

*Metaphrases and Continuous Expositions of the Epistles of the Apostle St.
Paul*

BOOK OF EXPOSITIONS: UPON THE EPISTLE OF SAINT PAUL TO THE
ROMANS, THE THIRD.

To Christian readers, grace and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ,

Volume 3

**Containing a Metaphrase and Exposition on the Epistle to the Romans, in which,
just as the Apostle treated the principal topics of all theology most exactly and fully,
so in this volume the greatest part of not only Pauline teaching, but of all sacred
philosophy, is explained.**

(While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, translations can contain errors, omissions, or unintended nuances. In the event of any discrepancy or inconsistency, the original official language version shall prevail and be considered the authoritative text. translated using Sonnet.)

Translated by @polemicalpresby on X

Martin Bucer



Nasc. Selestadtj. in Alsatia.
A^o. 1493.
Ob. Cantabrigia in Anglia.
A^o. 1551. Kl. Martij.
Crematur ibid. A^o. 1556.
Reservatur ibid. A^o. 1560.

Anne ideo Bucere alio petis græcè Britannos,
Ut cinis & cineris gloria tanta fores.

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EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS: **CHAPTER 9**

I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness through the Holy Spirit, that there is great sorrow in my heart and bitter, unceasing anguish. For I myself was wishing to be accursed and cast off from Christ for the sake of my brothers and my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites, to whom belong the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the worship, and the promises: of whom are the fathers, and from whom Christ is descended according to the flesh. He who exists over all things, God be blessed forever.

Amen.

But it cannot be that the word of God has failed. Nor are all who trace their descent from Israel, Israelites. Nor on that account are they all children, because they are of the seed of Abraham. But in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise who are counted as seed. For the word of the promise was this oracle: At this time I will come, and there shall be a son of Sarah.

But the promise was made not to this one alone, but also to Rebecca, who was with child by one father, our Isaac. For to her, before the children she was carrying in the womb had yet been born, when they had not yet done anything good or evil: in order namely that the purpose of God according to election might stand, it was said by oracle: The elder shall serve the younger. According to what is written in Malachi: Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.

What then shall we say? Is there injustice with God? By no means. For he says to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So it does not depend on the one who wills or the one who runs that we are saved, but on the mercy of God. For the scripture says to Pharaoh: For this very purpose I raised you up, that I might display my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth. So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and hardens whomever he wills. You will say to me then: Why then does he still find fault? For who has resisted his will? But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder: Why have you made me thus? Or has not the potter authority over the clay, from the same batch to make one vessel for honorable and another for dishonorable use?

But if God, bearing with great patience those who are themselves as it were instruments in which vengeance is to be wrought, who have been fitted for destruction: so as to display in these the force of his vengeance, and to make his power known: and to make known his most ample glory in those who are themselves as it were instruments in which mercy is to be displayed: whom he prepared beforehand for this, that they might receive the fellowship of the divine nature: whom he also called, not only from Jews but also from Gentiles. As indeed in Hosea he says: I will call him who is not my people, my people: and her who is not beloved, beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said to them, You are not my people, there they shall be called sons of the living God. But Isaiah cries out over Israel: Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved. He will complete and cut short his word upon the people, yet diffusing righteousness. For he will cut short his word upon the earth. And as Isaiah predicted: Unless the Lord of Hosts had left us children, we would have been like Sodom and would have become like Gomorrah.

What then shall we say? That Gentiles who were not pursuing righteousness have attained righteousness: even the righteousness that is by faith. But Israel, though pursuing a law of righteousness, has not reached the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith but as if based on works. They have stumbled against the stone of stumbling, as it is written:

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Behold I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. And whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

CHAPTER TEN.

SECTION ONE.

Brothers, the desire indeed of my heart and the prayer which I pour out to God is for Israel that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to true judgment. For since they are ignorant of the solid and divine righteousness, and seek to establish their own righteousness, they do not submit themselves to the solid and divine righteousness. For the end of the law is Christ, that he might confer righteousness upon all who believe. For Moses indeed describes the righteousness that consists in the law: The man who does the things that are commanded shall live through them. But the righteousness that consists in faith says thus: Do not say in thy heart: Who shall ascend into heaven? For that is to bring Christ down from heaven. Or: Who shall descend into the abyss? For that is to bring Christ back up from the dead. But what does it say? The word is near thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart. This is the word of faith which we proclaim. Because if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart one believes, and righteousness is attained; and with the mouth confession is made, and salvation is obtained. Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, rich in bounty toward all who call upon him. For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? But how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? But how shall they hear without a preacher? But how shall they preach unless they be sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim peace, who proclaim good things. But not all have obeyed the Gospel. For Isaiah says: Lord, who has believed our message? Faith then is from the proclamation, and the proclamation consists in the word of God.

But I say: Have they not heard? Indeed rather: Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. But I say: Did Israel not know? First Moses says: I will make you jealous over a nation that is not a nation, over a foolish nation I will provoke you. And Isaiah is bold and says: I have been found by those who were not seeking me, and I have made myself manifest to those who were not asking for me. But to Israel he says: All day long I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.

CHAPTER ELEVEN.

I say then: Has God rejected his people? By no means. For I myself am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says about Elijah, how he pleaded with the Lord against Israel? Lord, he was saying, they have killed thy prophets, they have torn down thine altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life. But what does the divine response say to him? I have kept for myself seven thousand men, who have not bent the knee to Baal. So then at the present time also there is a remnant chosen by grace. But if by grace, then it is no longer on the basis of works. Otherwise

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grace would no longer be grace. But if on the basis of works, then it is no longer grace. Otherwise work would no longer be work.

What then? What Israel was seeking, it has not attained. But the elect have attained it, and the rest were hardened. As it is written: God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day. And David says: Let their table become for them a snare and a trap and a retribution for them. Let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see, and bend their backs forever.

I say then: Did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means. But by their stumbling salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to provoke them to jealousy. Now if their stumbling brought about the simultaneous greatest abundance of men for salvation throughout the whole world: if their diminishment brought about the simultaneous greatest abundance of Gentiles: how much more good is to be expected when they are fully restored? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am an Apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke my kinsmen according to the flesh, and save some of them. For if their rejection has meant reconciliation for the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the first fruits are holy, so is the whole lump. And if the root is holy, so are the branches.

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, though a wild olive, were grafted in among them, and have become a partaker of the root and the richness of the olive tree: do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, it is not you that bear the root, but the root that bears you.

You will say then: Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in. Well, they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Consider therefore both the kindness and the severity of God: toward those who have fallen, severity; toward you, kindness, if indeed you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. And they, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in. For God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree: how much more will these, who are the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree?

For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, lest you be wise in your own sight. A partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the full and just number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved. As it is written: The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will turn ungodliness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins. As regards the Gospel they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election they are beloved for the sake of the forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance. For just as you were at one time disobedient to God, but now have received mercy because of their disobedience: so they too have now disobeyed because of the mercy shown to you, so that they also may receive mercy. For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all.

O the depth and fullness of the goodness, wisdom, and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and how unfathomable his ways. For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given him a gift, that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and in him are all things. To him be glory forever. **Amen.**

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SUMMARY OF THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE CONTAINED IN THESE THREE CHAPTERS.

The scope of the Apostle in this whole passage is to remove the stumbling block which the blind obstinacy of the Jews, so stubbornly attacking the Gospel, was putting in the way of the course of the Gospel. For since the Jews were believed to be the only followers of the true religion, and Christ had been promised to them peculiarly: it was troubling to many of the religious among the Gentiles, and to the common people of the Jews themselves, that no other men hated the Lord Jesus so greatly, or persecuted him so furiously, and this under the charge of violated religion and dissolution of the divine law, as the Jews: and among these, those who seemed more excellent in the knowledge and pursuit of religion. Nor indeed was it easy for modest Gentiles who had been taught the true God by the Jews themselves, or for the more simple among the Jews, to believe that those who had been the sole possessors of wisdom in this matter for so many centuries past, while the whole rest of the world was miserably and perniciously erring, should now above all others be failing in judgment concerning religion.

It seemed moreover not congruent with the divine goodness, that this people, upon whom he had poured out from the very first author Abraham onward such illustrious and perpetual benefits above all other peoples of the world, should now be so abandoned and cast off, that those above all other men should be hidden from his Christ: whom he had most especially promised to them, for whose sake he had selected them from other nations, had given them his religion and all other gifts: whom he had particularly prefigured to them in all the sacrifices, other ceremonies, and miracles which he from time to time exhibited among them: whom finally he had willed to be born from them. Likewise those who lived in the semblance of piety and holiness among the Jews who were attacking Christ with particular fury, as had happened to Paul himself, showed no apparent cause for such great divine wrath against them, and such monstrous blinding.

Those who were curious of this matter sufficiently acknowledged that the absolute righteousness taught by the Gospel was the very righteousness which God had commended through the law and the prophets: they saw that nothing holier than the Apostles who were proclaiming the Gospel could be imagined: yet because an overturning of all the ceremonies of the law was being urged, and the Apostles had in respect of outward appearance everything most lowly, the authority and prejudice of those who excelled in the Jewish nation and so stubbornly resisted the Gospel was making the faith of the Gospel doubtful and suspect to very many, both among the common people of the Jews and among the religious Gentiles.

Moreover the authority of these enemies of the Gospel rested chiefly on two things. The one was that the Jews above all peoples had hitherto been held by God as his particular possession, alone endowed with the law, alone endowed with the true religion, alone endowed with the promise of Christ. The other was that they were very zealous in legal righteousness and the observance of ceremonies. From this indeed arose what the Apostle wrote toward the end of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth chapter, that they pursue the law of righteousness, and that he bears them witness that they have a zeal for God. Now religious men could not doubt concerning these two principles: that the promises of God must be firm. And: that God cannot but embrace those who are zealous for his law. Now all the promises concerning Christ had been made peculiarly to the Jews: and no others were seen to be so zealous for the law of God.

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The Apostle therefore, in order to remove this preposterous and pernicious authority of the enemies of Christ, contends chiefly against two things on the contrary. The first: that the promises concerning Christ and all salvation were made not to the Jews indiscriminately, but to those divinely chosen for this end: and that these promises are also fulfilled to these. But that in the present time the vast Jewish multitude is being exercised by this judgment, so that it appears that in that storm very few from that people have survived whom God has enrolled in the number of the true Israelites. Both of these he proves by scriptures. He treats these things in chapter 9. Then he shows that God embraces not the legal and external, but the righteousness of faith: and that this is now being given to the Gentiles, while the Jews, ignorant of the righteousness of God, are seeking to establish their own: and he proves each of these likewise by certain scriptures. He executes these things in chapter 10.

But lest he should seem to exclude the entire Jewish people from the promise of Christ and to strip them utterly of true righteousness: he expounds that God is preserving for himself remnants from this people, however small, whom he embraces by his grace with no regard to the merit of works: and that the rest must for the present be subject to blindness: yet not so that this blindness should be eternal, nor that the hope of repentance should be utterly removed from the whole multitude of the Jews who have rejected Christ and do not accept him today: but that at some point, when they too shall have been long held in manifest impiety, they will be restored by the grace and mercy of God, the more illustrious in them thereby.

This he first proves from the fact that even their blinding was in some manner salutary for the rest of the world: then he argues from the fact that the first members in the holy Church were taken from that people, and it was into them that we Gentiles were grafted, from which it follows that still even now, however blinded and rejected they may seem, the holy seed, the seed of election, must lie hidden in them. Finally he openly declares this mystery: that when the just number of the Gentiles has come into the Church of Christ, the whole of Israel also shall be saved, endowed with the light of Christ. For it seemed good to God that, as he had through Christ exhibited his mercy to the Gentiles when they were utterly destroyed: so also to the Jews through the same he would exhibit his help, when they shall be most deplorable, and shall have long been most alien from all true worship of God. He treats these things in chapter 11.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER NINE

In his treatment and proof of all these things he observes this order. First of all he prefaces with a vehement and holy attestation, professing his incomparable love for the Jewish people: by which he wished to remove from himself the great suspicion of malevolence. He does this in section 1 of chapter 9.

In the second section he takes up this point: that the word of God cannot fail, and that for this reason the sons and posterity of Abraham, the people of Israel, must in all ways become partakers of Christ and through him of everlasting salvation. But he presently proves from the oracle concerning Isaac chosen before Ishmael, and likewise concerning Jacob preferred before Esau, that those who are born of the flesh from the holy fathers are not immediately children of the holy promise, but those whom God of his spontaneous election willed to make partakers of his promise.

In the third section therefore he takes up the objection concerning the justice of God. For to human reason it seems unjust that God does not hold all equally. He therefore confirms by adduced

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scriptures that God's benefits can have no cause outside his own will. Whether therefore he hardens some so that they do not receive the doctrine of salvation and thus perish, or whether he softens others so that having received the Gospel of salvation they are saved: he certainly acts justly, because he acts as he wills. Presently therefore he takes up another objection: that God wrongs us in blaming us when we live wickedly, since we can do nothing otherwise, being hardened by him, since no one can resist his will. But this objection he repels, he does not dissolve: and repels it by the fact that it cannot be right for the thing molded to demand a reason from its molder as to how it has been made.

In the fourth section he expounds what we are to look upon in those things which God made and fitted for this purpose, that he might exhibit in them an example of his wrath and bring glory of his power: for by the contemplation of these and our comparison with them, he renders the more illustrious his goodness toward us, whom he appointed for this, that he might show in us the riches of his infinite goodness. But immediately he adds that God has selected for himself these people equally from the Gentiles as from the Jews, indeed more from the Gentiles: and proves this from the oracles of Hosea and Isaiah. For in these it is stated that those who were not God's people would be received into the people of God, and the lot of those who had been God's people would so fall out, that from them only the very smallest remnants would be saved.

Thus far the Apostle has proved that it is not against but according to the promises of God and the oracles that at this time none less than the Jews receive the truth of God: and therefore that their prejudice in the cause of religion ought to be held most suspect and avoided, so far is it from rightly availing against the Gospel.

In the following things he removes the other thing by which they were deceiving the simpler among the Jews and the Gentiles: the opinion of righteousness, which God cannot but regard. For he shows that the true righteousness has been given to the Gentiles, while the Jews already blinded, and the law of righteousness pursued in the manner of the works of the law.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 10

In section 5 of chapter 9, he showed that it had been foretold by Isaiah that the Jews would stumble against Christ, but that all who had believed in him would be saved. In the first section of the tenth chapter he again testifies of his zeal for the salvation of the Jewish people, and shows that from this it comes that they do not accept the righteousness of God: because ignorant of the mercy of God through faith they must rely on their own righteousness, while Christ gives true righteousness to those who believe, as the perfection of the law. Moses puts life and salvation in the fulfillment of the law, but to this fulfillment no man can arrive by his own powers: hence it is necessary to embrace Christ apart from the law, in the manner in which he offers himself to us by the word of faith, that is, the Gospel. But the reception of the word renders secure both concerning the ascent to heaven and emerging from the dead. By faith therefore in Christ, which always suggests the free confession of Christ, and by which we have been grafted from the wild olive onto the holy root: full salvation is obtained for us. For whoever believes in Christ cannot be frustrated of his hope: among peoples to whom no promise of divine condescension had been made, to whom no institution of the true religion had come for many centuries.

In the second section of this chapter he again proves that this righteousness of faith, and true salvation through Christ, needed to be communicated equally to the Gentiles as to the Jews: since

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the goodness of God avails for all who call upon him: for it has been foretold that whoever calls upon the Lord shall be saved. But since salvation consists in no ceremonies, no prerogative of race, but solely in the faithful invocation of the name of God: and this ought to have been common to all peoples, having the oracle: it was necessary that both faith and the preaching of the Gospel be made common to all, and that the heralds of the Gospel also be sent to all. For faith is born of preaching, and this comes by the command of God ordering it.

In the third section he again recalled that the preaching of the Gospel had reached all through two oracles: and showed by the just judgment of God, and the manifest deserving of the Jews perpetually resisting the divine goodness, that it came to pass that the Gentiles were received and the Jews rejected.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ELEVEN

In the first section of chapter 11 he meets the question arising from what was premised: whether God has utterly rejected his Jewish people. He answers that this cannot be, for he himself is an Israelite. That God has indeed rejected very many from Israel according to the flesh, but not all: as in the time of Elijah he preserved for himself seven thousand free from the superstition of Baal, so now also he preserves his remnants: but remnants whom his grace, by spontaneous election with no regard for works, renders saved: and from this it follows that, with ceremonies and the prerogative of descent set aside, they must together with the Gentiles obtain the righteousness of God by believing in Christ.

In the second section he now expounds more explicitly that Israel according to the flesh has not attained the salvation it was seeking, but the elect from it have attained it, and the rest have been hardened: and proves this very thing by an oracle.

In the third section he presupposes the question concerning these, already blinded at the time, whether they have stumbled so as to fall utterly: and whether those who have now cast away the Lord are to be raised up again to him. He answers: by no means: and shows that their fall has served the rest of the world, so that it might receive the salvation of God in Christ: and that their restoration will be even more profitable. And since the first saints in the Church of Christ were taken from the Jews, and it is into these that we Gentiles have been grafted: there must therefore still abide in this people, however blinded and rejected they now are, the holy seed, the seed of election. From which many of them, broken off now by unbelief, may be restored and again grafted in from the Gentiles as from a wild olive. Hence the Gentiles must act with more modesty and in fear, lest they also be broken off, not natural branches, not born of that people to whom the Lord promised this salvation peculiarly, when the natural branches the Jews were not spared. Finally he introduces the expectation concerning the Jews being again grafted onto the holy root: which indeed ought to appear the more natural, since the Jews are now far from believing, while it has been given to the Gentiles to believe. He proves this in this order.

In the fourth section he openly declares the mystery concerning the restoring of the Jews, whom blindness now holds in part, until the predefined number of the elect from the Gentiles has come to the kingdom of Christ. And he confirms this by the oracle of Isaiah. From this moreover he gathers that if now the Jews are enemies of the Church on account of the Gospel, for the sake of the Gentiles to whom the gift of this Church of Christ has been given in the present time: yet they are beloved on account of the fathers by reason of election, which still obtains in them, since the

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gifts of God are without repentance. It is fitting, as we reached the fellowship of salvation through the mercy of God out of unbelief: that in the same manner the Jews should at some point be restored to it. For it has seemed good to God to subject all to unbelief, that his mercy may the more illustriously come to the aid of all, both Jews and Gentiles.

In section 5 he concludes all things premised from the exclamation concerning the inscrutable and always yet just judgments of God, of whose reasoning no one can enter, nor indeed reprove: for from him and through him and in him are all things. From this he breaks out into the praise of God, into which all the pious break out when they have raised themselves to the consideration of the judgments of God over the human race: as the impious always rush into the censure and blasphemy of God.

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER NINE.

I speak the truth in Christ.

EXPOSITION

That D. Paul might defend the faith of the Gentiles, of whom he was particularly the Apostle, and also of those who from among the Jews had believed in Christ, against the authority and prejudice of the Jews most obstinately fighting against the faith of Christ: he had to discuss the blinding and rejection of the Jewish people. But since to the holy mind of the Apostle nothing could seem to be capable of being said more bitterly and intolerably against the Jews: he rightly feared that he might seem otherwise unjust toward his own people, and perhaps be trying to render his own defection from them more honorable by so great a humiliation of that people, and thus defending by this means the neglect of the ceremonies of the law, on account of which he was also ill-spoken of among some believers. He therefore testifies concerning his greatest and incomparable love toward the Jews, and swears to it, and subjoins the most urgent causes of this love: so that the man is seen to swear and testify whose faith anyone ought rightly to approve. The proposition therefore is: I singularly love the Jews, and I seek their salvation with a desire than which there can be no greater. This moreover he proves from the effect of such love and desire: from the sorrow and pain with which he was tormented over their destruction. For whoever grieves supremely at another's destruction also supremely loves him and singularly seeks his welfare. He affirms therefore that there is great sorrow and unreleasing pain in his heart, now unceasing, to indicate by its duration also how very great it is, not only by its inward force. But on account of what he so grieves and is tormented, he does not express: which was done out of the vehemence of emotion, yet not incautiously, since all things of the Holy Spirit must needs be such. For that which was so bitter and intolerable, namely that they were blinded and rejected by God: he was unwilling to name at that moment. Moreover that he has such great sorrow and pain for the destruction of this people: he proves from the fact that he had wished, certainly in an ecstasy of the mind, when he had fixed his mind more deeply upon the so destructive blindness of so great a people, to be himself cursed and cast off from Christ. For to wish this for oneself for the redemption of the destruction of the Jews could certainly only be his, for whom their destruction grieved supremely: which could only be of one who loved them uniquely and incomparably.

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Moreover about to offer credibility to this so stupendous and immense love, and to the pain born of this great love over the blinding of so great a Jewish people, and of the vow which had arisen from both, from that love and pain: he first testified concerning his own mind, then recalled the causes for which he ought rightly to have held the Jews of the greatest account and to have loved them above all mortals.

But since it is always as it were the manner of the saints to speak before God and to speak what is both pleasing to God and, if they believe them, above all salutary to neighbors: there is nothing more readily natural for them than to call God as witness of those things which they say. He therefore began: I speak the truth in Christ, that is, by the very Spirit of Christ I am a witness of this. He was burning exceedingly, hence he so greatly multiplies: I lie not, my conscience bearing witness to me through the Holy Spirit. Thus he interposes his credibility here by the authority of Christ and the Holy Spirit, by which reasoning he rightly removed from the Romans all doubt concerning his attestation. For he was in such estimation with them justly, that they would have had to believe him even if he swore and simply affirmed. But since the matter was great, and he himself in speaking of it was burning more and more, he used such great asseverations and attestations.

But he premised before these asseverations and attestations the causes by which he shows why he recalled the Jews to be so greatly loved by him: for this whole matter depends on the mind, though even when the causes of his love toward the Jews are recalled, enumerated with such great and singular vehemence, that too added great weight to his words among the Romans and all the saints whatsoever, to whom the Apostle was at least somewhat known. For he had so approved himself in the judgment of the saints that no one did not hold him most zealous in his duty in any matter whatsoever.

The causes which he assigns of his love toward the Jews are twofold: from nature, and from the condescension of God. From nature, when he says brothers and kinsmen according to the flesh. For God has sown in us a singular charity toward such, which the faith of Christ so little diminishes, that Paul pronounces him who has put off this affection of nature to have denied the faith, and to be worse than an unbeliever. He rightly held the condescension of God of greater worth, and therefore he expounds at greater length the causes of his love toward them arising from this. For when he had said Israelites, he had comprised all that he subjoined: the gifts namely of this peculiar election, which he expressed in the name of Israelites. Yet he goes through the individual graces which have been divinely given to this people. That they were adopted by God as sons, that they have the singular presence of divine goodness which is true glory: that they are partakers of the covenants of God and the promises of life, that they are instructed in the doctrine of life which is in the law, and in the true manner of worshipping God: that they trace their descent from holy fathers, that Christ himself was born from their people, which is certainly the supreme nobility.

But those whom God so joined to Paul by the bond of nature, and moreover so heaped with gifts above all peoples of the world: how could such a divine Apostle not have loved uniquely and held in supreme esteem: since an unbeliever must be worse than one who neglects his own flesh, and an enemy of God who does not love and worship those whom God himself so embraces and adorns? For these were those to whom the Lord had said: I will do good to those who do good to you, and I will curse those who pray evil for you.

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INTERPRETATION.

I speak the truth in Christ. ἐν Χριστῷ, in Christ, he placed here, and presently when he subjoins, in the Holy Spirit, the preposition for the Hebrew preposition, which also has the force of what is ours through. It is a frequent idiom with Paul, to live, to be, to speak, to act in Christ, in the Holy Spirit, in God: and this is nothing other than through Christ himself, through the Spirit, God, by the knowledge, will, virtue, and act of God and Christ, to live, be, speak, act. But this formula excludes whatever is from us, whatever is from the flesh, and makes all things to be of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and God. But this doubled attestation, both through Christ and through the Holy Spirit, and through one's own conscience: has amplification of such gradations and manner. I speak the truth, and this not by human impulse but moved by Christ, and I speak the pure truth, for I lie not in this. But this does not merely seem so to me, I am not in vain deceiving myself with my own false opinion: but my very conscience bears testimony of this to me, is here plainly and confidently my co-attester, there is no doubt in it, no fear, but that it is truly so with me as I proclaim of myself. And this final confidence of my conscience arises not from human rashness or thoughtlessness, but from the very force of the Holy Spirit, who feels and testifies this in me concerning me.

For the Apostle was weighing that it would be incredible to the flesh, that anyone should have such love toward others, since to redeem at all the salvation of any men is utterly impossible for the flesh. Then he was not ignorant that we easily deceive ourselves and persuade ourselves that we have goods of which not even the shadow has occurred to us. But the Apostle was burning most greatly to make to all the saints his credibility in this his so great love: so that those things which had to be said against the blindness and superstition of the Jews might carry more weight. Hence here he used such abundance, and expounded this attestation of himself so fully and from every side confirmed.

That there is great sorrow in my heart. He mourned and was being racked by unceasing pain: and yet simultaneously he was rejoicing with the saints who were rejoicing indefinitely? For he exhorts the Philippians to rejoice always. As often as the destruction of the Jews came to his mind, and it came continuously, he could do nothing but grieve and be tormented, for he loved them solidly in Christ. But just as he always at the same time lifted his mind to the just judgments of God, and to the goodness which he exhibits to the elect in life: the greater the joy with which his mind was suffused, the more grief over the destruction of the Jews afflicted him, in proportion as the grace shown to the saints was a much greater good, and the rejection of the Jews an evil. So he also wept when beholding Jerusalem and thinking of the fate with which it was to be destroyed: and yet the same man, when he had lifted his mind to God, even after he had already complained of the obstinacy of his people, exulting in spirit said: I confess thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth: that is, I confess thou dost judge justly and most rightly, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to little ones. Concerning the fact that from the contemplation of diverse things, and even their sudden changing, most diverse emotions and prayers arise in the saints: I said something in the conciliation appended to the exposition of section 1, chapter 5. Therefore when he said the pain was ἀδιάλειπτος, unceasing: he signified that the blinding and destruction of the people was perpetually presenting itself to him, in proportion as the supreme love for them bore him. He also amplifies by saying, in my heart, not to me. He wished to express the most inward sense of this pain.

For I was wishing. This vow could only arise from an incomparable grief over the ruin and overthrow of Israel. He thus proved the portentous magnitude of his grief, and from this also his

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love toward this people. He says, I was wishing or was praying, and signifies that he did not pray this perpetually, but at times, namely when this grief from the contemplation of the destruction of so great a people, which had also been so dear to God, had singularly prevailed. Then certainly having considered it preferable to avert the destruction of his own at the expense of his own interests, and to redeem their salvation at the cost of his own destruction as a gain. For the mind agitated by such great passions is snatched toward impossibilities. So David wished to die for Absalom, that is, to redeem him from death by his own death. You read many similar things in the Psalms and in Job. Moses also altogether prayed the same when he said: Now either forgive their sin, or blot me out, I pray thee, from the book which thou hast written. Exod. 32. He too loved his people here most ardently, as the men of God are wont: and could not bear once to see them perish: not what was his own, but what could profit the people he sought: and himself also desired to redeem their salvation by his own destruction.

Nor is it fitting to object here that both Moses and Paul loved God supremely, and could not be torn from the love of God by any force of any creature. For they were not then, when they prayed these things, weighing themselves between God and other things, as to which way they would incline: but had their whole mind fixed upon the destruction of so great a people: whom since they loved far more vehemently from the Spirit of God, they could think of nothing else in this ecstasy of the mind, than if somehow they might be able to snatch them from eternal overthrow and death: from which desire, as the saints are above all prodigal of themselves in all things, nothing else occurred to them but to offer to God in exchange for themselves, as for the redemption of the Israelite people: which exchange they set forward as being of the greatest importance to themselves: not indeed because they think themselves of such great account, but because to be blessed in the Lord is justly the supreme thing for them, at the expense of which they may do.

These are the excesses of truly burning charity, which cannot displease God, since they proceed from charity, which uniquely delights God. Such were the tears of the Lord over Jerusalem, which yet he could not but desire to be destroyed, since the Father had so determined. For nothing else is desirable as good, and nothing is better than what God determines: who both alone, and is nothing but good. So therefore he acted, he desired the destruction of this people, and gave thanks to the

Father concerning it: but when he had already turned his whole mind to the justice of the Father, not to the destruction of the beloved people. So also Paul consoled himself with the consideration of the just judgment of God, in which when he was, he desired nothing other than that the Lord might in all things be glorified as seemed good to him, even in the destruction of this people for whom he was so exceedingly perishing.

But that he said he had prayed this, that he himself should perish for the salvation of this people, and he adds, I myself: this contributed to the amplification of his love toward this people. But when he wrote ἠὺχόμεν, I was wishing, not εὐχομαι, that is, I pray: he signified that this prayer was neither perpetual nor of a mind tranquil in God, but of one rapt outside itself, and now supremely afflicted and disturbed from the contemplation of the destruction of so great a people of the saints for so many centuries, who had been the sole people of God among all peoples. D. Chrysostom attributes this excess of his vow to love of God, from which namely the heart of the Apostle could not bear God to be blasphemed on account of the rejection of this people. But it is sufficiently clear that the Apostle recalled this his vow here to show how greatly he esteemed the

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Jewish people, and with what great love he burned for them. Which love since it was the expression of the love of God, in this excess also uniquely pleased the Lord.

Anathema he said, and understood the complete rejection and devotion to everlasting death. For he imprecated upon himself that evil and destruction which he was seeking to avert from the Jews. Which was that which he threatens and imprecates upon all who do not love the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. 16: Whoever does not love the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema. And which he had threatened to those preaching another Gospel, even to angels as well as men. Gal. 1. For the Apostle wished to express by this word what in scripture is called *קִרְבָּן*. Whoever sacrifices to other gods, to the one Lord alone, let him be *קִרְבָּן*, devoted. Exod. 22. But the law of the devoted man was that he should be killed. For whatever one devoted with anathema to God, if it were an animal it had to be killed, if a field it had to be the perpetual possession of the priest. Therefore to be anathema from Christ is to be devoted and consecrated to Christ, so as to perish forever. For so were the Jews perishing, whom Paul desired to redeem by his own perishing. Hence among the ancients no man was easily made anathema, but corrupt doctrines: persons however were excommunicated, so that repenting they might be received back into the fellowship of Christ. There is an excellent discourse of D. Chrysostom on this matter.

For my brothers. He uses the name of closest kinship, to profess greater love. Yet he expresses the bond of flesh more fully by subjoining: kinsmen according to the flesh. For this is a great cause of true love.

Who are indeed Israelites. Not brothers from the common stock of men, or Gentiles, but from the most noble race of the whole world, whom not my cause alone but also God's cause requires anyone who has God as his God to hold of the greatest account. The name Israelites came to this people from the holy patriarch Jacob, who was surnamed Israel by God at the time when, having overcome by the goodness of God and the iniquity of men, he returned to the land of Canaan, already enriched with eleven children and great substance. The angel of the Lord had wrestled with him the whole night in an undoubtedly terrifying kind of temptation: but when this man of God, strengthened by faith, did not yield to this temptation, the Lord blessed him, having impressed a singular sign of his care upon his hip, a certain dislocation from which he afterwards limped. There the Lord also changed his name, and called him Israel, as it were the powerful one of God, for this is what *יִשְׂרָאֵל* signifies. For the angel of the Lord was saying: Thou hast contended and in a manner exercised power with God and men, and hast prevailed. So moreover are all the elect of God: God himself at last yields to them, and causes all things to yield. For necessarily God undertakes the struggle with us, because our flesh resists him: but he at last grants that we conquer, that is, that we obtain him propitious and blessing through the intervening satisfaction of Christ, even as we have deserved him as an adversary. Therefore in the name Israel is supreme and infinite dignity: which is to have in one's power God and men and all things: for to those who love God, all things cooperate for good: God, angels, men, and whatever is anywhere. But this dignity had been given to the Jews above all mortals: and therefore there was far the greatest cause why they should be uniquely loved by Paul.

To whom belongs the adoption. The faith in God given to this people conciliates such great communion of the divine nature, that from this we are called and are sons of God, reflecting the image of God in true judgment, in holy use of the first things, and in the pursuit of helping all. Into this lot of sons of God, and if an imperfect one, that which has come to us through Christ: the Israelites were the first to be enrolled. From this condescension he prayed before God in Isa. 63:

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Thou art our father, Abraham knew us not, and Israel was ignorant of us. Paul proclaims the ancients to have been endowed with the servile spirit, and makes adoption in some manner our own: but he undertakes thereby to show the excellence of the gift that came to us in preference to them, not to deny that being sons of God was given even to them. For in Gal. 4 he expressly pronounces them sons of God, while he likens them to an heir still a child, acting therefore under a tutor and guardian, who though in treatment differs little from a servant, while he does not live at his own will, is yet lord of all. Of which matter we said in that: For ye have not received the spirit of bondage, in section 2 of chapter 8.

And the glory. The glory, the dignity. That was the illustrious condescension of God toward Israel, by which he had received those sons to himself, had endowed them with the law and true worship, was present at their prayers, cherished them as a father his sons. The glory was the fellowship of the divine nature, which had been given to them above all the Gentiles. Of this glory is that of Deut. 4: What nation is so great, that has gods so near to it as the Lord our God is near to us, whenever we call upon him? What nation has statutes and laws so just as all this law which I set before you today? Hence Ecclesiasticus: Great glory it is to follow the Lord. For he makes glorious those who glorify him.

And the covenants. **διαθήκαι**, usually rendered testaments, which nearly in the sense of protestations receive inheritances, by which men testify what they want to come to each one of their goods which they will leave at death. And in Greek such testations are called **διαθήκαι** in both the plural and the singular, of which in Budaeus in the commentaries. Hence the Epistle to the Hebrews also applies the reason of this testament to Christ, by whose death the promised goods of God began to be exhibited to us, chapter 9. But **διαθήκη** signifies not only a testament made on account of death in Greek, but also a pact, agreement, and pledge between the living: which is the force of **בְּרִית**, the word scripture uses in those passages where the Greeks rendered **διαθήκη**, the Latins testament. For testament also can be taken for attestation in general, even if by use it has been contracted to a certain species of attestation. But that Paul used the name **διαθήκης** for pact and promise simply, is evident both from other passages and from the third chapter to the Galatians. There having written that no one makes void **διαθήκην**, a pact of man, or adds anything to it once it has been confirmed: about to apply a similar argument, he added: To Abraham were spoken the promises, that is, **ἐπαγγελίαι**, and to his seed. Of these he presently adds: But this I say, **διαθήκη** previously confirmed by God to Christ: the law which was given four hundred and thirty years later does not make void so as to abolish the promise. Here the promise made to Abraham and his seed is manifestly called **διαθήκη** by Paul. He therefore takes **διαθήκη** for what scripture calls **בְּרִית**, for a pact and pledge: but nearly those which have in themselves the nature of such a covenant, by which God promises the people that he will be their God, that is, their Savior, and they in turn owe him worship as their God. Such covenants God repeatedly struck and renewed with the Israelites. God struck first, and not once, such a covenant with Abraham, as we read Gen. 12, 16, 17, and 22. With Isaac the same covenant is read to have been struck Gen. 26. With Jacob Gen. 28. With the whole people already brought out of Egypt, Exod. 20, 22, 23, and 24. These we read repeated in Deuteronomy and Joshua. Those solemn promises of God therefore, by which he undertook to be God and Savior of the Israelite people and to have them as a particular people in the place of sons: those **διαθήκαι**, those covenants and pacts and pledges, of which Paul here makes mention: for by the name of promises, which is subjoined, he understands other promises which the Lord made to this people from time to time concerning help to be rendered against their enemies, and singularly concerning Christ the Savior.

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And the giving of the law and the worship. He understands the moral and civil laws by the name νομοθεσίας, and the sacred ceremonies by the name λατρείας. So he used the word λατρεύειν in Luke 13. Hence it seems to have been accepted by the ancients who wished λατρεία to be the worship belonging to God alone. λατρεία moreover signifies both private and public service: voluntary and hired, whether of God or of men. Yet in this passage Paul used this word for the worship of God.

And the promises. ἐπαγγελίαι. The solemn promises of God by which he undertook to be God and Savior of the Israelite people and to have them as his particular people in the place of sons: those are the διαθήκαι, the covenants and pacts and pledges, of which Paul makes mention here. For by the name of promises, which is subjoined, he understands other promises which the Lord made from time to time to this people concerning help to be rendered against their enemies, and singularly concerning Christ the Savior.

Of whom are the fathers. Where the condescension of God in receiving one as a genuine son is lacking, to have had holy fathers and to be related to Christ the Lord according to the flesh is of no importance to salvation: yet since the certain promise of God is to do good in a thousand generations to those who observe his commandments, from this promise of God it is of the greatest importance to have had holy parents. And since it was a singular benevolence of God that Christ principally assumed flesh from the Jews, and this too, being related to Christ according to the flesh, was per se an illustrious gift of God, and if alone it can profit no one. Certainly the Lord had particular regard for his brothers according to the flesh even if very many of them were unbelievers, in offering and communicating his salvation. How many things did God do for the Gentile people of the Hebrews on account of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and other saints? How much more therefore on account of Christ? As the sun, when it has not risen upon any place, has not brought its light: so Christ, and through him all his members, brings the light of the divine condescension to all who have joined themselves to them, in their own manner. Yet all these things depend and receive their measure from the spontaneous and gratuitous goodwill of God. Which that it may appear: it sometimes comes to pass that those born of the worst men, and touching no saints by any kinship whatsoever, yet receive the chief place in the body of Christ: and on the contrary those born of the most holy parents, and joined to Christ by many external considerations, turn out the most impious and wicked of all. Yet most of the time thou wilt see God giving to his saints so many, that rightly anyone rejoices in the Lord to whom it has fallen to be united with any bond of necessity with the saints.

Below in 2 Cor. 5 Paul writes that he now knows no one according to the flesh, not even Christ, whom he had formerly known according to the flesh: by this he wished to disparage only the confidence of the flesh, not the order and connection of the benefits of God. The pseudo-Apostles were perpetually boasting of the nobility of the flesh, and apart from true faith, looking not to the gratuitous blessing of God, but to kinship of the flesh alone. He was therefore admonishing that since Christ died for us, we are also dead in him, and we ought to live for him who died for us and was raised from the dead: therefore that nothing which we were outside Christ ought to be of any account to us. For if anyone is in Christ, he must necessarily be a new creation. What therefore he says about knowing no one now according to the flesh, not even Christ himself: he understands the flesh considered outside the faith of Christ: thus certainly not even the very flesh of Christ profits anything. John 6. Before he had known Christ in true faith, he had known himself and his fellow-citizens, and Christ himself according to the flesh, that is, in the sense that Christ was born of the flesh from the holy fathers, and from this flesh he expected Christ to be born: hence he seemed to

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himself to be something, and to be held the more dear by God on this account: he was little solicitous about the solid faith by which first and alone we are justified before God. After he had therefore known Christ by faith, he wished to know and esteem no one, not even Christ himself, according to the flesh.

He who exists over all things. ὁ ὄν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας ἀμήν. It is an epiphonema of the mind exulting and exclaiming in praise of God and Christ from the remembrance of so many benefits of God through Christ the Lord. But this discourse, as far as the words and phraseology of Paul is concerned, can be taken as a proclamation of God simply, in this sense: Let therefore God be praised, that one who exists in all things, effecting and giving all these things, in the ages. But since the Apostle is most intent on proclaiming God in Christ, everywhere calling to faith in Christ, and in this passage chiefly was deploring the Lord Jesus being so unacknowledged by the Jews, and the Christ promised to them being so madly rejected by them: it is more probable that this was particularly exclaimed concerning Christ, as if he had said: O how noble and blessed are the Jews, if they had known their goods. From these was born Christ, that one who exists in all things and above all things as God to be praised: or who existing as God, is to be praised in all things and above all things. Christ is in all things, and all things hold together through him, as they were also created through him: he is also in all things and above all things to be praised. And this indeed follows from that. For since he is in all things and does all things, this too most excellently, and is therefore above all things: he is rightly acknowledged to be above all things to be proclaimed. And finally whether this is understood of God simply, or expressly of Christ: yet it belongs properly to Christ, for God is in Christ, and Christ is God: which need not be proved from this passage, since that is abundantly demonstrated from all those things which scripture has expressly written of Christ. God was the Word, and the Word was God, and the Word was made flesh, all things were made through him and hold together, he saves those who hope in him, and will judge all. These and the like things, if they cannot give faith to anyone that our Lord Jesus is both true man and true God, of the same nature and substance with the Father and the Holy Spirit: from this passage, what would you obtain? Such a person is perverse, and is therefore to be dismissed.

OBSERVATION I.

I speak the truth in Christ. The mind is to be deeply fixed in this, that when we are in this so portentous love of the Apostle, even toward enemies, which is equally unaccustomed in us, in this care of ours of approving our love to men. For we now weigh these things insufficiently, and now attain this love. And yet we shall have done nothing rightly and wholesomely with anyone, unless this proceeds from sincere and solid love: nor shall we profit anything with anyone from our own action, if he does not feel that we are driven by his own love. For without true love we are nothing, and we accomplish nothing good, and what befits sons of God. Therefore it is much to be lamented that we are so niggardly curious about this fountain of all good: true love. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, lives and acts in all things, and therefore most happily. Whoever falls from love falls from God, lives and acts in the darkness of eternal death. But love that is true is of that nature which Paul describes in 1 Cor. 13. For we all deceive ourselves, boasting of love, when we barely hold a shadow of it.

OBSERVATION II.

For I was wishing that I myself be anathema. From this let us learn that love knows no measure, and that this is approved by God, provided that love bears one in such manner as to love

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in God. But he who so loves, is more solicitous for the eternal salvation of those he loves, than the carnal love of a mother for the earthly salvation of the son she loves. For if we love from God, and love for eternal life: how much greater ought this solicitude of ours to be, that we avert from our neighbors whatever can intercept or diminish this life, and bring to them whatever can confirm and promote it: as any solicitude of a mother can be to drive away harmful things from her little son, and provide salutary things according to the flesh.

OBSERVATION III.

Kinsmen according to the flesh. Those things also which are from the flesh are incitements to love, and rightly prevail above all with the saints: but so that they may love rightly in the Lord. For whatever anywhere avails in love, or in the causes of love: all that is a singular work of the divine nature, for God is charity: and therefore the saints rightly observe that they should prevail with them as much as possible. Faith perfects nature, it does not destroy it: hence he is worse than an unbeliever and has plainly denied the faith, whoever has excluded these affections of nature: for the faith ought to be offered as a pretext of extreme perversity when an excuse is sought for the shame of faith among such persons. For if he had even a half-ounce of true faith, those sparks of love in nature would be the more inflamed thereby.

OBSERVATION IV.

Who indeed are Israelites. Let us observe how much the Apostle makes even of these gifts of God, which yet were already harmful to the Jews, because they boasted of them without true faith. But the saints consider the gifts of God in the manner in which God bestows them, not as men abuse them. For whatever there is of divine calling, and of kinship with the saints: this is of itself salutary, however harmful it becomes through the abuse of impiety. We have therefore rightly made the greatest account of these, while we regard them as marks of the divine condescension, as indeed they are. But if anyone wishes to rely upon them outside of Christ: then those things must be put forward which the Apostle wrote against these above in 2 Cor. 3 and 11, Gal. 3 and 4, Philip. 3, Col. 2, and other passages, in which he makes them not only weak and poor, but even harmful apart from faith in Jesus Christ.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION II.

But it cannot be that the word has failed.

The scope in this section is that the true Israelites, to whom the promises of salvation in Christ were made, are those alone whom God selected for this purpose from among the children of the saints, not whoever was born of the flesh from them: yet he subjoins these things to the preceding in such a way that he seems to assert the dignity of Israel, from which evidently this cannot diminish even the fact that in the present time very many are alienated from Christ, and present themselves as more hostile than disciples to him: for these, who so pertinaciously reject Christ, are not Israelites. In all ways he seeks to heal without offense. What therefore he places here at the beginning: But it cannot be: contains the chief reason of what he premised, namely the certainty of the word of God. The sense therefore is: I expounded how greatly I love the Jews, I added the causes, because they are the people and sons of God, heaped by God with so many goods. I rightly think this of them, nor can it be that the faith of the oracles by which God promised this people salvation should fail, however many meanwhile pertinaciously repel this salvation from

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themselves. Relying therefore on these oracles of God, I follow this people with the greatest love, however very few now acknowledge the condescension of God in themselves. Nor are all those Israelites who trace their descent from Israel.

Here therefore he introduces the proposition which he thereupon proves in this section, which is: That one belongs to the people of God depends not on carnal kinship, but on the gratuitous and free election of God. But since it was of the greatest importance that this truth be well persuaded to the Jews and to all who deferred to them too much: he repeats and proposes this proposition with the proof mingled in. For not all, he says, who are from Israel, are themselves Israel, nor because they are the seed of Abraham, are they his children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called, that is, the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as seed. Thus far the proposition: unless he intermingled the proof in that, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. Moreover by promise he always understands the gratuitous one, depending on the sole spontaneous goodwill of God: for which reason we showed above that to Paul it is equivalent to say, that salvation is ours from the promise, and from grace, and therefore since faith is the faith of the promise, that it rests on grace alone, on no works. Hence what the Apostle here signified by the word of promise, he afterward expressed by the word of election, when he writes: That the purpose of God might stand according to election, not from works, but from him who calls. The proposition therefore is, as we said, that being an Israelite, being of the people of God, being a partaker of the promises made peculiarly to this people: depends on the election of God, not on kinship of the flesh.

He proves this proposition from four oracles: two published concerning Isaac, two others concerning Jacob. Ishmael was the firstborn son of Abraham, yet it profited him nothing to become the father of the holy people, nor to be enrolled even with them. Through Isaac, says the oracle, thy seed shall be called, Gen. 21: that is, thy holy posterity shall be enrolled. Therefore it does not depend on the flesh, but on the spontaneous election of God, that anyone is enrolled in the holy people. But that this might be the more manifest, he adds the oracle published concerning Isaac before he was born: At this time I will come, and there shall be a son of Sarah. Gen. 18. Those therefore whom the Lord himself destined to this, whom he singularly as he promised, so also predefined that they should acknowledge and worship him: these at last become the heirs of religion and salvation, and are true sons of Abraham, genuine Israelites. So from the hypothesis he draws the thesis.

The other two oracles are concerning Jacob. He had a brother of the same womb, born at the same birth, and older, so as to be the firstborn: yet since God wished to show that all things are situated in his condescension, he answered through an oracle: The elder shall serve the younger: preferred the younger to the elder, and made him the firstborn and patriarch of his people, with the elder rejected from this dignity. This he confirms by another oracle: Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated: that is, I have always so discriminated between Jacob and Esau, that I seemed to love the one and hate the other.

But that it might be most clearly shown how nothing avails here in the flesh, and how all things are of the spontaneous election of God: he notes that Esau and Jacob were not only born of the same father, but also of the same mother and at the same birth. Then the oracle concerning their distinction was published when neither had yet done anything good or evil. He moreover adds the end which God had in view in these things: that the purpose of God might stand according to election, not from works, but from him who calls: that is, that we might see that the promises and

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gifts of God universally depend through all things on the sole election of God and his gratuitous calling, not from works, that is, from any thing that could be performed by man, or that is of human effort.

From these things he was now hinting that the blinded multitude of the Jews was not children of the promise, that is, not those sons of the holy fathers in whom God had promised that he would render his mercy illustrious through Christ. For those born of the flesh from them indeed, but so that by no means the fellowship of the grace of God came to them in the same way: just as Ishmael and Esau were rejected from the fellowship of the holy people: the one though born of the flesh from Abraham, the other from Isaac. Therefore no one ought to be offended if these were so adverse to Christ: since they were not those to whom Christ was promised, however much they might trace their descent from the holy fathers according to the flesh. These things are in this section.

INTERPRETATION

But it cannot be. He understands the oracles of God by which Christ and through him eternal salvation was promised to the Jewish people. To the seed of Abraham, that is, to those who were born of the flesh from Abraham, these promises were made: therefore the whole people cannot have fallen away from those promises. For the word of God cannot be frustrated, that is, cannot fail. It was necessary that some from this people be saved, in whom God might fulfil these his promises. But it did not follow that Christ must be communicated to each individual who traces carnal descent from Abraham: nor indeed were those promises made to each individual. Scripture says seed simply, and understands the elect seed, to which many are joined according to the flesh, who are by no means counted among it before God. As God first selected this seed, this people, from all the remaining peoples of the world by his spontaneous condescension: so also it is of his spontaneous condescension that he appoints into his holy seed those from among those born equally of the saints. Which he declared by the clearest example in Ishmael and Isaac, in Esau and Jacob. Which examples holy scripture also passed on to us for this very reason.

From these things it is therefore clear that it was necessary for the seed of Abraham, those born of the flesh of Abraham, to receive Christ and in him all the goods promised to the fathers. And from this came the fact that the Apostle held this people in such high esteem. But that each individual born according to the flesh from Abraham should become a partaker of these promises is not necessary: indeed it was necessary, as will be shown from the subjoined oracles, that the greatest part of the Jews should be blinded and fall entirely away from those promised promises.

In Gal. 3 Paul proves that those born of the Gentiles are also the seed of Abraham, all who are of Christ, who is himself the chief and head of this seed. But he understands these to be ingrafted into the seed of Abraham through Christ, and from this to be themselves also held as seed of Abraham, that is, of the holy people, of the sons of God: but they are nonetheless Proselytes, adopted ones. For by Paul those born of the flesh of Abraham are simply called the seed of Abraham. For unless we understand Paul to take the seed of Abraham here for the Jewish people itself, the proof by which he proves that the seed of God still lies hidden in them, and that it was necessary for remnants from them to be preserved, will not hold. Expressly to this people and to those born of the very flesh of Abraham, the salvation of Christ was promised: and the Apostle also understands these promises in this sense.

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But in Isaac shall thy seed be called. This oracle, as we read Gen. 21, was delivered in this manner. Sarah had asked that Ishmael and his mother be expelled from her house: for she did not wish him to share the inheritance with her son. This grieved Abraham at first, but the oracle commanded him to do what Sarah had asked, with this reason added: For in Isaac shall thy seed be called, that is, thy holy posterity shall be reckoned through Isaac. By this oracle God openly discriminated among the seed of Abraham solely by his own election. For both Ishmael and Isaac were begotten of Abraham, and Ishmael was the elder: nor did it matter so much that he was born of a handmaid: for the sons of Jacob's handmaids, with the sons of the free women, entered into an equal partition of the inheritance, and were held in no way inferior to them. Therefore what had been promised to the seed of Abraham seemed equally to pertain to Ishmael, and on account of primogeniture even more than to Jacob. But that we might see that God indeed fulfils the salvation he promised to this holy people, to those born of the flesh of Abraham, yet not on account of that flesh, but from his spontaneous condescension: he made this discrimination in that seed, and assumed Isaac who had been born of the seed of Abraham, and rejected Ishmael born of the same flesh.

At this time I will come. By this saying he proves that the children of the promise, that is, those particularly promised by God and therefore predefined for this, that they should be the genuine offspring of Abraham, are to be counted as seed, in the certain and true people: not those who merely trace fleshly descent from the saints. For this particular promise concerning Isaac is the argument of the particular election, from which alone it is that anyone is numbered among the consecrated seed. For no such promise was made to Abraham concerning Ishmael. But God is wont to promise beforehand to those whom he has destined for great things. Therefore in Isaac it has been shown that those alone are numbered in the people of God, in the holy race, whom God has certainly beforehand in himself selected for this end, and therein in the general promise of the holy seed promised them: that is, he himself designated them in himself when he promised the holy seed. For God does not so promise anyone by a particular oracle as he promised this Isaac to Abraham. And therefore, that Isaac should prevail over Ishmael, and become the father of the chosen posterity, he received not from the fact that he was born of the flesh from Abraham, but from the fact that God promised this before he was born: and thereby it is sufficiently indicated that when God makes a general promise to his own of children, upon whom he will bestow the fellowship of salvation: he understands by those children only those whom he himself has appointed for this, just as in this he appointed Isaac singularly, which he disclosed to Abraham by this particular promise which the Apostle here adduced.

But not only this. There is an ellipsis, to be supplied thus: But not only did this happen to Abraham and Sarah, that by an oracle it was shown to them which of their children God would deign to number among his own: but also Rebecca, having conceived from our one father Isaac, received an oracle of this kind, and learned that the general promise is determined and defined according to the will of God, and that God has selected in it whomsoever he has chosen. Concerning this ellipsis and **μόνον δὲ** it was said above in section 3, chapter 8.

For neither having yet been born. He removes simultaneously the merit of both nature and action.

That according to election. What purpose and election are, it was said already on that: Whom he predefined, above section 5, chapter 8.

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Not from works. From works, that is, from the merit of works: he opposes this to the gratuitous calling. Yet by the same he also excludes the benefit of descent.

It was said to her. That is, to Rebecca, when the oracle was consulted. For when the collision of the infants in her womb was more severe, and she had inquired of God concerning it, she received the response that she was bearing in her womb two nations, and two peoples would go forth divided from her womb, one people would prevail over the other, and the elder would serve the younger. This oracle concerning the two posterities, Esau and Jacob, was published before either was born, still less before they had done anything good or evil. And in this therefore it was shown that it is from the election alone of God, which of those born of the saints are appointed into the holy people, and what place and number each holds in it. Wherefore from all these promises which were made to Abraham and the other holy fathers concerning the salvation of their seed: nothing more can be concluded than that there will be and are from that seed those to whom these promises are fulfilled: but who these are or will be, this is for the divine destination to determine, and cannot be known by us, except from the effects of this destination, namely from faith and the true invocation of the name of God. The flesh can avail nothing of this.

As it is written. This is a confirmation of what he premised. For God rebuking through Malachi the ingratitude and impiety of his people toward Jacob, recalls that he loved him in preference to Esau, and that he rejected the people of Esau as eternal. He affirms that the sign of this is the sterility of the land which the posterity of Esau inhabited, which the Lord also singularly cursed. The words of the prophet run thus: I have loved you, says the Lord. And you said: Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau the brother of Jacob? says the Lord. Yet I loved Jacob, but Esau I hated, and I laid waste his mountains for desolation, and his inheritance for the dragons of the wilderness. If Edom says: We are destroyed, but we will return and build the waste places: thus says the Lord of Hosts: They shall build, but I will throw down. And they shall call them, The region of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord has indignation forever. And your eyes shall see it, and you shall say, The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel. Thus he.

The Jews, the posterity of Jacob, had been destroyed on account of their own impiety, but the Lord restored them and gave them back salvation in all manner. But Esau he so rejected, that he is an example of divine vengeance forever. The Jews understand under the name of the Edomites the Romans: but this is without reason. For this very people who came from Esau perpetually caused trouble to the sons of Jacob, and thereby provoked upon itself the gravest wrath of God. Which Jeremiah 49, Ezekiel 25, and Obadiah testify. From this people moreover finally came out that most destructive plague of the Mohammedan abomination. This region is also so vast and terrible perpetually, that it rightly ought to be called the region of wickedness. For the Lord indeed by the piety of men renders lands fertile and suited to human habitation, just as he turns fruitful earth into saltiness on account of the impiety of its inhabitants.

Concerning Ishmael and Esau themselves, we need not pronounce that they are utterly rejected by God: we rather believe that the parental piety availed for both, so that although they transgressed gravely from time to time, they yet attained salvation, endowed also themselves with true faith in the mercy of the Lord. Yet by a hidden judgment they were the authors of peoples who were conspicuous for impiety, and are so today. But whatever may be the case with them as far as pertains to them privately: yet in them and in their posterity it has been abundantly declared that the dispensation of the divine beneficence upon the seed of Abraham, upon the holy seed, is entirely situated in the spontaneous and gratuitous election of God.

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OBSERVATION I.

But it cannot be. From this let us learn to abide unmoved in the word of God, whatever absurdity or stumbling block seems to press upon those who follow the word of the Lord. The promise stood, that the Israelites would enjoy the goodwill and grace of God in Christ for eternal salvation: and yet no people from any source persecuted Christ with greater hatred and fury. These things seemed to conflict with each other exceedingly. But when Paul first establishes himself in the word of God, and persists in this, that it cannot be frustrated: the matter itself opens up, and what appeared to be a disagreement between the lot of the Jews and the promises made to them, vanished. For he set forth that not all who trace carnal descent from Israel are themselves Israelites. So also to us the dissolution of all things that seem to resist truth will easily occur, if we devote ourselves above all to the word of God and abide in it unmoved.

OBSERVATION II.

For not all who are from Israel. Let us most diligently weigh this passage. For we now are sons of God, the holy seed. To us also God has promised through Christ that he will be Father and Savior, both to us and to our seed. And that the light of the Gospel has been brought even to us, living in this impious and lost life perpetually provoking God: this comes from the fact that God of his infinite mercy willed to do good to our pious ancestors for a thousand generations. Let us therefore so receive these promises, that we do not doubt God will impart the benefit of salvation also to our seed. Yet not on this account to each one who is born of our flesh, but to those whom he himself has destined from ours for this purpose: those alone are to us children of the promise, that is, promised and exhibited in the holy seed, in the number of the sons of God.

OBSERVATION III.

The elder shall serve the younger. Let us observe that God by his election often judges not only against our estimation, but even against his own laws. This should avail us to the end that whatever we await from God, whether for ourselves or for others, we may always be mindful that it depends on his sole gratuitous goodwill, and on nothing whatsoever else, not even on a law which he himself has handed down to us. God willed by his own law, which he both implanted in nature and committed to letters through Moses, that the firstborn should be set over his brothers and have the first place: and yet he not only decreed the contrary concerning Ishmael and Esau, but also willed this to be an example for all ages. So much does it become him alone to be the prince, free from laws, and to teach us by his judgments that the one law of all justice is his own pleasure. Nevertheless our part is wherever to follow his prescription, until he himself teaches us otherwise. Isaac, because Esau was by nature the firstborn, had determined to confer upon him the right of primogeniture. For he had not understood the oracle that had been delivered to his wife, that the elder would serve the younger, as if God had thereby commanded him to change the right of primogeniture by that command: nor did he think the rash sale of Esau was to be held as ratified. Therefore as he thought Esau's right stood, so he omitted nothing, as far as in him lay, to establish him as the firstborn also by his own authority. But the mother, sufficiently persuaded by the oracle, followed the oracle and obtained it. Which when Isaac considered, he ratified it, yielding to the extraordinary divine sentence the ordinary law. So also we must act: always defer to God, so that in all things he may follow his own will, even beyond the order he himself implanted in things. But following his law everywhere becomes us, and it is not right rashly to depart from his determination, unless it clearly appears that God commands otherwise.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION III.

What then shall we say?

The Apostle's scope in this section is to remove the objections which the flesh is wont to make against the preaching of the free election of God. For when God created all men and made them of the same nature: it seems to the flesh little equitable for the common Creator to have such discrimination among men, that he should choose some for eternal life, reject others to perish eternally: and this even before they are born, before they have done anything good or evil. For God has implanted in us such a singular love toward those who are born of us, that such love properly belongs first among all things to God in all that he has created: and this we rightly conclude. But when we permit ourselves to measure the obligations of this love according to our weakness, as if the immensity of the divine goodwill and justice toward his creatures could be comprised within the narrow measure of our mind: then we ourselves lead ourselves into error and bind ourselves with extreme impiety. For what is more impious, than to so reduce God to order and subject him to his creature, that a man, a bubble, an evaporating dream, should allow himself to judge concerning the judgments of God? From this impiety therefore the Apostle here calls back: and this from two sources. From the presentation of the divine majesty, and the admonition of our humility.

Moreover he brings forward two objections of the flesh, of which the second is seized from the repulsion of the first. The first objection is of this sort: God created all men from nothing, gave all the same nature: therefore it is unjust so to discriminate among them, that he loves some and hates others, even before they are born, before they have done anything good or evil: and to allow this love and this hatred to avail to this extent, that to some he gives eternal life, others he thrusts into eternal death. But the Apostle, to indicate how impious it is to admit such thoughts: sets forth this objection in the most crude and supremely shameless manner, using the *μίμησις* which scripture is wont from time to time to use, to the end that it may the more fully and undisguisedly put our impiety before our eyes. Is there, he writes, injustice with God? To this interrogation who would not judge that the answer must be given which the Apostle gives: By no means.

He premised: *What then shall we say?* in which after his manner he put forward the confidence of the truth dispensed by himself. For the sense is: I know what our flesh is wont to infer from these things, in which I preached the free election of God: but how unjustly and falsely, I shall presently disclose. But let us hear what the flesh thinks follows from what I recalled concerning the just election of God. *What then shall we say?* What is it to be rejected and inferred from those things I just testified? This? Is there injustice with God? By no means. From what I preached concerning the election of God, nothing of this sort follows. But I do not labor over the consequence. For it cannot be obscure to any student of the sacred mysteries that from what I discussed concerning the hidden election of God, nothing less follows than such an impiety, that any inquiry should seem admissible concerning the injustice of God. I wish rather to admonish what the religious mind ought to reply to such a nefarious objection, whether it is put forward by one's own flesh or by others. But this is: By no means. A severe and constant rejection is needed here, no disputation.

The proposition therefore first here is what the Apostle concludes from the fact that he himself responds to the first objection: this thought must be most gravely rejected: Is there injustice with God? He subjoins this reasoning for it: Whatever God takes upon himself, we ought to acknowledge this as just to him. But he takes upon himself to have mercy on whomever he wills, and to harden whomever he wills, and he makes his own will the one and whole cause of all that he does with us.

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That this is just to him we must therefore confess: and freely proclaim that for anyone to attain salvation from God, it is not of the one who wills or the one who runs, that is, of the one seeking salvation or striving for it, but of the merciful God, who both stirs up the will of seeking salvation, and opens the way of attaining it, and himself alone grants all of it.

But that God takes upon himself to have mercy on whomever he wills, and to harden whomever he wills, which is the lesser thing: he proves from two oracles. The first is concerning mercy: I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will show compassion to whom I will show compassion: that is, I have no other cause for showing my mercy to anyone than my mercy itself, because it so seemed good to me: my will takes the place of reason for me. The second oracle is concerning hardening, to which he adds the cause, the glorification of the divine power. But this oracle was published concerning Pharaoh. But just as from the oracles which he adduced above published expressly concerning the election and rejection of Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau: he taught what is to be thought concerning the election and rejection of all: so now he shows from what was said privately concerning the hardening of Pharaoh, what is to be judged concerning all hardening. For in this way the judgments of God over certain men are described for us, that in them we may see what God determines concerning men universally. In all these hypotheses, these are contained, as was said above.

Moreover the order is to be observed in these. For first he drives away from God all suspicion of injustice from the fact that he himself takes upon himself this: to have mercy on whomever he wills, and there can be no cause for showing mercy to anyone, but his own mercy. When he had shown this by the oracle, he inferred from it: So then it is not of the one who wills, etc. And since in this inference he did not only infer that all things are situated in the goodwill of God, but also that nothing is in our will and effort: as if about to prove this, he adduced the other oracle, in which God affirms that he raised up Pharaoh so that he might display his power in him, and thereby make his name celebrated. And this oracle certainly has in itself the reason confirming that: It is not of the one who wills and runs. For we are God's, whatever we are, because he made us from nothing, and in him we live and move and exist: therefore wherever he drives us, thither we must needs be borne, and we cannot turn ourselves elsewhere by our own will or effort. Therefore nothing is in us, nothing is of our will, our running, but all things are in the will and nod of God. Hence he presently fittingly infers also concerning hardening, but with the mercy of God premised again. So then, he says, he has mercy on whomever he wills to have mercy, and hardens whomever he wills to harden: that is, he has no other cause of either, than his own will. But if for God all things are placed in his own will, he can do nothing unjust when he acts according to his will. For if you permit him to give or not give by his own will: however he may have acted, he cannot be charged with injury. And that all things are placed in the will of God: this occurs readily to the saints upon any appeal even naked to God. For thus the majesty of God always shines upon them. Sufficiently therefore and abundantly did the Apostle prevail with any of the pious, that at any thought by which it seems to our flesh that there is some injustice in the judgments of God, they should be supremely afraid and horrified: because he admonished from the adduced oracles that God himself testifies, in these matters as in all, that he acts according to his own will. But the will of God itself, since it is justice itself and the law of all justice that can anywhere exist: every saint willingly acquiesces in it, and repels by him any more copious inquiry into the justice of God as nefarious and impious. And this is what the Apostle was aiming at in these things. In this manner therefore he repelled the first objection.

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The second objection the flesh invents from the repulsion of the first. For when in this the Apostle expressly affirmed that all things are of the willing God, and that he hardens whomever he wills to be hardened: it seems to the flesh to follow rightly that since the hardened live wickedly, God has no cause to rebuke them. For since impossibility excuses among men, and it is not counted as a crime either of omitted duty, who could not perform the duty, or of committed sin, who could not avoid it: the flesh wishing to judge in the same manner concerning God, gathers thus: No one can resist the will of God: therefore it is not possible for one whom God wills to be hardened to act otherwise than perditely: therefore there is the excuse of necessity, and God unjustly accuses such persons of their depraved life. This is the second objection, which the flesh seizes from the refutation of the first.

This objection the Apostle teaches to be simply rejected, by holding up to us our humility and the divine majesty. But rather, he says, O man, who art thou to answer back to God, that is, as if thou disputest with God by right? In the name of man our humility is noted, in the name of God the divine majesty. The word man admonishes us that we are of ourselves empty and nothing of God; that God is the supreme good and all justice: therefore for us to dispute with God is the greatest impiety. He adds the similitude of the potter and the molded thing. For when a potter has molded his vessel, the vessel has no right to demand from the potter a reason why he molded it in such a manner. For he has the right from his own clay to make whatever vessels seemed good to him, some for honorable uses and others for dishonorable uses. In this similitude therefore the Apostle admonishes us that we were created and molded from nothing by God, and that as God had the right to mold us according to his own will: so it is not right for us to dispute with God what sort of beings he has made us.

But it might seem that this is not an apposite response to the premised objection. The objection inferred from the fact that no one can resist the will of God the hardener, that those who are evil are necessarily evil, and that God has no cause to rebuke them on this account. But this similitude brings forward nothing other than that since God made us from nothing, it is not our place to dispute with God as if by right as to what he has made us. For the flesh would easily retort: I do not wish to complain of what God has made me, but I complain that having made me evil he should accuse and condemn me. But Paul here did not wish to respond to that objection, but to repel it, and to teach that it must be abhorred in all ways by the pious. He did this therefore first by admonishing us of our humility and the divine majesty in that: Thou, O man, who art thou to dispute with God? And by this similitude of the molded thing and the potter, he wished more fully to expound and teach how unjust it is to inquire at all into the counsel of God concerning us: so that not only do we not inquire why God hardens some and shows his mercy to others, but also this: when God hardens some, why he accuses and condemns them when they live wickedly. Just as the molded thing, when it has been made, whatever the potter may have instituted concerning it: since all this is in the hands of the potter, nothing can be lawfully demanded by the vessel from the potter. So we who are vessels of God must simply in faith embrace whatever the Lord deigns to announce to us concerning himself and concerning us: and we must inquire this one thing, that we rightly know what he has promised us, and what he wishes to institute for us. To inquire by what right he does what he does, or how the things he has instituted concerning us or others are mutually consistent: that must be the greatest impiety to inquire. For since he is God, he can do nothing unjust; and since we are his molded things, we ought to take in good part whatever he has made us, and whatever he has determined concerning us.

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INTERPRETATION.

What then shall we say? What do you think must further be said, or can perhaps be inferred from what was premised? Or perhaps that which follows.

Is there injustice with God? Because namely he so discriminates between those not yet born, who have not yet merited anything. For equals seem to be owed equals. He expresses the impiety of this question most crudely and fully, to show that the pious ought to abhor it, and ought to do nothing other than reject a thought of this kind. For what could be more adverse and execrable to the religious mind, to hear injustice attributed to justice itself? Hence he also subjoined the response of one indignant: By no means.

For he says to Moses. These things and what follows through that: But if God wills, etc.: Origen takes as objections of the adversaries, yet not trusting this arrangement of the passage, he expounds them also as words of the Apostle. The rest of the Fathers interpret them as the Apostle's response to the premised question. If the response to the premised question were not interposed, and Paul were wont to attribute to the adversaries the citation of scriptures: the interpretation of Origen would have some probability.

But as D. Chrysostom also saw, the Apostle's purpose here was to call away from questions of this sort, and to refer everything to the will of God, against which no one but a madman would permit himself to institute a disputation. For D. Chrysostom thought that D. Paul here wished to exclude by other questions proposed to the Jews the question and disturbance concerning the calling of the Gentiles and their own rejection. As if he had said: Why do you judge it so unworthy of God, that now he calls few Jews and many from the Gentiles into the fellowship of salvation, when you know that God once so discriminated between those born of the same father Abraham, namely Ishmael and Isaac: indeed also between those born of the same father and the same mother, and at the same birth, and this before either had done anything good or evil? But also when all your ancestors had committed the same crime, in worshipping the golden calf, yet he punished some and forgave the offense to others, and said: I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, etc. But in all these things D. Chrysostom wishes the scope of the Apostle to be to teach that God alone knows who are worthy of his mercy and will be of good disposition, while no man knows this, even if he seems to know it very greatly. For this man of God thinks that in these oracles God showed that it is not necessary for him to defer judgment concerning men until they have manifested themselves by their own deeds, but that he foresees their mind and deeds: and therefore can pronounce judgment concerning them before they are brought into this light.

Of the same opinion are also Origen and D. Ambrose: namely that God elects and loves for life before they exist those whom he foreknows will be good: and on the contrary rejects and hates those whom he foreknows will be evil. Hence D. Ambrose defining foreknowledge here wrote thus: Foreknowledge is that which has determined what the future will of each one will be, in which he will remain, by which he either condemns or crowns. Hence the same expounded the present passage in this manner: I will have mercy therefore on him, he says, on whom I shall have shown mercy, that is, I will have mercy on him of whom I had foreknowledge, knowing that I would give mercy, knowing that he would turn back and remain with me. And I will bestow compassion on him to whom I shall have bestowed compassion, that is, I will give mercy to him whom I foreknew would return to me with a right heart after error. But this is not to give to him to whom it should not be given, nor not to give to him to whom it should be given: so as to call him whom he knows

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will obey, but not to call him whom he knows will by no means obey. But to call is to prick to receiving the faith. Thus he.

But D. Augustine rightly refutes this opinion, from the fact that Paul everywhere urges this, that nothing of salvation comes to us from works, but all good things come from pure grace, and that it is not grace if it is owed to anyone on account of works. Read chapter 7 of book 2 against the two Epistles of the Pelagians. There he proposes two infants born of a prostitute and exposed, of which one is taken in and baptized, and being thus saved dies presently: the other is not baptized and perishes, dying also presently, before he has defiled himself with his own sins. Here, since God in the saved infant could foresee neither the merits of the parents nor any of its own, since there would be none: Augustine proves it to be false that God in conferring salvation upon the elect regards future merits in them. When he has treated the present passage and those things in the following section, he concludes thus: For which reason you are surely mad (he addresses the Pelagians), who say, when truth says: Not from works, but from him who calls: that Jacob was beloved from future works which God foreknew he would do. And thus you contradict the Apostle saying: not from works. As if he could not say, not from present, but from future works: but he says not from works, to commend grace: but if grace, then no longer from works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. Grace certainly, that through it good works may come to pass: lest if good works had preceded, then grace would be rendered for works, and as though grace were no longer grace. But to take from you every hiding place of your blindness, for this reason I proposed twins of such a kind, that they would not be helped by the merits of their parents, and both dying in infancy one baptized, the other without baptism, lest you should say that God, as you say against the Apostle concerning Jacob and Esau, foreknew future works. For how did he foreknow future things which, since his foreknowledge cannot be deceived, he rather foreknew would not be future for them dying in infancy? Thus far he. But in the question on free will, which a little later I will subjoin God willing, I shall show that there is nevertheless agreement in the matter itself between these holy fathers. Now I shall interpret the passage which the Apostle adduced.

We read in Exod. chapter 33 that Moses prayed the Lord that he would go before the people with his face, and would from then on bring them himself into the land of Canaan, exhibiting himself to them by his perpetual beneficence as God and Savior. For God had threatened on account of the crime of the worshipped calf that he would utterly cast off the people. But when Moses asked the Lord for pardon for the people, and asked further that he would show him his glory: he added: Show me, I pray, thy glory. To this prayer the Lord responded: I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will call by the good name Jehovah before thee: that is, I will unfold before thee the power and grace which is contained in this name, and I will bestow my goodwill upon him to whom I will be gracious, and I will extend my mercy to him of whom I will have mercy.

When we compare these things both with the preceding and among themselves, two senses of those words which the Apostle adduced from these offer themselves. The first, that thou refer them to the people in this manner: I will show you all my goodness and my power, which I have exhibited to you in my holy name, I will unfold to you: but concerning the people I will also hear thee, yet so that the purpose may stand according to election: for I will deign with favor those whom it seemed good to me to so deign, and I will bestow my love upon those whom I have elected for this. The second sense is, that thou take these things as related to Moses thus: These things which I recalled to you as signs of my goodwill I will bestow, for I bestow my favor upon him to whom I have deemed good to bestow it, I declare my love toward those to whom it seemed good to me. But in whichever sense we understand this saying: it is sufficiently clear from the Apostle himself that

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the Lord wished to say by the present oracle, that his favor and goodwill have no other cause than his own favor and goodwill. And in this understanding the oracle properly avails, and for confirming what the Apostle here undertook to prove: that no thought is to be admitted which charges God with injustice, and for inferring what he subjoins: that it is not of the one who wills or the one who runs. For indeed if the divine goodwill and mercy toward us depends totally on itself, and can have no cause outside itself: it is sufficiently clear that wherever it is borne, and to whomever it imparts itself, nothing of injustice can be admitted in it, and our part is to implore it suppliantly, and to embrace it with grateful mind in religious fashion: but not to inquire why it imparts itself to some and not to others. And again since all things of our salvation depend on this one mercy of God, and this cannot be inclined or provoked by any creature anywhere, but is itself wholly its own cause of itself and of all benefits: certainly we shall accomplish nothing by willing or running, but all things must depend on that gratuitous and spontaneous mercy of God.

Moreover the words of scripture run thus: **וְחַנּוּתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר אֶחָן וְרַחֲמֵי אֶת אֲשֶׁר אֶרְחַם**, that is, I will favor whom I will favor, I will embrace with fuller affection whom I will embrace with fuller affection: for this word signifies so to embrace one, and to have such affection toward him, as a mother embraces her son of her womb, and what affection she has toward him. God indeed in scripture wishes to be acknowledged as so to dispense all things according to his own will, without any impulse of either men or any things whatsoever: the word **חָנַן**, from which this is derived, is first **חָן**, which signifies grace, condescension, favor. He uses it in that expression, if I have found grace in thy eyes. Concerning this word it was said above on that: Through whom we have received grace and the function of the apostolic office, chapter 1. Philip Melanchthon makes the response of D. Paul from this oracle thus: It would be injustice with God not to give equals to equals, if he gave his gifts from a debt or for merit: but since whatever he bestows on men is of mercy, he cannot be accused of injustice even if he does not give equals to equals. But this reason induced me toward the former interpretation: that I think the Apostle here wished from the adduced oracle to show not only that the rewards are not owed but are the free gifts of divine mercy which God bestows on men: but also that this mercy has no cause outside itself. For the human reason hearing and acknowledging that all things which God bestows on us are gifts of his mercy: nonetheless seems to itself to have something to object. For since all are equally lost, and equally the molded things of God: it seems fitting to the supreme goodness which God is, that even if he does not wish to heap each individual with equal benefits: yet he should extend his mercy to some so generously as to gift them with eternal life, and not so deprive others of his mercy as to destroy them eternally. But the Apostle in this place altogether undertook to stop up human reason and remove all justification from it. Since therefore he does this most fully, with our reason drawn into the abyss of the divine majesty, whose it certainly is to do all things from himself and by his own will, with no impulse from any thing outside himself: it appears that he adduced the oracle in this very sense, which the very words also most fully express. For from that: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy: what else would you take, than that the divine mercy has no cause outside itself: and that it is not fitting that God show mercy to others, to those very ones to whom he shows it. For what the mercy of God says, is also his justice, which is his nature, which we can only know from his own works. Therefore also: So then it is not of the one who wills. Understand, that we are saved and attain the promises of God. This ellipsis was of a mind burning for this assertion and confession of the divine justice as well as our emptiness. The metaphor of running for the effort and the very action of life is met with at every turn. In Gal. 2, Acts 20, Philip. 2, and 2 Tim. 4, he calls his running the performance of the apostolic office: Lest, he says, I should run in vain or have run: that I might complete my course: I have completed my course. Yet in this passage the Apostle seems to have placed the one running for the one who endeavors, sets about, and busies himself.

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For the scripture says to Pharaoh. Why is this not simply proclaimed to the whole world, to all ages, as he says? Scripture says, signifying that this mystery is not to be disclosed to a few, but the praise of the divine majesty is to be proclaimed to all mortals: so much so that it had to be referred into the divine letters to be published to all mortals. But when this oracle subjoins this with a causal notation to what was just premised: So then it is not of the one who wills, etc., it must be seen in what manner it proves that. The oracle introduces God testifying to Pharaoh that he raised him up, that in him, namely by punishing and exterminating him, he might display his power. From this first we are taught that God creates and brings forth whomsoever he wills, so as to make his name famous and celebrated in their punishment. Whatever right he had over Pharaoh, the same he has over whomsoever: for he created all from nothing. From this truth therefore what was premised is thus gathered: So then it is not of the one who wills, etc. For if each one is borne whither God has destined and directed him, and no one can turn himself elsewhere: it is sufficiently clear that all our salvation can by no means be in man's will and effort, but rests on the sole mercy of God. Pharaoh, certainly destined for this, that God might be glorified in his extermination, was borne so thither, that no portents and wonders however stupendous, most openly attesting the divine virtue, no most certain recognition and confession of the divine nature could soften him even while hardening those he wills, as in holy scripture he expressly wished this to be testified to the whole world and all ages. We see it indeed. Scripture says, signifying that this is not a mystery to be revealed to a few, but the praise of the divine majesty to be proclaimed to all mortals: so much so that it was to be referred into the sacred letters to be published to all mortals. But as this oracle subjoins with a causal notation to what was just premised: So then it is not of the one who wills, etc., it must be seen in what manner it proves this. The oracle introduces God testifying to Pharaoh that he raised him up, that in him, namely by punishing and exterminating him, he might demonstrate his power. From this first we are taught that God creates and brings forth whomsoever he wills, to make his name famous and celebrated in their punishment. Whatever right he had over Pharaoh, the same he has over whomsoever: for he created all from nothing. From this truth therefore what was premised is thus gathered: So then it is not of the one who wills, etc. For if each one is borne whither God has destined and directed him, and no one can turn himself elsewhere by his own will or effort: it is sufficiently clear that all our salvation can in no way be in man's will and effort, but rests on the sole mercy of God. Pharaoh certainly, destined for this, that God might be glorified in his extermination, was borne so thither, that no portents and wonders however stupendous, most openly attesting the divine virtue, no most certain recognition and confession of the divine nature could soften him that he should obey the voice of the Lord and let the people of God go. From this judgment of God exhibited over Pharaoh as an example, which is equally valid for all the reprobate: it is abundantly seen that it is not of the one who wills or runs that a man turn himself to salvation, but solely of the merciful God: that if he does not show mercy but hardens, which he always does to one of the two: the man can do nothing but will harmful things, and run with all his powers to his own destruction, as Pharaoh did. Rightly therefore from the present oracle he also infers what the Apostle subjoined: that God shows mercy on whom he wills to show mercy, and hardens whom he wills to harden: that all things depend on his will, which since it appears from the deed, we have no cause to inquire concerning it: because it is itself the cause of all things, and is itself justice.

Moreover the oracle which the Apostle adduces is found in Exod. 9 in these words: And indeed for this very purpose I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. Which the Apostle rendered by *ἐξήγειρά σε*: is in Hebrew *הִקְמַדְתִּיךָ*, which word rendered from the word signifies set up. The Hebrews take it for preserved: for God had preserved Pharaoh when many others were perishing in those plagues by which God was

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punishing his impiety: that is, with others falling he had raised him and kept him standing, until all those remaining in the gravest punishments the divine power might be made manifest to him, and thereby the name of the Lord rendered famous in the whole world. This sense is read also in the Greek edition which is commonly had. For this passage is read verbatim in it thus: **καὶ ἔνεκεν τούτου διετηρήθης ἕως τοῦ νῦν, ἵνα ἐνδείξωμαι ἐν σοὶ τὴν ἰσχὺν μου, καὶ ὅπως διαγγελῆ τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῆ**, that is, And for this cause thou hast been preserved until now, that I might show in thee my strength, and that my name might be announced in all the earth. But this interpretation of the word **הַעֲמִידְתִּיךָ** is not so consonant with the phraseology of scripture, and is dissonant from what the Apostle here undertook to prove from this oracle. The verb standing is indeed transferred in the scriptures to consisting and remaining: They will perish, but thou, that is, thou wilt stand, wilt remain, Psalm 102. And: righteousness **תְּמִידָתְךָ** stands to the age, Psalm 111. But this word standing for making to survive I do not find. Moreover for existing, being at hand, appearing, and from this for setting forth, exhibiting, and presenting: it is found used repeatedly. Because he himself speaks, and it is already done, he commands and it already exists, that is, **וַיִּעֲמֵד**, Psalm 33. So Moses is repeatedly read to have stood before the Lord, and Joshua the son of Nun to have stood before Moses, meaning to have been at hand and in attendance, to have appeared in service. So when Moses wished to inaugurate Joshua as prince of the people, and for this to exhibit him to the priest and the whole assembly: the scripture has **וַיִּעֲמִידְהוּ**, that is, he constituted and exhibited him before Eleazar the priest and the whole people. It therefore appears that **הַעֲמִידְתִּיךָ זֵאת** **בְּעֵבֶר** is properly the same as: for this I created thee, caused thee to exist, brought thee forth: that is, as the Apostle rendered it: I raised thee up, brought thee forth to the world and exhibited thee as a kind of example. And though this standing, and exhibiting, refers principally to the fact that the Lord brought him forth that he might exhibit in him an example of his vengeance: yet since God does all things with destination, nothing rashly: he also signified by the same word that he simultaneously made Pharaoh in that very condition, and brought him forth into this light. For as the Lord testifies that he formed his holy prophets in the womb for the prophetic office, and before they had come into the light, sanctified and prepared them for this: so also he simultaneously forms and prepares all others for that in which he has determined to illustrate his glory in them: for he does all things wisely. Even the evil are organs of God, upon whose body and soul he molds nothing rashly. Whatever he implants in them of temperament, whatever of genius: all this he accommodates to the end for which he creates them. Wherefore **הַעֲמִידְתִּיךָ** contains all these things: For this I molded thee and brought thee into the light, I raised thee up in the dignity of king, I exhibited thee to the world endowed with this very mind and power, prepared and fitted for all things, so as to exhibit in thee these examples memorable through all ages, by which he came before in judgment, that those who see might not see, that he might hide the mystery of salvation from the wise and prudent, and similar things. Let us therefore learn from this to acknowledge that whatever God takes upon himself is fitting to him and most just, and without confessed impiety the cause of it cannot be investigated by us. This he now teaches more openly in the following.

Thou wilt say then to me: Why does he still find fault? From two causes the human reason gathers from the preceding that those who sin, hardened by God, cannot rightly be blamed by God. The first is that he does those things which he himself wills them to do, indeed which he himself does in them. The second is that those whom God has hardened cannot do otherwise than act perversely. Both causes are signified in that: Who has resisted his will? When he says the will, he notes that God wills those things toward which he hardens men: when he adds, who has resisted: he indicates the necessity of doing what hardening brings. When God was hardening Pharaoh so that he would not comply with his command in letting the people of Israel go: he certainly willed him not to comply with his command, indeed to resist it: and he himself effected this in him. So

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Pharaoh did what God willed him to do, indeed what he himself was doing in him, and could do nothing else. Likewise when the Lord put it in David's heart to number the people: he willed and effected this himself, and it was necessary that David number the people. For God cannot be frustrated in any work. When therefore he put it in the heart of David to number the people: this had to come to pass. To such therefore plain attestations of scripture that God hardens, deceives, puts in the heart what is depraved, and such things: human reason can infer nothing else than: Why therefore does God rebuke such persons, whom he himself hardens so that they may act wickedly and sin, and puts in their heart what leads them to act badly?

But rather, O man. The Apostle mitigates nothing of what was said, he does not deny that those whom God hardens perish by the will of God, he does not make it possible for the man hardened to do good: but he only deters and drives away from the fact that we should judge the judgments of the Lord: showing that this is of the extreme shamelessness and impiety. Which this exclaiming reproach indicates: But rather, O man: and the comparison of man and God. Likewise that interrogation admonishing us that we are absolutely nothing of his, and have nothing, so that by any reasoning it could be fitting for us to dispute with God: and finally the atrocity of that word **ἀνταποκρινόμενος**, for it signifies one contradicting, as D. Chrysostom interprets it. Moreover the chief force of the argument by which the Apostle deters from inquiring why God blames and condemns those whom he hardens that they may deserve to be blamed and condemned: is from the comparison of man with God. For man is the molded thing of God, from himself nothing: God is all justice and wisdom. What therefore could be more unbecoming, more impious, than for man to contradict God, to dispute concerning the judgments of God? God testifies of himself that he has mercy on whomever it seemed good to him to have mercy: let us simply believe this, let us gratefully embrace the mercy with which God has embraced us. He testifies that he hardens whom he wills: let us attribute to him the praise of justice, who himself is justice, and let us give thanks to his goodness that he has not hardened us, and let us also pray that he may not harden us further, that is, that he may not lead us into temptation. He also blames and condemns those who act wickedly: again I will say, Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgments are just: forgive us our sins. But the cause of these things, let us not inquire: still less let us suspect that there is some injustice in the judgments of God. The will of God itself is to God the cause of all things, and is itself justice.

Will the thing molded say? He applies the similitude, in which he principally admonishes us of this: since God molds men from nothing, he has the right to make them of whatever kind he wills, and to appoint them to those uses which he himself has chosen for himself. Moreover the similitude has two things: it is not right for the molded thing to contradict the molder, and the cause of this, namely that since whatever is the molded thing owes everything to the molder: the potter himself prepares his clay: it is therefore entirely in the hands of the potter, and he is permitted to make from his clay whatever vessels he saw fit: some for honorable uses, others for shameful and base uses. For this: one to honor and another to dishonor: the Apostle referred to the vessels of the potter, from which he draws the similitude, not to men whom he likens to the vessels of the potter.

D. Chrysostom admonishes here that similitudes of scripture are not to be extended beyond those things for which scripture adduces them. For scripture makes God similar to an ox, a bear, fire, and other things: but in a certain particular property of these things only, not in all respects. So in the similitude of the molded thing the Apostle wished to look at this one thing only: that the molded thing in all things obeys the hands of the molder, and in no way contradicts him: but not the reason of the molding, or the necessity of the will. For in the vessels of the potter, whatever diversity there is, all of this comes entirely from the work of the potter, and they are necessarily in

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that condition in which they have been made by the potter. For this reason D. Chrysostom does not wish the Apostle to make us similar to the potter's vessels: for it would follow from this in his view, that God is the author of the evils which men commit, and that men do not act by their own choice, and therefore are also outside of blame.

But with all due respect to this most holy and most learned father, all our things depend far more on the help of God than in potter's vessels all things depend on the work of the potter. For God molds us entirely from nothing, while the potter molds from clay, a pre-existing material. And D. Paul certainly wished above all in this similitude to admonish us of this: and therefore we cannot complain concerning the judgment and dispensation of God toward us, because God has far more right over us than the potter over vessels which he molds from his own clay as seemed good to him. But from this it does not follow that we do not act by our own will, or that our sins are to be imputed not to us but to God: of which matter we shall speak presently in the question on free will.

CONCILIATION OF THESE SENTENCES: God hardens whom he wills, and: God wills all men to be saved, and those which are consonant with either.

The Apostle expressly teaches in this chapter that God by his own will hardens some, so that they do not take up his commands and be saved: that he has hated some before they had done anything good or evil. From this it seems to be gathered that God altogether wills that those who perish should sin and perish. But on the contrary, since in all scripture he calls all equally to salvation, he certainly declares that he wills all to be saved.

And that we may consider this matter in the example of Pharaoh adduced. When God sent Moses to Pharaoh, and commanded him to let his people go: who would say that God did not will that he should comply with his command? But scripture records that God, when sending Moses to Pharaoh and commanding concerning the letting go of his people, foretold that he would harden the heart of Pharaoh so that he would not let the people go. In Exod. 7 we read that God said to Moses: Thou shalt speak all things that I shall have commanded thee, and Aaron thy brother shall speak to Pharaoh, that he let the sons of Israel go from his land. But I will harden the heart of Pharaoh, and I will multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh shall not hear you. And I will put my hand against Egypt, and I will bring out my army, my people, the sons of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am God, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt, and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst.

And in chapter 10: The Lord said to Moses: Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may work these my signs among them: and that thou mayest tell thy son and the sons of thy sons, what things I have done against the Egyptians, and my signs which I have worked among them, and they may know that I am God. And at the beginning, when God first sent Moses and the elders of the people to Pharaoh, and commanded him to say to them: The Lord God of the Hebrews is invoked and worshipped by us, permit therefore us to go a three days' journey into the desert, and there make sacrifice to the Lord our God: he added: But I know that the king of Egypt will not give you leave to go, except compelled by a strong hand. I will therefore put my hand against Egypt, and strike them with my wonders which I shall do among them: then at last he will let you go. These are read in Exod. 3.

INTERPRETATION

But it cannot be. He understands the oracles of God by which Christ and through him eternal salvation was promised to the Jewish people. To the seed of Abraham, that is, to those who were born of the flesh from Abraham, these promises were made: therefore the whole people cannot have fallen away from those promises. For the word of God cannot be frustrated, that is, cannot fail. It was necessary that some from this people be saved, in whom God might fulfil these his promises. But it did not follow that Christ must be communicated to each individual who traces carnal descent from Abraham: nor indeed were those promises made to each individual. Scripture says seed simply, and understands the elect seed, to which many are joined according to the flesh, who are by no means counted among it before God. As God first selected this seed, this people, from all the remaining peoples of the world by his spontaneous condescension: so also it is of his spontaneous condescension that he appoints into his holy seed those from among those born equally of the saints. Which he declared by the clearest example in Ishmael and Isaac, in Esau and Jacob. Which examples holy scripture also passed on to us for this very reason.

From these things it is therefore clear that it was necessary for the seed of Abraham, those born of the flesh of Abraham, to receive Christ and in him all the goods promised to the fathers. And from this came the fact that the Apostle held this people in such high esteem. But that each individual born according to the flesh from Abraham should become a partaker of these promises is not necessary: indeed it was necessary, as will be shown from the subjoined oracles, that the greatest part of the Jews should be blinded and fall entirely away from those promised promises.

In Gal. 3 Paul proves that those born of the Gentiles are also the seed of Abraham, all who are of Christ, who is himself the chief and head of this seed. But he understands these to be ingrafted into the seed of Abraham through Christ, and from this to be themselves also held as seed of Abraham, that is, of the holy people, of the sons of God: but they are nonetheless Proselytes, adopted ones. For by Paul those born of the flesh of Abraham are simply called the seed of Abraham. For unless we understand Paul to take the seed of Abraham here for the Jewish people itself, the proof by which he proves that the seed of God still lies hidden in them, and that it was necessary for remnants from them to be preserved, will not hold. Expressly to this people and to those born of the very flesh of Abraham, the salvation of Christ was promised: and the Apostle also understands these promises in this sense.

But in Isaac shall thy seed be called. This oracle, as we read Gen. 21, was delivered in this manner. Sarah had asked that Ishmael and his mother be expelled from her house: for she did not wish him to share the inheritance with her son. This grieved Abraham at first, but the oracle commanded him to do what Sarah had asked, with this reason added: For in Isaac shall thy seed be called, that is, thy holy posterity shall be reckoned through Isaac. By this oracle God openly discriminated among the seed of Abraham solely by his own election. For both Ishmael and Isaac were begotten of Abraham, and Ishmael was the elder: nor did it matter so much that he was born of a handmaid: for the sons of Jacob's handmaids, with the sons of the free women, entered into an equal partition of the inheritance, and were held in no way inferior to them. Therefore what had been promised to the seed of Abraham seemed equally to pertain to Ishmael, and on account of primogeniture even more than to Jacob. But that we might see that God indeed fulfils the salvation he promised to this holy people, to those born of the flesh of Abraham, yet not on account of that flesh, but from his spontaneous condescension: he made this discrimination in that seed, and

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assumed Isaac who had been born of the seed of Abraham, and rejected Ishmael born of the same flesh.

At this time I will come. By this saying he proves that the children of the promise, that is, those particularly promised by God and therefore predefined for this, that they should be the genuine offspring of Abraham, are to be counted as seed, in the certain and true people: not those who merely trace fleshly descent from the saints. For this particular promise concerning Isaac is the argument of the particular election, from which alone it is that anyone is numbered among the consecrated seed. For no such promise was made to Abraham concerning Ishmael. But God is wont to promise beforehand to those whom he has destined for great things. Therefore in Isaac it has been shown that those alone are numbered in the people of God, in the holy race, whom God has certainly beforehand in himself selected for this end, and therein in the general promise of the holy seed promised them: that is, he himself designated them in himself when he promised the holy seed. For God does not so promise anyone by a particular oracle as he promised this Isaac to Abraham. And therefore, that Isaac should prevail over Ishmael, and become the father of the chosen posterity, he received not from the fact that he was born of the flesh from Abraham, but from the fact that God promised this before he was born: and thereby it is sufficiently indicated that when God makes a general promise to his own of children, upon whom he will bestow the fellowship of salvation: he understands by those children only those whom he himself has appointed for this, just as in this he appointed Isaac singularly, which he disclosed to Abraham by this particular promise which the Apostle here adduced.

But not only this. There is an ellipsis, to be supplied thus: But not only did this happen to Abraham and Sarah, that by an oracle it was shown to them which of their children God would deign to number among his own: but also Rebecca, having conceived from our one father Isaac, received an oracle of this kind, and learned that the general promise is determined and defined according to the will of God, and that God has selected in it whomsoever he has chosen. Concerning this ellipsis and **μόνον δὲ** it was said above in section 3, chapter 8.

For neither having yet been born. He removes simultaneously the merit of both nature and action.

That according to election. What purpose and election are, it was said already on that: Whom he predefined, above section 5, chapter 8.

Not from works. From works, that is, from the merit of works: he opposes this to the gratuitous calling. Yet by the same he also excludes the benefit of descent.

It was said to her. That is, to Rebecca, when the oracle was consulted. For when the collision of the infants in her womb was more severe, and she had inquired of God concerning it, she received the response that she was bearing in her womb two nations, and two peoples would go forth divided from her womb, one people would prevail over the other, and the elder would serve the younger. This oracle concerning the two posterities, Esau and Jacob, was published before either was born, still less before they had done anything good or evil. And in this therefore it was shown that it is from the election alone of God, which of those born of the saints are appointed into the holy people, and what place and number each holds in it. Wherefore from all these promises which were made to Abraham and the other holy fathers concerning the salvation of their seed: nothing more can be concluded than that there will be and are from that seed those to whom these promises are fulfilled:

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but who these are or will be, this is for the divine destination to determine, and cannot be known by us, except from the effects of this destination, namely from faith and the true invocation of the name of God. The flesh can avail nothing of this.

As it is written. This is a confirmation of what he premised. For God rebuking through Malachi the ingratitude and impiety of his people toward Jacob, recalls that he loved him in preference to Esau, and that he rejected the people of Esau as eternal. He affirms that the sign of this is the sterility of the land which the posterity of Esau inhabited, which the Lord also singularly cursed. The words of the prophet run thus: I have loved you, says the Lord. And you said: Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau the brother of Jacob? says the Lord. Yet I loved Jacob, but Esau I hated, and I laid waste his mountains for desolation, and his inheritance for the dragons of the wilderness. If Edom says: We are destroyed, but we will return and build the waste places: thus says the Lord of Hosts: They shall build, but I will throw down. And they shall call them, The region of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord has indignation forever. And your eyes shall see it, and you shall say, The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel. Thus he.

The Jews, the posterity of Jacob, had been destroyed on account of their own impiety, but the Lord restored them and gave them back salvation in all manner. But Esau he so rejected, that he is an example of divine vengeance forever. The Jews understand under the name of the Edomites the Romans: but this is without reason. For this very people who came from Esau perpetually caused trouble to the sons of Jacob, and thereby provoked upon itself the gravest wrath of God. Which Jeremiah 49, Ezekiel 25, and Obadiah testify. From this people moreover finally came out that most destructive plague of the Mohammedan abomination. This region is also so vast and terrible perpetually, that it rightly ought to be called the region of wickedness. For the Lord indeed by the piety of men renders lands fertile and suited to human habitation, just as he turns fruitful earth into saltiness on account of the impiety of its inhabitants.

Concerning Ishmael and Esau themselves, we need not pronounce that they are utterly rejected by God: we rather believe that the parental piety availed for both, so that although they transgressed gravely from time to time, they yet attained salvation, endowed also themselves with true faith in the mercy of the Lord. Yet by a hidden judgment they were the authors of peoples who were conspicuous for impiety, and are so today. But whatever may be the case with them as far as pertains to them privately: yet in them and in their posterity it has been abundantly declared that the dispensation of the divine beneficence upon the seed of Abraham, upon the holy seed, is entirely situated in the spontaneous and gratuitous election of God.

OBSERVATION I.

But it cannot be. From this let us learn to abide unmoved in the word of God, whatever absurdity or stumbling block seems to press upon those who follow the word of the Lord. The promise stood, that the Israelites would enjoy the goodwill and grace of God in Christ for eternal salvation: and yet no people from any source persecuted Christ with greater hatred and fury. These things seemed to conflict with each other exceedingly. But when Paul first establishes himself in the word of God, and persists in this, that it cannot be frustrated: the matter itself opens up, and what appeared to be a disagreement between the lot of the Jews and the promises made to them, vanished. For he set forth that not all who trace carnal descent from Israel are themselves Israelites. So also to us the dissolution of all things that seem to resist truth will easily occur, if we devote ourselves above all to the word of God and abide in it unmoved.

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OBSERVATION II.

For not all who are from Israel. Let us most diligently weigh this passage. For we now are sons of God, the holy seed. To us also God has promised through Christ that he will be Father and Savior, both to us and to our seed. And that the light of the Gospel has been brought even to us, living in this impious and lost life perpetually provoking God: this comes from the fact that God of his infinite mercy willed to do good to our pious ancestors for a thousand generations. Let us therefore so receive these promises, that we do not doubt God will impart the benefit of salvation also to our seed. Yet not on this account to each one who is born of our flesh, but to those whom he himself has destined from ours for this purpose: those alone are to us children of the promise, that is, promised and exhibited in the holy seed, in the number of the sons of God.

OBSERVATION III.

The elder shall serve the younger. Let us observe that God by his election often judges not only against our estimation, but even against his own laws. This should avail us to the end that whatever we await from God, whether for ourselves or for others, we may always be mindful that it depends on his sole gratuitous goodwill, and on nothing whatsoever else, not even on a law which he himself has handed down to us. God willed by his own law, which he both implanted in nature and committed to letters through Moses, that the firstborn should be set over his brothers and have the first place: and yet he not only decreed the contrary concerning Ishmael and Esau, but also willed this to be an example for all ages. So much does it become him alone to be the prince, free from laws, and to teach us by his judgments that the one law of all justice is his own pleasure. Nevertheless our part is wherever to follow his prescription, until he himself teaches us otherwise. Isaac, because Esau was by nature the firstborn, had determined to confer upon him the right of primogeniture. For he had not understood the oracle delivered to his wife, that the elder would serve the younger, as if God had thereby commanded him to change the right of primogeniture by that command: nor did he think the rash sale of Esau was to be held as ratified. Therefore as he thought Esau's right stood, so he omitted nothing, as far as in him lay, to establish him as the firstborn also by his own authority. But the mother, sufficiently persuaded by the oracle, followed the oracle and obtained it. Which when Isaac considered, he ratified it, yielding to the extraordinary divine sentence the ordinary law. So also we must act: always defer to God, so that in all things he may follow his own will, even beyond the order he himself implanted in things. But following his law everywhere becomes us, and it is not right rashly to depart from his determination, unless it clearly appears that God commands otherwise.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION III.

But if God willed.

EXPOSITION

In this section the Apostle does two things. He indicates something of the cause why God bears the wicked, and gradually slips down to setting forth those oracles by which it was predicted concerning the election of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews: which principal passage he here undertook to treat. But the cause why God bears the wicked he hints at rather than asserts: this he gave to the reverence for the judgments of God, which since they are a great abyss, it is not fitting to pronounce concerning them more boldly. Moreover that he set forth in a doubting manner

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the cause why God sustains the impious: he did not do this because he thought that cause which he adduces was to be doubted, for it is gathered from the premised oracle concerning Pharaoh: but he wished to hint this: that even if God had no other cause for tolerating the lost men in this life than this one, that in them he might declare his wrath against sins, and in this wrath his power which so memorably represses the force of the reprobate: and might display his most ample mercy toward the elect, by which alone namely he delivers them from the same destruction: yet there would be no ground for man to charge God with injustice. So the discourse of the Apostle here seems to be completed in this sense, for it is deficient. It is not lawful for the molded thing to demand a reason from the molder, why he molded it thus: so much less will it be right for us to require why God made us in the condition in which he made us. Yet if this be his whole cause for why he makes and bears the impious in this life, that in them he may exhibit examples of vengeance against sins, and thereby make his terrible power known, and his most ample goodness toward his elect, by which alone he delivers these from the same destruction: still there would be nothing for which man could charge God with injustice.

But descending to this principal passage, that the time had now come, when with very many of the Jews rejected, the Gentiles were to be brought into the fellowship of the life of God: he does not openly propose this at first, nor deal with it even at the beginning, nor does he betake himself thither abruptly. But first, having seized a fitting transition from what he discussed concerning the discrimination of the reprobate, he made a way for himself to discuss the discrimination between the Jews and the Gentiles, by which God had then begun to hold them: assuming very many from the Gentiles, very few indeed from the Jews. Then he proposes that it seemed good to God now to call to salvation not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles: he does not say from the Gentiles many, from the Jews few, which yet the oracles he adduces express concerning the Jews. He preferred to set this forth by the oracles themselves rather than in his own words, he who wished to gain his own people for salvation, not to offend. Therefore in the proposition he thought it sufficient to assert only the fellowship of salvation for the Gentiles together with and after the Jews, and did not yet wish to set the Gentiles before the Jews. The proposition therefore is: God called not the Jews only, but also the Gentiles into the fellowship of salvation obtained through Christ. There are two things in this proposition, but he proves only one: that the Gentiles also ought to become partakers of the redemption of Christ. And he uses moreover that oracle for proving this, which when it recalled the judgment exercised upon the Jews, was suited to the purpose that the Jews might learn therefrom, with less offense, the will of the Lord also concerning the Gentiles. For we read in that oracle that God threatened his people Israel and Judah, that on account of their impiety he would so cast them off, that they would deserve to be called *לֹא רַחֲמָה* and *לֹא עַמִּי*, Loruchama and Lo-ammi: that is, destitute of charity and not my people: and then promised he would again receive them, and bestow his benefits upon them so abundantly, that they would deserve to be called *רַחֲמָה* and *עַמִּי*, that is, Ruchama and Ammi: charity-endowed and my people. By this oracle therefore the Apostle wished to admonish the Jews that if they should await this mercy, so as to become from those not endowed with charity those who are endowed with charity, and from those who are not a people to become the people of God: they ought not to count it a foreign thing to God, that he should also unite the Gentiles to himself, and endow them with his charity, so that they might be of his people, who had previously been not endowed with charity and not the people of God. For such also themselves had at some time been. Then moreover from two oracles of Isaiah he proves, of which he had not made mention in the proposition, that there ought to have been assumed from the Jews into the people of Christ very few indeed, only the very smallest remnants of this people. I shall deal with the oracles in the interpretation.

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INTERPRETATION

To make known. **δόξας**, to make manifest, and to exhibit publicly to the world. So he used the name **δόξα** above in section 4, chapter 3, on that: for a demonstration of justice. Wrath with the Apostle is often said to stand for punishment of sins.

But if God willed to demonstrate. What men are to God, what the instruments of a craftsman are: unless he himself moves us and applies us to the work, we can truly do nothing. Hence God also calls the enemies of his own his rod and his axe. But in these passages men are called instruments of God from the fact that he effects through them something with respect to others: but in the present passage the Apostle calls them organs of wrath and mercy, from that wrath and mercy which God exercises in those very ones who are called organs of wrath and mercy. So those are called sons of death and sons of wrath, who are destined for death and wrath.

That he might make known his power. What he can do: for **δύναμιν** is used, as above in chapter 8, where he said **τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου**, for what is that which the law cannot do. For where God leaves many crimes of men unpunished, the fear of God is extinguished by the wickedness of men, and just as the impious almost insult God, so the weaker doubt somewhat concerning the power of God, as if he seemed to yield to the fury of the wicked. But when he more severely punishes the wicked, he makes his power manifest and terrible, and he is acknowledged to be the Lord, able to do all things: the impious are checked, the pious raised up, many too who previously occupied with the desires of the flesh had no care for God, are led to the knowledge and worship of God. The graver punishments of God have borne this fruit of old, as scripture everywhere testifies. For when God with his outstretched arm, that is, with his power signally declared, exterminated the Egyptians and freed his people: there was trembling everywhere among the impious, the Israelites exulted in the Lord, many finally from the Gentiles who had learned that power of the Lord, as we read of Rahab, were converted to the God of Israel. Hence God is said to be exalted, and his name to be magnified, when he exercises those graver judgments upon men.

He bore with much patience. Very great indeed and immense is the patience of God, that he so long bears the impious insulting him so monstrously, and this even sustained by his own gifts.

Instruments of wrath. In Hebrew they are called **כְּלֵי מַשָּׂא**, vessels is how they are usually rendered, from which very many learned men were imposed upon, so as to philosophize at length concerning this designation of vessels on matters that have nothing to do with the case: but scripture uses this word properly indeed for instruments, and by translation for men who are for others as it were instruments for effecting something. So Jacob called his sons Simeon and Levi **כְּלֵי הַמָּס**, instruments of violence, as it were instruments and organs singularly made for inflicting violence. So Paul was called by the Lord a chosen organ, by which he would bring his name to the Gentiles, kings, and sons of Israel. After the same manner the Apostle calls the wife **σκεύος**, that is, organ and chief instrument, of the husband. 1 Thess. 4. And 2 Tim. 2, any of the saints he calls a sanctified organ, fitted for the use of the Lord, prepared for every good work. We are nothing from ourselves and can do nothing, and God effects all things in us: therefore this designation of organ and instrument fits us very fittingly, for indeed this is what we are to God, what instruments are to craftsmen: unless he himself moves us and applies us to the work, no one can truly move us toward those things which are right. Hence God also calls the enemies of his own his rod and his axe.

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Who have been fitted for destruction. D. Chrysostom interprets: fitted by themselves. This is rightly said, when in this fitting we understand the guilt. But here Paul is wholly intent on showing that it belongs to God by his own will to assume some to life, others to reject into death, so much so that it is not lawful for us to enter into the cause of this judgment. The Apostle is not yet dealing with the proper guilt of the reprobate, by which they themselves drive themselves into destruction. Therefore as the Lord said that the reprobate are born of the devil, so in the bad sense we are to understand the Apostle here saying that the vessels of wrath are fitted and made by God for destruction. For what else is what he already adduced concerning Pharaoh: For this very purpose I set thee up, that in thee, namely by overthrowing and destroying thee, I might display my power? The wicked also God turns to good use, both when they act most wickedly and precipitate themselves into destruction: now all things have been made by God, and made and fitted both in mind and body for those things which God employs them for: but these things are destructive to them. Who therefore is there who would say it is incongruous that these are made and fitted by God for destruction? Through Judas God willed to deliver his Son to death: this was Judas's destruction, it would have been better for him not to have been born. Yet since he had been divinely appointed for this: who would doubt that even in the womb of his mother he was molded and formed for this? God makes nothing in vain. God gave Judas a soul and body, and the faculties of each, for doing and effecting something. Therefore as God willed to effect through Judas those things which he effected, which drove him into eternal death: so without doubt he made him and fitted him with all the parts and powers both of body and soul, that he might be a suitable organ for these things. Besides, what is it to reject before they are born, and while they live here to deliver into a reprobate sense, to blind, to harden, so that they do not hear the word of salvation: all of which scripture simply attributes to God: what is it other than to fit and perfect them for destruction? But the holy Fathers therefore fear to say that God fits men for destruction: because our reason, when it hears this, immediately tries to ascribe the guilt of its destruction to God in words, though this is not its true opinion, for it judges more rightly within itself, and attributes all the guilt of the evils which befall it to itself. Therefore scripture does not hesitate to proclaim to the glory of God, both that he rejects those not yet born, that he hardens, drives into destruction, and finally overturns and destroys whomsoever he wills. This right over us our potter takes upon himself. And this is what the Apostle principally undertook to teach here: that all things among men depend on the free election of God, so as to remove the offense which arose from the fact that so few Jews were coming to Christ at that time. In the following section he will begin to discuss the proper guilt of the Jews.

That he might make known the riches of his glory. That is, the wealth of the supreme goodness. For from the very fact that the Lord deals so severely and yet so justly with the reprobate, and the elect are not of themselves better than them: the goodness of God toward the elect is rendered the more illustrious. For the wicked always exhibit trouble and as much destruction as in them lies for the good: and from this, the extermination of these becomes the vindication of the saints: of which the Psalms everywhere sing. Therefore for this reason also God bears the organs of wrath, to make clear his most ample goodness toward the organs of mercy. Moreover concerning this formula, riches of goodness, it was said above in that, Dost thou despise the richness, etc., chapter 2, section 1.

Whom he prepared beforehand. Certainly when he made them. He again understands by glory his most ample goodness. He presses by each word that all things of our salvation are of the spontaneous divine goodness, and from this he always wishes us to infer that it is therefore not to be entered into why he assumes one and rejects another.

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Whom he also called. He said this in the sense in which he said above: those whom he predefined, these also he called. What he says here is therefore the same as: Those whom he prepared beforehand, these also he called. By calling he understands what D. Augustine calls the calling according to the purpose, the calling by which those also who are called are drawn.

Not only from the Jews. This is a litotes: he understands more than he says. In words he only conjoins the Gentiles with the Jews in the fellowship of salvation, but he wishes it to be understood that the Gentiles now have the greater share in the fellowship of salvation than the Jews.

As indeed in Hosea he says. He wishes by this oracle to prove that the Gentiles also ought to be called to the fellowship of Christ. But the oracle is properly of the Jews, whom the Lord promises he will again receive, when he has rejected them on account of their impiety, so that they should not be his people, nor enjoy his charity and mercy. But since in this oracle there is this: that God receives into his people those who are not his people, and endows with charity those who justly lack it: the Jews were admonished by it that from the mercy spent upon themselves, they might learn that it was not unworthy of God to spend it also upon the Gentiles, who had hitherto been destitute of it, as strangers from his people. For such also had they themselves at some time been. Moreover the Apostle adduced the sense of the oracle more than he enumerated the words. And from two passages he took what he adduced: from the first and the last verse of the second chapter, and those he took from the last verse he places first. These verses in the prophet run thus: I will sow her for myself in the land, and I will extend charity to Loruchama, that is, to her destitute of charity, and I will say to Lo-ammi, that is, to him who is not my people: thou art my people, and he shall say: my God. The first verse of this chapter which the Apostle adduced in the second place in the Prophet reads thus: And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them: Lo-ammi you are, that is, not my people: there it shall be said to them: sons of the living God. The Lord had commanded the prophet to take a wife who had been a harlot, and to call the first son which she bore him Lizrael, which signifies a lot decreed by God: the daughter which she bore him the second time Loruchama, which means destitute of charity: the son which she bore him the third time Loammi, meaning not my people.

The Lord wished these names to be symbols of those things which through the prophet he was threatening to his people. The Lord had made Jehu king in Israel, where Jehu at the Lord's command overthrew the kingdom of Ahab, slain being his son Joram and wife Jezebel, and his entire race. But since this Jehu persisted in the impiety which Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes, had introduced: God threatens to extinguish both him and his seed, and together with them to cast off the whole people of the ten tribes. As a sign therefore of the extinguishing of the posterity of Jehu, which had been elevated to rule in Lizrael, he commanded the prophet to call his first son Lizrael. But as a sign of casting off the whole people of the ten tribes, he wished the daughter to be called Loruchama, and the other son Loammi.

But as is the Lord's custom in the Prophets, he subjoined to these threats the promise of his mercy again to be exhibited, principally through Christ. In the second chapter therefore Hosea sings that the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, and there adds what the Apostle here adduced: And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them: you are not my people, there it shall be said to them: sons of the living God. For presently he predicts the sons of Judah and Israel to be gathered together, and these to appoint a single head, that is, a single prince over themselves, and to ascend thence, from a hostile land forsooth, to the holy land. To these is subjoined: Say to your brothers, Ammi, that is, my people, and to your sisters, Ruchama, that is,

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endowed with charity. After these things he commemorates the impiety and repudiation of their mother, that is, of the ancestors, and again subjoins concerning the receiving back again of their posterity, to be espoused to himself again in righteousness and judgment, in faithfulness and knowledge of the Lord. And this promise of goodwill he concludes in these words: And I will extend charity to Loruchama, and I will say to Loammi: thou art my people, and he himself shall say: my God.

Both the Jews and we understand this restoration of the holy people as having been fulfilled through Christ: it began however when their remnants were recalled to the true worship of God from the Babylonian captivity. Now before the Lord the sons of Abraham and true Jews are those who imitate the faith of Abraham. Since such have been brought to the kingdom of Christ in countless numbers from the Gentiles: the admonition of the Jews was apt from this passage, concerning what the Lord had determined to bestow his mercy also upon the Gentiles brought to Christ the Lord. For in the present prophecy there is rebuked to the Jews that impiety, on account of which they had deserved to be repudiated and utterly alienated from the Lord, and had already become Loruchama and Loammi, outside the charity of God and not his people. Therefore that which God had done for themselves from his sole mercy, who had utterly alienated themselves from him by their impiety: the Jews could easily recognize from this that he would do the same for the Gentiles, being admonished both of their own impiety and of the spontaneous mercy of God. For what the Gentiles then were, they themselves had been before. Concerning the word: it was already said a little before that it signifies such charity as a mother has toward her son whom she carried in her womb.

But Isaiah cries out over Israel. Here he begins to speak more openly concerning the rejection of the Jews. He therefore sets before the offense of the Jews the authority of Isaiah, and introduces him crying out: by which he hints at a more vehement attestation, by which he undertakes to strike down the confidence of the Jews. This oracle is found in the Prophet word for word in this manner: For if thy people Israel be, he addresses Hezekiah, like the sand of the sea, only remnants of it shall return. A consumption decreed will overflow with righteousness: for a consumption decreed shall the Lord God of Hosts do in the midst of all the land. But the sense is: even if the multitude of the Israelite people be infinite, yet those to be restored are not but few, and these few shall overflow with righteousness: these he calls *תְּרוּיָץ כְּלָה*, that is, a completed, an exact thing, that is, perfectly completed. But he understands what has been cut off and consumed in its greatest part, or what remains as the very smallest remnant after the consumption of some great body. So he calls the remnants of the holy people, those very smallest remnants which, with the remaining multitude utterly consumed and abolished, were to be preserved: first in the restoration from the Babylonian captivity, and then and most especially in conversion to Christ, arisen from the preaching of the Gospel. Then also those remnants, however much reduced, most abundantly flooded with righteousness the whole world, and filled the whole world with the knowledge of God. Hence the prophet here subjoins: For a consumption decreed, even that one, shall the Lord God of Hosts do in the midst of all the earth: God confirmed more vehemently that he would reduce and diminish the people, and make a consumption of it which is exact, that is, down to the most minute remnants.

Since it says in the midst of all the earth: very many understand this consumption as concerning all the nations, not the Jews alone. But since the prophet here speaks peculiarly of the diminution of the Jews, and that in the midst of the land is often found said of the land of Israel alone: I prefer to understand this prophecy of the consumption of the Jews alone.

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That D. Paul in adducing the present oracle followed the common Greek edition: this he gave to the Roman brethren, who since they were for the greater part from the Gentiles, were conversant with the Greek edition alone. Since moreover the sense agreed, the Apostle did not wish even to appear to derogate from the edition to which they were accustomed. He also relied more on the power of the Spirit than on words in all his doctrine. What therefore the Apostle brings from the Prophet, word for word runs thus: For a word completing and cutting short in righteousness: because a word cut short shall the Lord do upon the earth. Our common edition has: in the whole world. Because it reads **λόγον συντελῶν** etc. The Latins rendered: completing the word, but they understood this place as concerning the abbreviated doctrine of Christ, and in this opinion D. Chrysostom also is. Moreover it is established that where scripture has **הַלָּה**, matter, business, cause, the Greeks are wont to render **λόγον**. Since therefore the prophet placed **הַלָּה** and **וַיִּרְחַץ**: signifying a completed matter, the Greek interpreters perhaps wished to express what was said implicitly by the prophet through **λόγον**, a general name, namely one which they themselves could understand: so that the sense is: God is completing and cutting short the matter, in righteousness, so that righteousness might obtain: because he will make a cut-short matter in the land, that is, he will reduce and comminute the people.

Certainly in the common edition and in Paul, that **λόγον συντελῶν** etc. is subjoined with a causal notation to that: The remnants shall be saved. Therefore this consumption and cutting short of the word, however it be taken, must contain in itself a reason whence it might be the more manifest that only remnants are to be saved. Can this now so avail for that end, that God will make a brief and concise doctrine, and a cut-short and diminished people: anyone may see. Besides, although the ceremonies have been cut off, nothing of the true doctrine of piety could be cut away. That which they adduce concerning faith, or the brief precept of charity: this same truth and efficacy has been renewed and unfolded, and the same was also revealed before Christ as the sum of holy doctrine. But whatever may be the case with these things: there can be no doubt that the Apostle wished here to cite what is in the Prophet. But in the Prophet it is clear that the Lord predicted in this passage that he would reject the greatest part of his people, but that the diminished remnant, which he would preserve for himself from so great a multitude, would fill all things with righteousness.

Unless the Lord of Hosts, etc. This is taken from the first chapter. But the prophet indicates by it the greatest rejection of the people, when he affirms that the people would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah, unless the Lord had preserved from it as it were some seed. In the similitude of the Sodomites, who were utterly destroyed, he hints that they were very nearly going to be wholly abolished. But in that he predicts a seed to be preserved, he notes the paucity of those who were to be preserved. For he signifies that so few would there be, that they could not themselves be counted a people, but appear to have been left only as seed of the people to be raised again.

But however much the Jews both could formerly say, and can today say, that this rejection and diminution of the people, which the seers foretold in these oracles, was effected through the Assyrians and Babylonians, while all the other prophets and Christ himself predict that the holy people must be gathered again through him and increased immensely: yet to those who were and are capable of truth, these passages necessarily gave and give faith, that the restoration of the people through Christ was to be made in this manner, that with very many Jews rejected, the true righteousness would overflow through very few into the whole world. For they knew of old, and can know today, that in the salvation which the Lord brought to the people through Hezekiah, and then through the princes of the captivity, the salvation to be brought to the world through Christ

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was prefigured, and the seers had their eyes principally upon this, in which also it was necessary that those things which were only foreshadowed in those types should exist most fully and clearly.

From this therefore both they gathered and those gather today, who have been called to the kingdom of God. In that type of the salvation of Christ, which Hezekiah exhibited by saving and restoring the people from the Assyrian danger: so great was the rejection of the reprobate from Israel, so few saved, that not only did the ten tribes perish then, but the whole of Judah except Jerusalem alone had come into the hands of the enemies. Hence also it was necessary that the people pass through that furnace, which would devour all the impious as stubble, as was predicted in Malachi 3 and 4. And indeed everywhere in the Prophets.

The matter itself also most brilliantly attested this truth. For how few of the Jews were not either destroyed by the Romans, or sold into servitude, after they had rejected the Gospel of Christ? Now from all the Prophets it has been testified that this rejection and diminution of the people, of which the seers foretold in these oracles, was the reward of their extreme impiety, by which namely they had rejected the salvation offered in Christ. From these passages therefore which the Apostle adduced, he certainly establishes that the judgment of the Lord is such, that at the beginning of his kingdom and in its progress very few of the Jews would be converted to Christ, yet those who had been converted to him ought to have been as the seed of the people of God, and the true righteousness to overflow into the whole world. But that toward the end of the kingdom of Christ on earth Israel is to be converted: this he predicts below.

Concerning the certainty moreover of arguments of this sort from the types of Christ concerning the kingdom of Christ revealed: we said very many things in the second question appended to the exposition of section 4, chapter 3.

OBSERVATION I.

That he might make known his power. Therefore as often as God has gone against either our own or others' endeavors, as often as he has cast down or punished us or others: let us acknowledge in this that the divine power is commended to us, that we are admonished to see that all things are in the hand of God. For this can never be sufficiently persuaded to us. For those in whom it is certainly persuaded, always mindful of this, that all things are contained in the power of God: cannot but devote themselves wholly in all things to the pleasure of God.

OBSERVATION II.

He bore with much patience. Let us consider that we must imitate this great patience of God toward the wicked, those namely whom the magistrate does not remove. To whatever end God does not deign to convert these to himself: let us think they are yet preserved for a certain use, by which the name of God may be illustrated through us. And since God who is justice itself bears them with such patience: let us not contend that we are more just and severe than God, so as to think that those ought not to be borne, of whose removal we have no mandate from God. For those whom the magistrate at God's command removes: God, not men, removes them, for they exercise the judgment of God, not of men.

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OBSERVATION III.

In the type of Christ which was exhibited in the restoration of the people from the Babylonian captivity: it is seen that the judgment of the Lord was such, that even fewer than received salvation, more remained in destruction, and not a few even voluntarily, who could lawfully return to Jerusalem, to the true worship of God, though bound by present things preferred to remain among the idolaters. If now this manner of rejection of very many, and election of very few, pleased God then, when restoring the people more signally, he only set forth a prelude to the salvation to be prepared for the world through Christ, and presented a type of it: without doubt when Christ himself came, a much greater decimation of the people had to come to pass, and it was to be, that many should be called, few chosen. For it is established, and it is sufficiently believed now as is right, that the type is cleaner and more excellent than the antitype.

In the vessels of mercy.

Since the Apostle now sufficiently inculcates all things of human salvation being of the mercy of God: let us think now that these things are fully weighed. First that we are organs of God, that no one can move us even toward what is right, and that every right action which comes through us is of God using us. Then that we are organs of mercy, whom God thus deigns to employ, that he may exhibit his mercy in us, and therefore nothing can be attributed to our merit. Finally that we have been prepared by God for all these things beforehand: so that once for all we may acknowledge that all things of our salvation are the work of God, and nothing of our zeal, except insofar as God from his mercy for his own purposes has impelled and held us in these things. These things properly weighed truly and fully at last strip us of love and zeal for ourselves, and kindle and inflame the love and zeal for God, so that in him and in him alone we now solidly acknowledge all things that are to be sought are situated and set forth for us.

OBSERVATION IV.

I will call not my people. This also must always be repeated by us: that all salvation is not only conferred with nothing of our merits, but that our merits deserve eternal death. For we all are assumed from those who are not the people of God, and justly alien from all charity of God. For if this is always in our memory, then we can never be displeased with ourselves, sigh for the mercy of God, glory in it alone, embrace sinning brothers, and in all things be truly frugal servants of the Lord.

OBSERVATION V.

If the number of the sons of Israel. That God so both decimated and reduced his people to the most minute remnants, yet could by no means so extinguish them that through those very smallest remnants which he preserved for himself from so great a multitude, his righteousness flooded the whole world: let this console us in all the graver judgments of the Lord. For always will the most indulgent Father so temper them, that he will by no means cast us off altogether, and besides will always bring some desired fruit from our chastisement. The Jews were made types, in whom God declared how he wishes to have his people. 1 Cor. 10.

Now we come to the **Conciliation** of the sentences: God hardens whom he wills, and: God wills all men to be saved. And those which are consonant with either.

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The Apostle expressly teaches in this chapter that God by his own will hardens some, so that they do not take up his commands and be saved: that he has hated some before they had done anything good or evil. From this it seems to be gathered that God altogether wills that those who perish should sin and perish. But on the contrary, since in all scripture he calls all equally to salvation, he certainly declares that he wills all to be saved.

And that we may consider this matter in the example of Pharaoh adduced. When God sent Moses to Pharaoh, and commanded him to let his people go: who would say that God did not will that he should comply with his command? But scripture records that God, when sending Moses to Pharaoh and commanding concerning the letting go of his people, foretold that he would harden the heart of Pharaoh so that he would not let the people go. We read in Exod. 7 that God said to Moses: Thou shalt speak all things that I shall have commanded thee, and Aaron thy brother shall speak to Pharaoh, that he let the sons of Israel go from his land. But I will harden the heart of Pharaoh, and I will multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh shall not hear you. And I will put my hand against Egypt, and I will bring out my army, my people, the sons of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am God, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt, and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst.

And in chapter 10: The Lord said to Moses: Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may work these my signs among them: and that thou mayest tell thy son and the sons of thy sons, what things I have done against the Egyptians, and my signs which I have worked among them, and they may know that I am God. And at the beginning, when God first sent Moses and the elders of the people to Pharaoh, and commanded him to say to them: The Lord God of the Hebrews is invoked and worshipped by us, permit therefore us to go a three days' journey into the desert, and there make sacrifice to the Lord our God: he added: But I know that the king of Egypt will not give you leave to go, except compelled by a strong hand. I will therefore put my hand against Egypt, and strike them with my wonders which I shall do among them: then at last he will let you go. These are read in Exod. 3.

Indeed in this history in chapter 8, it is found that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, and his heart was hardened and made heavy many times: but at the beginning of the whole of this history the Lord testified: I will harden his heart, and he shall not let my people go. Exod. 4. But the Lord speaks most simply, he does not deal with his own who are of good disposition by enigmas, a father teaches his sons plainly. Therefore the requirement of piety is that what the Lord discusses concerning his judgments so plainly both in this history and elsewhere in the same sense, we understand simply. But if we do this, from these things we can learn nothing other than what scripture everywhere so copiously inculcates: that God willed to free his people from the servitude of the Egyptians by the greatest portents, and by the destruction of the Egyptians memorable through all ages, who had so unjustly oppressed them for so many years, and set them free: and thus in this people to declare his goodness toward the human race to the world. But for this to be effected by this manner, he determined and molded this Pharaoh, whose heart he would harden so that he would not hear his command, and thereby give himself the cause, so that in him and his people he might exhibit so many signs, and display his power in them by plagues so unheard of, and render his name famous.

What therefore shall we say that the Lord willed in all that he did with Pharaoh? That he, hardened, should pertinaciously resist him and provoke so great a vengeance upon himself: being an instrument and organ of him, in which he might display, by powerfully vindicating his own? He

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willed what he did. But he himself testifies of himself: I will harden the heart of Pharaoh, that he may not let the people go. Moreover if he willed him to despise his commands, and hardened him himself so that he would not comply with him: to what end did he command him: Let my people go that they may sacrifice to me in the desert? Exod. 5. Shall we say that God did not will what he commanded, and to the doing of which he was provoking him with so many signs? Likewise if God wills all men to be saved, and all our salvation consists in hearing his voice: does it not follow that God plainly willed that Pharaoh should let his people go, and that he should be saved by this obedience?

But the Lord said through Isaiah, which also Christ the Lord himself claimed for himself: Hear ye and understand not: and see the vision and know it not. Make the heart of this people fat, and stop their ears, and blind their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and he heal them. And the Lord himself testified that he had come into the world in judgment, that those who see might not see. The Lord therefore willed that some should be blinded by the Gospel: and at the same time when he preached it to those Jews, he certainly willed that they themselves should hear it. And when he said, Come to me all ye, he willed them to come to him.

These things seem to cohere little to our reason, but those who simply wish to follow the word of the Lord, easily acquit themselves from these. For first they firmly abide in this which God himself testifies of himself: that from the lost race of men from the first parent he selects some for himself to be remolded for the new and blessed life, and holds the rest as organs of his wrath, in which to exhibit examples of just vengeance, by which he commends his mercy toward the elect: because he transfers these, born into the same death, into the fellowship of the divine life.

This judgment of the Lord concerning men scripture does not merely proclaim and inculcate, but most amply in the history of the deeds of the Lord, in the oracles themselves. Immediately at the beginning he presents the sons of the first parent with such a discrimination. For Cain was rejected, Abel elected. At the time of Noah all were destroyed by the flood down to eight persons. And of the sons of Noah, a blessing befell two, a curse the third. Concerning the discrimination of the sons of Abraham and Isaac the Apostle himself here admonished. But from the very people of Israel very many were from time to time reprobated. At the time of Rehoboam ten tribes fell away from the true worship of God, and after many and grave punishments were utterly abolished. Then at the rise of the Gospel many fell away even from Judah and Benjamin itself, which tribes had been made the remnants. Moreover in the Christian people what dreadful happened: the rejection of the peoples of the East and Africa, among whom namely the most hurtful plague of Mohammed so prevailed, through India, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Asia, Scythia, Thrace, Greece, almost all Africa. And when do we not see, both in whole peoples and in private persons, and these often otherwise most closely connected, some assumed, others rejected? Which the Lord most openly testified, when speaking of his judgment he foretold that of two in the same bed, in the same field, in the same mill: one is to be assumed, the other to be left. Luke 17.

From examples and oracles of this sort therefore, which so clearly testify the same, with which scripture is full, by which namely the discrimination which God has among men is set forth: the

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saints have this most fully persuaded to themselves, that some are elected by God to life before this world was created, others who have not been elected to life, also appointed before anything was done, for that end to which the Lord at last employs them: namely to exhibit in them examples of his wrath, and in this manner to sanctify his name in them. When they see that this is pleasing before God, they give thanks together with Christ our Lord God to the Father for this very judgment, as also a mystery of salvation hidden from the wise and prudent of this world, that he reveals it to the elected little ones: as also he wishes the revelation of this mystery to be offered equally to both.

Then when the Lord commands nevertheless to preach the Gospel to every creature, and to call all to the fellowship of salvation: the saints do not dispute why God commands to call those whom he does not will to come, indeed whom he hardens that they may not come: but they gather thus. The Lord is he who commands, our part therefore is to obey, and it is sufficient for us that in these things also we have served the Lord for this purpose toward the reprobate: that every excuse of wickedness may be taken from them, and they must confess that God justly condemns them. For as God reveals his divinity and power to these in his creatures, so that they may be without excuse, which the Apostle testifies above in the first chapter: so also he reveals to them his pleasure through his word for this same purpose. Hence the Apostle was saying to the Athenians: Now God announces to all men everywhere to repent, because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness. Acts 17. And the Lord was saying that the Jews would have had an excuse, if he had not come and spoken to them, and had not done such portents among them.

If therefore reason objects that to call one whom you do not will to come, whom you yourself harden lest he come, is to deceive and mock: that of the Apostle is ready: Thou, O man, who art thou to demand a reason of his judgment from God, and to litigate with thy Creator as an adversary? The judgments of God are to be worshipped, not investigated: they are an infinite abyss. Wherefore not only is it madness, but fury, to judge concerning God from the postulates of our Reason. For if once you permit yourself to exact from God the judgments of a justice as our Reason knows it: God will now not be the most unjust to thee. Certainly if a friend calls someone to some advantage, invites him repeatedly, and yet allows him to be called back from that advantage by others, when he could easily have averted this: he will be said to have mocked the friend, and to have acted in a manner unworthy of a good man. After the same manner he will also judge concerning one who commands his servant to hasten at a fixed pace, and knows who will be delaying him on the road, and can repel them by his nod alone, lest they delay the servant, but does not do so, but knowingly allows the servant to be held back by them, and afterward flogs the servant for having delayed on his journey. Such a man, who I ask, would not judge to be harsh and inhuman? But that man also all will pronounce without doubt to be unjust and cruel, who has a servant held by chains from which no one but the master himself can free him, and moreover so weak that unless aided by a remedy which the master alone can give him, he cannot move himself: yet the master neither loosens the servant from the chains nor aids with the remedy, presses so greatly in commanding that he should hasten and hurry without delay, and while he remains stuck in his chains, consigns him to eternal torments.

In this manner altogether will our Reason judge concerning God, if it follows the justice it itself knows. It hears from the scriptures that we are held from birth by those chains of ignorance and depraved desire, so that we cannot perceive the things of God unless reborn and freed from these chains by God himself: and then that we are so weak for all good from ourselves, that unless God himself works in us both to will and to work, and the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness continually, we can accomplish absolutely nothing right and holy. Since therefore our Reason learns

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this also from the scriptures, and sees it in very fact daily, that God does not regenerate many, and does not renew them by his Spirit, and does not confirm them for righteous and holy life, but only proposes to them his law, his promises and threats which are contained in the law: it cannot but judge it unjust and cruel that these should be consigned to eternal punishment. And if it say: the first parents were not in this necessity of sinning, and had full faculty of living rightly, but by their transgression they deserved that both they and their posterity should be thrust into that necessity of sinning and full faculty of living piously and holily: Reason immediately retorts: Each person is to be judged for his own deed, not another's. And that there may be some basis of equity, that the sons of a criminal father should have an inferior position: yet what equity would it be to exact great public expenditures from the sons of some wicked and condemned man, when all paternal substance has been taken from them, and nothing left by which they themselves might sustain their own life, when they are not capable of meeting that expenditure, and to consign these to eternal torments?

Those therefore who moved by these things, in order to vindicate the justice of God before the tribunal of their own Reason, flee to this refuge: that some strength remains in us, by which called by the Lord and aided by his grace, which is offered to none that it is not offered, we can attain a righteous life, if we do not willingly allow ourselves to be diverted from it by our desires and Satan: beyond this contrivance they do not satisfy Reason, and moreover they lead themselves, that if they wish to defend this their contrivance, they must necessarily deny that God exists. For that they cannot defend the justice of God by this contrivance with Reason: from this it is clear, that Reason cannot but charge God with inhumanity toward his molded things, if he allows men sacred in his image to be dragged away from holy and blessed life into eternal destruction, when he can avert whatever seduces them from life, even by his nod alone. For what father, indeed what outsider among men, if only he belongs to the number of those who think nothing human alien to themselves, would see his son or any man whatever fall in with people of such a sort that they would drag him to certain destruction, and would not first drag him away from them, especially if he could effect this by his nod alone, even if he having been abundantly warned, by his own egregious fault lends ear to such imposters? For it is indicated to us by God that we should judge it to be the duty of a good man to save altogether those whom he can, even ungrateful and unwilling: the same our Reason requires from God the author of this judgment.

So even if it granted what these surely assume not only against all scripture but also against reason itself: that any man has strength to follow the calling of God and embrace the offered grace: yet thereby human reason is not satisfied, so that in the judgment of God by which he consigns to eternal fires those who have yielded themselves to depraved desires, it would desire nothing. For it always protests: But God could with no trouble have brought it about that men would not be led away from the right by depraved desires. And if you say: But it is not fitting that God compel us: it answers, he can give a good mind, so that we may will what is right voluntarily, without being compelled. In the future he will not compel, and yet will give that we may adhere unmoved perpetually to the good, that is, to himself. If you say: But if it were thus, then there would be no merit on our part, because no contest, no danger: it would retort that it is more fitting that all the glory of our salvation should belong to God alone, and that it is rather better for us to be saved without the praise of merit, through the sole power of God, so that we perish left to ourselves, than to merit virtue and our own life through the destruction of virtue. So nothing whatsoever can suffice to approve the judgment of the Lord to our Reason, if she has permitted herself to judge concerning him.

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Now the contrivance that we have only so much strength to live rightly, that called through the Gospel and aided by that grace of the Lord which he perpetually offers and gives to all mortals, we can follow God calling and embrace the offered grace: is of such a kind that whoever wishes to defend it, must necessarily deny that God exists. From this it is evident. For when we name God, we all understand the author of all good: and whoever affirms that any good is not effected by God, would not hesitate to deny God. For if even the slightest good is not from God, then he is no longer the author of all good, and therefore also not God. But when these perverse patrons of divine justice say that all men are equally called by the Gospel, and that equal grace is offered as a gift to all, so that they may follow God calling, and that it is in the power of men themselves to embrace this grace of God: we shall ask them whence it is that some embrace the grace equally offered to all, having made good use of their powers, others reject it, having made bad use of their powers. If they say this comes from man, not from God: then this chief good, upon which all others depend, namely to embrace the favor of God offered to us, is from man, and man has what he has not received, nor is God even the author of all good, therefore also not God. This conflicts not only with scripture, as I said, but also with common sense. But if it is from God that anyone hears and follows God calling: which it is: then God does not give his grace equally to all. For to those who follow the calling of the Gospel he gives this very thing which he does not give to those who reject the Gospel.

Our human Reason therefore remains and always in the judgments of God accuses, if you permit it to judge concerning God as a judge. But if this comes to pass concerning the whole dispensation of our salvation: it is no wonder if it also comes to pass concerning what seemed good to God, to call all mortals equally by the Gospel, even if he does not will all to follow that calling, for many are called, few are chosen. The saints therefore will ingenuously confess, indeed will also proclaim, that God wills the Gospel to be preached to all, and all mortals to be called to life by it: yet does not will all to believe the Gospel, for he does not bestow this on all, but hardens many, lest they sustain to hear it. For he came, as he himself says, in judgment to many, and Paul teaches that the Gospel, which is the power of God for salvation to all universally, is to those who perish a fragrance of death to death. 2 Cor. 2. In this is fulfilled that: Hear the hearing and understand not, see the vision and know it not.

When D. Paul first preached Christ at Rome to the chief of the Jews, and undoubtedly did this with the Lord willing and commanding it: yet since the greater number did not believe, he himself testified that in them was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: Hear ye and understand not, etc. The Lord thus willed these to be called by the Gospel, and yet not to come. So when Joab recalled David from numbering the people, he rightly admonished, and therefore from God, but since the Lord was angry with the people, the king did not hear Joab, and this the Lord so willed. After the same manner when the Lord himself so gravely admonished Judas of his evil, and God willed him to be admonished and recalled from his pernicious plan, lest he insufficiently offer him his mercy: yet by a just judgment he did not will that he should hearken to such an admonition. So therefore is the reasoning of God, this seemed good to him: to call all indeed to himself by the external word, but not to draw all to himself by his Spirit.

Yet since those who are not drawn cannot come to him, John 6: yet all those who have been called must afterward necessarily condemn themselves of the despised mercy of God. If I had not come, says the Lord, and spoken to them, they would have had an excuse: but now they have none. But for this cause scripture shows why God wants the precepts of salvation thrust even upon the hardened. And although human reason always stumbles on this, that God simply does not will those whom he hardens to hearken to him, and objects what is found here: Who has resisted his will?: yet

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when God has begun to exercise his judgment, that is, when he has stirred up men to a serious judgment of themselves: there all such cavils vanish, and men will not be able to do otherwise than condemn themselves, as those who have voluntarily despised the goodness of God, and confess all the praise of justice to God. The saints therefore in whom also the word and judgment of the Lord now avails: who always attribute the greatest justice to the Lord in all his judgments, and to themselves the guilt of whatever they have sinned. When Reason is offended anywhere in the judgments of the Lord, they immediately suppress it with the Spirit urging that: O man, who art thou, etc.: and they never plunge themselves into the abyss of the judgments of God, to sift them and search out their causes, but present themselves wholly as beasts of burden to be led by the right hand of God: and say: It is good for me to cleave to the Lord. Psalm 73.

From these things the conciliation can now be clear of those passages in which God expressly testifies that he hardens some lest they hear him and be saved, with those in which, his word sent equally, he expressly testifies to these very ones whom he hardens, that he requires this one thing from them, that they hear him and be saved. Such certainly were those to whom he said: How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not. Matt. 23. So: All day long I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people. Isa. 65. For the counsel and just judgment of God is such, that he attests to the reprobate in all ways that they are spurning and rejecting his mercy offered to them, that they are destroying themselves, with him always calling them to salvation. Though he simply does not will to save them, because he neither elected nor made them for this. The Scholastics following the Damascene in this call the will of God concerning the salvation of the reprobate, which is offered to them by the external calling to salvation, the antecedent will, and the will of sign: but the will concerning their destruction, the consequent will.

Moreover God proposes intermediate things also sometimes, as these arise from proximate causes and appear to be future, though these are otherwise with him, and otherwise are necessarily going to come to pass. Hezekiah had been seized by a pestilence, and seemed not only, but was also going to die by the way of nature, that is, by the ordinary operation of God in his body: thus therefore the Lord was setting forth his fate to Hezekiah: Set in order, he was saying through the prophet, the affairs of thy house, for thou shalt die. Yet he did not wish him to die, but willed to add fifteen years to his life. So also he dealt with the Ninevites.

Certainly wherever God clothes himself in man, dealing with us men, he proposes to us his counsels concerning us in the manner in which we can most greatly receive these for our salvation. Therefore what he prescribes and counsels for us, these we must simply embrace, never inquiring either the cause of what we are commanded, beyond those which God himself expounds in his word, or even the congruence of these with his other deeds and words. For so must this be fixed in our minds, that God cannot deny himself, and therefore neither fight against himself, or admit anything supremely unbecoming to himself, so that we may supremely abhor the contrary or suspicious thought. In the meanwhile however, for knowing and adoring the infinite majesty and amplitude of God, and also for consoling us when we see the word of salvation preached by us or others without fruit in men: let us look also at those passages with a free and firm gaze of the mind, and receive them most simply, in which God himself proclaims to us that all things happen by his nod, and therefore most excellently, even when he involves the saints in this world and the reprobate in this and in the future world in evils, both those which they themselves commit and those which they suffer. For these two causes indeed, that we may adore the immense goodness of God, and be strengthened in the present confidence of divine providence: this proclamation of scripture

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concerning the abyss of the judgments of God and of Providence, dispensing all things most justly indeed, but in that manner, in which human reason cannot but stumble, if she presumes to sift and judge it, is proclaimed. For she is overwhelmed when glorying irreligiously in searching the majesty.

Concerning what the Apostle writes to Timothy, that God wills all men to be saved: we shall discuss in its place, God willing Christ. In this sentence all has the force of any, or: from every race of men. For there he was exhorting that prayers be made for all, that is, for men of all orders, for princes and those endowed with authority. The same seemed right also to D. Augustine in the Enchiridion, chapter 103, and On correction and grace, chapter 14. For certainly whatever God wills simply comes to pass, for whatever he willed he did in heaven and on earth: but what he wills and approves in the life of his own, these he proposes to many, indeed to all, by the external word, which yet he does not simply will them to embrace: those namely whom it befits to be from the many called, not from the few elect. Who resist the will of God which he wishes to be set forth to all, yet which obtains only in the elect: but when God simply wills this in them, they serve the singular will of God concerning themselves, they do not resist it. But as it is not to be investigated by us, by what justice God simply wills one to be saved, but calls another only to salvation, yet simply wills him to be lost: so also is not that to be investigated, what befits God, to call to salvation and to testify that his will is that they should comply with the calling and be saved, whom yet he simply wills to hear and not understand, to see and not know. For it is certain that for anyone to comply with the calling of God, which is the beginning of all salvation: this is the gift and work of God, which God bestows on some and denies to others. For to these he persuades so as to persuade, to those not so: and those cannot but follow him calling to whom he persuades, nor follow to whom he does not persuade. He therefore absolutely wills some to hear him and hearken, others to hear and despise. But why God so wills and does: D. Augustine has only two things to answer. O the depth of riches. And: Is there injustice with God? adding: He who is displeased with this answer, let him seek more learned men, but let him beware lest he find the presumptuous. On the Spirit and the Letter, chapter 34. Nor will those who are right answer otherwise. Thus far concerning those passages in which God testifies that he wills all whom he calls externally by his word to be saved, and in which he testifies that he hardens some, so that hearing his word they may not understand or follow it, and thus may by no means be saved.

QUESTION ON FREE WILL: whether man is endowed with free will, and what it avails.

That it may be clear what it is fitting to answer to this question: first of all it must be established what we wish to understand by this name of free will. The Greeks call it *αὐτεξούσιον*, which signifies being in one's own power, or acting from oneself, by one's own will. The same is in the term free will. For all understand as free the one who is his own master, who does what he himself wills, who is not compelled by another: and will, or judgment, nearly signifies a decision arising from deliberation and choice. Hence to judge is a certain species of judgment, when it is determined which side is rightly contended. Rightly therefore Thomas Aquinas understands by free will the will by which we choose what reason through deliberation has found and judged to be more conducive. But the same is the opinion of D. Augustine, who wishing to establish that man has free will of the will, adduces those scriptures which press our will, with premised rewards for those doing what God commands, and threats for those neglecting it. When he has adduced very many, he concludes thus: Where in the divine admonitions work is required of the will to do something or not to do something, the freedom of the will is sufficiently demonstrated. Therefore with D.

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Augustine also free will is the will by which we embrace some things and reject others according to our own judgment, so that we ourselves esteem these good or evil.

Some who treat this question seem to understand free will as the free faculty of doing whatever one wishes. For since we cannot embrace the precepts of God if we are ignorant of God himself, and we cannot know him unless reborn and illuminated by the Spirit of God: they deny that man has free will, because he cannot do whatever: for he cannot, they say, embrace the precepts of God. So also those from whom they take away free will, who already somehow know God and love his precepts, but from innate perversity do not do what they approve, but rather the evil which they condemn. Some extend the freedom of will even to the very efficiency of things, denying therefore that man is endowed with free will, because he is sometimes frustrated in his purpose, events coming out contrary to what he had planned. But when we say free will, we do not say a free power of effecting, but the will which is borne according to our own judgment. To will and to choose by one's own judgment is one thing, to effect is another. Though to one who has a true and full will: he accomplishes all that he can accomplish by his own powers. Those who do the evil which they hate and neglect the good which they will, do not solidly will what is good, of which above in chapter 7. But if anyone perfectly wills something, and is impeded by some external thing from being able to do it, as if someone willing to bestow his services on the poor is impeded either by disease or a tyrant: he is judged before the Lord to have accomplished what he had planned.

There have not been lacking those who understood in free will the first and whole effective power, who because scripture testifies that God acts in us, and moves us, denied that our will acts anything, even in those things which we do with great zeal and accomplish. But the first cause does not exclude the action of secondary causes. God certainly does all things in us, and moves us too wherever seemed good to him, yet so as to make us also acting: who certainly knowing his act, recognize, choose, embrace, flee, apply the powers of the body.

We, as we follow the judgment of D. Augustine concerning the matter itself, so also in name shall follow him, understanding by free will the free will, following the judgment of one's own reason voluntarily. For we are so created that we are borne by the will toward those things which we know to be good for us, and abhor those which we know to be evil for us. Likewise there are some things which we know by nature to be good or evil for us, concerning these as there is no judgment, no choice, so necessarily we are either borne toward them or flee from them without any deliberation and judgment. These are in good things: happiness, and what appear to have a necessary connection with this. As that we may live, that we may live without trouble, that we may eat when hungry, drink when thirsty, and the like. In evil things: unhappiness, and what seem necessarily connected with this, as death, torments, want of those things by which the present life is sustained, and other things of this kind. Concerning these there is no free will, but a necessary will and appetite, or aversion and flight. But concerning those things which do not immediately and fully appear to be either necessarily good or evil for us: we judge these, that is, we judge from deliberation, and as we judge them certainly and perfectly, so we either seek or flee from them. And these are what pertains to the worship of God and to living life conveniently and becomingly: and what is opposed to these. For as we do not judge these in the same manner, so neither do we by equal reason either seek or flee from them.

Now since the nature of men is so vitiated by the sin of the first parents, that unless reborn we cannot know what the true worship of God is, and therefore cannot choose it: Philip Melancthon is wont to say that man has free will in the matters of civil life, but not in the matters of the life

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which God approves. He understands that man has a faculty for judging and choosing somehow truly and in some way concerning civil matters, and concerning civil and external justice itself. Concerning this we shall discuss in the other part of this question, what free will avails: for we are still disputing about the name of free will, and presently we shall examine whether man has free will, and finally how much it avails, or of what sort it is. We therefore by the name of free will shall understand simply the faculty of choosing and rejecting those things that come to hand, according to our own will and judgment. For this faculty is designated by this name, free will, by its native signification. Thus far what the name of free will avails.

If now it is asked whether man has free will: experience itself teaches that it must be answered: man has free will. For whatever things in all things do not immediately and fully appear to be either good or evil for us: all of these we embrace or reject according to our own judgment and choice. But those things which immediately and solidly appear good or evil: these we certainly desire or turn away from without deliberation and judgment, but always voluntarily and by our own propensity. Since we see ourselves doing this therefore: who would doubt that there is a faculty in us of doing thus? Scripture also co-attests, when in all its precepts, promises, and threats it presses our reason and will, which is the argument of D. Augustine and all the Fathers, by which he proves that we are endowed with free will. Scripture certainly speaks properly and certainly and most becomingly, when it compels us, as is fitting, to judge and approve what it commands, what it forbids, and to choose what it commends, and refuse what it calls back from: but this is nothing other than the property of one possessing the faculty of judging and choosing according to one's judgment, that is, one powerful in free will. Certainly therefore scripture attributes free will to man. Hence D. Augustine acknowledges it as a dogma of the catholic faith, that man has free will. Let us therefore also confess that man is so created by the benefit of God, that by the faculty of reason, and of the will following reason, that is, of free will, that he is endowed with free will, as all experience.

Therefore wherever it befits us to judge and approve what he commands, what he forbids, and to choose what he commends, and refuse what he calls back from: but this is nothing other than the property of one possessing the faculty of judging and choosing according to one's judgment, that is, one powerful in free will. Certainly therefore scripture attributes free will to man, as I said.

But when it is asked how widely this faculty extends, in what things this our free will unfolds itself: then it must finally be confessed that our free will of itself can do nothing in those things which pertain to true piety, so as to embrace these, but only so as to reject and flee from them. It does not now seem fitting to dispute what this faculty could once do in the first parent: for it is the part of theologians to dispute concerning what conduces to us, and to our advancing in the knowledge and pursuit of God.

The first man was made in the best condition, he lost it by his sin, both for himself and for us. Christ restored a better condition to believers. To hold these things concerning these is sufficient. How great the certainty of Adam's judgment, how great the faculty of the right will was: this is not expounded in the scriptures: therefore let us not curiously investigate this. For what good he once had, we need not consider: but what goods are lacking in us from his and our sins, and that it is permitted to obtain these through Christ alone, this is to be considered and weighed by us.

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Looking therefore at the present condition of men, it must be confessed that free will, which it befits man to have, is so weak and maimed, that without the Spirit of Christ the renewer and mover of the whole man, in those things which are truly useful, that is, which approve us to God, in which right life consists, it can do absolutely nothing: in the remaining things of this life it can indeed do something, but now not without error, so that it either chooses plainly harmful things for good, and refuses good things for harmful, or certainly neither seeks good nor flees evil as it ought always to be borne, as both good things are for us and evil things for us. This response has two parts: that free will not reborn can do absolutely nothing in those things which commend us to God, and that in other things it can, but now not without error. The former part of this response easily attains faith with one who holds the scriptures, and knows what God approves in us. The animal man cannot perceive the things of God, the Apostle testifies in 1 Cor. 2: how therefore would free will judge these to be to be embraced, and choose them? Free will therefore left to itself will always reject those things which are of God and of true piety, and now seek them: for it is adverse to piety which it seeks. From boyhood the heart of man is depraved, and he is zealous for perverse things.

Looking at this, others say that our will is not free in those things which pertain to true justice, because it cannot truly obey the law of God. But perhaps it should not be denied that on this account our will is free even with regard to those things which are of true piety, since it freely and by its own judgment rejects these: for free here seems to be opposed to compelled. With D. Augustine free and voluntary are the same, and as inappropriate as it sounds to him, a will not free: and hot without heat. And all the holy Fathers from this wish the sin of the impious to be rightly imputed to them, since by their own will and free will they reject the offered goodness of God. This also is sufficiently manifest to anyone: that impious men hearing the truth judge, and by a plainly free will reject it. And those who deny that man has free will with regard to the justice of God, look to this: no one without the Spirit of God can embrace it. For by a free will toward piety they understand one which can desire and flee piety equally. But if this suffices for denying the freedom of will, if it cannot avail in either direction equally, namely both for choosing and for rejecting: it would have to be denied that God has free will, and that we would in a judgment of truth rightly confirmed. For neither can God desire what is unjust, and neither will we be able to desire it, when it has been given us to see God as he is. We therefore gladly confess that the will is free in man for all things whatsoever that are offered to him, since compelling no one he either chooses or rejects what he chooses or rejects: but can now approve and embrace true piety only when sustained and moved by the Spirit of Christ. For when this is absent, man is dead in his trespasses, that is, destitute of all sense of true life, and is moreover moved by the evil spirit the author of all crimes, who works ἐν τοῖς υἰοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας. From this it is clear that the other part of the response here given is also beyond doubt: namely that in all things the greatest error prevails, and men either choose harmful things for goods, and despise good things for harmful, or do not seek good and decline evil as they ought, if the Holy Spirit does not govern all their judgment. For what else could those do, who are destitute of all true life, who wander in darkness, whom Satan drives and rolls according to his pleasure, working in them? Yet the matter itself teaches that even in those whom Satan still keeps captive, there are many things in the actions of this life that are seen and done which are true and right. So it cannot be denied that free will avails something in them, so that it makes a choice by true judgment. For when God grants those too, even in this, to enjoy his benefits, as men acting by their own reason and will: it is necessary that they do not always err, and seek harmful things for good. He therefore both acts and governs them, so that very often, not only those things which privately, but also those which publicly profit, they beautifully foresee and happily institute, and especially those things which pertain to justice, without which human life cannot subsist. Hence such illustrious laws, so many careful exhortations to virtue have so often proceeded from them.

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Though perhaps you will not find those who steadfastly proclaim virtue, and yet do not truly pursue virtue, who are endowed with the renewing Spirit.

But what need of many words about these things: we see and feel how much error and perversity avails in all mortals, and that it is a singular gift and work of God, to judge and undertake in any matter whatsoever what is good. Aristotle, who yet attributes very much to human powers, confesses that if anything is common, virtue is the gift of God, and acknowledges that all pursuit of man is in vain if he is not well-born. Plato affirms that virtue consists in men not by any force or human industry, but solely by the breathing of the propitious God. And indeed we also experience that God alone is good, and he alone does and makes all that is true, right, and good. He breathes here and by his breathing causes in some things that they are only certain defined and having qualities acting: in others that they also live: in others that they moreover feel: in men that they are powerful in reason and mind. So he breathes minds and various powers into men: for some he breathes that they excel in arts, others that they are outstanding in elegance of manners, others that they avail in strength, others that they are illustrious in learning and doctrine, others he makes illustrious with other gifts. But those whom he has selected for eternal life: these he first breathes upon with his Spirit, so that they may depend on him through all things, may look to him everywhere, pursuing this one thing, that they accommodate themselves to the role which he himself imposes upon them: then he instructs them peculiarly and drives them to certain offices, for which he has determined to use them, for unfolding his goodness to men. This is that variety of spirits and gifts which the Apostle proclaims below in chapter 12 and 1 Cor. 12.

But that those who steadfastly and promptly live rightly, or do other things useful for man, exhibit thereby what we see to be present in those whom we say to have a certain habit of doing something, namely a faculty by which they do what they are said to have the habit of doing, steadfastly, promptly, and pleasantly: the Scholastics say that to those whom the Spirit of Christ perpetually moves to live piously, there is present the gift of habitual grace. Paul calls this the new man, the new creation, ingrafting into Christ, and such things. Yet they acknowledge besides that the grace of moving and acting is always needed for those things which are right. So not only the ancients, but also those among the Scholastics who are more approved, in whatever they attribute to man's free will, all agree that without the particular impulse and perpetual act of the Spirit of God, men can neither turn themselves to God, nor having turned persevere in the life of God, nor having fallen rise again, nor standing and advancing pursue this, that they may be consummated in the life of God, and can no longer fall, but that all these are of the grace of God. They follow D. Augustine, whose opinion this is.

Some have tried to attribute to the powers of human nature: the ability to avoid particular sins, to merit that God bestow grace upon them *ex congruo*, to love God above all things: but both scripture and even common sense protest, so little effective knowledge of either God or true justice remains in us from nature. Yet from this it does not follow that God regards the person, or determines unjustly concerning men, which these wish to follow: as was expounded above abundantly.

On the contrary certain others, considering that scripture refers all things of salvation to the grace of God, and condemns all our nature everywhere as of the greatest impiety: assert that our will does absolutely nothing in right deeds, but is only moved. But we also feel sufficiently that we being moved act, and so scripture speaks, which it befits us to follow. It is certain indeed that from nothing as we are, we can do absolutely nothing from ourselves, but God must work in us both to

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will and to work. But if he works in us, that is, effects the willing and working, we certainly will and work, and being moved we move. The part of true theologians is to flee subtleties and word-battles, and to follow the things themselves according to the word of the Lord as simply as possible, and to refer all things hither, that we may advance in faith in the promises of God, and in zeal in aiding the neighbors.

D. Augustine acknowledges that we act by free will, both when we turn to God and when we advance in the life of God, and when we accomplish it: and yet that unless God converts us and draws us to himself, unless he himself lives in us, and completes his life in us: we can neither be converted and come to him, nor live his life, nor even now accomplish it. This reasoning is most expeditious, and most beautifully agrees with scripture: for we attribute all things to God, and acknowledge what rightly belongs to him, whatever right we do as his gift and work in us, and confess it according to his word. Nor is occasion thereby given for man to attribute his guilt to God, nor to attribute to himself what is the gift of God. For that nonetheless all things depend on the free action of God, by which he has mercy on whom he has mercy, and hardens whom he wills, moves our free will to himself or turns it away from himself: this cannot yet avail to this, that anyone should impute the guilt of his own destruction to God rather than to himself. This his own heart testifies to each, acknowledging itself to perish by its own guilt, even if in words it asserts the contrary to others. Of which above. But in this there is the agreement of all the orthodox. For whatever the ancient Fathers write concerning the future merits of men foreseen by God, and the equality of grace which is offered to all, but not equally received: they do not write it as if they did not acknowledge that all good things for all consist by the sole goodness of God, by no powers of their own from themselves. For in these passages which are in this chapter, D. Chrysostom repeatedly admonishes that the Apostle teaches that all things come to us as the gift and power of God. They wished only to guard against this: lest anyone transfer the guilt of his own impiety to God. So D. Augustine and those who follow him wish most of all to guard against this same thing, and do not deny that we also act and cooperate with the Lord for our salvation: only for the enemies of grace the Pelagians and those who follow them, they desire that the very thing which the Lord bestows on us to cooperate with himself, these should refer to him as accepted from him. And they think it matters not a little for breaking down the arrogance of human nature and for bringing to the Lord the praise of his goodness: that we proclaim more openly with scripture that God from his sole will, without any regard for either present or future merits, destines some for his flock to be saved, others for the mass of evils to be destroyed. Yet they firmly affirm, indeed inculcate, that no one perishes not by his own merit, even if he have no other, than what comes from the harm of the first parents.

Therefore there is no real difference, but only in the manner of treatment, among the holy Fathers in this question: and this has arisen from the fact that those had their eye principally on those who try to attribute the guilt of their own perversity to God, while these had their eye on those who arrogate too much to human powers. Hence those stopped at the proximate causes of right action, among which our will also is: while these raised themselves to the first cause, which is the sole will of God. This also the former looked to and proclaimed, but since their matter was with men who impiously excused themselves by the lack of the faculty of acting rightly, when the will was lacking to them: they thought the more important thing for them to urge was our will. But these had their dispute with those who exalted our will beyond what is fitting: and therefore they considered the weakness of our will and the fact that all things are to be referred to the will of God to be more urgently pressed. From this therefore arises the diversity of treatment. But that the Fathers agree in the matter itself, from this is abundantly clear: it is acknowledged in common by

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them that no one can have any good from himself, which is not wholly the gift and work of God: and yet that no evil befalls anyone which he has not rightly deserved by his own guilt: and also that nothing is done rightly by us, except by our will and judgment, with which we cooperate with God. D. Chrysostom, himself otherwise a most zealous assertor of both the human will and the faculty for living piously, writes in the exposition of this chapter: The Apostle did not say vessels of right action, or vessels of confidence, but vessels of mercy: showing that all is of God. So D. Ambrose, who himself also following Origen, takes that: it is not of the one who wills or of the one who runs, as said by the adversaries: writes on that: For the word completing, etc.: for it is fitting that by the sole name of the Lord the Creator the creature should attain salvation, that is, through faith. And a little after: Faith alone is set up for salvation. And this is equivalent to that: by grace alone, by no will or running of ours are we saved. These same opinions you will find very many with these and all other Fathers. So you will see D. Augustine and those who speak with him as having testified abundantly everywhere both concerning our will and concerning our guilt. They agree therefore in the matter itself. Thus far also what free will avails has been expounded.

OBSERVATION I.

I will have mercy on whom I have mercy. From this let us learn in all the deeds of the Lord, in all his dispensation both of goods and evils which befall either us or others: diligently to think that God can have no other cause in the matter than his own will: and in all things, for God does all things in all things, to acknowledge and look up to it as the best. To inquire its cause is not only senseless, since it can have no cause, but also supremely impious, since our part is with the greatest zeal in all things to accommodate ourselves to the will of our Creator. There is no doubt that the proximate cause of the punishments which God takes from us are our sins: because God himself testifies this in his word, and causes us to acknowledge this, that we may detest sins the more. But why God led us into temptation, when he permitted us to fall, why he punishes the fallen with such severity, while others who perhaps sinned more atrociously he does not punish so: if these questions trouble us, they are to be immediately repelled by the present oracle. God said to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I have mercy. And he has mercy on whom he wills, and hardens whom he wills. If thou lovest life and desirest good things: depart from evil and do good. Many evils befall even the just, because these must be chastised here, lest they be condemned with the world: but the Lord delivers them from all these. But the wicked his own evil destroys, and at last those who hate the zealous of justice shall be abolished. Psalm 34. Therefore whatever of adversity may befall either us or others: let us not doubt that it befalls on our merits, so that we may strive to correct both our own and others' life if it is permitted. But whatever of good may have befallen, likewise both to ourselves and others: let us always proclaim the mercy of God as just. So we shall use the goods which God bestows on us more blessedly, and with those given to others we shall not be offended, but shall rather receive occasion from both, as much to incite ourselves as those upon whom these befall, for sanctifying the name of the Lord more efficaciously.

OBSERVATION II.

So then it is not of the one who wills. This should occur to us in all our good endeavors, so that we implore the help of the mercy of the Lord, without whom we can do nothing. But in the sins of the brethren: that we may restore them with greater clemency, and also strive to obtain remission of the Spirit for them by truly holy prayers. But by no means so as to either neglect holy endeavors, or while we lie in sins, neglect to rise. For when the Apostle says: it is not of the one who wills or of the one who runs, he certainly hints that men ought to will and run, but that their

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will and running will accomplish nothing, unless the mercy of God perfects all things, which also effects even the willing and working, that is, the running in us.

OBSERVATION III.

O man, who art thou. This song the Spirit sings to us as often as the judgments of the Lord do not smile upon us: which alas happens too frequently. For when do we approve in all things either our own or others' fortune? When moreover is even heaven so administered that we would complain of nothing? Let us observe our vows, which indeed rarely are not borne contrary to how God institutes things. For when do we not wish a different health, a different condition of living, a different temperature of sky, a different fortune for ourselves and others than God dispenses these? But whoever wishes things to be otherwise than God exhibits them: he certainly charges God. Now what could be imagined more furious and impious, than for a man who is a lie and a vapor, to desire something and find fault in the works of God, which are all done with infinite wisdom and goodness?

Therefore as often as God does not satisfy our flesh: let this deter us from such great impiety: O man, who art thou, to litigate with God? For it is nothing other than to call God as an adversary unjustly, to desire something and complain in his works, which cannot but be most excellent. But when we pray against sins and the evils which we have deserved by sins, with the heart now turned to the pleasure of God, and when we pray that the goods for which we were created and elected may at last be given to us: since in both we follow the promise of God, not our own flesh: in vows of this kind there is no charging of God, which is in those vows which arise from our flesh alone, and are not taken up from the word of God.

OBSERVATION IV.

Will the thing molded say? Let us also remember this when our lot is not approved in all things by us. From ourselves we are nothing, and nothing can belong to us. God is therefore our potter, we are his clay: since therefore he is the best, let us not doubt that the manner in which he has made us and holds us is both simply and for us the best. Let us only pray for the Spirit of the Lord, by which he may rightly accommodate us to himself, and we may feel in very fact that it is the best.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION IV.

But if God willed.

EXPOSITION

In this section the Apostle does two things. He indicates something of the cause why God bears some wicked, and gradually slips down to setting forth those oracles by which it was predicted concerning the election of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews: which principal passage he here undertook to treat. But the cause why God bears the wicked he hints at rather than asserts: this he gave to the reverence for the judgments of God, which since they are a great abyss, it is not fitting to pronounce concerning them more boldly. Moreover that he set forth in a doubting manner the cause why God sustains the impious: he did not do this because he thought that cause which he adduces was to be doubted, for it is gathered from the premised oracle concerning Pharaoh: but he wished to hint this: that even if God had no other cause for tolerating the lost men in this life than

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this one, that in them he might declare his wrath against sins, and in this wrath his power which so memorably represses the force of the reprobate: and might display his most ample mercy toward the elect, by which alone namely he delivers these from the same destruction: yet there would be no ground for man to charge God with injustice. So the discourse of the Apostle here seems to be completed in this sense, for it is deficient. It is not lawful for the molded thing to demand a reason from the molder, why he molded it thus: so much less will it be right for us to require why God made us in the condition in which he made us. Yet if this be his whole cause for why he makes and bears the impious in this life, that in them he may exhibit examples of vengeance against sins, and thereby make his terrible power known, and his most ample goodness toward his elect, by which alone he delivers these from the same destruction: still there would be nothing for which man could charge God with injustice.

But descending to this principal passage, that the time had now come, when with very many of the Jews rejected, the Gentiles were to be brought into the fellowship of the life of God: he does not openly propose this at first, nor deal with it even at the beginning, nor does he betake himself thither abruptly. But first, having seized a fitting transition from what he discussed concerning the discrimination of the reprobate, he made a way for himself to discuss the discrimination between the Jews and the Gentiles, by which God had then begun to hold them: assuming very many from the Gentiles, very few indeed from the Jews. Then he proposes that it seemed good to God now to call to salvation not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles: he does not say from the Gentiles many, from the Jews few, which yet the oracles he adduces express concerning the Jews. He preferred to set this forth by the oracles themselves rather than in his own words, he who wished to gain his own people for salvation, not to offend. Therefore in the proposition he thought it sufficient to assert only the fellowship of salvation for the Gentiles together with and after the Jews, and did not yet wish to set the Gentiles before the Jews. The proposition therefore is: God called not the Jews only, but also the Gentiles into the fellowship of salvation obtained through Christ. There are two things in this proposition, but he proves only one: that the Gentiles also ought to become partakers of the redemption of Christ. And he uses moreover that oracle for proving this, which when it recalled the judgment exercised upon the Jews, was suited to the purpose that the Jews might learn therefrom, with less offense, the will of the Lord also concerning the Gentiles. For we read in that oracle that God threatened his people Israel and Judah, that on account of their impiety he would so cast them off, that they would deserve to be called *לֹא רַחֲמָה* and *לֹא עַמִּי*, Loruchama and Lo-ammi: that is, destitute of charity and not my people: and then promised he would again receive them, and bestow his benefits upon them so abundantly, that they would deserve to be called *רַחֲמָה* and *עַמִּי*, that is, Ruchama and Ammi: charity-endowed and my people. By this oracle therefore the Apostle wished to admonish the Jews that if they should await this mercy, so as to become from those not endowed with charity those who are endowed with charity, and from those who are not a people to become the people of God: they ought not to count it a foreign thing to God, that he should also unite the Gentiles to himself, and endow them with his charity, so that they might be of his people, who had previously been not endowed with charity and not the people of God. For such also had they themselves at some time been. Then moreover from two oracles of Isaiah he proves, of which he had not made mention in the proposition, that there ought to have been assumed from the Jews into the people of Christ very few indeed, only the very smallest remnants of this people. I shall deal with the oracles in the interpretation.

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INTERPRETATION

To make known. **δόξας**, to make manifest, and to exhibit publicly to the world. So he used the name **δόξα** above in section 4, chapter 3, on that: for a demonstration of justice. Wrath with the Apostle is often said to stand for punishment of sins.

But if God willed to demonstrate. What men are to God, what the instruments of a craftsman are: unless he himself moves us and applies us to the work, we can truly do nothing. Hence God also calls the enemies of his own his rod and his axe. But in these passages men are called instruments of God from the fact that he effects through them something with respect to others: but in the present passage the Apostle calls them organs of wrath and mercy, from that wrath and mercy which God exercises in those very ones who are called organs of wrath and mercy. So those are called sons of death and sons of wrath, who are destined for death and wrath.

That he might make known his power. What he can do: for **δύναμιν** is used, as above in chapter 8 where he said **τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου**, for what is that which the law cannot do. For where God leaves many crimes of men unpunished, the fear of God is extinguished by the wickedness of men, and just as the impious almost insult God, so the weaker doubt somewhat concerning the power of God, as if he seemed to yield to the fury of the wicked. But when he more severely punishes the wicked, he makes his power manifest and terrible, and he is acknowledged to be the Lord, able to do all things: the impious are checked, the pious raised up, many too who previously occupied with the desires of the flesh had no care for God, are led to the knowledge and worship of God. The graver punishments of God have borne this fruit of old, as scripture everywhere testifies. For when God with his outstretched arm, that is, with his power signally declared, exterminated the Egyptians and freed his people: there was trembling everywhere among the impious, the Israelites exulted in the Lord, many finally from the Gentiles who had learned that power of the Lord, as we read of Rahab, were converted to the God of Israel. Hence God is said to be exalted, and his name to be magnified, when he exercises those graver judgments upon men.

He bore with much patience. Very great indeed and immense is the patience of God, that he so long bears the impious insulting him so monstrously, and this even sustained by his own gifts.

Instruments of wrath. In Hebrew they are called **כְּלֵי מַשָּׂא**, vessels is usually rendered, from which very many learned men were imposed upon, so as to philosophize at length concerning this designation of vessels on matters that have nothing to do with the case: but scripture uses this word properly indeed for instruments, and by translation for men who are for others as it were instruments for effecting something. So Jacob called his sons Simeon and Levi **כְּלֵי הַמָּס**, instruments of violence, as it were instruments and organs singularly made for inflicting violence. So Paul was called by the Lord a chosen organ, by which he would bring his name to the Gentiles, kings, and sons of Israel. After the same manner the Apostle calls the wife **σκεύος**, that is, organ and chief instrument, of the husband. 1 Thess. 4. And 2 Tim. 2, any of the saints he calls a sanctified organ, fitted for the use of the Lord, prepared for every good work. We are nothing from ourselves and can do nothing, and God effects all things in us: therefore this designation of organ and instrument fits us very fittingly, for indeed this is what we are to God, what instruments are to craftsmen: unless he himself moves us and applies us to the work, no one can truly move us toward those things which are right. Hence God also calls the enemies of his own his rod and his axe.

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Who have been fitted for destruction. D. Chrysostom interprets: fitted by themselves. This is rightly said, when in this fitting we understand the guilt. But here Paul is wholly intent on showing that it belongs to God by his own will to assume some to life, others to reject into death, so much so that it is not lawful for us to enter into the cause of this judgment. The Apostle is not yet dealing with the proper guilt of the reprobate, by which they themselves drive themselves into destruction. Therefore as the Lord said that the reprobate are born of the devil: so in the bad sense we are to understand the Apostle here saying that the vessels of wrath are fitted and made by God for destruction. For what else is what he already adduced concerning Pharaoh: For this very purpose I set thee up, that in thee, namely by overthrowing and destroying thee, I might display my power? The wicked also God turns to good use, both when they act most wickedly and precipitate themselves into destruction: now all things have been made by God, and made and fitted both in mind and body for those things which God employs them for: but these things are destructive to them. Who therefore is there who would say it is incongruous that these are made and fitted by God for destruction? Through Judas God willed to deliver his Son to death: this was Judas's destruction, it would have been better for him not to have been born. Yet since he had been divinely appointed for this: who would doubt that even in the womb of his mother he was molded and formed for this? God makes nothing in vain. God gave Judas a soul and body, and the faculties of each, for doing and effecting something. Therefore as God willed to effect through Judas those things which he effected, which drove him into eternal death: so without doubt he made him and fitted him with all the parts and powers both of body and soul, that he might be a suitable organ for these things. Besides, what is it to reject before they are born, and while they live here to deliver into a reprobate sense, to blind, to harden, so that they do not hear the word of salvation: all of which scripture simply attributes to God: what is it other than to fit and perfect them for destruction? But the holy Fathers therefore fear to say that God fits men for destruction: because our reason, when it hears this, immediately tries to ascribe the guilt of its destruction to God in words, though this is not its true opinion, for it judges more rightly within itself, and attributes all the guilt of the evils which befall it to itself. Therefore scripture does not hesitate to proclaim to the glory of God, both that he rejects those not yet born, that he hardens, drives into destruction, and finally overturns and destroys whomsoever he wills. This right over us our potter takes upon himself. And this is what the Apostle principally undertook to teach here: that all things among men depend on the free election of God, so as to remove the offense which arose from the fact that so few Jews were coming to Christ at that time. In the following section he will begin to discuss the proper guilt of the Jews.

That he might make known the riches of his glory. That is, the wealth of the supreme goodness. For from the very fact that the Lord deals so severely and yet so justly with the reprobate, and the elect are not of themselves better than them: the goodness of God toward the elect is rendered the more illustrious. For the wicked always exhibit trouble and as much destruction as in them lies for the good: and from this, the extermination of these becomes the vindication of the saints: of which the Psalms everywhere sing. Therefore for this reason also God bears the organs of wrath, to make clear his most ample goodness toward the organs of mercy. Moreover concerning this formula, riches of goodness, it was said above in that: Dost thou despise the richness, etc., chapter 2, section 1.

Whom he prepared beforehand. Certainly when he made them. He again understands by glory his most ample goodness. He presses by each word that all things of our salvation are of the spontaneous divine goodness, and from this he always wishes us to infer that it is therefore not to be entered into why he assumes one and rejects another.

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Whom he also called. He said this in the sense in which he said above: those whom he predefined, these also he called. What he says here is therefore the same as: Those whom he prepared beforehand, these also he called. By calling he understands what D. Augustine calls the calling according to the purpose, the calling by which those also who are called are drawn.

Not only from the Jews. This is a litotes: he understands more than he says. In words he only conjoins the Gentiles with the Jews in the fellowship of salvation, but he wishes it to be understood that the Gentiles now have the greater share in the fellowship of salvation than the Jews.

As indeed in Hosea he says. He wishes by this oracle to prove that the Gentiles also ought to be called to the fellowship of Christ. But the oracle is properly of the Jews, whom the Lord promises he will again receive, when he has rejected them on account of their impiety, so that they should not be his people, nor enjoy his charity and mercy. But since in this oracle there is this: that God receives into his people those who are not his people, and endows with charity those who justly lack it: the Jews were admonished by it that from the mercy spent upon themselves, they might learn that it was not unworthy of God to spend it also upon the Gentiles, who had hitherto been destitute of it, as strangers from his people. For such also had they themselves at some time been. Moreover the Apostle adduced the sense of the oracle more than he enumerated the words. And from two passages he took what he adduced: from the first and the last verse of the second chapter, and those he took from the last verse he places first. These verses in the prophet run thus: I will sow her for myself in the land, and I will extend charity to Loruchama, that is, to her destitute of charity, and I will say to Lo-ammi, that is, to him who is not my people: thou art my people, and he shall say: my God. The first verse of this chapter which the Apostle adduced in the second place in the Prophet reads thus: And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them: Lo-ammi you are, that is, not my people: there it shall be said to them: sons of the living God. The Lord had commanded the prophet to take a wife who had been a harlot, and to call the first son which she bore him Lizrael, which signifies a lot decreed by God: the daughter which she bore him the second time Loruchama, which means destitute of charity: the son which she bore him the third time Loammi, meaning not my people.

The Lord wished these names to be symbols of those things which through the prophet he was threatening to his people. The Lord had made Jehu king in Israel, where Jehu at the Lord's command overthrew the kingdom of Ahab, slain being his son Joram and wife Jezebel, and his entire race. But since this Jehu persisted in the impiety which Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes, had introduced: God threatens to extinguish both him and his seed, and together with them to cast off the whole people of the ten tribes. As a sign therefore of the extinguishing of the posterity of Jehu, which had been elevated to rule in Lizrael, he commanded the prophet to call his first son Lizrael. But as a sign of casting off the whole people of the ten tribes, he wished the daughter to be called Loruchama, and the other son Loammi.

But as is the Lord's custom in the Prophets, he subjoined to these threats the promise of his mercy again to be exhibited, principally through Christ. In the second chapter therefore Hosea sings that the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, and there adds what the Apostle here adduced: And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them: you are not my people, there it shall be said to them: sons of the living God. For presently he predicts the sons of Judah and Israel to be gathered together, and these to appoint a single head, that is, a single prince over themselves, and to ascend thence, from a hostile land forsooth, to the holy land. To these is subjoined: Say to your brothers, Ammi, that is, my people, and to your sisters, Ruchama, that is,

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endowed with charity. After these things he commemorates the impiety and repudiation of their mother, that is, of the ancestors, and again subjoins concerning the receiving back again of their posterity, to be espoused to himself again in righteousness and judgment, in faithfulness and knowledge of the Lord. And this promise of goodwill he concludes in these words: And I will extend charity to Loruchama, and I will say to Loammi: thou art my people, and he himself shall say: my God.

Both the Jews and we understand this restoration of the holy people as having been fulfilled through Christ: it began however when their remnants were recalled to the true worship of God from the Babylonian captivity. Now before the Lord the sons of Abraham and true Jews are those who imitate the faith of Abraham. Since such have been brought to the kingdom of Christ in countless numbers from the Gentiles: the admonition of the Jews was apt from this passage, concerning what the Lord had determined to bestow his mercy also upon the Gentiles brought to Christ the Lord. For in the present prophecy there is rebuked to the Jews that impiety, on account of which they had deserved to be repudiated and utterly alienated from the Lord, and had already become Loruchama and Loammi, outside the charity of God and not his people. Therefore that which God had done for themselves from his sole mercy, who had utterly alienated themselves from him by their impiety: the Jews could easily recognize from this that he would do the same for the Gentiles, being admonished both of their own impiety and of the spontaneous mercy of God. For what the Gentiles then were, they themselves had been before. Concerning the word: it was already said a little before that it signifies such charity as a mother has toward her son whom she carried in her womb.

But Isaiah cries out over Israel. Here he begins to speak more openly concerning the rejection of the Jews. He therefore sets before the offense of the Jews the authority of Isaiah, and introduces him crying out: by which he hints at a more vehement attestation, by which he undertakes to strike down the confidence of the Jews. This oracle is found in the Prophet word for word in this manner: For if thy people Israel be, he addresses Hezekiah, like the sand of the sea, only remnants of it shall return.

A consumption decreed will overflow with righteousness: for a consumption decreed shall the Lord God of Hosts do in the midst of all the land. But the sense is: even if the multitude of the Israelite people be infinite, yet those to be restored are not but few, and these few shall overflow with righteousness: these he calls *כְּלֵה תְרוּיָן*, that is, a completed, an exact thing, that is, perfectly completed. But he understands what has been cut off and consumed in its greatest part, or what remains as the very smallest remnant after the consumption of some great body. So he calls the remnants of the holy people, those very smallest remnants which, with the remaining multitude utterly consumed and abolished, were to be preserved: first in the restoration from the Babylonian captivity, and then and most especially in conversion to Christ, arisen from the preaching of the Gospel. Then also those remnants, however much reduced, most abundantly flooded with righteousness the whole world, and filled the whole world with the knowledge of God. Hence the prophet here subjoins: For a consumption decreed, even that one, shall the Lord God of Hosts do in the midst of all the earth: God confirmed more vehemently that he would reduce and diminish the people, and make a consumption of it which is exact, that is, down to the most minute remnants.

Since it says in the midst of all the earth: very many understand this consumption as concerning all the nations, not the Jews alone. But since the prophet here speaks peculiarly of the

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diminution of the Jews, and that in the midst of the land is often found said of the land of Israel alone: I prefer to understand this prophecy of the consumption of the Jews alone.

That D. Paul in adducing the present oracle followed the common Greek edition: this he gave to the Roman brethren, who since they were for the greater part from the Gentiles, were conversant with the Greek edition alone. Since moreover the sense agreed, the Apostle did not wish even to appear to derogate from the edition to which they were accustomed. He also relied more on the power of the Spirit than on words in all his doctrine. What therefore the Apostle brings from the Prophet, word for word runs thus: For a word completing and cutting short in righteousness: because a word cut short shall the Lord do upon the earth. Our common edition has: in the whole world. Because it reads **λόγον συντελῶν** etc. The Latins rendered: completing the word, but they understood this place as concerning the abbreviated doctrine of Christ, and in this opinion D. Chrysostom also is. Moreover it is established that where scripture has **מְלָא**, matter, business, cause, the Greeks are wont to render **λόγον**. Since therefore the prophet placed **מְלָא** and **מְרַיָּק**: signifying a completed matter, the Greek interpreters perhaps wished to express what was said implicitly by the prophet through **λόγον**, a general name, namely one which they themselves could understand: so that the sense is: God is completing and cutting short the matter, in righteousness, so that righteousness might obtain: because he will make a cut-short matter in the land, that is, he will reduce and comminute the people.

Certainly in the common edition and in Paul, that **λόγον συντελῶν** etc. is subjoined with a causal notation to that: The remnants shall be saved. Therefore this consumption and cutting short of the word, however it be taken, must contain in itself a reason whence it might be the more manifest that only remnants are to be saved. Can this now so avail for that end, that God will make a brief and concise doctrine, and a cut-short and diminished people: anyone may see. Besides, although the ceremonies have been cut off, nothing of the true doctrine of piety could be cut away. That which they adduce concerning faith, or the brief precept of charity: this same truth and efficacy has been renewed and unfolded, and the same was also revealed before Christ as the sum of holy doctrine. But whatever may be the case with these things: there can be no doubt that the Apostle wished here to cite what is in the Prophet. But in the Prophet it is clear that the Lord predicted in this passage that he would reject the greatest part of his people, but that the diminished remnant, which he would preserve for himself from so great a multitude, would fill all things with righteousness.

Unless the Lord of Hosts, etc. This is taken from the first chapter. But the prophet indicates by it the greatest rejection of the people, when he affirms that the people would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah, unless the Lord had preserved from it as it were some seed. In the similitude of the Sodomites, who were utterly destroyed, he hints that they were very nearly going to be wholly abolished. But in that he predicts a seed to be preserved, he notes the paucity of those who were to be preserved. For he signifies that so few would there be, that they could not themselves be counted a people, but appear to have been left only as seed of the people to be raised again.

But however much the Jews both could formerly say, and can today say, that this rejection and diminution of the people, of which the seers foretold in these oracles, was effected through the Assyrians and Babylonians, while all the other prophets and Christ himself predict that the holy people must be gathered again through him and increased immensely: yet to those who were and are capable of truth, these passages necessarily gave and give faith, that the restoration of the people through Christ was to be made in this manner, that with very many Jews rejected, the true

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righteousness would overflow through very few into the whole world. For they knew of old, and can know today, that in the salvation which the Lord brought to the people through Hezekiah, and then through the princes of the captivity, the salvation to be brought to the world through Christ was prefigured, and the seers had their eyes principally upon this, in which also it was necessary that those things which were only foreshadowed in those types should exist most fully and clearly.

From this therefore both they gathered and those gather today, who have been called to the kingdom of God. In that type of the salvation of Christ, which Hezekiah exhibited by saving and restoring the people from the Assyrian danger: so great was the rejection of the reprobate from Israel, so few saved, that not only did the ten tribes perish then, but the whole of Judah except Jerusalem alone had come into the hands of the enemies. Therefore it was necessary for the people to pass through that furnace, which would devour all the impious as stubble, as was predicted in Malachi 3 and 4. And indeed everywhere in the Prophets.

The matter itself also most brilliantly attested this truth. For how few of the Jews were not either destroyed by the Romans, or sold into servitude, after they had rejected the Gospel of Christ? Now from all the Prophets it has been testified that this rejection and diminution of the people, of which the seers foretold in these oracles, was the reward of their extreme impiety, by which namely they had rejected the salvation offered in Christ. From these passages therefore which the Apostle adduced, he certainly establishes that the judgment of the Lord is such, that at the beginning of his kingdom and in its progress very few of the Jews would be converted to Christ, yet those who had been converted to him ought to have been as the seed of the people of God, and the true righteousness to overflow into the whole world. But that toward the end of the kingdom of Christ on earth Israel is to be converted: this he predicts below.

Concerning the certainty moreover of arguments of this sort from the types of Christ concerning the kingdom of Christ revealed: we said very many things in the second question appended to the exposition of section 4, chapter 3.

OBSERVATION I.

That he might make known his power. Therefore as often as God has gone against either our own or others' endeavors, as often as he has cast down or punished us or others: let us acknowledge in this that the divine power is commended to us, that we are admonished to see that all things are in the hand of God. For this can never be sufficiently persuaded to us. For those in whom it is certainly persuaded, always mindful of this, that all things are contained in the power of God: cannot but devote themselves wholly in all things to the pleasure of God.

OBSERVATION II.

He bore with much patience. Let us consider that we must imitate this great patience of God toward the wicked, those namely whom the magistrate does not remove. To whatever end God does not deign to convert these to himself: let us think they are yet preserved for a certain use, by which the name of God may be illustrated through us. And since God who is justice itself bears them with such patience: let us not contend that we are more just and severe than God, so as to think that those ought not to be borne, of whose removal we have no mandate from God. For those whom the magistrate at God's command removes: God, not men, removes them, for they exercise the judgment of God, not of men.

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OBSERVATION III.

In the type of Christ which was exhibited in the restoration of the people from the Babylonian captivity: it is seen that the judgment of the Lord was such, that even fewer than received salvation, more remained in destruction, and not a few even voluntarily, who could lawfully return to Jerusalem, to the true worship of God, though bound by present things preferred to remain among the idolaters. If now this manner of rejection of very many, and election of very few, pleased God then, when restoring the people more signally, he only set forth a prelude to the salvation to be prepared for the world through Christ, and presented a type of it: without doubt when Christ himself came, a much greater decimation of the people had to come to pass, and it was to be, that many should be called, few chosen. It is established now, and it is sufficiently believed as is right.

In the vessels of mercy. Since the Apostle now sufficiently inculcates all things of human salvation being of the mercy of God: let us now think of these things as fully weighed. First that we are organs of God, that no one can move us even toward what is right, and that every right action which comes through us is of God using us. Then that we are organs of mercy, whom God thus deigns to employ, that he may exhibit his mercy in us, and therefore nothing can be attributed to our merit. Finally that we have been prepared by God for all these things beforehand: so that once for all we may acknowledge that all things of our salvation are the work of God, and nothing of our zeal, except insofar as God from his mercy for his own purposes has impelled and held us in these things. These things properly weighed truly and fully at last strip us of love and zeal for ourselves, and kindle and inflame the love and zeal for God, so that in him and in him alone we now solidly acknowledge all things that are to be sought are situated and set forth for us.

OBSERVATION IV.

I will call not my people. This also must always be repeated by us: that all salvation is not only conferred with nothing of our merits, but that our merits deserve eternal death. For we all are assumed from those who are not the people of God, and justly alien from all charity of God. For if this is always in our memory, then we can never be displeased with ourselves, sigh for the mercy of God, glory in it alone, embrace sinning brothers, and in all things be truly frugal servants of the Lord.

OBSERVATION V.

If the number of the sons of Israel. That God so both decimated and reduced his people to the most minute remnants, yet could by no means so extinguish them that through those very smallest remnants which he preserved for himself from so great a multitude, his righteousness flooded the whole world: let this console us in all the graver judgments of the Lord. For always will the most indulgent Father so temper them, that he will by no means cast us off altogether, and besides will always bring some desired fruit from our chastisement. The Jews were made types, in whom God declared how he wishes to have his people. 1 Cor. 10.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION V.

What then shall we say?

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EXPOSITION

Having averted the offense of the Jews through the oracles he premised concerning their rejection: he now more openly infers from what was premised both this rejection of the Jewish people and the receiving of the Gentiles, and presently sets forth the cause why the former should be cast off, the latter received: which indeed existed in the Jews themselves who were cast off, and in the Gentiles who were received. He had said that those called into the number of the instruments of mercy were not from the Jews alone, but also from the Gentiles: he had subjoined that the Jews were to be rejected down to the very smallest remnants. From these it followed that more from the Gentiles ought to have come to Christ than from the Jews, which had now come to pass.

But that he might affirm this more inoffensively, he shows it to follow from what was premised. What then, he says, shall we say? What shall we affirm follows from these things, which were premised and confirmed by the oracles of scripture? This certainly: that the Gentiles who were not pursuing righteousness have attained righteousness, and righteousness that is by faith: but that Israel, though pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained righteousness. That he might exhibit confidence in this affirmation, and thereby render the Romans more attentive to the doctrine of truth: he himself adds what seem to resist what he was affirming, namely that the Gentiles had not sought righteousness, while the Jews had applied themselves to the law of righteousness. For it appears that this conflicts: that those should become partakers of righteousness who were not seeking it, and that those should not attain it who are applying themselves to the law which teaches righteousness. But the Apostle, as a preacher of faith, rightly commends the force of faith upon every occasion: for this reason he was stirring up the minds of the Romans with this paradox proposed with such confidence. For paradoxes wonderfully move and render attentive, if set forward by those who are in authority.

But lest he seem merely to astonish rather than also to teach: he immediately subjoins what could appear to be consistent with what he had affirmed. The righteousness that is by faith, he says: by faith he understands that by which we apprehend the mercy of God spontaneously offered through the Gospel. This righteousness of faith, since it consists in this, that we embrace with solid faith the goodwill and condescension of God offered through the Gospel, can only be received first by those who were not seeking it. For those who do not yet have this righteousness, that is, those who do not yet believe, are in the power of Satan and are held in the servitude of sin, and not only are ignorant of true righteousness but cannot even endure it. It is therefore necessary that they be anticipated by the Lord, both with the external preaching of the Gospel and with the internal breathing of the Holy Spirit, so that hearing the Gospel they believe, and believing be justified. Therefore it is clear that this righteousness can only be received by those who were first opposed to it, let alone not seeking it, before it was spontaneously given to them.

Moreover because it appears more abhorrent to the truth that the Jews who study the law, which teaches all righteousness, should not attain righteousness, while righteousness is divinely given to the Gentiles who even attacked it: the reason for the latter he only hints at verbally, but expounds the former more fully. He therefore subjoins: Why so? In which he shows that he acknowledges what he said to be a paradox. But the reason he gives is: Because not by faith but by the works of the law, add: the Jews apply themselves to the law, that is, they pursue only the ceremonies and external obligations of justice, and trust in these, not resting upon the faith of the promised mercy of God. Now the law requires faith above all things. He said this so precisely,

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because he was expounding these things with a certain reverence for the Jewish people, and at the same time with the greatest sorrow. He therefore set this forth by cutting short the discourse.

But since it had not yet appeared why the Jews, applying themselves to the law which everywhere teaches and requires faith, should remain without faith: he added that the Jews had stumbled against the rock of offense, that is, Christ. Yet he does not express this, but puts forward the words of the Prophet concerning Christ, so as to move more deeply and to excite them to weigh more fully what he writes. For to say that the Jews had stumbled against Christ, that Christ was a stumbling block to them, was too harsh, and he did not think that should be set forth in his own words.

INTERPRETATION

What then shall we say? What shall we affirm follows from the oracles that have been spoken? For he exhibits by this interrogation the certainty and confidence of what follows from the preceding, and thus opens a way to the minds of the Romans by the paradox which he wished to appear to be necessarily inferred from what was premised.

Gentiles who were not pursuing righteousness. A remarkable saying. For to apprehend is the act of those who are pursuing: but those who were not pursuing righteousness apprehend it, and those who were not in the least pursuing it attain it. So wholly is it the gift and work of God in us, and so little can our powers avail toward preparing this, as God then employs them both in receiving and in using righteousness. For this righteousness is, as we said, to embrace the goodwill and mercy of God offered in the Gospel, to rest on this alone, and to entrust oneself to it alone in all things. To live with some praise of virtue, very many of the Gentiles studied: but to trust utterly in God and to devote themselves wholly to him for the use of neighbors: this the common Gentile never sought, even if Plato and a few others raised their minds so far.

The righteousness that is by faith. For from the persuasion of the Gospel all confidence in the goodness of God consists for us, which the Gospel promises.

But Israel pursuing the law. This is the same as if he had said: they were pursuing the letter of the law, and had not arrived at the true meaning of the law. For whoever truly pursues the law as it was given, pursues the doctrine of faith and of true righteousness. Hence the Apostle calls it the law of righteousness.

Why? He was about to set forth the primary cause of the destruction of the Jews, and therefore thought the minds of the Romans must be stirred up by so many interrogations and simultaneously by a more unusual manner of speaking.

Because not by faith. That is, they apply themselves to the law, relying not on faith but on the works of the law, which they were doing without faith, for he opposes these to faith. But those works of the law were the ceremonies and the observance of whatever external offices. Concerning these we spoke at length in the question: What are the law and the works of the law to Paul, in the prefaces, and in the exposition of the third and fourth chapters above.

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For they have stumbled against the stone of stumbling. Such was Christ to them. He was an offense to them in the fact that he was a Galilean, that he seemed to have been born of such parents, then that he did not superstitiously cling to external observances as they did, but most of all because he rebuked their hypocrisy so sharply. Hence the Lord was saying: Blessed is he who shall not be offended in me. And since Christ was therefore so far from being recognized by them as Christ: not only did they not receive the things which he was bringing them of the Father's goodwill, but they also persecuted Christ with the greatest hatred. So they stumbled against him, and shattered and destroyed themselves against him from whom they could have received eternal salvation. So he proved to be a ruin for many in Israel, who refusing to believe in him were devoted to their own destruction, addicted to the works of the law.

As it is written. What the Apostle here adduces he took from the eighth and twenty-eighth chapters of Isaiah. In the eighth we read: And the Lord of Hosts shall be for sanctification, and for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both houses of Israel, and for a snare and a trap to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble and fall and be broken, and shall be ensnared and taken. But we showed in the second question appended to section 4, chapter 3, that Christ is that Lord of Hosts, and that whatever the Lord of Hosts once devised for his people was a type and a certain delineation of those things which were to be accomplished through Christ. The Apostle therefore here attributes to Christ the Lord what the prophet predicted of the Lord of Hosts, and to the Jews of his own time what the Lord threatened to the Jews at the time when that prophet was writing. For just as the Jews of that time, deserting to the Assyrians, stumbled against the Lord, and from this were enraged against the Lord even though he offered himself to them as Savior, forbidding them to seek aid from unbelievers: so the Jews stumbled much more gravely against the Lord after the coming of the Lord in the flesh, when they so raged against him even though he was offering them eternal life, forbidding them to trust in present things.

Christ exhibited all the benefits of God. Christ alone, the one mediator of God and men, is always the same: except that what he once performed obscurely and in part in his people, he began to perform after the incarnation most clearly and fully. This argument therefore is certain: Christ the true Lord of Hosts was once for very many of the Jews a stumbling block and stone of offense: therefore it is necessary that this be so for them even more today, and after the coming of the Lord in the flesh, this judgment of the Lord, which both rejects some and assumes others, had to be exercised more manifestly and fully. The cause therefore why so few of the Jews arrived at the true righteousness is that they would not believe in Christ. But the reason they could not endure believing in him is that they stumbled against him: everything in Christ displeased them and was hateful. But this was their fate. For what once befell this people at the time of Ahaz, when the Lord's judgment exercised this in a manner typical and in shadow: had after the coming of Christ to befall them now much more fully and brilliantly, so that namely, rejecting the grace of God offered and looking to the power of the Romans and their own, they themselves would make Christ into ruin and condemnation for themselves, he who had offered himself to them as Savior and Redeemer.

Moreover that the Apostle might show more clearly that the Jews stumbled against Christ, and therefore had to fall because they would not give him faith: he mingles a second oracle from the same prophet, which is in chapter 28. There the Lord promises under the type of Hezekiah that he will set up Christ as the Savior of his own, the unique one, and that whoever believes in him will fare well. He uses the allegory of one laying a foundation. For the words of the Prophet run thus: Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am laying in the foundation a sure, cornerstone, precious, solidly placed in the foundation: whoever believes shall not be in haste. The Seventy rendered: shall not

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be confounded, and the Apostle used this edition, because it was commonly in the hands of believers. Whoever firmly believes the promises of the Lord, waits with an even mind until it seems good to the Lord to fulfil them, does not hasten with a spirit impatient of delay toward those things which God has promised, and is not now confounded or put to shame, not only before others, but not even before himself, as if his hope had been frustrated.

The Apostle hints at an argument of this sort from this passage: God established Christ as the unique foundation of his house, the unique confidence of his elect, and therefore there is no other name under heaven by which we are saved. Therefore while the Jews not only did not receive him, but offended by the humility and severity of the Lord, attacked it with the greatest fury: it was necessary for them to stumble, fall, and perish forever. But the Lord is called foundation, because all the saints rest upon him. He also says cornerstone, because he joined in himself Gentiles and Jews, and all who believe in him. The Apostle used these translations also in 1 Cor. 8 and Eph. 2.

OBSERVATION I.

Gentiles who were not pursuing righteousness. Let us always turn this over in our minds, we who from the Gentiles have been brought to Christ: that we may be grateful for the divine condescension so generously poured out. Moreover let us confirm our faith in this concerning the goodness of the Lord: for if it came to us not seeking it, indeed opposing it: it will not now desert those who are zealous for it. Let us also see from this that all our salvation is the work and gift of God, nothing whatsoever of our powers.

OBSERVATION II.

But Israel pursuing the law. As long as we do not live by faith, let us weigh what happened here to the Jews, and what can happen to us: namely that, pleased with a shadow of faith in ourselves, we should neglect to pray for true and solid faith from the Lord. For no one will sufficiently acknowledge that we are justified by the free pardon alone of sinners. If we have touched even the smallest part of our duties: immediately we seem just to ourselves, we live securely as regards the judgment of the Lord, for ourselves, not for the Lord, our sins do not burn us, and from this neither is true justification, namely the remission of sins in Christ, duly acknowledged. But the Jews appeared religious and holy both to themselves and to others.

OBSERVATION III.

They have stumbled against the stone. Let us acknowledge that we stumble against Christ whenever we are offended by his word. But his word is whatever is the true word, whatever reproves us of sin, by whomsoever it may be administered. And whoever, admonished of sin even from boyhood, does not acknowledge the sin and pray for pardon: such a one would not even endure to be admonished by Christ himself, and would find in the Lord himself some pretext for appearing to want to reject the word of salvation. Let us therefore fix in our minds that Christ is as much the foundation of salvation for those who believe in him, as he is a stone of offense for those who do not believe even now, and that this is the case with those who are best in outward appearance, namely the citizens of Jerusalem. Therefore lest it come to pass that we receive destruction from Christ, when he has come to us for salvation: let us receive his voice suppliantly and trembling through whomsoever it has sounded for us. Whatever is brought to us in the name of God, if we have acknowledged it: it is the word of Christ, and we reject Christ, if we do not embrace it most

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religiously. Let us observe here also that: it is equally glorious for Christ to be proclaimed a stone of offense and a snare to unbelievers, as a rock of salvation to believers. Let us therefore not flee the simplicity of scripture in these things.

EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS: **CHAPTER 10**

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER TEN.

Brothers, the desire indeed of my heart.

EXPOSITION

In this section he does three things. First he testifies concerning his own zeal for the Jews and his solicitude for their salvation. Then he teaches that the zeal for God which they held is without true knowledge. Third, that the end of the law is Christ: and therefore that the righteousness which the law teaches can consist for us by faith in Christ alone. He treats these three things in such a way that in the later he adduces the reason of the earlier. For the reason he loved the Jews and so anxiously sought their salvation: he gives the zeal for God which he himself also attributes to them, but blind and ignorant, whereby they were rejecting the true and everlasting righteousness of God by trusting in their own worthless and imagined righteousness. This he then proved by the fact that Christ is the end and completion of the law, through whom alone we can attain this, that the law does not condemn us, being truly partakers of righteousness in Christ which the law requires.

By testifying of his love toward the Jews and his solicitude for their salvation: he wished to soften those things which he had begun to expound concerning their unbelief and arrogance. So above, at the beginning of the ninth chapter, when he had undertaken to discuss their rejection: he prefaced at length that he was held by the most ardent love for his people, which drove away from himself the suspicion of ill will. For the pseudo-Apostles were accusing him of writing those things which appeared to derogate from the dignity of the Jews.

Therefore just as he there wrote that the rejection of the Jews caused him such great sorrow, that he had wished to be rejected by the Lord in their place: which was certainly the most certain argument of a great full love: so he testifies in the present passage by the desire of his heart and his prayer to the Lord to be seeking the salvation of the Jews, which could not have been the case unless he loved them most sincerely. Then just as in the preceding chapter he subjoins the causes of his love, that they were brothers, kinsmen according to the flesh, Israelites, endowed with the adoption, etc.: so in this passage he subjoins the cause of his love toward them: the zeal for God, by which he himself acknowledges them to be held. Above he adduced the causes of his love from the condescension of God, because he wished to speak about the secret judgment of God by which they had been rejected even before they were born into this world: here he recalls the cause of his love as the study of God, because he had purposed to speak of the proximate cause of the destruction of the Jews, of their unbelief and arrogance. For being about to say that they were repudiated by God, it could appear that he was thinking maliciously of the condescension of God toward them: and it was fitting therefore to recall how well he recognized the magnitude of the condescension of God toward them, how highly he esteemed it. Here he began to accuse the Jews of their own impiety: lest therefore he might seem to attribute nothing of religion to them, he attributes zeal, but without true knowledge. For it was altogether necessary to show also what the cause was in them and from them, that they should abhor Christ above all the nations.

The second principal sentence in this section therefore is this: I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. That they had zeal, namely the pursuit of the ceremonies of the law which they held: this was sufficiently known to the whole world. But that their zeal was blind and ignorant, when few believed this, he proves from the fact that they were trying to worship God by their own proper righteousness, namely the zeal for ceremonies and civil respectability, according to the letter of the law, without true faith. For since they were seeking to

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establish their own righteousness, they could not rest solely on the gratuitous remission of sins offered through Christ, which is the righteousness of God, which God teaches in his law, which he gives to his own, and which alone he approves. Therefore their zeal was truly without knowledge, while they were vainly trying to worship God by their own righteousness, and were so obstinately rejecting that which he alone acknowledges.

But that the Jews had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God, even if they seemed to be most zealous for the law: he proves by the fact that Christ is the end and perfection of the law, to which the law everywhere calls and leads, so that he himself may bestow true righteousness upon those who believe in him. This is the third principal sentence in this section. He proves it from this. The law demands its fulfilment: since therefore no one can render this, there is need to believe in Christ, who may remove the curse of the law and renew the heart with the spirit of true righteousness. This he bestows on all who believe in him.

The whole argumentation of the Apostle is disposed thus: Let no one think that what I now say concerning the unbelief of the Jews, I say out of hatred for them. I love them most intensely. The undoubted proof of this my love toward them is that by the perpetual desire of my heart and continual prayer to God I seek their salvation. But because these things can be known to God and to me alone: I further adduce the cause of my love toward them, and from this the solicitude for their salvation which is evident to the whole world. They have the study of God, this I also confirm by my testimony: I myself acknowledge that they are devoted to the worship of God. By now I am so known to the brothers, that they cannot doubt that those who pursue God are most dear to me, let alone these my brothers according to the flesh, for I place nothing before the pursuit and worship of God.

But concerning the Jews I am compelled to complain of this: that their zeal here is without true knowledge. This is the second proposition, and the return to accusing the unbelief of the Jews. For wishing to worship God and pursue true righteousness, they are ignorant of what true and divine righteousness is. Since therefore their zeal is with the greatest ignorance. But that they are ignorant of the righteousness of God is clear from this: that they try to establish their own proper righteousness. But whoever knows what righteousness avails before God, will hold all his own righteousness as a thing abominable, certain that this alone is true righteousness, when we firmly believe God offering through the Gospel the remission of sins, and then will have thought of establishing nothing of his own proper righteousness: but he will submit himself to the righteousness of God, that is, believing the Gospel, will acknowledge himself once lost by his own merit, and will devote and consecrate himself wholly to the grace and mercy of God exhibited in Christ.

This he makes still more manifest in this further respect: Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every believer. This third principal sentence he deduces and expounds at greater length. And these things thus prove the preceding sentence: that the Jews from their blind and ignorant zeal, by which they try to establish their own righteousness, reject the righteousness of God. Whoever rejects him who alone bestows true righteousness upon those who believe in him: rejects true righteousness. This the Jews do. Therefore they are destitute of true righteousness. But that Christ is he who alone bestows true righteousness upon those who believe in him: is in this sentence. Christ is the end of the law, the ultimate thing to which the law leads, from whom solid righteousness is attained by every believer. This sentence is known of itself to those who know the law of God. For the holy seers everywhere attribute the justification of their own to Christ. And what else does the law teach but true righteousness? It therefore leads to Christ, that he may bestow

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the righteousness which it cannot bestow itself. Yet because the sum of the whole Gospel is in this sentence: he expounds it at greater length. This exposition is arranged thus:

The law makes known the necessity of righteousness, Christ alone gives it: therefore the law leads to Christ, and Christ is the end of the law. He proves the antecedent by the fact that the law condemns us all to eternal death: for it grants life only to those who do what it commands. But Christ is commended to us, who may avert the curse of the law from those who believe in him, and reconcile the life of God which the law demands. The law therefore drives to Christ, and Christ is the end of the law. For the law cannot teach in vain, since it is the law of God. But it teaches solid righteousness: it is therefore necessary that it teach it in such a manner that those whom it teaches may be able to learn and receive it. Since therefore this comes about only through faith in Christ: the law certainly leads to Christ.

That he may expound this more familiarly: he compares the righteousness which is from the law, that is, which the law teaches and requires, and the righteousness of faith, which consists for us by faith: and shows that the former comes to us through the latter, because this embraces Christ, who averts the curse of the law that holds all of us, reconciles the favor of the Father, and supplies the spirit of true righteousness. The Apostle therefore says: Moses describes the righteousness that is from the law, that is, which the law teaches and acknowledges. If any man shall have done the things that are commanded, he shall live through them. Now to do the precepts of the law, that is, to truly pursue them, no man can of himself, since from boyhood we are all inclined to evil. We therefore need a mediator and a renewer of ourselves, who by his death may avert from us the curse of the law, and bring the life of God from heaven. Just as the law consigns those who truly pursue it to that life, so it threatens eternal death to its transgressors. But the righteousness of faith, which consists for us by faith, removes all this condemnation from the law, because it has Christ. He ascended into heaven, so as to appease all wrath of the Father against us, and to obtain for us the Holy Spirit as the pledge of his eternal favor: the same also before plunged himself into the abyss of death on our behalf, that he might dissolve the power of death over us. Therefore through confidence in Christ this faith or righteousness of faith forbids saying: Who shall ascend into heaven, to appease the heavenly Father's majesty and obtain the heavenly spirit, the faculty of true righteousness? For whoever requires this, does not believe that Christ long since ascended into heaven and accomplished these things for us, and as far as in him lies, draws Christ down from heaven again, as if he who has Christ's ascension into heaven and the fact that at the right hand of God he perfects our salvation, holds these for nothing. Likewise he who is still anxious, after Christ has been proclaimed to us, as to who will descend into the abyss and destroy death for us: as far as in him lies, brings back Christ from the underworld, that is, holds his death and descent into the underworld as void. This therefore the righteousness of faith does not allow to be required.

But what it suggests, what it in turn affords us: where it has been received, there our heart is obtained by the word of faith, the word of the Gospel, so that we always proclaim it with joyful confession, secure concerning the remission of sins, the destruction of death, the possession of the life of God, of life everlasting. This word is never absent from the heart, never from the mouth: by it we live and reign. That word is: that Christ was raised by God from the dead. For if God, when he had died for our sins, called him back from death: he deems himself to have been satisfied for our impiety. And since he raised Christ to heavenly life at his right hand, that he might be the author and giver of life to those who believe in him: so it is necessary that those who believe in Christ be partakers of the life of God. Truly therefore they already attain and now possess righteousness and salvation, who believe these things with the heart, and confess and proclaim with the heart of those

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who believe, which necessarily all do who have received that true faith. For scripture testifies that those who believe in him cannot be put to shame. But if they are not put to shame, their hope frustrated, which the Gospel creates concerning him — a life of such a sort, righteousness, and consummated salvation — these they necessarily attain. Therefore the end and completion of the law, which teaches true righteousness and calls to salvation, is Christ: whom when the Jews reject, they reject the righteousness of God. Wherefore all their zeal, all their pursuit of God with which they burn, is with the greatest ignorance, and is consumed in vainly trying to establish their own righteousness: whence it comes that they cannot submit themselves to the righteousness of God, but stumble against Christ and perish forever.

INTERPRETATION

Brothers. The reverence for the Jews was undoubtedly great among the Romans, and it was not without reason that the Apostle so testifies of his zeal for the Jews with such great emotion. For by this appellation of brothers he expressed how highly he esteemed them, and how solicitous he was for their salvation.

My desire. *εὐδοκία* it is, but for it the Apostle also uses the word which he repeats in *δέησις*. For this use of doubling is the custom of scripture. Therefore desire and the longing of the heart is rightly understood here.

For I bear them testimony. He affirms gravely, so that one recognizing so seriously the cause of love toward the Jews, so far from common, might have fuller faith in him affirming how greatly he was solicitous for their salvation out of true love for them.

They have a zeal for God. Zeal is a more vehement pursuit. It seemed right to D. Chrysostom, not without reason, that the Apostle here used zeal for God in the common manner. For he who does not truly know and love God cannot be held by the pursuit of God. But he who in no wise knows God, much less loves him, who attributes even the smallest thing to his own righteousness. Therefore these Jews seeking to establish their own righteousness, and therefore rejecting the righteousness of God, were driven by a zeal for their own righteousness, though under the name of divine worship: not by a zeal for the righteousness of God, the worship of God, and therefore of God himself.

There is also a zeal for God with ignorance, when anyone seriously pursues whatever he knows with certainty to be the pleasure of God, and among those things certain things which, though they are not the pleasure of God, he nevertheless pursues for no other cause, thinking them altogether to be the pleasure of God. It is probable that the Apostle had such a zeal when he was persecuting the Church. Phil. 3. He considered the law of Moses to be the law of God, and applied himself to it to be irreproachable: when therefore he judged that the Christians wished to dissolve this law, he thought they were to be persecuted by him, and the law of God to be adduced against them. The same was being pleaded by the chief men of the Jews who were enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ: but the Lord rightly objected to them that they neither believed Moses nor knew the Father, whom they boasted of as their God, that they sought their own glory, transgressed the weightier matters of the law, and

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observed the lesser only for ostentation. These therefore were being stirred up against the Lord by a zeal for their own glory and gain, not by a zeal for God, which they were pretending.

Not a few from those Jews of whom the Apostle speaks in the present passage were undoubtedly similar to these. But because the Apostle had undertaken to set forth the causes why the Jews so abhorred the Gospel, in such a manner as to offend none of the saints, whether from the Jews themselves or from the Gentiles who were most ardently devoted to the Jews, but rather to bring to the piety of faith those whom he could, and to confirm in it those who held it: he wished to speak all things more mildly concerning the Jews. He therefore had his eye, when he attributed the zeal for God to them in common, upon the more sane among them, and those who were held by a true pursuit of God, even if still with such ignorance that they could not admit the Gospel of Christ: but when he subjoins concerning the stubborn confidence in their own righteousness and the rejection of Christ, he had his eye on those who were driven still more by such a zeal for their own righteousness.

So in nearly all his epistles the Apostle is wont at the outset, to win over minds for himself, indeed for Christ, and to prepare them to receive the admonition: to heap the Churches to which he writes with choice praises, not indeed vain ones, but yet those which belonged to those Churches only on account of a few more approved brothers. Afterward he accuses the same Churches collectively of many serious sins as well, even if all were not held by those evils, but only certain ones. For such is the logic of the commonwealth, that there be attributed to it in common the virtues and graces which only a few in it obtain, and the vices only those which have prevailed among the majority and gone unpunished. A most remarkable example of this economy is had in both epistles to the Corinthians. In the first the Apostle at the outset praises them as adorned eminently with all spiritual gifts, word and knowledge, so that no spiritual gift was lacking to them, and such persons the church did have some of. But presently he rebukes them for many serious evils, and calls them carnal, puffed up, and injurious. For not a few of these they also had, and did not, as was fitting, animadvert upon them. After this manner therefore, since even a few of the Jews were held by true zeal for God with ignorance: yet he attributes this collectively to the whole commonwealth of the Jews, and since the majority were being driven more by a zeal of the flesh, he presently also rebukes these collectively.

Their own righteousness. He writes: seeking to establish: for their own righteousness cannot be established, since there is none. Righteousness is the gift of God remitting sins and breathing his good Spirit through Christ the Lord: it is not the work of our powers. Those who are partakers of this righteousness hold for dung with D. Paul what they formerly counted as excellent merits, and desire to be found in Christ, not having their own righteousness which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Jesus Christ, the righteousness which is from God through faith. Phil. 3.

They have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. Aptly said. For the righteousness of God, which he himself bestows upon us and acknowledges in us, is the remission of sins for the sake of Christ. To this we submit and subject ourselves when we embrace it by faith. For we confess ourselves to be lost in sin, and we give ourselves over to the mercy of God. Concerning this designation of the righteousness of God: we said very many things in that: For in it is revealed and exhibited the righteousness of God. Section 5, chapter 1.

The end of the law is Christ. The end of the law of anything is that one may live for it. The law of God teaches true righteousness: its end therefore is for us to live justly. This now Christ alone has, and bestows upon those who believe in him: and this the whole law proclaims of him.

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Therefore the end and ultimate of the law, to which all things in the law are referred, is Christ justifying those who believe in him. When he says to every believer, he had in view the calling of the Gentiles.

For Moses writes the righteousness. For, describes. This passage is in Leviticus 18. There the Lord commands the people in these words: You shall do my decrees, and you shall keep my statutes, to live in them. I am the Lord your God. And you shall keep my statutes and my decrees, which a man who does them shall live through them. **אֲנִי** is what scripture has, which is rendered in them, but avails through them, for it is equivalent to that of the Lord: If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. D. Augustine and very many others understand this of the present life, which those preserve for themselves who comply with the law, for those who violated the law were punished with death. But since the law teaches faith and love first in all its precepts, whether ceremonial, judicial, or moral — for on these hang the whole law and the Prophets — who would doubt that he will live eternally who observes and does the precepts of the law, that is, who lives according to them? For to pursue the law, which also signifies to do and to keep and observe: are equivalent and mean the same: not immediately and completely to fulfil what the law commands, but to apply oneself to these with the whole heart. Whoever does this, keeps the commandments and enters into everlasting life, as the Lord himself testifies. D. Chrysostom also understands this passage thus.

D. Paul adduced this saying to show the necessity of faith in Christ: for the law grants life only to those who deliver themselves up to it from their soul and apply themselves with all their powers to doing what it commands: but condemns with death and devotes to all evils whoever does not persist in all things and adheres to them with all study, that is, does not remain in everything it commands. Deut. 27. But no man left to himself is able to pursue the law: and therefore drives to Christ, who made a curse for us, has taken away the curse of the law from us.

The confidence of this, the righteousness of faith, that is, the solid apprehension of the mercy of God which the Gospel offers in Christ, creates and sustains, removing all doubt concerning this our redemption. Of which are the things that follow. From this it is certainly clear that the Apostle opposed the righteousness of faith to the righteousness that is from the law, when in truth, as D. Chrysostom also acknowledges, both are the same righteousness. For what the law requires, faith supplies: the righteousness which the law admits and which righteousness indicates: faith in Christ brings and perfects. For the law demands that we depend in all things on God and merit well of all neighbors. But faith receives Christ, who bestows this by his Spirit on all who believe in him. When in those now sincerely applying themselves to the law, the flesh yet so strongly opposes the Spirit, that however much they pursue the law, they nevertheless still transgress it: Christ intercedes with the

Father for pardon for them, and shares with them his perfect obedience to the law, and finally brings it to pass that, the life of God fully imparted to them, they respond to the law in all things, and fully possess that righteousness which the law requires. Faith therefore perfects in us the righteousness that is from the law, which the law teaches and acknowledges. For the Apostle said: The righteousness that is from the law, for what it is, that which is held by the law for righteousness, which the law acknowledges as righteousness: thus it is one righteousness, both from the law and from faith, but by the law it is only commanded, required, and approved: while by faith it is conceived, nourished, and perfected. The beginning of which is to believe the remission of sins and the fellowship of the divine life, which both Christ reconciled for us, with all dread of merited punishment removed and all doubt of the divine lot. With these things therefore, as I said, he describes the righteousness of faith.

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The righteousness that is by faith. But that righteousness which is by faith: this is the whole condition of the soul by which we are new creatures, by which we are sons of God, by which we are members of Christ: by which we attribute and ascribe all things to God, and for his nod we are and do all things for all. This righteousness we conceive in faith in Christ, and Christ in us continually nourishes it, and finally perfects it, when our sins are finally utterly abolished. But all these things depend on this: that we embrace by faith the remission of sins and the reconciliation of the Father in Christ: with these therefore, as I said, he describes the righteousness of faith. For the Apostle says this righteousness speaks thus.

Do not say in thy heart. Do not admit this thought. Who shall ascend into heaven, to come back into grace with God and obtain the heavenly spirit of living the celestial life? This interrogation is not of one doubting, but of one despairing: therefore the righteousness of faith removes it. For this, having embraced Christ, who alone ascended into heaven and entered into the life of God, because he came from heaven, true God and man in all ways holy and divine, that is, heavenly: cannot endure this doubt. For it recognizes in it the negation of Christ, and that he draws Christ down from heaven who has admitted this doubt and distrust. For Christ ascended into heaven for this purpose: that interceding at the right hand of the Father for us, and imparting his Spirit, he might bestow the fellowship of the divine nature, with a place prepared for us with himself in heaven, so as to transfer us also there.

This righteousness of faith equally removes the fear of Gehenna, to which we all are liable by nature. This the Apostle signifies by the fact that it is added that the righteousness of faith forbids saying: Who shall descend into the abyss? תהום scripture uses for the deep, nearly of the sea, sometimes also of the earth. Jacob blessing his son Joseph, prayed him a blessing from heaven above and from the deep below. Gen. 49. After the same manner the blessing of Joseph is described in Deut. 33. And Psalm 71: Thou hast sent upon us many and grievous afflictions, and hast recalled and drawn me back from the depths of the earth. In Luke 8 we read that the demons prayed the Lord not to compel them to go away into the abyss. From which it is clear that the abyss is also said of the underworld. In this significance it appears that the Apostle here took this word abyss, for he subjoins:

This is to bring Christ back from the dead: that is, to hold his descent into the underworld and his resurrection from the dead, and his victory over death and Gehenna, as void. The Apostle appears to have written these things in this sense, and D. Ambrose understood them thus.

Origen understands in that: Do not say who shall ascend into heaven, or who shall descend into the abyss: the thought that affixes Christ to heaven or the abyss and does not acknowledge him to reign everywhere to be condemned. D. Chrysostom thinks what is condemned by the Apostle is doubt concerning the descent of Christ from heaven into our flesh, and the ascent from the underworld into heaven. The righteousness of faith rests on Christ the Lord, believing that he came from heaven into our flesh for our salvation, and having atoned for our sins by his death, rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven. But this faith is not of human powers: the flesh easily falls into doubt concerning these things. Therefore the righteousness of faith struggles against this doubt, forbidding to say: Who shall ascend into heaven, who shall descend into the abyss? that is, who could Christ come from heaven into my flesh, who could rise from the dead? This is the interpretation of Chrysostom.

But let us see how the words of scripture which the Apostle here used stand, for he changed them somewhat. In Deut. 30 we read them thus: For this commandment which I prescribe to thee

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today is not above thy comprehension, nor far off. It is not in the heavens, that thou shouldest say: Who shall ascend for us into heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it. Nor is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say: Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it. For this word is near thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. Moses had said a little before concerning the restoration of Israel, and the circumcision of the heart of these and of the heart of their seed, that they might love the Lord their God with their whole heart and their whole soul, and thus live, all of which Christ effects. And a little after: For thou wilt hear the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep the commandments and statutes that are written in the book of this law: and thou wilt return to the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole soul. To these he subjoins what the Apostle here adduced, or rather to which he alluded: that the commandment was not far from the people of God, nor in heaven, nor beyond the sea, etc.

You see therefore that the Apostle cited this passage very aptly: except that in place of crossing the sea he put descending into the abyss, having understood thereby the underworld, that is, the condition of death which Christ underwent and conquered for us. Moses said that the word and force of the law is not placed far, or exceeds the comprehension of the people. But of which people? Of those converted to the Lord and loving the Lord with their whole heart and whole soul, of the people whose heart is circumcised, that is, renewed and regenerated to the pleasure of God. But this alone Christ provides for his own. When therefore the Apostle wished to show that faith perfects that righteousness which the law requires: he rightly adduced the fact that faith does not allow you to allege that what the law teaches is removed from you, and that you could not reach it: as if it were placed either in heaven or beyond the sea: since Christ whom faith embraces, the law writes in the hearts, so that it may truly be present to believers, in the heart and in the mouth.

In this the Apostle appears to have varied from Moses: for in place of what Moses has, who shall go over the sea, he said: who shall descend into the abyss? For if you wish to take abyss here for the sea, and to understand that: who shall descend into the abyss? for that: who shall descend into the sea, and crossing bring the command of God: the fact seems to stand in the way which the Apostle subjoins: This is to bring Christ back from the dead. For the underworld and the state of the dead appears to be understood here by the abyss. This moves me to think that the Apostle understood in these doubts, who shall ascend into heaven, who shall descend into the abyss, the liberation of the overthrown death and the restored heavenly life, that is, the divine lot, the new man, truly loving God and having the law piously in the heart and in the mouth.

But if anyone thinks that heaven and abyss here should simply be understood as the height and depth of the precept of God, the true righteousness which the law requires: what the Apostle adds will fit somewhat better in this sense, that this is to bring Christ down from heaven and to bring him back from the dead, in this manner. The righteousness which the law teaches demands the highest conformity to the pleasures of God, but by no means bestows it. The righteousness of faith, that is, faith itself, embraces Christ, who supplies that conformity: so that thou canst not say, this righteousness is in heaven, who shall ascend into heaven that he may bring it to us? It is in the abyss, that is, it is so hidden and secret, that it cannot be approached: who shall descend there that he may bring it to us? Christ died and rose again for this, and ascended into heaven, to reconcile this righteousness for thee, to inscribe it in thy heart, so that it may always be present in thy mouth and in thy heart. If thou doubtst concerning this, thou dost draw Christ down from heaven again, and bring him back from the underworld, that is, thou makest void for thyself the fact that he died and rose again for thee, and ascended into heaven. For he died to expiate thy sins and to put to flight the power of Satan in thee, from which it came that thou couldst not even understand the force of the divine law. He ascended into heaven, to fully restore thee breathed upon by the heavenly Spirit

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to his image. If therefore thou believest in Christ, thou canst not doubt that thou art a partaker of the righteousness of God, and that all things are now given thee which the law teaches and requires: and these will be far from thee: Who shall ascend into heaven, who shall descend into the abyss? that is, this righteousness is too high and too deep for me to be able to attain it.

But what does it say? The word is near thee. He wished to fix it well that all our righteousness and salvation is contained in the word of the Gospel: and so to the negation which he premised, that the force of the law, solid righteousness, is not removed from believers: he subjoins separately and with an interrogation this affirmation, that the force of the law and true righteousness is near to the saints in the mouth and in the heart, that is, so fixed in the heart that the soul always burns to proclaim it. It was more weighty to speak thus, and it rendered the reader more attentive.

This is the word of faith. Namely the Gospel of Christ itself, in which is all the force of the law, the force of all righteousness. For he who has truly believed the Gospel is truly the Son of God, and justified before God, and has eternal life. Therefore he holds all that word and precept of the law in which the life of God, namely righteousness itself, is contained. Therefore the Apostle, about to prove that the word of faith, the very Gospel which he was proclaiming, was that word which Moses predicted would be in the mouth and in the heart of the saints, in which they would have life and salvation: subjoined that whoever believes and confesses that our Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead is saved.

For if thou confess. This proof rests on the faith and consent of those who have already received Christ. With these it is indeed admitted, that salvation consists by true faith in the Gospel of Christ. Now Moses spoke of a life-giving and salvation-giving word. Since therefore the Romans were persuaded that the Gospel was power for salvation to every believer, and it had also been abundantly shown that the law without the Gospel only condemns: from the fact that they acknowledged the Gospel to be salvation-giving, they recognized what they acknowledged: that the Gospel was that word which God so inscribes in the heart of his own that they hold nothing before it, and to confess and proclaim it everywhere.

If thou confess, he says, for this is to have it in the mouth, and believe in the heart, that is, to have it in the heart. For confessing here does not only signify to acknowledge and admit, but to proclaim and celebrate with zeal: for this is what scripture says by **הִתְהַלֵּל**. To confess: which is more than to believe, for he is speaking of true confessing: he places first the word to believe, and this according to the custom of scripture. So Psalm 121: He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep: I would say, will not sleep nor yet slumber. But scripture has its own custom. Therefore the sense of this Psalm is: He who keeps Israel will not slumber, let alone will he not sleep, so will he watch over his people: so in the present passage the sense is: He who confesses with his mouth and also proclaims, will not believe only with the heart.

That God raised him. This is the sum of the Gospel. For when we believe Christ was raised from the dead, we believe that he made satisfaction for our sins, and reigns in heaven to perfect us according to his image. In these are contained all things which scripture proclaims concerning Christ. Of which matter we said more in the last section of chapter 4, and in section 1 of chapter 6.

For with the heart one believes. He proves what he premised: that whoever confesses with the mouth and believes with the heart that Christ was raised from the dead is saved. For if the faith of the heart avails for righteousness, and the confession of the mouth for salvation: certainly he is saved who believes with the heart and confesses the Gospel of Christ with the mouth. He attributes

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righteousness to the faith of the heart, and salvation to the confession. But just as neither faith of the heart can be without confession of the mouth, nor confession of the mouth — for he speaks of true, not simulated, confession — without faith of the heart: so neither righteousness without salvation, nor salvation without righteousness: indeed salvation is itself righteousness. For then finally when it fully obtains in us, so as is fitting we shall avail, we shall be completely saved and blessed. Yet since when we also proclaim our faith to others, we exhibit the life of God, and declare ourselves to be true members of Christ: salvation is rightly attributed to confession. For then indeed we are truly saved, when we avail and do all things which befit us, that is, when we persist inoffensively, promptly, and alacritly in the actions of the new man. Among all of these the chief is to confess and proclaim Christ. Moreover salvation is perfected through the ministry of the Church, which remits the sins of those to whom they are remitted: and since these are already remitted to adults, it already demands confession of faith from them: it is therefore suited to the perfecting of salvation.

For scripture says. He proves what he said: that the faith of the heart avails for righteousness and the confession of the mouth for salvation. For if he shall not be put to shame, that is, his hope which awaits eternal life is not frustrated, whoever believes: it is manifest that he who believes is a partaker both of righteousness and of salvation: because it was truly said, with the heart one believes for righteousness, and confession is made with the mouth for salvation. For not to be put to shame, that is, not to be frustrated in one's desire, that is, to receive eternal life, which we all seek as the end of goods, and to be a partaker of righteousness and salvation — which is itself nothing but perfect righteousness — is equivalent: so that if those things belong to the believer, these too must belong to the believer. But he adduces the proof only concerning the believer, and not also concerning the confessor, though he had said separately that faith avails for righteousness and confession for salvation: and thereby shows that he added confession to faith only for the sake of explaining, and that where true faith obtains, there confession cannot be absent. For it is as impossible for one who truly believes in Christ not to confess and proclaim him, as it is impossible for one who rightly lives and is well not to move and act. For whoever truly believes embraces Christ as every good, and lives by that Spirit whose first desire is that the name of the Lord be sanctified: then he knows that all things are in the hand of Christ the Lord, wherefore all things drive him to proclaiming God, and nothing deters him from this.

OBSERVATION I.

Brothers, the desire indeed of my heart. Let us again be reminded that we must avoid inexpert offense in the administration of the Gospel of Christ. This caution belongs to all who sincerely preach Christ. For the Spirit by which these are driven so burns in this, that it may gain as many as possible for the Lord, that no circumspection and care is sufficient for it. Therefore they proclaim Christ not for the purpose of bearing fruit, to whom it is such a small thing to offend certain persons by an untimely and inconsiderate handling of the Gospel. Moreover we are taught here also how much we must pray to God even for those who are still opposed to the Gospel.

OBSERVATION II.

But not according to knowledge. Let us observe how great an impiety can be under the zeal of God, that is, the most ardent pursuit of worshipping God. For what of impiety is not in it, when men try to establish their own righteousness, and attack the righteousness of God? Every zeal whatsoever must therefore be carefully examined, however much it may invoke God, however many things it may do and suffer under the name of God with insolence. The pseudo-zeal is wont

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for the most part to drive men even to the pouring out of life, not only to the casting off of wealth, the flight from honors and delicacies. But here is the Lydian stone by which every zeal must be assayed: if it submits itself to the righteousness of God, that is, rests on the sole mercy of God, sustaining the recognition of no proper righteousness. For whoever has admitted even the slightest thing of his own righteousness: it is certain that he is being driven by a zeal without knowledge.

For true knowledge of God knows that the whole of our salvation is contained in the resurrection of the Lord, that is, in the victory of our sins through the death of the Lord: and this passage admonishes. Let us always from this be mindful that our sins are such that they could only be expiated by the death of Christ alone, and that all things are to be ascribed to him, and nothing of sin is ours. And that they have been most fully expiated, after God raised him from the dead, granting eternal life in our flesh, in order to share this with all who believe in him, as a new and heavenly life which also manifests itself here, and exhibits the image of the heavenly one.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION II.

Nor indeed is there any distinction, etc.

EXPOSITION

The Apostle shows in this section that the Gospel must be preached to all without distinction, and yet not all receive it. He comes to this passage on this occasion. It has been, from the beginning of the ninth chapter, his aim to expound from what causes it came about that so few of the Jews and so many of the Gentiles believed in Christ at the preaching of the Gospel. When therefore he had expounded the first cause of this in the preceding chapter, the will of God, which at that time deigned to call so many from the Gentiles and so few from the Jews: he began at the end of that same chapter to expound also the second cause, which exists in the Gentiles and Jews themselves, namely the faith of the former and the unbelief of the latter, and the fact that the Jews seek to establish their own righteousness, which is the cause why they cannot believe the Gospel. Upon this occasion he began to expound the force of faith, which alone commends all to God, and attains in Christ alone the righteousness which the law requires. This finally he confirmed by the fact which Isaiah has: Those who believe in Christ cannot be put to shame. Since therefore he was otherwise working to show that the kingdom of Christ must now be communicated especially to the Gentiles, to whom it had been given in preference to the Jews to believe the Gospel: in the present section he returns from this back to the argument and confirms the same thing together, that God determined now to draw not only the Jews but the Gentiles, and more from the Gentiles than from the Jews, to Christ the Lord: which is precisely what the Apostle undertook to prove in these three chapters.

He first proves that: Whoever believes in him shall not be put to shame, through this: There is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles for salvation. From themselves both are equally lost, by faith both are equally saved. He then confirms this, first from the amplitude of the divine goodness: The same Lord is Lord of all. For his mercy is rich, that is, it avails for all who call upon him, since he is the Lord of all. It is the same reasoning as that above in chapter 3: Is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not also the God of the Gentiles? Therefore it is the nature of the same Dominion to save those over whom one is lord. For to whomsoever power over men is divinely given, it is given for this, that he may be their savior. Hence in scripture those who are endowed with higher authority are called lords. But the Lord bestows this because it is most fully in himself: and therefore he himself is the savior of all over whom he is lord, that is, of all mortals: but with the discrimination

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of election saved. For the Lord is thus the God and Lord of all, and saves all, yet so that finally by right and just judgment he consigns the reprobate, after they abuse the temporal salvation, to Gehenna.

We see each man who is rightly constituted to have a singular condescension toward those whom he has begotten, whom he governs, whom he holds in his power: this is from God, who alone is good. God therefore excels supremely in this goodness, and therefore will not be able so to cast off the Gentiles: it therefore befits him to bring them to the fellowship of salvation, those who for so many centuries had perished in their own impiety.

Then the Apostle confirms the same by the oracle of Joel: Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. He places all salvation in the sole invocation of the name of God, and when the prophet says whoever: it is signified that this must be communicated to all mortals. For the prophet said this when he was prophesying concerning the kingdom of Christ, to which the Gentiles were to come — as was predicted at all the Prophets. But from the fact that the salvation-giving invocation ought to be communicated to all the Gentiles: the Apostle then gathers that Christ also had to be preached to the Gentiles, and that the Apostles were sent for this purpose. For all these things served the purpose of the Apostle: that the Gentiles in the present time ought to be brought to Christ rather than the Jews.

The argument is of this sort: The invocation of the name of God ought to reach all: it is therefore necessary that faith also reach all, for the invocation belongs to believers. But faith requires the preaching of the Gospel, to which faith must be applied: and preaching requires the sending of preachers. For the inclination and faculty of announcing salvation to men is a gift of the divine office: the flesh can do nothing of this from itself. Satan also attacks this preaching in all ways. It was therefore so decreed by divine providence, that Christ be preached to all, and that just as the faith of Christ, so also the Gospel be made common to all: even though not all would believe the Gospel, and from the Jews very few — of which he presently repeats in the following section.

INTERPRETATION

There is no distinction. That there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, as much in their own impiety as in the capacity for receiving the righteousness of Christ through faith: the Apostle also proved above in chapter 3. The first in section 4, there: There is no distinction, for all have sinned. The other in section 5, there: Is God the God of the Jews only?

For the same Lord is Lord of all. But the generality of the Lordship of God brings it that it belongs to God to communicate the salvation of his Christ to all peoples, and yet to select from all peoples some whom he may bring to him.

For whoever calls upon him. Joel 2: this passage reads thus: Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance. The prophet here premised the judgment of the world, and therefore fittingly subjoins concerning the deliverance of the saints: he says indeed it will be in Zion and in Jerusalem: but the prophet here speaks of Zion and Jerusalem restored, to endure and reign forever: and this Zion and Jerusalem is the Church of Christ, to which the Gentiles also had to come. In this is the proof from this oracle of that: that the salvation of Christ was to be communicated equally to the Gentiles and the Jews: because salvation is placed in the sole invocation of the name of God, not now in the ceremonies of the law which could not be omitted by the Jews without offense to God: and he says it generally:

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קרא בַּשׁ, to call upon the name of the Lord: or to invoke the name of the Lord is placed somewhere for the whole worship of God. For in the worship of God the first thing is to acknowledge God as the one from whom salvation must be implored, who must be invoked in any crisis. Yet here to invoke is taken simply for to seek all aid and salvation from God.

But how shall they call. He uses interrogations for the sake of greater vehemence of the discourse. But it is manifest that one cannot invoke God who does not believe that he can obtain aid from him by prayer. The invocation of the name of God is therefore such an effect of faith, that without the certain faith that he is willing and able to save us, it cannot exist.

But how shall they believe? For just as that thou believe something concerning anyone, it is necessary that thou have heard beforehand what thou must believe concerning him: faith rests on what has been said. So that all may invoke God, it is necessary that all believe in him: but that they may believe, it is necessary that they hear what they must believe concerning God.

But how shall they hear? The name of the herald, κήρυξ, is aptly used, that is, herald: for the Gospel is wholly a proclamation, which is announced concerning Christ, that he came to save all who believe in him: scripture uses a name of the same significance.

But how shall they proclaim? For who proclaims anything true concerning God, and making for the salvation of man, whom God himself does not send and impel to this? Yet concerning the benevolence of man, no one will be able truly to proclaim anything, whom the man himself has not sent for this: much less will any creature be able to proclaim the mercy of God, if God himself has not caused her to proclaim it. The oracle which he here cites is found in Isa. 52. That whole passage is concerning the restoration of the people of God, especially that which was effected through Christ, but yet under the type of the restoration from the Babylonian captivity. There he premises before the adduced oracle: Therefore my name is continually and daily assaulted with insults, while the impious nations dominate my people: my people shall know my name, in that day, for I myself who speak, behold me. To these there follows in the prophet: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who proclaims good news and announces peace, who proclaims good news, announces salvation, who says to Zion: your God reigns. In these we aptly see that this proclamation of peace and goods and salvation, that is, of the kingdom of God, was promised as a most greatly desired thing, and in which the Lord himself wished to speak to his people, which the people would receive with the greatest joy. This joy the prophet expressed both with the image of those leaping with admiration at the arrival of the heralds so eagerly awaited — for the admiration with singular joy is that: How beautiful the feet upon the mountains, etc. — and with so favorable a repetition of the blessed herald's message which sounded from them, saying: Of him who proclaims good news and announces, who proclaims good news of peace, who announces good things, who proclaims good news of salvation. Adding to the magnificence of the proclamation also the fact that the saints are led to admire the feet of those proclaiming good news in the mountains. For the proclamation which was to be announced to all, from which everlasting salvation was offered: is proposed to happen in the most lofty places, with the greatest magnificence and majesty. In all these things, since the preaching of the Gospel, which is the proclamation of peace, of true goods, of salvation, is so described that it is the greatest of all the benefits of God, which God was willing to exhibit to the world only in his pre-established time: it is sufficiently clear from this that no one can bring the Gospel proclamation anywhere, who is not divinely appointed, sent, and impelled for this. For the Spirit of my Father himself speaks in you, says Christ.

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Now if the Gospel of Christ cannot be preached except by those who are divinely sent for this very purpose, and the Apostles preached an unquestionable Gospel — concerning which not only Isaiah here, but all the prophets foretold — and the Gentiles received this Gospel most eagerly while very many of the Jews spurned it: it is abundantly clear that the Lord willed, at the time of the Gospel, that many from the Gentiles and few from the Jews be brought to the kingdom of his Son. But this is precisely what the Apostle is chiefly working at in this passage. Whence he presently subjoins concerning those who did not believe the Gospel, but with the name suppressed quietly.

But not all have obeyed. He said this of the Jews, of whom is also the complaint of the prophet which he subjoins. Concerning the obedience of the Gospel it was said in that: In the obedience of faith, section 2, chapter 1.

For Isaiah says. This is found in chapter 53, and has an expression of wonder at the paucity of believers, and particularly of the Jews. The prophet predicted that the arm of the Lord, that is, the salvation-giving death of Christ, was so little to be revealed to these as to predict that they would judge Christ, when he had expiated our sins, to have been rejected and stricken by the Lord, as is read in that chapter 53.

Faith therefore is from hearing, that is, from the preaching of the Gospel, and this consists in the word of God. For both the Gospel itself is the word of God, and it is preached from the word, that is, from the command of God, with a certain divine sending. Since therefore the Gentiles in preference to the Jews believe in this: it is manifest that the Lord has now determined to bring more from the Gentiles than from the Jews to his kingdom.

That faith is from hearing: many in this age harass this, as if the Apostle were making the whole cause of faith the hearing of the word of God. For they contend that this saying of the Apostle must be understood of the internal hearing of the word. But the Apostle here speaks of the external preaching of the Gospel, through which the Lord wished to call all the Gentiles to the fellowship of faith. That the sole external preaching of the Gospel produces faith: there is no one who teaches this. For who would not confess that faith is the gift and work of God? The Apostle teaches nothing else here, than that the Lord uses external preaching to engender faith in his elect. For here the Apostle wished to render the preaching of the Gospel commendable, and to remove all stumbling block from it. For because the Jews obstinately rejected the Gospel, very many both among the Jews and among the Gentiles, detained namely by the preposterous admiration for the Jews, were partly alienated from that Gospel, partly weakened in the faith of the Gospel. And the discourse of the Apostle chiefly serves these for the whole of these three chapters. Therefore through that: faith is from hearing, he shows that all who hear the Gospel and believe reach faith and from this to eternal salvation: and through what he subjoins, namely: but hearing is from the word of God, he teaches that all preaching of the Gospel consists in the word and command of God. Since therefore the Gospel had now reached all the Gentiles: he rightly objected this very thing here, so that from it it might appear that God had determined, in this time, to give the Gentiles most of all to Christ his Son.

OBSERVATION I.

The same Lord, rich toward all. Let this make us both hope the best for all, and most urgently serve all for their salvation. For if we are servants, it befits this Lord of ours and of all, who so generously pours out his goodness upon all: that we ourselves serve above all to administering this

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goodness of God to all, accommodate ourselves with all our powers, that is, as D. Paul so greatly pursued, let us give care to be all things to all, whereby we may gain even some for Christ. This Lord is the Lord of all for salvation: let us therefore also be servants of all for the same. For what else do other good little servants care for, and what do they see to be of concern to their master? But this so widespread a zeal for procuring the salvation of all: let us not think it is to be extended to those only who have not yet come to the fellowship of our religion, such as Jews, Turks, and those occupied with manifest publicly condemned superstition, as are today very many of those peoples who bear the name of Christ: but also to those who are joined to us by the same profession of faith. For it cannot be said how for very many of us, if we do not lay down the care of the brethren, we yet let it go slack. For when they do not immediately follow whither we call them, if they disagree in something, if driven from the way by the desires of the flesh they have done what God has not yet permitted us to fall into: it is dreadful that we despond concerning them, that we judge them securely as all but lost, both among ourselves and among others. Let it therefore be fixed in our minds, and let this occur whenever this despair concerning the salvation of the brethren, and this neglect of them, steals upon us: The same Lord is Lord of all, rich in goodness toward all who call upon him. Let us weigh how great the gift of the condescension of God is, to invoke his name: and let us sustain believing that God bestows this in vain upon no one: let us think that wherever the invocation of the name of God exists, there is a foundation which it is our part to cultivate for the Lord. Let hope of advancement be confirmed: so utterly without exception is salvation promised to all who shall have called upon the name of the Lord: and it is not our part to pronounce concerning those who invoke with the heart, nor to interpret all true zeal of salvation only in the better part, but often also to hope against hope.

OBSERVATION II.

How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? O the memorable commendation, O the eulogy of the preaching of the Gospel now to be weighed! To believe in Christ is eternal life, and here Paul writes: How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? It is therefore impossible to come to faith, to come to eternal life, unless thou hast heard the Gospel, and that administered through a man. For Paul here speaks of the preaching of the Gospel which the Lord administered through his Apostles. The Apostle knew when he wrote these things that God could call men without the ministry of men, he knew that all doctrine administered through men is inefficacious for salvation unless God gives the increase: he of all people guarded most against anything of the divine glory accruing to mortals: yet he wrote simply: How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And a little after: Faith is from hearing. Let us therefore not be most ungrateful to our Savior for so great a gift, nor diminish the immense weight of this gift, nor be fastidious about the word of life for this reason, because the Lord deigns to administer it through mortals, through our brothers, through our flesh. Such a lover of our association is God, such he teaches us and seeks to bring us into the fellowship of his divinity, that he determined to administer the very eternal salvation to us through the ministry of a dispensation. It will easily be guarded against, that salvation be not attributed either to the externally administered word or to its human administrator, if only the Gospel be preached purely. For what is the Gospel itself but the offering of salvation, which the Lord himself offers by his own word, requiring that we trust in him alone? Far therefore let us drive from the Church of Christ those subtleties: that what a man speaks is not the word of the Lord, that the soul can be taught by the Spirit and not by the external voice those things which are of God, and the like. These thoughts call away minds from the faith and esteem due the Gospel which is preached in the Church, dissolve the fellowship of the Church: and because under the pretext of revelations and the internal doctrine of God they teach men to despise God in the brothers, they finally entirely empty souls of God. God willed us to consist of body and soul,

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and what the mind is to learn to be put into it through the senses, and then decreed that all his benefits among us are to be dispensed through our ministry. Let us so accustom ourselves and ours to believe that in the Gospel and sacraments God himself speaks his dialogue to us and offers his gifts: and let us embrace these not as a man's word and donation, but as God's — as indeed they are: thus easily all superstitious admiration of the ministry or ministers will depart, and in the word and sacraments the due honor of God in the Church, the due use and fruit, will endure, and the fellowship of the Church itself will advance more and more in Christ its head and Savior.

OBSERVATION III.

But how shall they proclaim unless they be sent? Let us confirm from this that absolutely no one can speak or teach and proclaim the Gospel of salvation, or anything true and right, who is not instilled, impelled, and moved to this divinely. God speaks when it seems good to him: and sets such store by his word as not to allow it to be dispensed rashly. Therefore as nothing true can proceed except from God himself — for every man is a lie, and the devil the father of lies — so the pious in whatever truth he hears, cannot be in doubt that it was divinely particularly destined for him: and whoever brings it, he can conclude nothing of this could have sounded or been possible, unless the Lord himself had sent him and moved him to this, whether he be evil or good. If the minister is good, he will the more admire the condescension of the heavenly Father toward himself: if evil, he will acknowledge himself worthy of no other administrator: yet he will equally embrace the love of God toward himself, who does not allow himself to be so deprived of the word of salvation, that he more quickly impels the evil to bring it to him. Therefore the sons of God will always inquire this above all: whether what they heard is the word of God, and being assured of this: will no longer concern themselves with the minister through whom the word of the Father reached them, and will embrace it with the whole heart. But where the Lord shall have given them to establish, or rather to consider whom the Lord has established as the interpreter of his word: they will commit the dispensation of the word of God to none but those whom they have recognized, as much as men can recognize such things, to be suitable for that ministry.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION III.

But I say: have they not heard?

EXPOSITION

The Apostle now expounds the second cause of the blinding of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles somewhat more openly: namely that the Jews stubbornly reject the Gospel offered, while the Gentiles eagerly embrace it. He makes the transition here conveniently from what he had said: Faith is from hearing. For since faith comes from the Gospel, a more honorable cause of the unbelief of the Jews would have been, if they had not yet heard the Gospel. The Apostle therefore removes this cause by an inquiry. For he asks: have they not heard the Gospel? But guarding against offense, he does not express of whom he is asking, and responds through the oracle of the Psalm, that the Gospel had reached all. When he inquires again: has Israel not known? he again responds not in his own words but in those of Moses. In all these things he showed how highly he esteemed the Jews, and drove away from himself the suspicion of ill will toward them. For it is the mark of one showing reverence to descend so discreetly to what is their fault. Moreover the response which the Apostle here signifies rather than expresses from the adduced oracles, runs thus: The Jews stubbornly reject the grace of God offered: the Gentiles embrace it. From this there come to the fellowship of Christ very many from the Gentiles, very few from the Jews. And this is the proposition of this section.

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The Apostle wishing to express more fully and grandly how widely the Gospel had been spread at that time: used this saying of the prophet concerning the heavens, signifying by it that, just as the splendor of the heavens, the light and movement of the stars, proclaim God everywhere, so that no one anywhere from this can fail to know clearly the majesty of God: so now the proclamation of God through the Gospel is heard everywhere, so that the glory of Christ, no less than the splendor of the heavens and the sun, now shines forth clearly everywhere. For so rapidly then was the preaching of the Gospel running and spreading daily, that the Apostle wrote to the Colossians that even in his own time it had reached the whole world, and every creature which is under heaven. Col. 1. For even though at that time the preaching of the Gospel had not yet reached all the climates of the world individually, it had yet reached the chief regions of the world, from which it could easily spread to the remaining mortals. There are indeed very many kingdoms very late indeed converted to Christ entirely so as to receive the polity of Christ publicly: for England through Augustine sent by D. Gregory is read to have fully received the laws of Christ: and Saxony at the time of Charlemagne — and this is not an argument: in those passages in which God himself complains both of the stubborn impiety of the Jews and of the spurning of the offered grace, and of his condescension toward the Gentiles, and testifies that the Gentiles embraced this condescension. I shall expound the oracles in the interpretation.

INTERPRETATION

But I say, have they not? He descends gravely and distinctly, in a lucid arrangement, to accusing the unbelief of the Jews, so that the very form of his discourse exhibits at once both the certainty of his accusation and his sincerity and love toward his people.

Indeed rather into all the earth. The Apostle took this from Psalm 19, and by allusion fitted it to the preaching of the Gospel: for the prophet sang this concerning the heavens. These, he says, have indeed no speech, no words, no voice of them is heard: yet their rule, the certain course of them, goes forth into all the earth, and their utterances to the ends of the world: the Lord placed the Sun as a tent in them, etc. This Psalm is then concerning the heavens: its purpose here is to teach first to acknowledge and admire the majesty of God from the mechanism of the heavens, then from the benefit of the law. The Apostle after his custom used the common Greek edition, which has: Into all the earth their sound went forth. But in the Hebrew it is **וְהִלְכָה**, that is, their rule: by which the prophet signified the regular course of the heavens and the motion recurring in certain alternations, carrying back the sun and other stars: which is also the speech of the heavens, certainly admirable and magnificent, by which the heavens proclaim with singular magnificence the infinite majesty of God.

The Apostle wishing to express more fully and grandly how widely the Gospel had now been proclaimed: used this saying of the prophet concerning the heavens, signifying by it that, just as the glory of the heavens, the light and movement of the stars, proclaim God everywhere, so that no one anywhere from this can fail clearly to know the majesty of God: so now the proclamation of God through the Gospel is heard everywhere, so that the glory of Christ, no less than the splendor of the heavens and the sun, now shines forth most clearly everywhere. For so rapidly then was the preaching of the Gospel running and spreading daily, that the Apostle wrote to the Colossians that even in his own age it had in their own time reached the whole world, and every creature which is under heaven. Col. 1. For even though at that time the preaching of the Gospel had not yet reached

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all the individual climates of the world: it had yet reached the chief regions of the world, from which it could easily spread to the remaining mortals. There are indeed very many kingdoms very late indeed converted to Christ entirely, so as to receive the polity of Christ publicly: England through Augustine sent by D. Gregory is read to have fully received the laws of Christ: and Saxony at the time of Charlemagne. But this is not an argument, that the name of Christ had not been preached among these even before. Nowhere indeed in the whole world was the Gospel publicly received all the way down to the times of Constantine, except perhaps among the Armenians: and yet everywhere the proclamation of it was continually growing more and more among the Gentiles.

First Moses says. This saying is read in Deut. 32, where God premises: They provoked me to jealousy by what is not a god, and irritated me with their vain inventions: and I in turn will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a people, and with a foolish nation I will irritate them. Thus there. God is a zealot, not enduring a foreign god to be worshipped alongside of him: and therefore, as with a kind of jealousy, the Jews provoked God, when with their inventions and worthless deities they paid in worship to them what was owed to God alone. In turn therefore God threatens them in this passage that he will assume and cultivate the Gentiles with his benefits: who since they had hitherto been destitute of the polity of the true religion, it was right to say they were not a people, and a foolish nation. This so great a felicity of the Gentiles therefore rightly kindled jealousy in the Jews.

Moreover the first of the benefits with which God deigned to cultivate the Gentiles is the true religion, and the rest follows which all men seek, according to that: Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. God therefore by this saying of Moses undertook to impart to the Gentiles the knowledge of himself in Christ the Lord, and together with this all manner of felicity: and to cast off the Jews on account of their contempt for his grace, and to plunge them into such evils that they would burn with jealousy against the Gentiles: just as the matter stands with both groups for so many centuries. For while even among the Gentiles the purity of religion long since collapsed, and among not a few is utterly extinguished, and kingdoms from this have miserably collided and overthrown each other, and every kind of evil has weighed upon them: yet as long as the proclamation of the name of Christ endured among very many of them, so much also of peace, liberty, and all manner of felicity endures among these. But the Jews are found everywhere in the manner of exiles and captives, in the greatest misery and calamity, and this for so many centuries now, from the very rise of the Gospel. For then God began to provoke and irritate the Jews to jealousy in the Gentiles, upon whom with his Christ he bestowed all things: just as he consigned the Jews on account of the denied and rejected Christ to the greatest unhappiness and calamity. To provoke to jealousy, or to emulation, he says: by which he understands that pain which stirs up the Jews, while they see the Gentiles enjoying the felicity which was once promised to them: from which they will undoubtedly be impelled to aspire again toward that felicity.

If here the Jews object that they rejected Christ and crucified him, yet they had not irritated God by false and spurious religion, but had with great zeal applied themselves to the law of God itself, so that they had no other cause for bringing Christ to the cross than that he seemed to derogate from the law of God: it must be answered to them that Christ and the Father are so one, and teach the same things, that they could not have rejected Christ if they truly worshipped the Father: nor would they have doubted to have faith in Christ, if they had truly believed Moses alone. Nor does it follow that they did not worship foreign gods, since they observed invented and vain inventions in place of the law of God, since they set up no idols for themselves, nor assumed foreign rites of worshipping God. Under the very name of the true God, and with ceremonies themselves instituted

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by God: men can supremely irritate the true God, and worship their own inventions. Which the Jews at the time of Christ admitted most crassly. For when they boasted of worshipping God without true repentance and just confidence in the mercy of God, partly by the carnal observance of those things which are in the law of Moses, and partly also by the traditions of men, and from this were puffed up with pride, and were running with open iniquity against their neighbors: hypocrites most vain, toward God as well as toward men — which Christ the truth repeatedly objects to them in the Gospels, but most of all in Matt. 23 — they certainly worshipped the true God no more than, and kept his law no more than. For God also testifies through the Prophets that it is an abomination to him, not to be endured, all external worship, if it be without true faith which works through love. But if they did not worship the true God, they must necessarily have worshipped some vain fiction as God: for it is not that they expended so much labor in vain on their external observances. Under the name therefore of the true God, they established for themselves a deity to be worshipped and propitiated which, appeased by that carnal and external worship, would bestow and preserve present and future goods for them, and avert all evils: while they themselves were persisting meanwhile in their hypocrisy, that is, unbelief and perversity. But this deity is nothing: they therefore irritated God by worshipping him who is not God, who is nothing but the vain fiction of an impious mind. And this impiety of the Jews was so much the more harmful, the more concealed: which they themselves declared by pursuing Christ the teacher and bestower of all piety and salvation with so great a fury.

These Jews who rejected and crucified Christ the Lord, just as they surpassed all their ancestors in impiety and fulfilled the total perversity of all of them: so they have deservedly paid the penalty of all the impiety which existed in this one people, whence also upon them came the guilt of all innocent blood shed from Abel.

From all these things therefore, for those piously considering the scriptures and the true reasoning of the worship of God: it is abundantly clear that the Apostle rightly and aptly adduced the present saying of the Lord here, to prove that it was necessary for the Jews to be rejected from the fellowship of true religion in Christ, and for the Gentiles to be received: and this for the reason that the Jews stubbornly rejected the grace of God and the true worship of him, while the Gentiles were eagerly embracing these things. And that God only then fully began to provoke the Jews to jealousy in the Gentiles, when he drew these to his Christ, and permitted for the Jews that he should be a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling. For the fact that God previously also sometimes subjected the Jews on account of their impiety to the Gentiles: yet this was neither lasting, nor was the benefit of religion transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles, in which one benefit all things that are to be sought are contained, since it is eternal life.

But Isaiah is bold and says. This oracle of Isaiah is far the clearest, both concerning the rejection of the Jews by their own fault, and concerning the gratuitous receiving of the Gentiles: therefore the Apostle writes: Isaiah is bold and says. The oracle in the prophet reads word for word thus: I was found by those who were not seeking me, I was found by those who were not inquiring for me, I said to the nation that was not invoking my name: behold me, behold me. I stretched out my hands all day to a people alienating themselves, that is, to those who go on a way that is not good, according to their own inventions: a people which irritates me to my face continually, which sacrifices in gardens and burns incense upon bricks. סוֹרֵר, which signifies one defecting and alienating himself: even the common Greek edition rendered by ἀπειθοῦντα ἀντιλέγοντα, that is, not hearkening, or not complying with right admonitions, and contradicting. For such are all who defect from the Lord and alienate themselves. For these adhere to the Lord, who believe and obey his words: those who do not believe them are immediately snatched away to contrary pursuits which

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are diametrically at war with the commands of God: and therefore while they are held by these, they can do nothing but despise and reject all the admonitions of God, that is, ἄπειθεῖν καὶ ἀντιλέγειν to God, not to hearken and to contradict.

If the Jews contend that these things were said to their ancestors addicted to the manifest idolatry which the prophet also expresses in this passage, from which they preserved themselves from that time, since they returned from Babylon to their own land: it must be answered to them, as we already recalled before, that the prophet set forth the impiety of their own under the coarser works of it in this passage, yet meanwhile attacking all impiety, defining it itself as the unbelief and contradiction of the Gospel, which the Lord always offered his goodness to this people: and threatening it as to be avenged in their children. Having completed this impiety therefore by rejecting Christ: they presently paid the extreme penalties, which both they and their ancestors had deserved, truly the prophet foretold with this prophecy concerning that ultimate and most grave rejection of the Jews, which they brought upon themselves, when they rejected the Gospel of Christ with such stubbornness and cruelty, having crucified the Lord and slain his Apostles.

OBSERVATION I.

Into all the earth their sound went forth. Now we must recall and sufficiently admire this condescension of God toward the human race: that in so brief a time, and with the whole world resisting with the utmost powers and incomparable cruelty, the Gospel of our salvation reached every creature which is under heaven, as the Apostle proclaims both here and in Col. And since for a long time alas the Mohammedan plague and innumerable other superstitions have prevailed, by which the Gospel has been partly wholly expelled from many peoples, and among not a few miserably obscured: yet so much of truth everywhere has clung to the Gentiles, that if men did not impiously drive it away from themselves, the whole light of the Gospel would easily be poured out again upon all. Mohammed certainly ruined very many peoples, so that they believe Christ to be nothing of a man, and that he whom he promised as Paraclete is to be believed, and from this prefer his impious inventions to the institutions of Christ: yet since they retain from the Gospel this, that Christ is a prophet of God and taught the way of God: if their own impiety did not stand in their way, they would adhere with full faith to what Christ taught, and from this, by the benefit of Christ, they would at last without any trouble discover that Mohammed is not the Paraclete whom Christ promised, but his supreme adversary and Antichrist, of whom he forewarned us. So also the Jews, if they truly believed Moses and rightly compared what they know concerning the history of the Gospel with the law and the prophets, sincerely inquiring the will of the Lord: would themselves immediately reach the full light of the Gospel. This would be the more easy for those who still profess the whole Gospel, although simultaneously subject to very many superstitions, by which the mercy of the Lord has preserved them more in the Gospel. For however much both the doctrine and the life of virtually the whole ecclesiastical order which still worships the Roman Pontiff differs completely from the Gospel: yet since all confess that the sum of the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of salvation, is contained in the Gospels and the apostolic writings: how great is the cause that all who wish to be of Christ should consecrate themselves wholly to these very things which the Gospel teaches. And whoever studies to do this, to such a one the Lord cannot fail to be immediately present, and to manifest himself in all things. Therefore also today the Gospel sounds everywhere, but the spontaneous impiety of men closes ears and hearts to it: wherefore the ignorance of no mortal will be excused at the judgment of the Lord, but all who have remained alienated from Christ will be compelled to condemn themselves, and to ascribe all praise of mercy to the Lord always and everywhere pressing himself upon them, that is, when the face of the Lord is revealed, in the truth of salvation itself.

OBSERVATION II.

I will provoke you to jealousy. We are admonished here in the Jews, rejected on account of their own ingratitude and confidence in their own righteousness: to look what threatens us, if we either reject or vainly receive the grace of God now with such force insinuating itself again to us. For we shall see the kingdom of God at last taken away from us also, and entrusted to another people which may bring forth fruit for it. Then also this is to be noted here: that all humanity and felicity depend on the true religion. For those who are destitute of this are not a people, and know nothing, and in all respects are miserable and unhappy. The Lord also says: I will provoke them to jealousy in those who are not a people, and in a foolish nation I will irritate them: by which he pronounced all those who are alienated from his Christ to be not a people, that is, to have no true and human worthy manner of living, and to know nothing. Such we once were, but when the Lord assumed us and drew us to his Son, so we became his people: so we were endowed with the heavenly and life-giving wisdom: let us only strive to show ourselves grateful for so great a beneficence of God.

OBSERVATION III.

I was found by those who were not seeking me. A remarkable passage by which it is confirmed that we ought to be anticipated by the grace of God in all things. For we are so lost by nature, that left to ourselves we can never seek God: it is therefore necessary that he first insinuate himself to us, draw us to himself, and utterly renew us. So also the people of Israel was the first to be assumed: which the Prophet Ezekiel describes with wonderful elegance and clarity in chapter 16. For he makes the people of Israel similar to a girl exposed at the same time as she was born, whom the Lord found cast out and lying in her blood, trodden underfoot, with the umbilical cord not cut, and with no care at all applied, such as is wont to be exhibited to the newly born: and gave her life, and caused her to grow like the grass of the field. And when she had grown and reached the time for marriage, when she was naked and oppressed by shame: he visited her again, covered her with his garment, washed her, cleaned her, cared for her most tenderly, espoused her to himself: adorned her with wonderful and altogether regal adornment. By which similitude the Lord expounds that both this people was devoted to eternal damnation, at the very time it was brought forth into this life, because it was born of impious parents who applied no remedy to the tainted origin, since they did not yet have the sacrament of regeneration. But that he gave this people so that it both lived and grew. For when it deserved to immediately perish, he preserved it, and increased it with abundant offspring in Egypt. But when it had grown, and was already a great people: it was plainly as a girl naked and exposed to ignominy: because while they served in Egypt, they had no true institution, no laws, no commonwealth, no religion. But there the Lord espoused them to himself, and endowed them with laws, commonwealth, and religion: seeking or desiring nothing of the sort. Truly so also was he found by the Israelites not seeking him: so he also finds and saves all those he saves.

EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS: **CHAPTER 11**

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER XI.

I say then: has God rejected his people?

EXPOSITION

The Apostle has thus far taught that God by his own hidden but just judgment determined, at the time of the revealed Gospel, to reject very many from the Jewish people: and that the Jews themselves by their own impiety and confidence in works so deserved this: and he confirmed both from the scriptures. Now, that he might more fully proclaim the immense condescension of God toward them, and render his goodwill toward that people more attested, and more fully remove the suspicion of ill will: he teaches that the Jewish people is by no means utterly rejected by the Lord, that the fall of those who were cast off from this people brought salvation to the Gentiles, and finally that the Jews also are to be restored. In the first section therefore the proposition is: that God has not rejected the Jewish people, but will preserve and has preserved from it those whom he foreknew and freely elected that they should be his people. He proves this from his own example and from the oracle delivered to Elijah. Moreover when he asks whether God has rejected his people, he is asking about that peculiar condescension by which God peculiarly joined this people to himself: whether it has been changed, so that just as God was hitherto singularly propitious to this people, so he is now peculiarly hostile to it, and just as it was once a matter of grace to be born of the seed of Abraham, it is now a matter of indignation. He therefore answers with the repetition that God has not rejected his people, that is, he does not now hate the Jewish people, which he once held as singularly his own, so that anyone would be hateful to God for being a Jew. And from this he shows that he acknowledges it to be a matter of the condescension of God, not of wrath, to trace descent from Abraham and be an Israelite: and magnificently glories that he himself is an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, and of the tribe of Benjamin. Which he would by no reason here recall, unless he had wished to prove that God had not changed his goodwill peculiarly promised to the Jewish people, so as to hate them now before others, as he once loved them: so that to be a Jew, which had formerly been held as a gift of grace, now should turn grace away. In this therefore, in which he here glories that he is an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin: he does the same as he did above in chapter nine, when giving the reason why he so grieved over the blinding and destruction of the Jews, he wrote: Who are Israelites, to whom belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, etc. He wished to testify that he acknowledges these to be still marks of the favor of God, not of his wrath. But since not all those are Israelites before God who are born of the flesh from the Israelites, as he subjoins above in chapter nine, and here likewise: not all who trace carnal descent from Abraham are Jews, upon whom God wished principally to bestow his mercy, but those whom he himself foreknew and elected from this people for this.

The second argument from the oracle delivered to Elijah rests on this: that God is like himself, and that his gifts and calling are without repentance, as he says below in section 4. For if when Elijah thought that all piety in Israel was once extinguished, and that there remained in the whole people not one true Israelite, yet God preserved seven thousand for himself: if now after the blinding that came about at the time of the Gospel he preserved no one for himself from this people, neither would he be like himself, nor would his gifts and calling admit repentance. But this is impossible: therefore in the present time God has his remnants from the Jews, but those which he himself elected, those which he will preserve from his grace with no merit of theirs.

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He expressed this singularly so as to inculcate well, that those too whom God deigns to preserve from the Jews, he preserves in no other way than the Gentiles, from his sole mercy, with no regard whatsoever for works: lest the Jews should attribute anything to the prerogative of their people or to their ceremonies. For this is the chief thing he pursues in this whole discussion: that faith in Christ makes us receive salvation, that is, from the mercy of God exhibited in Christ, and not by any works of ours.

In this appendix therefore the proposition is: those from the Jews whom God will preserve, he will preserve by his grace, with no merit of works. He proves only the other part: not from works. For he supposes that no one can deny that whoever is saved, is saved by grace. But very many, while they do not sufficiently weigh what it is to be saved by grace, try to join the merits of works to grace. He therefore shows that this cannot be: and from the fact that grace and the merit of works mutually exclude each other. Which is sufficiently known of itself, if only anyone would notice. He therefore admonishes of this. For if it is grace, that is, if salvation is given gratuitously, nothing of it can be owed to works: and if anything is owed to works, it is no longer grace, that is, gratuitous. And if you say that salvation consists at once of grace and works, you make it so that neither grace is grace, nor work is work, that is, the merit of a work. For indeed all understand what is given freely to be that which is given with absolutely no merit: and what is given on account of merit, no one fails to acknowledge is by no means given freely. It is therefore established that, if all are saved by grace, even the Jews, which no one denies, it cannot come about that any, not even a Jew, is saved from works.

INTERPRETATION

I say then. He thought it sufficient, in those things which he discussed concerning the rejection of the Jews, to serve fully the cause of salvation of the Jews, and to discuss all those things for which the Jews were held in esteem, and from this himself to infer whatever could be inferred from what he said: and this always in words by which he set forth fully and clearly what could have appeared absurd. That was an argument both of confidence in the truth which he was treating, and of zeal for the Jews and those zealous for the Jews, whom he so greatly guarded against offending: of which things we have already spoken several times. Would that this manner of dispensing the Gospel were also thus in our heart as it was in Paul's.

For even I am an Israelite. The argument is of this sort: For if God had rejected his people, that is, the Jews, insofar as they are Jews: he would have rejected me too. But he has not now rejected me, but assumed me, so that I might even be a herald of his grace, and I acknowledge this benefit to have come to me from that goodwill which he promised to our ancestors: from which I also glory that I am an Israelite, etc. God therefore has not rejected his people Israel, even though he now assumes fewer from them than from the Gentiles into the number of his holy people.

He has not rejected his people. For God does not change his gifts and calling: those whom he once elected for himself as his own, he does not now cast away. But his people are those whom he himself elected for this, not whoever were born of those to whom he made this promise that they would be his people: but those whom he himself foreknew and predefined from these to be his own. Concerning the word *προέγνω*, that is, foreknew or foreknew: we spoke in that, in those whom he predefined, section 5, chapter 8: For whom he foreknew in his mind.

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Do you not know what scripture says? This history is read in 3 Kings 19. The argument from this history is as I said in the exposition of this sort: In the time of Elijah the people of the ten tribes was so lost, that the holy prophet thought he alone survived of all those worshipping God with true faith: yet God had preserved for himself seven thousand men who had persisted in the true religion. And by seven thousand, after the custom of scripture, very many thousands are to be understood. For scripture is wont to use the number seven for an indefinite and large number. If now God at that time, when the affairs of the people were so desperately ill, yet preserved for himself in such large numbers: from what shall we say this came about? Without doubt from the fact that God is like himself and does not know repentance of his gifts and calling. Therefore since he once assumed this people to himself, he will never cast it off, and in every time will preserve some from it for himself, as he did in the time of Elijah: even though he now elects fewer from it for himself than he once did, and will again do so in the future. The present argument therefore rests on the fact that God is like himself, and does not change his goodwill: which the Apostle has here presupposed.

The remnants have been made. For so it was divinely determined that only remnants of the Jews should be saved. This he also proved above in chapter nine from Isaiah, and presently in the following section he will prove it more fully from Isaiah and the Psalm. He gladly recalls election and grace, so as to cut off the confidence of the people and their ceremonies from the Jews, and to inculcate well that to be of the people of God depends wholly on the gratuitous election of God.

When he was interceding with the Lord against Israel. That is, complaining of their impiety. For as God is all things to the saints, so whatever troubles them, that they first complain of to God. For the administrators are here of those things which they announce to men, and sometimes also carry them out: and therefore from time to time pray for these to be speedily accomplished, and for the wicked to be given their deserved punishment. Many examples of this exist in the Psalms. With such emotion Elijah also was burning when he interceded against Israel, though he was then seeking to be taken away, not to have the people destroyed.

Who have not bent the knee to Baal. **בעל** signifies lord and patron. For just as our common people today venerate the Saints, so the Jews of old venerated the fictitious deities of the nations not in the place of the supreme God, but as patrons before him and intercessors, and also as administrators of his benefits. But because they divided their trust in him, and did not fix it wholly upon the one true God, and therefore were satisfied to implore and obtain by that manner of supplication which God himself had prescribed for them: the worship of **בעלים**, that is, of the patrons whom they fashioned for themselves alongside God, was to God himself an extreme abomination, even when they affirmed that in these very ones they were worshipping and praying to God himself. Hence through Hosea chapter 11 he was saying to the people of Israel: It shall come to pass in that day, says the Lord, that thou shalt call me, my husband, and shalt call me no more **בעלי**, that is, my lord or my patron. And I will remove from her mouth the names of Baalim, and they shall be remembered no more by their name. Thus he. Unless thou worshippest God in himself alone, and according to his word, thou worshippest a foreign god, whatever name of the true God thou attachest to him.

Now not from works. For from works is what is owed to works. But if it is owed, it is not gratuitous. But whatever work has been right, so avails before God that he cannot fail to repay the reward for it. Hence the Apostle rightly infers: if salvation consists from works, it follows that it does not consist from grace: otherwise if we say it is conferred by grace and works, it follows that work is not work. For if it is a work, it merits something and is a merit: if now there is a merit, there

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is also a debt: but if it is a debt, it is not a free gift. Grace is the primary cause of salvation. Works are secondary from grace. But the Apostle here speaks of the primary cause of salvation: it is entirely one grace and mercy of God, by which when God has now embraced us and assumed us among his own, he bestows his good Spirit, and by it drives to good works, which he himself prepared beforehand: and these presently, though they are gifts and his own works in us and in all respects gratuitous, he yet most amply, far beyond the weight of works, rewards both in this life and in the future. Hence scripture says so often that God repays us according to our works. But concerning the conciliation of these passages it was said abundantly above at the end of the exposition of section 2, chapter 2.

OBSERVATION I.

For even I am an Israelite. Again we are admonished how much it matters to be born of the saints, even if not all born of the saints prove to be saints. For God does good for the posterity of his own for a thousand generations. So when the Lord also assumed us Gentiles into his people, let us cultivate this grace, both in ourselves and in all our own. The root is already holy, it cannot but put forth at least some holy branches from itself. Let us also always be mindful that we are the peculiar possession of God, whom he cannot but cultivate, so that in turn we also may have him as our portion and all good.

OBSERVATION II.

He intercedes with the Lord against Israel. A memorable example, which admonishes us to put the hope of salvation in no one easily. For if so eminent a prophet fell into error so far as to pray that he himself be taken away, treating his people as abandoned, with whom he could do nothing of worth: which of us would not stumble here? For generally speaking, the fuller anyone is of God, that is, the more full of mercy toward sinners, and the greater the hope of their salvation. None are more savage toward sinners than those who are wholly slaves to sins themselves. Which all histories of tyrants, and especially the Evangelical ones of the Pharisees, and experience itself abundantly attest. For the wicked indeed wink at many things in accomplices, and in those things which seem most to humor their own desires they notice nothing contrary: in all other things nothing seems to them severe enough, nothing equally cries out for law and justice and right, though they themselves are the supreme enemies of all law, equity, and good. Let us therefore think that we are divinely placed for this, to bear fruit for God among men: that with God all things are possible, and finally that God commands nothing rashly: and however greatly the impiety and perversity of men may prevail, in those whom the Lord has joined to us, let us now desist from admonishing and teaching. For while God gives life here, and this spirit of winning even some to himself: let us not doubt that he will also now give those whom we may win for him.

OBSERVATION III.

I have kept for myself. This also confirms that all salvation is the sole work of God: for if he does not himself make us the remnants for himself from the lost heap of men, we all perish at once.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION II.

What then? What Israel was seeking.

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EXPOSITION

What the common people of the Jews and those who were most zealous for the Jews were most greatly offended by was the fact that none were equally adverse to the Gospel as those who among the Jews were held to be more excellent. And the Apostle in these three chapters is chiefly working to remove this stumbling block, which he had hinted above in chapter nine, section 3, under the examples of the rejected and hardened: Ishmael, Esau, and Pharaoh — this he here expresses clearly: that the Lord blinds and hardens many of the Jews, yet so as also to illuminate very many of them and soften them to his pleasure, but fewer, only remnants. The proposition therefore here is: God gave to the elect the salvation which all Israel seeks, but did not give it to the rest, but blinded and hardened them.

The proposition has three parts. Israel, that is, the whole people tracing descent from Israel, seeks salvation: for the Apostle here comprehends under this name the elected and rejected Israelites, as the distribution he presently subjoins sufficiently indicates. But this part of the proposition he does not prove, for it is known of itself that the election, action, and art of all mortals seeks felicity. Hither therefore also the zeal and pursuit of the whole of Israel's law and ceremonies was borne: though in many this zeal was without right knowledge.

The second part of the proposition is: The election, that is, the elected from Israel, have truly attained salvation. Nor did he prove this, because it is sufficiently manifest of itself. For who would not attain that for which God selected them?

The third part is: But the rest were blinded: those namely who are not elect. That there are more of these than of the elect, he proved in the preceding things, when he adduced the oracles attesting that only remnants of the Jews were to be preserved: even if their number had equaled the sand of the sea. By the rest therefore in this passage he understands the greater part of the Jews. But this part of the proposition he proves through two oracles, one of Isaiah and one of David, in which this argument is contained: The Lord predicted through his prophets, threatening through Isaiah, and with the prayer of David imprecating, that the greatest part of the Israelite people would be blinded, and would be stirred up by a perverse spirit against the truth, so that from the doctrine of salvation they would receive nothing but everlasting destruction. So therefore it had to come to pass. We must therefore consider what the always just judgment of God has determined here concerning the Jews: not what they themselves claim, or what others attribute to them. Moreover that these oracles contain in themselves the fact that the greatest part of the Jews had to be blinded and stirred up by a perverse spirit to their own destruction: we shall soon declare in the interpretation of these passages.

INTERPRETATION

What Israel was seeking. The Apostle puts election, that is, the elected, alongside Israel: from this it is sufficiently clear that he here takes Israel for the common mass of them, who were then accounted Israel. These therefore, insofar as they had nothing more than that they were of the people

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of Israel, it is manifest that they could seek salvation but could not attain it: for this God bestows only on his elect.

But the rest were blinded. From their own spirit of contentiousness, says Chrysostom. D. Jerome does not fear to acknowledge that they were blinded by God. And since this blindness is nothing other than the reprobate sense, the contentious spirit, the eyes that do not see — and God himself clearly testifies that he sends these upon the reprobate — what do we wish to say of God more religiously than God himself speaks of himself and teaches us to speak? But concerning these things above in that: For the scripture says, section 3, chapter 9, and in the Conciliation appended to the exposition of that section. Also above in sections 7 and 8 of chapter 8. It is glorious to God to proclaim of him that he does anything whatsoever with us, and nothing not justly, even if this is inexplicable to us. Let us only attribute to our own perversity whatever we sin, and whatever we suffer on account of sins.

As it is written. That: He gave them a spirit of stupor: is found neither in the Hebrew nor in the Greek edition in that place where the following things are found, namely Isaiah 6. Nor can you find this sentence elsewhere in these very words in which it is here adduced by the Apostle. In Isa. 19 the prophet prophesies concerning Egypt: The Lord will fill Egypt with a spirit of error: the Greeks rendered **κατανύξεως**. Somewhere you will find wine and a cup, which the Greeks rendered **κατάνυξις**. In Hebrew properly **המדרת** signifies madness and a disturbance of the mind, a lack of counsel: when the Lord sends this upon those whom he has determined to punish and overthrow, he is said under the allegory of those acting in a frenzy from too much drink, to pour and thrust such wine or cup of fury upon them, whereby as if inebriated they may fall from right reason and take counsel pernicious to themselves. But what else is this than to send upon them an evil and raging spirit, which may turn them from true goods and drive them into certain and everlasting evils? Such a spirit the Lord sent upon Saul, upon Judas, and sends upon all the organs of his wrath. To these scriptures therefore the Apostle perhaps here alluded, and wishing to express the sense of such passages more significantly, said: He gave them a spirit of stupor, that is, a perverse and destructive spirit, which, while it brings all evil, stings and torments nothing.

Eyes that they may not see. This passage in Isaiah 6 reads in these words. The Lord speaks to the prophet asking to be sent to the people, to call them back from the wrong way: Go, and say to this people: Hear indeed and understand not, see indeed and know not. Make fat the heart of this people, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes: lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn, and he heal them. This the Apostle afterward set before the Jews at Rome in person, as we read in Acts 28. But what the Apostle here adds of his own, down to this very day: is equivalent to that below in 2 Cor. 3, down to this day the veil remains upon the reading of the old testament: he wished to apply that saying of the prophet to the Jews of his own time, in whom that certain blinding of the people predicted by the prophet was most completely fulfilled. Moreover the force of the argument from this passage to the Apostle's purpose is in this: The present prophecy is concerning the whole people: therefore it ought to be accomplished in the greater part of the people. And the time of Christ was that in which all these things were to be especially fulfilled: therefore at the time of Christ the rest, that is, the better part of the Jews — for few are chosen — had to be blinded, with a spirit of error sent upon them, a spirit seven times and far more harmful than that which had held them before they received the law. Which the Lord confirmed to the Jews under the parable of the spirit who, having left its former house, wandered through waterless and arid places seeking rest for itself in vain, returned to its former house, and when it found it prepared and adorned for itself, taking up seven spirits more

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wicked than itself, entered again: for those things from which salvation was expected began necessarily to fall to their destruction, from which they had expected salvation, and had to be abandoned to them.

And David says. This passage is in Psalm 69, and has in the Hebrew this manner: Let their table which is set before them become a snare for them: let their friends be nets for them: let the eyes of them be darkened so they do not see, and make their loins always totter. The Apostle attached the sense rather than the words, when following the common Greek edition after his custom: לשלומים, which the Hebrews understand as those who are rightly held as friends: the Greeks rendered εις ἀνταπόδοσιν. For the word שלם means to repay: שם peace, and also a friend with whom you have a covenant of peace: hence שלומים for friends who cultivate peace with us, are used.

Moreover the sense of this passage is: Make it happen, O God, that what is prepared for these, so as to seem to be for their good and comfort, may fall to their destruction. Take from them all right judgment, and the power of foreseeing what is useful to them and of carrying it out. The former he expresses under the metaphor of a table, friends, a snare and a net: the latter under the metaphor of the darkening of the eyes and the weakening of the loins. For to one whose table is already set, he thinks he ought after accomplished labors and dangers to rest and take his ease: if therefore snares are prepared for him there, and he is cut off: the more unexpected the evil is, and the more unseasonably it befalls, the graver it is, and the greater is the calamity. So also when anyone is cut off or slain by friends, with whom he believed himself to be at peace. This kind of misery the prophets threaten the reprobate with repeatedly in the Psalms, and the saints complain of it. Hence that in Psalm 41: Even איש שלומי, that is, the man of my peace, my friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. But the most unhappy of all is to be cut off in the very pleasures, where one believes himself to be most safe, and by those very friends from whom he expected evils to be driven away. Thus also the greatest misery is not to be able even to see how one may act usefully, or having seen it, to carry out what the Psalm signifies under the image of a man whose eyes are darkened and whose loins totter.

From these moreover the argument for what the greatest part of the Jews had to be blinded at the revelation of Christ runs thus: In these things which were adduced, and which the Holy Spirit expounds in further verses of Psalm sixty-nine, the extreme devotion and rejection of the Jewish people has been predicted, and specifically for that time above all, when they had rejected and crucified Christ: for in this Psalm under the type of David the things which Christ suffered are described: for before that verse, Let their table be, etc., it has that: They gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. It was therefore necessary that the greatest portion of the Jews should experience these things which are here predicted of them. The Apostle thought it sufficient to adduce these things.

Moreover what is noted in this devotion: that the law itself and all worship, while they pursued these with Christ rejected, as though salutary and life-giving gifts of God — as it was indeed — fell to their destruction. Beyond this he here expressly names the blinding, which the Apostle had particularly undertaken to prove.

The Apostle added εις θήραν, that is, and into a trap, by which he wished to express that in a snare more fully. Then for מוקש, which also signifies a snare and a net, he placed σκάνδαλον, that

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is, a stumbling block: for when those who fall into a snare, stumble and run into it and fall, **σκάνδαλον** is also sometimes used for a snare.

Many contend that this imprecation of such great evils and similar ones which occur throughout the Psalms are predictions. But what it is just for God to send upon reprobate men, it is pious for the saints to pray and imprecate upon them. Let us not correct the tongue of the Holy Spirit. D. Peter officially slew Ananias and Sapphira: and so it was not permitted to imprecate death upon them?

OBSERVATION I.

The election has attained it. It is to be observed that the Apostle uses even his words religiously for the commendation of grace: he says **ἐπέτυχεν**, that is, attained, received, and as it were obtained a gift offered beyond expectation. For the Lord is always found by those who were not seeking him.

D. Chrysostom, fearing here lest anyone should gather from this that we cooperate nothing with God in preparing salvation, and that there is no free will of men: wishes this speech of Paul, The election **ἐπέτυχεν**, to be similar to that which we use at times when someone, though by his own labor, yet beyond his expectation, has gained something. For he says, on account of expressing the greatness of the goods, and because **τὸ πλεον χάριτος ὅλι**, the greater portion of salvation is of the grace of God, that the Apostle wished to speak thus: but he adds, **οὐ πᾶν**, not all. When the unskilled read this, they condemn this most holy man, as if he attributed some portion of salvation to our powers, when he himself attributes no more to us than Augustine himself, and whoever today are believed to preach grace most fully. For this man of God wished nothing more by this saying than: **τὸ πλεον χάριτος, οὐ πᾶν**: he expresses that well known: God created thee without thee, but will not save thee without thee. Chrysostom wished to say that God requires of us that we believe, that we love him with our whole heart, our whole soul, and all our powers, and so we ourselves cooperate with God for our salvation, and act as those who are moved. But all these things themselves — believing, loving, acting — he nowhere denied to be gifts and works of God in us: nor did he ever say anywhere that God owes us anything on account of these. He only undertook to meet the recklessness of those who, while they stubbornly reject the grace of God, attribute the guilt of their own destruction to God: and because he said **τὸ πλεον χάριτος ὅλι, οὐ τὸ πᾶν**: that what is greater is not all of grace, he understood that salvation so consists for us of grace, that we too, stirred and moved by the Spirit of God, devote and accommodate ourselves wholly to God, and to the good works which God prepared, that we should walk in them: and that our works also are required, so that no one may think he receives salvation from grace in such a way that his own whole life nevertheless resists grace. But since the manner of speaking of the Holy Spirit is the best, and it can now be sufficiently inculcated upon us that all things are of grace and nothing ours: and we cannot be stirred up in any other manner more greatly, to exhibit ourselves with all our powers as cooperators with the Lord for any good works: if we rightly consider that he grants and does all things for us from his sole grace — I will say too that we ourselves plainly find, we receive what is spontaneously offered, and given as a gift, whatever true goods come to us. Accordingly it is permissible to teach this same thing: that to receive salvation is to believe and love God, and this with the whole heart, and from all our powers: and that God's grace anticipates us for this very thing, so that we who were before dead in trespasses, and therefore were either able to do nothing, or only what is depraved, may now live for God, that is, move ourselves to all good, and not sleep or serve sin.

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OBSERVATION II.

But the rest were blinded. So we are made that we always act as we know and judge we ought to act. Therefore as the beginning of all salvation is to be given the knowledge of the truth: so the head of destruction is to be destitute of the knowledge of the truth. Hence the Apostle everywhere prays for his own, that they may be filled with the knowledge and understanding of the truth. Since therefore God by his just judgment illuminates and blinds whom he wills: let us pray earnestly and continually: Illuminate my eyes, O Lord, teach me thy ways — always well mindful that Christ alone is the light of the world, who alone illuminates, that is, teaches the truth, all who come into this world.

OBSERVATION III.

God gave them a spirit of stupor. Let this admonish us of what sort is every counsel not taken up from the word and Spirit of God. All things pierce, tear apart, and torment forever, which the Spirit of the Lord has not operated in us: which not only the histories of the reprobate, but experience itself concerning ourselves abundantly teaches. For in the ways of the impious, that is, in all the plans and actions to which the Spirit of Christ does not drive us, there is nothing but unhappiness and convulsion, as the prophet testifies.

OBSERVATION IV.

Let their table become. Let us diligently weigh this also, and always remember: just as for the saints all things are good and cooperate for salvation, even sins themselves and the evils brought by sins: so all things, even salvation itself, as that man was saying, is destruction, and cannot save those who live outside of Christ.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION III.

I say then: have they stumbled?

EXPOSITION

The Apostle does two things in this section. First he softens what he necessarily said concerning the blinding and rejection of the greater part of the Jews, and this from two sources: the rejection of the Jews brought salvation to the Gentiles: and in those Jews who are now mostly blinded, there still remains the root of election, and the hope of a most ample conversion. Then on this occasion he exhorts the Gentiles to conduct themselves modestly toward the Jews, and to observe the gift of God with fear and holy solicitude. For he is careful to avoid offense everywhere, and to be of service everywhere. Since therefore there was fear that the good might be offended by those things which he had necessarily said about the casting off and unbelief of the Jews — lest namely their preposterous admiration of them might diminish for some the authority of the Gospel — he now appeases them, and drives away from himself by far the suspicion of any less generous spirit toward the Jews: proclaiming the condescension of God toward the Jews as so generously poured out as to avail to this end, that even their fall was profitable to the world, and their restoration will be even more profitable to the world: that the root of their election remains, and that we Gentiles had to be grafted into them, and finally that God determined to keep this root in them, until

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he restores them to himself by the most complete conversion. From these therefore he admonishes the Gentiles not to exalt themselves against the Jews, but rather to serve them for their salvation.

The first proposition therefore is: The Jews have now stumbled, but have not fallen. They stumbled not so as to fall, but so that the Gentiles might come into the fellowship of salvation, and might become themselves a cause of healthy emulation for the Jews. The Apostle speaks this of the Jewish people, not of individuals. And from this he says that they only stumbled, not that they fell: though very many of them have headlong cast themselves utterly into Gehenna. Moreover he does not here prove this proposition, but subjoins from where the proof of it consists. For in the following section, partly by prophetic authority he declares, and partly proves from the scriptures, that God preserves in the Jews, even the ones now rejected, the seed of election, and will in time restore them gloriously. For it seemed good to God to keep all — that is, both Jews and Gentiles — in unbelief for a time, so that there may arise and appear the illustrious mercy of his, which preserves as many as he preserves. From these therefore, when it is established that the Jewish people is still holy to God, to be restored with great glory, and that only when the fullness of the Gentiles has entered in: it follows that the Jewish people has not itself fallen by its own fall and that of the greater part, but has only stumbled, and this for the sake of the salvation both of the Gentiles and of themselves. For the sake of the salvation of the Gentiles, because these in the meanwhile enter into the kingdom of God, until that time runs out in which the Jewish people must also be concluded under unbelief by the just judgment of God, so that in them too the mercy of God may be the more illustrious, when it will call them back — a people long since without mercy and no people — to Christ the Lord. But for the sake of the salvation of the Jews themselves too, who in the Gentiles happily living through Christ see those things which rightly provoke them to emulation. All this proof rests on two things. The first is that the gifts of God and calling know no repentance: for from this it is that the Jewish people could not be cast off. The second is that God established for himself this order of dispensing salvation to the Gentiles and the Jews: that at the time when he principally draws the Gentiles to Christ, the Jews are concluded under unbelief, just as when he reigned peculiarly among the Jews, the Gentiles were concluded under unbelief.

The second proposition: The complete restoration of the Jews will bring to the remaining mortals the most consummated salvation. This he proves from the fact that the fall and diminution of the Jewish people so profited the rest of the world that the riches of the world and the Gentiles came to be, that is, that the very great multitude of the remaining mortals came to Christ in the greatest abundance. For if the world was so saved by what seemed least likely to save, namely the blindness and rejection of the Jews: much more will what seems rightly to be able to do this most of all be saving for mortals: the most complete conversion of the Jewish people to God.

The third proposition is: The root of election, into which we had to be grafted, and upon which we rest, is still surviving among the Jews, and the Jews will again be grafted into it: and this more easily, since they are natural branches. This proposition he inserted into the discourse which he particularly addressed to the Gentiles. He says: I speak to you Gentiles. For the greater part of the Roman Church was from the Gentiles. Yet since there were Jews in it too, and Gentiles who bore the Jews more than enough in esteem: he had said all the preceding things concerning the rejection of the Jews for the admonition also of these, and chiefly indeed for these. But when he now particularly turns his discourse to the Gentiles, he no less aptly prefaced saying that he speaks to the Gentiles: by which he wished to stir them up, so that what was in this discussion chiefly pertaining to them they might understand and weigh thus. But this was the amplitude of the divine condescension now exhibited to them before the Jews. For this the Apostle wished to magnify by

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comparison with the indignation of God which now falls upon the Jewish people. He desired to admonish the Gentiles, so that they might show themselves grateful for so great a goodwill of God toward themselves, and kindle daily increments of piety to provoking the Jews to salutary emulation for the winning of them to the Lord. He says therefore: I speak to you Gentiles, to you converted from the Gentiles I write these things: insofar as God has preferred you to the Jews, once his own peculiar possession, I proclaim this: not certainly so that you may be pleased with yourselves and despise the Jews before yourselves, but so that I may satisfy my office. I am an Apostle of the Gentiles particularly, I function for them particularly in the office of the Gospel: therefore this office I desire to glorify, that is, to exhibit it as glorious, that is, as most efficacious for the salvation of the Gentiles. Which I attain when you Gentiles have rightly acknowledged and embraced with worthy faith that grace prepared for you through Christ before God, and the salvation offered from this grace. But I set forth at the same time what the indignation of God falling upon the Jewish people is: I did this for the sake of your salvation to be promoted, so that you might see from this how great is the condescension of God toward you: and then also for the Jews themselves, who as they are my flesh, so I uniquely seek their good. These therefore, proclaiming how great a condescension God has embraced you with in preference to them, I desire to inflame with emulation of you, and so save even some from them.

Having premised these things he now comes to prove the third proposition premised: that the seed of election remains in the Jews, and that it is to again put forth shoots. He makes the transition here conveniently from that: that I might save some of them. For in this the Apostle put himself as an example to the Gentiles, that they too should give care to gain the Jews, and should not despise or hold them as abandoned. But from the preceding things it could be objected to the contrary: How will you save some of the Jews, or how shall we too contribute anything to this end? They have been blinded and rejected, as you yourself have now proved. To this therefore objection as it were he responds when he says: For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what shall their reception be but life from the dead? If the first fruits are holy, so also the whole lump. If the root is holy, so also the branches. In these the Apostle takes these things: that the rejection of the Jews brought reconciliation to the rest of the world: that they are to be received again: that their first fruits and roots are holy. He infers moreover that the reception of the Jews will be like life brought out from the dead, that is, that from the Jews who are now dead, life is hereafter to be brought to many. That the whole lump of the Jews is holy. And that holy branches from this people, in which the holy root remains, are to put forth again. But all these produce this: that there still remains in the Jewish people the holy seed, the sons of God elected: from whom the Gentiles wished to infer that they should be grafted into it. Therefore we must love and cultivate the Jews, not cast them off: we must give care that by the recommendation of the condescension of God which God still keeps for them, together with our Apostle, we may devote them to him, and not lose heart concerning their salvation.

Moreover the Apostle does not prove these assumptions, for they are known of themselves to the saints. For the matter itself proclaimed in the whole world that by the rejection of the Jews the fellowship of Christ had come to the Gentiles. For what the Jews had repelled from themselves, the Gospel was received, and immediately brought forth fruit everywhere among the Gentiles. It is equally manifest that the first fruits and root of the Jews are holy, that is, that the first fathers and very many from this people even to the rise of the Gospel, and in that very period the holy remnants of the Apostles and others, through whom the Lord flooded the knowledge of himself into the rest of the world. Of these no Christian from the Gentiles at any rate could doubt. But the inferences hold thus. The first: if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, etc.: as was said, is

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recognized from this passage: if what seems less inherent is so, much more is what seems more inherent to be so. But it rests in truth and acknowledges the unquestionable things from the nature of God and his works. For since God is the one supreme good, he produces some good in all things, though this is more fully known to us in things which are also seen to be good for us. Since therefore God with the casting off of the Jews did such good for the remaining peoples that he gave them the Gospel, that is, eternal life: without doubt through the restored Jews he will bring greater good to men. Especially since the very nature of good is also in the effects, to always produce something out of itself. Therefore since God made such good use of the dead Jews, when restored to life he will use them in such a way that it will appear that life has been brought from the dead. And as much as life surpasses death, so much more will he profit the world through the Jews again assumed than he profited through them when cast off by God. Since therefore the lot of the Jews is thus, this is where they stand with God: who worships God and does not hold the Jews in esteem, and does not accommodate himself wholly to restoring them? But this is where the Apostle was chiefly going here.

The other two inferences: If the first fruits are holy, if the root is holy, etc., rest on the firmness and constancy of the love of God, and indeed also on the nature and genius of God, whose it certainly is, since he foresees all things and does everything for himself, to love those whom he undertakes to love, to the end and perpetually. Hence the Apostle subjoins: The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. God once took up the Jewish people, promised that he would be their God: therefore it is necessary that there exist again from the Jews those for whom he renders this. For as the Apostle expounded above in chapter nine, this promise brings it that there ought to be from the Jews to whom God bestows eternal life: but those whom he himself selected from the Jews for this, not all those who are born of the flesh from this people. It is therefore necessary, since God so assumed this people that he endowed its first fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with this promise that he would be the God of them and their seed, and this forever: that he still has in this people, and again educates from it, those for whom he shows himself God, that is, the bestower of eternal life. And since the Jews are of such great account with God, they rightly ought to be counted worthy by the sons of God, whom these should most zealously serve for salvation. But this is what the Apostle wished to admonish the Gentiles from this. From these therefore it is now manifest, both how certain and necessary are the inferences of Paul in this passage, and why he related them.

Moreover that he might remove from the Gentiles every excuse against the Jews, he presently takes up the objection against what was premised concerning the salvation of the Jews. For from the preceding things it could be objected: that the Jews are now as it were broken-off branches, devoid of the life coming from the holy root. As if someone had answered Paul: I acknowledge the first fruits to be holy, and the root of the Jewish people to be holy, that is, the fathers of this people to be truly pious and truly dear to God: but the Jews are now alienated from these, having rejected Christ in whom their fathers placed all their hope. The Apostle therefore takes up this objection, and while he concedes that the Jews now are as it were broken-off branches, and the Gentiles are grafted onto the holy root: he admonishes us who are from the Gentiles that we were grafted into the root of the Jews: and then that since we were grafted from a wild olive, from an impious stock, and from ancestors alien from God, and therefore unfruitful of true justice. From this he infers three things. First: that the Jews, though broken off from the holy stock by unbelief, are yet to be cultivated by us: because we enjoy their good, made partakers of the fatness of the olive tree which is theirs, that is, of the blessing peculiarly promised and exhibited to the Jews: and that we are borne by the root, that is, that we rest on salvation coming from the holy fathers and authors of the Jewish people, not we bearing the root, that is, that nothing of salvation has been brought by us to the Jews.

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If therefore salvation has come to us from the Jews, and we have been adopted to their holy fathers: why should we not hold the Jews in the greatest esteem for so great a benefit which came to us through them, and apply ourselves with all our powers to this, that they too may return to their Christ?

The second thing he infers is: that the fall of the Jews ought to bring to us solicitude and caution of cultivating the gift of God which came through the Jews, and not at all contempt of the Jews. For if God did not spare the natural branches, that is, those born of the holy and consecrated stock: certainly there ought to be fear lest he cast us off too. This fear therefore incites that we may studiously approve ourselves to God, not that we may distrust the promise and calling of God.

The third thing he infers is: since the Jews are the natural branches of the holy olive tree, and we are from the wild olive: it is easier to expect that the Jews will again be grafted into their own olive than it was to expect that we would be grafted from the wild olive. Since therefore this has come to pass, we ought to hope much more that the Jews will again be grafted in: and since they are still contained within the most ample condescension of God: we ought to love and cultivate them, to serve them for their salvation with all our powers, and by no means to be fastidious about them or cast them off.

But this is what he expresses in these words: Do not boast against the branches. And: They were broken off by unbelief, but thou standest by faith. Do not be arrogant, but fear. And: Consider the kindness and severity of God. Likewise: If indeed thou persist in kindness: since thou also wilt be cut off, etc. In all these he deters from contempt of the Jewish people, and introduces solicitude about maintaining the salvation we have received. He commends the Jews to us, as those from whom salvation was brought to us: he raises hope of the restoration of the Jews, from which it cannot but follow that all who receive these things with believing minds are inflamed to love, cultivate, and help the Jews, so as to convert them to Christ the Lord. So therefore the Apostle at once declared his zeal for the Jews, and drove away from himself all suspicion of ill will toward them, and worthily set forth and commended to the Gentiles the beneficence of God exhibited to themselves in the present before the Jews: and in the same manner brought it about that those things he premised concerning the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews would give to neither party any occasion of offense, but would stir up both so that they might value the grace of Christ more highly and worship it more religiously. Which was the chief thing he was pursuing in the whole Epistle.

INTERPRETATION

Have they stumbled so as to fall? He understands by fall the fall of the whole people from the gracious election of God. From this all that the Apostle subjoins has this aim: to prove that there still remains in the Jewish people the holy seed, and that this, even though it now as it were lies hidden, is to be splendidly raised up again.

But by their fall, salvation for the Gentiles. Understand: came: for it seemed good to God to communicate salvation to the Gentiles only at that time, when the Jews had driven it away from themselves by repudiating Christ. A philosopher will judge this absurdly said, and so to fall away from true religion, and so to be disposed, that one who can both himself and those he can draw away from the true religion — which all the impious study — has in himself nothing that promotes

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religion anywhere, but rather what removes it everywhere. For how can you admit that those who are lost in their own sins, and with hostile hatred everywhere attack the sobriety of others, should be the authors to others of living soberly? But the theologian who knows that all things were created from nothing by God, and therefore that all things are of themselves nothing, and therefore that the genius and work of any thing is that to which God deigns to apply it: acknowledges that the Word of God made and makes all things, and therefore that from the Word of God also all things are to be judged. For it was predicted in the law and prophets, and finally declared by the very fact, that it seemed good to God to bestow the Gospel of life upon the Gentiles at the time the Jews had rejected it. Hence Paul and Barnabas said to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia: It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken first to you: but since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. Acts 13. So the Lord was saying that the kingdom of God was then to be transferred to the Gentiles, when the Jews, with Christ crucified and his ministers slain, had exterminated it from themselves. Since therefore God does nothing in vain, and in fact the Jews drove the Gospel to the Gentiles when they rejected it themselves: Paul rightly and in accordance with theology properly said that by the fall of the Jews salvation was brought to the Gentiles: and not merely that the fall of the Jews gave the occasion for salvation to be brought to the Gentiles. Hence also he repeats this sentence so often, affirming that the fall and diminution of the Jews became the riches of the world, that is, brought to the rest of the world such a great multitude of believers. Likewise that the rejection of the Jews became the reconciliation of the world. And finally that the Jews were broken off from the holy stock so that the Gentiles might be grafted in. So certain and proper a work of the defection of the Jews is it to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles, to bring eternal life.

That they might be provoked to emulation. He affirms the fall of the Jews to be also somehow salvific even for the Jews themselves. For the salvation communicated to the Gentiles, and the kingdom of God existing and flourishing among the Gentiles, rightly excites emulation in the Jews, so that they too may flock to Christ. For as among Christians from the Gentiles the true religion, and from this all things both at the beginning and afterward flourished, and even now, as with superstition prevailing everywhere, it yet flourishes among many nations: it is certainly a strong cause for the Jews to judge the Christians their rivals, while they themselves are miserably oppressed by so many superstitions and from this by every kind of calamities. And this has in fact deeply disturbed not a few of them, and brought many to Christ, and is bringing them, and will bring very many more when the religion of Christ is more fully restored among us. For there is no other argument of the coming of Christ which so greatly and carefully troubles the Jews today as this one: that they see the Christians enjoying such great favor of God, and they themselves being held so calamitously. And if such manifest superstitions had not prevailed among us, for very many among them the hope of a future Messiah would have long since completely collapsed, and they would have received him who came, Christ our Lord. Let us pray therefore that the Gospel may truly prevail among us, and we shall see this emulation concerning which the Apostle here speaks to prevail much among the Jews.

Moreover what the Apostle said concerning the emulation of the Gentiles he said from that Deut. 32 which he adduced a little before.

If their fall. From the fact that very many fell away from Israel, and the number of those truly worshipping God has been diminished in this people: the riches of the world and of the Gentiles came to be, that is, that very great multitude of the remaining men was brought to the kingdom of God. But to show more certainly that the fall and diminution of the Jews contributed to this, that

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the peoples of the Gentiles believed in Christ: he says that the fall and diminution of the Jewish people became the riches of the world and the Gentiles. And this is proper indeed. For each thing is and does what God has decreed that it should be and do through it, as was already said. All things were made and are made by the Word of God: therefore from the Word of God also all things are to be judged.

How much more their fullness. So he presently says *πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν*, the fullness of the Gentiles. But by this name is understood the just and full number of the elect from the Jews and the Gentiles: when in contrast there was *ἥττημα*, the diminution, that is, the sparse and diminished number of the saints who existed in the Jewish people. The argument which is drawn from the lesser is explained in the exposition. He infers this: If the fall and diminution of the Jewish people, that is, the blinding and rejection of the greater part of the Jews, brought to the rest of the world so great a multitude of saints from the Gentiles: their restoration, when they have returned to Christ in ample and full number, will bring many more. But that will be the fullness, or full number, of the Jews in the kingdom of Christ, when so many Jews have given their name to Christ that it is now permissible to say simply and fully: The Jews worship Christ. For this cannot now be said, but it must be said: the remnants of the Jews believed in Christ, and those small ones. And even the fullness of the Gentiles has not yet entered in, because not yet have so many from the Gentiles received the fellowship of the kingdom of Christ, that it may be lawful to say: the whole world, all nations worship Christ, which the seers predicted would come to pass. Even now certainly the tares of Satan will not be lacking among the sheep of Christ, and the weeds of the enemy among the wheat of the Lord: but as the fullness of the Gentiles will be said to have entered when the principal portion of the Gentiles has come into the kingdom of God, so the whole Israel which will be saved will be the greatest part of this people then surviving: just as today the whole Israel is said to be estranged from salvation, when there are very few who embrace the faith of Christ.

There are those who understand by the whole Israel here the people of God composed of Jews and Gentiles, which namely shall all be saved, when all from the Gentiles who are elect have at last entered to Christ: but what mystery would Paul have said there, concerning the restoration of that Israel to whom he here says the blindness has happened in part? We see that he in this whole chapter is working to commend the Jews to us from the condescension of God, which will at some point restore them, now certainly lost. Those who thrust in that interpretation are moved by the fact that all will now be saved, whether from the Gentiles or from the Jews. But neither does the word fullness, nor the designation whole, require this. Since scripture teaches us men, it speaks to us in human manner: and what it predicts about the fullness of the Gentiles entering into the Church of Christ, and the whole Israel to be saved, predicts nothing other than that very few from the Gentiles will remain outside the Church, and it will be most rare for anyone from the Jews to be devoid of salvation.

As it is written. Very many wish the whole oracle which the Apostle subjoins to have been taken from Isa. 59: but since nothing is found there about a covenant and the promise of the removal of sins, while this is expressed singularly in the description of the new covenant, which is in Jeremiah 31: I think indeed that what the Apostle here adduced he took partly from Isa. 59, partly from Jer. 31. Though neither is the first part of the present testimony read word for word as it is adduced by the Apostle, either in the Hebrew or in the common Greek edition.

For in the Hebrew that oracle runs thus: To those who return in Jacob shall come the Redeemer, says the Lord. And this covenant I make with them, says the Lord: My Spirit which is upon thee,

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and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart from thy mouth, nor from the mouth of thy seed, nor from the mouth of the seed of thy seed, says the Lord, henceforth and forever. The common Greek edition has: He shall come for the sake of Zion, ἔνεκεν Σιῶν, a Redeemer, and shall turn impieties away from Jacob. And that word which is לְשׁוּבֵי, that is, for those who return, the Greek interpreter took as לְשׁוֹב, that is, for returning. The rest agrees with the Hebrew. D. Jerome adduces the interpretation of the LXX as having it thus: And there shall come from Zion one who shall deliver, and shall turn impieties away from Jacob. And this is his covenant with them, says the Lord: My Spirit which is in thee, etc.

Thus far therefore the Apostle appears to have followed the version of the LXX, which was then the only one in the hands of the saints from the Gentiles, and did not conflict with the Hebrew truth. For in what the LXX rendered: He shall come from Zion who shall deliver and turn impieties away from Jacob: this is contained: that our Savior was to come, even to Zion itself as Redeemer, and to those who return from iniquity in Jacob. For that they may return from iniquity is itself the work of Christ, and his very redemption: for unless he himself averts iniquity and defection from God, there is no one who could recover from it. Now the same people the prophet designates by Zion and Jacob: the LXX therefore expressed sufficiently clearly that the Redeemer is coming to Zion, and to those who return from defection in Jacob, when they placed: and he shall turn impiety away from Jacob. But that the Lord was also to be born from Zion, that is, from the Jewish people: this very prophet does not have in this passage: yet both this prophet himself and all scripture express it everywhere. In fact therefore there is sufficient agreement thus far between the Hebrew reading and the Apostle following the LXX: and the common Greek edition is not dissonant, even if certain things are changed somewhat.

But what the Apostle subjoins: And this covenant from me with them, that I may remove their sins: is not found in Isaiah at this passage, but, this covenant I establish with them: my Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart from thy mouth, etc. But in Jeremiah 31, where the new covenant of God with the people of Israel is described, we read thus: This shall be the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their heart, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall no longer teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying: Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the smallest of them to the greatest of them, for I will be merciful toward their iniquity, and their sins I will remember no more. To this description of the covenant therefore the Apostle seems to have had regard, when in it the Lord expressly promised the removal of sins.

But whatever the case may be concerning this, certainly the first thing is in the covenant of the Lord with his elect: that he remits sins to them, and makes them certain of this. For we are so lost in sins, that unless we first believe that God will forgive us our sins and be our God, that is, the bestower of eternal life, we can in no way believe: and since in this very first article of the divine covenant, I will be their God, the promise of the removal of sins is contained: it can therefore happen that the Apostle said this concerning this very general condition of the divine covenant: And this shall be my covenant with them, when I shall remove their sins. But the force of the argument from this oracle in the present passage is in this: that this removal of sins and redemption, concerning which the Apostle here adduces the prophecies, is so predicted by the Prophets as about to come for Israel, that all the Israelites, that is, the whole Israel, will receive it. This therefore is still to be awaited.

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According to the Gospel they are enemies. This is the taking up of what the Apostle could from the preceding be objected against, namely that he had proved above that Israel is now the adversary and enemy of God. From this it follows rightly that he ought also to be held as an enemy of the saints. He therefore concedes here that the Jews are to be held as enemies by the saints, but on account of the Gospel, which we must promote with all our powers, while they attack it with the greatest effort. And on account of the Gentiles, whose salvation they are busily striving to avert, while the saints promote it with all their power. And that which he says: for your sake — this also seems to note what he said before, that the fall of the Jews brought the riches of the Gentiles: and what he will presently say, that the Gentiles have obtained mercy by the unbelief of the Jews. And so therefore: on account of the Gentiles, that is, for the sake of the salvation of the Gentiles, the Jews are held as enemies both by God and the saints: because it was necessary for the Jews to be blinded and concluded under unbelief, so that the Gentiles might receive the mercy of God and be preserved through faith. But we must hold them as enemies not in order to harm them, but to go wholeheartedly against their impious efforts by which they fight against the kingdom of Christ, and to bear from them in turn whatever they design against us as fully as enemies can.

But according to election. God elected the fathers and their seed: the seed of promise, not of the flesh, but God still draws the elected seed from this flesh, and from this holy posterity of the saints, which is now concluded under unbelief. Therefore as God wondrously preserves and cherishes this people on account of his own election and the fathers whose flesh they are, so that still in whatever adoration of himself, and pursuit of the law — however erring in their zeal — they persist, though the most calamitous of all mortals, and everywhere exposed to the injuries of all: so also we on this account must love and cherish them.

For the gifts of God are without repentance. For just as God cannot err, so neither can he repent of anything. For what should cause grief in him, since all his deeds are always the best? But repentance is sorrow about rashly and evilly committed things. But the calling by which God once called the holy fathers to himself, assumed them, and the gift of his grace which he assigned to them is, that he may be their God and the God of their seed, that is, the bestower of eternal life: of all of those from their flesh who trace their descent: though not of all of them, but of those selected from them: yet of so many, that the whole people and peculiar possession of God is held as such by all nations. From which felicity since they have themselves cast themselves off, yet they are not utterly dismissed. For none at all — which is truly to be wondered at and astonishing as the gift of God — throughout the whole law and all the prophets are threats and devotions read against this people, in which God does not subjoin the magnificent and eminent promise of the restoration of these. How splendid and memorable for us always is that promise in Deut. 30: If thou be scattered to the corners of heaven, thence will the Lord thy God draw thee back, etc. And what else does Isaiah sing throughout that whole portion of his book which is from chapter 40 to the very end of the book? Similar things we read also in all the prophets. Altogether therefore it is necessary that the whole people be at some point restored. And from this it is certainly given to them, I would not doubt, to have such a firm expectation of the Messiah: who, though he came in the flesh and is not recognized by them now, will yet come to them in his Spirit, and will give himself to be recognized, and will make them enjoy in his kingdom a felicity stupendous and salutary to the whole world. Concerning the calling, it was said at the beginning of the epistle in that: Called as an Apostle, and above in chapter 8, section 5, in that: Those who were called according to his purpose.

For just as you. What dispensation of divine mercy toward ourselves we Gentiles have experienced: why should we not expect the same for the Jews? While the Jews were believers, we

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were unbelievers: now we have been endowed with faith, and the Jews are held under unbelief. Just as therefore the condescension of God did not leave us under unbelief: who would leave under it the people which he willed to be his own peculiar possession before all the peoples of the world, to whom so many promises belong, and the fathers, and Christ himself? God determined to know, as the Savior of all men, a more illustrious mercy, by which he restores from the confessed and public impiety of the people. Just as therefore he assumed the Gentiles who for so many centuries had been utterly without God: so he determined to assume the Jews too, when they also shall have been publicly lost in manifest and long-standing impiety.

Now you have obtained mercy by their unbelief. God so established each of his individual works that one always serves the other, and is in some manner the cause of some good. For nothing of what God does can fail to be good. But if whatever comes from God is good, nothing can be done by him in any way which does not serve other things and exist as the cause of some good. But since things and the deeds of the Lord avail only from the will and dispensation of God, it is sufficiently clear from the word of God alone and the common use of all things that all things are to be judged: what each thing avails, and of what good each is a cause. The unbelief of the Jews is evil and destructive to them, and this is their own guilt. Yet at the same time it is also the work and will of God: God himself concluded them under unbelief: thus far therefore that unbelief of the Jewish people is good, and the certain cause of some good. But this appeared: and this blindness and unbelief of the Jews first drove the Apostles of the Gospel to the Gentiles. Then it teaches the whole world that in rejecting Christ the

Lord, all righteousness and salvation is rejected. For this is what happened to the Jews. Moreover it admonishes how pernicious a thing the confidence of the flesh and of works is, and how much the salvation of all depends on the sole mercy of God: while the Jews live so calamitous in all respects, because in trying to establish their own righteousness, they so withdraw themselves from the righteousness of God. It shows also that God cannot bear hypocrisy and the neglect of his word and worship, since he so cast off the Jews and devoted them to such great evils, who despised the offered grace of his word. And finally it proclaims that God cannot utterly cast off those whom he once assumed. For no one can sufficiently admire it, if he weighs with how great a kindness he still holds and cherishes the Jews, so that they may at some point receive Christ. But this is above all, that by the hidden judgment of God, as the Apostle here proclaims, they serve us by their own unbelief for this purpose: that we in the meantime, endowed with true faith, may fully enjoy the mercy of God.

And so they too have now fallen from faith. But how does this agree with that above: If the fall of the Jews and their diminution and rejection so profited the rest of the world as to bring to the kingdom of Christ such a multitude of the Gentiles — how much more will their restoration profit the world? From the very genius of the works of God, in his use of everything, it appears that since God makes good things from those which are evil for men, he makes far more ample things when good things come from those which also seem good to us. How does it come therefore that the fall and rejection of the Jews so profit us, and that our being assumed does not profit the Jews? But in fact our assumption does not harm the Jews: it serves them now to their humbling, so that they may be exalted by a more illustrious and admirable mercy of God at some point. The Jews were assumed in the beginning, that through them the remaining nations might be blessed, that is, endowed with the fellowship of the divine nature: for this purpose therefore they also contributed and contribute something by their fall and blinding. So also we Gentiles are assumed to bear fruit: for every good

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tree puts forth good fruit: and we too, who from the Gentiles believed, shall bear fruit: with others, and with the Jews themselves.

But the fructification of all, since it is wholly from God, is also rightly dispensed at the will of God. Hence it has come to pass that first the faith of the Jews, when they alone from all the peoples of the world were the peculiar possession of God: availed for this, that the Gentiles were alien from God, and the goodness of God appeared to share itself uniquely with the Jews. Then he willed by the fall of the Jews to bring to us the fellowship of Christ and eternal life, from which the Jews themselves had already fallen. So it is no wonder if also our unbelief was once of great benefit to the Jews, since now our faith is to their disadvantage: so that this indeed can be considered from the very unbelief of the Jews. But in truth, just as we were once humbled toward salvation by the faith of the Jews, detained until the appointed time in unbelief, so that we too might in our own time obtain mercy: so now the Jews are humbled toward salvation by our faith, themselves concluded under unbelief.

And just as it could once have been said of us Gentiles: If the fall of the Gentiles is such a benefit to the Jews, that they themselves are the people of God while the Gentiles are alienated from God: how much more will the conversion of the Gentiles benefit them? — so now it is rightly said of the Jews: if their fall led to Christ the multitudes of the Gentiles, how much more will their restoration profit the world? Yet for the present the Jews remain in unbelief from the conversion of the Gentiles, just as the Gentiles were once detained in unbelief from the faith of the Jews. But yet the Jews will in turn at some point learn Christ from us Gentiles, and be brought to the kingdom of God. And they too in turn will contribute their part splendidly to the Gentiles for the consummation among them of the kingdom of God.

For the Jews served us first by their faith, so that we Gentiles might be humbled to salvation in the appointed time prescribed for us by the Father, detained under ignorance of God. They served us afterward by their fall, that we might obtain mercy. And they will serve us finally most amply by their restoration, perfecting the kingdom of God among us. So in turn we Gentiles also served the Jews: first by our unbelief, so that they might be the people of God: now by our faith, by which they are humbled under unbelief: and we shall serve them most splendidly still, when we lead them back to their Christ and ours, in which ultimate and eminent conversion of the world, they too will be the most happy administrators of the beneficence of the Lord for many from us Gentiles. For then the kingdom of God will be completed, and the elect will be gathered from everywhere to the Lord: and we must not expect that as now the Jews have fallen from faith through our salvation, so we shall fall from faith at their future assumption. For their assumption will be, as was said, life from the dead, and the most perfect consummation of the Church. Thus far it was necessary to come to pass that as we Gentiles were long detained under unbelief, with the Jews enjoying the salvation of God, so the Jews too should in their time be detained under unbelief, with us Gentiles believing the mercy of God. Toward the end, both the fullness of the Gentiles will enter to Christ, and the whole Israel will be saved. Such is the logic of the dispensation of our salvation, of which all the seers and the Apostle here testify: from which logic he then subjoins.

For God has shut up all. That is, he so determined that all, both Jews and Gentiles — for he speaks here of peoples, not of individuals — might publicly be detained under unbelief for a time, so that he might be known as the savior of all by a broader and more splendid mercy. Again the Apostle freely and with full voice attributes to God that he concludes men under unbelief: for certainly with him concluding them, no one will loose himself to belief. For it pertains to the glory

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of God that whatever is done in his creatures, we should say is done by his will and power: as it truly is done. For these are simply good from him, and therefore simply good: while those who are of depraved will find them evil. The human weakness will wonder why God permits so many Jews to perish while he publicly detains this people under unbelief for their future salvation: but whoever has thought that we are nothing but the molded things of God, and he nothing but good: will exclaim with the Apostle: O the depth and richness of the wisdom and knowledge of God, etc., and what follows.

OBSERVATION I.

And so the whole Israel shall be saved. Again we are admonished how far otherwise we ought to hold the Jews than they are generally held among us. In some places they are not borne at all: in others they are indeed borne, but exposed to the injuries and insults of all: honest and frugal trades are not permitted to them, which compels them either to pernicious arts or to the necessity of practicing usury, which miserably bleeds our poor: when they have become rich, they are despoiled by tyrants, who use them as sponges. In other places, on account of the ignorance of the provincials, the chief commerce is in their hands, and nearly all things are permitted to them, on account of the portentous riches they have amassed. But by this perversity of ours, we not only daily make the Jews more and more alienated from the truth with which the Lord has endowed us: but we also bring it about that whatever of religion remained among them in ignorance of Christ is utterly vanishing, as they now headlong with all fear of God driven away from themselves rush into whatever wickedness and crimes. But we are not ignorant what the Lord threatened to those who offer stumbling blocks. It is therefore truly to be prayed that the Lord may grant to our Princes and Magistrates, and to all of us who invoke Christ, both toward others and especially toward the Jewish people: that spirit with which we may study together with him to seek and preserve in them what is lost: that we may receive and treat the Jews with all gentleness and humanity, so that it may be permitted to them to live well among us and not to live evilly. Since by their own stubbornness they deserve not to be placed on an equal footing with Christians: care must also be taken lest they instill into the simpler ones the venom of their error. Let them live among us in such a manner that they are both admonished of the curse of the Lord, to which they are rightly subject, and lack occasion of harming anyone, especially by the contagion of their impiety. There are arts, there are occupations by which they may live to their own individual and to the commonwealth's singular advantage: let these be permitted to them with such discipline as will not only restrain them from foisting their pernicious opinions on anyone, or living otherwise wickedly and wantonly: but so that they may at the same time be drawn and, as far as this can be done, compelled toward the religion of Christ and all the innocence of life. This manner certainly of dealing with the Jews, which today a good part of Princes either do not tolerate at all in their dominions, or do tolerate them indeed, but exposed to the injuries and insults of all, so that by no honest trade, but only by harmful arts and usury most destructive to very many, they sustain their miserable life and serve Princes for the plundering of the common people: this certainly conflicts not only with the laws of pious Princes, but also with the very law of nature and of nations. We are called sons of God, and if we believe in Christ, we truly are: the light of our faith with which we boast of being illuminated before others ought therefore to shine far differently in good works. We have received more benefits from the Jews than we have: they are of greater value to God: so that even the common mass of Christians, let alone the Princes and leaders of Christ's flock, should so securely dissimulate this dreadful thing, and this stumbling block, sometime to be expiated by an intolerable vengeance upon us, which is so barbarously and impiously offered generally to this people. May the Lord grant that both concerning the Jews and concerning ourselves and all men, we may truly and with hatred

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pursue impiety and sins, and whatever of God is in any men whatsoever, may both rightly acknowledge and everyone zealously seek to cultivate it according to his calling.

OBSERVATION II.

And this is my covenant with them. Let us observe how throughout scripture makes the beginning of all our salvation and the proper work of Christ restoring us: the removal of our sins. Which he performs when he intercedes with the Father for the forgiveness of our transgressions, and having communicated his Spirit, brings it about that we hereafter abhor sinning, and continually strive to cut out the roots of sins in us. This benefit therefore, the removal of sins, let us always seek from Christ the Lord and from him alone. For this one thing will make us of true worth both before God and men, will render us partakers of solid righteousness: however much Paul inculcates this everywhere, though it seems superfluous to many who always have it in their mouths.

OBSERVATION III.

According to the Gospel they are enemies. Let us learn from this that we must altogether take upon ourselves the enmity of all those not reborn in Christ, but for no other cause than the Gospel and those for whom the Gospel is to be preached. But all those in whom something of God remains — and very much remains in all who are still living in this life — must at the same time, according to that which of God remains in them, be loved and cherished: but so that they may be attracted to Christ, not so that they may be strengthened in their own errors. In both we all sin too greatly, because Christ is not yet all in all for us. The reasonings of the flesh avail very much everywhere, and so to those alienated from Christ, now too much is deferred, now too little. For very often if those who seem to be able to do something according to the flesh, one does not go against their impiety as one ought: but if they are lowly according to the flesh, or seem to be of little use to us, those things of God which are in them are not only neglected but sometimes also impiously fought against. Certainly no one will advance to this point unless he prays daily, so as to have enemies and friends according to the Gospel of Christ, to serve faithfully and happily for the sanctification of the name of the heavenly Father and the amplification of his kingdom before all men: and to offer no one any stumbling block by his own fault.

OBSERVATION IV.

For the gifts of God are without repentance. Let us well consider and always be mindful of what gifts have been divinely bestowed on both us and our neighbors, and to what calling God has called each one: and then let us always remember that these gifts, this calling of God, cannot be changed. So we shall acknowledge the condescension of God both toward us and toward others better and more worthily, and our confidence in the mercy of God will be wonderfully confirmed, and the zeal for serving our neighbors according to the gifts and calling of God will be inflamed: that is, the life of God, the true felicity, will be perfected in us. For what should we not expect with the greatest confidence from our heavenly Father, and what should we not wholly consecrate ourselves to all his pleasures, when we consider to what fellowship of his divinity he has called us, what gifts he has bestowed — truly heavenly and beatifying gifts — and this from his sole mercy, from which he also determined them to be everlasting: though we fall from our duty not seven times a day only but seventy times seven. Now if we consider that God has assumed our neighbors whatever they may be, to do them such ample good, and this without any repentance: what injury can they possibly do to us that we could judge sufficient cause for us to change our goodwill toward

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them, or relax our diligence? We are sons of God: let therefore our calling toward brothers also be without repentance: let our gifts be without repentance: for such are our calling and gifts of God, for all manner and eternal felicity.

OBSERVATION V.

For God has shut up all, that he might have mercy on all. From this let us judge concerning the blinding of all, until the Lord altogether shows who sin unto death: and let us most vigilantly subserve this mercy of God, for which the elect are often being prepared while they are held under unbelief. For those who are lost must always be sought for salvation, and the hope of their salvation must be put in none, nor the zeal for gaining them relaxed, of whom God himself does not openly forestall our hope and repel the zeal of gaining them.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION V.

O the depth and amplitude.

EXPOSITION

D. Paul throughout this whole Epistle chiefly pursues this: to show that we are saved and blessed by the sole gratuitous mercy of God exhibited in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we are partakers of this mercy at the very moment we believe in the Gospel offering this mercy. The Jews and Judaizing Christians on the contrary were boasting of their descent, their law, and the rites and ceremonies which the law prescribes, that these bring something to salvation and the blessed life. That the Apostle therefore proved and prevailed that salvation is obtained by the sole gratuitous election of God, with no prerogative of the flesh, and then by faith in the mercy of God and thus in Christ the Lord, not by the law or any pursuit of the law: the Jews and their followers were also objecting the very election and calling of God by which in their fathers above all the nations they had been elected and called into the peculiar possession of God. From which, since no people with equal fury rejected the Gospel of Christ as the Jews: this prejudice of the Jews was diminishing the faith of the Gospel for very many, and for Christ the Lord himself. From this the Apostle was compelled to show that the Jews in the present time have been rejected and blinded before others by God: but that the Gentiles have been assumed and illuminated by the true light of faith, and then that God will again assume the Jews.

In these things it was necessary for the Apostle to declare more broadly how all things depend on the will of God, so that he, owing nothing to anyone, hardens and anticipates with his mercy those whom he himself wills: and that there is nothing at all not only in man, but even in all the creatures, which can of itself avail even the slightest for eliciting the calling and gifts of God. Since God does and dispenses all his things with certain knowledge and most present power, freely and openly he had to confess that God has now blinded and rejected the Jews — indeed well deserving of this — while in the meantime, from his gratuitous mercy, he has assumed the Gentiles, deserving nothing better than the Jews. When therefore with these things the Apostle readily acknowledged that he was offending human reason — for that perpetually dreams that it can be, that God in dispensing his own benefits regards merits — he undertook again to draw our mind down into the abyss of the goodness and wisdom of God: and because he here concludes his discourse concerning the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews: he does this with more words and more

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ardent emotion, and that the discourse may carry more weight, he wove it from the very oracles of scripture, and finished it in a confession of the divine majesty most wonderfully full and fervent.

The proposition therefore here is: God in adorable and unsearchable wisdom and equity tempers the salvation of men, and now holds the Jews concluded under unbelief, but so that he may have mercy on them more illustriously at some point: but the Gentiles he endows with the faith of his Gospel and all manner of felicity, to irritate the Jews by the emulation of the Gentiles. That there is in this dispensation of human salvation, of which he discusses, adorable wisdom and equity: he proves by three arguments. The first is from the authority of his own Spirit exclaiming in such burning ardor toward this praise. The second is that no one can counsel or give anything to God. This he set forth with a certain religious glorification of God and insulting against human rashness and irreverence, when he subjoined: Who has been his counselor? Who gave him anything first? etc. But this: that God cannot be counseled or given anything: he infers that he himself by highest wisdom and from his own fullness disposes and bestows all things. But that he might show how certainly this ought to be held by us, how abhorrent it is from every contrary thought, he used such a glorification of the infinite wisdom of God and most perfect right over all things, and insulting against human audacity, as is contained in these interrogations: Who has been his counselor? Who gave him anything first? etc.

The third argument principally upholds the justice and equity of God: for it shows that God not only has all things from himself, and nothing can be conferred upon him, as in that: Who gave him anything first? — in which rather the perfection of God and the immensity of his power is shown — but also that we are so of God that he cannot fail to determine rightly whatever he determines about us. For the argument is from our creation. For God himself made us, and made us through himself, with no one helping him, and for his own sake, through all things for himself, so that our ultimate end and highest perfection is to be and to be employed in all things for his pleasure. This the Apostle teaches in that: From him, through him, and in him are all things. For since all things are thus from God himself as their first author and principle — for nothing else moved him to make them — and since they were thus made through him alone with no other thing applied even as an instrument — and finally, as now necessarily follows from what was premised, also for his sake alone, so that they may be referred to him alone, and serve his pleasure in all things — such a right has God over his creatures: and he has declared in them his infinite wisdom and goodness to this extent, that it is confessedly impious not to acknowledge and admire and adore in all things this very wisdom and goodness, and to exclaim with the whole heart with the Apostle: O the depth of wisdom, etc.: and let us also finish with that exclamation with which Paul finished it: To him be glory in the ages. Amen. Thus far therefore the Apostle has proved that God employs the highest wisdom and equity in the dispensation of human salvation.

But that this wisdom and equity of God is by no means to be investigated by us: he proves by the testimony both of his own Spirit exclaiming this with the greatest emotion, and of scripture. For since the immensity of this wisdom is so deep, which the Apostle exclaims about in the profundity of its riches: since his judgments are unsearchable and his ways unfathomable, and no one has known the mind of the Lord — all of which both the scriptures proclaim, and his own Spirit exclaims — the reasoning of this wisdom and equity of God is certainly to be sought by no mortal.

So also above in section 3 of chapter 9 he called away from this forbidden investigation of the counsels of God, presenting the amplitude of God and our emptiness, when he admonished that God is our potter and we are his molded things. For when he molds us from nothing, and from this

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rightly has power to mold, govern, and move us according to his own will: and we from ourselves are nothing, and from God we are, we can, we have, and we do whatever we are, can, have, and do — it certainly will not be lawful for anyone to say to God: Why hast thou made us thus, or others thus? The same amplitude of God and our emptiness the Apostle also presents here, when he proclaims that the judgments of God are unsearchable to us and his ways unfathomable, that no one can give God either counsel or anything of substance. From these it is certainly established most clearly that God is and does all things, and we receive all things from him: therefore he has such full right over all things that it is impious and the greatest wickedness to demand from him the reasoning of those things which he has determined concerning his own molded things, and not to acknowledge that, just as in highest wisdom, so he also governs, moderates, and moves all things so that they cannot be governed and moved more wisely and better. This praise and glory therefore in God all in all his judgments and deeds must attribute and celebrate with the whole heart. To invite us hither therefore he subjoined: that God alone is sufficient in himself, needing no counsel and work of others.

INTERPRETATION

O the depth of goodness. The Greek exemplars have: Ὡ βάθος πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως Θεοῦ. O the profundity of the divine riches and wisdom and knowledge. From this reading it can appear that the Apostle is exclaiming concerning the profundity of three things: riches, wisdom, and knowledge. Following this reading, I rendered this passage: O the depth of goodness and wisdom, etc. For riches placed absolutely in the scriptures are taken for abundance of goodness, as above in section 2 of chapter 10: The same Lord of all, rich in bounty toward all who call upon him, that is, abundant in goodness for saving all. And Eph. 2, he said the unsearchable riches of Christ, for unsearchable goodness and salvation which Christ brought us. Moreover Paul is wont to add something to this name, as when he says riches of glory, or riches of grace. Yet the Latins read this passage, subjoining wisdom and knowledge to the name of riches: so that the sense is: O the profundity, amplitude, or abundance of the wisdom and knowledge of God. But since the Apostle undertook here to proclaim not only the immensity of God's wisdom and knowledge, but far more the goodness and mercy of God, I preferred to take riches here separately, and for the most ample goodness and mercy of God, of which he had premised: He has shut up all under unbelief, that he might have mercy on all. Though in the wisdom and knowledge of God, the goodness and mercy itself is also contained. But what Paul chiefly cares to commend: this he is also wont to express by name. By the names of wisdom and knowledge, which when they are nearly joined in scripture: the Apostle, where excellent wisdom is proclaimed, wished to express the amplitude of the divine wisdom, directing all things so wonderfully toward the best end, even where we see nothing but destruction and the extermination of things. In the same sense the Apostle writes Col. 2 that in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. There certainly the same thing through the name of knowledge as is signified through the name of wisdom: most full and absolute wisdom and knowledge of salvation. Scripture everywhere is full of such reduplications. Eph. 1, in the same sense he joins τῆ σοφίᾳ φρόνησιν. So is joined in the Proverbs of Solomon: חָכְמָה, that is, wisdom, now מוֹסֵר, that is, erudition, now בִּינָה, that is, understanding, which the Greeks nearly rendered γνῶσις, that is, knowledge. These reduplications you may find also in the Prophets. Isa. 11 and 33, and elsewhere.

For unsearchable are his judgments. The Apostle seems to have taken this from many testimonies of scripture, as it were the sum of those things which the scriptures teach concerning the hidden and unsearchable logic of the judgments and the whole dispensation of God, by which

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he administers the affairs both of men and of the whole world. Isaiah from the fortieth and nearly all the subsequent chapters to the end of the book proclaims this most copiously, that the judgments of God are admirable and by no means to be investigated by men: his ways are as much loftier than our ways as heaven is higher than the earth. The whole book of Job is also in this: that we learn to acknowledge that God most justly determines all things about men, but the logic of his judgments is by no means to be sought. The same the Psalms sing everywhere: indeed the whole scripture teaches this everywhere as preeminent: that the counsel of the Lord concerning us and all his creatures is most just and best, but its logic cannot be investigated by us, and that we must live by the faith of his promises, the confidence of his goodness: so that we may say with the Prophet: Psalm 73: I am stupid and know nothing, I am before thee as a beast. Yet I am always with thee, thou hast taken hold of my right hand, and by thy counsel thou dost lead me, and at last thou wilt receive me to glory. Likewise that in Psalm 36: Lord, thy kindness reaches to the heavens, thy truth to the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God, that is, the highest, thy judgments are a vast abyss: both man and beast thou dost save, O Lord. To the same belongs the fact that in the Psalms the saints so greatly celebrate the wonderful and stupendous deeds of the Lord. From this sum therefore of all holy scripture the Apostle took this: How unsearchable are his judgments.

For who has known the mind of the Lord? This is the reason for the preceding exclamation. For since no one can fully know the mind of the Lord, he certainly will investigate the counsels, judgments, and ways of him, that is, his deeds, in which he carries out what he determined in his mind. From the deeds of the Lord his counsel is partly disclosed to us, and may partly piously be traced: but what ultimate end the mind of God has in view in all things, that lies hidden from us: and it is therefore impossible and also impious for anyone to try to inquire further into the judgments and ways of the Lord. He himself commands us in the scriptures to inquire: namely so that we may acknowledge that in whatever he dispenses with us or others, whether good or bad, he wishes to teach and admonish us: that nothing good can be prepared for us outside himself, but that from him, if only we believe him, we shall receive beyond what we can ask all good. And this ought to produce in us the effect that we ourselves in all things adhere to him, and strive to fear him with all our powers.

Who has been his counselor? He who can be taught nothing by anyone, knows all things from himself: he is therefore the highest wisdom. To whom nothing can be given, he has all things from himself: he is therefore the highest goodness. In this truth therefore let us fix our mind: and when it is not clear what God intends by any of his deeds and judgments, while in very many other things his supreme wisdom and goodness clearly and is known to us: let us think that in those things and deeds too which are not so manifest to us, he admits nothing that is not the best in the doing, that befits his infinite wisdom and kindness.

Because from him, and through him. This is the reason of the preceding saying. For he wished to proclaim that God from himself, with no one admonishing or instigating him: and through himself alone, with no one ministering to him or helping him: and in himself alone, that is, for himself alone and for his sole cause, created, preserves, and governs all things. From this therefore it follows that no one can either counsel God or confer anything upon him. But if all things are thus wholly of God, and nothing of all things can belong to others: God certainly has such full right over all things that it is impious and the greatest wickedness to demand from him the logic of those things which he has so through all things determined for his own molded things: and not to acknowledge that just as in highest wisdom and from immense goodness he made all things, so also he governs, moderates, and moves all things so that they cannot be governed and moved more

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wisely and better. Which praise and glory all are bound to attribute to God in all his judgments and deeds, and to celebrate with the whole heart. To invite us hither therefore he subjoined.

To him be glory in the ages. Amen. That is, the everlasting glory, which namely can befit only that unique one who does all things most excellently, God our Creator, the sole wise and good one.

OBSERVATION I.

O the depth of goodness. To this place rush the minds of those who truly look up to God: for the more they acknowledge the judgments of God to be inferior and less to be investigated by us, the more they pour themselves out in the admiration and proclamation of the goodness and wisdom of

God with the greater emotion. Nothing in the deeds of the Lord however strange to our reason occurs to them as sad, nothing as terrible, much less as anything reprehensible. For they worship and love God with their whole heart, and those things also of whose logic they are ignorant, those which they wonder at, all the counsels and deeds of God seem to them to be with highest goodness and wisdom admirable and to be adored: and in any deeper consideration of the works and judgments of God they can do nothing other than *δοξολογεῖν*, celebrate, and with all their powers extol the goodness and wisdom of God. Similar was that exclamation of the Lord: I give thee thanks, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent of this world, and hast revealed them to little ones. Even so, Father, for so it was well pleasing to thee. Let us therefore remember this, whenever the judgments of the Lord seem to us bitter and troublesome in ourselves or others. Rightly indeed do we grieve over sins and evils brought by sins, both our own and others': but a mind truly revering and loving God raises itself immediately to the consideration of this: that since God is all good, he can do nothing that is not good for all who truly seek good from him. Therefore among those who firmly believe the Lord, it is necessary that every thought and word about the deeds and judgments of the Lord, whatever they may be, come out and burn at last in the admiration and praise of the goodness and wisdom of God, exulting with a certain heavenly joy and singular confidence in his goodwill toward themselves.

OBSERVATION II.

How unsearchable. Let this occur to us as often as that impious curiosity steals upon us to investigate the counsels of the Lord, that is, inquiring why God dispenses the affairs of ourselves or others in the manner in which they come to pass. This evil is certainly far more troublesome to us than we ourselves believe. For who does not from time to time hear even from those who yet are held among the common mass of the saints: Why does he so elevate, why does he so cherish those who are plagues of the human race? And why does God so make the affairs of the impious prosperous, why me, why those good men zealously devoted to the commonwealth in all good faith, does he so cast down and break? For unless this evil deeply besieged the saints too, it would not have been so diligently set forth by the Spirit of God both by itself and with its remedy, in Psalm 73, Jeremiah 12, and throughout the book of Job. When therefore these things either arise in us or are heard from others: let us immediately object those things which the Apostle here exclaims: How unsearchable are his judgments, etc. Who has known the mind of the Lord? For not only is it impossible to know the logic of these things, but also supremely impious to investigate it. For if it is of God so to administer things that his counsel is unsearchable to man: certainly whoever presses

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forward to investigate the counsel of the Lord is trying to reduce God among the creatures, and indeed below man. For the heart of man is unsearchable. But how great an impiety is this?

OBSERVATION III.

Who has given him anything first? Let us remember this when we are displeased with our lot, and do not receive even with thanksgiving whatever the Lord may have sent. We have given nothing to God, we can give nothing to him: but he has given to us, and gives all things, and cannot fail to give good things, who is nothing but good. Which even Socrates and Seneca and other Gentiles acknowledged. Let us only receive and use these well: which we shall do when we use all things for the glory of God and the salvation of the brethren, so that all things come out to the glory of God.

PERORATION.

Thus far we have executed also the colophon of the second book of the expositions on this Epistle of D. Paul, in which the Apostle discussed the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews, averting namely the stumbling block which was put in the way of very many both of the Jews and of the Gentiles by the fact that none fought against the Gospel more stubbornly and atrociously, and those who were held among the Jews to be the first in religion and knowledge of the scriptures: because they believed these would be the first to come to the Gospel, if it were the genuine Gospel of God. For to this people the kingdom of Christ had been promised especially. Hence therefore, as he necessarily had to, the Apostle taught in many ways that our salvation, all true dignity, depends on no thing that is of the flesh, but depends wholly on the gratuitous election of God, which he makes by his hidden, and to all creatures inscrutable, counsel, with absolutely no regard for works, either future or present. And from this he simultaneously confirmed the chief heading of the doctrine, which the whole Epistle up to this point expounds and defends: that we are saved by the sole mercy of God exhibited in Christ the Lord: when from this same mercy the very true faith is given to embrace it. For since God preserves those whom he wills, by so exclusively his own spontaneous goodwill, so that his purpose stands from his free election and nothing of this comes from works, not even future ones, as Augustine most irrefragably gathers from the words of Paul and from the whole logic of our salvation: it is most evidently established that we are saved by the sole mercy of God in Christ, and that we shall have attained the end of goods and enjoyed solid felicity, when it has been given to us from this mercy of God to embrace it in Christ the Lord. For those whom God elected and predefined for salvation: these he elected and predefined in Christ the Lord, Eph. 1, through whom he also calls, justifies, and glorifies them, above in chapter 8. Truly therefore there is in these three chapters, in which the Apostle discussed the mystery of election, a colophon of those things which he taught in the preceding, concerning faith in Christ by which alone we receive salvation, namely when we embrace the spontaneous and sole saving mercy of God offered and exhibited in Christ the Lord.

Moreover in these things, while the Apostle strives in all ways that all salvation is of the sole spontaneous goodwill, and that the hidden judgment of God now so runs that the Jews are held blinded under unbelief: he attributes to the Lord to anticipate by his mercy and preserve, to again harden, blind, and cast off those whom he himself wills, with absolutely no regard for works. For concerning Jacob and Esau he expressly says: before they had done anything good or evil. In expounding these things I judged it unworthy to try to speak of these judgments of the Lord either more cautiously, or more reverently, or in any other more decent manner. The Lord himself speaks

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of them, and wished the Apostle — certainly the most vigilant and most religious of all dispensers of the holy mysteries of God — to speak of them. I therefore beg by the Lord those who will read these things, before condemning me, whether of **καινοτομίας** or of an irreligious and incautious handling of the scriptures: carefully to weigh in what words not only the Apostle but also all the canonical writers speak of these mysteries. I confess that, with the exception of D. Augustine and D. Jerome somewhere, the holy Fathers were somewhat reluctant to say simply with scripture: that God hardens, blinds, delivers into a reprobate sense, concludes under unbelief. Nor is the cause which led them away from the simplicity of scripture here to be condemned, for they wished to guard against men attributing the guilt of their sins, not to themselves, but to God. But we are not ignorant, experienced as we are with such great loss to religion: and it is full of danger to correct the tongue of the Holy Spirit, indeed not everywhere to adhere to him most religiously, as scripture has it. No one knows the mind of the Lord, no one even the Spirit of the Lord: nor is there anyone more knowing of our salvation: who therefore expresses the doctrine of our salvation in more cautious and better-adapted words? This certainly is what we must chiefly guard against in dispensing the word of the Lord, that men should impute their sins to God, since the beginning of holy doctrine is to lead men to the true acknowledgment of their own sins, so that namely they may attribute the guilt to themselves and all the glory of justice to God. But this the Holy Spirit in the scriptures teaches us to do in such a way that we appeal to the very consciences of men, and convict them of sin from their own words and deeds: and proclaim God as having made and preserved us and all things from nothing by his sole power, and as exhibiting supreme goodness and supreme wisdom in them: and finally as about to judge the world, that is, to correct with supreme justice whatever error, iniquity, and depravity is anywhere. These certainly are so, that whoever does not acknowledge these to belong properly to God, knows nothing rightly about God, and cannot be taught: but whoever knows and considers these to be proper to God, for him will immediately vanish whatever thoughts can arise in him about transcribing his sins to God. When those interpretations, through permitted, allowed, withdrew his grace, did not illuminate, human reason — as we proved above — if once you permit it to judge the judgments of the Lord and our Creator, those unsearchable and adorable ones: they do not restrain at all. When, if you rightly object to our reason — which can indeed be taught something about God — that God our judge can admit nothing unjust, our Creator and the best and wisest of all can in us admit nothing that either is unbecoming to him or unsuitable for us: at once you most fully remove all the complaint of men against God, all the transference of guilt to God: you preserve free will for man, and with it the guilt of sin, leave a place for admonitions, exhortations, and dissuasions, and do not destroy the contingency of things. And there will remain simultaneously safe for God his majesty, his justice, his wisdom.

But how these things stand together and do not overthrow each other: the reason which compels me in these passages to adhere to the simplicity of the scriptures and to receive no interpretation which the scripture itself does not offer: I expounded in the course of the exposition of those passages about which there is question. This reasoning I beg the pious reader by the Lord first to sustain reading, rereading, and religiously examining: and not to condemn this treatment — not mine, but scripture's — of irreligious innovation. God, who is the knower of hearts, knows how great is my reverence for that ancient and purer Church of Christ, and how much I defer to the opinion and observation of the holy Fathers. But having professed to be an interpreter of divine scripture, thou thyself knowest it must be necessary above all things to abhor and guard against not ever expounding it in its own simple and genuine sense. Let those who fear God judge, and may the Lord inspire true judgment for us all. Amen.

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TO THE READER.

Thus far the Apostle has expounded and proclaimed in common the doctrine concerning the end and foundation of all things, that is, concerning that by which we are made certain that God is propitious to us: in which namely are contained all the grounds of living well and blessedly, as we said at the outset. For we feel sufficiently, however much the impiety of many clamors against it, that our mind can be satisfied and set at rest by no other certainty, nor brought to quietness, than the certainty of the goodwill of God, by whose nod we know that all things, whether we will or not, are done and dispensed. Hence the Lord himself so often testifies: that whoever trusts solely in him, who namely restored us to grace with the Father, enjoys eternal life. As therefore the Apostle has thus far taught and most clearly prevailed, that by faith alone and the fitting assent of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ we are made certain of the mercy of the heavenly Father, who both forgives us our sins through Christ the Lord and imparts the Spirit of right and blessed life — which in things to be sought is the highest and ultimate — so now, following the order which all who had prudently prescribed anything concerning the shaping of this life, following nature as guide, had observed: he subjoins concerning duties, concerning the pursuit of virtue, by which in all the actions of life we render what is becoming to us, what adorns us, what is truly καλόν. But just as the Apostle in the first part did not linger over those things which the philosophers variously and discordantly invented concerning the ends of goods and evils, but had his eye on what has been divinely implanted and fixed in all mortals: namely that they should seek above all to have God propitious, and as the ultimate of evils shudder at having God angry: so also in prescribing concerning duties he took a far different path from the philosophers. But first and foremost he brings in and joins to him who alone ἐνεργεῖ in us both the willing and the doing of what is right and becoming, when he exhorts us to consecrate ourselves to the Lord as a living sacrifice. Presently he sets forth the use of this faculty, while he teaches us to hold religiously in the body of Christ that place which the Lord himself has assigned us, and to perform the offices of that life with the highest modesty and diligent solicitude which the Lord has enjoined: lest the fastidiousness of our lot, which creeps in as it is wont, lead us to seek things higher or even different, admitting the chief plague of all office, πολυπραγμοσύνη: which brings it about that, like dislocated members in the body of the Lord, we both less receive the force of the common spirit of our common action, and are troublesome to our fellow members, and an impediment to right living.

Then he teaches from where comes the true willingness, alacrity, and constancy in duty: commending burning charity of soul, earnestness of pursuit, endurance of evils, with all manner of holiness of life, and how all these things may both be present and preserved and increased for us — the continual imploring of a more ample spirit. Finally he unfolds the breadth of duty, and establishes how we ought to conduct ourselves and render our duty toward brothers — those weak in faith as well as the strong, those who dissent as well as those who agree — toward outsiders, toward enemies, toward magistrates, and toward all men. These things the Apostle in the remaining part of the Epistle treats, expounds, commends, and fixes briefly indeed, but most fully and most ardently, as all his things are. But since we have been quite diffuse in expounding the preceding parts, and this instruction recurs in all the Epistles: lest this Volume grow to an immense size, we shall strive to touch on all things as briefly as possible, with the more detailed exposition deferred to the remaining Epistles. May the Lord attend us, so that our work may serve at least some for the fruit of the Christian life. Fare well in the Lord, whoever thou art who dost sustain hearing the Lord pouring forth in this his most holy instrument the words of his life.

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PARAPHRASE OF CHAPTERS XII AND XIII TO THE ROMANS.

SECTION ONE.

I exhort you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God: to present your bodies, the whole outward man, a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, by which you may exhibit to him your reasonable worship. And do not sustain to live a life congruent with the life of the men of this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may be able to judge and prove with certainty what is the pleasure of God, what is good, what is well pleasing, and what is perfect.

For I warn each one among you, by the office which the Lord has enjoined upon me by his singular goodwill: not to raise his mind with more care than he ought to raise it, but to set his mind with such care so as to preserve modesty and the observance of his own place and duties: each according as God has measured out to him the strength and faculty of faith in religion. For just as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same action: so we who are many are one body in Christ, and each one members of the others. Having this, through the good providence of God which has befallen us, in a varied way: whether prophecy, according to the proportion of faith: or the office of sacred ministry, with the faculty of ministering: or the office of teaching, with the faculty of teaching: or the office of exhorting, with the faculty of exhorting: or the office of imparting, with simplicity: or the office of governing, with diligence: or the office of showing mercy, with cheerfulness.

Let love be without dissimulation: be resolved to abhor what is evil, be devoted to beneficence: be inclined toward one another with singular affection in brotherly love: forestall one another in honor and veneration: be not sluggish in diligence, fervent in spirit, intent upon the occasion of duty, joyful in hope, patient in affliction, persevering in prayer, sharing your things for the uses of the saints, following hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you: bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Do not aspire to high things, but accommodate yourselves to the humble. Do not be wise in your own conceits. Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought to conduct yourselves before all men in those things which are held to be honorable. Keep peace as much as possible, and as much as in you lies, with all men. Do not avenge yourselves, dear ones, but give place to divine vengeance. For it is written: Vengeance belongs to me, and I will repay, says the Lord. If therefore thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink. For when thou doest this, thou shalt burn him most of all, as it were heaping coals of fire upon his head, and yet to his benefit. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

CHAPTER XIII.

SECTION ONE.

Whoever enjoys the present life, let him be subject to the excellent powers. For there is no power except from God. But the powers that are, are so constituted by God. Therefore he who resists a power resists the ordinance of God. But those who resist will bring punishment upon themselves. For those who hold the principate are not a cause of fear for good works, but for evil. Dost thou wish not to fear the power? Do good, and thou shalt have praise from it. For it is a

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minister of God for thy good. But if thou doest what is evil, fear. For it does not bear the sword in vain. For it is a minister of God, an avenger to take punishment upon those who do what is evil. Be subject therefore, as it is necessary: not only for the sake of avoiding punishment, but also for the cause of preserving the sincerity of the conscience. For this reason you also pay tribute: for they are public ministers of God, who attend to this very thing, that all things may be rightly and in order conducted. Render therefore to all what you owe: to whom tax, tax; to whom tribute, tribute; to whom reverence, reverence; to whom honor, honor.

Remain in debt for nothing except that you love one another. For he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For this: Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not speak false testimony, thou shalt not covet evil, and if there is any other commandment, it is comprehended in this word, in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. He who loves his neighbor will not do what is evil. The fulfillment therefore of the law is love.

And since we know that time is at hand, because the hour has come that we be awakened from sleep — for now our salvation is nearer than when we embraced the faith, the night has advanced, the day has come near — let us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the weapons of light. And let us conduct ourselves honestly and becomingly as in the day: not indulging in revellings and drunkenness, not in beds and wantonness, not in contention and rivalry: but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to pursue its desires.

SUMMARY OF THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE CONTAINED IN THESE TWO CHAPTERS.

God has joined us so that we may live by reason proper to ourselves and by pursuit: therefore in his own scriptures, by which he imparts to us the doctrine of salvation, he both establishes reason and inflames pursuit: that is, he sets forth what things are to be sought in life, what to be avoided: then he attracts and invites to those things, showing what good is in them: and deters and calls away from these, explaining what evil they contain in themselves. D. Paul therefore, as the chief administrator of divine instruction, enters by the same path in commending the wisdom of the Gospel, which is the one true and perfect art of living well and blessedly. First of all he taught, against the errors by which Satan seduces men from this truth, and defended that in which is situated what we all experience as the ultimate of goods: namely that we are made certain of the eternal grace and goodwill of God: which is for us the ultimate in things to be sought. For he showed clearly, and proved most evidently, that this certainty of grace and goodwill of God consists for us by faith alone in our Lord Jesus Christ. Now he teaches what manners are congruent with this faith, what the duties of believers in Christ are, how those ought to live who wish to enjoy the goodwill and love of God more continuously and abundantly, and finally to receive from it the complete fellowship of the divine life. And so expounding what it may be worth to observe these manners and duties, and what great good is to be obtained thereby: he wonderfully stirs up and inflames zeal for such manners and life.

And above indeed, in the fifth, sixth, and eighth chapters, the Apostle set forth what the pursuits of Christians are: namely that whatever God may have sent, to take it in good part, to extinguish the depraved desires which are innate in us, to meditate all manner of holiness, to follow in all things the spirit of righteousness. But what he there discussed of these, he referred to the heart: so that showing these to be the proper effects of faith in Christ the Lord, he might more clearly prevail that we are solidly made partakers of the mercy of God by faith alone in Christ. For

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when this alone brings such great communion of the divine nature, true righteousness — the first and greatest proof of the eternal and supreme goodwill of God, which no other thing anywhere men could obtain — from this very fact certainly most brilliantly is it recognized that faith in Christ is that by which we first and most certainly receive this goodwill of God, and possess it fully. But in this place the Apostle explains what manner of life we ought to lead, what manners we must pursue: not in order to show thereby what avails and brings to us faith, but to stir and impel to this very life, to seize these manners, and to press with the whole heart into it.

First therefore, as we said in the preface of this book, he exhorts us to offer and accommodate ourselves to God the fountain of all righteousness, by a solid consecration and devotion of ourselves to his pleasures. For no one is good but God: hence we can do nothing rightly and well, except what God himself does in us. Therefore he must live in us, not we ourselves. This we attain best when the Spirit of the heavenly Father forms in us right judgment, that is, the approval of the pleasure of God. He does this in section 1 of chapter 12.

Presently he exhorts us to rightly join and subject ourselves to the saints: as those who are partly the means through which God determined to teach and move us, and partly those in whom God has determined to administer his salvation through us. He treats this in section 2 of the same chapter, teaching that we who believe in Christ are members of one another, and that each has his own office and his own faculty of restoring others in the Lord: and then he enumerates the principal offices of the Church, and describes their duties.

Third he recalls and commends those things from which the full will of rendering service to the saints exists and perseveres. These are: genuine love, the just love of doing good, a propense affection toward brothers and reverence, diligence in acting, fervor, diligence, joy from goods hoped for, contempt of present evils, urgency of prayers. To these he exhorts in section 3.

Fourth he exhorts to duty toward those who are outside the Church, and toward enemies as well. How duteous we are to be toward enemies, calling away fury from revenge, recommending humanity toward others, and describing it from its true effects. These are in section 4.

Fifth he incites to rendering true obedience to Princes and Magistrates, expounding the principal utility both of public power and of the obedience to be rendered to it.

Sixth he returns to commending love, on which true dutifulness depends through all things, teaching that by it the whole law is fulfilled.

Seventh, as if in conclusion, he exhorts from the amplitude of salvation made by Christ, to the continual repression of the depraved desires of the flesh, and to the cutting out of those vices which perpetually spring up from them — both those with which our life is contaminated, and those by which the love of the brethren is harmed and impeded — and finally to bending all zeal so that we may express the whole life of Christ.

EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS: **CHAPTER 12**

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EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER XII.

I exhort you therefore.

EXPOSITION

The Apostle here undertakes to fashion manners worthy of a Christian, as we said: the head of this is to establish every action of life with right judgment. But right judgment is formed first of all by what is then true and certain, when we judge and determine as right what God approves and commands, and as wrong and to be avoided in life what God disapproves and forbids. But since this judgment, when it was destroyed and overturned by the sin of the first parents, cannot be restored to any mortal except through the breathing of the Spirit of Christ — renewing us wholly, and first of all our mind and all our reason in us — the Apostle exhorts us, for the receiving of this breathing of the Spirit and the renewal of our mind, to consecrate ourselves wholly to God. For this Spirit breathes in this manner upon those who permit and devote themselves wholly to God, who know that nothing good, nothing right can be seen or established from themselves, and who wish to be taught and governed by God. For God does not wish to teach and govern those who govern themselves.

The proposition therefore is: Present yourselves to God, for the full transformation of the outer man, whom the Apostle elsewhere also calls the body, and sometimes the body of sin. He therefore says: Present your bodies, meaning the whole man as he is by nature, who necessarily must be slain and sacrificed, so that the life of God may have place in him. And this mortification, yet to a true fellowship of life, is signified in the word **παραστήσαι**. This proposition he proves by two primary reasons, each drawn from what religiously minded men chiefly experience. For the first is drawn from the worship of God, the other from the faculty of right judgment, and from the happy and well-ordered conduct of the whole of life.

The first reason is thus formed: What, brothers, do you think above all must be striven for in this whole life, you who now glory that the heavenly Father has been reconciled to you through Christ the Lord, the certain fellowship of eternal life given from his supreme mercy — unless it be that you may gratify God who is so infinitely kind toward you, and exhibit to him the true worship? But this worship can be none other than that you yourselves slaughter and offer yourselves to be renewed to his pleasures. He does not prove this, because from the Gospel they had long known well: that since all our reason and will is corrupted from the original: God, when he undertook to save and restore us, requires above all things that we deny ourselves, and devote ourselves to be reformed and renewed.

But that he might further commend this worship and inflame them toward it, he adds: when we offer our bodies to God, that is, the whole outer man, this sacrifice is a living one, holy, exceedingly pleasing to God, and in this the worship is rational. In that he says living, he drives away the horror of death which otherwise inheres in our very offering. For although it is necessary that we be slain and consumed in the outer man, yet the inner man by this very thing enters eternal life. When he adds holy, he admonishes that in such a sacrifice there is at last the true holiness, that is, that excellence by which we are devoted to divine uses. In that he thirdly adds **εὐάρεστον**, exceedingly pleasing to God, he shows that God is truly and completely pleased by this one

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sacrifice. Moreover the Apostle here has in view, after he began to use the transference of sacrifice, the sacrifices of the old testament: which were offered living and slain, and were consecrated to God with a certain chosen cleanness and integrity, and were said to offer God an odor most pleasing, which odor nevertheless was the faith of the offerers. To the first therefore the Apostle alluded when he said living. For those legal sacrifices were offered living, but yet so that when slaughtered they presently no longer lived: whereas this our sacrifice is offered to be slaughtered indeed, but thence to live in a better manner and forever. Those were consecrated to the worship of God by the selection of singular cleanness and integrity: yet they were not holy unless insofar as they were symbols of the sanctification of the offerers: but our sacrifice is itself holy, because a partaker of the divine nature. Those poured out upon God a sweet odor, but this pleased and was received by those who offered: whereas our sacrifice is itself approved by God, which he restores to the true glory of his name, while we offer it itself to be slaughtered. Now in these things — true life, fellowship of the divine nature, being truly approved by God and pleasing to him — what more could there be for a Christian man to seek? Since therefore the Apostle admonishes us that these things are present in our offering, and admonishes those who can in no way doubt these things: certainly by this very admonition of these things he most efficaciously incites and inflames them to offer and devote themselves to God.

Of equal force is also what he added last: which is your rational worship: by which he extolled the excellence of our worship by the fact that whereas the ancients used symbols in their worship, and irrational beasts as sacrifices, all our worship is rational: and this because it consists without the symbols of animals, and because we render this our worship to God with greater knowledge both of the divine will toward us most kind, and of our salvation in this worship.

The second proof of the proposition is, as I said, from the faculty of true judgment and right reason, on which depends all zeal for right action and the blessed life. But the Apostle here seems to make a new proposition, for he says: Be not conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind: yet when by this saying he expressed the utility of our consecration to the pleasures of God, rightly in this saying we also understand the proof of the first proposition. Moreover the utility is: the renewal of life, and first of judgment, on which the whole rest of life depends. Which certainly cannot come to us from anywhere, unless we have given ourselves utterly to God. For by his Spirit alone can we be changed from the reason and form of living of this age into the reason and form of living according to God. To which he exhorts when he says: And be not conformed. This second proof therefore seems to be explained thus: All of us who believe in Christ confess that eternal life, the blessed life, is set before us in the precepts of God, and that nothing else can be good, pleasing, and perfect for us, and what God approves in our life. For he is most desirous of our salvation and felicity. Therefore when we strive to live according to the pleasure of God, we are pursuing eternal life and full felicity, which is the first of things to be sought. But this pursuit of living in accordance with God's determination then comes into being in us, when we have the things which God wills, what he commands for us, fully known and proved, and from this solidly acknowledge the same things alone to be good, pleasing, and perfect. For everyone pursues in life what he is persuaded is the best for himself. But this certain knowledge of the will of God and of true goods belongs only to those who are renewed. For the natural man cannot receive those things which are of the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. 2. The renewal therefore of our mind, and thereby the whole transformation of ourselves into the image of God, must necessarily be sought by us, and must be pursued with all zeal. Now by this one method alone is it possible to attain this: if we deny ourselves, and devote ourselves wholly to God, who alone by his Spirit removes in us all that is old and the conformity with this age, and gives a new mind, and from this a new life, which is fashioned

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according to his image. Therefore to present and consecrate ourselves to God as a sacrifice must be striven for with the whole heart. Which was the proposition.

INTERPRETATION

I exhort you therefore, brothers. He lowers his authority and expresses a singular emotion of charity: using the word of exhorting, and the appellation of brothers: so as to move them the more. For he had undertaken to stir up will and zeal, for which purpose it had weight that they should see themselves to be of the greatest importance to the Apostle, and that what he admonished he admonished from their sincere love. For we willingly listen to friends, and those who come to us modestly and with winning address: the one because we believe that friends seek our advantage, the other because it pleases us to live more by our own than by another's judgment.

By the mercies of God. רַחֲמִים: Mercies he rendered: concerning this word it was said above in chapter 9 in that, For he says to Moses, section 3. And therein in that, As indeed in Hosea he says, section 4. It signifies a more propense charity and mercy. The Hebrews use this word in the plural number, as we use the name of riches and very many other things: perhaps because true and more ardent charity, which is expressed, always burns with very many emotions toward those whom it embraces. But to be admonished of this mercy of God, avails rightly very much for stirring up our minds, that we may strive to respond with the whole heart to so great a love of God toward us, aiming at that life to which the heavenly Father, embracing us with such great love, gave his Son to death for us in order to lead us.

That you present your bodies. This presenting is first in the sacred ceremonies the chief thing in religion, then with the singular concentration of the soul, in all private prayers and more weighty admonitions, whether of the goodwill or wrath of God which befall us or our neighbors, in things which happen more out of the ordinary, whether desired or adverse: and finally in all our life, in all our thoughts, words, and deeds — an elevation of the mind, acknowledging and confessing to the Lord that whatever pleases us according to the genius of our flesh is evil and pernicious, and from this abominating and renouncing all that from the heart: on the contrary acknowledging and confessing as good and salutary, and as what must be borne and pursued, whatever God may have sent or commanded: and at the same time praying earnestly that God himself may take us up in all our actions, teach, and govern us for the sanctification of his name and the amplification of his kingdom. The Psalms sing everywhere of this consecration of man, as it is the proper work of true prayer. In Psalm 5 David sings of his solemn devotion of himself in these words: I, trusting in the abundance of thy goodness, will come into thy house: I will worship in thy holy temple in thy reverential fear. Lord, lead me by thy righteousness, because of those who lie in wait for me: direct my way before me. Concerning private prayer it is Psalm 25: To thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul: O my God, in thee I trust: make known to me thy ways. Concerning general prayer it is Psalm 16: I set the Lord always before me: for he is at my right hand, that I be not moved. But there are very few Psalms in which this our offering of ourselves to the pleasures of God is not commended. Of this consecration the Lord himself set an example, when he repeatedly testified of himself that he had come not to do his own will but the Father's. Likewise when he said: Father, glorify me from this hour: but for this very purpose I came into this hour. And: Remove this cup from me: but not my will, but thine be done. Paul shows examples of this in himself throughout, both in the Epistles and in Acts. From this his consecration of himself it came about that he could not come to Rome, which he had so long proposed, above in chapter 1. Likewise he wished to be anathema from Christ for the salvation of the Jews, because he recognized the necessity of preaching the Gospel. 1 Cor.

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9. He did not know whether he would choose to be dissolved, or to minister still further to the Churches, and had dying as his gain, but had only one cause for living, Christ, and rejoiced over the afflictions which he endured for the Churches. Col. 1. He endured all things for the sake of the elect. 2 Tim. 2. From the same devotion of himself were those things which he said to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus: I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will befall me there: except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me: but none of these things move me, neither do I count my life dear to myself, that I may complete my course with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus. Acts 20. Likewise how he responded to the brothers weeping at Caesarea that he was going to Jerusalem into certain danger: What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. From the same came the fact that when these very brothers could not persuade Paul not to go to Jerusalem, they acquiesced saying: Let the will of the Lord be done. Concerning the word **παραστήσαι**, it was said above in chapter 6, section 2, and chapter 3, where it was used more fully in the same sense, when he exhorted that we present and offer our members to God as organs of righteousness. By the name of body some said the outer man, from its more prominent part, as above in chapters 6, 7, and 8.

A living sacrifice. Below in chapter 15 he recalls that he has brought the Gentiles to God as a **προσφορά**, that is, an offering accepted and sanctified. And the name **θυσίας** fits beautifully, since it signifies a sacrifice which was wont to be slaughtered. For we must altogether die to ourselves when we hand ourselves over to God to be transformed for life. But this name is common to those things which are offered to God: for the Apostle also calls **θυσίαν** that money which the Philippians sent to him at Rome. Phil. 4. Why the Apostle added living, holy, and exceedingly pleasing, and rational worship: I said in the exposition. For that **εὐάρεστον**, what is to be understood underneath is: to God, which in the passage of Phil. 4 already adduced is added.

D. Chrysostom by **λογικὴν λατρείαν**, rational worship, understands virtues, such as temperance, equity, mercy, innocence. But since the Apostle here by our bodies understands ourselves as a whole, and especially with respect to the mind — for from this all the rest of life depends — it seems to him that this very consecration of our bodies, to which the Apostle here exhorts us, is called rational worship: from the object namely of this our worship, by which, unlike the irrational beasts of old, we offer ourselves who are rational, and especially the mind, and our very reason, to God. In the exposition I added also another reason for this appellation: from the fact that we render this our worship to God with greater knowledge both of the divine will and of our salvation, and therefore with more certain reason. For what was also the chief thing in the sacrifices of the ancients, namely the devotion of the very men themselves to God, and indeed their first assumption by God for the renewal of their salvation: this is now practiced without the veil of animals and other external ceremonies, openly and with greater spirit. Hence our worship could also be called rational from those who render it. But the former reason for this appellation from the object is plainer.

And be not conformed. Because it is **σχηματίζεσθαι**, which could be rendered word for word as figuring themselves: D. Chrysostom in this word understands the vanity of the life of this age as noted, and adduces that of 1 Cor. 7: For the figure of this world passes away. For to be transformed for the life of God is said by the Apostle not **σχηματίζεσθαι** but **μεταμορφοῦσθαι**: so that the Apostle seems to attribute the figure to the life of this age, the form to the life of the sons of God: so that by that name greater solidity may be signified. Whatever may be the case with this: the Apostle here calls away from the manner of living of this age, that is, of those men not yet endowed

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with the life of the age to come, the life of God: and exhorts to entering upon and meditating the life of God, the life of the age which we await. In Phil. 2 the Apostle seems to have taken **μορφὴν** for the same as **σῆμα**, when he writes that the Lord assumed the form of a servant, and was found in figure as a man. In the same Epistle, chapter 3, he writes of the Lord: who will **μετασχηματίσει** our body of humiliation, so that it may be conformed to his glorious body: where in the word **σχηματίζεσθαι** there is nothing vain.

But be transformed. This transformation of ours beginning from the renewal of the mind, the Apostle describes most explicitly in Eph. 4: As the truth is in Jesus, he says, to put off according to the former conversation the old man which is corrupted with erratic lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, etc.

So that you may be able to judge with certainty. From this certain judgment of true goods — that is, of those things which God commands — all right action depends. Concerning the true good, it was said above in the first place in the Conciliation appended to the Exposition of section 6, chapter 1. And in the question appended to the Exposition of section 3, chapter 7. In Phil. 4, the same verb **δοκιμάζεσθαι** is placed, and it is added: **τὰ διαφέροντα**, that is, what are excellent, what are outstanding. D. Chrysostom also reads and interprets this as added here. But as there is no cause why the Apostle should add it, so I think someone has inserted it into this passage from the Epistle to the Philippians. For nothing can be good for us, what God wills, approves, and commands. Hence he also subjoins **εὐάρεστον**, that is, exceedingly pleasing, understand to God: which also alone is perfect, so that no desires of men can be added to it. God requires of us that we permit our whole mind, all desires, to be governed by himself: in this manner of restraining the errors of the soul and depraved desires, have any philosophers ever prescribed more holily and completely? He commands that we use the things made for the use of the body conveniently: so that the body may most conveniently nourish and cherish itself for the purpose of serving: and by that work and method by which each can most promote the salvation of neighbors both privately and publicly. What couldst thou imagine more becoming for such a use of things made for the body? What fuller modesty and temperance could be prescribed? And finally he commands each who strives with his own powers to render himself privately and publicly to neighbors as a certain God, that is, to labor as a savior in all things. What wisdom can human wisdom add to this justice? Truly therefore what God wills, approves, and what is pleasing and well-pleasing to him, is good and perfect.

OBSERVATIONS

In this reading we observe among other things: First, the method of exhorting to the duties of piety with fruit, in which the chief things are the submissive friendliness of one admonishing, and the holy winning address, and then the weighty admonition of the divine mercy toward us. The one conciliates minds to the one admonishing, the other adds weight to the admonition. Then: that the beginning of all right life is to devote ourselves wholly to God in this, that the old man in us may die. Next: that living in conformity with this age is a thing that Christians by itself must flee. Moreover: that God also uses our pursuit for our transformation. For the more diligently we observe the oldness of our nature, and the more ardently we pray for the Spirit of Christ: the more certainly, swiftly, and completely is our transformation accomplished. Further: that true goods cannot be known and rightly proved by anyone who has not been reborn through Christ. And that anyone will advance more in the knowledge of salvation, the greater progress he has made in the renewal of the

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mind. Finally: that since nothing is good but what God wills, we ought to be intent on the word of the Lord, by which the will of God is set forth for us.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION II.

For I warn from my office.

EXPOSITION

In the preceding section he called us out of ourselves, because in us there is nothing good, and brought and joined us to God the fountain of all good: now he joins and inserts us into those through whom God deigns to bestow his gifts upon us, and toward whom he deigns to employ us in dispensing his gifts: our brothers and members. The proposition is: Each person's own place in the body of Christ must be religiously maintained, and his own office must be fulfilled with the highest charity and faithfulness. This the Apostle set forth when he admonishes that we must direct our mind and care to this end, so that each may maintain moderation and the observance of his own place and office. But that we may acknowledge and pursue this: he removes first the single impediment of this, **πολυπραγμοσύνη**, by which we aspire to other things, or to higher things, than God has enjoined. This is the same as **ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν**, that is, to be wise in an adverbial sense: to over-be-wise beyond what one ought to be wise. This evil he removes chiefly by two arguments. Both arguments are from the admonition of the will of God. The first, from the will of God declared in the Apostle himself, the second declared toward each one privately. For he first admonishes of the goodwill of God, from which D. Paul had received the office of apostleship: hence he wished them to draw such an argument: He whom God deigned to send to us as Apostle, we ought to hear most eagerly, and follow his admonition with the whole heart. But that Paul had received this grace that he might be an Apostle, no Christian can doubt. This is in the fact that he writes: and that indeed with authority. For I say to each of you, through the grace which has been given to me. The second argument is from the admonition of the divine will toward each and every one, and is expounded in this manner: Each of the Christians ought rightly to will, to work, to be in that for which he has been divinely called, and has received the faculty of acting, since God has measured out to him the measure of faith, that is, the faculty of living and acting from faith, and has thereby declared what he wills each to care for and do. It is fitting therefore that each accommodate himself wholly to the will of God toward himself, and care for this one thing, and care for it with the best faith, which he notices has been singularly enjoined upon him by God: after no Christian can be unaware, not only that it is impious to take upon oneself to do other things than God has commanded those of whom we are wholly, but also that it is impossible for anyone to do anything else well and rightly. Since these things are therefore established, it is manifest that all our care and zeal must be so ordered that we maintain true modesty, and fulfill our duty: which here is the proposition.

But since he had said that God measures out to each his own measure of faith, that is, the faculty of acting from the faith of Christ, he expounds and makes manifest this by the similitude of the human body: first proposes it, then explains it, showing that we are joined in Christ the Lord as members in one body, and therefore as the individual members of the body each have their own proper action: so also each has their own proper action by which they may accomplish something for the utility of the whole body. Moreover that he might at the same time inflame them to this: that each may studiously strive to fulfill his own office in the Church religiously, he calls the very offices **χαρίσματα**, which are bestowed on each: as gifts of the singular goodwill by which we have been

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assumed as sons of God. But what the individual gifts are, enumerated here by the Apostle, I shall explain in the interpretation.

INTERPRETATION

For I say by grace. Concerning this metonymy by which he calls the office of apostleship, conferred upon him by singular grace, grace: it was said in that: Through whom we have received grace and the function of the apostolic office, section 2, chapter 1. When he says to each of you: by this he not only set forth the authority of commanding, but also the necessity of the precept, which no one ought to consider without diligence. For the evil of **πολυπραγμοσύνη**, in that we aspire, with our own neglected, to other things or those which God has enjoined upon us, no one can sufficiently excuse. For who is there whom the tedium of his own calling does not seize from time to time, longing for another's? But in the Church this can accomplish nothing other than the dislocation of the members in the body.

Not to exalt his mind beyond due measure. **ὑπερφρονεῖν**, that is, to over-be-wise, to aspire and raise the spirit and zeal beyond one's own measure, whence the Apostle himself adds in explanation: to be wise beyond what one ought to be wise. For the Apostle does not note this evil here only in the fact that the spirit is raised to higher things: but it often rages with the greatest destruction of human affairs even in the fact that when someone is in higher things, he aspires to lower: when this happens, not from the virtue of **ταπεινοφροσύνη**, but from the pusillanimity of a spirit fleeing dangers and labors. This evil once gave rise to so many examinations of monks and anchorites, when the episcopal office still consisted in the Churches and had its labors, troubles, and dangers. And today not a few otherwise good men are kept from the commonwealth by this plague. Therefore **ὑπερφρονεῖν** according to the sense of Paul in this passage is: to care more than is fitting for what is beyond one's own measure, which he explained clearly in the subjoined exposition. But this caring more than is fitting is always with the neglect of those things which the Lord commended to be cared for.

But to set the mind toward moderation. **σωφρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν**. By this word the Greeks nearly understand that temperance and moderation by which the movements of the appetitive soul are governed and settled, and which always maintains in all moderation a steady adversary against desire: as Cicero defines this virtue calling it frugality. Lib. Tusc. 3. Aristotle, as all things, defines it more precisely and comprehensively: that it is the moderation of those pleasures which are received through touch. But this word extends even more broadly to the philosophers themselves. For since **σωφροσύνη** is said as it were **σωτηρία τῆς φρονήσεως**, that is, the preservation of prudence, as Plato says in the Cratylus, and **σωφρονεῖν** is **σώζειν τὴν φρόνησιν**, that is, to preserve prudence: these words are very often used for that moderation and constancy by which in all things we preserve and maintain what right reason dictates, what true prudence commands. Hence Plato recalls in Timaeus that it was once rightly said that: **πράττοντα καὶ γινῶναι τὰ τε αὐτοῦ καὶ ἑαυτὸν, σώφρονοι μόνῳ προσήκει**, that is, to act and to know what are one's own things and oneself belongs only to the **σώφρονοι**. He disputes on this virtue also in the Charmides. Now it is certain that the Apostle here prescribes this one thing: that each may know himself and act his own things, that is, may attend and serve his own calling. Without doubt therefore **φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν** for Paul here is: to so set and direct all the mind, care, and zeal — that is, to be so wise, to aspire to this — that we understand and do in all things what the Lord has particularly enjoined upon us. From there presently follows the dispensed proper measure of faith: without doubt also prophesying is distributed.

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Having then gifts. He expounds the principal offices of the saints and their proper functions. He does the same in 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4, where we shall discuss these more precisely God willing. He places prophecy in the first place, which is the faculty of the Spirit of Christ by which they predict and announce things future and the secrets of God for the restoration of the Church.

Added here is *κατὰ ἀναλογίαν* of faith. D. Ambrose reads this as: according to the operation of faith, and interprets it as prophecy being given according to the manner of the receiver, that is, as much as the cause requires for which it is given. Chrysostom explains that almost to the same effect. For he writes that this gift of prophecy receives its measure from those who receive it: that is, so much flows in as it finds the faith fitted to it. This interpretation certainly agrees with what the Apostle premised: according as God has measured out to each the measure of faith. For when God bestows all gifts proportionally: he presently subjoins.

According as God to each. Faith the Apostle often takes for the whole of religion and the new life, the life by which we live from faith. So here he says the measure of faith, for the portion of the new life, the spiritual life, the faculty of living and acting from faith. Otherwise faith — as has been said above many times — if you take it precisely, is the persuasion and certain assent to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, from which there immediately springs confidence in Christ, and true worship, and from this love toward neighbors, and all duties. In this saying moreover there is a pressing argument which may contain us within our own calling, and inflame the most constant zeal for it. God distributed the measure of faith. By faith, if we are Christians, we live and do all things: this whole is a gift of God: as therefore he himself imparts it to us, so all our life and all actions ought to be established, modified, and perfected.

In one body. For just as in one body. This similitude is more broadly expounded below in 1 Cor. 12, and fits wonderfully as well. The body is otherwise the name of any college: but in no human college and association is there a life more unified, and a greater *συμπάθεια*, than in the Church of Christ. For here the Spirit of Christ does all things: he puts us out of ourselves, and impels us to care for those things which serve others, and this with that propensity and affection with which the members serve one another in our body.

But all the members. In this above all the argument of this passage is certain and proper: that from the similitude of the body we may learn that each ought to have a certain and proper action in the body of Christ, and altogether that which the Lord has given to each. For just as the hand can never render what the eye, what the ear, nor the eye and ear what the hand: so no one with safety in any manner will accomplish, beyond that one thing to which the Lord both made and equipped him, anything proportionate to his measure of faith. For to the public utility of the body of Christ, the Spirit of Christ breathes all these gifts upon the saints, and it is fitting therefore that he breathe them according to the measure of faith, that is, of the new life of God, by which the saints live for the good of the Church. For the more anyone aspires with spirit to the glory of Christ and the restoration of the saints: the more fittingly it is equal that any one be equipped with gifts and faculties, by which he may make the glory of Christ more illustrious and the utility of the Church greater. God bestowed these gifts of old even upon the impious, to whom he will say: Amen I say to you, I never knew you. Matt. 7. But the Apostle here speaks of gifts with which the saints are powerful: and the Lord likewise tempers to them all the faculty of acting well and usefully, in proportion to faith, that is, the new and spiritual life. For thus in all things you see the faculties of acting respond to the substance and first form of things. Man is endowed with a faculty of ampler reason, of which the brutes are destitute: but this reason is given proportionately to the soul, which

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also in man is more sublime than in brutes. So the new life, the life of God, is wholly from faith: for by faith we are sons of God. So as the mode of faith is the mode of the whole new and celestial life: in the same manner also the faculties of the actions of this new and divine life are fittingly tempered.

Among these, at the beginning of the Church, prophecy was certainly frequent, and also the gift of healings, of tongues, and others, which are enumerated below in 1 Cor. 12. For the Lord wished to exhibit the gift of the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon unbelievers, to the world as magnificently as possible: and this not only so that at that time the whole world might be stirred to admiration of the Gospel, which was nevertheless done wonderfully at once, but also so that it might be the clearest example for the saints to the end of the age of the virtue of Christ yet to be present, from which the confidence of all might easily be confirmed in Christ: that now it can come about that those who sincerely consecrate themselves to Christ are destitute of any faculty of living and acting well and happily. For this reason above all the Lord wished at the beginning to gather his Church from men powerful in no excellence of the flesh: for he called for the most part the uneducated, the ignoble, the poor, and exposed them to the extreme hatred of all who were thought to be something and to have power in this world. Meanwhile however he gave them, by the sole hidden power of his Spirit, so to live and to conduct their affairs, that nothing was lacking to them of all those things which could be required for a most excellently organized and completely blessed commonwealth. From fishermen indeed and from other more rustic men the Lord first selected for this his city the Senate and first Princes: but he immediately made them to excel in wisdom and prudence, so that there were none in the whole world who administered a commonwealth more justly and happily. For in accordance with the laws which God himself established, they organized all things: religion, without which no commonwealth anywhere can subsist, they taught true and most absolute: and that men might embrace it with all justice, they obtained it for them from heaven. They also so cared for the bodies, that no one needed: for to each was given as much as was necessary. And since there are various arts which contribute not a little to living conveniently, they imparted these by the imposition of hands by the power of the Lord. If anyone disturbed the tranquility and right life, they animadverted upon him with a word, and if the matter demanded, removed him as well. If diseases befell, those who could expel them in the name of the Lord were there. There is need at times in human affairs of some conjecture about future things: for this they had an infallible divination, the gift of prophecy. And finally things sometimes require that dealings be had with men of a foreign tongue: when therefore the Lord had enjoined upon his city to bring his Gospel to every creature, and to the very ends of the earth, he also gave them those who could speak the tongues of all.

These gifts indeed ceased to exist in the Church after the times of the Apostles in that unusual manner: for they were given in that mode to arouse the world, and as an example, as I said, of the virtue of Christ perpetually governing his own, so that they require nothing that contributes to living rightly and happily. Yet just as Christ the Lord is present to us, and will be present to the end of the world: so he will never desert us with any faculty, which has any importance for rightly instituting, preserving, and perfecting the life of piety and blessedness: though he uses our work to confer these faculties upon us, and acts with us without miracle from himself. It does happen not rarely that the saints seem to very many of the impious to avail less in gifts by which the present life must be governed and aided: yet the Spirit of Christ always supplies to them whatever may bring to them true utility, even if he does none of this with a miracle as once. Though nothing is not an outstanding miracle, if we attended to those things which the Lord works in his own. For he aids his own also with gifts which he confers upon the impious. For as he showed that the blessed life fully consists

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in faith and love — just as once those miraculous gifts — and he gave some of them to those who were not his, and to many he did not give them who were yet among the chief saints in the time of the Apostles: so he often gives the most excellent faculties of soul and body to the sons of this age, and to his own so meager that they are neglected and despised by all. Yet because the Lord is present to these, they live happily in their simplicity and rudeness, while the sons of the age with all their excellence of soul and body are destruction to themselves and to many.

But to the purpose: since God bestows all other gifts also on his own according to the analogy of faith, why was this added only to the gift of prophecy? It was placed in the first place, and so it seems added: that you understand *ἀπὸ κοινοῦ* it to pertain also to what is subjoined. In our time *κατὰ ἀναλογίαν*, that is, according to the ratio of faith, has begun to be expounded in such a way as if the Apostle wished to admonish thereby that prophecies must not dissent from faith. For by the name of prophecy they also understand the rest of the administration of holy doctrine, which is without the gift of predicting. But D. Paul here and in the Corinthians speaks of those unusual faculties which at the beginning of the Church existed in the saints from the singular breathing of the Spirit: and he makes prophecy one faculty, doctrine another. 1 Cor. 14: for so he enumerates some as prophets, others as teachers. Eph. 4. For prophets, as in scripture, so also in the apostolic writings indicate those who are endowed with the faculty of divining from the Spirit of the Lord. Those therefore seem not to follow the Apostle who make of prophecy and simple exposition of scripture and preaching of the word of God prepared by the study of men — as though even this cannot happen to anyone from the certain power of the Spirit, nor even be rightly administered — the same thing: and to confound the gifts of the first Church.

But that it may be consistent with the Apostle, to understand by the name of prophecy also any administration of the word of God which is true, and therefore a gift of the Holy Spirit: yet it does not appear for what reason the Apostle prescribed that it ought to be consistent with faith. For since this gift of prophecy is given proportionately to faith and for advancing faith — for it is a gift of the Holy Spirit, aspiring to the utility of the Church — who can it be that is not congruent with faith, as far as pertains to what is taught? For a vice can fall into the use of these gifts, so that someone does not always use them in his own place and manner, or is pleased with himself about them and in comparison despises others: which abuse the Apostle corrects. 1 Cor. 12, 13, and 14. But since no one speaking from the Spirit can say that Jesus is accursed, 1 Cor. 12: no one certainly from the gift of prophecy will teach false things. But those who follow the latter interpretation will respond to these things that: *κατὰ ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως* is added so that by the propriety of true prophecy, it may be discerned which is the true, which the false exposition of the word of God, and who are the false, who the true prophets and interpreters and narrators of the word of God. For whatever anyone truly teaches from the Holy Spirit: all of it must be congruent with faith, that is, must proclaim Christ as our one Savior, and subject all things to his word. Which when all who teach perversely do not render, they are rightly convicted that what they prescribe and teach, they do not prescribe and teach as those prompted by the Holy Spirit, however much they boast of it. For what is true prophecy and sincere interpretation of the word of God: that always responds to faith. You have here, good reader, the interpretation of the ancient as well as recent interpreters of this passage: do thou judge which seems to agree more with the words of the Apostle.

Whether ministry, in ministry. Ministry placed simply is sometimes taken generally for any administration of the Gospel, and those things which contribute to its advancement. So Paul used this word above in chapter 11: That I may glorify my ministry: where he said ministry for his

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apostleship to the Gentiles. In the same signification he used this name also in 2 Cor. 3, where he compares the ministry of the Gospel and the law with each other. Likewise in the same epistle, chapter 6, when he says: that our ministry be not blamed. And Eph. 4, when he recalls that the Lord gave the Church Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Teachers, and Pastors, for the work of ministry. Likewise 2 Tim. 4, when he exhorts Timothy to fulfill his ministry. In these passages ministry is taken for the whole dispensation of the Gospel and the administration of the Church. But sometimes it is taken, when simply placed, for the administration of those things by which the life of the body is sustained. Hence the **διάκονοι**, that is, ministers simply, were appointed by the Apostles. Hence in 2 Cor. 8, he calls what the brothers from Macedonia contributed for the uses of the poor at Jerusalem **κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους**, that is, the fellowship of ministry toward the saints. To D. Chrysostom it seems that ministry here should be taken in the former, that is, the general manner: and this is indeed probable, for he seems to place the ministry of bodily things lower, when he subjoins: Who imparts, with simplicity. Therefore as he placed first the gift of prophecy, which was both rarer and more sublime, but also of such a kind that the first administration of the Gospel began from it — for from heavenly revelation the Apostles learned it — so he subjoined the ministry of the Church in general, which many administer, who yet are not endowed with that more excellent gift of divination. But when this ministry, that is, the administration of the Church, consists chiefly in these parts: doctrine, exhortation, the care of the needy, governance, and finally that each from his own may succor the wretched: he subjoins these parts by name.

Moreover when he says: ministry in ministry, he understands by the one ministry the office of ministering, namely the administration of the Gospel and those things which contribute to its advancement: by the other, the gift of ministering, namely the faculty of the Spirit, by which it is rightly and fruitfully administered. So that the sense is: another has the office of prophecy with the gift of prophecy: another has ministry, that is, the office of ministering, in ministry, that is, with the singular faculty of the Spirit of rightly and fruitfully ministering. So he who teaches is one who has the teaching office, in doctrine, that is, with the power and spiritual faculty for rightly fulfilling this teaching office. So the one who exhorts in exhortation is one who has the office of exhorting, also endowed with the gift of exhorting. He who imparts — that is, the minister of the Church for dispensing the faculties of the Church and the contributions of the saints for the uses of the needy, who is otherwise called a deacon, that is, a minister simply — with the gift of imparting, which he expressly says here when he says: in simplicity, that is, in good faith, looking at nothing other than what is fitting. This gift seems to be called by the Apostle in 1 Cor. 12: **ἀντιλήψεις**. Further he who presides, who has received the office of feeding and governing the Church, with diligence, that is, with the gift of the Spirit, from which true diligence and proper assiduity is supplied. This gift is called in the Corinthians **κυβερνήσεις**. He who shows mercy, bearing the office of caring for the afflicted and the wretched, in which ministry there is very much trouble: but whoever is also powerful in the gift for this office to be rightly fulfilled, will without trouble, and cheerfully, perform that office.

In these therefore — ministry in ministry, teaching in doctrine, etc. — I interpreted the particle in as: through, with: for this is the force of the preposition which the Apostle here renders by in. I know that very many interpret all those: he who imparts with simplicity, and he who shows mercy with cheerfulness, as concerning the private imparting and mercy of any individuals: but the Apostle here speaks of the public offices and gifts of the Church, with which the Lord equips some for the common utility of the whole body. But now Satan suggests here on one side some swelling against others, and approaches others on another side with rivalry against these. So that the Apostle

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might avert this evil, he admonished that these gifts are distributed by the Lord in proportion to faith, and cannot be rightly and in order discharged without a certain gift and act of the Spirit. As if he had said: We are many as one body, and each are members of others: and as the members of the body do not all have the same action, but different ones have different ones, so we too, though under one head, Christ, we are one body and are driven by one Spirit, yet from the goodwill of God by which he made us members of his Son, we have varied gifts, that is, faculties of acting happily those things for which God deigns to employ us to the fellowship of the Church. Let each therefore consider what office the Lord has enjoined upon him, and not at all despise it, but studiously strive to fulfill it in good faith: those who are called to higher things, let them not envy, but serve the grace of God in their own way, so that those too may conveniently fulfill their offices. For as God distributed to each his own office in proportion to faith, that is, the faculty of the new and celestial life: so he also confers the faculty of his Spirit upon each in the manner in which he himself acts, for these things not otherwise. Hence if anyone strains after other things, not only will he accomplish nothing, but he will obstruct himself and others from serving the Church in the manner in which he could have. For the scope of the Apostle here is altogether: to contain us in this, that each by his own calling and office, which has fallen to each from the Lord, should devote and serve the brothers. He recalls the principal and public offices, as also in 1 Cor. 12: because Satan principally labors to impede these.

OBSERVATIONS

The Apostle admonishes by the authority of his office set forward: how much the word of those legitimately called, who publicly perform the sacred ministry of the Church, ought to be of account to us. He inculcates that we ought to be wise according to our calling, to direct all care and zeal to that which God has enjoined upon each: and that this may admonish us how difficult it is for anyone to contain himself in his own place and office, and thereby sharpen solicitude for maintaining one's own calling. The similitude of the body commends to us both the highest unification of the whole life, and the highest solicitude that each may maintain his own place in the Church and fulfill his own office most studiously. For when the members are dislocated the whole body is rendered useless. The fact that he recalls the varied gifts of the same grace should stir us, so that if anything has been given to us to render to the utility of the Church, we may apply ourselves to it in good faith, grateful for so great a goodwill of God toward us, and for the dignity: and if we see any more excellent office conferred upon others, with all rivalry removed we may serve the grace of God and not fight against God. The fact that he proclaims the gifts to be distributed in proportion to faith should cause us to recognize, if little has been given us to serve the Church, that the mode of our faith, our life in Christ, is also narrow: let us therefore pray for our faith to be increased, and the faculty of being useful to the Churches will increase. From the very genius of the gifts which the Apostle here enumerates, we can see for what purpose above all God bestows his gifts, and in what order. For he enumerates first the gifts by which religion is established and promoted: namely the gifts of prophecy, ecclesiastical ministry, doctrine, and exhortation, to which the gift of governing is to be joined if it is inserted in the following. Then those by which the body is assisted: the gifts of imparting and mercy. From this therefore let us learn that God equips his own so that piety and the life of God may rightly prevail among them, and nothing may be lacking to the body. Then: since we see that God has always had the right institution of religion in the first place, let us think this must also be sought by us before all things. Which will then be rightly established, when we are fully joined and assembled in peace into one body under Christ as head, and as befits the members of one body, each maintains his own place and religiously fulfills his own duty, and the work of holy sub-administration avails, and the holy authority of those

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prescribing and correcting. The ecclesiastical polity has long since fallen, alas, and solid obedience of faith has been driven out: while bishops exercised all power in the Church not for Christ, but for themselves.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION III.

Let love be without dissimulation.

EXPOSITION

The Apostle here teaches from where comes the full will of duty and sure constancy. He prescribes simply, proves nothing. For what he prescribes in this manner: since no Christian is unaware that these are to be sought above all. Hence also this is the fact that he prescribes these things with such great authority. All duty is perfected in what serves the saints, and whoever else, for the restoration of the kingdom of God: but in this, such is the perversity of men, there is very much difficulty and trouble and trouble for the flesh, so that certainly no one has persisted in duty who is not endowed with charity — first toward the brothers, then toward any neighbors — most simple and most certain. He first therefore requires love without dissimulation. For the power of God still operates in us, and from it comes the knowledge of duty, so that by a marvelous impulse of nature we all put forward for ourselves a charity toward all people: but in words and gesture if we are reborn, in work and truth only as far as we are reborn, and in proportion to the new creature in us. The Apostle therefore admonishes us to attend to ourselves, lest either some hatred creep against men, or our charity be common, simulated more in words and gesture than in fact truly flourishing and sincerely exercising itself in its own duties.

Moreover since it belongs to sincere charity perpetually to do good, and with a certain wonderful zeal and propenseness of soul toward those to whom good must be done — both the zeal and a certain wonderful propenseness both in this very thing, that we may deserve well of men, and toward the very men — is required. He therefore subjoins both: and first concerning the studious love of doing good, by which from the soul we avert whatever is evil and inconvenient to men, and we are fastened to the good, that is, supremely desiring and ardent for all that which is truly good and pleasing to men. You see men who by nature desire cleanliness with wonderful zeal, detest filth, others who burn for a military life, cannot bear a life of leisure: very many who are carried with the whole soul toward letters, and flee a life without letters, or one withdrawn from literary pursuits, more than death. So the Apostle wishes our souls to be devoted and given over to the pursuit of beneficence, and to supremely abhor everything by which a neighbor might be seen to be harmed or offended — that is, by which you exhibit to him **γεγόνηρον**. When wishing the Bishop to excel in this as well, among other ornaments of his he requires him writing to Titus to be **φιλάγαθος**, by which he expressed the same as here by **κολλώμενον τῷ ἀγαθῷ**.

The affection and propenseness of soul toward the very persons to whom good must be done he expresses when he commands them to be **τῆ φιλαδελφία εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι**. He joins two things, each of which expresses a singular and vehement love: brotherly love and **φιλοστοργία**, that is, such love as parents embrace children, and such kind children embrace parents: for in both it is **φιλοστοργία** toward others. He wishes therefore that we mutually pursue one another with truly brotherly love, and this vehemently, so that one may be supremely pleased by another, and one may most eagerly strive to help another: and when one has rendered another some service in

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any matter, he may be affected with the greatest pleasure. With such **φιλαδελφία** and **ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι** were David and Jonathan the son of Saul, Paul and Timothy.

But as all our love and beneficence toward a neighbor is to be referred to God for us, since to him we render all that love and service in which we exhibit ourselves loving and beneficent toward the brothers: the Apostle subjoins: forestall one another in honor. But by the name of honor scripture understands those benefits which we render spontaneously, and with especial eagerness of deserving, yet as from debt, for excellent merit. Such as: to support parents, and to supply a double honor, that is, a liberal measure, to those who preside well and labor in the word. For when we do good to neighbors, we do not bind them to ourselves as by a granted benefit: for we are rendering to God the worship owed in them, we are not conferring anything on them from our own. From this also it is anxiously to be sought by us and attended to, that our ministry may be **εὐπρόσδεκτον**, well received by the brothers: as the Apostle certainly anxiously sought and attended to having the alms which he had gathered from the Gentiles and was bringing to them received and accepted by the saints at Jerusalem. Of which below at the end of chapter 15. Truly also it belongs to Christian charity that one may count another more excellent than himself, as the Apostle exhorts in Phil. 2: and that he may zealously serve him in every way in which one can gratify or serve another in the Lord. For not only must the service of every given duty be exhibited to the brothers with that reverence and veneration with which well-taught sons perform their duty toward parents, or well-mannered subjects toward the best princes and kings: but with which to God himself. For to God, not to men, we minister and render our duty when we deserve well of the brothers, as scripture testifies throughout. Hence Paul called the benefit which the Philippians had sent him at Rome when he was in chains: an offering of sweet odor, a sacrifice accepted, well pleasing to God.

Thus far the Apostle has commended those things from which the full will and solid zeal of doing duty arises: what he then subjoins sustains this will and brings it to completion.

For since by nature we are more equitably indulgent toward ourselves, and are easily broken by labor: he now conveniently exhorts that we be diligent in zeal, and fervent in spirit. By spirit he understands the **ἐνέργεια** exerted of the soul, the very bent of the will to act: the fervor of this spirit is the contention of this singular **ἐνέργεια** and unfolded power in acting. With such contention for proclaiming Christ was Apollos, of whom it is written in Acts 18: that he was speaking fervent in spirit, and teaching diligently those things which are of God: by which Luke wished to testify that he was vehement, and had pursued the cause of Christ with singular contention.

Moreover Satan so lies in wait for the dutifulness of the saints, so resists it, and the wickedness of men: that it is necessary for one who truly and constantly wishes to serve the brothers, with great zeal to apply himself to the occasion of helping. For in whatever manner you may bring more benefit to brothers by admonishing and exhorting, that they may live for Christ: the occasion rarely occurs of affecting the brothers with this benefit, and as easily also the occasion of affecting them with this benefit flies away. And there is need of no common caution and prudence, that you may admonish and exhort with fruit. For even if you only plan to do something in behalf of the body, with what circumspection must be used also for this, so that you may truly serve neighbors thereby, and incite them to Christ: not give occasion so that either indulging in their flesh, they may be made worse by your benefit, or certainly not be stirred up to acknowledging Christ by beneficence: which if it does not happen, certainly the benefit has perished for a Christian. For he lives and does all things for this one cause, that the name of the heavenly Father may be sanctified, and his kingdom, with Christ the Lord more fully known, be restored. And since it is so difficult to seize the

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opportunity and time of acting for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, as it is difficult to seize the occasion of acting well in any matter: and this was sought by no one in vain, and so many proverbs about opportunity remain tossed about, so many celebrated sayings of the wise, and moreover the very picture of opportunity: for it was once imagined standing on a little wheel and with winged feet, by which it was signified that it rolls around incessantly and flies away at once: it had the forehead covered with hair, and the back of the head bare, so that it must be seized as it approaches and cannot be held as it flees. It held a razor in the right hand, because as it offers the faculty of acting well suddenly, so presently if you neglect it, it also falls: finally it had Penitence as its companion, because once the occasion is escaped, nothing is left but penitence. Since the opportunity of acting rightly is thus not without the greatest care and attention seized and held in any matter: Paul rightly commands us to serve the occasion, that is, to watch it and be intent upon it, as good servants are wont to watch their masters and be intent upon their nod. Nor is the occasion of helping brothers offered, other than the calling of our heavenly Father to duty. If now we truly invoke God as Father, if we love him from the whole heart, if we know eternal life and consummated felicity to be in accommodating ourselves to the divine pleasures, what should we care for more and seek more solicitously and observe, than what God requires of us, in what thing he may deign to use us for his glory, that is, where he may send us the **καιρόν**, that is, the opportunity of doing something for the salvation of the brothers?

If anyone here prefers to read **τῷ κυρίῳ** as some exemplars have, rather than **τῷ καιρῷ**: he will understand from this saying that to serve the Lord is to study for the neighbors, in the manner in which it is here prescribed: which interpretation D. Chrysostom here adduces. And certainly since it is to serve God to comply with his law, and the whole law is fulfilled by the love of the neighbor, as the Apostle testifies below: it is most truly said that we serve the Lord when we serve the interests of neighbors.

Moreover since there is so much in rendering duty toward brothers and others, both of difficulty and labor and trouble, and we are so constituted by nature that we are not equal to sustaining difficulties and troubles for a long time, unless some hope of a more excellent good sustains us: the Apostle conveniently presents here the amplitude of our hope. Rejoice in hope, he says. Joy is over a present good, hope over a future one. But firmer hope makes in some manner present what it hopes for, and from this affects one with a certain joy. The Apostle therefore admonishes us: when difficulty and trouble in duty fatigues us, to raise our soul to those things which God promised us and proposed as rewards of duty: so that from the joy and alacrity conceived therefrom, we may persevere in what we know is approved by God. To the same end serves what he subjoins concerning the endurance of evils: Patient in afflictions.

But since all these things are the most ample gifts of God, which he himself commands us to pray for from him assiduously, and the very power of prayer wonderfully obtains consolation from God in all difficulty and pressure: the Apostle rightly subjoins concerning the constant urgency of prayers. For what most indulgent Father would not hear us his sons crying out to him in whatever necessity: as it is in the Gospel. But we must press and persevere in prayers, **προσκαρτερεῖν**. Concerning the nature and force of prayer it was said above in chapter 5.

But since all the duty to which the Apostle exhorts us is situated in deserving well of our neighbors — first the domestic ones of faith, then all others — he commends by name the necessities of the saints, with which we ought to share, that is, impart what God has bestowed upon us, and invites to hospitality. For these are the chief and most necessary duties. For if we delay to

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share with those who are in need those things whose dispensation the Lord has committed to us, and to whom the goodness of nature left behind invites us to help: and with the saints, with whom we are not only one flesh, but one spirit, and companions of eternal life: who ought therefore to be of such place and number with us, that for their salvation, if the matter requires, we ought to lay down our life, as Christ did for us — for whom at last will we do good, in whom will we be duteous? Certainly among the Gentiles no good man was ever held as one who was not merciful, and a lover of hospitality, and who did not cultivate good men singularly. It is indeed by these praises that Homer celebrates those who are placed in the number of the good and praiseworthy. Now the saints alone, that is, those who believe in Christ, are good men. Nature avails here nearly: so that those who care for their own citizens and those of their household, also care for strangers when they are there, where they are strangers and have no one to care for them. God who cares for all singularly commends to those whom he cares for: strangers as those who are desolate, and all the poor whose care no one takes privately, as we read Exod. 22, Lev. 19, Deut. 10, and elsewhere. In the tenth of Deuteronomy Moses proclaims concerning God: He vindicates the orphan and the widow, loves the stranger, and gives him food and clothing. Love therefore the strangers: because you yourselves were also strangers in the land of Egypt. The same was given to the Gentiles to acknowledge. Hence Homer in the Odyssey: *πρὸς γὰρ Διὸς εἰσιν ἅπαντες ξεῖνοί τε πτωχοὶ τε*: In the care of Jove are all strangers and the poor.

Moreover he says: *φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες*, pursuing the love and study of hospitality. For it is necessary to press into this with all powers and to devote great care, that we both receive strangers and deserve well of them by our services: as Abraham and Lot seem to have done, whereby they merited, as it is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to receive angels.

We have executed the interpretation together with the exposition.

OBSERVATIONS

That the Apostle requires charity not simulated — let this admonish us that there are very few, if indeed there are any, who render as much charity in fact as they profess in words and gesture, impelled by the very force of nature. Then let it occur to us how hateful to God, who is truth, is all simulation, and above all that of charity, by which alone we live for God. Then the hatred of evil and the clinging to good — let us think on this: that this is the character we must have, that whatever our neighbors are or deserve, we abhor from the heart and from the whole breast that by which they can be harmed or offended, and that we are carried most eagerly toward all those things by which they can be helped and affected by some benefit. Moreover it requires *φιλοστοργία* in brotherly love — let this stir us to strive continually for charity toward all, especially toward brothers, but full and most ardent. To which let all charity that exists anywhere more vehemently — in parents, brothers, and all in whom we perceive love to prevail especially — stir us up.

Honor — let this cause us to forestall one another, to reckon ourselves servants of the brothers, and to worship God in them when we do some benefit for them: not to see it as so much a benefit as a duty owed, an honorific office, and a necessary worship of God. What the Apostle subjoins concerning zeal, the fervor of the spirit, and serving the occasion — let these always suggest to our souls that our diligence and urgency are never sufficient for serving God with the whole heart, whole soul, and all our powers. That he exhorts to the joy of hope, endurance of afflictions, and urgency of prayers — let this admonish us that no thanks for our service is to be expected from men, that the reward of all our labor is placed in hope, that here we must sweat and labor and bear

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the cross, and that all virtue and consolation must be sought from God alone by assiduous prayer. That he commends the needy and guests to us singularly, and among these especially the saints — let this provoke us to exercise beneficence and true charity especially toward these, and let us not think we shall rightly do our duty toward any men if we have neglected these.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION IV.

Bless those who persecute you.

EXPOSITION

In this section the Apostle teaches duty toward outsiders who are not in the Church, and especially toward enemies, for toward these the pursuit of doing good is more difficult to maintain. The proposition therefore is: Strive to show yourselves humane, benevolent, and beneficent toward all men, even toward enemies themselves. He expounds this proposition part by part, removing what is wont to diminish this perfect humanity and charity toward men, then adduces scripture concerning committing our vengeance to the Lord and deserving well of enemies. In general he sets these forth when he says: Taking thought to do good before all men — that is, so order your life, so strive to profit men of whatever sort, that all mortals may acknowledge nothing but benefits in whatever you do. This amounts to what he subjoins: If possible, as much as in you lies, keep peace with all men. For we cannot pursue peace from all unless we strive for the good of all — at least insofar as this lies in us, that is, as much of this as God requires of us and makes possible. And concerning enemies specifically there are these: Bless those who persecute you. Render to no man evil for evil. Avenge not yourselves. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Moreover, that we may come to this full goodwill and beneficence toward men and toward enemies themselves, we must abound in singular humanity and love of men, so as to count all their circumstances our own. To this therefore he exhorts when he says: Weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice — that is, take all adversities and prosperities of men as your own, and be affected by them in the same way as those to whom these things properly belong. And this is *τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν εἰς τοὺς πλησίον* — that is, to be of the same mind toward neighbors. The Apostle says *ἀλλήλους* — that is, one toward another. For this pursuit, this spirit ought to be mutual toward all men. And in proportion as this is less rendered to us by others, with so much greater pursuit must we call all to this by word and example.

But from this humanity exposed to all, two things above all impede us: that we have a higher opinion of ourselves than is fitting and think more is owed us; and then that we judge an injury done to us ought to be repelled by us, and repaid upon those who harm us. These two obstacles to true charity he removes. The first when he says: Do not aspire to high things, but accommodate yourselves to the humble — that is, do not think yourselves unworthy to serve even the most abject of men, and in the most menial services. The lower anyone is, consider that he must be helped with all the greater zeal; and since duty is a divine office, though it be exhibited to the humble and in a humble matter, let no work, no labor or trouble deter you from being able to help men. But this great submission cannot be persuaded to us unless we utterly deny ourselves and attribute nothing whatsoever to ourselves. Hence he adds: Do not be wise in your own conceits — that is, do not be exalted by your own judgment. Seek to be exalted before God, not before yourselves. He exalts those who humble themselves. The second obstacle to fuller humanity and charity — the desire for

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revenge — he removes when he exhorts: Let us repay no evil to anyone; let us not avenge ourselves; and let us bless those who persecute us. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

But the Apostle commends all these things: first by his own authority, which toward the Roman brothers was, and is toward all Christians, rightly most great by reason of the grace of God given him so powerfully and so splendidly in this office of apostleship to the Gentiles. Then there are also contained in the very words by which the Apostle exhorts to these things arguments which rightly and greatly avail with believers in Christ. For since we profess self-denial, and know that the one who is greater before the Lord is the one who has humbled himself most for the service of neighbors; then we know the whole law of God to be fulfilled by solid love of the neighbor — not of one who has deserved well, or one who has not deserved ill, but of the neighbor, whoever the Lord has joined to us, who lives among us, whom it is permitted to help — when certainly we remember and consider these things, we easily acknowledge, especially when admonished, and admonished from so certain and so ample a calling of God, grace given to this most excellent Apostle of all, that it is our duty to strive with the greatest zeal for those very things to which the Apostle here exhorts.

But the first is: to bless even enemies from the soul, and to curse no one. In these the mere mention of prayer and devotion, and likewise of good and evil, brings a notable impulse for compelling Christians toward that to which the Apostle calls. For from our good Father God, what good shall we, like sons, ask for anything else but for those for whose good and salvation death itself must in its place be accepted — that is, for all neighbors, even the most hostile? Then since we must be of such absolute charity and goodness as entirely brings it about that we are affected in the same way by the same things — would not those voices alone admirably move us: weeping, rejoicing? Moreover, having professed the cross of Christ, who even by the very name thereof would not be turned away from all insolence and self-satisfaction, and driven toward whatever humble things, and toward whatever ministries however abject, in whatever way it may be permitted to help neighbors? Moreover, since we wish to be good to all, and most zealous for peace — having heard so much about all benefits to be rendered and approved, about peace to be cultivated with all, about not yielding to evil, but overcoming evil by good — would not this excite and inflame us wholly toward these same things?

Yet finally, because it is most difficult to entirely remit and pardon an injury inflicted, and to commit all revenge of ourselves to God: he adduces two oracles for this to be more deeply fixed in our souls. By the first he shows that we not only ought not but cannot avenge an inflicted injury. Give place to wrath, he says — that is, to vengeance; he does not add: of God, wishing it to be acknowledged that it belongs to God alone to be angry at evils, that is, to repay. For since we can move not even a hair unless the Lord acts and accomplishes it: with the attempt of vengeance we can both most gravely offend God and destroy ourselves, but we cannot execute vengeance. Moreover the reason for this is manifest from the oracle by which God himself claims vengeance as his own. Vengeance is mine, he says, and I will repay. Mine, he says, and I — so significantly does God himself testify that the vengeance of evils is his alone. Since therefore vengeance is God's own, no man can execute it. But since the just judgment of the Lord so requires that punishments be taken from the wicked, and this through the Lord himself: let us give place to this his so holy work, and let us not try to impede it uselessly and impiously, having assumed for ourselves the power of a judge, which belongs to God alone.

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The second oracle is that by which we are commanded to feed and water an enemy — by those things by which the present life is sustained, we are commanded to provide to enemies whatever things contribute to their living well and blessedly. For this is the end both of our own life and of all who are to be sustained and cherished through us. And this is the true vengeance of evils which can and ought to be administered through us. For a certain fire will in this manner heap upon the heads of enemies, by which not only will the evil mind be burned, but burned out — with the salvation of those who have harmed us, if they attain it; if not, then certainly with their everlasting destruction, and to the magnificent glory of God and the salvation of others. The Lord commands this, therefore it is the best in the doing, and is uniquely to be sought by us.

INTERPRETATION

Bless. To bless men is to seek good for them from God; to curse is to seek evil. And rightly the Apostle requires this first: that we bless those who attack us, and not curse. Since not only men but especially those who deny God with mouth and deeds have their prayers going first to God in all difficulties of things, both against their own enemies and for those toward whom they bear goodwill. For God wonderfully holds his kingdom among men, so that all of them, even those who have set their minds in the contrary direction, fear him and invoke him. For whom do you not hear in any danger whatsoever calling on the help of God, both for rescuing themselves and for oppressing their adversaries? And when something of more notable good appears, who is there who does not wish to attract God to himself, or to avert it from those he hates? But the saints invoke God more frequently and more urgently, the more earnestly they raise their mind to God, and the more habitually they are reminded from his works and word of his goodness and wisdom. The Apostle therefore admonishes in this passage, since they always look to God as the supreme good and savior of all, that they pray to him for the salvation of men, by no means their destruction: and for persecutors all the more, the more madly they attack their own salvation by persecuting the sons of God. He uses a reduplication and contrary: Bless, he says, those persecuting you — bless, and do not curse. For since those who attack us must be injurious and maleficent, if we are Christians: it is certainly very easy to pray vengeance upon them rather than salvation. But it is ours, together with Christ the Lord, to seek and save what is lost, and to commit our cause to our Lord himself, to whom the Father has given all judgment. Moreover in this precept an argument is contained from the lesser. For what the Apostle here prescribes concerning persecutors is to be understood of all men. Therefore it must be gathered: if it is necessary to bless enemies and by no means to curse — which common people do not think — how much more do we owe this to others; therefore to no one must we curse, but we must bless all.

Weep with those who weep. He ascends to the perfection of humanity. For it is not enough to curse no one and to bless all; it is necessary moreover to be in humanity toward all, so that you take all the evils and goods of all as shared, and be affected in the same way as those to whom these things properly belong. Someone might readily commiserate and condole with those weeping, and congratulate and smile at those rejoicing; but to be affected in exactly the same way — so that you weep with those weeping and rejoice with those rejoicing — this will not be except from absolute humanity and charity. But this we owe to neighbors, therefore to all, and therefore also to enemies and persecutors.

Be of the same mind one toward another. τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονοῦντες — thinking the same one toward another. The same is given to us by the Lord, as he prays below in chapter 15: The God of endurance and exhortation give you τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις κατὰ Χριστόν. Here

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it is manifest that the Apostle prays that it be given to us to think the same about another as about oneself, to be toward another in the same spirit as toward oneself — but according to Christ, namely from the Spirit of Christ, for the glory of God and our mutual salvation. In the same signification he used this formula also in 2 Cor. 13: **τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε, εἰρηνεύετε** — think the same, be of the same spirit, live in peace. So is that of Phil. 2: Fill up my joy so that **τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε** — that is, you may think the same, having the same love. That is, let your feelings and spirits be carried in the same direction; let each have the same love for another — that is, let each love another as himself. To the same he exhorts Euodia and Syntyche in the same Epistle, chapter 4.

Do not aspire to high things. Do not desire any greater dignity, or any preeminence in any matter, or any other office of life, any other lot and condition, than those in which the Lord has placed you. In a different sense the Apostle writes to the Colossians: **τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς** — let the things above be your care, seek and desire those. For the word **ζητεῖτε** was used, which a little before was the word seek — for he used a reduplication here. For he says: if you have risen with Christ, **τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε** — seek the things above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; **τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε** — care for, desire the things above.

But accommodate yourselves to the humble. D. Chrysostom understands this of men, for it is easy to be weary of serving the humble, when none need our work more. But since the Apostle opposes this to that, Do not aspire to high things, by which he calls back from desiring a higher condition or ministry: from this it could also seem that this, accommodate yourselves to the humble, was said of more menial things and offices. But from where does a humble ministry and base office seem so to the flesh? Unless from the humility and baseness of those to whom ministry must be given. Moreover therefore we shall rightly understand here both humble things and humble and despised men in **ταπεινοῖς**. For when we accommodate ourselves to humble brothers neglected by the world, so as to make their lot and necessity our own — which true charity plainly leads us to — now also we lower ourselves into their very humility, and take up their lowly and flesh-despised condition. So at the same time to both men and things we **συναπαγόμεθα** — that is, devote and accommodate ourselves. You may find many who permit themselves to be led so as to help even the lowest and most contemptible of men in some way, but with a condescension and gift that seems to befit eminent and elevated men — as if a king should give more liberally to a beggar — but to sustain to take up the condition and humility of the life of those who are wretched, who are held of no account among men, and to exhibit themselves to them as one of them, and to make all their misery one's own — those who accommodate themselves to the humble to this point are none except those who are truly and extraordinarily Christians.

Do not be wise in your own conceits. So above in chapter 11, section 4, he said: **ἵνα μὴ ᾔτε παρ' ἑαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι** — that is, not be wise in yourselves; here **μὴ γίνεσθε φρόνιμοι παρ' ἑαυτοῖς** — be not wise in your own conceits. Moreover it is sufficiently clear that the Apostle in both places wished to denounce that pride and confidence of soul from which contempt of others springs, and especially of the humble. Above he wished to forestall contempt of the Jews, here contempt of any man whatsoever, because the affairs of the humble are more lowly. But from where does this swelling, this confidence, arise in souls? Certainly when men attribute more to themselves than is right, and judge more highly of themselves than is proper. Hence D. Ambrose thinks the passage of Isaiah 5 is here adduced by the Apostle: Woe to you who are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own sight. D. Chrysostom cites the same passage as consonant with the present saying of the Apostle, but interprets the Apostle's saying, Do not be wise in your own conceits, as: **μὴ νομίζετε ἄρκεῖν ἑαυτοῖς** — do not think yourselves sufficient for yourselves; for nothing, he

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says, so exalts souls and severs from others as anyone's thinking himself sufficient for himself. Hence, that God might join us and hold us joined, he placed us in such great necessity that no one fails to need the work of others. These most holy fathers therefore agree that the Apostle in this passage exhorts us not to attribute more to ourselves than is right, and from this grow insolent, despising and neglecting men more humble and more lowly than ourselves. He says: in your own conceits — for when a man indulges himself and regards himself alone, he does not esteem that God by whose judgment alone we ought to measure ourselves, nor others to whom God has given more, and whatever they may be — if our work is needed by them, God has placed them before us such that he himself demands to be worshipped by us in them. Each easily approves himself, thinks a great deal is owed to him, exalts his spirit and grows insolent, despises and neglects Christ in his least ones, God in his sons. Hence the Apostle, taxing the arrogance of the pseudo-apostles in 2 Cor. 10, writes thus of them: But those who measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves show no understanding. He therefore here admonishes us not to trust our own judgment of ourselves, and from this, as is wont to happen, to exalt our spirits, and so withdraw ourselves from the duties and services which we owe to brothers and to other neighbors whom the Lord has brought to us.

Render to no one evil for evil. By the very name of evil he deters from revenge. For good people always both do and render good.

Take thought to do good before all men. For the greatest care and diligence must be brought to bear on shaping life acutely, and we must not be lacking in duty anywhere: we must conduct ourselves with fear and trembling, Phil. 2, as wise and prudent, Eph. 5. Therefore the Apostle requires providence, by which we may take thought to do good before all men, so that no one fails to judge our works as good. But this we shall achieve when we have done good to all, evil to none — for here he speaks of the duties of the present life. The world indeed cannot fail to condemn the true religion, but it cannot censure the rest of the life of the saints. For it is exposed to the uses of all; they harm no one, they strive for the good of all, and when they receive evil deeds in return for their good deeds, they are not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. However much the world may abide in evil, there remains in it so much right judgment that, whether it will or not, it is compelled to approve and admire such a life. This witness of such a life the Apostle requires in that about what ought to commend a bishop, when he says in 1 Tim. 3: But he must also have a good testimony from those outside — even though no one could be more hateful to unbelievers than a bishop who studies to carry the religion faithfully and efficaciously. So in 2 Cor. 6 he requires of all that we give no offense anywhere. The Lord also commands the same when he says: So let your light shine, etc.

If possible. For we cannot always have a longer peace with men unless they themselves will it; therefore he adds the other condition: as much as in you lies — that is, as much as it pertains to you, as much as it is given to you to render this. For that expression, from you, here signifies not the faculty of our nature but the caution of offense. For from us, as men adhering to the oldness of sin, it is not possible that we have a true peace with anyone, because being so disposed, we seek only what is ours, and this with injury to others. But if we are Christians, and live by the Spirit of Christ, we will strive to offend no one, take all things in good part from all, and repay all wrongs with benefits, and in this manner strive to overcome evil with good. So from us it will not be the case that there is not peace with us, and that perpetual peace is cultivated with all men. But since it is very troublesome to the flesh always to suffer the injuries of evil persons, and persistently to

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receive wrongs in return for benefits: he subjoins that by which to call us away from avenging ourselves.

Avenge not yourselves. He adds: But give place to wrath. Therefore to wish to avenge oneself is to deny place to the wrath of God — that is, to vengeance — and to resist it. For who will avenge us of evils if we do not admit his vengeance? He is the avenger of those who suffer injury. But if we try to repay a received injury in kind, we ourselves are no longer suffering injury but inflicting it — not only on the men who are unjust to us, because we constitute ourselves as judges of them over whom we have no jurisdiction at all — but also on God himself, because we invade the judicial power which belongs to God alone. When therefore God must both guard this power for himself, and has determined still to preserve the men whom he uses as organs of his wrath for their own use: it is necessarily the case that he must turn his wrath against us who resist his just judgment, and humiliate us by the operation of the wicked — until, receiving ourselves as yielding to him, we become those enduring injury to whom his vengeance fittingly belongs.

Avenge not yourselves, my dear ones. He uses this appellation of a sympathizing and endearing soul — dear ones — in this sense: I order you to remit vengeance for yourselves; I shall not treat the injury done to you lightly; I plainly sympathize with you, because I love you from the soul. But since I know that if you try to avenge yourselves, you avert the vengeance of yourselves and the vindication of injury — which belongs to God alone — to your great harm. But I desire you to be freed from all evils: which since God alone can and is wont to do, I would have you give place to his wrath — which you do if you commit your whole cause to your heavenly Father. For he will execute the vengeance of his elect swiftly. Luke 18.

Vengeance is mine, and I will repay. He proves that exercising wrath — that is, vengeance — is the business of God alone, from which it follows that it is to be expected from God alone by all, and especially by the sons of God. And therefore that it is both impossible and supremely impious for anyone to try to avenge himself. The oracle is taken from Deuteronomy 32. There the Lord threatens grave vengeance upon the Israelites who are impiously rejecting his grace. And in what is as it were a reason to be rendered of this threat, and to confirm it to the Israelites, he says: וְשַׁלַּם לִי נִקְמָה — Vengeance is mine, and I will repay. That is: since I am the judge of all, and it is mine alone to avenge all impiety and perversity, I will necessarily exact these punishments from the impious, and there is no reason to doubt that I will repay to the impious what I have threatened. For even if I seem to defer judgment, yet in time their foot shall slip. Since therefore in the present saying this is expressed — that it properly befits God to avenge evils, as Moses inferred from it that the deserved vengeance of the impious is to be undoubtedly expected, for since God is just he cannot fail in his duty — so the Apostle gathers the same: first this very thing, that God will undoubtedly exact punishments from those who bring fury upon his sons, and this since he does all things rightly and in order, altogether in his own time and manner. Then also that, since vengeance of evils so properly belongs to God, it is as fruitlessly and with the greatest impiety attempted by a man. He adds: says the Lord — which however is not subjoined in Moses — so that this admonition might have more weight.

If therefore your enemy is hungry. The oracle is taken from Proverbs 25, and agrees with the Hebrew, except that the Hebrew word which the Apostle renders *σωρεύσας* signifies what kindles signifies to ignite; then is added: thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. And the Lord will repay thee. Moreover though the Spirit of the Lord here expressly prescribes no further to provide necessities of the body to enemies if they lack them — in food and drink by which life is sustained

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— in this benefit that charity is commended, and the pursuit of such duty, that we omit nothing at all which can bring any benefit to our enemies toward this end: that they may live well and blessedly. For to what purpose does a Christian man benefit a man? For that to which he was made and is commended to us for cherishing — that is, that he may live rightly and happily in all things. He adds: For in doing this thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Coals of fire — that is, live coals signify in the scriptures a lasting fire, and therefore a more vehement one. What is given thee, what is added, O deceitful tongue — robust, sharp arrows, and coals of the juniper tree, which are said to keep fire for a long time. Sometimes lightning, as in Psalm 18. Fire moreover by its usual transference signifies the vehemence of such intensity, the most grievous vengeance of God, as is to be seen throughout the scriptures. In Psalm 140 the metaphor of coals and fire is joined: Let coals fall upon them, cast them into the fire, into pits from which they shall not rise.

To D. Chrysostom it seems that the Apostle wished first to concede something to the emotion of those burned by the injury inflicted, and by this manner to weaken this emotion, then when it is somewhat weakened, to entirely cut it out: and so he prefaced that saying from Proverbs — In doing this thou shalt heap coals on his head — as if he had said: I know the desire for vengeance is so fixed in you; I show you therefore the true manner of taking revenge on your enemies. Do good to them, feed them, provide them also those benefits which you are wont to provide to your closest friends: in this way you will throw fire on their heads, you will overwhelm them with the fire of the most grievous vengeance, while the Lord repays you in the meanwhile whatever good you have done to them. By this manner that man of God thought the Apostle wished first to somewhat weaken the emotion of revenge in the saints. For the anger against those believed to have harmed cannot but be broken and collapse while they are treated so kindly. By this moreover he thinks the Apostle entirely cuts out and abolishes the desire for revenge when he subjoins the saying: Be not overcome by evil, etc.

This is the interpretation of D. Chrysostom, to which perhaps one ought not greatly oppose — but I cannot fully subscribe to it, for this reason moves me. First, the Apostle did not bring this forth about heaping coals on the head of the enemy from himself, but adduced it from Solomon. Then since it is the word of God which he adduced, whose first heading is the love of neighbor — and therefore also of an enemy — no emotion to be excised can by this saying be conceded. For prescribing to feed and water the enemy — which are the duties of a friend — he prescribed true love, exercising itself in this work; but true love leaves no desire for vengeance. Thus the Apostle sees that neither by his own nor by Solomon's words has anything been indulged to the desire for iniquitous and to-be-excised revenge.

But it appears that there is in this saying the taking up of a thought objecting thus to the precept about feeding and giving drink to the enemy: Shall the enemy then freely overpower the innocent? And not only freely, but shall he receive a benefit in return for his wrong? Where is that justice of God by which each must be repaid according to merits? Such a thought therefore Solomon seems to take up when he says: Thou shalt heap coals on his head, and the Lord will repay thee — in this sense. So far is your enemy from bearing the injury done to you with impunity, that if you treat him in this manner, feeding him when hungry, giving him drink when thirsty — that is, coming to his aid whatever his need — you will overwhelm him entirely with ignited coals, with a lasting fire: you will kindle for him the fire of the most savage vengeance. And this fire will avail for the salvation of your enemy, if he descending into himself is put to shame by your beneficence — for then the fire which you kindled in his conscience will burn out whatever malevolence there is in him toward you, and so you will save him, which certainly is uniquely to be sought by you, as you

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are a son of God and taught to love enemies. Since the more you proclaim and exhibit the goodness of God to him not only by word but by such splendid benefactions, the more powerfully will you kindle for him the fire of Gehenna. For it will certainly be for the saints not to wish to avenge evils otherwise than is just — God, who is justice itself, and by whose sole judgment vengeance is proved just, both chastises some that they may repent, and others, because they are obstinate, casts into Gehenna. And he requires that we ourselves serve in this twofold vengeance in the manner he prescribes himself. Therefore Solomon says: If you seek vengeance from God — just vengeance, namely — this will be the manner of obtaining it: do good to your enemy, in the manner which befits you and which God demands of you; and you will serve the Lord either for their salutary chastisement, or for inflicting everlasting punishment upon them. And what you have done in good will not perish for you: for the Lord will repay you, even when nothing in good has profited with your enemy by your beneficence.

Be not overcome by evil. For what is more foul, what more perverse, than for a good son of God to league with evil, and for one who is supported by the good Spirit of Christ to be inferior to the effort of the spirit of Satan? In those very two words therefore — overcome, conquer, good, evil — and also in the antithesis which the Apostle uses here, what calls us most efficaciously where the Apostle calls is plainly enough signified. For if we believe in Christ, his good Spirit ought to drive us: let us therefore persist in what is good, and therefore persist as superior to evil — it is necessary. But this will be true when we shall strive to repel the malice and perversity of men by good deeds, and let no injury ever be suffered to so drive us away that we ourselves become unjust in returning evil for evil. Evil is the injury inflicted upon us, because it is against the law of God: if therefore this moves us so as to try to repel it against the Lord's prohibition, and we also invade the judicial power of God, and in turn are unjust toward our enemies since we have no jurisdiction over them to punish — certainly we are overcome by evil and driven to our own destruction. But if we persist in the pursuit of doing good — which as it is our duty is also our salvation — by our good deeds we shall either exclude the perversity of enemies or drive them to their judgment which awaits them from the Lord, and we shall truly overcome evil with good. But this work is of God, therefore also ours, who glory in being sons of God.

Conciliation of These Passages

Where Paul here simply forbids cursing enemies, and yet both he and the prophets and holy psalmists solemnly devote their enemies. Blessed Paul writes in Gal. 1: Would that those who disturb you might be cut off! And very many of the Psalms are full of the most savage imprecations, in which yet the saints driven by the Holy Spirit poured out their prayers to the Lord himself. Among which is also that in section 2 above, from Psalm 69, a quite savage devotion. How these agree with that which D. Paul here prescribes — to bless those persecuting us, not to curse — can be doubted. And since those who do injury are certainly to be punished by God, it could seem there is nothing unjust in it if someone prays to God for what they have merited, since whoever will receive worthy recompense for their evil deeds.

Here the Apostle establishes us in true and just love toward all, and calls us away from the desire for revenge. He shows therefore what spirit must be toward those who persecute us, how much they compare with us, and we with them. For they are so near to us, and therefore to be loved from the heart, that it is necessary to bless them only, never to curse. As much as we consider both ourselves and them, when the business is still between us and them.

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But indeed in holy prayers, where we deal with the Lord, and he reveals his judgments to us — with which we rightly consent — where it is necessary to be inflamed with the greatest zeal for the sanctification of the name of God, and to execrate and detest whatever is contrary to this: there certainly religion itself and the true pursuit of God suggests the devotions and those harsh imprecations which are read in the Psalms. And the saints altogether piously pray for those evils which God the just judge ought to inflict on the wicked. Concerning which also above on the passage of Psalm 69 in section 2 of chapter 11. How the just vengeance of the wicked befits God who is charity itself and loves all: so neither does it at all conflict with the true love of the saints toward their neighbors, who certainly must be loved second to God. Thus David, who most patiently bore Shimei son of Gera speaking evil against him, and other enemies of all sorts: when he looked at himself differently and at those who dealt with him in prayers with the Lord, and considered the attempts of his impious enemies to subvert the kingdom of God — there he rightly loved God before all, before even his father and mother, his children, and himself, and he had to pray above all things that the name of God be sanctified and his kingdom amplified: he certainly most ardently implored those most savage judgments of the Lord upon them which they deserved, and this from the very genius of true piety. So the Lord Jesus, who wept beholding Jerusalem because it would not know the time of its visitation — because he looked at it already, whose destruction since he loved it he could not but grieve at — he likewise gave thanks to the Father, and this exulting in spirit, because he had hidden from them the mysteries of the kingdom: but when he dealt with the Father, he then considered his infinite justice and wisdom. Then certainly just as he rightly preferred the will of the Father to all, so he rightly exclaimed: Even so, Father, because it was well pleasing thus to thee.

And to what should David be attributed? That then he prays for himself in whatever he here imprecates on his enemies? Certainly to this: Help me, Lord my God, save me according to thy goodness. And let them know that this is thy hand, and that thou hast done this.

Then since neighbors must be loved in the order which God himself prescribes — so that the kingdom of God is promoted in them above all things — it comes about that the saints also consider the impious, not as they persecute and trouble them, but insofar as they harm the Church of God and avert from men the salvation of Christ: and here they rightly invoke God against the impious who labor to draw these away from the truth, out of love and zeal for the neighbors in whom the word of the Lord has begun. So is that which the Apostle exclaims to the Galatians. He was burning for his Christ, blazing with love of the Galatians, he was at that time dealing with the Galatians, and was considering the certain and everlasting destruction which the false apostles were trying to increase upon them: here, what else could exist in the soul of the Apostle burning so greatly for the glory of Christ and the salvation of the Galatians to whom he had preached Christ, than this very vow which he there conceived and uttered, that those might be utterly cut off and abolished who were laboring to cut off and abolish the kingdom of Christ among them?

He cursed, and he cursed his persecutors — for a cause. David was a king, not a private person; he pursued the cause of the Lord in good faith, and earnestly opposed it in them — when therefore he looked only at his own injury, when he looked only at those who were persecuting himself, certainly he prayed the best for them, just as the Lord did for those who crucified him, and Stephen for those stoning him. But when their actions with impious cruelty had already brought his mind to God, and he was considering what the Lord had enjoined on him, what he was working through his Spirit, in that these enemies were attacking not him but God in himself, and the salvation of the people — and that their success would bring certain destruction to the people of God, while their

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suppression would open the way for the salvation of the people to be dispensed — what he felt the Lord willed, he rightly prayed to proceed by the best right: what seemed to be decreed for them by divine justice as judgment, he rightly and piously prayed to be accomplished. In such a manner praying God his glory, and the destined salvation for the people, and for himself the faculty of carrying out what the Lord had enjoined on him — thus he prayed for them, and did not bless them, but not as persecutors of himself, but as persecutors of Christ and the saints.

From this emotion and fervor of soul arose whatever devotions are read in the Psalms and elsewhere. These are not imprecations against the persecutors of those who prayed, but against the persecutors of God and the salvation of the elect. We read indeed in the Psalms these imprecations directed directly and by name against those very ones whom the saints in the Psalms complain are their persecutors: yet if you consider for what cause they pray for the suppression of these persecutors, you see alongside that this alone is the cause of all their imprecations: that it may be permitted to them, by their calling concerning which they are certain from the Word of God, to sanctify the name of the Lord and to amplify the kingdom of the Lord. In Psalm 6 David prays: Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled; but before this toward those same enemies of his, he says: Depart from me all you who work iniquity. So in Psalm 9: There is indeed: Have mercy on me, O Lord, look upon my affliction which those inflict upon me who hate me. Behold, he says, my affliction, and those who hate me. Therefore he prays badly for those persecuting him? By no means. For it follows: Let the wicked be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. So in Psalm 109, which is most filled with the most savage devotions: from the beginning the saint complains: The mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful is opened against me, the words of those who hate me have surrounded me, etc. But how great is the impiety of these in that same Psalm —

And this manner certainly ought to establish the prayers of all the saints whatsoever. For the first of all in a rightly established prayer is: Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come. Therefore it will be the duty of a Christian to always pray for the sanctification of the name of God and the amplification of the kingdom, both through himself and through others, and in that manner which he has known from the Word of God is destined by God. If anyone opposes these — which they will always do to their own and others' harm — the saints necessarily pray that those impious and destructive attempts be repelled, and repelled in the manner which the Lord determines. When therefore it is made clear to the saints that these impious and pernicious attempts cannot be broken except by their destruction — since God has rejected them — the saints certainly cannot fail to pray religiously: since the end of our prayers is not that the will of God conform to ours, but that our will conform to the divine. Therefore what the Apostle admonishes here — to bless those who persecute us and not to curse — no other imprecation of evils does he forbid than that which arises from impatience of injury, contrary to the love of the neighbor: and by no means that by which we pray for the judgment of the Lord — as it is made manifest to us by his Word — to be accomplished to the certain glory of God and the salvation of neighbors. Such certainly is that very imprecation of the Apostle himself: Would that those who trouble you might be cut off — and whatever is read in the Psalms.

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Second Conciliation of These Passages, namely that we are here commanded to feed and water an enemy — and that the Apostle himself forbids taking food with manifest wicked men who hold themselves to be brothers, below in 1 Cor. 5 and 2 Thess. 3. And the elder John prohibited receiving into the house one who brings foreign doctrine, or saying greeting to him.

On this matter there will be a proper place for discussion below in the fifth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, where we shall also expound a more exact conciliation of such passages. It is true that no one can be an enemy to the saints except the manifestly impious: but these are not all to be avoided, nor in every manner — otherwise, as the Apostle says in that same 1 Cor. 5, one would have to go out of the world. The company and intimacy of the wicked must indeed be avoided in its place, namely that we avoid their contagion, and if by any means it may be permitted, bring it about that they are ashamed of themselves. But this is to be tempered so that we do not withhold from them necessary help. Therefore to those who are hungry and thirsty — that is, in need — we shall administer the benefits of God nonetheless. For God himself makes his sun rise on the good and evil, and rains on the grateful and ungrateful — that is, those things which come from the earth for the nourishment of men, he creates and appoints for them too. Indeed sometimes the wicked must be gone to and more familiarly associated with — as the Lord himself did — but insofar as there is occasion to draw them to the truth. Yet when they are and conduct themselves as they are, while the Lord does not remove them from here, either by divine force, or by the work of his appointed overseers, or of those who exercise public power: by those who are private and have no jurisdiction over them, they must be cherished and fostered so that they may live, and helped as much as can be obtained from them, happily — that is, toward the end that they may be useful to men and as conveniently as possible — not so that they may have fuel for wickedness, or fraud, or violence.

But concerning this manner in which dealings must be had with the wicked — to what extent they must be avoided, associated with, and admitted to familiarity — we shall speak, the Lord willing, in the epistle to the Corinthians. The sum here is: The Apostle in this passage exhorts to the duties of charity; these we owe to all, but to each in that manner which God prescribes for each: namely that whoever has been our neighbor — whether by blood-relation or kinship, or affinity, or domestic familiarity, or civil or ecclesiastical fellowship, or any other society of things and contract, or connection of place, or necessity of duty, or by whatever manner the Lord has joined men to us — to all of these we must do good and render service with all our powers, that is, according to our calling, according to their need and also the utility which can arise from them: as much as they themselves have admitted of this — all of this indeed for this end: that they themselves also may be led to God if it can be done, and if not, that some use of them may exist for the commonwealth, and if this also cannot be obtained from them, at least that they may do as little harm as possible, until the Lord removes them from this life.

With this spirit of goodwill brought forward, the zeal and severity consist in this: that if anyone boasts himself a brother, yet lives openly impurely, or tries to corrupt the doctrine of Christ, and does not admit those who call him back from impurity of life or impious doctrine of the Word of God — the Christian with such a person should not take food, nor receive such into his house, or say greeting to him. Yet if his necessity demands this severity, otherwise his necessity must be relieved.

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QUESTION

Whether it is permitted to Christians to invoke the public power for repelling injury: and if this is not available, to use their own power for this — that is, as is commonly said, whether it is permitted to a Christian, in place, to repel force with force?

Concerning the first part of the question — to what extent it is permitted to implore the public power against those who inflict injuries — there will be a place for discussion in the sixth chapter of the first to the Corinthians. But in the present it is sufficient that a Christian can piously use all the works and ordinances of God which he has made and established for the salvation of his own. God established public courts, ordained the public power for this: that the innocent may be defended against the violent. Therefore a Christian may use these courts so that those to whom this is enjoined may perform this duty of theirs, and may admonish and invoke them with piety unimpaired. Indeed if any danger should arise to anyone lest through the force of the wicked he may not rightly carry out his office which he received from the Lord: and there is hope that those who exercise the public power will not fail in their duty — he certainly tempts the Lord who has not sought the help of the Lord from the public power. Yet the help of the Lord must be sought in this manner: with all confidence fixed in the Lord himself, and with all gentleness and charity intact toward all — to try whether God wills to bring the force of the wicked against thee and thine through his own instruments of judges and magistrates. And then for this end: to use, for the glory of the Lord, thyself and the men and things which the Lord has entrusted to thee — by no means that thou mayest either satisfy anger or harm the enemy.

What the Lord commanded about turning the other cheek, and giving the cloak to one who takes the tunic — he did not simply command, for neither the Lord himself nor the Apostles, when struck on one cheek, turned the other. The head of these precepts is the love of neighbor, from which the Lord summed it up in Luke 6: As you wish men to do to you, do ye likewise to them. Therefore the Lord did not absolutely command everyone who strikes to immediately exhibit the other cheek, or to one wishing to take the tunic by judgment to throw the cloak as well: but by comparison with private revenge and injured charity — namely that rather than avenge thyself, retaliate the injury, transgress against charity — thou shouldest turn not only the other cheek but thy whole face and entire body, as the Lord did: and not only throw thy cloak to one taking the tunic, but whatever thou seemest to possess at all. For even thou wishest it, if ever struck by anger or another passion thou dost injury to a neighbor, that he rather exhibits himself to accepting the other cheek than to retaliating the injury and dissolving love toward thee. For thou thinkest thyself, and rightly, to be able to be more quickly recalled to duty by gentleness and love than by mutual injury and violence. Since therefore with true love of the neighbor and solid gentleness intact, the saints can invoke the help of the Lord through the work of magistrates and employ it for repelling injury — for if the use of public power were at variance with love and gentleness, neither would God have established it, nor committed it to his own to administer — the saints can also, without transgression of those precepts which are found in Matt. 5 and Luke 6, both invoke and employ the work of magistrates for repelling injury, if they do it in the manner and for the end we expounded. For those precepts of the Lord prescribe nothing other than this very duty of love and gentleness.

Nor does that conflict with this manner of imploring the office of magistrates, which the Apostle censures in the Corinthians — namely that their brothers should go to judgment before the heathen. For the Apostle condemned this because the Corinthians admitted this both with injury and without necessity, when plainly the business of both parties could more conveniently be settled

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in the Church. The Lord himself sends diseases, and we act impiously if we do not accept them with a grateful enough spirit: yet it is not nearby impious, when the Lord has also provided medicine for us, to use it — if only we use it with trust in the Lord, not in the creature, and with the spirit that submits to the petition of the disease: Not my will, Father, but thine be done. So since the Lord himself has given the public power as a remedy against the force of the wicked — if we use its office in the name of the Lord, what else do we do but enjoy his benefit for his own glory? Hence also Paul did not fear to seek the protection of Roman power against the violence of the Jews.

To the second part of the question it is perhaps not so safe to respond. For since we cannot now sufficiently permit ourselves to the Lord, and by nothing do we so pervade duty as when we assume care of ourselves and revenge for ourselves: certainly every faithful dispenser of the word of God must take care that he give no cause for this evil so fixed and adhering in us. But what must be guarded against there is: not to trouble the consciences of the sons of God uselessly in any matter. With words we can easily condemn all who try to defend themselves: but how easy it is for anyone to try to repel force with force when it is permitted — this we experience daily. Moses, even if he was destined for the public power, was not yet exercising it when he killed the Egyptian. And though the Lord commanded Peter to put up his sword after the ear was cut off: yet he permitted the disciples to carry two private swords with them, certainly against force.

I hold thus on this question — if in a private case it is permitted, either from oneself or from another, to repel force and ward off injury — that it must be responded thus. Above all it must be striven for by the Christian to commend himself now to God his heavenly Father for governing and defending in all things: since from the Word of God he knows that the public power was so constituted by God to defend the innocent from the wicked — while it will be permitted — he must seek this help and think nothing for himself about his own defense. But if through private force a situation of such danger arises that he cannot be defended through the magistrate: let him pray the Lord, so that in the service both of the Church and the commonwealth and his household — whether himself, or his people, or his goods — he may establish and do what the heavenly Father himself wills him to establish and do. And let him pray this in good faith: and the Spirit of the heavenly Father will without doubt impel him — as those who are sons of God are moved — to what will be of duty, and will never permit him to be tempted contrary to duty. We all belong to God: he not rarely uses private men in the role as it were of public authority, as he used Moses, Abraham, Elijah, and many others: in which case force is repelled not by force but by legitimate power, though extraordinary. But just as in these a particular impulse of the Spirit of the Lord is needed, so of private defense nothing else can be prescribed: that whoever sees that he must take care of himself should pray the Lord with firm faith, lest he anywhere permit himself anything which he has not designated for himself. The more kindly father cannot bear that his sons should err, especially if they pray to be governed by him: therefore how will the heavenly Father not direct and apply us to those things which in any matter are the best in the doing, if we pray him for this?

OBSERVATIONS

That the Apostle repeatedly exhorts — as our Savior the Lord Jesus himself also did — that we even bless those persecuting us, and not curse: let this stir us to weigh how immense an impiety the common people have admitted into their customs — to curse not only men but even any things whatsoever at any misfortune however slight, so that they are even wont to jest with this. From this atrocious impiety, on account of the custom of the people, those who by no means wish to be of the people restrain themselves with difficulty. Let us therefore admonish as many as we can — since

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the Lord is the savior and bestower of all good things and considers it to be his supreme worship to be known and invoked as such — that we cannot affront our God with greater insult than when we beg of him to harm for our impure and insane desires, and to send whatever plagues, by which those who are drawn away from the way of justice, we ourselves dare not touch. For in this, what else do we make our God than Jove himself and Satan, who delights in doing evil to men, and that for an unjust cause?

He commands to weep with those weeping, etc. — let this admonish us that with full and by no means simulated charity we must embrace all. He also calls back from aspiring to high things, from insolence: let us think therefore that now we must also submit to those to whom we must strive hither — it is necessary that we estimate and judge ourselves not by our own but by God's judgment. He wishes us to take thought to do good before all men: since this is most difficult to render, let it sharpen our diligence, and let it always keep us mindful that it is not enough to be approved by some, to be approved by friends — since we must please all to the good, thus we must benefit all, so that no one receives any occasion of offense from us. And for this how much care, what providence, what circumspection is needed! That he proclaims vengeance to be of God — let us think, whenever the desire for vengeance steals upon us, how it is simultaneously impious and impossible to invade what belongs to God alone. That he exhorts to overcome evil with good — let us acknowledge from this that we shall always double our evils if we try to repel evils by a different method than by benefits. And then it behooves us not — who profess ourselves sons of God — to be overcome by evil, and to be so offended by the evil of others that we ourselves also become evil.

EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS: **CHAPTER 13**

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER XIII.

Whoever enjoys the present life.

EXPOSITION

That the Apostle commends obedience to Princes and Magistrates in so many places here, and also prescribes it in the epistle to Titus, and D. Peter teaches the same carefully indeed: this is an argument that something had crept into the Church at that time, perhaps, of the leaven of the sect of Judas of Galilee, who was the author of the idea among the Jews that no man ought to be acknowledged as Lord — and since they were the people of God, they should deny tribute to the Romans, since paying tribute while owing tribute to the Lord was an open defection from the Lord. He was saying that a man who accepted a lord and gave tribute to the heathen made a confession of defection from the Lord. Concerning which you may read in Josephus, book 18, chapter 1 and 2. Now Christians, as endowed with a more sublime spirit, are more perfectly the peculiar possession of God: this perhaps — as Satan is always wont to insert his own among those most devoted to the Lord — some, preposterously exaggerating, had instilled into the simpler folk: that the public power which heathen administered was all the more to be borne and cultivated, and that the injury established publicly should be exacted from them. Hence, even though no seditions were yet arising, since it was impious in itself to think this, and it was going to bring grave harm to the Church in the future: the Apostle rightly thought this evil must be suppressed from its very first rising.

The Jews converted from among the heathen were held in great esteem, and rightly, since through them they had come into the fellowship of Christ. But since nothing is blessed on every side, and the Lord does not bear the authority of the doctrine of saving life to be attached to any men — and since he willed the excellence of the Jewish nation to be cast down, and finally he is wont always to sharpen the diligence of his own and to exercise faith through the authors of false doctrines — for these reasons it came about, from the very beginning of the Church itself, that very many corruptions of doctrine and life were introduced into the Church by the Jews. Among these was that *ἑθελοθησκεία* which Paul censures in Colossians 2: a superstition from vain fear of angels which some were thrusting upon the saints, which pestilence came from the Pharisees, then the chief sect of the Jews. Then that excessive and preposterous admiration of celibacy — from which the purity of life had been so miserably overturned, and this in the first order of the Church — to whose account should we charge it? To the Essenes, who judged marriage unworthy of themselves? Which was a faction of the Jews, held as holier. And that doubt about the resurrection which the Apostle in 1 Cor. 15 repels from the Church — who breathed it into the Church, infected with the madness of the Sadducees, which was the more profane sect among the Jews? So it is no wonder that from the fourth sect also some error was thrust upon the saints: namely this, about not acknowledging and respecting the power which the impious administer. Concerning these four sects by which the Jewish people, when it was heading toward its destruction, was torn: you may read in the cited passage of Josephus and in the book on the Jewish War, 2.7.

But from wherever this harm may have been brought to the Church: so diligent a commendation of the public power altogether argues that the esteem of magistrates had been challenged among the saints, and perhaps in some quarters had even been spoken down. **The**

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proposition of this section therefore is: Those exercising supreme authority — all who live here must subject themselves to them from the soul, and be obedient, and pay whatever public tax has been established. Concerning subjection he proposes immediately from the outset: Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. But that we must be subject willingly from the soul, and not under compulsion, he expresses thus: Therefore it is necessary that you be subject, not for wrath only, but also for conscience. Concerning paying tribute and tax, and all the rest, that is at the end: Render therefore to all what is due, to whom tribute, tribute, etc.

And the Apostle proves this proof principally from the efficient and final cause of the principal office, or public power. From the efficient cause: because no power whatsoever that exists is not ordained by God. From the final cause: because it is ordained for the good of men — namely to drive away evils from men and promote good things for them. Both he inculcates with great diligence. To the former pertains what he thirdly proclaims: that those who exercise power are ministers and prefects of God. To the latter he proclaims that princes are to be feared not for good but for evil works, and that they have praise from those who do good, punishment for those who do evil.

From the former, we must first thus gather: If the powers that are, are all ordained by God, certainly we must cultivate them with the greatest zeal — both from the very reverence of God, whom we must surely regard and worship with the whole heart, whole soul, etc., and also all things which he has ordained; and for our good — for God, so loving us and the supreme good, can only ordain these powers for a certain salvation of ours. But the Apostle hints at this as of so much importance, and expresses that which is evil in not obeying the magistrate: He who resists the power, he says, resists the ordinance of God. But that this is both impious and perverse — who of Christians does not know? He therefore admonishes us to consider this also. Moreover he further explains the destruction which follows from this: Those who have resisted the power shall take condemnation unto themselves — that is, shall bring punishment upon themselves. But he proves this from the nature of this office, that God so established princes for this: that they may be a terror not to good but to evil works — for they minister to God and bear the sword themselves, for the vengeance of evils and the defense of the good. This holy and necessary ordinance of God — whoever dares to violate it, since thereby he attempts to violate and cast down that by which all good things are procured and preserved for men, and evils are kept away and driven off, so that he certainly deserves the most grave vengeance — thus he takes up against himself, by attacking the power itself armed with the sword for this very purpose of punishing the wicked, and thereby attracts punishment upon himself. But what is more to be abhorred than this madness? Therefore, the public power must be obeyed with the whole heart.

From the final cause he brings this reason: The power has been constituted by God for your good; if you wish to do good, princes are formidable not to good but to evil works only — which greatly commends the power to us. For who does not desire evils to be averted and driven away? And whatever those exercising power may be, yet insofar as they exercise the public power, they minister to God for our good. Therefore we receive nothing but good from it, if indeed we ourselves will it — which the Apostle himself expounds quite clearly with an elegant dialogue and communication. From this it must be inferred that, since we receive nothing but the gathering of good things from it, and the removal and repulsion of evils is to be expected from the office and duty of the magistrate, since we know God governs this office: it will plainly be ours — who with the greatest zeal must cultivate and promote what is established to be for the salvation of the human race — to hold the public power sacred, to observe and venerate it with the whole heart; which we

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do by subjecting ourselves to it in all things, and by commending its authority and reverence to all with all our powers. The certain conclusion, and irrefutably established for all Christians, is that all who live here must subject themselves from the soul to magistrates, be obedient, and pay tributes and taxes, and exhibit the greatest reverence and true worship — rendering to them both ourselves and all our things, so that they may perform their office not only more fully but also more cheerfully and with greater willingness of soul. For these are contained in the name of fear and honor.

INTERPRETATION

Every soul. He spoke this in the Hebrew manner, but to express that no one who enjoys this life ought not to be subject to the public power. For while one lives here, one must live in the society of men, and therefore under the common laws and under the one rule of the common magistrate. For a multitude of rulers is evil; let there be therefore one ruler. And D. Chrysostom admonishes us of this generality of the present precept, which he noted and expressed when he said every soul; for he writes that the Apostle made it immediately evident from the outset that he prescribes this to priests and monks, not to secular persons only. And expounding this saying, every soul, he thus subjoins: Even if you are an Apostle, and if an Evangelist, and if a prophet, or whoever. For subjection does not turn away piety.

To the higher powers. These are those who have supreme authority, and the power of life and death for he says below: For it does not bear the sword in vain. In the epistle to Titus 3 he simply put **ἀρχάς τε καὶ ἐξουσίας** — that is, principalities and powers, and below in this Section he says **ἄρχοντας** — that is, those who exercise principality. D. Peter in chapter 2 names the king and dukes from him.

Let it be subject. This subjection to magistrates — that is, **ὑποτάσσεσθαι** — is to be fully under the rule and power of those, so that your whole life depends on their judgment. The Apostle uses the same word when he prescribes to women that they be subject to their husbands, Eph. 6. D. Chrysostom noted here that **ὑποτάσσεσθαι** is more than **πειθεσθαι** — which signifies to hear and obey. In the epistle to Titus when he exhorts to render obedience to magistrates, he uses both words. With this word certainly the Apostle understood that we must place all our things in the hand of those who exercise public power — but for the Lord's sake; therefore what we owe to the Lord, that must nonetheless always and before all things be rendered. Yet meanwhile, if the magistrate for this reason takes away from us not only things but also life itself, it must be borne, and the power must not be resisted. While our hour has not yet arrived, and the Lord calls there, it will indeed be permitted with Christ and the Apostle to decline the force of the power and withdraw oneself from their cruelty by flight — but to violate the power itself is not permitted. And whatever they may have been permitted against us, it must be said with the Lord: You would have no power against me unless it had been given you from above. He therefore will have truly been subject to the higher powers according to the present precept of the Holy Spirit, who permits himself wholly and all his things to the laws and rule of his Princes and Magistrates in all things according to God — that is, saving this: that he accommodate his life to the precepts of God in all things, even in confessing and sanctifying his name, and amplifying his kingdom — which those, whom the prince of this world still holds, can by no means endure, to whom obedience must be paid.

For there is no power but from God. Just as God fashioned all things from nothing, so by his power alone he bears and preserves all things. To no one therefore, and to no creature, can there accede any share of power from anywhere, which God does not confer on them by his certain will

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and disposition — without whose certain knowledge and providence not a sparrow falls to the earth, not a hair from the head, nothing passes unnoticed. When therefore it is asked to whom obedience is to be rendered, nothing else is to be looked to: what kind of person is he who exercises power, or by what right or wrong someone has seized power, or by what manner he administers it — but only whether he has power. For if anyone is endowed with power, it is already beyond doubt that he has received that power from God; therefore without any exception you must permit yourself to him and obey from the soul — but according to God. Hence he subjoins:

But the powers that are. He does not say the power, but the powers. For one is not sufficient to govern many, for rightly and orderly administering things. Hence greater monarchies have ever served the Lord in the role of a rod, through which very many commonwealths were more narrowly destroyed than were healthily established. So indeed it was with the monarchy of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Macedonians, and Romans. Egypt flourished at one time, but as one kingdom under one king. The affairs of the Jews often fared well — but when they had their own princes. So Athens, Lacedaemon, and other commonwealths, however illustrious in right establishment. For when each had been established and cultivated as best as possible by its own princes, all were destroyed and overturned by monarchs. That the individual powers are therefore ordained by God — would that both those who administer them and those who are subject to them acknowledge this: that both those who, having obtained whatever Sparta, cultivate it with the greatest zeal, and that subjects in full subjection obey them in this. The supreme right therefore of all powers, kings, princes, and magistrates is placed in this: that they are ordained by God. And the one and indubitable **τεκμήριον** of this ordination is that there are powers. For no power, as has been said, can exist except by the certain dispensation of God.

Accordingly he who has set himself against the power — that is, has been an adversary, has not subjected himself to it, and has not been obedient. For he who does not obey, and at all times submits himself wholly to the magistrate, despises the power itself and as much as in him lies dissolves it, and so is now opposed to the power. From this evil he deters most powerfully indeed when he subjoins that he who has set himself against the power has resisted the ordinance of God — and resists it. The word in the past tense, **ἀνθεστήκεν**, in Hebrew usage signifies this. For who would not greatly shudder to resist the ordinance of God, which alone brings salvation to men, and cannot be attacked?

But those who have resisted. Even though he had deterred the pious abundantly from all disobedience against the magistrate by saying that those who do not comply with magistrates resist the ordinance of God — yet to deter further from this most terrible and deadly evil, he adds that those who have resisted this ordinance of God will take condemnation upon themselves. For **κρίμα** here signifies condemnation and extreme penalty. And with the word **λήψονται** the Apostle seems to have used it in that signification which John uses in his Gospel when he reports the words of the Lord to the Jews: I do not receive glory from men — **λαμβάνω**. And: How can you believe, receiving glory from men — **λαμβάνοντες**. In these passages the word **λαμβάνει** seems to signify somewhat more than to accept or admit — namely to seize, snatch, eagerly embrace — in which there is somehow also: to seek and attract. Certainly when the Lord says to the Jews: I do not accept the glory which men offer; you accept it — this is the same as: I do not attend to it, nor do I count my glory, which men offer; but you make this your only glory, eagerly snatch it, and therefore also seek and desire it. So therefore in the present saying of Paul — **ἐαυτοῖς κρίμα λήψονται** — it seems to amount to the same: they will of their own accord take condemnation upon themselves and attract it. For if it were only **κρίμα λήψονται**, it could be understood: they will suffer judgment,

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they will pay penalties; but since it says *ἑαυτοῖς* — to themselves — he seems altogether to have wished to express that those who resist the power thereby make themselves liable to vengeance, and provoke judgment upon themselves, and voluntarily attract evil to themselves. For since the whole tranquility of the commonwealth and the constancy of all duties is contained in the authority and rule of the public power, it is necessary to take action against those first, and with the gravest force, who attempt to dissolve this authority and rule. But those who refuse to be obedient to magistrates attempt this. Hence the Lord in his polity established that he who would not obey magistrates should be killed. The same was observed in all commonwealths which were ever rightly established.

For princes are not a terror for good works. He speaks in Hebrew for terror. Here he brings the other proof of the proposition, drawn from the final cause of the office of the magistrate, as we explained in the exposition. For if indeed Princes are constituted for this alone — if this is their work and the end of their office: that they may be a terror for evil works only, which by nature we all desire to be driven away, and that they may render praise and reward to good works, and thereby excite and foster these — than which nothing is more desirable — certainly the very function of the magistrate is a thing most useful and to be desired. Therefore it must be cultivated, both by all and especially by the pious; and it must be repented of by all that every soul is subject to the powers, which is the proposition. But this saying: For princes, etc., will refer to the head of this section: Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. But if anyone prefers to refer it to what was premised just before — Those who resist the power attract judgment upon themselves — it can be explained in this manner: Princes are constituted for this: to take action against the wicked, not the good; to punish evil, not good deeds. Therefore he who has resisted the magistrates, since it is necessary to pursue evil and flee good works — moreover he violates that by which good works for the whole commonwealth ought above all to be procured, evils to be driven away — such persons altogether make themselves liable to vengeance, and attract to themselves the censure of the magistrate.

But here the Apostle speaks of the office of the magistrate in itself, not of the abuse of it, which is among impious princes — but always our fault. For this office is a certain ministry of God, and just as no one can ever invade it by his own force, so neither can he obtain or administer it at any moment. Therefore whatever God established this office, such it will also exhibit, however impious and wicked those who exercise it may be, and it will always be the case that it is a terror for evil works, not good. For if at any time the Lord resolves to exercise and to make illustrious the faith of his own by the savagery of impious magistrates, then he breathes upon his own that spirit, so that with most confident souls they proclaim his name, loudly proclaiming: We must obey God more than men. And affected by insults and penalties they rejoice and exult, thinking themselves to receive the rewards of virtue, as the matter stands, not to be paying penalties of crimes.

But indeed here the Apostle speaks not only of the office of the magistrate in itself, as it is divinely established, but also for that reason and respect: to call Christians back from that impiety of magistrates which, as we said above, some had however begun to breathe into the simpler folk, attempting to persuade them that it was unworthy of Christians to be subject to the public power — that is, to comply in civil life with common laws and rules.

So the Apostle wished to show what benefit to all comes from this office of the public power, even when however impious men administer it. For however cruel and monstrous tyrants may be, yet while they retain some semblance of legitimate rule — as they must retain it, lest they wish to perish immediately — they must accommodate themselves to laws and legitimate rules. Now in

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these there is a great and altogether inestimable miracle of divine goodness toward us; for even when the most impure men preside over these laws and rules — as, since our sins require it, happens too frequently — yet the terror of all power is brought against evil works, thefts, brigandage, frauds; and all care is properly for good works, if anyone studies to live quietly, modestly, beneficently toward all. The clearest testimony of this exists in the laws and institutions of all peoples. These, even though they are wont to be too greatly neglected by evil princes, and sometimes even oppressed — when against the laws and public institutions they defend the guilty and oppress the innocent — yet in general, and in the chief headings of the laws, they are so divinely retained that this office of the magistrate is perpetually a terror to the wicked and a solace to the good. For very many also of those who seem to be unjustly oppressed by tyrants — they in truth deserved it, though not for that for which tyrants punish them; but those who are entirely innocent fall for the good of the commonwealth, and with so lofty and ready a spirit that they feel no terror at all from the power. You have the example in Socrates the heathen, in Anaxagoras, and in not a few others — I say nothing of the saints for whom to die is gain.

It is simply true therefore that princes are not a terror to good works, but only to evil ones. We would experience this abundantly, if we truly strove after good works as much as is needed — that is, if we were intent with the whole heart and whole soul on doing good to all, from true charity, which rightly venerates and worships God in magistrates. Because very few perform this duty of ours, it is no wonder if few also feel in turn the duty of the magistrate. God is wont to be perverted with the perverse everywhere, Psalm 18; but most conspicuously of all in so divine an office as the magistrate, in which he exhibits his image most conspicuously. And because this is certainly the one and whole cause that we feel the goodness of divinity from magistrates so thinly — because we are devoted to evil rather than to good works, and render first to the power, and then to all, their due from the soul — the Apostle subjoins:

But dost thou wish not to fear the power? Not only because by nature, inflated by love of ourselves, we are reluctant to obey anyone — but also because, always conscious of evil works, we shrink from the power of the magistrate. The Apostle therefore, as it were taking up and refuting that which the mind of man can object against so great a commendation of the public power — that Princes are generally evil and abuse the sword — says here: There is no reason to expect anything evil from the magistrate, from that alone shall evil come to thee. Therefore if you wish to be free of the fear of the magistrate, hear me, do good, render to all what you desire to be rendered to thee, take care not to offend or harm anyone — and you shall be praised by the power, and it shall hold you among good citizens, protect and favor you. For this indeed is what the laws are made for, and the received institutions. D. Peter likewise proclaims of the magistrate that it is for the punishment of evil-doers and the praise of those who do good. By the name of praise here are signified all those benefits which are established in the commonwealth for the upright and good citizens. For those who are praised among the good are thereby judged worthy to share in all those good things for the sake of which the commonwealth is maintained. And he subjoins the clearly necessary reason of this when he says:

For he is the minister of God. All things necessarily exist and perform what they were made for, and are divinely preserved. Now the magistrate was divinely made for this and is preserved: to minister to God for our good — that is, to administer in God's stead for us that greatest benefit: that we live in peace, and have the commonwealth for our necessities, and enjoy the necessities of life, and are called to the studies of virtues, and are deterred from vices. Therefore whatever those who exercise public power may be — if only we strive after good works — we shall feel them as

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ministers of God for our good to a large extent, in the greater part: so that we may live a quiet and peaceful life in all piety and honesty. For this cause the Apostle bids solemn prayers be made in the Church to God for magistrates, 1 Tim. 2. Since therefore this ought to be beyond doubt for the saints, he also fixes it through the contrary:

But if you do evil. And this we see to happen daily as the greatest miracle: that however evil magistrates may be, yet they exact punishments from the wicked — and very often most grave ones — from those whom for a long time they had in the greatest favor and honor. Whatever is affirmed in the scriptures about the affairs of men, is to be accepted as it is the dispensation of God concerning men — that is, that such things mostly happen, and for the greater part and universally, not always and in each individual case. For God always exempts some from his common dispensation, and applies them by an extraordinary calling to what seemed right to himself. So too is the vengeance of evils which God exercises through the magistrate. God indeed takes abundant punishments from the wicked through these his ministers; hence we often see that murderers and other more wicked men are detained by the most manifest miracle when they come into the hands of the magistrate — sometimes even denouncing themselves and betraying themselves for no apparent cause, when humanly speaking very many ways of escape seemed still to remain. Yet meanwhile God also by his judgment preserves some whom he does not punish here through the public power, even committing things worthy of public punishment.

For it does not bear the sword in vain. What therefore is the impudence of those who contend that what the Apostle here discusses about the power is to be understood of another — namely of the supreme power — of that to which belongs the right over the life of men, to which belongs supreme authority, and who define the power of the sword by laws? For in regard to jurisdiction Ulpianus adduces it, who defining supreme authority writes: **Merum imperium** is to have the power of the sword for taking action against criminal men, which is also called the power. The very name of ἐξουσία which all render as power teaches that Paul here speaks of the supreme and sword-armed power — I pass over the remaining most manifest indications. He is the minister of God. Therefore fear not unjust vengeance: God through his magistrates takes action against those who do evil, not those who do good. Therefore expect nothing grave from the public power if you have done good; but if evil — unless you wish to flee the hand of God, permit yourself to his chastisement, which he exercises through these his ministers.

They are public ministers of God, intent and persisting in governing the commonwealth. Therefore since they care for public things, it is fitting to most readily and most liberally furnish them the instruments of this care. And even if they abuse the public goods, yet we must always look to this: that no one can receive power except from God, and can retain it only supported by the virtue of God. If we consider this, nothing of any work or payment will be burdensome.

Therefore it is necessary to be subject. This will be easily acknowledged by whoever considers what was premised. And hence it is that he adds: not for wrath only — to be avoided, namely — but also for conscience: because of those good things which are secured for us through the magistrate — so that if certainly nothing evil were to be feared by us from contempt of the power, yet since we are conscious of so many good things which are procured and preserved for us by the benefit of the magistrate — our own conscience, that is, the judgment of our own reason, rightly compels us to subject ourselves to them most fully. D. Ambrose indeed understands this of conscience, which will some day in the future judgment accuse us of violated power, if we have not obeyed the power from the soul. But D. Chrysostom understands this of conscience

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acknowledging the good things which are secured for us through the magistrate. As if Paul had said: It is necessary that we subject ourselves to the power, not for this cause alone, lest we attract vengeance upon ourselves if we are less obedient to it — but rather for this: that she is so much the more the establisher and preserver of good things for us. Hence enumerating the good things which we enjoy by the benefit of the magistrate, he concludes with these words: **καὶ οὕτως ὑποτάσσεσθαι σε ἐχρῆν, ἵνα μὴ δόξης ἀγνώμων εἶναι καὶ ἀχάριστος πρὸς τὸν εὐεργέτην** — that is: And thus it behooves thee to be subject, lest thou appear not to acknowledge and to be ungrateful toward the benefactor. The Apostle wished to say here that our own conscience rightly impels us to all subjection toward magistrates — since we are conscious of how much God demands this from us, how useful it is for ourselves, and finally the duty of a good man.

φόρος is tribute properly, as **τέλος** is tax. D. Chrysostom notes here the artifice of the Apostle, who adduced as argument that which is thought to be the chief burden by the magistrates — that we ourselves acknowledge, and testify by paying tribute, how much the magistrate is to be held by us, to whom namely we pay as the wage of the work which he expends for our salvation, when we pay tributes.

For they are public ministers of God. That is, **λειτουργοί** — for they fulfill the public office of the Lord.

Render therefore to all. For we do not give but render whatever we give to each from duty — especially of all that which we pay publicly. Moreover of those to whom the Lord has devoted us as servants, we ourselves are what we are; to say nothing of what God has committed to us to be dispensed for our neighbors.

To whom fear, fear. By fear he means reverence; by honor, the most liberal offering of all things which must be rendered to each from us for duty and honor's sake. He distributes these — tribute, tax, fear, honor — so that to some we owe tribute, to others tax, to others fear, to others honor: though we owe all these to magistrates. Yet there are those to whom we owe reverence and honor, but tribute and tax we do not owe. And tribute is also sometimes paid to some, tax to others. The sum of what Paul teaches here is that we render to all whatever we owe, whether by private or public name. He has especially in view what must be rendered to the powers — though meanwhile from this special passage on duty toward magistrates he betakes himself again to the common passage on love, by which we also devote and exhibit ourselves and all our things for the good of all.

Question: Whether the power that bears the sword is the supreme power of all on earth, to which all who live here ought to be subject.

We said above that since one is not sufficient to govern many, it seemed good to God to constitute many powers in the world, not one. But just as it is necessary for one commonwealth to be administered by one plan, and those who ought to cohere like members of one body must be ruled by one head: so in one commonwealth a multitude of rulers is evil — this drives us, both by the very necessity of our situation, since it cannot always seem and be proved the same to many: and by the impulse of God, procuring our salvation in this manner, so that whatever difference of powers we admit, we nonetheless refer the highest things to one — not to him alone, to be sure, but one nonetheless. For those whom we adjoin to him as counselors — these, just as the prince himself, are chosen, and this is plainly divine, and rightly with the highest claims we weigh with the most

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favorable spirit of mind what is publicly required. He adds another reason for this same thing — namely, that they may be servants of the Lord: that one can better establish, moderate, and make blessed a commonwealth by a single, certain, and optimal plan. That we are divinely impelled toward this unity of a prince is a sign that neither a house, nor any other assembly of men, gathered for serious or even jesting matters, whether profane or sacred, can be conveniently governed by many. In popular administration itself, where it is chiefly guarded that one person does not manage things, yet one must lead, convoke the assembly, one pronounce the opinion, one execute what shall have pleased the multitude. The same is more fully observed in the administration of the best men, since these better perceive what is for the safety of the commonwealth. Where a somewhat greater danger impends — as at sea, in warfare, in a seditious city — there supreme power is entrusted to one; to one Helmsman, one Commander, one Dictator all subject themselves; to these the highest things are entrusted. It cannot therefore be doubted that necessarily in one commonwealth one must be in command, and exercise the primary power.

But how ample commonwealths it is fitting to be — such as are governed by one power — since very few are those who can usefully preside even over the most contracted commonwealth: although this can be usefully disputed, yet this is not the place to examine it. For we here inquire not to amplify or contract the established powers, but to whom we must primarily obey and subject ourselves. And from the Apostle it has been shown above that for the Christian, when it is asked to whom obedience is to be rendered, this one thing is to be looked to: whoever has power there, where he himself acts. For whatever powers there are, and however widely they extend, it is most certain that they are ordained by God — both that they exist and that they avail so widely; and that the ordinance of God is obeyed if the power is obeyed; and that it is resisted if such a power is resisted.

There are therefore first the larger commonwealths which are governed by royal power — as in our Europe the kingdoms of the Franks, Britain, the Spains, the Neapolitan, Sicily, Poland, Hungary, Bohemia — and that commonwealth which is called the Roman Empire, since it remains from the remnants of the empire which the Romans once had, whose chief portion is Germany, with some part of Italy. For from where certain scribes recently invented the title of the Kingdom of Germany is uncertain, since neither are there peoples who acknowledge this Kingdom of Germany, nor has any prince been born or chosen for this kingdom, nor do laws exist by which this kingdom would be administered. For all the peoples of Germany acknowledge as prince the one who sustains the remnants of the power of the Roman Empire — he who is chosen, inaugurated, and saluted under the name of King of the Romans, not of the Germans — and finally law in Germany is said chiefly from the laws of the Roman Empire.

The largest commonwealths therefore in our Europe are this very Roman Empire and the mentioned kingdoms, each of which has its own princes and kings, who are not beholden to other princes. Then each of these has under himself in his kingdom cities, has princes and lords of certain provinces — but these beholden to him, not with full right. In the Roman commonwealth, namely, which today survives — for the polity of others is unknown to me — there are Elector princes, there are other princes, counts, and reguli, and also cities, who all possess supreme authority, who have the right of enacting laws among their own people, and the power of taking action against criminals — so that even when the emperor is present among them, yet it is their jurisdiction and censure. This right the emperors indeed confirm and protect, but from duty, not freely and at their own judgment. For those chosen to this empire confirm by oath that they will confirm and augment the rights and privileges of all the estates of the empire, not diminish them. Hence neither can the

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emperor enact a law, nor take up war in the name of the empire, without the counsel and assent of the estates of the empire. So the power of this commonwealth — which today is called the Roman Empire — is so conducted that primary authority rests with the emperor, but the force and execution of it rests with the whole body of the empire, and with whatever estate for that portion which belongs to it from the rights and privileges which have fallen to each. Hence their proceedings and acts are wont to be called imperial. So the supreme power is held among the Germans and those who acknowledge whatever remains of the Roman Empire.

Now the Apostle explicitly says: No power is except from God. The powers that are, are ordained by God. Since therefore today in the Christian world powers are so constituted — sanctioned by the consent of peoples, by laws, and by oath — that to whatever kings there may be supreme and free power, beholden neither to the Roman Emperor nor to other kings; and that to the princes and cities of the empire the power is beholden to the emperor, but so that he preserve and protect each one's own right, and by no means diminish it while he uses it legitimately — certainly those resist the ordinance of God who of whatever order or estate of the empire attempt to detract anything from the power. By divine right therefore and the indubitable constitution of God, whoever bears the sword among his own people — whoever possesses supreme authority — exercises the supreme power, no less the lord of one little town, the prince of a vast territory, equally a small municipality and the largest city alike. Since the one body can have but one head, in one commonwealth there can be but one power — in which commonwealth the power that bears the sword, and therefore is supreme, possesses supreme authority — every soul that lives in that commonwealth must be subject to it. And as ministers of God are all those who exercise such power — for this purpose: that each among his own people, by laws and penalties, may be a terror to the wicked and a solace and defense to the good — necessarily all those subject themselves to such just laws and penalties of whatever power, who enjoy the benefit of the power, using the common advantages of the commonwealth and safe in the common defense. That is: in whatever commonwealth anyone lives, to the power of that commonwealth he must be obedient. For Paul said: Every soul — by which, as D. Chrysostom testifies, the Apostle expressed that this precept pertains not to secular persons only, but also to priests and monks — indeed if anyone were an Apostle, Evangelist, and prophet, **κἂν ὁ δεῖνα** — that is, or whoever. He also said: Let it be subject — **ὑποτασσέσθω** — which is more, as Chrysostom likewise admonishes, than **πεῖθεσθω** — let it obey. Finally he added: Therefore it is necessary to be subject, not for wrath only, but also for conscience.

Moreover, since those who exercise power must execute the power of God for the good of the saints — he is the minister of God for your good, says the Apostle — it will be the concern of whatever Princes and Magistrates to whom the Lord has deputed supreme authority, with their laws and with the whole administration of the commonwealth among their own people, to take care that the religion of Christ flourish rightly, that the people be taught the Gospel of Christ purely, that ceremonies consonant with it be held, that no room exist for false doctrine of religion or superstition. For truly no commonwealth can flourish rightly without the true worship of God — which all who have written anything about the commonwealth and laws have acknowledged, even among the heathen; for none of them did not teach that the first care of the power must be expended on religion. The Lord not only prescribed the same in his law, but also effected it by his Spirit in all those whom he endowed with faith in his name — such as Constantine and his sons, Jovinian, Valentinian both, Theodosius, and not a few other princes of the Roman Empire, whose care it was that above all public religion be rightly established and prevail — as so many of their most holy laws testify, which are in the Code of Justinian for this very reason placed before all other

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constitutions. Justinian also in not one place of his constitutions on ecclesiastical matters acknowledges that nothing is to be striven for first by the prince than that priests rightly perform their office, that sacred canons hold as laws, that the true religion of Christ happily advance with all obstacles removed. Let the Christian reader read, if only by themselves, the sixth and one hundred and twenty-third constitutions from the Novels. But who with any sense of God doubts that those who have received power from God over the life and death of men — men made for the worship of God, and whose whole end of administration must be that subjects live well and blessedly — must above all provide that they be well instructed in the worship of God, and preserved from all things that can lead them away from the true religion? This was the madness of the Manichaeans and Donatists and other heretics — that princes ought to leave religion to their own judgment; which error D. Augustine most forcibly refuted by testimonies of holy scripture in the books which he wrote against both arms of the pest of the Manichaeans and Donatists, and especially in the epistle to the count Boniface on the correction of the Donatists, and how very forcefully he treated the same argument in the second book against the second epistle of Gaudentius, and in the first book near the end against the epistle of Parmenianus, and also in the epistle to Emeritus.

It is pleasant to append a few words from the epistle to Boniface: In this therefore kings serve the Lord, insofar as they are kings, when they do for serving him those things which they cannot do except as kings. When the kings had not yet served the Lord in the times of the Apostles, but were still pondering vanities against him and against his Christ — so that all the predictions of the Prophets might be fulfilled — impieties could not then be prohibited by laws, but rather were exercised. For the order of times so revolved that both the Jews killed the preachers of Christ, thinking they did a service to God, as Christ had predicted, and the nations raged against Christians, and the patience of all the martyrs conquered. But afterwards there began to be fulfilled what was written: And all the kings of the earth shall worship him, and all nations shall serve him. Who with a sober mind would say to kings: Do not care in your kingdom by whom the Church of your Lord is protected or attacked; it does not pertain to you in your kingdom who wishes to be religious or sacrilegious? To whom it cannot be said: It does not pertain to you in your kingdom who wishes to be chaste, who unchaste? For why, when free will has been divinely given to man, are adulteries punished by laws, and sacrileges permitted? Is it a lighter thing not to observe the faith toward God than not to observe it toward a woman? Or if those things which are committed not in contempt but in ignorance of religion are to be more gently avenged, are they therefore to be neglected? It is better indeed (who would doubt it?) that men be led to worship God by doctrine, than be compelled by fear of punishment or pain. But not because these are better, therefore those who are not such are to be neglected. For many have profited by being compelled by fear or pain, so that afterwards they might be taught, or might practice in deed what they had learned in words. So much he. Which I have adduced here, because not only heretics today who desire wickedly to rend the Church of Christ and leaven the purity of the Gospel — but those who boast themselves to be the columns of the true religion — the whole order of sacrificers who receive their appointment from the Roman Pontiff — keep princes away from caring for religion, permit them no judgment concerning any princes however impiously they may teach and impurely they may live, resisting the constitution, circumscribing it, or impeding it in any manner. Finally, this must be cared for above all: that as widely as anyone's rule extends, the religion of Christ be restored and advanced. But since these things are so, and cannot be called into doubt in any way, at least among men who believe in Christ: it has now been effected, and evidently so, that the power in whatever commonwealth — which bears the sword, concerning which namely the Apostle here discusses — is the supreme power of all on earth, to which all those who live in this age must be bound and devoted, and each to that

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power under whose protection he lives his life — from which subjection neither religion exempts, nor anything else.

Those whom they themselves judge to be heretics they wish to compel to what they have sanctioned — praying that life be given to them, ordering them to be burned — but concede no cognizance to princes, if what they themselves determine is holy, and demand that it be defended, and so whether they are heretics whom they condemn on this charge: they hold princes in place of lictors and executioners, to exercise the sword at their nod — even if they see those persons attacking the truth of Christ, defending falsehood. They take for themselves what the Jews took against Christ before Pilate: Unless this man were a malefactor, we would not have delivered him to thee. Would that more princes had the constancy of Pilate, and refused to take action against those concerning whose cause they had not yet themselves held inquiry. But the Lord Jesus — to whom the Father has given all judgment and all power in heaven and earth — will give, and has already given in many places, better things: as he formerly breathed his Spirit upon his own, and has already breathed upon many of those whom he has constituted as ministers of his power for his people — so that they acknowledge religion to be their first care, and to be cared for by their own judgment. Let them not doubt that by divine right all who live here are subject to them — the priests and monks themselves, the Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, every soul. All of these therefore they will endeavor with the whole heart — with holy laws and edicts, and with pious constitution — to call back from all impiety, and to lead to the pursuit of solid piety, imitating those princes who are certain to have approved the administration of their office with similar care of religion to the Lord Christ. For even if they exercise power under the emperors, yet since it is that imperial power which they exercise, it must undoubtedly be conducted according to the truly holy laws and edicts of the emperors — so that they direct all their effort that the religion which the Lord and Apostles handed down may flourish among their own people, that the bishops and the rest of the sacred order perform their duty according to the prescription of those same, that they take most severe action against all — of whatever order or dignity they may be — who have taught or done anything against Scripture and the ecclesiastical constitutions which have been composed according to Scripture. For so the divine laws of pious princes ordain — laws which exist today not without the singular benefit of God in the Code of Justinian and the Novels — to the end that they be observed.

From these things I think it is now clear what must be responded to the posed question. For the Apostle — to those who are not contentious, and who are capable of divine truth, if they weigh what was premised — these things are beyond doubt. First: in whatever commonwealth there ought to be one supreme power. Then: whatever powers there are — whether free, or in some way beholden to others — they are ordained by God, such as they are; that they must be so conducted and divinely observed.

The irrefutable and most evident *ἀπόδειξις* of this truth is: To whatever power on earth every soul — that is, whoever lives here, even if they are Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, priests, and monks — subjects itself necessarily, God so commanding, that power is certainly the first of all on earth, and all who live here must be subject to it. But that is the power which bears the sword. Therefore the power which bears the sword is the supreme of all on earth, and every mortal must necessarily be subject to it, God so commanding. The major is self-evident: The power to which no one fails to be subject — that power is certainly the supreme of all powers. Now that by every soul the Apostle understands whatever of men lives here — not Chrysostom alone but all the older and purer Church acknowledges, as we read this everywhere among the holy fathers.

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But that this eminent power, to which the Apostle therefore subjects all, is that which bears the sword — the Apostle himself expounded, saying: It does not bear the sword in vain. By this demonstration what is more evident, what is clearer?

Yet so our sins requiring it, the multitude of the good — not of the common people, but even of princes — not only does not assent to this truth, but strenuously resists as to a pernicious error. For which of the kings and greater princes today has not established very many things about priests and their revenues, at his own judgment, against the liberty and immunity which that order boasts? This certainly sufficiently declares that princes hold even the ecclesiastical order as subject. But to bring it about that bishops, abbots, and the rest of the ecclesiastics might administer their office religiously, labor in the word and doctrine, present themselves as a pattern to the faithful in speech and conversation, and in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity — and not so impiously and most flagitiously pour out so great resources of the Church on pomp and luxury, sometimes also on destructive wars — and with doctrine and life, doctrine through subservient flatterers, servants of the belly, and life through these same and themselves to corrode, overturn, and abolish, as much as in them lies, all piety and honorableness of living — this, namely, for princes and magistrates to care for, and by their rule — since they are also perfected by God over things — to demand from the ecclesiastics, and to execute against them the most holy laws of the greater princes of the nations: this indeed would be both to violate ecclesiastical immunity, to violate the holiness of the ministers of God, to pervert the order of powers.

But in fact, what has the immunity of the ecclesiastical order been today among the more powerful princes, other than impunity of all impiety and whatever flagitia? For in other things — not only in the situation but plainly in the subjection of things and bodies — the ecclesiastics themselves profess themselves to be subject to the higher powers. Which is to be seen in all the more powerful courts: for in these, what the principal and most difficult court ministries are today — do not bishops, abbots, provosts, and other ecclesiastics perform them? Indeed in these they often approve themselves to the princes and serve assiduously, which to recall is a matter of shame. Moreover, not as others are enriched from the treasury of the prince — but from whatever accumulated priesthoods they heap up ecclesiastical riches, these they expend on the magnificence and splendor of the prince, as they say. Which also for the most part for this cause so far surpass the rest of the courtiers of the court in favor and power with the princes. And as the Roman Pontiff has yielded place to none of the princes now for some years: in how much time, while he endeavors the ruin of all monarchs, has he not served some one of the monarchs? Not only against that majesty which he assumes to himself, but especially also against the arrogance and swelling of his own soul. So since this order by true and vigorous reason truly cannot sustain being subject to the higher powers, and princes neglect to vindicate their right over them for the safety of the commonwealth: in this manner both resist the ordinance of God — thus, by the just judgment of God, that they may be subject not to those powers but to their own — to the most conspicuous destruction of the princes and the whole Church. This, alas, no one of the saints has not for many centuries been groaning and weeping over. Let D. Bernard be read in the Canticles and elsewhere where he laments these things.

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But let us hear by what reasons the ecclesiastics not only do not withdraw themselves from all powers, but prefer themselves. The first of all, and what seems to them the most firm, is this: that the ordained powers ought to be ordered — to which Pope Boniface, that column of impudence and arrogance, adduces in his extravagant which begins **Unam Sanctam** the passage of Paul: The powers that are, are ordained by God — as if the Apostle were speaking here about the order of powers among themselves, and not about a certain and divine constitution of all. Spiritual things moreover excel corporeal things. Therefore it is necessary that the spiritual power, which the ecclesiastics possess, excel and have the corporeal power — which the profane administer — subject to itself. And this they confirm through what was said by the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah, himself from the priests, not from kings: Behold, I have established thee today over the nations and kingdoms, to root up and destroy, to plant and to build. And then especially through those: Whatsoever thou shalt bind, and: Feed my sheep. O would that you would open your eyes, my servants, whom God willed to be gods to his people, lest you permit these triflers to avert themselves, by these trivial tricks, from your commands and the legitimate function of their office — to so great destruction of your little sheep, which you have purchased by your blood. We concede to you — O too unlike the Prophets, Apostles, the Lord Jesus, whose place you so infamously and impiously invade — that the corporeal power ought to be subject to the spiritual power. We wish and desire that whatever on earth must be bound and loosed may be bound and loosed. Would that you had both the power and the will to bind and loose on earth what is held bound and loosed in heaven, and to feed the sheep of Christ, as this was committed to Peter. But let us define what the spiritual power is, what it is to bind, what to loose, what to feed the sheep of Christ. These are holy and splendid names, but in the kingdom of Christ the work is in deeds not in names. D. Paul defines the spiritual power in these parts: to be able to cast down the reasonings that exalt themselves against the knowledge of Christ, to bring captive every understanding to Christ, to have in readiness vengeance against all disobedience, when the obedience of the saints shall be complete — 2 Cor. 10. In the same manner he also speaks of the spiritual power elsewhere. And what else can this be but the faculty of the Spirit of Christ, efficaciously driving away impiety from men and planting, guarding, and advancing piety in them? Nor will there be any other power of binding and loosing and feeding the flock of the Lord. To this power certainly whatever power and strength there is among any mortals must be subject. With this power certainly the holy prophets operated against kings and priests and the people, when they fell away from the law of God. With the same the Savior and Apostles shook the whole power of the Jewish nation, coerced the Church of God, and freed it from all the force of Satan throughout the whole world. With this power D. Ambrose was reducing Theodosius the prince to the order of penitents, was denying Valentinian the basilica, and simultaneously the conference on faith before partly heathens, partly those corrupted by the impiety of the court. With no other power whatever remains in the world of the Church, and has persisted to this day, against the whole force of Satan — and now lifts its head again, however much those labor against it in full force, who make themselves false promoters of spiritual power.

This truly spiritual power — would that those who boast of spiritual power could and would use it. What else does the whole world seek for so many centuries now? That Pontiffs and Bishops are not willing to bind — and not only by ecclesiastical function, but by the very whole communion of the Church to expel — those whom the scripture and the sacred canons command to be bound and expelled: namely those who teach false things and live perversely, who are Simonists, fornicators, adulterers, **ἀρσενοκοῖται**, covetous, drunkards, brawlers, revilers, rapacious, and the like — all who live disorderly, practicing nothing good, and burdening the Church unjustly, and also harmfully offending it. For it is not hidden from you what D. Paul prescribes and testifies in 1 Cor. 5 and 6, Eph. 5, 2 Thess. 3, in 1 Tim. 3, and Tit. 1 — and what has been constituted in the

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Decrees and Decretals on the life and honesty of clerics, on their election and whole office. According to these your laws therefore — why do you not exercise the power which you so greatly extol in words? In those places surely where supreme princes, and the whole world, ought to submit their rods to your power. But if these laws of God avail — if there are in the Church those who wish and are able to rightly use this spiritual power, the faculty of binding and loosing, and of feeding the sheep of Christ — to what point, I ask, from the whole cohort of the order falsely called ecclesiastical, can anyone stand in his place?

But to bind men in impiety and to loose in piety is to close and open — but to close heaven, and not only to open Gehenna but to drive into Gehenna innumerable multitudes of peoples — and yet not to wish to be convicted by any mortal, as it holds, chapter *Si papa*, *Distinct.* 40. And finally to feed and cherish — but wolves, and the very plagues of the human race — and to do this so that they may do harm to the Churches always more, not the sheep of Christ, that they may advance in the life of God.

Now when in these things the whole rabble of the pseudo-ecclesiastics lies sunk — who certainly among all evil works hold the supreme summit — by what sense of nature, by what judgments of the prudent, by what law finally do these persons withdraw themselves from the higher powers armed with the sword? For the legitimate power must certainly be a terror for evil works, in whatever persons they may exist, and the Spirit of Christ through Paul subjects all souls to it for this end. And the laws also of the most holy emperors have exempted no bishops, clerics, or monks from their jurisdiction, as so many laws testify which concern the functions of these, and penalties almost constituted in those laws against transgressors. Justinian indeed wished those clerics who sinned against canons — and not also against the laws — to be judged and corrected by bishops, after whom also clerics are first to be summoned in civil causes. And this for the same reason: lest by occasion of a lawsuit they be drawn away from their ministry, and be absent from churches and monasteries — also lest that which they had admitted against the sacred canons not be chastised severely enough — certainly not so that all impiety of life and perversity, which the ecclesiastics today claim for themselves as liberty and immunity, might go unpunished. Moreover in criminal and civil causes which could not conveniently be decided by the judgment of the bishop, he wished them to be liable to the common courts of the empire. We read these things in the Novels, in many places, as in constitutions 5, 16, 37, 67, 79, 83, 86, 123. But when were these laws abrogated? Which of the princes made them void? And which of the holy bishops and pontiffs was there who would have condemned them — indeed who did not subject himself to them? For when by so many Canons those are excommunicated and deposed from office who have even a suspect woman in their house, or are held by another manifest crime or flagitium, and bishops especially who ordain such, or who connive at such when ordained — how many faces do you leave us among the innumerable crowd of bishops and priests, if these canons and laws avail? That is, if the power of binding avails — and if the ecclesiastical power now holds at all by chapters *Nullus*, beyond *distinct.* 32, and the chapter *Si qui*, *distinct.* 8, and likewise the last chapter on the cohabitation of clerics and women — the evil of paganism and idolatry is judged to be to communicate in the sacred things of those who openly have a concubine, on account of which those are also excommunicated who have admitted this. O the times, O the customs.

If here the power of binding were to stand in its place — who altogether from the laity today in the Church would have professed Christ? I say nothing now of those old-time holders of place — where is the place of the papal power?

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To bear only the names of holy functions and to squander ecclesiastical riches for impious lust against the purity of the Gospel and every right institution of life; to set themselves before all powers; to disturb kingdoms; to embroil the whole world in wars and slaughters — which things alone now for not a few years come from the power of the pseudo-ecclesiastics — to admit these things, and in this impious and most destructive manner to rampage among men: this is to exercise spiritual power indeed, but from the spirit of Satan, not of Christ; this is to bind and to loose — D. Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, and those of this class. What D. Gregory himself the Roman Pontiff judged about the power in himself and its order among princes, and concerning their laws: from his letters to princes it is easy to understand. How humbly he writes, how he defers to their power himself and all his things! And this not only in civil matters but also ecclesiastical, and in those in which Pontiffs today exempt themselves most, from the power of princes — as is the case about the power and eminence of the pontificate, about the laws of those imposing on ecclesiastical men.

In the case with John the patriarch of Constantinople, who wished to be called universal bishop: he obeyed the imperial command, to write to him gently and humbly, and commended the whole cause to be judged by the prince — even though he had already judged that a name of such a sort contained in itself blasphemy and impiety, so that it could in no way be tolerated in the Church, since it had not been given even to D. Peter, and had been repudiated by the Roman Pontiffs to whom the Council of Chalcedon had offered it. In this cause he invoked the authority of the emperor Maurice against John with particular vehemence, writing among other things thus: He therefore must be more greatly bent by the command of the most pious lords, who despises to offer obedience to canonical precepts. He must be coerced, who does injury to the holy universal Church, who swells in heart, who desires to rejoice in the name of singularity, who opposes even to the honor of your empire a private title. So much he. But when he had thus prejudged the matter of the patriarch's insolence and arrogance: yet he committed the whole cause to the judgment of the emperor. For thus he wrote to the emperor: Let the piety of the lords consider me as their own — him whom they have always singularly cherished and contained beyond others — who both desire to offer obedience to you, and yet greatly fear to be found guilty on account of my negligence before the tremendous judgment of God. And according to the petition of the said deacon Sabinianus, either let the most pious lord himself deign to judge the affair, or deflect the oft-named man so that he may at length desist from this intention. If therefore by your most just judgment of piety, or by gentler admonitions, he shall have desisted — we give thanks to Almighty God, and we rejoice in the peace of the whole Church granted through you, etc. These things we read in the epistle of D. Gregory 32, book of epistles 4.

Also in another cause, see how this man submitted himself to the fasces of the empire. The same Emperor had sent through Longinus the Stratorius a law, to be transmitted through his works to the different parts of the land, in which he had ordained that whoever had been involved in public functions should not be permitted to come to an ecclesiastical office or to a monastery — and that neither those who had been signed by hand for military service should be permitted. To this constitution D. Gregory writes that he was very much struck with terror, because through it the way to heaven was closed for many, and he most solemnly entreats the prince to soften the rigor of his law, either by tempering or changing it. Yet he concludes the epistle with these words: I indeed, subject to the command, had the same law transmitted through the different parts of the lands; and because the law itself in no way agrees with Almighty God, behold through the page of my suggestion I have now notified the most serene lords. On both sides therefore I have discharged what I owed — who have given proof of obedience to the Emperor, and have by no means kept

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silent for God what I felt. So much he. With this spirit toward princes and their pious laws and commands, some other Pontiffs also were. It is read in the Decrees of the Pontiff 25, question 1, chapter Satagendum — the response of Pope Pelagius to King Childebert, in which he frankly confesses that the King by his own right had required from him through a legate a confession of faith, which he also renders in these words: We must endeavor that for removing the scandal of suspicion we offer the service of our confession to the laws of religion, by which the holy scripture commands us to be even now subjects. For indeed Rufinus, a magnificent man, the legate of your excellence, confidently demanded of us, as was fitting, either that we should signify to you that the tome of Pope Leo of blessed memory is preserved by us in all things, or that we should send the confession of our faith in our own words; and the first part of his petition, because it was easier, we fulfilled as soon as he said it; and we signify to you by our profession that we keep with propitious hand the tome of the bishop written for the assertion of the Catholic faith. But that no occasion of suspicion should remain hereafter — which God forbid — I have hastened to do also that other part which the renowned man admonished me to do, namely to set forth in our own words the confession of the faith which we hold. So much he. And Pope Leo the fourth of this name did not think it unworthy of himself to offer his whole life to be examined and judged by the legates of the Emperor Louis in these words: If we have done anything improperly and have not observed the track of just law in subjects, we wish everything to be corrected by your judgment and that of your envoys; because if we who must correct the sins of others commit worse things, certainly we shall not be disciples of truth, but — which we say with grief — beyond others we shall be teachers of error. Hence we greatly implore the clemency of your magnitude, that you direct to these regions persons of such a kind for inquiring into what we have said, who fear God in all things, and diligently examine everything as if your imperial glory were present — and not only these things alone which we said above do we ask to be examined precisely, but if greater or smaller matters than these concerning us have been indicated to them, all of these may be terminated by a legitimate examination, so that in the future nothing may remain undiscussed or undefined. 2 q. 1 c. Nos si incompetenter.

What now does a just man and one versed in the Christian religion judge about us — if the judgment about the power of princes and pontiffs of these pontiffs, who are established to have rightly and vigorously used the spiritual power and the power of binding and loosing, and to have shown themselves true pastors and certain successors of the Apostles, is to be preferred rather than that of the later ones, about whom D. Bernard five hundred years ago was complaining thus? It is not in this time to adorn the bride but to despoil her; not to protect but to destroy; not to defend but to expose; not to instruct but to prostitute; not to feed the flock but to slaughter and devour it. These things D. Bernard complained of and things much graver about the bishops of his time; what do you think he would have complained about our pontiffs if he were now present, and beheld how fallen and cast down the affairs of ecclesiastics are — so that indeed that time of D. Bernard compared with ours would seem golden, while ours could barely seem not leaden but even clay?

We therefore follow the scripture of God, we hear Paul, we agree with the most holy fathers and pontiffs of the Church — acknowledging and proclaiming in whatever commonwealth that power to be supreme which bears the sword there, which administers supreme authority; and that there must be subject to this power, even for conscience, whatever lives in that commonwealth — every soul. But to be subject for God's sake, therefore also according to God, so that each accommodate and commit himself to these laws and edicts of the Power, fulfilling both by bearing and by doing what is commanded — through which piety may be safe for each. This subjection

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God has imposed; therefore no man can rightfully exempt anyone from it. Nor have those pious princes entertained the thought of releasing anyone from this subjection, as we said above.

But what popes by art and force extorted from later princes — that they abjure their power over the ecclesiastical order — this can be as firm as if one were to induce a father to abjure the care of his children. What God enjoins on us, it is not ours to abjure; and if this was done in error, it is necessary to return to duty as soon as that is understood. Those who bear the sword are ministers and servants of God; God himself has enjoined on these to be wholly intent on this: that wherever they have supreme authority, they coerce those from evil works and incite them to good. This therefore they cannot remit for any man's favor. Now no pacts or oaths avail against God, so that what God commands a man should bargain with a man to abjure, and then neglect it — no Christian acknowledges this.

Therefore God must be prayed to, that those to whom he himself has given the sword may also learn to use it legitimately, and above all to take care that doctrine and life be rightly observed by those who are constituted for this: that they be the salt of the earth and the light of the world — with whose rightly performing their office it is necessary that all else be safe; but with their neglecting — or as has now long and everywhere been the case, perverting — all things necessarily perish. For as they themselves either by a Synod or by some other means promote this, those who are so powerful with the great portion of princes that they avert them not only from the reform of the Church but also inflame them horribly against those who exhort to the purging of ecclesiastical administration: so God must be sedulously prayed for this too, that he inspire in the princes and magistrates to whom he has already given to know what his true worship is, and what the function of those is who are ministers of the Church of Christ — that they likewise acknowledge what their own calling demands in this; and so sanctify God in their hearts, that when they have learned what God demands from them in the governance of the Church — from whom alone they have received their power — they may pursue this with bold soul, fearing nothing that man may do.

Now teaching and praying these things from the Lord, we in no way repudiate the distinction of orders and powers — nor do we attempt to remove the royal priesthood of the supreme pontificate from the Catholic Church, as Sadoletus calumniates — a man certainly unworthy who had not undertaken to merit better concerning the doctrine and religion of Christ. Let there be orders in the Church, let there be distinct and separate powers from each other — but such as may make for the edification of the Church, not against it, and with such manifest impiety. Let there be in the Catholic Church the royal priesthood of the supreme Pontiff — but the priesthood of Christ, not of the Antichrist — *ἱερουργούντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ*, that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable and sanctified in the Holy Spirit. To reign in Rome, with such luxury, by those arts, and by that force, as for a long time has been the case with the Pontiffs — this is not to act as a priest of Jesus Christ. It is cited in distinct. 40 under the name of Chrysostom: Not the throne makes the priest, but the priest the throne; not the place sanctifies the man, but the man the place; not every priest is holy, but every holy man is a priest. Sadoletus himself makes the office of the supreme Pontificate this: to contain all others in one faith and truth and good order. Which one Church, I pray, does the Roman Pontiff contain in one faith and truth and good order? What faith shines, what truth reigns, what good order prevails in Rome itself — I adjure you by Jesus Christ? Would indeed that the Roman Pontiff studied what you attribute to him: surely as he exhibited himself as a priest, so we would willingly acknowledge him. For who of right mind does not wish to be contained in one faith and truth and good order?

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But since no one can render this service to all — for the boundaries of the kingdom of Christ must be coterminous with the whole world — one supreme and universal Pontiff neither ever was, nor can possibly be; so far is it from the truth what Sadoletus writes, that nothing is more evidently constituted by Christ, nor more salutary for the faithful peoples, than that there be one leader and one head of the common Church. D. Gregory writes that D. Peter was the principal member of the Church, and not a universal Apostle, and deems that in this title of universal leader and head of the Church there is the greatest impiety and blasphemy; all the saints judged the same. There is one head of the Church — Christ; his members and ministers are the Apostles, Bishops, and all pastors, each according to his calling. One indeed ministers more widely in one area, but no one everywhere. So proclaim the divine letters; so testifies Paul. About which I certainly most greatly condole with you, O Sadoletus, that you have dared to write: That the same who is the head of the heavenly Church, Christ, may be possibly united to and bearing this earthly one — so that the same person may be understood as both triumphator and soldier at once, and in the way and in the homeland.

But you say: this cannot be conceived by any thought? By the thought of the flesh it certainly cannot. But faith both conceives and holds what the Lord promised — that he will be with us to the consummation of the age, that he is our head so joined and adhering to us, that we are flesh of his flesh, bone of his bones. And so simultaneously triumphator and soldier, so in the way and in the homeland — as Paul would say to those still raging against Christians: Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me? As indeed he proclaims himself to hunger, thirst, be cold, and suffer the other necessities of the body, when his least ones hunger, thirst, are cold, and suffer the other inconveniences of the body. Indeed in teaching and governing us, he deigns to be with men living here in the body; when he ascended to heaven, he gave some Apostles, others Evangelists, others Prophets, others pastors and doctors — but he himself remains the one head and prince, Eph. 4. He gives also some Apostles, others Evangelists, etc. — not the same ones all, not both Apostle and pastor etc., but Apostles and pastors.

For who could be able to exercise the true pastoral care — and this very care which Sadoletus requires: to contain peoples in one faith and truth and good order — even in one small town, to such degree as is sufficient? Paul labored more than all, and brought the Gospel most widely to all; and yet he did not bring himself to profess himself pastor of all those whom he himself had brought to Christ. But he established — both by himself and through others, for this cause he had left Titus also in Crete — through the individual churches and individual towns individual presbyters and bishops, content himself with the title and duty of Apostle. A bishop who is endowed with greater judgment and zeal for religion can indeed not a little benefit many other bishops and churches by consulting, admonishing, and even correcting — as D. Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, and very many others did; for which cause also at the Council of Nicaea the churches of Egypt were commended to the Bishop of Alexandria, and the suburban churches to the Roman. But jurisdiction — if anything formerly was to be claimed in the bishops or churches — the neighboring bishops were wont to exercise, and this present in that very church where the fault had crept in. Not a little authority was thence derived to those first patriarchs — of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome — and to Rome the first authority was conceded on account of the honor of D. Peter, but no jurisdiction over others, nor rule over them. For as D. Jerome truly writes to Evagrius: wherever a bishop may be — whether in Rome, or in Eugubium, or in Constantinople, or in Rhegium, or in Alexandria, or in Tanis — he is of the same merit, of the same priesthood; the power of riches, or the lowliness of poverty, makes the bishop higher or lower. But for the rest, all are successors of the Apostles.

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For this supreme jurisdiction over all the Roman Pontiffs first invaded after the decline of the Roman Empire — and this only in the West. By what arts, by what struggles they contended for this, the histories sufficiently testify, and those conspicuous lies, and the most impudent distortions of scriptures, which they themselves inserted in their decrees and decretal epistles.

EPILOGUE ON THE MAGISTRATE

But let us pass over these things, sufficiently known to the pious and learned, and bitterly deplored by all the saints; the virtue of the Lord will one day cause these men's remnants to acknowledge the one head of the Church, and the true Pontiff, the Lord Jesus Christ. We, as we have certainly demonstrated from the present passage of D. Paul, acknowledge and worship as supreme in whatever commonwealth, kingdom, province, or city, that power which bears the sword there; and we know and proclaim that to this power there must necessarily be subject, even for conscience, whatever lives in whatever commonwealth — even if they be Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, priests, monks, Roman or Eugubine Pontiffs, or whoever else. Nature does not know it, divine ordinance does not know it, the sacred laws and the true Church of Christ in all centuries are ignorant of it as a monstrosity: that in one city, in one association of men they live and enjoy public benefits, who acknowledge no common power, and enjoy impunity of all crimes and flagitia. But the sword of the word, and the use of spiritual power, we so far from wishing to break — as Sadoletus calumniates — that we judge it must be greatly prayed that those to whom it has been given to be able and willing may use it most fully. We acknowledge that very much of this power was conceded to Peter; we shall acknowledge the same and more in the Roman Pontiff, if he renders the same and more. But while he attacks Christ, and assails not only all piety but even humanity itself — certainly it is incumbent on every Prince and Magistrate not to neglect the sheep of Christ; and on those to whom the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ has been entrusted, it is necessarily incumbent to preach it, whatever the Roman Pontiff and his adherents may seem. As for Sadoletus — judging us so unjustly — however much we are, we yet seriously seek the kingdom of Christ: it is no wonder, since he dared to write about Clement VII, so notorious to the whole world, that he was the best and most prudent Pontiff — indeed that nothing was more upright than he, nothing more gentle, nothing more worthy to be loved and honored by all. Although by his arts and cruelty he so afflicted all Italy that before him no Pontiff exposed Rome to pillage, overturned his own homeland, and delivered it to the tyranny of his own, who nearly exhausted the resources of all — who at Bologna in the greatest difficulty of the food supply, when a good part of the miserable common people was fed on herbs alone salted with salt, tripled the price of salt, so that those who lacked bread could not healthily use even herbs for want of salt. Lord Jesus, grant to these bishops and literary men that they think thee to be Lord, and that for those professing the divine letters, the bishopric of thy Church must look to thee alone, testimony must be borne to thee, thou alone must be proclaimed.

OBSERVATIONS

That the Apostle says every soul — unusual language for him elsewhere — let us carefully weigh that he studied by this to forestall the error of those who think that any holiness, any however sublime office, does not owe subjection to the higher powers. For he easily foresaw how much harm this error would bring to the Church: to which we certainly attribute the cause not only that everywhere the manner of rightly living together with religion has been so completely overturned, but also that those things are restored with such difficulty. For while the world serves the impiety of the pseudo-bishops, what hope is there of publicly restoring religion? The Apostle then diligently

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inculcates that all power is ordained by God and is a minister of God; let this stir us to with most ardent prayers assail the clemency of the heavenly Father, that he ordain for us pastors according to his own heart — doubting nothing that our sins deserve it if others take possession of things. Moreover the Apostle so constantly and simply affirms that he who does good receives praise from magistrates: let this admonish us to well and properly weigh this most great miracle. For we shall truly experience that it is so, if we apply our mind to the acts of men and adverse circumstances with true judgment. Since God administers all power — and could he who ordained it for the good of his own not also administer it for the good of those? That word: For this cause you also pay tribute — let it make us alert and willing to bear all public burdens, since by these we pay back nothing as the wage, and pay back plainly no match for so great the beneficence of God, which he dispenses to us through the power — but rather we contribute to the instrument of the safety and tranquility of the commonwealth to be protected and promoted.

Exposition of Section II.

Owe nothing to anyone.

EXPOSITION

He returns to commending love — for this brings it about that we both carefully discern what duty is, and perform it with the greatest willingness and constancy. Keeping in view what he premised about rendering to each what we owe, he exhorts not to owe anything to anyone except love — that is, to render to each what is of duty, so that no one can call us debtors in any matter, except for the debt of love, which namely it is necessary for us to perpetually pay and owe. In this the **Proposition** is: That love must be perennial in us toward neighbors, so that whatever we have done for them, we yet acknowledge that we are still debtors to them — and so that we pursue them with continual love, reckoning that we owe them all that will at any time and in any circumstance be given to help them.

The reason which incites us to this perpetual debt of love is from the reverence of the law. The pseudo-apostles, to thrust upon them the necessity of the ceremonies, adduced the majesty of the law. Hence D. Paul in Gal. 5, Coloss. 3, and 1 Tim. 1 — when he had rejected the false observance of the law in the ceremonies — immediately subjoined in what the true observance and fulfillment of the law consists: namely in the pursuit of the new life and love, by which all virtue is altogether perfected. And so in what the Apostle subjoins, there is a proof of this sort for the institution: You rightly revere the law of God, and in studying it, you rightly think you live the life of God — but one must see how you use the law, how you consider to where it calls you. By love the law is fulfilled — that is, it accomplishes what all those things prescribe; for by the precept of love whatever precepts there are in the law *ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται* — that is, is summed up and as it were contained under the first heading. Therefore if love is rightly constituted, just as it perfects that in which all that the law teaches is summarily contained: so the law is fulfilled and all that it prescribes is perfected.

Moreover that all things are contained in the precept of the law, he proves first by the exposition of some precepts, about which no doubt of this can exist — these are: Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, etc. But since these are the principal of the precepts of the law, he concludes the same about any precepts whatsoever. And if any other precept there be, he says, in this saying it is comprehended: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Then he proves the same

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by that sentence: Love works no evil to the neighbor. Holy scripture is ever wont to use synecdoches, and by the first in any matter to signify the whole matter; so in this passage by doing no evil, it understands doing good, and whatever true love strives to render to the beloved. For it will never come about that someone should do no evil to the neighbor, who is not already held by true love of the neighbor and the pursuit of doing good to him. But it is established also that the law was given first and chiefly to call us away from evils. For it is the first thing to recede from evils, and this so first that in those with whom you obtain it, you have now attached them to good actions. The reason then is the second and is digested thus: The law was given so as to render us good toward the neighbor in all things — that is, beneficent. Who doubts that love renders this? Certainly it works no evil to anyone, because it therefore strives to do good. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. And those to whom the law is dear, who truly wish to devote themselves to the law, must above all devote themselves to love toward the neighbor — that is, toward whoever the Lord has placed before us.

The whole law certainly consists of a threefold order of precepts. The first order consists of those in which are prescribed things pertaining to religion. The second, those in which what properly pertains to purity of life is dictated. The third, those in which duties toward the neighbor are prescribed. Now those which commend — whether prescribing simply the worship of faith, or the ceremonies by which faith toward God is promoted — certainly seek this: that we dedicate and consecrate ourselves wholly to God, to be accommodated to those offices of life which God sees fit. All these are: that we serve the neighbors for their present and eternal salvation, that we be organs of the divine goodness toward men, that we exhibit God, as it were, to the neighbors. But this we render by love alone. Therefore the end of all these precepts and their consummation is love.

Moreover those which prescribe concerning the holy institution of one's own life and true frugality — what else do they do but prepare us, so that we may conveniently serve the neighbors, and present ourselves as certain gods to them? And these precepts therefore are consummated by love. For if you truly love the neighbor — that is, all men — if you study this one thing: always to bring some benefit to them, thus certainly with the greatest zeal you will establish body and soul; you will strive to procure for yourself those arts and faculties; so you will moderate all your senses, words, and actions; you will use that frugality and decency in all things of life that have to sustain it, so as to declare yourself to have been wholly born and made for the goods of neighbors, and to be, to be able, and to have for them whatever you are, can do, and have that God has given you to be, to be able, and to have. About the precepts of duties toward the neighbor it is not necessary to show that love perfects all of them. For each experiences sufficiently that by love alone the will and the pursuit of deserving well of neighbors is established for himself. For to whom would thought of any injury to the neighbor come — whether the neighbor himself or his things or men are harmed — if he embraced the neighbor with such love as a mother embraces a son, as an upright wife embraces her husband — that is, if he truly abounded in love of the neighbor? Thus it is most evident that the whole law, and the whole will of God, is fulfilled and perfected by our loving the neighbor. It is necessary therefore that the pursuit of love be primary for us.

INTERPRETATION

Owe nothing to anyone. This is variously expounded, but the plainer sentence of Chrysostom seems correct: that Paul exhorts us to remain debtors of love alone — paying off immediately whatever of other things or duties we owe. Love, which cannot be fully paid off now, must always

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be paid — and is also always owed. Here he speaks to Christians; and if he wishes all the neighbor to be loved by us, for this reason he added *ἀλλήλους* — that is, one another — in this life God joins to us. He joins to us some by blood and affinity, whom whoever abandons has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever, 1 Tim. 5. Others by civil or private society — in whom to be remiss is judged faithless even by the world. Others by mere encounter, as strangers, and whose necessity is most of all offered to us to be borne — as he who had fallen among robbers was joined to the Samaritan; to abandon these from our help everyone considers inhuman and cruel. Others by the bond of faith — of whom the chief account must be held, as the very feeling of faith demands. But however each has been joined to us, in such manner must he be held as our neighbor, be loved from the soul, and be helped, whatever need he may have — as much as this lies in our faculty.

He has fulfilled the law. That is, he has perfected that to which the law refers all things. But who is he who is conscious of solid love of the neighbor — that is, of whoever the Lord has offered him in whatever manner, whether he has deserved well or ill, whether there is hope of favor from him or none? Certainly he who had arrived at this: to embrace whoever it may be with true love — for the scripture of God demands no love but a certain and just love — and to require no other cause of love in whatever person, than that he is a man, is a neighbor, is commanded to be loved by God: this person certainly would fully live the God who is charity, and would altogether satisfy the law. It is to be striven for in all life toward this, and faith must continuously be nourished in this, so that at last by such love it may fully operate and work.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. These precepts are all expounded above in chapter 7 in the conciliation subjoined to section 4.

Love works no evil to the neighbor. It is a litotes — for it signifies more than is said. Since the law was given chiefly to avert evils — namely for transgressions — this sentence so put very well fits the purpose: Love works no evil to the neighbor. For since the law chiefly works this: that we do no evil to the neighbor — so it is clearly evident that by love of the neighbor, which averts the whole will of harming the neighbor, the law is fulfilled. The rest has been sufficiently explained in the exposition.

OBSERVATIONS

If the law is satisfied by love alone, let us see what our progress in the law of the Lord is; let us weigh to what all pursuit of the law ought to avail — that namely we embrace and pursue all with just and unfeigned love, and let us not doubt that we wickedly abuse the law, if the pursuit and treatment of the law does not inflame us to this. What he says, another and the neighbor, let us now turn over in mind, and at every encounter of men let us consider that our love must be ready toward all those whom the Lord has in whatever manner placed before us. When the flesh boils toward those things by which the neighbor is saddened, let that occur: love brings no evil to the neighbor — so that since we know that without love we are nothing, we may convert ourselves from all indignation toward the neighbors to a certain benevolence.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION III

And this, knowing the time.

EXPOSITION

Here there is a general exhortation from the time of our salvation, and from every common benefit which we have received through Christ, to absolute justice in all respects — namely to putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, to living his life. But since even for the saints striving hither the innate lusts of the flesh obstruct — both of those things from which the body feels pleasure, that is, food, drink, and love, and of those things in which some excellence and dignity seems to be, which namely excite contention and emulation — he exhorts by name away from reveling and drunkenness, beds and wantonness, and contention and strife. The **proposition** therefore is: Put on Christ, that is, live, and indulge not the lusts of the flesh. This he also sets forth in other words: It is the hour to awaken from sleep. Also: Let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. And then by: Not in reveling etc. — he expounded what he meant by works of darkness. The main reason by which he here exhorts is this: That this time demands it — that is, the benefit of the Lord is now more clearly and more amply exhibited to us than when we first embraced faith; for salvation — that is, our full restoration — is nearer, because the dissolution and transition into the joy of the Lord is more imminent. The reason is digested thus: The more clearly God calls us to salvation — that is, to the complete renewal of ourselves into the life of God — with so much greater zeal certainly must we accommodate ourselves to this benevolence and mercy of God calling us thither. But we know now — since we have long received Christ and have made some progress in him — that God calls us more clearly to salvation and our redemption, since the end of life has drawn nearer. Therefore now it is the most opportune time for intensifying pursuit, for mortifying our flesh, and for advancing in the life of Christ — that is, that daily casting off the works of darkness and taking up the arms of light, we may put on Christ more perfectly, and concede nothing whatsoever to the flesh for its depraved lusts. Moreover arguments are also present in the individual words; I shall indicate them in the interpretation.

INTERPRETATION

And this, knowing. Our own conscience urges us — for having professed Christ and expecting his advent by the hours, indeed by the moments: certainly we well know and undoubtedly hold that now is above all the time, the very hour, for entirely casting off the old man, and putting on Christ in all things.

That now it is time for us to awake from sleep. That is, to be roused from the security of life and indulgence of the flesh. Christ is the light — without whom we are wholly destitute; the night is deep midnight; but when we embrace him by faith, in proportion to faith we enjoy the light of the true life, and as it were the dawn of full day shines upon us. Full day and high noon will be in the resurrection. He therefore admonishes that this is now nearer. Sleep is the image of death; it signifies the life which is spent by reason and the lusts of the flesh, without any sure judgment, but as in dreams. The Apostle used the same transference in 1 Thess. 5, where he also dwells on it. Isaiah also employs it in chapter 29. To awake from sleep is to be aroused from the life of the flesh into the true life of the Spirit of Christ.

For now salvation is nearer. He understands full salvation — that is, the resurrection — as D. Chrysostom also saw; this was so much nearer to them than when they had received the faith of Christ. At every moment the advent of the Lord must be expected by us — who will certainly come when men will least expect it. Hence the Apostles were accustomed to speak of it as if they thought he would come even in their own lifetime. Hence Paul had to remind the Thessalonians particularly

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of the same thing — who from such admonitions had conceived the opinion that that day was already imminent, as we read in chapter 2 of the epistle to the Thessalonians. D. Chrysostom sees that Paul by this admonition had noted the Romans: that with the progress of the received Gospel they were glowing less than at the beginning, while they ought to become more ardent in Christ, the longer we enjoy his grace and receive the gifts of God more fully. Concerning this nearness of salvation is also that of Christ the Savior speaking of the last day and those transformations of things which will then terribly come: Then, he says, lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near. For salvation and our redemption are the same. This salvation D. Peter writes in chapter 1 is prepared to be revealed in the last time. Of the same Paul writes in Phil. 3: We await a savior from heaven, who will transform our humble body, etc. And in Heb. 6, where there is a similar but more sharp admonition to those who had neglected to advance from the time they had come to the religion of Christ, he subjoins to that admonition: But we are persuaded of better things concerning you — τὰ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας — that is, adjoining to salvation, adhering to salvation. The Apostle wished to admonish: since we must not doubt that we are brought by the Lord to the coming and full salvation more nearly, the more we approach living in his faith to the dissolution of our little body — the time of the advancing life altogether demands that we accommodate ourselves with greater pursuit to promoting this renewal of ours here too. He associates himself with them: salvation is nearer to us, he says, than when we believed — that is, than when we came to the communion of faith — so that he might the more incite those whom he was admonishing by noting things which he himself considered no less desirable for himself than for them.

The night is advanced. That is, the life of the flesh. Proceeded, he says — for it had not yet fully vanished; nor had the day yet — that is, the life of God — fully shone, but was approaching more nearly now. For the flesh still lives here adversely to the spirit and drives us toward many things which are alien to our calling.

Let us cast off the works of darkness. These same works of the flesh are, Gal. 5, and the earthly members, Col. 3; they are what in our life proceed from the darkened mind of our flesh. The arms of light are the fruits of the spirit, Gal. 5, Eph. 5, Col. 3. Concerning these darkesses and this light, of which Paul makes mention here, he writes more fully in Eph. 4 and 1 Thess. 5. The Lord himself was also wont to use these metaphors gladly. Darkesses are the judgment of reason subject to depraved lusts. Light is the judgment of reason illumined and driven by the Spirit of Christ; by the former false things are chosen, by the latter true good things; by the former those things which the flesh delights in, by the latter those which are of eternal life.

That we may walk honestly as in the day. Now indeed the day of salvation has shone upon us — and if not yet fully, we acknowledge the Lord, and as it were walk in his sight and that of all the saints. As therefore men apply greater caution, to conduct themselves more decently in dress and every gesture of the body when it is day and they are in the eyes of men — when it is night and they are at home — so it befits us, endowed now with the light of Christ, to apply the greatest diligence, so that all our things may decently have regard for Christ the Lord and the heavenly Father, approving our whole life — since we know it to be spent in his sight.

Not in reveling. He explains summarily the works of the flesh, in which even the saints are sometimes implicated. He names these more roughly — revellings, drunken carousing, beds and wantonness's — to deter more from these evils. But we admit these evils whenever we indulge food, drink, or love more than the necessity of the body and the faith of the marriage demands; and the more enormous, the more we depart from this true use of these things. But in these who always

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preserves the true measure? Contention and emulation come from the desire for principality. For when we wish to excel in all things and to hold the first places, others refuse to yield to us, and should not always yield — contention arises, and since those others appear to have more, envy and strife. These evils also we can now sufficiently repel from ourselves; therefore the flesh must always be suppressed by us, and the works of darkness rejected; the members of our body which are on the earth must always be mortified.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ. This transference of putting on is very frequent in the scriptures. By it is signified the great abundance and certain possession of the thing which is said to be put on. Hence: Clothed with honor and glory, Psalm 8. With a covering of light, Psalm 104. Let them be clothed with execration, Psalm 109. Let thy priests be clothed with justice; I will clothe her priests with salvation, Psalm 132. Isaiah 52: Put on thy strength, O Sion; put on thy garments of glory. But the Apostle by this transference seems to signify rather a change, and the certain assumption of the thing which he commands or wishes or also proclaims us to put on. He proclaims that those who have been baptized have put on Christ, Gal. 3 — what is this else than to have been changed into the Lord Christ, so that those who have been baptized into Christ appear not in their own person but in the person of Christ — namely living the life of Christ. This is what baptism offers and gives — concerning which more was said above in chapter 6. When he exhorts in Eph. 4 and Col. 3 that we put on the new man, and bowels of mercy, goodness, modesty, etc. — he certainly wishes these to be assumed in our life, so that these may exist in us and be seen by all men in actual fact. So in the present passage, when he commands to put on the Lord Jesus, he requires that we so meditate on the Lord Jesus in our life and so be changed into him, that we appear in his life, not our own — as one casting off his own dirty garment puts on a princely garment, in which another man and a prince appears. Now it is the work of the Lord himself to clothe us with himself — that is, to grant such communion of himself, from which his genius and his manners may exist in all our life — though since he deigns to use our pursuit for this, the Apostle, to stir up this pursuit, speaks thus, placing before us the goal of our whole life: which is, that we reproduce and express our Lord Jesus Christ.

And make no provision for the flesh. The flesh lusts against the spirit, and therefore against Christ. Therefore if we shall undertake to put on Christ — that is, to live — the provision of the flesh for its lusts must be entirely cast off, but for necessity, and so that the flesh may serve the spirit, it is not to be cast aside. The Apostle has thus far prescribed the duties of the Christian man; he therefore here places before us the goal of our whole life, at which in all counsels one must aim, and to which one must look fixedly — lest we admit any slackness or stain in duty. That goal is: nothing for our own lust, but to institute all things for this end: that we become conformed to the Lord Christ, with full trust in God, burning charity toward all, assiduous incumbency on each in his office with the greatest zeal — and in these to place this one end before us: the sanctification of the name of God and the amplification of his kingdom everywhere among the nations. If we always keep this goal in view, if we always think of this goal of our race as placed before us, that all our life must fully express our Lord Jesus Christ — certainly no insincerity or slackness of duty shall creep in upon us; but with the whole heart and the greatest effort, and with that perennial striving, we shall arrive at the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus — and having attained the extreme and utmost of the good, we shall live an eternal and blessed life. To which indeed Paul refers the whole dispensation of the doctrine of Christ and the preaching of the Gospel: namely the philosophy of eternal life. What follows contains in itself the correction of a dissension which had arisen among those who professed Christ, on the occasion of the choice of foods and days and other observances which Moses prescribed.

OBSERVATIONS

That the Apostle so diligently admonishes of the time: let this stir us so that in these days of salvation, and in this time of divine goodwill — the more we advance, the greater progress in piety we demand from ourselves. It is a monstrosity always to remain children; it is also destruction not to follow sluggishly Christ continually calling us more clearly to salvation. He proclaims salvation to be nearer to us, the more we approach in faith in Christ toward the end of the present life; let this with meditation on the celestial life increase and intensify the confidence of dying in the Lord. Let those metaphors of night and day, sleep and waking, darkneses and light, occur in every action of ours — the more it may please to cast off what is of the flesh, and to be intent on what is of the spirit, let this admonish. He requires that we always walk honestly in the day itself, walking in the eyes of the Lord and conducting everything. That he thought it necessary even for such adults in Christ as the Romans to call them back by name from reveling and etc. — and what follows — let this stir us to always intensify care and solicitude for ourselves, and never to leave room for these evils with us, or restore them. For now we have sufficiently expelled them. Therefore what he subjoins let it always be fixed in soul: that we must put on our Lord Jesus Christ, and concede nothing whatsoever to the flesh for its lusts. Let us therefore always look to the Lord Jesus Christ himself, continually admonishing ourselves that we shall then approve ourselves to the Father when already nothing of ourselves remains in us, but all is Christ himself. This alone is our life and true happiness. Why therefore do we not strive thither with all our powers, and direct all our forces and cares into this one thing? Even committing things worthy of public punishment. For it does not bear the sword in vain. What therefore is the impudence of those who contend that what the Apostle here discusses about the power is to be understood of another, namely of the supreme power, of that, I say, to which belongs the right over the life of men, to which belongs supreme authority, and who define the power of the sword by laws? For in regard to jurisdiction Ulpianus adduces it, who defining supreme authority writes: **Merum imperium** is to have the power of the sword for taking action against criminal men, which is also called the power. The very name of ἐξουσία which all render as power teaches that Paul here speaks of the supreme and sword-armed power — I pass over the remaining most manifest indications. He is the minister of God. Therefore fear not unjust vengeance: God through his magistrates takes action against those who do evil, not those who do good. Therefore expect nothing grave from the public power if you have done good; but if evil, unless you wish to flee the hand of God, permit yourself to his chastisement, which he exercises through these his ministers.

They are public ministers of God, intent and persisting in governing the commonwealth. Therefore since they care for public things, it is fitting to most readily and most liberally furnish them the instruments of this care. And even if they abuse the public goods, yet we must always look to this: that no one can receive power except from God, and can retain it only supported by the virtue of God. If we consider this, nothing of any work or payment will be burdensome.

Therefore it is necessary to be subject. This will be easily acknowledged by whoever considers what was premised. And hence it is that he adds: not for wrath only, to be avoided namely, but also for conscience, because of those good things which are secured for us through the magistrate, so that if certainly nothing evil were to be feared by us from contempt of the power, yet since we are conscious of so many good things which are procured and preserved for us by the benefit of the magistrate, our own conscience, that is, the judgment of our own reason, rightly compels us to subject ourselves to them most fully. D. Ambrose indeed understands this of conscience, which will some day in the future judgment accuse us of violated power, if we have not obeyed the power from

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the soul. But D. Chrysostom understands this of conscience acknowledging the good things which are secured for us through the magistrate. As if Paul had said: It is necessary that we subject ourselves to the power, not for this cause alone, lest we attract vengeance upon ourselves if we are less obedient to it, but rather for this: that she is so much the more the establisher and preserver of good things for us. Hence enumerating the good things which we enjoy by the benefit of the magistrate, he concludes with these words: **καὶ οὕτως ὑποτάσσεσθαί σε ἐχρῆν, ἵνα μὴ δόξης ἄγνώμων εἶναι καὶ ἀχάριστος πρὸς τὸν εὐεργέτην** — that is: And thus it behooves thee to be subject, lest thou appear not to acknowledge and to be ungrateful toward the benefactor.

The Apostle wished to say here that our own conscience rightly impels us to all subjection toward magistrates, since we are conscious of how much God demands this from us, how useful it is for ourselves, and finally the duty of a good man.

φόρος is tribute properly, as **τέλος** is tax. D. Chrysostom notes here the artifice of the Apostle, who adduced as argument that which is thought to be the chief burden by the magistrates, that we ourselves acknowledge and testify by paying tribute how much the magistrate is to be held by us, to whom namely we pay as the wage of the work which he expends for our salvation, when we pay tributes.

For they are public ministers of God. That is, **λειτουργοί** — for they fulfill the public office of the Lord.

Render therefore to all. For we do not give but render whatever we give to each from duty, and especially of all that which we pay publicly. Moreover of those to whom the Lord has devoted us as servants, we ourselves are what we are; to say nothing of what God has committed to us to be dispensed for our neighbors.

To whom fear, fear. By fear he means reverence; by honor, the most liberal offering of all things which must be rendered to each from us for duty and honor's sake. He distributes these, tribute, tax, fear, honor, so that to some we owe tribute, to others tax, to others fear, to others honor, though we owe all these to magistrates. Yet there are those to whom we owe reverence and honor, but tribute and tax we do not owe. And tribute is also sometimes paid to some, tax to others. The sum of what Paul teaches here is that we render to all whatever we owe, whether by private or public name. He has especially in view what must be rendered to the powers, though meanwhile from this special passage on duty toward magistrates he betakes himself again to the common passage on love, by which we also devote and exhibit ourselves and all our things for the good of all.

Question: Whether the power that bears the sword is the supreme power of all on earth, to which all who live here ought to be subject.

We said above that since one is not sufficient to govern many, it seemed good to God to constitute many powers in the world, not one. But just as it is necessary for one commonwealth to be administered by one plan, and those who ought to cohere like members of one body must be ruled by one head: so, in one commonwealth a multitude of rulers is evil. This drives us, both by the very necessity of our situation, since it cannot always seem and be proved the same to many, and by the impulse of God, procuring our salvation in this manner, so that whatever difference of powers we admit, we nonetheless refer the highest things to one, not to him alone to be sure, but

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one nonetheless. For those whom we adjoin to him as counselors, these, just as the prince himself, are chosen, and this is plainly divine, and rightly with the highest weight we weigh with the most favorable spirit of mind what is publicly required. He adds another reason for this same thing, namely that they may be servants of the Lord: that one can better establish, moderate, and make blessed a commonwealth by a single, certain, and optimal plan. That we are divinely impelled toward this unity of a prince is a sign that neither a house, nor any other assembly of men gathered for serious or even jesting matters, profane or sacred, can be conveniently governed by many. In popular administration itself, where it is chiefly guarded that one person not manage things, yet one must lead, one convoke the assembly, one pronounce the opinion, one execute what shall have pleased the multitude. The same is more fully observed in the administration of the best men, since these better perceive what is for the safety of the commonwealth. Where a somewhat greater danger impends, as at sea, in warfare, in a seditious city, there supreme power is entrusted to one; to one Helmsman, one Commander, one Dictator all subject themselves; to these the highest things are entrusted. It cannot therefore be doubted that necessarily in one commonwealth one must be in command and exercise the primary power.

But how ample commonwealths it is fitting to be, such as are governed by one power, since very few are those who can usefully preside even over the most contracted commonwealth: although this can be usefully disputed, yet this is not the place to examine it here. For we here inquire not to amplify or contract the established powers, but to whom we must primarily obey and subject ourselves. Now from the Apostle it has been shown above that for the Christian, when it is asked to whom obedience is to be rendered, this one thing is to be looked to: whoever has power there where he himself acts. For whatever powers there are, and however widely they extend, it is most certain that they are ordained by God, both that they exist and that they avail so widely; and that the ordinance of God is obeyed if that power is obeyed; and that it is resisted if such a power is resisted. There are therefore first the larger commonwealths which are governed by royal power, as in our Europe the kingdoms of the Franks, Britain, the Spains, the Neapolitan, Sicily, Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, and that commonwealth which is called the Roman Empire, since it survives from the remnants of the empire which the Romans once had, whose chief portion is Germany, with some part of Italy. For from where certain scribes recently invented the title of the Kingdom of Germany is uncertain, since neither are there peoples who acknowledge this Kingdom of Germany, nor has any prince been born or chosen for this kingdom, nor do laws exist by which this kingdom would be administered. For all the peoples of Germany acknowledge as prince the one who sustains the remnants of the power of the Roman Empire, he who under the name of King of the Romans, not of the Germans, is chosen, inaugurated, and saluted, and finally law in Germany is said chiefly from the laws of the Roman Empire.

The largest commonwealths therefore in our Europe are this very Roman Empire and the mentioned kingdoms, each of which has its own princes and kings, not beholden to other princes. Then each of these has under himself in his kingdom cities, has princes and lords of certain provinces, but these beholden to him not with full right. In the Roman commonwealth namely, which today survives, for the polity of others is unknown to me, there are Elector princes, there are other princes, counts, and reguli, and also cities, who all possess supreme authority, who have the right of enacting laws among their own people, and the power of taking action against criminals, so that even when the emperor is present among them, yet it is their jurisdiction and censure. This right the emperors indeed confirm and protect, but from duty, not freely and at their own judgment. For those chosen to this empire confirm by oath that they will confirm and augment the rights and privileges of all the estates of the empire, not diminish them. Hence neither can the emperor enact

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a law, nor take up war in the name of the empire, without the counsel and assent of the estates of the empire. So the power of this commonwealth, which today is called the Roman Empire, is so conducted that primary authority rests with the emperor, but the force and execution of it rests with the whole body of the empire, and with whatever estate for that portion which belongs to it from the rights and privileges which have fallen to each. Hence their proceedings and acts are wont to be called imperial. So the supreme power is held among the Germans and those who acknowledge whatever remains of the Roman Empire.

Now the Apostle explicitly says: No power is except from God. The powers that are, are ordained by God. Since therefore today in the Christian world powers are so constituted, sanctioned by the consent of peoples, by laws, and by oath, that to whatever kings there may be supreme and free power, beholden neither to the Roman Emperor nor to other kings; and that to the princes and cities of the empire the power is beholden indeed to the Emperor, but so that he by his authority preserve and protect each one's own right, and by no means diminish it while he uses it legitimately: certainly those resist the ordinance of God who of whatever order or estate of the empire attempt to detract anything from the power. By divine right therefore and the indubitable constitution of God, whoever bears the sword among his own people, whoever possesses supreme authority, exercises the supreme power, no less the lord of one little town than the prince of a vast territory, equally a small municipality and the largest city alike. Since one body can have but one head, in one commonwealth there can be but one power, in which commonwealth the power that bears the sword, and therefore is supreme, possesses supreme authority; every soul that lives in that commonwealth must be subject to it. And as ministers of God are all those who exercise such power, for this purpose: that each among his own people with laws and penalties may be a terror to the wicked and a solace and defense to the good; necessarily to such just laws and penalties of whatever power are subject those who enjoy the benefit of the power, using the common advantages of the commonwealth and safe in the common defense; that is, in whatever commonwealth anyone lives, to the power of that commonwealth he must be obedient. For Paul said: Every soul, by which, as D. Chrysostom testifies, the Apostle expressed that this precept pertains not to secular persons only, but also to priests and monks; indeed if anyone were an Apostle, Evangelist, and prophet, **κἂν ὁ δεῖνα**, that is, or whoever. He likewise said: Let it be subject, **ὑποτασσέσθω**, which is more, as Chrysostom likewise admonishes, than **πειθέσθω**, that is, let it obey. Finally he added: Therefore it is necessary to be subject, not for wrath only, but also for conscience.

Moreover, since those who exercise power must execute the power of God for the good of the saints, he is the minister of God for your good, says the Apostle: it will be the concern of whatever Princes and Magistrates to whom the Lord has deputed supreme authority, with their laws and with the whole administration of the commonwealth among their own people, to take care that the religion of Christ flourish rightly, that the people be taught the Gospel of Christ purely, that ceremonies consonant with it be held, that no room exist for false doctrine of religion or superstition. For indeed no commonwealth can rightly subsist without the true worship of God. Which all who have written anything about the commonwealth and laws have acknowledged, even among the heathen. For none of them did not teach that the first care of the power must be expended on religion. The Lord not only prescribed the same in his law, but also effected it by his Spirit in all those whom he endowed with faith in his name, such as in Christendom were Constantine and his sons, Jovinian, Valentinian both, Theodosius, and not a few other princes of the Roman Empire, whose care it was that above all public religion be rightly established and prevail, as so many of their most holy laws testify, which are in the Code of Justinian placed before all other constitutions for this very cause. Justinian also in not one place of his constitutions on ecclesiastical matters

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acknowledges that nothing is to be striven for first by the prince than that priests rightly perform their office, that sacred canons hold as laws, that the true religion of Christ happily advance with all obstacles removed. Let the Christian reader read, if only by themselves, the sixth and hundred and twenty-third constitutions from the Novels. But who with any sense of God doubts that those who have received power from God over the life and death of men, men made for the worship of God, and whose whole end of administration must be that subjects live well and blessedly, must above all provide that they be well instructed in the worship of God, and preserved from all things that can lead them away from the true religion? This was the madness of the Manichaeans and Donatists and other heretics: that princes ought to leave religion to their own judgment. This error D. Augustine most forcibly refuted by testimonies of holy scripture in the books which he wrote against both arms of the pestilence of the Manichaeans and Donatists, and especially in the epistle to the count Boniface on the correction of the Donatists, and with what great vehemence he treated the same argument in the second book against the second epistle of Gaudentius, and in the first book near the end against the epistle of Parmenianus, and also in the epistle to Emeritus.

It is pleasant to append a few words from the epistle to Boniface. In this therefore kings serve the Lord, insofar as they are kings, when they do for serving him those things which they cannot do except as kings. When kings did not yet serve the Lord in the times of the Apostles, but were still pondering vanities against him and against his Christ, so that all the predictions of the Prophets might be fulfilled, impieties could not then be prohibited by laws, but rather were exercised. For the order of times so revolved that both the Jews killed the preachers of Christ, thinking they did a service to God, as Christ had predicted, and the nations raged against Christians, and the patience of all the martyrs conquered. But afterwards there began to be fulfilled what was written: And all the kings of the earth shall worship him, and all nations shall serve him. Who with a sober mind would say to kings: Do not care in your kingdom by whom the Church of your Lord is protected or attacked; it does not pertain to you in your kingdom who wishes to be religious or sacrilegious, to whom it cannot be said: It does not pertain to you in your kingdom who wishes to be chaste, who unchaste? For why, when free will has been divinely given to man, are adulteries punished by laws, and sacrileges permitted? Is it a lighter thing not to observe the faith toward God than toward a woman? Or if those things which are committed not in contempt but in ignorance of religion are to be more gently avenged, are they therefore to be neglected? It is better indeed (who would doubt it?) to lead men to worship God by doctrine, than to compel them by fear of punishment or pain. But not because these are better, therefore those who are not such are to be neglected. For many have profited by being compelled by fear or pain, so that afterwards they might be taught, or might practice in deed what they had learned in words. So much he.

Which we have adduced here because not only heretics today, who desire wickedly to rend the Church of Christ and leaven the purity of the Gospel, but those who boast themselves to be the columns of the true religion, the whole order of sacrificers who receive their appointment from the Roman Pontiff, keep princes away from caring for religion, permit them no judgment concerning any princes however impiously they may teach and impurely they may live, resisting the constitution, circumscribing it, or impeding it in any manner. Finally this must be cared for above all: that as widely as anyone's rule extends, the religion of Christ be restored and advanced. But since these things are so and cannot be called into doubt in any way, at least among men who believe in Christ: it has now been effected, and evidently so, that the power in whatever commonwealth which bears the sword, concerning which namely the Apostle here discusses, is the supreme of all on earth, to which those must be bound and devoted who live in this age, each to

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that power under whose protection he lives his life, from which subjection neither religion exempts, nor anything else.

They wish men to be compelled to what they themselves have sanctioned; those whom they themselves judge to be heretics, praying that life be given to them, they order to be burned; but they concede no cognizance to princes as to whether what they themselves determine is holy and demands to be defended, and as to whether they are heretics whom they condemn on this charge. They hold princes in place of lictors and executioners, to exercise the sword at their nod, even if they see them attacking the truth of Christ and defending falsehood. They take for themselves what the Jews took against Christ before Pilate: Unless this man were a malefactor, we would not have delivered him to thee. Would that more princes had the constancy of Pilate, and refused to take action against those concerning whose cause they had not yet themselves held inquiry. But the Lord Jesus, to whom the

Father has given all judgment and all power in heaven and earth, will give, and has already given in many places, better things: as he formerly breathed his Spirit upon his own, and has already breathed upon many of those whom he has constituted as ministers of his power for his people, so that they acknowledge religion to be their first care, and to be cared for by their own judgment. And let them not doubt that by divine right all who live here are subject to them, the priests and monks themselves, the Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, every soul. All of these therefore they will endeavor with the whole heart, with holy laws and edicts, and with pious constitution, to call back from all impiety and to lead to the pursuit of solid piety, imitating those princes who are certain to have approved the administration of their office with similar care of religion to Christ the Lord. For even if they exercise power under the emperors, yet since that is the imperial power which they exercise, it must undoubtedly be conducted according to the truly holy laws and edicts of the emperors, so that they direct all their effort that the religion which the Lord and Apostles handed down may obtain among their own people, that the bishops and the rest of the sacred order perform their duty according to the prescription of those same, that they take most severe action against all, of whatever order or dignity they may be, who have taught or done anything against scripture and the ecclesiastical constitutions which have been composed according to scripture. For so the divine laws of pious princes ordain, laws which today exist not without the singular benefit of God in the Code of Justinian and the Novels, to the end that they be observed.

From these things I think it is now clear what must be responded to the posed question. For the Apostle, to those who are not contentious and are capable of divine truth, if they weigh what was premised, these things are beyond doubt. First: in whatever commonwealth there ought to be one supreme power. Then: whatever powers there are, whether free or beholden to others in some manner, they are ordained by God, such as they are, and they must be so conducted and divinely observed.

The irrefutable and most evident *ἀπόδειξις* of this truth is: To whatever power on earth every soul, that is, whoever lives here, even if they are Apostles, Evangelists, and prophets, priests and monks, subjects itself necessarily, God so commanding, that power is certainly the supreme of all on earth, and all who live here must be subject to it. But that is the power which bears the sword. Therefore the power which bears the sword is the supreme of all on earth, and every mortal must necessarily be subject to it, God so commanding. The major is self-evident: the power to which no one fails to be subject is certainly the supreme of all powers. Now that by every soul the Apostle

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understands whatever of men lives here, not Chrysostom alone but all the older and purer Church acknowledges, as we read this everywhere among the holy fathers.

Supreme power.

But that this eminent power, to which the Apostle therefore subjects all, is that which bears the sword, the Apostle himself expounded saying: It does not bear the sword in vain. By this demonstration what is more evident, what is clearer?

Yet so our sins requiring it, the multitude of the good, not of the common people but even of princes, not only does not assent to this truth, but strenuously resists it as a pernicious error. For which of the kings and greater princes today has not established very many things about priests and their revenues, at his own judgment, against the liberty and immunity which that order boasts? This certainly sufficiently declares that princes hold even the ecclesiastical order as subject. But to bring it about that bishops, abbots, and the rest of the ecclesiastics might administer their office religiously, labor in the word and doctrine, present themselves as a pattern to the faithful in speech and conversation, and in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity, and not so impiously and most flagitiously pour out such great resources of the Church on pomp and luxury, sometimes also on destructive wars, and with doctrine and life, doctrine through subservient flatterers and servants of the belly, and life through these same and themselves, trample, overturn, and abolish, as much as in them lies, all piety and honesty of living: this, namely, for princes and magistrates to care for, and by their rule, since they are also perfected by God over things, to demand from the ecclesiastics, and to execute against them the most holy laws of the greater princes of the nations: this indeed would be both to violate ecclesiastical immunity, to violate the holiness of the ministers of God, and to pervert the order of powers.

Ecclesiastical immunity exposed.

But in fact what has the immunity of the ecclesiastical order been today among the more powerful princes, other than impunity of all impiety and whatever flagitia? For in other things, not only in situation but plainly in the subjection of things and bodies, the ecclesiastics themselves profess themselves to be subject to the higher powers. Which is to be seen in all the more powerful courts, for in these, what the principal and most difficult court ministries are today, do not bishops, abbots, provosts, and other ecclesiastics perform? Indeed in these they often approve themselves to the princes and serve assiduously, which to recall is a matter of shame. Moreover, not as others are enriched from the treasury of the prince, but from whatever accumulated priesthoods they heap up ecclesiastical riches, these they expend on the magnificence and splendor of the prince, as they say. Which also for this cause chiefly they surpass the rest of the courtiers of the court in favor and power with the princes. And as the Roman Pontiff has yielded place to none of the princes now for some years: in how much time, while he endeavors the ruin of all monarchs, has he not served some one of the monarchs, not only against that majesty which he assumes to himself, but especially also against the arrogance and swelling of his own soul? So since this order by true and vigorous reason truly cannot sustain being subject to the higher powers, and princes neglect to vindicate their right over them for the safety of the commonwealth: in this manner both resist the ordinance of God, and thus by the just judgment of God, so that they may be subject not to those powers but to their own, to the most conspicuous destruction of the princes and the whole Church. Which alas no one of the saints has not for many centuries been groaning and weeping over. Let D. Bernard be read in the Canticles and elsewhere where he laments these things.

The reasons by which the ecclesiastics claim their immunity.

But let us hear by what reasons the ecclesiastics not only do not withdraw themselves from all powers, but prefer themselves above them. The first of all, and what seems to them the more firm, is this: that the ordained powers ought to be ordered, to which Pope Boniface, that column of impudence and arrogance, adduces in his extravagant which begins **Unam Sanctam** the passage of Paul: The powers that are, are ordained by God, as if the Apostle here were speaking about the order of powers among themselves, and not about the certain and divine constitution of all. Spiritual things moreover excel corporeal things. Therefore it is necessary that the spiritual power, which the ecclesiastics possess, excel and have the corporeal power, which the profane administer, subject to itself. And they confirm this through what was said by the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah, himself from the priests not from kings: Behold, I have established thee today over the nations and kingdoms, to root up and destroy, to plant and to build. And then especially through those: Whatsoever thou shalt bind, and: Feed my sheep. O would that you would open your eyes, my servants, whom God willed to be gods to his people, lest these triflers of such trifles permit themselves to be averted from your commands and the legitimate function of their office, to so great destruction of your little sheep which you have purchased by your blood. We concede to you, O too unlike the Prophets, Apostles, and the Lord Jesus whose place you so infamously and impiously invade, that the corporeal power ought to be subject to the spiritual power. We wish and desire that whatever on earth must be bound and loosed may be bound and loosed. Would that you had both the power and the will to bind and loose on earth what is held bound and loosed in heaven, and to feed the sheep of Christ, as this was committed to Peter. But let us define what the spiritual power is, what it is to bind, what to loose, what to feed the sheep of Christ. These are holy and splendid names, but in the kingdom of Christ the work is in deeds not in names.

What the spiritual power is.

D. Paul defines the spiritual power in these parts: to be able to cast down the reasonings that exalt themselves against the knowledge of Christ, to bring captive every understanding to Christ, to have in readiness vengeance against all disobedience, when the obedience of the saints shall be complete, 2 Cor. 10. In the same manner he also speaks of the spiritual power elsewhere. And what else can this be but the faculty of the Spirit of Christ, efficaciously driving away impiety from men and planting, guarding, and advancing piety in them? Nor will there be any other power of binding and loosing and feeding the flock of the Lord. To this power certainly whatever power and strength there is among any mortals must be subject. With this power certainly the holy prophets operated against kings and priests and the people when they fell away from the law of God. With the same the Savior and Apostles shook the whole power of the Jewish nation, coerced the Church of God, and freed it from all the force of Satan throughout the whole world. With this power D. Ambrose was reducing Theodosius the prince to the order of penitents, was denying Valentinian the basilica, and simultaneously the conference on faith before partly heathens, partly those corrupted by the impiety of the court. With no other power whatever remains in the world of the Church, and has persisted to this day, against the whole force of Satan, and now lifts its head again, however much those labor against it in full force who make themselves false promoters of spiritual power.

The pseudo-ecclesiastics' vices.

This truly spiritual power, would that those who boast of spiritual power could and would use it. What else does the whole world seek for so many centuries now, that pontiffs and bishops are

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not willing to bind, and not only by ecclesiastical function but by the very whole communion of the Church to expel, those whom scripture and the sacred canons command to be bound and expelled: namely those who teach false things and live perversely, who are Simonists, fornicators, adulterers, **ἄρσενοκοῦται**, covetous, drunkards, brawlers, revilers, rapacious, and the like, all who live disorderly, practicing nothing good, and burdening the Church unjustly, and also harmfully offending it. For it is not hidden from you what D. Paul prescribes and testifies in 1 Cor. 5 and 6, Eph. 5, 2 Thess. 3, in 1 Tim. 3, and Tit. 1, and what has been constituted in the Decrees and Decretals on the life and honesty of clerics, on their election and whole office. According to these your own laws therefore, why do you not exercise the power which you so greatly extol in words? In that, surely, where the supreme princes, and the whole world, ought to submit their rods to your power. But if these laws of God avail, if there are in the Church those who wish and are able to rightly use this spiritual power, the faculty of binding and loosing, and of feeding the sheep of Christ, how far can anyone, I earnestly ask, from the whole cohort of the falsely named ecclesiastical order, stand in his place?

But to bind men in impiety and to loose them in piety is to close and open; but to close heaven, and not only to open Gehenna but to drive innumerable multitudes of peoples into Gehenna, and yet not to wish to be convicted by any mortal, as it holds, chapter Si papa, Distinct. 40. And finally to feed and cherish, but wolves and the very plagues of the human race, and this so that they may do harm to the Churches always more, not the sheep of Christ, so that they may advance in the life of God.

To what extent the pseudo-ecclesiastics' immunity is concealed.

But with the whole rabble of the pseudo-ecclesiastics sunk absorbed in these things, who certainly among all evil works hold the supreme summit: by what sense of nature, by what judgments of the prudent, by what law finally do these persons withdraw themselves from the higher powers armed with the sword? For the legitimate power must certainly be a terror for evil works, in whatever persons they may exist, and the Spirit of Christ through Paul subjects all souls to it for this end. And the laws also of the most holy emperors have exempted no bishops, clerics, or monks from their jurisdiction, as so many laws testify which concern the functions of these, and penalties almost constituted in those laws against transgressors. Justinian indeed wished those clerics who sinned against canons, and not also against the laws, to be judged and corrected by bishops, at whose proceedings also clerics are first to be summoned in civil causes. And this for the same cause: lest by occasion of a lawsuit they be drawn away from their ministry, and be absent from churches and monasteries; or also lest what they had admitted against the sacred canons not be chastised severely enough; but by no means so that all impiety of life and perversity which the ecclesiastics today demand as their liberty and immunity might go unpunished. Moreover in criminal and civil causes which could not conveniently be decided by the judgment of the bishop, he wished them to be liable to the common courts of the empire. We read these things in the Novels, in many places, as in constitutions 5, 16, 37, 67, 79, 83, 86, 123.

But when were these laws abrogated? Which of the princes made them void? And which of the holy bishops and pontiffs was there who would have condemned them, indeed who did not subject himself to them? For when by so many Canons those are excommunicated and deposed from office who even have a suspect woman in their house, or are held by another manifest crime or flagitium, and bishops especially who ordain such, or who connive at such when ordained: how many faces do you leave us from such a great number of bishops and priests, if these canons and

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laws avail, that is, if the power of binding avails, the ecclesiastical power, now by chapters Nullus, beyond distinct. 32, and the chapter Si qui, distinct. 8, and likewise the last chapter on the cohabitation of clerics and women, the evil of paganism and idolatry is judged to be to communicate in the sacred things of those who openly have a concubine, on account of which those also are excommunicated who have admitted this? O the times, O the customs.

If here the power of binding were to stand in its place, who altogether today even from the laity in the Church would have professed Christ? I say nothing now of those old-time holders of place.

The spiritual power is from the spirit of Satan.

To bear only the names of holy functions and to squander ecclesiastical riches for impious lust against the purity of the Gospel and every right institution of life; to set themselves before all powers; to disturb kingdoms; to embroil the whole world in wars and slaughters, which things alone now for not a few years come from the power of the pseudo-ecclesiastics: to admit these things, I say, and in this impious and most destructive manner to rampage among men, is to exercise spiritual power indeed, but from the spirit of Satan, not of Christ; is to bind and to loose D. Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, and those of this class.

What D. Gregory himself the Roman Pontiff judged about the power in himself and its order among princes, and concerning their laws: from his letters to princes it is easy to understand. How humbly he writes, how he defers to their power himself and all his things! And this not only in civil matters but also ecclesiastical, and in those in which pontiffs today exempt themselves most from the power of princes, as is the case about the power and eminence of the pontificate, about laws to be imposed on ecclesiastical men.

D. Gregory acknowledged the authority of the Emperor.

In the case with John the patriarch of Constantinople, who wished to be called universal bishop: he obeyed the imperial command, to write to him gently and humbly, and commended the whole cause to be judged by the prince; even though he had already himself judged that a name of such a sort contained in itself blasphemy and impiety, so that it could in no way be tolerated in the Church, since it had not been given even to D. Peter, and had been repudiated by the Roman Pontiffs to whom the Council of Chalcedon had offered it. In this cause he invoked the authority of the emperor Maurice against John with particular vehemence, writing among other things thus: He therefore, he says, must be more greatly bent by the command of the most pious lords, who despises to offer obedience to canonical precepts. He must be coerced who does injury to the holy universal Church, who swells in heart, who desires to rejoice in the name of singularity, who also opposes a private title to the honor of your empire. So much he. But when he had thus prejudged the matter of the patriarch's insolence and arrogance, yet he committed the whole cause to the judgment of the emperor. For thus he wrote to the emperor: Let the piety of the lords consider me as their own, him whom they have always singularly cherished and contained beyond others, who both desire to offer obedience to you, and yet greatly fear to be found guilty on account of my negligence before the tremendous judgment of God. And according to the petition of the said deacon Sabinianus, either let the most pious lord himself deign to judge the affair, or deflect the oft-named man so that he may at length desist from this intention. If therefore by your most just judgment of piety, or by gentler admonitions, he shall have desisted, we give thanks to Almighty God, and we rejoice in the

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peace of the whole Church granted through you, etc. These things we read in the epistle of D. Gregory 32, book of epistles 4.

Also in another cause, see how this man submitted himself to the fasces of the empire. The same Emperor had sent through Longinus the Stratorius a law, to be transmitted through his works to the different parts of the land, in which he had ordained that whoever had been involved in public functions should not be permitted to come to an ecclesiastical office or to a monastery, and that neither those who had been signed by hand for military service should be permitted. To this constitution D. Gregory writes that he was very much struck with terror, because through it the way to heaven was closed for many, and he most solemnly entreats the prince to soften the rigor of his law either by tempering or changing it. Yet he concludes the epistle with these words: I indeed, subject to the command, had the same law transmitted through the different parts of the lands; and because the law itself in no way agrees with Almighty God, behold through the page of my suggestion I have now notified the most serene lords. On both sides therefore I have discharged what I owed, who have given proof of obedience to the Emperor, and have by no means kept silent for God what I felt. So much he.

Pontiffs who were subject to emperors.

With this spirit toward princes and their pious laws and commands some other Pontiffs also were. It is read in the Decrees of the Pontiff, 25, question 1, chapter Satagendum, the response of Pope Pelagius to King Childebert, in which he frankly confesses that the King by his own right had required from him through a legate a confession of faith, which he also renders in these words: We must endeavor that for removing the scandal of suspicion we offer the service of our confession to the laws of religion, by which the holy scripture commands us to be even now subjects. For Rufinus, a magnificent man, the legate of your excellence, confidently demanded of us, as was fitting, either that we should signify to you that the tome of Pope Leo of blessed memory is preserved by us in all things, or that we should send the confession of our faith in our own words; and the first part of his petition, because it was easier, we fulfilled as soon as he said it, and we signify to you by our profession that we keep with propitious hand the tome of the bishop written for the assertion of the Catholic faith. But that no occasion of suspicion should remain hereafter, which God forbid, I have hastened to do also that other part which the renowned man admonished me to do, namely to set forth in our own words the confession of the faith which we hold. So much he. And Pope Leo the fourth of this name did not think it unworthy of himself to offer his whole life to be examined and judged by the legates of the Emperor Louis in these words: If we have done anything improperly and have not observed the track of just law in subjects, we wish everything to be corrected by your judgment and that of your envoys; because if we who must correct the sins of others commit worse things, certainly we shall not be disciples of truth, but, which we say with grief, beyond others we shall be teachers of error; hence we greatly implore the clemency of your magnitude, that you direct to these regions persons of such a kind for inquiring into what we have said, who fear God in all things, and diligently examine everything as if your imperial glory were present; and not only these things alone which we said above do we ask to be examined precisely, but if greater or smaller matters than these concerning us have been indicated to them, all of these may be terminated by a legitimate examination, so that in the future nothing may remain undiscussed or undefined. 2 q. 1 c. Nos si incompetenter.

What now does a just man and one versed in the Christian religion judge about us, if the judgment of these pontiffs about the power of princes and pontiffs, who are established to have

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rightly and vigorously used the spiritual power and the power of binding and loosing, and to have shown themselves true pastors and certain successors of the Apostles, is to be preferred and held rather than that of the later ones, about whom D. Bernard five hundred years ago complained thus: It is not this time to adorn the bride, but to despoil; not to guard, but to destroy; not to defend, but to expose; not to instruct, but to prostitute; not to feed the flock, but to slaughter and devour.

D. Bernard's complaint in the Canticles.

These things D. Bernard complained of, and much graver things, about the bishops of his time. What do you think he would have complained about our pontiffs if he were now present, and beheld how fallen and cast down the affairs of ecclesiastics are, so that that time of D. Bernard compared with ours would seem golden, while ours could barely seem not leaden but even clay?

We therefore follow the scripture of God, we hear Paul, we agree with the most holy fathers and pontiffs of the Church, acknowledging and proclaiming in whatever commonwealth that power to be supreme which bears the sword there, which administers supreme authority; and that there must be subject to this power, even for conscience, whatever lives in that commonwealth, every soul. But to be subject for God's sake, therefore also according to God, so that each accommodate and commit himself to these laws and edicts of the Power, fulfilling both by bearing and by doing what is commanded, through which piety may be safe for each. This subjection God has imposed; therefore no man can rightfully exempt anyone from it. Nor did those pious princes entertain the thought of releasing anyone from this subjection, as we said above.

No magistrate can abjure power over the ecclesiastics.

But what the later pontiffs by art and force extorted from princes, that they abjure their power over the ecclesiastical order: this can be as firm as if one were to induce a father to abjure the care of his children. What God enjoins on us, it is not ours to abjure; and if this was done in error, it is necessary to return to duty as soon as that is understood. Those who bear the sword are ministers and servants of God; God himself has enjoined on these to be wholly intent on this: that wherever they have supreme authority, they coerce those from evil works and incite them to good. Therefore they cannot remit this for any man's favor. Now no pacts or oaths avail against God, so that what God commands a man should bargain with a man to abjure, and then neglect it; no one of Christians acknowledges this.

God must therefore be prayed to, that those to whom he himself has given the sword may also learn to use it legitimately, and above all to take care that doctrine and life be rightly observed by those who are constituted for this: that they be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, with whose rightly performing their office it is necessary that all else be safe, but with their neglecting or, as has now long and everywhere been the case, perverting, it is necessary that all things perish. For as those who are so powerful with the great portion of princes not only avert them from the reform of the Church but also inflame them horribly against those who exhort to the purging of ecclesiastical administration, whether through a Synod or through other means: so God must be sedulously prayed for this too, that he inspire in the princes and magistrates to whom he has already given to know what his true worship is, and what the function of those is who are ministers of the Church of Christ, that they likewise acknowledge what their own calling demands in this; and so sanctify God in their hearts, that when they have learned what God demands from them in the

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governance of the Church, from whom alone they have received their power, they may pursue this with bold soul, fearing nothing that man may do.

The higher powers, as in the Roman Empire the power of the Emperor, are to be cultivated and observed, but according to God, so that what God commands you neglect not for any man's command. The commonwealth of the Roman Empire chooses through ordained electors an Emperor, so that he may preserve the laws and rights of the Empire, and the liberty of all the members of the Empire, and augment it, not diminish it. As whoever is raised to this dignity receives by oath the commitment to care for the whole empire with all his powers, so all who think piously about their power ought to presume that they desire to render the same, and that those magistrates who bring it about among their own people that Christ is purely taught and commended, both in sacred ceremonies and word, and that all impiety be kept away both in ceremonies and universal life, and especially in doctrine, will obtain favor from them and incur no offense. For since they have supreme authority, and each exercises the supreme power in his own commonwealth, which depends from the power of Caesar no more than from the laws, and depends from it by right: it is certainly the part of princes and magistrates of this kind to establish among their own people, according to the law of God and of pious princes, first above all that religion be rightly ordered, and to remove and keep away whatever has in any manner crept in against this.

Why supreme authority is called supreme.

For as has been said and all laws testify, in every true constitution and governance of the commonwealth, religion claims the first care for itself. Now this also is certain: that just as no laws, so no privileges can be given for impiety. Moreover since these princes and magistrates have supreme authority, which as Alciato has seen is for this reason called supreme, because it is free, it will certainly be the duty of such powers to follow the law of God and of pious princes freely, with no moderation of these sought or accepted from a superior power, especially a moderation of such a kind as they certainly know to be contrary to the law of God.

Christians must yield property, must yield life to the power even acting by force, when namely the command of God does not call elsewhere. But to yield the office, to yield the duty enjoined by God, Christians can never yield to any power, because they cannot prefer men to God. Therefore it is necessarily the case that whatever magistrates have supreme authority among those in whose commonwealth they live, they must be a terror for all evil works which they themselves do not doubt to be evil, an aid to good things which they certainly know to be good; and to all commanding the contrary they must say: We must obey God more than men. For it is one thing to suffer force, another to desert what God has enjoined and to make oneself a participant in violence against God and the saints.

Finally since no right and no jurisdiction can exist against God and the Church, there is no private jurisdiction for the pseudo-ecclesiastics to claim, to the end that it may be permitted to them with impunity to lay waste the Church of God. The power of the Spirit and word is for certain edification; exemption from common jurisdiction both could not and has not been conceded to them, so that they alone might with impunity be unjust and blasphemous against God and men, as today are all the pseudo-ecclesiastics, whoever, namely, do not teach the Gospel purely, nor live toward the whole Church for this end, and do not expend ecclesiastical resources for the same use. It is not in the power of any of the princes to grant that anyone harm another with impunity, let alone the commonwealth, and this in the cause of religion, in which the salvation and eternal life

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of all is at stake. D. Gregory writes to the Emperor Phocas that this is what distinguishes the Emperor from the kings of the nations, and the kings of the nations are lords of servants, but the Emperors are lords of the free commonwealth, book of epistles 11, epistle 36.

Hence the Emperor himself also made void whatever it happened to enact against right and public utility, as we read in the Code of Justinian, under the title: If against right, or etc. The law reads thus:

We warn all judges of our universal commonwealth of whatever greater or lesser administration, that they permit no rescript, no pragmatic sanction, no sacred notation which appears to be contrary to the general right or public utility to be brought into the debate of any litigation, but let them not doubt that the general sacred constitutions are to be observed by all.

When things are thus, doing their duty toward God, toward the Church of Christ, toward the commonwealth, toward the emperor himself, and not being unjust toward the sacrificers or any mortals: whatever princes and magistrates to whom supreme authority has been entrusted by the Lord, in their dominions and cities, shall first have removed whatever is contrary to the doctrine of Christ, and established whatever is according to it. Since thus the whole salvation of men depends on the true religion, so God must be earnestly prayed that he inspire this mind in all princes and magistrates who bear the sword, of the first, middle, and last order, so that they both acknowledge this to be their exalted office, and perform it boldly and in good faith, deterred by the fear of no creature.

Sadoletus calumniates.

Teaching and praying these things from the Lord, we by no means in us repudiate the distinction of orders and powers, nor do we attempt to remove the royal priesthood of the supreme pontificate from the Catholic Church, as Sadoletus calumniates, a man certainly unworthy who has not undertaken to merit better concerning the doctrine and religion of Christ. Let there be orders in the Church, let there be distinct and separate powers from each other, but such as may make for the edification of the Church, not against it, and with such manifest impiety. Let there be in the Catholic Church the royal priesthood of the supreme Pontiff, but the priesthood of Christ, not of the Antichrist, **ἱερουροῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ**, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable and sanctified in the Holy Spirit. To reign in Rome, with such luxury, by those arts, and by that force, as has long been the case with the Pontiffs: this is not to act as a priest of Jesus Christ. It is cited in distinct. 40 under the name of Chrysostom: Not the throne makes the priest, but the priest the throne; not the place sanctifies the man, but the man the place; not every priest is holy, but every holy man is a priest. Sadoletus himself makes the office of the supreme Pontificate this: to contain all others in one faith and truth and good order. Which one Church, I pray, does the Roman Pontiff contain in one faith and truth and good order? What faith shines, what truth reigns, what good order prevails in Rome itself? I adjure you by Jesus Christ. Would indeed that the Roman Pontiff studied what you attribute to him: surely as he exhibited himself as a priest, so we would willingly acknowledge him. For who of right mind does not wish to be contained in one faith and truth and good order?

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One and universal Pontiff there is not and cannot be.

But since no one can render this service to all, for the boundaries of the kingdom of Christ must be coterminous with the whole world: one supreme and universal Pontiff neither ever was, nor can possibly be. So far is it from the truth what Sadoletus writes: that nothing is more evidently constituted by Christ, nor more salutary for the faithful peoples, than that there be one leader and one head of the common Church. D. Gregory writes that D. Peter was the principal member of the Church, and not a universal Apostle, and deems that in this title of universal leader and head of the Church there is the greatest impiety and blasphemy. The same all the saints judged. There is one head of the Church, Christ; his members and ministers are the Apostles, Bishops, and all pastors, each according to his calling. One indeed ministers more widely in one area, but no one everywhere. So proclaim the divine letters; so testifies Paul. About which I certainly most greatly condole with you, O Sadoletus, that you have dared to write: That the same who is the head of the heavenly Church, Christ, may be possibly united to and bearing this earthly one, so that the same person may be understood as both triumphator and soldier at once, and in the way and in the homeland.

Christ is the head of the Church.

But you say: this cannot be conceived by any thought? By the thought of the flesh it certainly cannot. But faith both conceives and holds what the Lord promised, that he will be with us to the consummation of the age, that he is our head so joined and adhering to us, that we are flesh of his flesh, bone of his bones. And so simultaneously triumphator and soldier, so in the way and in the homeland, as Paul would say to those still raging against Christians: Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me? For indeed he proclaims himself to hunger, thirst, be cold, and suffer the other necessities of the body, when the least ones of his hunger, thirst, are cold, and suffer the other inconveniences of the body. Indeed in teaching and governing us, he deigns to be with men living here in the body; when he ascended to heaven, he gave some Apostles, others Evangelists, others Prophets, others pastors and doctors, but he himself remains the one head and prince, Eph. 4. He gives also some Apostles, others Evangelists, etc., not the same ones all; neither Apostle and pastor, etc., but Apostles and pastors.

For who could be able to exercise the true pastoral care, and this very care which Sadoletus requires, to contain peoples in one faith and truth and good order, even in one small town, as much as is sufficient? Paul labored more than all, and brought the Gospel most widely to all; and yet he did not bring himself to profess himself pastor of all those whom he himself had brought to Christ. But he established, both by himself and through others, for this cause he had left Titus also in Crete, through the individual churches and individual towns individual presbyters and bishops, content himself with the title and duty of Apostle. A bishop who is endowed with greater judgment and zeal for religion can indeed not a little benefit many other bishops and churches by consulting, admonishing, and even correcting, as D. Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, and very many others did. For which cause also at the Council of Nicaea the churches of Egypt were commended to the Bishop of Alexandria, and the suburban churches to the Roman. But jurisdiction, if anything formerly was to be claimed in the bishops or churches, the neighboring bishops were wont to exercise, and this present in that very church where the fault had crept in. Not a little authority was derived thence to those first patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome; and to Rome the first authority was conceded on account of the honor of D. Peter, but no jurisdiction over others, nor rule over them. For as D. Jerome truly writes to Evagrius: wherever a bishop may be, whether in Rome, or in Eugubium, or in Constantinople, or in Rhegium, or in Alexandria, or in Tanis, he is of

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the same merit, of the same priesthood; the power of riches, or the lowliness of poverty, makes the bishop higher or lower. But for the rest, all are successors of the Apostles.

For this supreme jurisdiction over all the Roman Pontiffs first invaded after the decline of the Roman Empire, and this only in the West. By what arts, by what struggles they contended for this, the histories sufficiently testify, and those conspicuous lies and the most impudent distortions of scriptures which they themselves inserted in their decrees and decretal epistles.

Epilogue on the magistrate.

But let us pass over these things, sufficiently known to the pious and learned, and bitterly deplored by all the saints; the virtue of the Lord will one day cause their remnants to acknowledge the one head of the Church, the true Pontiff, the Lord Jesus Christ. We, as we have certainly demonstrated from the present passage of D. Paul, acknowledge and worship as supreme in whatever commonwealth, kingdom, province, or city, that power which bears the sword there; and we know and proclaim that to this power there must necessarily be subject, even for conscience, whatever lives in whatever commonwealth, even if they be Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, priests, monks, Roman or Eugubine Pontiffs, or whoever else. Nature does not know it, divine ordinance does not know it, the sacred laws and the true Church of Christ in all centuries are ignorant of it as a monstrosity: that in one city, in one association of men they live and enjoy public benefits, who acknowledge no common power, and enjoy impunity of all crimes and flagitia. But the sword of the word, and the use of spiritual power, we so far from wishing to break, as Sadoletus calumniates, that we judge it must be greatly prayed that those to whom it has been given to be able and willing may use it most fully. We acknowledge that very much of this power was conceded to Peter; we shall acknowledge the same and more in the Roman Pontiff, if he renders the same and more. But while he attacks Christ, and assails not only all piety but even humanity itself: certainly it is incumbent on every Prince and Magistrate not to neglect the sheep of Christ; and on those to whom the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ has been entrusted, it is necessarily incumbent to preach it, whatever the Roman Pontiff and his adherents may seem. As for Sadoletus, judging us so unjustly, however much we are, we yet seriously seek the kingdom of Christ: it is no wonder, since he dared to write about Clement VII, so notorious to the whole world, that he was the best and most prudent Pontiff, indeed that nothing was more upright than he, nothing more gentle, nothing more worthy to be loved and honored by all. Even though he by his arts and cruelty so afflicted all Italy that before him no Pontiff exposed Rome to pillage, overturned his own homeland, and delivered it to the tyranny of his own, who nearly exhausted the resources of all, who at Bologna in the greatest difficulty of the food supply, when a good part of the miserable common people was fed on herbs alone salted with salt, tripled the price of salt, so that those who lacked bread could not healthily use even herbs for want of salt. Lord Jesus, grant to these bishops and literary men that they think thee to be Lord, and that for those professing the divine letters, the episcopate of thy Church must look to thee alone, testimony must be borne to thee, thee alone proclaimed.

OBSERVATIONS

That the Apostle says every soul, unusual language for him elsewhere, let us carefully weigh that he studied by this to forestall the error of those who think that any holiness, any however sublime office, does not owe subjection to the higher powers. For he easily foresaw how much harm this error would bring to the Church: to which certainly we attribute the cause not only that everywhere the manner of rightly living together with religion has been so completely overturned,

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but also that those things are restored with such difficulty. For while the world serves so greatly the impiety of the pseudo-bishops, what hope is there of publicly restoring religion? The Apostle then diligently inculcates that all power is ordained by God and is a minister of God; let this stir us to assail with most ardent prayers the clemency of the heavenly Father, that he ordain for us pastors according to his own heart, doubting nothing that our sins deserve it if others take possession of things. Moreover the Apostle so constantly and simply affirms that he who does good receives praise from magistrates: let this admonish us to well and properly weigh this most great miracle. For we shall truly experience that it is so, if we apply our mind to the acts of men and adverse circumstances with true judgment. Since God administers all power, could he who ordained it for the good of his own not also administer it for the good of those? That word: For this cause you also pay tribute, let it make us alert and willing to bear all public burdens, since by these we pay back nothing as wage, and repay plainly no match for so great the beneficence of God which he dispenses to us through the power; but rather we contribute to the instrument of the safety and tranquility of the commonwealth to be protected and promoted.

Exposition of Section II.

Owe nothing to anyone.

EXPOSITION

He returns to commending love, for this brings it about that we both carefully discern what duty is, and perform it with the greatest willingness and constancy. Keeping in view what he premised about rendering to each what we owe, he exhorts not to owe anything to anyone except love, that is, to render to each what is of duty, so that no one can call us debtors in any matter, except for the debt of love, which namely it is necessary for us to perpetually pay and owe. In this the **Proposition** is: That love must be perennial in us toward neighbors, so that whatever we have done for them, we yet acknowledge that we are still debtors to them, and so pursue them with continual love, reckoning that we owe them all that will at any time and in any circumstance be given to help them.

The reason which incites us to this perpetual debt of love is from the reverence of the law. The pseudo-apostles, to thrust upon them the necessity of the ceremonies, adduced the majesty of the law. Hence D. Paul in Gal. 5, Coloss. 3, and 1 Tim. 1, when he had rejected the false observance of the law in the ceremonies, immediately subjoined in what the true observance and fulfillment of the law consists: namely in the pursuit of the new life and love, by which all virtue is altogether perfected.

And so in what the Apostle subjoins, there is a proof of this sort for the institution: You rightly revere the law of God, and in studying it, you rightly think you live the life of God; but one must see how you use the law, how you consider to where it calls you. By love the law is fulfilled, that is, it accomplishes what all those things prescribe; for by the precept of love whatever precepts there are in the law *ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται*, that is, is summed up and as it were contained under the first heading. Therefore if love is rightly constituted, just as it perfects that in which all that the law teaches is summarily contained: so the law is fulfilled and all that it prescribes is perfected.

Moreover that all things are contained in the precept of the law, he proves first by the exposition of some precepts, about which no doubt of this can exist; these are: Thou shalt not

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commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, etc. But since these are the principal of the precepts of the law, he concludes the same about any precepts whatsoever. And if any other precept there be, he says, in this saying it is comprehended: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Then he proves the same by that sentence: Love works no evil to the neighbor. Holy scripture is ever wont to use synecdoches, and by the first in any matter to signify the whole matter; so in this passage by doing no evil, it understands doing good, and whatever true love strives to render to the beloved. For it will never come about that someone should do no evil to the neighbor, who is not already held by true love of the neighbor and the pursuit of doing good to him. But it is established also that the law was given first and chiefly to call us away from evils. For it is the first thing to recede from evils, and this so first that in those with whom you obtain it, you have now attached them to good actions. The reason then is the second and is digested thus: The law was given so as to render us good toward the neighbor in all things, that is, beneficent. Who doubts that love renders this? Certainly it works no evil to anyone, because it therefore strives to do good. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. And those to whom the law is dear, who truly wish to devote themselves to the law, must above all devote themselves to love toward the neighbor, that is, toward whoever the Lord has placed before us.

The whole law certainly consists of a threefold order of precepts. The first order consists of those in which are prescribed things pertaining to religion. The second, those in which what properly pertains to purity of life is dictated. The third, those in which duties toward the neighbor are prescribed. Now those which commend religion, whether prescribing simply the worship of faith, or the ceremonies by which faith toward God is promoted, certainly seek this: that we dedicate and consecrate ourselves wholly to God, to be accommodated to those offices of life which God sees fit. All these are: that we serve the neighbors for their present and eternal salvation, that we be organs of the divine goodness toward men, that each exhibit God, as it were, to the neighbors. But this we render by love alone. Therefore the end of all these precepts and their consummation is love.

Moreover those which prescribe concerning the holy institution of one's own life and true frugality: what else do they do but prepare us, so that we may conveniently serve the neighbors, and present ourselves as certain gods to them? And these precepts therefore are consummated by love. For if you truly love the neighbor, that is, all men, if you study this one thing: always to bring some benefit to them; thus certainly with the greatest zeal you will establish body and soul; you will strive to procure for yourself those arts and faculties; so you will moderate all your senses, words, and actions; you will use that frugality and decency in all things of life that have to sustain it, so as to declare yourself to have been wholly born and made for the goods of neighbors, and to be, to be able, and to have for them whatever you are, can do, and have that God has given you to be, to be able, and to have. Concerning the precepts of duties toward the neighbor it is not necessary to show that love perfects all of them. For each experiences sufficiently that by love alone the will and the pursuit of deserving well of neighbors is established for himself. For to whom would thought of any injury to the neighbor come, whether the neighbor himself or his things or men are harmed, if he embraced the neighbor with such love as a mother embraces a son, as an upright wife embraces her husband: that is, if he truly abounded in love of the neighbor? Thus it is most evident that the whole law, and the whole will of God, is fulfilled and perfected by our loving the neighbor. It is necessary therefore that the pursuit of love be primary for us.

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INTERPRETATION

Owe nothing to anyone. This is variously expounded, but the plainer sentence of Chrysostom seems correct: that Paul exhorts us to remain debtors of love alone, paying off immediately whatever of other things or duties we owe. Love, which cannot be fully paid off now, must always be paid, and is also always owed. Here he speaks to Christians; and if he wishes all the neighbor to be loved by us, for this reason he added *ἀλλήλους*, that is, one another, in this life God joins to us. He joins to us some by blood and affinity, whom whoever abandons has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever, 1 Tim. 5. Others by civil or private society, in whom to be remiss is judged faithless even by the world. Others by mere encounter, as strangers, and whose necessity is most of all offered to us to be borne, as he who had fallen among robbers was joined to the Samaritan; to abandon these from our help everyone considers inhuman and cruel. Others by the bond of faith, of whom the chief account must be held, as the very feeling of faith demands. But however each has been joined to us, in such manner must he be held as our neighbor, be loved from the soul, and be helped, whatever need he may have, as much as this lies in our faculty.

He has fulfilled the law. That is, he has perfected that to which the law refers all things. But who is he who is conscious of solid love of the neighbor, that is, of whoever the Lord has offered him in whatever manner, whether he has deserved well or ill, whether there is hope of favor from him or none? Certainly he who had arrived at this: to embrace whoever it may be with true love, for the scripture of God demands no love but a certain and just love, and to require no other cause of love in whatever person than that he is a man, is a neighbor, is commanded to be loved by God: this person certainly would fully live the God who is charity, and would altogether satisfy the law. It is to be striven for in all life toward this, and faith must continuously be nourished in this, so that at last by such love it may fully operate and work.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. These precepts are all expounded above in chapter 7 in the conciliation subjoined to section 4. Love works no evil to the neighbor. It is a litotes, for it signifies more than is said. Since the law was given chiefly to avert evils, namely on account of transgressions, this sentence put thus very well fits the purpose: Love works no evil to the neighbor. For since the law chiefly works this: that we do no evil to the neighbor, it is clearly evident that by love of the neighbor, which averts the whole will of harming the neighbor, the law is fulfilled. The rest has been sufficiently explained in the exposition.

OBSERVATIONS

If the law is satisfied by love alone, let us see what our progress in the law of the Lord is; let us weigh to what all pursuit of the law ought to avail, that namely we embrace and pursue all with just and unfeigned love, and let us not doubt that we wickedly abuse the law if the pursuit and treatment of the law does not inflame us to this. What he says, another and the neighbor, let us now turn over in mind, and at every encounter of men let us consider that our love must be ready toward all those whom the Lord has in whatever manner placed before us. When the flesh boils toward those things by which the neighbor is saddened, let that occur: love brings no evil to the neighbor, so that since we know that without love we are nothing, we may convert ourselves from all indignation toward the neighbors to a certain benevolence.

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EXPOSITION OF SECTION III

And this, knowing the time.

EXPOSITION

Here there is a general exhortation from the time of our salvation, and from every common benefit which we have received through Christ, to absolute justice in all respects, namely to putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, to living his life. But since even for the saints striving hither the innate lusts of the flesh obstruct, both of those things from which the body feels pleasure, that is, food, drink, and love, and of those things in which some excellence and dignity seems to be, which namely excite contention and emulation: he exhorts by name away from revellings and drunkenness, beds and wantonness, and contention and strife. The **Proposition** therefore is: Put on Christ, that is, live, and indulge not the lusts of the flesh. This he also sets forth in other words: It is the hour to awaken from sleep. Also: Let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. And then by: Not in revellings etc., he expounded what he meant by works of darkness. The main reason by which he here exhorts is this: That this time demands it, that is, the benefit of the Lord is now more clearly and more amply exhibited to us than when we first embraced faith; for salvation, that is, our full restoration, is nearer, because the dissolution and transition into the joy of the Lord is more imminent. The reason is digested thus: The more clearly God calls us to salvation, that is, to the complete renewal of ourselves into the life of God, with so much greater zeal certainly must we accommodate ourselves to this benevolence and mercy of God calling us thither. But we know now, since we have long received Christ and have made some progress in him, and the end of life has drawn nearer, that God calls us more clearly to salvation and our redemption. Therefore now it is the most opportune time for intensifying pursuit, and for mortifying our flesh, and for advancing in the life of Christ, that is, so that daily casting off the works of darkness and taking up the arms of light, we may put on Christ more perfectly, and concede nothing whatsoever to the flesh for its depraved lusts. Moreover arguments are also present in the individual words; I shall indicate them in the interpretation.

INTERPRETATION

And this, knowing. Our own conscience urges us, for having professed Christ and expecting his advent by the hours, indeed by the moments: certainly we well know and undoubtedly hold that now is above all the time, the very hour, for entirely casting off the old man, and putting on Christ in all things.

That now it is time for us to awake from sleep. That is, to be roused from the security of life and indulgence of the flesh. Christ is the light, without whom we are wholly destitute; the night is deep midnight; but when we embrace him by faith, in proportion to faith we enjoy the light of the true life, and as it were the dawn of full day shines upon us. Full day and high noon will be in the resurrection. He therefore admonishes that this is now nearer. Sleep is the image of death; it signifies the life which is spent by reason and the lusts of the flesh, without any sure judgment, but as in dreams. The Apostle used the same transference in 1 Thess. 5, where he also dwells on it. Isaiah also employs it in chapter 29. To awake from sleep is to be aroused from the life of the flesh into the true life of the Spirit of Christ.

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For now salvation is nearer. He understands full salvation, that is, the resurrection, as D. Chrysostom also saw; this was so much nearer to them than when they had received the faith of Christ. At every moment the advent of the Lord must be expected by us, who will certainly come when men will least expect it. Hence the Apostles were accustomed to speak of it as if they thought he would come even in their own lifetime. Hence Paul had to remind the Thessalonians particularly of the same thing, who from such admonitions had conceived the opinion that that day was already imminent, as we read in chapter 2 of the epistle to the Thessalonians. D. Chrysostom sees that Paul by this admonition had noted the Romans, that with the progress of the received Gospel they were glowing less than at the beginning, while they ought to become more ardent in Christ the longer we enjoy his grace and receive the gifts of God more fully. Concerning this nearness of salvation is also that of Christ the Savior speaking of the last day and those transformations of things which will then terribly come: Then, he says, lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near. For salvation and our redemption are the same. This salvation D. Peter writes in chapter 1 is prepared to be revealed in the last time. Of the same Paul writes in Phil. 3: We await a savior from heaven, who will transform our humble body, etc. And in Heb. 6, where there is a similar but more sharp admonition to those who had neglected to advance from the time they had come to the religion of Christ, he subjoins to that admonition: But we are persuaded of better things concerning you, **τὰ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας**, that is, adjoining to salvation, adhering to salvation. The Apostle wished to admonish: since we must not doubt that we are brought by the Lord to the coming and full salvation more nearly, the more we approach living in his faith to the dissolution of our little body, the time of the advancing life altogether demands that we accommodate ourselves with greater pursuit to promoting this renewal of ours here too. He associates himself with them: salvation is nearer to us, he says, than when we believed, that is, than when we came to the communion of faith, so that he might the more incite those whom he was admonishing by noting things which he himself considered no less desirable for himself than for them.

The night is advanced. That is, the life of the flesh. Proceeded, he says, for it had not yet fully vanished; nor had the day yet, that is, the life of God, fully shone, but was approaching more nearly now. For the flesh still lives here adversely to the spirit, and drives us toward many things which are alien to our calling.

Let us cast off the works of darkness. These same works of the flesh are, Gal. 5, and the earthly members, Col. 3; they are what in our life proceed from the darkened mind of our flesh. The arms of light are the fruits of the spirit, Gal. 5, Eph. 5, Col. 3. Concerning these darknesses and this light, of which Paul makes mention here, he writes more fully in Eph. 4 and 1 Thess. 5. The Lord himself was also wont to use these metaphors gladly. Darknesses are the judgment of reason subject to depraved lusts. Light is the judgment of reason illumined and driven by the Spirit of Christ; by the former false things are chosen, by the latter true good things; by the former those things which the flesh delights in, by the latter those which are of eternal life.

That we may walk honestly as in the day. Now indeed the day of salvation has shone upon us, and if not yet fully, we acknowledge the Lord, and as it were walk in his sight and that of all the saints. As therefore men apply greater caution to conduct themselves more decently in dress and every gesture of the body when it is day and they are in the eyes of men, when it is night and they are at home: so it befits us, endowed now with the light of Christ, to apply the greatest diligence, so that all our things may decently have regard for Christ the Lord and the heavenly Father, knowing that our whole life is spent in his sight, as one to be approved.

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Not in revellings. He explains summarily the works of the flesh, in which even the saints are sometimes implicated. He names these more roughly, revellings, drunken carousing, beds and wantonnesses, to deter more from these evils. But we admit these evils whenever we indulge food, drink, or love more than the necessity of the body and the faith of marriage demands; and the more enormous, the more we depart from this true use of these things. But in these who always preserves the true measure? Contention and emulation come from the desire for principality. For when we wish to excel in all things and to hold the first places, others refuse to yield to us, and should not always yield; contention arises, and since those others appear to have more, envy and strife. These evils also we can now sufficiently repel from ourselves; therefore the flesh must always be suppressed by us, and the works of darkness rejected; the members of our body which are on the earth must always be mortified.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ. This transference of putting on is very frequent in the scriptures. By it is signified the great abundance and certain possession of the thing which is said to be put on. Hence: Clothed with honor and glory, Psalm 8. With a covering of light, Psalm 104. Let them be clothed with execration, Psalm 109. Let thy priests be clothed with justice; I will clothe her priests with salvation, Psalm 132. Isaiah 52: Put on thy strength, O Sion; put on thy garments of glory. But the Apostle by this transference seems to signify rather a change, and the certain assumption of the thing which he commands or wishes or also proclaims us to put on. He proclaims that those who have been baptized have put on Christ, Gal. 3: what is this else than to have been changed into the Lord Christ, so that those who have been baptized into Christ appear not in their own person but in the person of Christ, living namely the life of Christ? This is what baptism offers and gives, concerning which more was said above in chapter 6. When he exhorts in Eph. 4 and Col. 3 that we put on the new man, and bowels of mercy, goodness, modesty, etc.: certainly he wishes these to be assumed in our life, so that these may exist in us and be seen by all men in actual fact. So in the present passage, when he commands to put on the Lord Jesus, he requires that we so meditate on the Lord Jesus in our life and so be changed into him, that we appear in his life, not our own, as one casting off his own dirty garment puts on a princely garment, in which another man and a prince appears. Now it is the work of the Lord himself to clothe us with himself, that is, to grant such communion of himself, from which his genius and his manners may exist in all our life; though since he deigns to use our pursuit for this, the Apostle, to stir up this pursuit, speaks thus, placing before us the goal of our whole life: which is, that we reproduce and express our Lord Jesus Christ.

And make no provision for the flesh. The flesh lusts against the spirit, and therefore against Christ. Therefore if we shall undertake to put on Christ, that is, to live: the provision of the flesh for its lusts must be entirely cast off, but for necessity, and so that the flesh may serve the spirit, it is not to be cast aside. The Apostle has thus far prescribed the duties of the Christian man; he therefore here places before us the goal of our whole life, at which in all counsels one must aim, and to which one must look fixedly, lest we admit any slackness or stain in duty. That goal is: nothing for our own lust, but to institute all things for this end, that we become conformed to the Lord Christ, with full trust in God, burning charity toward all, assiduous incumbency of each in his office with the greatest zeal; and in these to place this one end before us: the sanctification of the name of God and the amplification of his kingdom everywhere among the nations. If we always keep this goal in view, if we always think of this goal of our race as placed before us, that all our life must fully express our Lord Jesus Christ: certainly no insincerity or slackness of duty shall creep in upon us; but with the whole heart and the greatest effort, and with that perennial striving, we shall arrive at the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and having attained the

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extreme and utmost of the good, we shall live an eternal and blessed life. To which indeed Paul refers the whole dispensation of the doctrine of Christ and the preaching of the Gospel: namely the philosophy of eternal life. What follows contains in itself the correction of a dissension which had arisen among those who professed Christ, on the occasion of the choice of foods and days and other observances which Moses prescribed.

OBSERVATIONS

That the Apostle so diligently admonishes of the time: let this stir us so that in these days of salvation, and in this time of divine goodwill, the more we advance the greater progress in piety we demand from ourselves. It is a monstrosity always to remain children; it is also destruction not to follow sluggishly Christ continually calling us more clearly to salvation. He proclaims salvation to be nearer to us, the more we approach in faith in Christ toward the end of the present life; let this with meditation on the celestial life increase and intensify the confidence of dying in the Lord. Let those metaphors of night and day, sleep and waking, darkneses and light, occur in every action of ours, the more it may please to cast off what is of the flesh, and to be intent on what is of the spirit; let this admonish. He requires that we always walk honestly in the day itself, walking in the eyes of the Lord and conducting everything. That he thought it necessary even for such adults in Christ as the Romans to call them back by name from revellings and etc., and what follows: let this stir us to always intensify care and solicitude for ourselves, and never to leave room for these evils with us, or restore them. For now we have sufficiently expelled them. Therefore what he subjoins let it always be fixed in soul: that we must put on our Lord Jesus Christ, and concede nothing whatsoever to the flesh for its lusts. Let us therefore always look to the Lord Jesus Christ himself, continually admonishing ourselves that we shall then approve ourselves to the Father when already nothing of ourselves remains in us, but all is Christ himself. This alone is our life and true happiness. Why therefore do we not strive thither with all our powers, and direct all our forces and cares into this one thing?

Paraphrase of Chapters 13, 14, 15, 16.

Section I.

Now receive him who is weak in faith, and do not harass him with arguments of disputations. This one believes it is permitted to eat whatever, but he who is weak in faith eats only vegetables. He who eats whatever, let him not despise him who does not eat; and he who does not eat, let him not condemn him who eats. For God has received him. Who are you, who condemn another's servant? To his own lord he stands or falls. But he shall stand, for God is able to make him stand. This one judges day above day, but that one holds every day equally sacred. Let each be certain of his own judgment. He who keeps account of a certain day, keeps it for the Lord; he who keeps no account of a certain day, keeps it not for the Lord. He who eats, eats for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; he who does not eat, does not eat for the Lord, and gives thanks to God.

Section II.

For none of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself; for whether we live, we live for the Lord; whether we die, we die for the Lord; whether therefore we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. But thou, why dost thou condemn thy brother? Or thou another, why dost thou despise

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thy brother? For we shall all stand before the tribunal of Christ. For it is written: As I live, says the Lord, because to me every knee shall bend, and every tongue shall confess God. Therefore each shall render to God an account for himself. Let us therefore henceforth not condemn one another.

Section III.

But judge this rather, that no one place a stumbling block before his brother or give him cause for ruin. I know and am persuaded through the Lord Jesus, that nothing is profane of itself; only to him is something profane who thinks something to be profane. But if thy brother is saddened by food, thou art now not walking according to charity. Do not destroy by thy food him for whom Christ died. Let not therefore your good be subject to reproach. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but justice and peace and joy through the Holy Spirit. For he who in these things serves Christ is most pleasing to God, and approved of men. Therefore pursue those things which make for peace and your mutual restoration. Do not destroy for the sake of food the work of God: all things indeed are pure, but it is evil for that man who eats with offense. It is certainly commendable neither to eat meat, nor to drink wine, or to use whatever else, by which thy brother may stumble, or fall, or become weak in faith. Thou hast faith; have it for thyself before God. Blessed is he who does not condemn himself in that which he approves. But he who discerns among foods and yet eats them, is condemned, because he does not act from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.

Chapter 15.

But we who are stronger ought to bear the weakness of those who are weaker, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us approve himself and strive for the neighbor in good and toward restoration. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written: The reproaches of those reproaching thee fell upon me. For whatever things were written beforehand were written for our doctrine, that through patience and the exhortation which is from the scriptures we may hope well. The God who is the giver of endurance and exhortation grant you that you may hold the same spirit toward one another according to Christ Jesus, that unanimously with one mouth you may glorify God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another mutually, just as Christ received us to the glory of God.

Section II.

But I say and proclaim, that Jesus Christ was made a minister of truth to the circumcised, that he might render the promises which were made to the fathers; but that the Gentiles are to glorify God for mercy. As it is written: Therefore I will celebrate thee among the Gentiles, and I will sing to thy name. And again it says: Rejoice, Gentiles, with his people. And again: Praise the Lord, all nations, and praise him above all, all peoples. And again Isaiah says: There shall be the root of Jesse, and he who shall arise to rule the Gentiles, in him the Gentiles shall hope. The God who is the giver of hope fill you in believing with all joy and peace, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Section III.

But I myself also am persuaded, brethren, of you, and you yourselves are filled with goodness, and full of knowledge, so that you are able to instruct one another. But I have written to you somewhat more boldly, brethren, to put you in remembrance, because of the goodwill of God this

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office was given me, that I be a public minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, performing sacred service in this, that I administer the Gospel of God, to the end that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified namely through the Holy Spirit. Of this office therefore I glory through Christ Jesus before God. For I will not dare to say anything of myself, which Christ has not effected through me, by word and deed, through the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the spirit of God, for bringing the Gentiles to the obedience of the Gospel. So certainly that from Jerusalem, and around about, as far as Illyricum, I have filled all with the Gospel of Christ. But I have this ambition to preach the Gospel, not where Christ has already been known, lest I build upon another's foundation, but as it is written: Those to whom it was not announced concerning him shall see, and those who have not heard shall understand. For which cause I have often also been hindered from coming to you.

Section IV.

But now since I no longer have a place in these regions, and have had a desire to come to you for many years, if I go into Spain, I will come to you. For I hope that as I pass through I shall see you, and be accompanied there by you, if first I shall have enjoyed you somewhat. But now I am going to Jerusalem, ministering to the saints. For it pleased Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution to the poor saints who are in Jerusalem. For it pleased them, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, they ought also to minister to them in their carnal things. When therefore I shall have accomplished this, and shall have exhibited this fruit to them complete, I will come through you to Spain. And I know that when I come to you, I shall come with the full blessing of the Gospel of Christ. But I exhort you, brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my ministry in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, that I may come with joy to you through the will of God, and be refreshed with you. The God who is the giver of peace be with all of you. Amen.

Chapter 16.

Section I.

But I commend to you Phoebe our sister, minister of the Church which is in Cenchreae, that you receive her in the Lord, as befits the saints, and assist her in whatever matter she shall have need of you. For she herself also has assisted many, and me myself. Salute Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who indeed for my life submitted their own neck. To whom not I only give thanks, but also all the Churches of the Gentiles. And salute the Church which is in their home. Salute Epaenetus my beloved, who is the firstfruit of Achaia in Christ. Salute Mary who labored much for us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow captives, who are certainly distinguished among the Apostles, and who were before me in Christ. Salute Amplias my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbanus my fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles, approved in Christ. Salute those who are of the family of Aristobulus. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Salute those who are of the family of Narcissus, those who are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labored much in the Lord. Salute Persis the beloved, who labored much in the Lord. Salute Rufus elected in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Salute one another with a holy kiss. The Churches of Christ salute you.

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Section II.

But I exhort you, brethren, to watch those who cause dissensions and stumbling blocks contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and to decline from them. For those who are such do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly. And through bland and fair-speaking words they deceive the hearts of the innocent. For your obedience has reached to all. I rejoice therefore insofar as it concerns you. But I desire you to be wise for good, and sincere toward evil. The God who is the giver of peace shall subdue Satan under your feet quickly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Section III.

Timothy my fellow worker salutes you, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater my kinsmen. I Tertius salute you, who wrote the epistle, in the Lord. Gaius my host salutes you, and of the whole Church. Erastus the administrator of the city salutes you, and Quartus the brother. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen. But to him who is able to confirm you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept silent from everlasting times, but manifested now through the prophetic scriptures, according to the constitution of the eternal God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to him be glory forever. Amen.

Written to the Romans at Corinth, sent through Phoebe, minister of the Church of Cenchreae.

End of the Paraphrase of the Epistle of D. Paul to the Romans.

Summary of These Chapters.

The necessity of the ceremonies of the law was being thrust upon the Churches by pseudo-apostles, as has often been said; meanwhile however many truly holy ones, both from the Gentiles who had come earlier and from the Jews themselves, from a certain religion, preposterous indeed, yet not without sincerity, and referred as it were to Christ, were being deterred from the promiscuous use of foods and days. These, certain incautious rivals of the liberty made in these matters through Christ, despised before themselves and scorned as superstitious; sometimes also by untimely use of foods promiscuously, and by disputations, they sometimes saddened and offended them, sometimes provoked them to the same use and pressed them improperly, with their conscience resisting, in which way they were tumbling them into sin. On the contrary the Jews and Judaizers from the Gentiles, by the nature of superstition, were judging and condemning those others, as insufficiently religious and deferring more to the belly than to the law of God. Hence arose contentious disputations among them, which by their character obscured and disturbed fraternal love, and sometimes also excited just dissensions.

Of the Three Chapters.

The Apostle, wishing to remedy this evil, in this last passage of this Epistle, which he treats through the whole fourteenth chapter and the two prior sections of chapter 15, first exhorts those who were stronger in faith to receive and cherish in a friendly manner the weaker ones, and admonishes them not to harass them either with untimely disputations, or to despise them before themselves. Then he exhorts those who through weakness of faith did not yet believe it was

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permitted to use whatever things, not to permit themselves to judge and condemn the brothers who hold a different opinion. From this untimely condemnation of brothers he deters them especially with these passages: that those who were using the liberty of Christ were received by the Lord; that they eat and give thanks for the Lord; that they are servants of the Lord, and to be judged by no one except the Lord himself. These things the Apostle treats in section 1 of chapter 14.

In section 2, chapter 14, he deters those who seemed to themselves stronger in faith from saddening, offending, and especially scandalizing, that is, inciting to the risk of ruin, and from weakening, that is, debilitating in faith, those who did not yet believe that the Lord had made this liberty for his own. He uses these passages: that even if all things are pure to the pure in themselves, yet to those not yet believing this, whatever anyone judges from the law of God to be prohibited to him is rendered impure. That brothers are not to be harmed by food, much less to be destroyed. That the kingdom of God is not placed in food and drink. That it is better always to abstain from meat and wine, than to admit that one gives the brother cause for ruin.

In section 1, chapter 15, he first exhorts from the example of Christ to bear and care for the sicknesses of brothers. Then from the grace of Christ made to both Jews and Gentiles he incites them to true agreement of souls and concord in the religion of Christ.

In section 2, for the same cause he proclaims, with adduced scriptures, that the salvation of Christ has been communicated to both Jews and Gentiles, and prays for them increases of joy, peace, faith, and hope.

In section 3 he softens the liberty of his admonition, both by attributing to the Romans great faculty of right will and true knowledge, by which they themselves are sufficient to instruct and establish one another mutually, and by commending to them his apostleship to the Gentiles, which he commends to them both from the ample virtue of the Spirit and from the multitude of regions which he had filled with the Gospel of Christ.

In section 4 he notes that, since he has no more place in the east for announcing the Gospel where it has not been announced before, he is about to go into Spain, and from that journey to visit the Romans; but before that to bring to Jerusalem that subsidy which the brothers through Macedonia and Achaia had gathered for those needy saints. The mention of which he so tempers as to invite the Romans at the same time to the same beneficence, proclaiming that the Gentiles rightly owe to the Jews their carnal things, from whom they themselves have received their spiritual things. Then reiterating his journey into Spain, he confirms that he will come to the Romans with the full fruit of the Gospel; thence he asks to be aided by their prayers, and that delivered from the unbelievers in Judea he may be able to come with joy to them, and that his ministry may be approved to the saints of Jerusalem. For pseudo-apostles had not a little alienated many of those from Paul. And with an imprecation of peace he ends the Epistle.

The first section, chapter 16, bids to salute by name, with the appended praise which could befit each, those whom he had among the brothers known to him at Rome. In the second section of this chapter he forewarns about the deceitful and impious flatteries of pseudo-apostles, by which those serving their own belly, not Christ, were troubling the simpler folk in the doctrine of Christ. In the third section he writes to the Romans salutation in the name of those brothers whom he had with him known to them, and again concludes the Epistle with an imprecation of grace, a doxology, and a commendation of the Gospel.

EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS: **CHAPTER 14**

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EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER XIV

He who is weak in faith.

EXPOSITION

In this section the Apostle first addresses those stronger in faith, and exhorts them to receive and embrace for cherishing and caring for those who through weakness of faith did not yet understand that Christ had made liberty to use whatever things; and admonishes them not to harass them either with untimely disputations or to despise them, but chiefly throughout the whole section he deters those who labored from weakness of faith from rash and unjust judgment against those who were using the liberty which the Lord had made. And since these also would not have despised those others, unless they had also unjustly judged of them, he tempers the admonition by which he calls back from unjust judgment of brothers in such a way that he equally corrects both.

There are therefore in this section three propositions. The first: those are to be received, that is, embraced with Christian friendship and care, who are still weaker in faith, and therefore by no means to be disturbed with unfruitful disputations. This proposition he only proposes here, but proves in the first section of the following chapter from the example of Christ and the grace of Christ made to us, from which he concludes there: Therefore receive one another mutually, just as Christ received us to the glory of God.

The second proposition is: He who believes it is permitted to use foods of whatever kind, and holds every day equally sacred, ought not to despise and reject those who have not yet arrived at this in faith. This he proves first by this: that each must be left to his own judgment. **Let each**, he says, **be certain in his own understanding or judgment**. And this he has been content simply to affirm. For it is self-evident to those who know that saints live by their faith, and that it is necessary for each also to himself understand and become certain what the word of the Lord is which one ought to believe. While therefore someone cannot show to a brother, or even to one not yet a brother, by gentle and charity-befitting admonition and doctrine, what the word of the Lord is, if he knows by what method those things are to be handed on which are of the Spirit of the Lord: he will now permit the matter to come to contentious disputation, but will rather commend the brother, or whoever he may be, to the Lord. For while the doctrine of piety, which he administers to them with the greatest modesty and gentleness, does not succeed with him, so that he who is taught may himself assent, and also understand by himself that he hears the word of God: he now plainly sees that the Lord does not will to use his work in teaching such a man. What else therefore can you do, but commend him to the Lord?

Then he confirms the proposition by this: that those among the brothers who distinguish days, and with them foods, do so for the Lord, that is, from religion and observance of the Lord; then also that in their indiscrimination and abstinence of this sort they give thanks to the Lord; for as they look in this observance of theirs to the Lord, so they also transfer all the praise both of this observance of theirs and of their whole life to the Lord, and study to proclaim him alone. Now those who so look to the Lord and attribute all glory to the Lord are so much the Lord's, that they not only observe this distinction of foods and days, but live and die through all things. And this therefore the Apostle subjoined: No one, he says, lives to himself, no one dies to himself, of the saints only; for neither are we our own, but we are the Lord's, as much as we are. In this therefore

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we are the Lord's, whether we live or die: the Lord died, rose, and lived again. Which also the Apostle himself expressed: But these things, that we live not to ourselves but to the Lord, and die; that whether we live or die we are the Lord's; that the Lord vindicated us to himself by death and resurrection, the power of new life: the Apostle inculcates this so greatly here, to put us in mind not to wish to appear more just and severe than God himself, despising and rejecting those whom we see received by the Lord into the communion of eternal life, even the weak in faith and imperfect; nor allow there to arise in us any disgust with such feeble brothers on account of their imperfection, since the Lord, notwithstanding this, has embraced them with such great condescension, but rather acknowledge them as worthy to be cherished and honored even by the greatest humanity and reverence, those namely whom we see so cherished and honored by their Lord and ours, who for us for this very cause died and rose again.

If therefore God has not rejected them for that liberty, nor has even forbidden it to them: it cannot but be impious for a man to condemn such. Then he objects that these are other men's servants, namely of Christ's, to whose care it is that whether they stand or fall they are to be permitted. And to express more that it is unworthy of us to judge them whom yet we may not judge: he uses an interrogation reproaching us with our audacity and reminding us of our own lowliness: Who are you, he says, who judge another's servant?

He brings a second argument from the same benevolence of God, with which God has deigned to attract the Gentiles to Christ the Savior, but treats it in such a way as to simultaneously admonish those Judaizers how much, by the judgment with which they condemned the brothers who did not wish to bind themselves to their ceremonies, they were opposing the judgment of the Lord concerning these same. He shall stand, he says, for God is able to make him stand. In these things these things are present: It seems to you that these brothers fall away from the reverence and worship of God, since they do not devote themselves to the Mosaic observances; in this you first sin, that when you see them received by the Lord as servants and slaves, you do not leave them to be judged by the Lord, deferring to the Lord at least as much right in his own slaves as a man ought to defer. For to whom their own servants are permitted to be judged, and no one judges another's servant. Then you also sin in this, that after you entirely take judgment on the brothers for yourself, you do not consider what God has prejudged concerning them. It seems to you that they fall by transgression of the law, since they neglect the distinctions of foods and times prescribed through Moses. But if you weighed with what condescension the Lord has embraced them, you ought rather to judge by yourself that they are established and confirmed by the Lord lest they fall. Certainly God is able to make them stand, that is, to confirm them in truly pious and holy life. But if he is able in this, do not doubt that God also wills it, since he has already so loved them as to have redeemed them for himself from falling by the death of his Son. Of the objection of the power of God, from which also the will is to be inferred, we spoke in that: God is able, section 3, chapter 11.

Finally he objects the judgment of the Lord, which awaits all equally, and in which each shall render an account of his own life for himself, the scripture testifying that every knee of all must bend to the Lord, and that every tongue must confess the Lord in Christ. Also the name, brothers, which all these things strongly call away from contempt and disgust of brothers however weak, and commend and fix the care and honor of one another. These things the Apostle expressed in these: Or also thou, why dost thou despise thy brother? For all of us, etc.

The third proposition is to the Judaizing brothers: those who believe in the Lord Christ are not to be condemned when they use the liberty of things which the Lord has provided for them, eating

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whatever and holding every day sacred. This proposition he proves first from the grace of God made to such ones. The Lord received them to eternal life living in that liberty, and does not require from them that religion of the Jewish observances. If therefore God has not for that liberty rejected them, nor has forbidden it to them: it cannot but be impious for a man to condemn such. Then he objects that they are other men's slaves, namely of Christ's, to whose care it is that whether they stand or fall they are to be permitted. The remaining arguments are those which he used with the Gentiles, not to have them despise or reject the Jews weak in faith: namely that each who is not devoted by any singular religion to certain days is to be of the Lord, and in this also to strive to approve himself to the Lord; that when they eat of whatever they give thanks to God for him, from which they may declare themselves to be the Lord's, and that they are also to be left to the Lord's judgment; and finally also that they are brothers whom they would not fraternally condemn. But chiefly against these Judaizers he wrote that: We shall all stand before the Tribunal of Christ, and each shall render account for himself; for these were laboring more from condemnation of brothers. Also that: the prophet had predicted that every knee would bend to the Lord, and that every tongue would confess God in Christ. For the Jews on account of the observance of the ceremonies of Moses claimed something for themselves in the kingdom of Christ above the Gentiles.

INTERPRETATION

He who is weak in faith. Faith is the persuasion of the Gospel of Christ; if this is firm and solid, there is no doubt that Christ, while we believe in him, and trust so much, has thus appeased the Father and given the communion of eternal life, that if only we accommodate our whole life according to his new commandment, in true love toward the use of the brothers, for the sanctification of the name of our heavenly Father, and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, we are pleasing to God and approved of men. That the kingdom of God now requires nothing of the ceremonies by which once a certain pedagogy was prescribed, but that it is placed in justice, peace, and joy of the Holy Spirit. Therefore those who were firm in faith among the brothers now freely used foods and other things, in this namely: that as they ought to bring every creature to Christ, they might be all things to all. But those to whom the persuasion of the Gospel had not yet been sufficiently fully received, and who were as it were weakened and labored by faith in this, could not yet acknowledge this generality of the life of Christ, and therefore the liberty of all things which can belong in whatever way to the uses of men. But since Christ had nonetheless received them so as to have given them to expect salvation from himself, whatever, from weakness of faith and knowledge of the Gospel, they also thought necessary the observance of ceremonies: they were to be received, cherished, and strengthened by the brothers to whom there had befallen the stronger faith.

Receive. That this is the same as to take into the care of salvation, to embrace for cherishing and honoring, the Apostle declares from what he says shortly after: For God received him. Also, at the end of this exhortation in section 1 of the following chapter: Therefore receive one another mutually, just as Christ received us to the glory of God. For in these three passages there is the same word, *προσλαμβάνεσθε*. This interpretation of the word Ambrose and Chrysostom acknowledge.

Not for arguments of disputations. He adds this as contrary to that reception in which he prescribes to receive the weak. Christ embraced these weak brothers to care for and cherish them into eternal life; with the same spirit, the same care, you too ought to receive them, not certainly for any contentious disputations, which are plainly contrary to this friendly and curatorial reception.

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This one believes he may eat. For those who were of fuller faith knew that the pedagogy of Moses had ended, at least insofar as it was in the choice of foods, times, and similar things; and therefore they were persuaded that it was permitted to eat whatever.

But he who is held by weakness, that is, he who is of more narrow faith and understanding of Christ, eats vegetables, abstaining namely from meats forbidden in the law, or which from the law are judged impure in themselves, or which have not been prepared according to the prescription of the law. For the law prescribes a certain slaughter and examination of entrails, for which cause the more superstitious Jews today do not dare to eat meats otherwise clean, when they have been prepared by us.

And he who does not eat, let him not judge him who eats. That is, let him not condemn; for thus he used the word for judging. Hence he opposes the mercy of God absolving from sins to the judgment from which he dissuades: For God, he says, received him, for grace; as D. Ambrose interprets this saying. For he was wanting to infer the Jews: these brothers therefore are also to be received by us, that is, to be embraced as partners of eternal life, not to be judged and condemned as profane and irreligious.

He judges day. Here to judge seems to amount to the same as to hold more excellent and more holy; for the Apostle uses this word in that signification also elsewhere. The same appears to D. Ambrose, but he interprets that judgment, that is, the esteeming of whatever day as more holy, as that he eats meats on that day. But more fittingly, since the doctrine of the Apostle wishing to remove all discrimination of days concords with this, we understand by those distinguishing days the Judaizers, and by those judging every day the ones stronger in faith; so that we receive this judgment, and this sanctification of whatever days, as the true and spiritual sanctification, which namely consists in assiduous piety and holiness of the whole life, so that it may concord with that oracle of Isaiah: And there shall be new moon from new moon, Sabbath from Sabbath.

He who eats, eats for the Lord. To eat for the Lord, not to eat for the Lord, to live for the Lord, to die for the Lord, is in eating, not eating, living, and dying to depend on the Lord, to look to the Lord, to strive to approve oneself to him in all things. Hence he proves that these eat for the Lord, those do not eat for the Lord, from this: that both give thanks to the Lord. For he who proclaims the Lord, and has grace toward him in all things, as he acknowledges himself to be able to do nothing, all things to be of the spontaneous benevolence of God: thus truly worships God and is of the Lord, and deserves for this reason to be held by us of the greatest account and zealously honored, whatever weakness may still seem to remain in him or actually remains.

As I live. This oracle reads thus in Isaiah 45: By myself I have sworn, a just word has gone out of my mouth, and shall not return; to me every knee shall bend, and every tongue shall swear. The Greek reading has: shall confess, that is, shall celebrate. For in an oath by the name of God there is a confession of divinity, because of the supreme judgment, which the one swearing invokes in himself. Moreover the Apostle fittingly adduced this passage here, in which there is a prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles, commending the Gentiles, in which also from their judgment he calls back the Jews.

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OBSERVATIONS

From this that the Apostle so greatly commends those weak in faith, let us observe that such will always be present with us, and can never be sufficiently cherished and cared for. He condemns sharper disputations; let this admonish that what belongs to Christ can be taught only by good and religious treatment, by no contentious disputation. That everyone ought to be certain by his own judgment: let this stir us to propose and commend the truth of Christ more conveniently and evidently, with the greatest dexterity of spirit, so that men may embrace it by their own and true judgment. That he writes that some eat for the Lord, and that both give thanks: from this let us consider what great error God bears among his own, that we not contend to be more severe than the Lord himself. Then from this let us observe who of those who err are of the Lord, if they transfer all praise in all things to God. For hypocrites are always promoters of themselves. That the Apostle deters so many from the untimely judgment of brothers: let this admonish us how diligently this must be guarded against, and how difficult it is to guard against.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION II

But judge this rather.

EXPOSITION

In this section the Apostle deals chiefly with those who were using the liberty of Christ inopportunately, that is, either with destruction, or with offense, or with some shaking and weakening of faith, or at least with saddening of brothers who judge differently. For he mentions these four inconveniences which result from this incautious usurpation of liberty: the saddening of brothers, offense, scandal, and weakening. The proposition is: Even if all things are pure in themselves to the pure, and are known to be pure and licit, yet nothing is to be usurped by a Christian by which brothers could be saddened only, let alone offended or scandalized, that is, brought to the risk of ruin, or weakened, that is, debilitated in faith. This, he says, judge, that is, deem to be worthy of you and of your duty. Moreover he affirms the second, and with asseveration, that all things are pure in themselves; he does not say that he knows this and is persuaded of it. By this affirmation he wished partly to call back the Judaizers from their error, and partly to avoid the stumbling of those who had already known the liberty of Christ, lest it seem to these that he is yielding the truth to the error of the Judaizers, by which certainly D. Peter had offended at Antioch, so that it was necessary to rebuke him openly for it.

He proves the proposition in four passages. The first is from the nature of charity, which in all things seeks for those it loves to be an aid and delight. It is therefore contrary to this to admit that by food, that is, by species of food, for only this is at issue, we sadden a brother, let alone afflict him with some harm. The second is from the reverence of Christ and the price of our redemption. For the Apostle compares these with one another: to redeem, to destroy, death, food, Christ, us, and this toward our brothers. Hence he wished to infer these things: If they are brothers, it befits us to seek their salvation as our own, and to take the greatest care not to impede or delay it anywhere. If we follow Christ, he faced death for bringing our brothers, and therefore we must also lay down our soul for the salvation of brothers, and death is to be shunned more than destroying brothers. Now if even the salvation of brothers must be purchased at the cost of our death, and nothing is to be preferred to it: how impious and execrable it is if anyone destroys his brother by food, that is, by a kind of food, which costs him no discomfort of his own life? For in this name, food, there is

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an attenuation, so that the antithesis of food with the life of Christ which Christ expended for saving brothers may stand out more. For how rightly it may move, to cast aside whatever, not foods only, if anything harms the salvation of brothers, to consider that Christ the Lord for the salvation of brothers left and yielded all things, even his own soul. The third passage is from the very nature of good. For what we do well and rightly, that by nature we desire to be known as good and right; we therefore rightly shrink from our good, that is, what we do well and rightly, being subject to reproach, especially of friends and those whom we rightly esteem. Now when those untimely usurpers of liberty ate of whatever before those brothers who did not yet understand the right of this liberty: they were rendering their own good, namely of faith and knowledge of the fuller Christ, from which they knew all things to be pure to the pure, themselves liable to reproach. For those weaker brothers, since they could not acknowledge that liberty to be of faith, ascribed it to neglect of religion and lusts of the flesh. The fourth passage is from the first and most proper duty of Christians, which is to take care that all our things make for peace, that is, all manner of convenience and happiness, for the elect of God, and also for restoration, that is, the continual progress of piety. But from this institution what is more alien than to destroy the work of God already begun, and this for the sake of food, from which you abstain with no trouble? The Apostle expounded this when he said: Therefore pursue those things which make for peace and mutual edification. Do not destroy for the sake of food the work of God.

But when the Apostle in this argument objects that by food, that is, by the preposterous use of Christian liberty, brothers are saddened and destroyed, and in them the work of God is also destroyed: those he was admonishing could have responded: But we do not so much care about food, but the gift of God, the kingdom of Christ, which we would betray unless we used the liberty which Christ has provided for us. Then we do not destroy brothers by our liberty; for what we do from faith is good, not noxious, as through it a brother is destroyed. Thus Paul takes up this tacit response and refutes it with this: that the kingdom of God is not food and drink, that is, the force and right of the kingdom of God is not placed in using food and drink promiscuously, nor is it to be declared, but in meditating true justice, in expending yourself wholly in the glory of Christ for brothers, in being certain of the benevolence of God toward you and being tranquil of soul, and taking all things in good part, and always rejoicing from the life of the Holy Spirit making you certain of the mercy of God, and impelling you to be useful to neighbors wherever possible. But if those weak ones see you eating of whatever, they find this at the very least troublesome, so you disturb their joy in the Lord, which you ought to have promoted for them. And it very easily comes about that in this your liberty they stumble and are offended, so that they now judge you to be an irreligious man, to whom friendship in the Lord must be renounced, and thus sin against charity, and also the communion of the Church, making a schism, which is certainly a deadly evil for them. This I think is to be understood by placing a *πρόσκομμα*, that is, a stumbling block, by which someone stumbles. But not only this danger is to be feared; for it can happen that offended by your liberty, they now think less rightly also about religion itself and the faith of Christ, fearing that by it the dissolution of the divine law may be introduced, and a licentious and profane life induced. This I think is noted by the Apostle through the word to be weakened. Finally this also is to be feared: lest those weak in faith, impelled by your example and your improper invitation to promiscuous foods, also themselves use them against their own conscience, thinking namely to themselves that they are admitting what God has forbidden. This the Apostle seems to have understood by scandal. Since therefore such great evils are to be expected from the inopportune usurpation of the liberty of foods, it is sufficiently clear that the kingdom of God, namely true justice, solid peace, and perpetual joy, is impeded and destroyed by it, not promoted and restored.

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Now what these could say, that what they do from the faith of Christ is good, and that they cannot destroy anyone: the Apostle responds, that it is indeed good in itself to eat of whatever, since all things are pure: but that it is not good joined now with the offense of a brother, which not to admit, you ought rather wholly to abstain from meat and wine.

Thou hast faith? Have it for thyself before God, and do not harm thy brother by the untimely attestation of it in foods. For from faith in Christ these disturbers of the weak brothers boasted that they ate of whatever. But lest he offend these, appearing to defer too much to the Judaizers, he pronounces: blessed is he who does not judge himself, that is, does not condemn himself for the promiscuous use of things, in which he knows, that is, **δοκιμάζει**, the truth explored. Meanwhile however if anyone discerns, namely among foods, and yet eats them promiscuously, he is for this very reason condemned. For what he does is not from faith, that is, the certain persuasion that this pleases God; indeed rather with the opinion that this displeases God. Now sin is whatever is not from faith, that is, not received with certain trust that God approves it. For since we are God's, as much as we are, and Christ the Lord has again vindicated us to God by his blood: it is certainly ours to try nothing at all about which we doubt that it is pleasing to God. For we ought to serve him ourselves with the whole heart, whole soul, and all our powers.

The interpretation has been rendered in the course of the exposition.

In Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, and elsewhere Paul most severely attacks those who contended that the choice of foods and the distinction of days is necessary, but in those the error was no longer simple. In Galatians therefore, the Lord willing, I shall treat of this matter more fully, and there also respond to the calumnies of Sadoletus which he makes against us; for now is not the time. Above all it is to be observed here, that to keep ourselves from offending brothers we may always think: Behold, for these my Lord died.

EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS: **CHAPTER 15**

Exposition of Chapter XV.

But we ought.

EXPOSITION

The Apostle returns to the head of this passage, what he admonished at the outset: that those weak in faith are to be received, that is, embraced in friendly manner for the care of salvation. That this is the duty of those who are stronger, he proves by three arguments. The first is from the very strength of faith, which is given to us for this very purpose: that we not only tolerate the sicknesses of the weaker, but also bear them, that is, as it were take them upon ourselves, to cure them. So he employs this word **βαστάζειν** also in Gal. 6: Bear one another's burdens. The second is from the very institution of piety, which requires that we deny ourselves, and devote ourselves to the advantages of the brothers, that is, not to please ourselves, but the neighbors, truly for their good, not for their noxious desires, and this for edification, that is, the restoration of piety. To more greatly incite to this, he proposes the example of Christ, who so greatly did not please himself, so greatly took no account of himself, that he transferred upon himself, bore, and expiated by his death all the sins of all of us. And he confirms this with an oracle, Psalm 69, by which it was foretold that he would expiate by his death all the impiety of his own, and all the reproaches by which they reproached God.

What he subjoins about the scriptures seems not only to have been subjoined by the Apostle so as to render a reason why he has adduced the present oracle, but since he was now ending the Epistle: I think he wished here to expound the cause why he had cited the scriptures so many times throughout the whole Epistle, and simultaneously to invite to the reading of the scriptures in this manner, and to show the reason by which they are read with certain profit. For he recalls to what end they were given to us, and what their reading ought to contribute to us. From this it is already manifest what the true reason is for handling them, namely in such a way that you attain that end for which you received them divinely. The sense therefore here seems to be: Now again I introduce scripture, as I have done intermittenly above; I do this, brethren, because there is nothing in all of scripture which does not benefit us, if we examine it religiously, for this: that we may be more patient in bearing evils, and more eager and zealous for all good things, and may have hope in God continually greater and more solid. For whatever things, he says, were written beforehand, were written for our doctrine, and for such doctrine: that through patience, namely of evils without doubt, and exhortation, namely to duty, to true goods; these things the Lord has administered to us in the scriptures, and grants by the religious reading of them, that we may have hope, hope I say by which we are saved and happy. For as we have said several times above, this is the extreme of good things for us in this life: to hope well of God, to be certain of his benevolence, from which all good things are here for us, and the revealed glory of Christ may soon be communicated to us, the consummated happiness.

The third argument is from the end of our whole life, namely that with one spirit and one mouth we may glorify God. For this will be our work in heaven. For this it is necessary that each embrace another with the greatest charity, just as Christ received and embraced us. Which reception and embrace easily guards against all offense, for it brings it about that each toward another, affected as toward himself, judges and feels the same, that is, **τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖ**. But since this is here chiefly paramount, he prays for it from the Lord. The God of endurance and exhortation, he says. He names God from his gifts, as is the custom everywhere in the scriptures. But by praying for this

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he shows simultaneously how much they themselves ought to pray for it from the Lord, and seek it with all their powers.

The interpretations, as much as time now allows, have been rendered in the exposition. The following are especially to be observed. First: In whatever things God has given us to be of service to others, all the use of these is in this: that we help those to whom those gifts of God come in lesser measure. Then: that we must always leave the scriptures more patient in bearing evils, and more ardent for doing good, and this from this: that our confidence in God is now more confirmed. Finally: that we always remember that this is the end of our whole life, that at some time with the same spirit and mouth most closely conjoined and united in Christ, we may glorify and proclaim God. For if we always rightly consider this, whatever things can excite any dissensions or enmities in any way will easily vanish.

Exposition of Section II.

But I say Jesus Christ.

EXPOSITION

To reconcile the Jews and Gentiles with one another, he had reminded them that both had been received by Christ, and were called to this: that they glorify God with one heart and mouth. This he now expounds more widely, proclaiming: First that Christ was made a minister, that is, the particular minister of salvation, to the circumcision, that is, to the Jews, as God testified of himself when he said that he was sent to the sheep that had perished from the house of Israel. For thus he fulfilled the promises made to the fathers. Then that the Gentiles now glorify God for mercy, with which they also had been received into the communion of salvation with the Jews. He adduces oracles in which this had been predicted of the Gentiles, so that the Jews might value the Gentiles all the more on this account, as those whom the sacred seers had predicted would be associated with them in the faith of Christ.

For all four oracles, of which the first is adduced from Psalm 18, the second from Deuteronomy chapter 33, the third from Psalm 117, the fourth from chapter 11 of Isaiah, manifestly predicted the communication to the Gentiles of the praise of God for the redemption of Christ, and trust in Christ. The second, that from Deut., has in Hebrew: *הִרְנִינוּ גוֹיִם עִמּוֹ*, that is, celebrate with jubilation his people. But that celebration, since it is here predicted as future from the joy of the redemption of the people with which the Gentiles were to be suffused, and this from the fact that they themselves also would be participants in the same redemption: in this oracle the communion of praise of God and of faith in Christ was predicted.

Concluding the Epistle, he prays for the Romans the increase of hope through the power of the Holy Spirit; for in it, as has been said, is all our salvation and happiness. Moreover this hope is the daughter of faith, that is, of the certain persuasion of the Gospel, which namely proclaims and exhibits to us so great a goodness of God in us through Christ. For while we have faith in this, and do not doubt of such blessed promises of God, we cannot but have the best hope of God, and live fully saved and happy by that hope. But this faith, that is, the persuasion of the promises of God, is wondrously confirmed by feeling how God tempers all things for our salvation. Therefore the Apostle prays that the God who is the giver of hope may fill the Romans in believing with joy and peace, that is, that they may enjoy true success in all things, and hence perpetually rejoice in the

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goodness of the Lord toward themselves. The interpretation has been rendered. To be observed here is: that faith must always be nourished and strengthened by the oracles of scripture; that faith begets thus both true tranquility of soul and joy in the present goodness of God in us, so supporting the hope of future happiness. Finally that all these things rest not on our own, but on the sole virtue of the Holy Spirit.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION III

But I am persuaded. He removes the offense which was to be feared from his freer admonition among the more imperfect; for the Apostle could seem to the Romans to attribute less than was fitting to them in Christianity, and to take too much for himself. He recalls therefore that he does not doubt that they are filled with goodness and full of knowledge, and that they wish and are able to instruct and establish one another mutually; but that he had thought that they also were to be reminded by him, he had done from the debt of his office, namely that he was the public minister of Christ to the Gentiles and a priest, who by administering the Gospel ought to offer the Gentiles to the mercy of God, as an acceptable offering, because sanctified through the Holy Spirit. This his office, as also from the beginning of the Epistle, and above in chapter 12, he calls the grace of God; which was indeed a very great grace. He repeats the name, brethren, all, that he might more fully approve this doctrine and admonition of his to them.

Hence let us observe with how much care and by what method the word of God must be administered, so that it may bear fruit, concerning which in section 4, chapter 1. Also what the priesthood of the new testament is, with what sacred things it must deal: namely the Gospel, for this purpose that as many mortals as possible may be consecrated to God and brought to Christ.

Moreover since pseudo-apostles were depreciating the apostleship of Paul wherever occasion of it arose, he commends it himself to the Romans for the glory of Christ, and for the salvation of the Romans themselves, namely so that they might value more highly the doctrine of Christ administered through him. But he commends it from the ample virtue of the Spirit, with which he had discharged it, which he had most powerfully exercised by word and deed, by signs and wonders; with which he had brought very many nations to Christ from Jerusalem and around about, through Asia, and through Greece as far as Illyricum. In all these regions he had filled all with the Gospel, that is, had completed the preaching of the Gospel, and had filled all things with the Gospel. For he had there chiefly studied to preach where before him no one had preached, so that he might always more widely advance the Gospel, and bring it about that according to the prophecy of Isaiah they might see to whom it had not before been announced. And he says this was the cause which had often intercepted and detained him from coming to Rome, as he had proposed. So widely was the door of the Gospel open to him everywhere.

Let this so great power of the apostleship commend to us also his writings, and let that infinite pursuit of advancing the Gospel kindle in us also something of this pursuit.

EXPOSITION OF SECTION IV

But now since I have no place. He notes his journey into Spain, from which he had resolved to visit the Romans and enjoy them somewhat; also the journey to Jerusalem with the alms which the brothers of Achaia and Macedonia were sending to the brethren of Jerusalem. He commends the goodwill of these brothers, and testifies however that they owed it to the Jewish brothers, from

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whom they had received the spiritual things. In this manner he subtly invites the Romans also to the same goodwill. He writes that on this journey he will visit the Romans only in passing, yet that he will come to them with the full blessing of the Gospel, so as not to seem to take too much for himself toward the Romans, as if they were still so indigent in the faith of Christ that they needed to be taught much by him. That he so greatly prays that prayers be poured out to God for him, to be delivered from the unbelieving Jews, and to approve his duty to the believing ones: indicates that both the evil were hostile, and the good were alienated from him, which both the devil had brought about, because Paul more than all was promoting the kingdom of Christ. But let this teach us with how much zeal we must take care that what we do for the brothers may please them.

EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS: **CHAPTER 16**

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER XVI

The first section has the commendation of Phoebe, and the salutations which he inscribed to those known to him among the saints at Rome, in all of which it is to be observed that he inscribed something of praise. For thus true charity is wont to admire the gifts of God in the brothers, and to commend them at length, so that from this God may be glorified, and the praised brothers may be held of more account in the Lord. To weigh the praises of individuals is not the time here, but as you see, all the praises are from those gifts by which the kingdom of Christ was promoted and the brothers were helped. For these alone are good works and worthy of praise.

In the second section he forewarns against pseudo-apostles, to whom he attributes the blandishments of words, stumbling blocks and dissensions about the doctrine of Christ, and the study of the belly; by these marks let us also today recognize false doctors. They indeed often conceal the servitude of the belly, but by stumbling blocks and dissensions about sound doctrine they always betray themselves. Concerning which matter in Galatians, the Lord willing, we shall speak at length. He gives this cause for admonishing the Romans about these: their faith was celebrated, had reached far and wide; he wished therefore that they be cautious against all the imposture of Satan, and pure from evils. But lest they be cast down from this, he prays and predicts that Satan will soon be crushed under their feet.

In the third section the Apostle inscribes to the Romans salutation in the name of certain brothers who were then with him known to them, and prays for them grace, so that the end may correspond to the beginning. For on the grace and goodwill of God all things depend. Finally he concludes with the praise of God, by which he simultaneously predicts that they are to be confirmed by the Lord in the received communion of salvation. The faith of which he strengthens them from the communion of the Gospel and the revelation of the mystery of salvation, with which the Lord had already deigned them, as all the Gentiles, from his certain constitution; and this being attested by the prophetic scriptures, to excite namely everywhere among the Gentiles the obedience of faith. This condescension of God from the beginning of the world had been publicly silent; for the mysteries of the Prophets were known to few. Since therefore God from this his infinite beneficence most rightly, alone omnipotent, best and most wise, deserves to be acknowledged and celebrated: so he stirs the Romans to this with his own, as is his wont, most ardent feelings. Concerning this method of doxology it was said in section 1, chapter 9. Concerning the nature and revelation of the Gospel made first at the end of the ages, it was said in section 2, chapter 1, something; and more will be said in the 3rd chapter of Ephesians, God granting.

PERORATION

There are certainly many things in these last three chapters worthy of more diligent and ample examination, but the Lord has not given this time that there was sufficient time for it. Yet the foregoing has been treated so extensively that from them some light has also been brought to these; moreover these recur repeatedly throughout all the writings of the Apostle. What therefore the time here excluded, in other passages and no less proper than these now passed over, we shall strive to supply, if God so wills. In all these things which have now been completed as best as possible, I know that I have aimed at this: that the knowledge of Christ might become more certain and full for very many teachers of the people of Christ, and from there among the whole Church of Christ. If I have attained any of this, let the saints give thanks to God together with me; whatever they shall judge to have been not rightly instituted toward this end, that in the Lord they forgive the man. For by the judgment of the saints I will that all these things stand or fall. May the Lord alone our master

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in heaven grant true judgment, and the just advancement of his doctrine; to him be glory and dominion forever. Amen.

END.

The Paraphrase and Exposition on the Epistle of D. Paul to the Romans, by Martin Bucer.

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