Exposition of Certain Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans

Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430)

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These are the meanings in the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans. First of all, that everyone should understand that in this epistle the question being treated concerns the works of the law and grace. 1. [1.] When he says: According to the Spirit of sanctification from the resurrection of the dead, that is, because they received the gift of the Spirit after his resurrection; and he mentions the resurrection of the dead, because in him we were all crucified and rose again. 2. [2.] When he says: That I may impart to you some spiritual grace, namely the love of God and neighbor, so that through the charity of Christ they might not at all envy the Gentiles who were called to the Gospel.

3. [3.] When he said: The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and so on, Solomon too says concerning the wise men of the world: For if they were able to know so much that they could estimate the world, how did they not more easily find the Lord and Creator of that very world? But those whom Solomon reproves did not come to know the Creator through the creature; whereas those whom the Apostle reproves did know him, but they did not give thanks, and while saying that they were wise they became fools and fell to worshiping idols. For that the wise men of the nations could find the Creator, the same Apostle clearly showed when he was speaking with the Athenians. For when he had said: For in him we live and move and are, he added: As certain ones among you also have said. But with this intention he first reproves the ungodliness of the Gentiles, that from it he may prove that even those converted can attain to grace. For it is unjust that they should undergo the penalty of ungodliness and not receive the reward of faith.

4. [4.] When he says: Knowing God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks, this is the head of sin, of which it is said: The beginning of all sin is pride. For had they given thanks to God, who had given this wisdom, they would not have attributed anything to themselves by their own thoughts. Wherefore they were given over by the Lord into the desires of their heart, to do the things that were not fitting. 5. [5.] When he says: He gave them over, it is understood: he dismissed them into the desires of their heart. And he says they received a reciprocal recompense from God, namely to be given over into the desires of their heart. 6. [6.] When at last he says: God gave them over to a reprobate mind, etc., filled,

he says, with all iniquity, we are given to understand that these things he now names, that is, crimes, pertain to doing harm to others. But above he was speaking of the corruptions that are called shameful deeds, from which one comes to crimes; for each person, following the pernicious sweetness of shameful deeds, while he tries to remove the persons who hinder him, proceeds to crime. Thus too that passage in the Wisdom of Solomon is distinguished, where, when he had enumerated the shameful deeds above, he says: Let us lie in wait for the poor righteous man, because he is useless to us, etc.

7. [7.-8.] When he says: Not only those who do these things, but also those who consent to those who do them, he means that whatever they did, they did not unwillingly; but, when they consent to evil deeds, they also approve even those things which they did not do; and therefore, of sins now fully accomplished, he says: Therefore you are inexcusable, O every man who judges. And when he says every, he now brings in a further point, to show not only the Gentile but also the Jew, who wished to judge the Gentiles according to the law. 8. [9.] When he says: You are storing up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath, he everywhere uses the wrath of God for vengeance. Therefore he says: Of the just judgment of God. It should be noted, however, that the wrath of God is placed also in the New Testament—which, when men who are opposed to the old law read it in the Old, they think it something to be blamed; whereas God is surely not subject to perturbations as we are, as Solomon says: But you, O Lord of hosts, judge with tranquility. But wrath, as has been said, is used in the signification of vengeance.

9. [10.] When he says: Their conscience bearing witness, he speaks according to that passage of the apostle John, where he says: Beloved, if our heart reproves us, God is greater than our conscience, etc. 10. [11.] When he says: By the spirit, not the letter, this means that the law is to be understood according to the spirit, not according to what the letter contains—which surely happened to those who received circumcision more carnally than spiritually. 11. [12.] When he says: Whose praise is not from men but from God, this fits with what he says: He who is a Jew in secret.

12. [13.-18. When he says: Because no flesh shall be justified in the law before him; for through the law comes knowledge of sin, and other similar things which some think must be raised as a reproach against the law, these must be read carefully enough, so that neither may the law seem to be disapproved by the Apostle, nor may free will be taken away from man. So let us distinguish these four stages of man: before the law, under the law, under grace, in peace. Before the law we follow the concupiscence of the flesh; under the law we are dragged by it; under grace we neither follow it nor are dragged by it; in peace there is no concupiscence of the flesh. Before the law, then, we do not fight, because we not only lust and sin, but even approve of our sins. Under the law we fight, but we are conquered; for we confess that the things we do are evil, and by confessing them to be evil, we certainly do not wish to do them, but because grace is not yet present, we are overcome. In this stage it is shown to us how we lie prostrate, and while we wish to rise and yet fall, we are more grievously afflicted. Hence it is said here: The law entered in secretly, that sin might

abound. Hence too what is now set down: For through the law comes knowledge of sin—for it is not the removal of sin, since sin is removed by grace alone.

The law, therefore, is good, because it forbids the things that ought to be forbidden and commands the things that ought to be commanded. But when anyone thinks to fulfill it by his own strength, and not through the grace of his Liberator, this presumption profits him nothing; indeed, it even harms him so much that he is both swept away by a more vehement desire for sin and is found to be a transgressor in his sins as well. For where there is no law, neither is there transgression. So then, lying thus prostrate, when anyone recognizes that he cannot rise by himself, let him implore the help of the Liberator. Grace, therefore, comes, which forgives past sins, and helps him as he strives, and bestows the love of righteousness, and takes away fear. And when this happens, although certain desires of the flesh, while we are in this life, fight against our spirit to lead it into sin, yet the spirit, not consenting to these desires, because it is fixed in the grace and love of God, ceases to sin. For we do not sin in the evil desire itself, but in our consent. To this pertains what the same Apostle says: Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey its desires. For by this he shows that there are desires which, by not obeying, we do not allow sin to reign in us.

But since these desires arise from the mortality of the flesh, which we draw from the first sin of the first man, from whom we are born carnally, they will not come to an end until, by the resurrection of the body, we attain that transformation which is promised to us, where there will be perfect peace, when we shall be established in the fourth stage. And it will be perfect peace, because nothing will resist us when we do not resist God. This is what the Apostle says: The body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. If, then, the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit dwelling in you. Free will, therefore, existed perfectly in the first man; but in us, before grace, there is no free will so that we may not sin, but only so that we may not wish to sin. But grace brings it about that we not only wish to do right but also are able to, not by our own strength but by the help of the Liberator, who will also grant us perfect peace in the resurrection—which perfect peace follows upon good will. For, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.

13. [19.] When he says: Do we then make the law void through faith? God forbid! Rather we establish the law—that is, we confirm it. But how was the law to be confirmed except through righteousness? And through the righteousness that is by faith, since the very things that could not be fulfilled through the law have been fulfilled through faith. 14. [20.] When he says: For if Abraham was justified by works, he has glory, but not before God, this means that Abraham, being without the law, since he does not gain glory from the works of the law—as if he were fulfilling the law by his own strength, when that law had not yet been given—that glory is God's, not his own. For he was justified not by his own merit as if from works, but by the grace of God, through faith. 15. [21.] When he says: But to him who works, the reward is not reckoned according to grace but according to debt, he spoke of how

men render reward to men. For God gave by grace, since he gave to sinners, that they might live justly through faith, that is, might work well. Therefore that we work well, once grace has been received, is to be attributed not to us but to him who justified us by grace. For if he wished to render the wage that was owed, he would render to sinners the penalty that was owed.

16. [22.] When he says: Who justifies the ungodly, this means: he makes the godly out of the ungodly, so that henceforth he may remain in that very godliness and righteousness; for he was justified for this purpose, that he might be righteous, not that he should think it permitted him to sin. 17. [23.] When he says: For the law works wrath, this signifies vengeance and pertains to that stage when a person is under the law. 18. [24.] When he says: Before God, in whom he believed, he indicated that faith is in the inner man, in the sight of God, not in the display before men, such as is the circumcision of the flesh. 19. [25.] When he says of Abraham: Giving glory to God, this is set against those who sought their own glory from the works of the law before men. 20. [26.] When he says: And not only so, but we also glory in tribulations, and the rest, he leads on step by step up to the love of God—which love he says we have through the gift of the Spirit—and he shows that all those things which we might attribute to ourselves are to be attributed to God, who has deigned to give grace through the Holy Spirit.

21. [27.-28.] When he says: For until the law sin was in the world, it must be understood: until grace should come. For it was said against those who suppose that sins could be taken away through the law. For the Apostle says that sins were made manifest through the law, but not taken away, when he says: But sin was not imputed when there was no law. For he does not say: There was no sin, but: it was not imputed. Nor, when the law was given, was it taken away, but it began to be imputed, that is, to appear. Let us not, then, suppose that until the law was said as though there were no sin now under the law; rather it was said thus: until the law, so that you may count the whole time of the law up to the end of the law, which is Christ.

22. [29. 1.] When he says: But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even in those who did not sin after the likeness of Adam's transgression, this may be distinguished in two ways: either, Death reigned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, because even those who did not sin died from the origin of Adam's mortality; or else, Death reigned even in those who did not sin after the likeness of Adam's transgression, but sinned before the law—so that those are understood to have sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression who received the law, since Adam too sinned once the law of the commandment had been received. Certainly, too, what is said, until Moses, is to be understood as the whole time of the law. And Adam is called the figure of the one to come, but by contrast; so that as through him came death, so through our Lord came life.

23. [29. 2. When he says: But the gift is not as the offense, the gift excels in two ways: either because grace much more abounds—since through it one lives forever, whereas through Adam's death, death reigned only temporally; or because by the condemnation of one offense

the death of many came about through Adam, whereas through our Lord Jesus Christ grace was given, by the free gift covering many offenses, unto eternal life. But he explains another difference thus, saying: And the gift is not as it was through the one who sinned. For the judgment indeed was from one unto condemnation, but grace is from many offenses unto justification. When, therefore, it says from one, offense is to be understood, since there follows: but grace from many offenses. This, then, is the difference: that in Adam one offense was condemned, but by the Lord many were forgiven. What follows, therefore, contains both these differences, so that it is explained thus: For if by one man's offense death reigned through one, much more shall those who receive the abundance of grace and of righteousness reign in life through one, Jesus Christ. What he said, then—much more shall they reign—pertains to eternal life; but what he said—they receive the abundance of grace—pertains to the forgiveness of many offenses. After these differences have been explained, he returns to the figure from which he had begun, whose sequence he had suspended, when he said: For as through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin, death.

To which he now returns, when he says: Therefore, as through one man's offense it came upon all men unto condemnation, so also through one man's righteous act it comes upon all men unto justification of life. For as through the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one many shall be made righteous. This is the figure of the coming Adam, of which he had begun to speak above, and, interposing certain of its differences, he had deferred the sequence, to which he now, returning, brought his conclusion, saying: Therefore, as through one man's offense it came upon all men, etc.

24. [30.] When he says: The law entered in secretly, that sin might abound, by this very word he sufficiently indicated that the Jews did not know by what dispensation the law was given. For it was not given as something that could give life, since grace gives life through faith; rather the law was given to show by how great and how tight bonds of sins those were constrained who presumed to fulfill righteousness by their own strength. Thus sin abounded, since both concupiscence became more ardent from the prohibition, and to those sinning against the law was added the charge of transgression. This is understood by one who considers the second stage among those four stages. 25. [31.] When he says: What then shall we say? Shall we remain in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! We who are dead to sin, how shall we live in it? By this he shows that it was done regarding past sins, that they should be forgiven, and that in this grace superabounded—that past sins should be remitted. Therefore whoever still seeks increases of sin in order to feel an increase of grace does not understand that he is acting so that grace works nothing in him. For it is the work of grace that we die to sin.

26. [32.-34.] When he says: Knowing this, that our old man was crucified together with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, this refers to what was said through Moses: Cursed is everyone who hangs upon a tree. For the crucifixion of the old man was signified in the cross of the Lord, just as the renewal of the new man was signified in the resurrection. And it is clear that we enact the old man—the one who is cursed—on account of whom, in respect

of sin, no one doubts that it was said even of the Lord that he bore our sins, and was made sin for us, and from sin condemned sin. But what is it "to destroy the body of sin"? He himself explained it: That we should no longer serve sin; and that which he says: If we are dead with Christ—that is, if we have been crucified with Christ. For he says in another place: For those who are Christ Jesus' have crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences. Moses, therefore, did not curse the Lord, but prophesied what his crucifixion would show.

27. [35.] When he says: For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace, this surely pertains now to that third stage, where a man already serves the law of God with his mind, although with the flesh he serves the law of sin. For he does not obey the desire of sin, although concupiscences still solicit and provoke him to consent, until the body too is made alive and death is swallowed up in victory. Since, therefore, we do not consent to evil desires, we are in grace, and sin does not reign in our mortal body; and altogether, from that passage where he says: We who are dead to sin, how shall we live in it? he describes the one who is established under grace. But he over whom sin has dominion, although he may wish to resist sin, is still under the law, not yet under grace.

28. [36. When he says: For a woman, while her husband lives, is bound by the law to her husband; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband, etc., it must be noted that this comparison differs in this from the matter for which it was employed: that here he says the husband dies, so that the woman may marry whom she wishes, being freed from the law of her husband; but there, when he sets up the soul as the woman, and the passions of sins as the husband—which work in our members so as to bring forth fruit unto death, that is, so that from such a union offspring worthy of death may be born—and the law that was given not to take away sin or for liberation from sin, but to reveal sin before grace, through which it came about that those placed under the law were swept away by a more vehement desire of sinning and sinned still more by transgression; since, then, there too there are three: the soul as the woman, the passions of sins as the husband, and the law as the law of the husband—yet there he does not say that the soul is freed by the sins dying, as by the husband dying, but that the soul itself dies to sin and is freed from the law, so that it may belong to another husband, that is, Christ, once it has died to sin, although sin itself is as it were still living;

which happens when, with the desires and certain incitements to sinning still remaining in us, we nevertheless do not obey nor consent, serving the law of God with our mind, because we are dead to sin. But sin too will die when the reformation of the body takes place in the resurrection, of which he afterward says: He will give life to your mortal bodies also, on account of his Spirit remaining in you.

29. [37. 1.] When he says: But sin, having taken occasion, worked in me through the commandment every concupiscence, it must be understood that it was not the whole of concupiscence before it was increased by the prohibition. For concupiscence is increased by the prohibition when the grace of the Liberator is absent; and therefore it is not yet "all" before

it is prohibited. But when it has been prohibited, grace being absent, as we have said, concupiscence grows so much that thus in its own kind it becomes "all," that is, consummated—so that it is even done against the law and heaps up the charge by transgression. 30. [37. 2.] When he says: For without the law sin is dead, he said it is dead not because it does not exist, but because it lies hidden—which he makes clear in what follows, when he says: But sin, that it might appear as sin, worked death in me through what is good. For the law is good, but without grace it only shows sins, it does not take them away.

31. [38.] When he says: But I once lived without the law, it must be understood: I seemed to myself to live, because before the commandment sin lay hidden. And when he says: But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died, it must be understood: sin began to appear, and I recognized that I was dead. 32. [39.] When he says: For sin, having taken occasion through the commandment, deceived me and through it slew me, this was said because the fruit of a forbidden desire is sweeter. Hence too whatever sins are done secretly are the sweeter, though this sweetness is deadly. Hence it is that, in Solomon, a woman, sitting as the image of deceitful teaching and inviting the foolish to come to her, is written to say: Gladly eat hidden bread and drink stolen sweet water. This sweetness is the occasion of sin found through the commandment, which, when it is desired, surely deceives and turns into greater bitterness.

33. [40.] When he says: Did then that which is good become death to me? God forbid! But sin, that it might appear as sin, worked death in me through what is good—here he evidently shows that what he had said above, For without the law sin is dead, he said because it lies hidden, since he now says that it was not that good thing, that is, the law, that became death to him, but that sin worked death through the good of the law, that is, so that the sin which lay hidden without the law might appear. For then each one recognizes that he is dead, when he cannot fulfill what he confesses to have been rightly commanded, and by the charge of transgression sins more than if he were not forbidden. This is what he says in what follows: That the sinner, or sin, might become beyond measure sinful through the commandment—which before the commandment was less, because where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

34. [41.] When he says: We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, he sufficiently shows that the law cannot be fulfilled except by the spiritual, such as the grace of God makes. For anyone who has become like the law itself easily fulfills what it commands; nor will he be under it but with it—and such is he who is no longer captivated by temporal goods, nor terrified by temporal evils. 35. [42.] When he says: I was sold under sin, it must be understood that each one, by sinning, sells his soul to the devil, having received, as it were as a price, the sweetness of temporal pleasure. Hence our Lord too was called Redeemer, because in this way, as has been said, we had been sold. 36. [43.] When he says: For what I do, I know not, it may seem to those who understand less to be contrary to that statement in which he said: Sin, that it might appear as sin, worked death in me through what is good. For how does it appear, if it is not known? But I know not is said in this place so that it

may be understood: I do not approve. For just as darkness is not seen but is perceived by comparison with light—and to perceive darkness is precisely not to see—so also sin, because it is not illumined by the light of righteousness, is discerned by not understanding, just as darkness was said to be perceived by not seeing. And to this pertains what is said in the Psalm: Who understands his faults?

37. [44.] When he says: For what I will, that I do not, but what I hate, that I do. But if I do what I do not will, I consent to the law, that it is good—the law is indeed sufficiently defended from every accusation; but care must be taken lest anyone suppose that by these words free will is taken from us, which is not so. For now a man is described as placed under the law before grace; for at that time he is conquered by sins, while he tries to live justly by his own strength without the help of God's liberating grace. But by free will he has it to believe in the Liberator and to receive grace, so that now, with him who bestows it liberating and helping, he does not sin, and thus ceases to be under the law, but is with the law or in the law, fulfilling it by the love of God, which he could not do by fear.

38. [45.-46. When he says: I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and taking me captive under the law of sin which is in my members, he calls the law of sin that by which each one, entangled by carnal habit, is bound fast. He says that this wars against the law of his mind and takes him captive under the law of sin—from which it is understood that the man being described is one who is not yet under grace. For if carnal habit only warred and did not take captive, there would be no condemnation. For condemnation lies in this: that we submit to and serve evil carnal desires. But if such desires exist and are not lacking, yet we do not obey them, we are not taken captive, and we are already under grace—of which he will speak, when he has cried out and implored the help of the Liberator, so that through grace charity may accomplish what through the law fear could not. For he said: Wretched man that I am, who will free me from the body of this death? And he added: The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Then he begins to describe the man established under grace, which is the third of those four stages we distinguished above. To this stage now belongs what he immediately adds: Therefore I myself with my mind serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin;

for although carnal desires exist, he no longer serves by consenting so as to commit sin—he who, established under grace, serves the law of God with his mind, but with his flesh the law of sin. And by the law of sin he means the mortal condition arising from Adam's transgression, by which we were made mortal. For from this taint of the flesh carnal concupiscence solicits us, and according to this he says in another place: We too were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

39. [47.] When he says: There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, he sufficiently shows that there is no condemnation if carnal desires exist, but only if one obeys them so as to sin. This happens to those who are established under the law, not yet under grace. For those established under the law not only have concupiscence warring

against them, but are also led captive when they submit to it. But this does not happen to those who serve the law of God with their mind.

40. [48. When he says: For what was impossible for the law, in that it was weakened through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, even from sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit—he teaches most clearly that these very precepts of the law were for this reason not fulfilled, although they ought to have been fulfilled: because those to whom the law was given before grace were given over to carnal goods and desired to acquire happiness from them, and feared nothing except when adversity threatened such goods; and therefore, when those temporal goods were disturbed, they easily withdrew from the precepts of the law. The law, therefore, was weakened by not fulfilling what it commanded, not by its own fault but through the flesh—that is, through those men who, in desiring carnal goods, did not love the righteousness of the law but preferred temporal advantages to it. Therefore our Liberator, the Lord Jesus Christ, by taking on mortal flesh, came in the likeness of sinful flesh. For to sinful flesh death is owed. But that death of the Lord was of condescension, not of debt; and yet the Apostle calls even this "sin"—the assumption of mortal flesh, though not sinful flesh—because, being immortal, he as it were enacts sin when he dies. But from sin, he says, he condemned sin in the flesh. For the Lord's death accomplished this:

that death should not be feared, and that thereafter temporal goods should no longer be sought nor temporal evils feared—in which lay that carnal prudence in which the precepts of the law could not be fulfilled. But when this prudence is destroyed and removed in the Lord's manhood, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, when one walks not according to the flesh but according to the spirit. Hence it was most truly said: I came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Love, therefore, is the fullness of the law. And love belongs to those who walk according to the spirit. For this belongs to the grace of the Holy Spirit. For when there was not the love of righteousness but fear, the law was not fulfilled.

41. [49.] When he says: Because the prudence of the flesh is hostile toward God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be, he shows what he meant by hostile—lest anyone suppose that, as from an opposing principle, some nature which God did not create wages enmity against God. He is therefore called an enemy of God who does not submit to his law, and this through the prudence of the flesh, that is, when he desires temporal goods and fears temporal evils. For the definition of prudence is usually set out in the desiring of goods and the avoiding of evils. Wherefore the Apostle rightly calls it the prudence of the flesh, by which these things are desired as if they were great goods, though they do not endure with a man, and by which it is feared that these may be lost, which must one day be lost. But such prudence cannot submit to the law of God; rather the law is submitted to only when this prudence has been extinguished, so that the prudence of the spirit may succeed it, by which our hope is neither in temporal goods nor our fear in temporal evils. For the same nature of the soul both has the prudence of the flesh, when it pursues lower things,

and the prudence of the spirit, when it chooses higher things—just as the same nature of water both freezes with cold and melts with heat. Thus, then, it was said: The prudence of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be—just as it would rightly be said that snow cannot be made warm, nor indeed can it; but when, heat being applied, it is dissolved and the water grows warm, now no one can call it snow.

42. [50.] When he says: The body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness, the body is called dead in the sense of mortal. For from its mortality the need of earthly things solicits the soul and stirs up certain desires, which, so as to sin, he does not obey who now serves the law of God with his mind. 43. [51.] When he says: If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus Christ from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit dwelling in you, he now shows the fourth of those four stages which we distinguished above. But this stage is not found in this life. For it pertains to the hope by which we await the redemption of our body, when this corruptible shall put on incorruption and this mortal shall put on immortality. There peace is perfect, because the soul suffers no troubles from the body, now made alive and transformed into a heavenly quality.

44. [52. When he says: For you have not received a spirit of servitude unto fear, but you have received the Spirit of the adoption of sons, in whom we cry: Abba, Father!—the times of the two Testaments are most clearly distinguished; for that one pertains to fear, but the New to love. But it is asked, what is the spirit of servitude? For the Spirit of the adoption of sons is surely the Holy Spirit; the spirit of servitude in fear, then, is he who has the power of death, because by that very fear those were held liable to servitude throughout their whole life who lived under the law, not under grace. Nor is it to be wondered at that those who pursued temporal goods received him through divine providence—not that the law and the commandment are his. For: The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good; but that spirit of servitude, which is surely not good, is received by those who cannot fulfill the precepts of the given law, while they serve carnal desires, not yet taken up by the grace of the Liberator into the adoption of sons; for that spirit of servitude too holds no one in its power except him who, by the order of divine providence, has been handed over to it, God's justice assigning to each his own. This power the Apostle had received, when he says of certain persons: Whom I have handed over to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme; and again of another:

I have already judged, he says, to hand over such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the soul may be saved. Those, therefore, who are not yet under grace and, established under the law, are conquered by sins so as to obey carnal desires, and by transgression increase the guilt of their crimes, have received the spirit of servitude, that is, the spirit of him who has the power of death. For if we understand by the spirit of servitude the very spirit of man, then the spirit of adoption too begins to be understood as that same spirit changed for the better. But since we take the Spirit of adoption to be the Holy Spirit—which he clearly shows when he says: The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit—it remains

that we understand the spirit of servitude to be that one whom sinners serve, so that, just as the Holy Spirit delivers from the fear of death, so the spirit of servitude, which has the power of death, holds the guilty by the terror of that same death, so that each one may turn himself to the help of the Liberator—even against the will of the devil himself, who desires always to hold him in his power.

45. [53. When he says: For the expectation of the creature awaits the revelation of the sons of God; for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, etc., down to what he says: And we ourselves groan within ourselves, awaiting the adoption, the redemption of our body—this is to be understood in such a way that we neither suppose that there is a sense of grieving and groaning in trees and vegetables and stones and other creatures of this kind (for this is the error of the Manichaeans), nor think that the holy angels are subjected to vanity, or judge of them that they will be freed from the servitude of destruction, since they surely are not going to perish; but let us understand the whole creation as being in man himself, without any distortion. For no creature can exist except either spiritual, which is preeminent in the angels, or animal, which appears well enough also in the life of beasts, or corporeal, which can be seen or touched; and all of these are also in man, because man consists of spirit and soul and body. Therefore the creature awaits the revelation of the sons of God—whatever now in man labors and lies subject to corruption awaits that manifestation of which the same Apostle says: For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God; when Christ, your life, shall appear, then you also shall appear with him in glory. John too says:

Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. This revelation of the sons of God, then, the creature awaits, which in man is now subjected to vanity, as long as it is given over to temporal things, which pass away like a shadow. Hence too it is said in the Psalm: Man has become like vanity; his days pass away like a shadow. Solomon too speaks of vanity, when he says: Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity; what abundance has a man in all his labor with which he labors under the sun? Of which David likewise says: Why do you love vanity and seek a lie? He says the creature was subjected to vanity not willingly, because this subjection is penal. For man, though he sinned willingly, was not likewise condemned willingly—yet this condemnation was inflicted upon our nature not without hope of restoration. And therefore: On account of him, he says, who subjected it in hope, because the creature itself also shall be freed from the servitude of destruction into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God—that is, even that which is only creature, not yet gathered by faith into the number of the sons of God; yet in those who were going to believe the Apostle saw what he says:

that the creature shall be freed from the servitude of destruction, so that it may not serve destruction, which all sinners serve. For to the sinner it was said: You shall die the death. But it shall be freed into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God—that is, so that it too may attain to the liberty of the glory of the sons of God through faith; and when this faith

was not in it, it was called only creature. And to this he refers what follows: For we know that the creature groans together and is in pain until now. For there were still those going to believe, who even in spirit lay subject to laborious errors. But lest anyone should think it was said only of their labor, he adds a further word about those who had already believed. For although they served the law of God with the spirit, that is, with the mind, yet because the flesh serves the law of sin, as long as we suffer the troubles and solicitations of our mortality, therefore he added, saying: And not only so, but we ourselves also, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves.

Not only, then, he says, does that which is called merely creature in those men who have not yet believed—and therefore are not yet established in the number of the sons of God—groan together and grieve, but we ourselves also, who believe and have the firstfruits of the Spirit, because we already cleave to God in spirit through faith, and therefore are no longer called creature but sons of God—yet we ourselves also groan within ourselves, awaiting the adoption, the redemption of our body. For this adoption, which has already been accomplished in those who have believed, was accomplished in spirit, not in body. For the body has not yet been reformed into that heavenly transformation, as the spirit has already been changed, being turned from its errors to God by the reconciliation of faith. Therefore even in those who have believed, that manifestation is still awaited which will come about in the resurrection of the body, which pertains to that fourth stage, where peace will be wholly perfect and rest eternal, with no corruption on any side resisting us or trouble soliciting us.

46. [54.] When he says: Likewise the Spirit also helps our weakness; for what we should pray as we ought, we do not know, it is clear that he speaks of the Holy Spirit, which is plain in what follows, where he says: Because he intercedes for the saints according to God. We, therefore, do not know what we should pray as we ought, for two reasons: both because that which we hope to be future and toward which we tend does not yet appear; and because in this very life many things can seem to us favorable which are adverse, and adverse which are favorable. For even tribulation, when it comes upon a servant of God for testing or amendment, sometimes seems useless to those who understand less; but if it is referred to what was said: Give us help from tribulation, and vain is the salvation of man, it is understood that God very often helps us out of tribulation, and that safety is vainly desired which is sometimes adverse, when it entangles the soul with delight and love of this life. Hence too is that saying: I found tribulation and sorrow, and I called upon the name of the Lord. For when he says I found, he signifies something useful; for we do not rightly rejoice at having found anything except what we were seeking. Therefore we do not know what we should pray as we ought. For God knows both what is expedient for us in this life and what he is going to give after this life. But the Spirit himself intercedes with unutterable groanings. He says the Spirit groans in the sense that he makes us groan, arousing by love the desire of the life to come, just as he says: The Lord your God tests you, that he may know whether you love him, that is, that he may make you know. For nothing is hidden from God.

47. [55.] When he says: Whom he called, them he also justified, it may prompt the question whether all who are called are justified. But elsewhere we read: Many are called, but few are chosen. Yet because the chosen too are surely called, it is clear that none are justified except the called—though not all the called, but those who are called according to purpose, as he said above. And the purpose is to be understood as God's, not their own. And he himself explains what according to purpose means, when he says: For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. For not all who are called are called according to purpose; for this purpose pertains to the foreknowledge and predestination of God. Nor did he predestine anyone except him whom he foreknew would believe and would follow his calling, whom he also calls the chosen. For many do not come when they have been called, but no one comes who has not been called.

48. [56.] When he says: That he might be the firstborn among many brethren, he teaches well enough that our Lord is to be understood in one way as only-begotten, in another as firstborn. For where he is called Only-begotten, he has no brethren and is by nature the Son of God, the Word in the beginning, through whom all things were made. But according to the assumption of manhood and the dispensation of the incarnation—through which he deigned to call even us, who are not sons by nature, into the adoption of sons—he is called firstborn, with the addition of brethren. For where he is called first, he is surely not alone, but has brethren who are to follow into that which he himself has gone before. Hence in another place too he calls him the firstborn from the dead, that he himself might hold the primacy. For the resurrection of the dead, so that they die no more, was before him in no one, but after him is of many saints, whom he is not ashamed to call brethren on account of that very sharing of humanity.

49. [57.] When he says: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution? and the rest, it depends on the earlier statement, where he says: If indeed we suffer together, that we may also be glorified together; for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory that shall be revealed in us. For the whole intent of this passage is directed to this exhortation: that those to whom he speaks might not be broken by persecutions, if they were to live according to the prudence of the flesh, by which temporal goods are desired and temporal evils feared.

50. [58. When he says: For I am certain—and he did not say: For I think—he held with full faith that neither any death, nor temporal life promised, nor the rest that follows, can turn the believer away from the love of God. No one, therefore, separates us: neither he who threatens death, because he who believes in Christ, though he die, shall live; nor he who promises life, because that One gives eternal life. For the promise of temporal life is to be despised in comparison with the eternal. Nor does an angel separate us, because, though an angel, he says, should come down from heaven and announce to you anything beyond what you have received, let him be anathema. Nor principality—that is, an adverse one—because he himself stripped off these principalities and powers, triumphing over them in

himself. Nor things present nor things to come—that is, temporal things, whether those that delight, or those that oppress, or those that give hope, or those that strike fear. Nor power (and here an adverse power must be understood, according to which he says: No one shall plunder the goods of the strong man unless he first binds the strong man), nor height, nor depth. For very often an empty curiosity about those things which cannot be found, or are even found in vain, whether in heaven or in the abyss, separates one from God, unless love conquers, which invites us to sure spiritual things, not by the vanity of the things that are outside, but by the inner man.

Nor any other creature. This can be understood in two ways: either the visible creature—since we too, that is, the soul, are a creature, but an invisible one—so that he meant this: that no other creature separates us, that is, the love of bodies; or else that no other creature separates us from the love of God, from the fact that there is no other creature between us and God which might set itself against us and exclude us from his embrace. For above human minds, which are rational, there is no longer any creature, but God.

51. [59.] When he says: Whose are the fathers, from whom is Christ according to the flesh, and adds: Who is over all, God blessed forever, he commends the fullest faith, because we confess our Lord both, according to the assumption of the flesh, the Son of Man, and, according to eternity, the Word in the beginning, God blessed over all forever. But because the Jews held only part of this confession, they are refuted by the Lord. For when he had asked them whose son they said the Christ was, they answered: David's. But this is according to the flesh. Concerning his divinity, however—that he is God—they answered nothing. Therefore the Lord said to them: How then does David in the spirit call him Lord? That they might understand that they had confessed only this, that Christ is the son of David, but had passed over in silence that Christ is the Lord of David himself. For the former is according to the assumption of the flesh, the latter according to the eternity of the divinity.

52. [60. When he says: For when they were not yet born, nor had done anything good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him who calls, it was said to her: The elder shall serve the younger; as it is written: Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated—this moves some to think that the apostle Paul has taken away free will, by which we earn God's favor through the good of godliness or offend him through the evil of ungodliness. For they say that before any works, whether good or evil, of two not yet born, God loved the one and hated the other. But we reply that this came about by the foreknowledge of God, by which he knows even of the not-yet-born what each one will be. But lest anyone say: God, then, chose the works in the one whom he loved, although they did not yet exist, because he foreknew they would be—and if he chose works, how does the Apostle say the election was made not of works?—therefore it must be understood that good works are done through love, but that love is in us through the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the same Apostle says: The love of God is poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. Therefore no one ought to glory in works as his own, which he has through the gift of God, since love itself works the good in him.

What, then, did God choose? For if he grants the Holy Spirit, through whom love works the good, to whom he wills, how did he choose to whom he should grant it? For if there is no merit, there is no election; for all are equal before merit, and among things wholly equal, election cannot be spoken of. But since the Holy Spirit is not given except to believers, God did not indeed choose the works which he himself bestows when he gives the Holy Spirit, that through love we may do good works—yet he did choose faith. For unless a person believes in him and remains in the will to receive, he does not receive the gift of God, that is, the Holy Spirit, through whom, love being poured out, he may be able to do good. God, therefore, did not choose anyone's works in foreknowledge, which he himself was going to give, but he chose faith in foreknowledge, so that the one whom he foreknew would believe in him, him he chose, to whom he would give the Holy Spirit, so that by doing good he might also attain eternal life. For the same Apostle says: It is the same God who works all things in all, but nowhere is it said: God believes all things in all. Therefore that we believe is our own, but that we do good belongs to him who gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe in him.

This example was set against certain Jews who had believed in Christ and gloried in works before grace, and said that they had merited the very grace of the Gospel by their preceding good works—whereas good works can exist in no one except one who has received grace. But it is grace that the calling is proffered to the sinner, when his merits, none of them, have gone before except unto damnation. But if the called follows him who calls—which is now in free will—he will merit also the Holy Spirit, through whom he may be able to do good; and remaining in this (which is likewise in free will), he will merit also eternal life, which can be corrupted by no taint.

53. [61.] When he says: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will show mercy to whom I will be merciful, it is shown from this that there is no injustice with God—which some can allege when they hear: Before they were born, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated. For I will have mercy, he says, on whom I will have mercy. For God first had mercy on us, when we were sinners, so as to call us. Therefore on whom I will have mercy, he says, so as to call him, I will have mercy on him still further, when he has believed. But how still further, except that he gives the Holy Spirit to the one who believes and asks? And when this is given, he will show mercy to him to whom he will be merciful, that is, so as to make him merciful, whereby he may be able to do good through love. Let no one, therefore, dare to attribute to himself that he acts mercifully, because God has given him love through the Holy Spirit, without which no one can be merciful. God, therefore, did not choose those who work well, but rather those who believe, so that he himself may make them work well. For it is ours to believe and to will, but his to give to those who believe and will the ability to work well through the Holy Spirit, through whom the love of God is poured out in our hearts, that he may make us merciful.

54. [62. When he says: It is therefore not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy, he does not take away free will, but says that our willing is not sufficient

unless God helps us, by making us merciful for working well, through the gift of the Holy Spirit—referring this to what he said above: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will show mercy to whom I will be merciful. Because we can neither will unless we are called; and when, after the calling, we have willed, our will and our running are not sufficient, unless God both supplies strength to those who run and leads them where he calls. It is clear, therefore, that our working well is not of him who wills nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy—although our will is there too, which by itself could do nothing. Hence there follows also the testimony concerning Pharaoh's punishment, when Scripture says of Pharaoh: For this I raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth; for, as we read in Exodus, the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, so that he was not moved by such evident signs. That Pharaoh at that time did not obey the commands of God already came from his punishment.

But no one can say that that hardening of heart befell Pharaoh undeservedly, but by the judgment of God repaying his unbelief with the deserved penalty. Therefore this is not imputed to him—that he then did not obey, since with a hardened heart he could not obey—but that he showed himself deserving of having his heart hardened, by his prior unfaithfulness. For just as in those whom God chooses, not works but faith begins the merit, so that by the gift of God they may work well, so in those whom he condemns, unfaithfulness and ungodliness begin the merit of punishment, so that through the punishment itself they may even work evil, as the same Apostle says above: And because they did not approve of having God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do the things that are not fitting. Wherefore the Apostle concludes thus: Therefore he has mercy on whom he wills, and whom he wills he hardens. For on whom he has mercy, he makes him work well; and whom he hardens, he abandons him, so that he works evil. But that mercy is granted to the preceding merit of faith, and that hardening to preceding ungodliness, so that we both do good through the gift of God and evil through punishment—while yet free will is not taken away from man, whether unto believing God, that mercy may follow us, or unto ungodliness, that punishment may follow. This conclusion having been drawn, he introduces a question as if from an objector.

For he says: You will say to me then: Why does he still find fault? For who resists his will? To which inquiry he replies in such a way that we may understand that to spiritual men, and to those who no longer live according to the earthly man, the first merits of faith and of ungodliness can lie open—how God, foreknowing, chooses those who will believe and condemns the unbelieving, neither choosing the former for their works nor condemning the latter for their works, but granting to the faith of the former that they may work well, and hardening the ungodliness of the latter by abandoning them, so that they may work evil. And because this understanding, as I said, lies open to the spiritual, but is far removed from carnal prudence, he thus refutes the inquirer, so that he may understand that he must first put off the man of clay, in order to be worthy to investigate these things through the spirit. And so he says: O man, who are you who answer back to God? Does the thing formed say to him who formed it: Why have you made me thus? Or does not the potter have

power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?

As long as you are a thing formed, he says, and belong to the lump of clay, not yet brought to spiritual things, so as to be a spiritual man judging all things and judged by no one, you ought to restrain yourself from an inquiry of this kind and not answer back to God. For whoever desires to know his counsel must first be received into his friendship—which cannot happen except to the spiritual, who now bear the image of the heavenly man. For he now says: I will not call you servants but friends, for all the things which I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. And so, as long as you are an earthen vessel, this very thing in you must first be broken by that iron rod, of which it is said: You shall rule them with an iron rod, and you shall break them in pieces like a potter's vessel, so that, with the outer man destroyed and the inner renewed, you may be able, rooted and grounded in love, to comprehend the breadth, length, height, and depth, and to know also the surpassing knowledge of the love of God. Now, therefore, when out of the same lump God makes some vessels unto honor and others unto dishonor, it is not yours to examine this, whoever you are who still live according to this lump, that is, who are wise with an earthly and carnal sense.

55. [63.] When he says: He bore with much patience the vessels of wrath, which were fitted for destruction, he sufficiently indicated by this that the hardening of heart which took place in Pharaoh came from the merits of a prior hidden ungodliness, which nevertheless God patiently endured, until Pharaoh should be brought to that time at which vengeance might opportunely proceed against him—for the correction of those whom he had determined to free from error, and to lead them, by recalling them to his own worship and godliness, granting help to their prayers and groanings. 56. [64.] When he says: Whom he also called, namely us, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles, as he says also in Hosea: I will call that which was not my people, my people, and the rest, he brings the purpose of this whole discussion to this: that since he has taught that our working well is of God's mercy, the Jews should not glory as if from works—who, when they had received the Gospel, thinking it was to be attributed to their own merits, did not want it given to the Gentiles; from which pride they must now desist, understanding that if we are called, not from works but by the mercy of God, that we may believe, and it is granted to believers that they may work well, then this mercy is not to be begrudged the Gentiles, as though the merit of the Jews—which is nothing—were preferred.

57. [65.] When he says: But Isaiah cries out for Israel: If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved, he shows how God is the cornerstone, joining both walls in himself. For the testimony of the prophet Hosea was spoken for the Gentiles: I will call that which was not my people, my people, and her that was not beloved, beloved; and the testimony of Isaiah was spoken for Israel, that a remnant shall be saved, so that those may be counted in the seed of Abraham who have believed in Christ. Thus he makes both peoples in concord, according also to the testimony of the Lord, who says in the

Gospel concerning the Gentiles: I have other sheep, which are not of this fold, whom I must bring, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

58. [66.] When he says: Brethren, the good will of my heart and my prayer to God is made for them, unto salvation, from here he now begins to speak of the hope of the Jews, lest the Gentiles too should dare to be proud against them. For just as the pride of the Jews, who gloried as if from works, had to be refuted, so too the Gentiles must be met, lest they be proud as though preferred to the Jews. 59. [67.] When he says: The word is near, in your mouth and in your heart; this is the word of faith which we preach: that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation—this whole passage refers to what he said above: For the Lord will make a word consummating and abridging upon the earth. For, the innumerable and manifold sacraments by which the Jewish people were burdened being removed, it came about, through the mercy of God, that by the brevity of the confession of faith we might attain to salvation.

60. [68.] When he says, according to the testimony of Moses: I will lead you to jealousy by that which is not a nation; by a foolish nation I will provoke you—by saying a foolish nation, he explained what he had said, that which is not a nation, as though that which is foolish should not even be called a nation. Yet by the faith of this nation he says the Jewish people is to be provoked, because they laid hold of what the others rejected. Or else, that which is not a nation, a foolish nation, means that, since it was a foolish nation—every people worshiping idols—it nevertheless laid aside its heathenism by believing. Hence too is that saying: If, then, the uncircumcised keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? So that this is the sense: I will lead you to jealousy by that which has become no nation, laying aside its heathenism through faith in Christ, though it had been a foolish nation in worshiping idols.

61. [69.] When he says: Has God then rejected his people? God forbid! For I too am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, this refers to what he said above: But the word of God cannot fail. For not all who are of Israel are Israelites, nor because they are the seed of Abraham are all sons, but: In Isaac shall your seed be called—so that from the very people of the Jews those may be counted in the seed who believed the Lord. Of this too he says above: A remnant shall be saved. 62. [70.] When he says: I say then, Did they so stumble that they should fall? God forbid! But by their fall salvation has come to the Gentiles, he does not say this because they did not fall, but because their fall was not empty, since it profited unto the salvation of the Gentiles. They did not, then, so stumble as to fall—that is, only to fall, as if solely for their own punishment—but so that this very fact, that they fell, might profit the Gentiles unto salvation. Then from this passage he begins to commend the people of the Jews, even on account of their very fall of unbelief, so that the Gentiles may not be proud, because even the fall of the Jews proved so precious for the

salvation of the Gentiles; rather the Gentiles ought all the more to take care lest, while they are proud, they likewise fall.

63. [71.] When he says: If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he thirsts, give him drink; for in doing this you will heap coals of fire upon his head, it can seem to many to contradict that saying by which the Lord commanded that we love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, or even this which the same Apostle said above: Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse, and again: Rendering to no one evil for evil. For how does anyone love him to whom he gives food and drink for the purpose of heaping coals of fire upon his head, if coals of fire in this place signify some grievous punishment? Wherefore it must be understood that this was said so that we might provoke him who has injured us to repentance for his deed, when we do good to him. For these coals of fire avail for the burning, that is, the contrition of the spirit, which is as it were the head of the soul, in which all malice is burned away, when a man is changed for the better through repentance—like those coals of fire of which it is said in the Psalms: What shall be given you, or what shall be added to you, against a deceitful tongue? The sharp arrows of the mighty, with devastating coals.

64. [72. When he says: Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power except from God, he most rightly admonishes, lest anyone, because he has been called to freedom by his Lord and made a Christian, be lifted up into pride and not think that on the journey of this life he must keep his own order, and suppose that he need not be subject to the higher powers, to whom, for the time being, the government of temporal affairs has been handed over. For since we consist of soul and body, and, as long as we are in this temporal life, use also temporal things for the support of leading that life, we ought, in that part which pertains to this life, to be subject to the powers, that is, to men who administer human affairs with some honor. But in that part by which we believe God and are called into his kingdom, we ought not to be subject to any man who desires to overturn in us that very thing which God has deigned to grant unto eternal life. If anyone, therefore, thinks that, because he is a Christian, he need not pay toll or tribute, or need not render the honor owed to those powers who attend to these matters, he is caught in a great error.

Likewise, if anyone thinks he must be subject in such a way as to judge that he who excels by some eminence in administering temporal affairs has power even over his faith, he falls into a greater error. But this measure must be kept, which the Lord himself prescribes: that we render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. For although we are called to that kingdom where there will be no power of this world, yet while we journey on this road, until we arrive at that age where every principality and power is done away, let us bear our condition for the sake of the very order of human affairs, doing nothing in pretense, and in this very thing obeying not so much men as God, who commands these things.

65. [73.] When he says: Do you wish not to fear the power? Do good, and you shall have praise from it, this can trouble some, when they consider that Christians have often suffered

persecution from these powers. Did they, then, not do good, since they were not only not praised by these powers, but were even subjected to punishments and killed? The words of the Apostle, therefore, must be considered. For he does not say: Do good, and the power will praise you; but he says: Do good, and you shall have praise from it. For whether it approves your good deed or persecutes it, you shall have praise from it—either when you gain it into the service of God, or when by its persecution you merit a crown. This too is understood in what follows, when he says: For it is God's minister to you for good—even if to itself for evil.

66. [74.] When he says: Be subject of necessity, this avails so that we may understand that it is necessary, on account of this life, that we ought to be subject, not resisting if they wish to take away anything of temporal things over which power has been given them; and because these things pass away, therefore this subjection too must be established not in goods that are to endure, but in things necessary to this time. Yet because he said, Be subject of necessity, lest anyone should become subject to powers of this kind with less than a whole heart and pure love, he added, saying: Not only on account of wrath but also on account of conscience—that is, not only to avert wrath, which can be done even in pretense, but so that in your conscience you may be certain that you do it out of love for him to whom you are subject, by the command of your Lord, who wishes all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For when the Apostle said this, he was dealing with those very powers. This is what he urges upon servants in another place: Not serving to the eye, as though pleasing men, so that, in the very fact that they are subject to their masters, they may not hate them or desire to win their favor by deceits.

67. [75.] When he says: For he who loves another has fulfilled the law, he shows that the consummation of the law is placed in love, that is, in charity; hence the Lord too says that on those two commandments the whole Law hangs, and all the Prophets, that is, on the love of God and of neighbor. Hence too he himself, who came to fulfill the law, bestowed love through the Holy Spirit, so that what before fear could not fulfill, love might afterward fulfill. Hence is that saying of the same Apostle: But love is the fullness of the law; and that: But the end of the commandment is love, from a pure heart and a good conscience and unfeigned faith. 68. [76.] When he says: And this, knowing the time, that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep, this looks to what was said: Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. For the time of the Gospel is signified, and that opportune season of saving those who believe in God.

69. [77.] When he says: And make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences, he shows that provision for the flesh is not to be blamed, when those things are provided which avail for the necessity of bodily health. But if it is for superfluous delights and luxuries, so that one may rejoice in the things that the flesh desires, he is rightly reproved, because he makes provision for the flesh in its concupiscences, since he who sows in his flesh shall reap corruption from the flesh, that is, he who rejoices in carnal delights.

70. [78.] When he says: Receive him who is weak in faith, not in disputes over thoughts, he says this so that we may receive the one who is weak in faith, and by our own firmness bear

with his weakness, and not pass judgment on his thoughts—that is, that we should not dare to pass sentence on another's heart, which we do not see. Therefore it follows and he says: One indeed believes he may eat all things; but he who is weak, let him eat vegetables. For at that time many, now firm in faith and knowing, according to the teaching of the Lord, that the things which enter into the mouth do not defile, but the things which come out, took food indifferently with a clear conscience. But certain weaker ones abstained from meats and from wine, lest even unknowingly they should fall upon the things that were sacrificed to idols. For at that time all sacrificial meat was sold in the market, and the Gentiles poured out libations of the firstfruits of the wine to their idols, and made certain sacrifices at the very winepresses. The Apostle therefore commands both those who used such foods with a clear conscience not to despise the weakness of those who abstained from such food and drink, and those weak ones not to judge, as though defiled, those who did not abstain from meats and drank wine. To this pertains what he says consequently: Let him who eats not judge—that is, despise—him who does not eat; and let him who does not eat not judge him who eats. For the strong were contemptuously despising the weaker, and the weak were rashly judging the strong.

71. [79.] When he says: Who are you to judge another's servant? he says this so that, in those matters which can be done with either a good or a bad intention, we may leave the judgment to God, and not dare to pass sentence on another's heart, which we do not see. But in those matters which are so grasped that it is clear they cannot be done with a good and chaste intention, one is not disapproved if we judge. And so, in what he says about foods—since it is not known with what intention it is done—he does not want us to be judges, but God; but concerning that abominable defilement, where a certain man had taken his father's wife, he judged that it must be judged by the precepts. For that man could not say that he had committed so monstrous a shameful deed with a good intention. Therefore whatever deeds are so manifest that it cannot be said, "I did it with a good intention," are to be judged by us; but whatever things are so done that it is uncertain with what intention they are done, are not to be judged but reserved for the judgment of God, as it is written: The things that are hidden belong to God, but the things that are manifest, to you and to your children.

72. [80.] When he says: One indeed judges between day and day, but another judges every day, setting aside for the moment a better consideration, it seems to me to be said not of two men, but of man and God. For he who judges between day and day is man, for he can judge one thing today and another tomorrow—that is, whomever he has today condemned as a proven or confessed evildoer, he may find good tomorrow, when he has corrected himself; or, on the contrary, when he has today praised someone as righteous, he may find him tomorrow depraved. But he who judges every day is God, because he knows not only what each one is, but also what he will be on every day. Therefore: Let each one abound in his own understanding, he says—that is, let him dare to judge only so far as is granted to human understanding, or to each man. He who is wise as to the day, he says, is wise to the Lord—that is, because this very thing, that he judges the present day well, is wise to the Lord.

And this is to judge well as to the day: that you know his correction in the future is not to be despaired of, concerning whose manifest fault you have judged in the present.

73. [81.] When he says: Blessed is he who does not judge himself in that which he approves, this is best referred to what he said above: Let not our good, then, be blasphemed. For this is also what he now says before that statement: The faith which you have, keep to yourself before God—so that, since this faith is good, by which we believe that all things are clean to the clean, and in that faith we approve ourselves, we may use our good well; lest perhaps, when we have abused that good to the stumbling of weak brethren, we sin against the brethren and judge ourselves in that very good, when we scandalize the weak, in which good we approve ourselves, when that faith pleases us.

74. [82.] When he says: For I say that Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers, but that the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy, he says this so that the Gentiles may understand that the Lord Christ was sent to the Jews, and may not be proud. For, the Jews rejecting what was sent to them, it came about that the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles also—which is most clearly written in the Acts of the Apostles, when the Apostles say to the Jews: To you it was necessary that the word be preached first; but since you have judged yourselves unworthy, behold, we turn ourselves to the Gentiles. According also to the testimonies of the Lord himself, when he says: I am not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and again: It is not good to send the children's bread to the dogs. And if the Gentiles consider this well, they understand that, by this their own faith, by which they now believe that all things are clean to the clean, they ought not to insult those—if any perchance be weak among the circumcision—who, on account of association with idols, dare not touch any meats at all.

75. [83.] When he says: That I may be a minister of Christ Jesus among the Gentiles, consecrating the Gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified in the Holy Spirit, this is understood: that the Gentiles are offered to God, as an acceptable sacrifice, when, believing in Christ, they are sanctified through the Gospel—as he also says above: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God. 76. [84.] When he says: I beseech you, brethren, to mark those who make dissensions and scandals contrary to the teaching which you have learned, he is understood to speak of those of whom he also wrote to Timothy, saying: As I asked you to remain at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that you might charge certain persons not to teach otherwise, nor to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which furnish questions rather than the edification of God, which is in faith; and to Titus: For there are many unruly, vain talkers and seducers of minds, especially those who are of the circumcision, who must be refuted, who subvert whole households, teaching things they ought not, for the sake of filthy gain; one of them, their own prophet, said: The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies. For to this refers what he also says here: For these do not serve Christ the Lord, but their own belly—of whom he says in another place: Whose God is their belly.

Notes

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.