On the Spirit and the Letter

Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

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Introduction

In One Book, Addressed to Marcellinus, a.d. 412.
Marcellinus, in a letter to Augustin, had expressed some surprise at having read, in the preceding work, of the possibility being allowed of a man continuing if he willed it, by God's help, without sin in the present life, although not a single human example anywhere of such perfect righteousness has ever existed. Augustin takes the opportunity of discussing, in opposition to the pelagians, the subject of the aid of god's grace; and he shows that the divine help to the working of righteousness by us does not lie in the fact of God's having given us a law which is full of good and holy precepts; but in the fact that our will itself, without which we can do nothing good, is assisted and elevated by the spirit of grace being imparted to us, without the aid of which the teaching of the law is "the letter that killeth," because instead of justifying the ungodly, it rather holds them guilty of transgression. He begins to treat of the question proposed to him at the commencement of this work, and returns to it towards its conclusion; he shows that, as all allow, many things are possible with God's help, of which there occurs indeed no example; and then concludes that, although a perfect righteousness is unexampled among men, it is for all that not impossible.

Chapter 1 [I.] - the Occasion of Writing This Work; A Thing May Be Capable of Being Done, and Yet May Never Be Done.

After reading the short treatises which I lately drew up for you, my beloved son Marcellinus, about the baptism of infants, and the perfection of man's righteousness, - how that no one in this life seems either to have attained or to be likely to attain to it, except only the Mediator, who bore humanity in the likeness of sinful flesh, without any sin whatever, - you wrote me in answer that you were embarrassed by the point which I advanced in the second book, that it was possible for a man to be without sin, if he wanted not the will, and was assisted by the aid of God; and yet that except One in whom "all shall be made alive," no one has ever lived or will live by whom this perfection has been attained whilst living here. It appeared to you absurd to say that anything was possible of which no example ever occurred, - although I suppose you would not hesitate to admit that no camel ever passed through a needle's eye, and yet He said that even this was possible with God; you may read, too, that twelve thousand legions of angels could possibly have fought for Christ and rescued Him from suffering, but in fact did not; you may read that it was possible for the nations to be exterminated at once out of the land which was given to the children of Israel, and yet that God willed it to be gradually effected.

And one may meet with a thousand other incidents, the past or the future possibility of which we might readily admit, and yet be unable to produce any proofs of their having ever really happened. Accordingly, it wouldnot be right for us to deny the possibility of a man's living without sin, on the ground that amongst men none can be found except Him who is in His nature not man only, but also God, in whom we could prove such perfection of character to have existed.

Chapter 2 [II.] - the Examples Apposite.

Here, perhaps, you will say to me in answer, that the things which I have instanced as not having been realized, although capable of realization, are divine works; whereas a man's being without sin falls in the range of a man's own work, - that being indeed his very noblest work which effects a full and perfect righteousness complete in every part; and therefore that it is incredible that no man has ever existed, or is existing, or will exist in this life, who has achieved such a work, if the achievement is possible for a human being. But then you ought to reflect that, although this great work, no doubt, belongs to human agency to accomplish, yet it is also a divine gift, and therefore, not doubt that it is a divine work; "for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Chapter 3. - Theirs is Comparatively a Harmless Error, Who Say that a Man Lives Here Without Sin.

They therefore are not a very dangerous set of persons and they ought to be urged to show, if they are able, that they are themselves such, who hold that man lives or has lived here without any sin whatever. There are indeed passages of Scripture, in which I apprehend it is definitely stated that no man who lives on earth, although enjoying freedom of will, can be found without sin; as, for instance, the place where it is written, ”Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” If, however, anybody shall have succeeded in showing that this text and the other similar ones ought to be taken in a different sense from their obvious one, and shall have proved that some man or men have spent a sinless life on earth, - whoever does not, not merely refrain from much opposing him, but also does not rejoice with him to the full, is afflicted by extraordinary goads of envy. Moreover, if there neither is, has been, nor will be any man endowed with such perfection of purity (which I am more inclined to believe), and yet it is firmly set forth and thought there is or has been, or is to be, - so far as I can judge, no great error is made, and certainly not a dangerous one, when a man is thus carried away by a certain benevolent feeling; provided that he who thinks so much of another, does not think himself to be such a being, unless he has ascertained that he really and clearly is such.

Chapter 4. - Theirs is a Much More Serious Error, Requiring a Very Vigorous Refutation, Who Deny God's Grace to Be Necessary.

They, however, must be resisted with the utmost ardor and vigor who suppose that without God's help, the mere power of the human will in itself, can either perfect righteousness, or advance steadily towards it; and when they begin to be hard pressed about their presumption in asserting that this result can be reached without the divine assistance, they check themselves, and do not venture to utter such an opinion, because they see how impious and insufferable it is. But they allege that such attainments are not made without God's help on this account, namely, because God both created man with the free choice of his will, and, by giving him commandments, teaches him, Himself, how man ought to live; and indeed assists him, in that He takes away his ignorance by instructing him in the knowledge of what he ought to avoid and to desire in his actions: and thus, by means of the free-will naturally implanted within him, he enters on the way which is pointed out to him, and by persevering in a just and pious course of life, deserves to attain to the blessedness of eternal life.

Chapter 5 [III.] - True Grace is the Gift of the Holy Ghost, Which Kindles in the Soul the Joy and Love of Goodness.

We, however, on our side affirm that the human will is so divinely aided in the pursuit of righteousness, that (in addition to man's being created with a free-will, and in addition to the teaching by which he is instructed how he ought to live) he receives the Holy Ghost, by whom there is formed in his mind a delight in, and a love of, that supreme and unchangeable good which is God, even now while he is still "walking by faith" and not yet "by sight;" in order that by this gift to him of the earnest, as it were, of the free gift, he may conceive an ardent desire to cleave to his Maker, and may burn to enter upon the participation in that true light, that it may go well with him from Him to whom he owes his existence. A man's free-will, indeed, avails for nothing except to sin, if he knows not the way of truth; and even after his duty and his proper aim shall begin to become known to him, unless he also take delight in and feel a love for it, he neither does his duty, nor sets about it, nor lives rightly. Now, in order that such a course may engage our affections, God's "love is shed abroad in our hearts," not through the free-will which arises from ourselves, but "through the Holy Ghost, which is given to us."

Chapter 6 [IV.]- the Teaching of Law Without the Life-Giving Spirit is ”The Letter that Killeth.”

For that teaching which brings to us the command to live in chastity and righteousness is ”the letter that killeth,” unless accompanied with ”the spirit that giveth life. For that is not the sole meaning of the passage, ”The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life, which merely prescribes that we should not take in the literal sense any figurative phrase which in the proper meaning of its words would produce only nonsense, but should consider what else it signifies, nourishing the inner man by our spiritual intelligence, since ”being carnally-minded is death, whilst to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. If, for instance, a man were to take in a literal and carnal sense much that is written in the Song of Solomon, he would minister not to the fruit of a luminous charity, but to the feeling of a libidinous desire. Therefore, the apostle is not to be confined to the limited application just mentioned, when he says, ”The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life; but this is also (and indeed especially) equivalent to what he says elsewhere in the plainest words: ”I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet; and again, immediately after: ”Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Now from this you may see what is meant by ”the letter that killeth. There is, of course, nothing, said figuratively which is not to be accepted in its plain sense, when it is said, ”Thou shall not covet;

but this is a very plain and salutaryprecept, and any man who shall fulfil it will have I no sin at all. The apostle, indeed, purposely selected this general precept, in which he embraced everything, as if this were the voice of the law, prohibiting us from all sin, when he says, ”Thou shalt not covet; for there is no sin committed except by evil concupiscence; so that the law which prohibits this is a good and praiseworthy law. But, when the Holy Ghost withholds His help, which inspires us with a good desire instead of this evil desire (in other words, diffuses love in our hearts), that law, however good in itself, only augments the evil desire by forbidding it. Just as the rush of water which flows incessantly in a particular direction, becomes more violent when it meets with any impediment, and when it has overcome the stoppage, falls in a greater bulk, and with increased impetuosity hurries

forward in its downward course. In some strange way the very object which we covet becomes all the more pleasant when it is forbidden. And this is the sin which by the commandment deceives and by it slays, whenever transgression is actually added, which occurs not where there is no law.

Chapter 7 [V.] -What is Proposed to Be Here Treated.

We will, however, consider, if you please, the whole of this passage of the apostle and thoroughly handle it, as the Lord shall enable us. For I want, if possible, to prove that the apostle's words, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," do not refer to figurative phrases,-although even in this sense a suitable signification might be obtained from them,- but rather plainly to the law, which forbids whatever is evil. When I shall have proved this, it will more manifestly appear that to lead a holy life is the gift of God,- not only because God has given a free-will to man, without which there is no living ill or well; nor only because He has given him a commandment to teach him how he ought to live; but because through the Holy Ghost He sheds love abroad in the hearts of those whom he foreknew, in order to predestinate them; whom He predestinated, that He might call them; whom He called, that he might justify them; and whom he justified, that He might glorify them. When this point also shall be cleared, you will, I think, see how vain it is to say that those things only are unexampled possibilities, which are the works of God,- such as the passage of the camel through the needle's eye, which we have already referred to, and other similar cases, which to us no doubt are impossible, but easy enough to God;

and that man's righteousness is not to be counted in this class of things, on the ground Of its being properly man's work, not God's; although there is no reason for supposing, without an example, that his perfection exists, even if it is possible. That these assertions are vain will be clear enough, after it has been also plainly shown that even man's righteousness must be attributed to the operation of God, although not taking place without man's will; and we therefore cannot deny that his perfection is possible even in this life, because all things are possible with God, -both those which He accomplishes of His own sole will, and those which He appoints to be done with the cooperation with Himself of His creature's will. Accordingly, whatever of such things He does not effect is no doubt without an example in the way of accomplished facts, although with God it possesses both in His power the cause of its possibility, and in His wisdom the reason of its unreality. And should this cause be hidden from man, let him not forget that he is a man; nor charge God with folly simply because he cannot fully comprehend His wisdom.

Chapter 8.- Romans Interprets Corinthians.

Attend, then, carefully, to the apostle while in his Epistle to the Romans he explains and clearly enough shows that what he wrote to the Corinthians, ”The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,” must be understood in the sense which we have already indicated, -that the letter of the law, which teaches us not to commit sin, kills, if the life-giving spirit be absent, forasmuch as it causes sin to be known rather than avoided, and therefore to be increased rather than diminished, because to an evil concupiscense there is now added the transgression of the law.

Chapter 9 [VI]. -Through the Law Sin Has Abounded.

The apostle, then, wishing to commend the grace which has come to all nations through Jesus Christ, lest the Jews should extol themselves at the expense of the other peoples on account of their having received the law, first says that sin and death came on the human race through one man, and that righteousness and eternal life came also through one, expressly mentioning Adam as the former, and Christ as the latter; and then says that ”the law, however, entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Then, proposing a question for himself to answer, he adds, ”What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. He saw, indeed, that a perverse use might be made by perverse men of what he had said: ”The law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,”-as if he had said thatsin had been of advantage by reason of the abundance of grace. Rejecting this, he answers his question with a ”God forbid! and at once adds: ”How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? as much as to say, When grace has brought it to pass that we should die unto sin, what else shall we be doing, if we continue to live in it, than showing ourselves ungrateful to grace?

The man who extols the virtue of a medicine does not contend that the diseases and wounds of which the medicine cures him are of advantage to him; on the contrary, in proportion to the praise lavished on the remedy are the blame and horror which are felt of the diseases and wounds healed by the much-extolled medicine. In like manner, the commendation and praise of grace are vituperation and condemnation of offences. For there was need to prove to man how corruptly weak he was, so that against his iniquity, the holy law brought him no help towards good, but rather increased than diminished his iniquity; seeing that the law entered, that the offence might abound; that being thus convicted and confounded, he might see not only that he needed a physician, but also God as his helper so to direct his steps that sin should not rule over him, and he might be healed by betaking himself to the help of the divine mercy; and in this way, where sin abounded grace might much more abound,- not through the merit of the sinner, but by the intervention of his Helper.

Chapter 10. - Christ the True Healer.

Accordingly, the apostle shows that the same medicine was mystically set forth in the passion and resurrection of Christ, when he says, ”Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is justified from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Now it is plain enough that here by the mystery of the Lord’s death and resurrection is figured the death of our old sinful life, and the rising of the new; and that here is shown forth the abolition of iniquity and the renewal of righteousness. Whence then arises this vast benefit to man through the letter of the law, except it be through the faith of Jesus Christ?

Chapter 11 [VII.]- from What Fountain Good Works Flow.

This holy meditation preserves ”the children of men, who put their trust under the shadow of God’s wings,” so that they are ”drunken with the fatness of His house, and drink of the full stream of His pleasure. For with Him is the fountain of life, and in His light shall they see light. For He extendeth His mercy to them that know Him, and His righteousness to the upright in heart. He does not, indeed, extend His mercy to them because they know Him, but that they may know Him; nor is it because they are upright in heart, but that they may become so, that He extends to them His righteousness, whereby He justifies the ungodly. This meditation does not elevate with pride: this sin arises when any man has too much confidence in himself, and makes himself the chief end of living. Impelled by this vain feeling, he departs from that fountain of life, from the draughts of which alone is imbibed the holiness which is itself the good life,- and from that unchanging light, by sharing in which the reasonable soul is in a certain sense inflamed, and becomes itself a created and reflected luminary; even as ”John was a burning and a shining light,” who notwithstanding acknowledged the source of his own illumination in the words, ”Of His fulness have all we received. Whose, I would ask, but His, of course, in comparison with whom John indeed was no light a t all?

For” that was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Therefore, in the same psalm, after saying, ”Extend Thy mercy to them that know Thee, and Thy righteousness to the upright in heart,” he adds, ”Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hands of sinnersmove me. There have fallen all the workers of iniquity: they are cast out, and are not able tostand. Since by that impiety which leads each i to attribute to himself the excellence which is God’s, he is cast out into his own native darkness, in which consist the works of iniquity. For it is manifestly these works which he does, and for the achievement of such alone is he naturally fit. The works of righteousness he never does, except as he receives ability from that fountain and that light, where the life is that wants for nothing, and where is ”no variableness, nor the shadow of turning.”

Chapter 12. - Paul, Whence So Called; Bravely Contends for Grace.

Accordingly Paul, who, although he was formerly called Saul, chose this new designation, for no other reason, as it seems to me, than because he would show himself little, -the ”least of theapostles,” - contends with much courage and earnestness against the proud and arrogant, andsuch as plume themselves on their own works, in order that he may commend the grace of God. This grace, indeed, appeared more obvious and manifest in his case, inasmuch as, while he was pursuing such vehement measures of persecution against the Church of God as made him worthy of the greatest punishment, he found mercy instead of condemnation, and instead of punishment obtained grace. Very properly, therefore, does he lift voice and hand in defence of grace, and care not for the envy either of those who understood not a subject too profound and abstruse for them, or of those who perversely misinterpreted his own sound words; whilst at the same time he unfalteringly preaches that gift of God, whereby alone salvation accrues to those who are the children of the promise, children of the divine goodness, children of grace and mercy, children of the new covenant. In the salutation with which he begins every epistle, he prays: ”Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ; ” whilst this forms almost the only topic discussed for the Romans, and it is plied with so much persistence and variety of argument, as fairly to fatigue the reader’s attention, yet with a fatigue so useful and salutary, that it rather exercises than breaks the faculties of the inner man.

Chapter 13 [VIII.] -Keeping the Law; The Jews' Glorying; The Fear of Punishment; The Circumcision of the Heart.

Then comes what I mentioned above; then he shows what the Jew is, and says that he is called a Jew, but by no means fulfils what he promises to do. "But if," says he, "thou callest thyself a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest His will, and triest the things that are different, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou art thyself a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly;

neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. Here he plainly showed in what sense he said, "Thou makest thy boast of God. For undoubtedly if one who was truly a Jew made his boast of God in the way which grace demands (which is bestowed not for merit of works, but gratuitously), then his praise would be of God, and not of men. But they, in fact, were making their boast of God, as if they alone had deserved to receive His law, as the Psalmist said: "He did not the like to any nation, nor His judgments has He displayed to them. And yet, they thought they

were fulfilling the law of God by their righteousness, when they were rather breakers of it all the while! Accordingly, it "wrought wrath" upon them, and sin abounded, committed as it was by them who knew the law. For whoever did even what the law commanded, without the assistance of the Spirit of grace, acted through fear of punishment, not from love of righteousness, and hence in the sight of God that was not in the will, which in the sight of men appeared in the work; and such doers of the law were held rather guilty of that which God knew they would have preferred to commit, if only it had been possible with impunity.

He calls, however, "the circumcision of the heart" the will that is pure from all unlawful desire; which comes not from the letter, inculcating and threatening, but from the Spirit, assisting and healing. Such doers of the law have their praise therefore, not of men but of God, who by His grace provides the grounds on which they receive praise, of whom it is said, "My soul shall make her boast of the Lord; and to whom it is said, "My praise shall be of Thee: but those are not such who would have God praised because they are men; but themselves, because they are righteous.

Chapter 14.-In What Respect the Pelagians Acknowledge God as the Author of Our Justification.

”But,” say they, ”we do praise God as the Author of our righteousness, in that He gave the law, by the teaching of which we have learned how we ought to live.” But they give no heed to what they read: ”By the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God.” This may indeed be possible before men, but not before Him who looks into our very heart and inmost will, where He sees that, although the man who fears the law keeps a certain precept, he would nevertheless rather do another thing if he were permitted. And lest any one should suppose that, in the passage just quoted from him, the apostle had meant to say that none are justified by that law, which contains many precepts, under the figure of the ancient sacraments, and among them that circumcision of the flesh itself, which infants were commanded to receive on the eighth day after birth; he immediately adds what law he meant, and says, ”For by the law is the knowledge of sin.” He refers then to that law of which he afterwards declares, ”I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” For what means this but that ”by the law comes the knowledge of sin?”

Chapter 15 [IX.] -The Righteousness of God Manifested by the Law and the Prophets.

Here, perhaps, it may be said by that presumption of man, which is ignorant of the righteousness of God, and wishes to establish one of its own, that the apostle quite properly said," For by the law shall no man be justified," inasmuch as the law merely shows what one ought to do, and what one ought to guard against, in order that what the law thus points out may be accomplished by the will, and so man be justified, not indeed by the power of the law, but by his free determination. But I ask your attention, O man, to what follows. "But now the righteousness of God," says he, "without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Does this then sound a light thing in deaf ears? He says, "The righteousness of God is manifested. Now this righteousness they are ignorant of, who wish to establish one of their own; they will not submit themselves to it. His words are, "The righteousness of God is manifested: he does not say, the righteousness of man, or the righteousness of his own will, but the "righteousness of God,"-not that whereby He is Himself righteous, but that with which He endows man when He justifies the ungodly. This is witnessed by the law and the prophets; in other words, the law and the prophets each afford it testimony.

The law, indeed, by issuing its commands and threats, and by justifying no man, sufficiently shows that it is by God's gift, through the help of the Spirit, that a man is justified; and the prophets, because it was what they predicted that Christ at His coming accomplished. Accordingly he advances a step further, and adds, "But righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ," that is by the faith wherewith one believes in Christ for just as there is not meant the faith with which Christ Himself believes, so also there is not meant the righteousness whereby God is Himself righteous. Both no doubt are ours, but yet they are called God's, and Christ's, because it is by their bounty that these gifts are bestowed upon us. The righteousness of God then is without the law, but not manifested without the law; for if it were manifested without the law, how could it be witnessed by the law? That righteousness of God, however, is without the law, which God by the Spirit of grace bestows on the believer

without the help of the law,-that is, when not helped by the law. When, indeed, He by the law discovers to a man his weakness, it is in order that by faith he may flee for refuge to His mercy, and be healed. And thus concerning His wisdom we are told, that "she carries law and mercy uponher tongue," - the "law," whereby she may convict the proud, the "mercy," wherewith she may justify the humbled.

"The righteousness of God," then, "by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all that believe; for there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" -not of their own glory. For what have they, which they have not received? Now if they received it, why do they glory as if they had not received it? Well, then, they come short of the glory of God; now observe what follows: "Being justified freely by His grace. It is not, therefore, by the law, nor is it by their own will, that they are justified; but they are justified freely by His grace, - not that it is wrought without our will; but our will is by the law shown to be weak, that grace may heal its infirmity; and that our healed will may fulfil the law, not by compact under the law, nor yet in the absence of law.

Chapter 16 X.] -How the Law Was Not Made for a Righteous Man.

Because ”for a righteous man the law was not made; and yet ”the law is good, if a man use it lawfully. Now by connecting together these two seemingly contrary statements, the apostle warns and urges his reader to sift the question and solve it too. For how can it be that ”the law is good, if a man use it lawfully,” if what follows is also true: ”Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man? For who but a righteous man lawfully uses the law? Yet it is not for him that it is made, but for the unrighteous. Must then the unrighteous man, in order that he may be justified,- that is, become a righteous man,- lawfully use the law, to lead him, as by the schoolmaster’s hand, to that grace by which alone he can fulfil what the law commands? Now it is freely that he is justified thereby,-that is, on account of no antecedent merits of his own works; ”otherwise grace is no more grace,” since it is bestowed on us, not because we have done good works, but that we may be able to do them,- in other words, not because we have fulfilled the law, but in order that we may be able to fulfil the law. Now He said, ”I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it,” of whom it was said, ”We have seen His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

This is the glory which is meant in the words, ”All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; and this the grace of which he speaks in the next verse, ”Being justified freely by His grace. The unrighteous man therefore lawfully uses the law, that he may become righteous; but when he has become so, he must no longer use it as a chariot, for he has arrived at his journey’s end,- or rather (that I may employ the apostle’s own simile, which has been already mentioned) as a schoolmaster, seeing that he is now fully learned. How then is the law not made for a righteous man, if it is necessary for the righteous man too, not that hemay be brought as an unrighteous man to the grace that justifies, but that he may use it lawfully, now that he is righteous? Does not the case perhaps stand thus, -nay, not perhaps, but rather certainly,- that the man who is become righteous thus lawfully uses the law, when he applies it to alarm the unrighteous, so that whenever the disease of some unusual desire begins in them, too, to be augmented by the incentive of the law’s prohibition and an increased amount of transgression, they may in faith flee for refuge to

the grace that justifies, and becoming delighted with the sweet pleasures of holiness, may escape the penalty of the law's menacing letter through the spirit's soothing gift?

In this way the two statements will not be contrary, nor will they be repugnant to each other: even the righteous man may lawfully use a good law, and yet the law be not made for the righteous man; for it is not by the law that he becomes righteous, but by the law of faith, which led him to believe that no other resource was possible to his weakness for fulfilling the precepts which "the law of works" commanded, except to be assisted by the grace of God.

Chapter 17.- the Exclusion of Boasting.

Accordingly he says, ”Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith.” He may either mean, the laudable boasting, which is in the Lord; and that it is excluded, not in the sense that it is driven off so as to pass away, but that it is clearly manifested so as to stand out prominently. Whence certain artificers in silver are called ”exclusores.” In this sense it occurs also in that passage in the Psalms: ”That they may be excluded, who have been proved with silver,” -that is, that they may stand out in prominence, who have been tried by the word of God. For in another passage it is said: ”The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver which is tried in the fire.” Or if this be not his meaning, he must have wished to mention that vicious boasting which comes of pride-that is, of those who appear to themselves to lead righteous lives, and boast of their excellence as if they had not received it, -and further to inform us, that by the law of faith, not by the law of works, this boasting was excluded, in the other sense of shut out and driven away; because by the law of faith every one learns that whatever good life he leads he has from the grace of God, and that from no other source whatever can he obtain the means of becoming perfect in the love of righteousness.

Chapter 18 [XI.] - Piety is Wisdom; That is Called the Righteousness of God, Which He Produces.

Now, this meditation makes a man godly, and this godliness is true wisdom. By godliness I mean that which the Greeks designate qeosbee, -that very virtue which is commended to than in the passage of Job, where it is said to him, ”Behold, godliness is wisdom. Now if the word qeosbee be interpreted according to its derivation, it might be called ”the worship of God; ” and in this worship the essential point is, that the soul be not ungrateful to Him. Whence it is that in the most true and excellent sacrifice we are admonished to ”give thanks unto our Lord God. Ungrateful however, our soul would be, were it to attribute to itself that which it received from God, especially the righteousness, with the works of which (the especial property, as it were, of itself, and produced, so to speak, by the soul itself for itself) it is not puffed up in a vulgar pride, as it might be with riches, or beauty of limb, or eloquence, or those other accomplishments, external or internal, bodily or mental, which wicked men too are in the habit of possessing, but, if I may say so, in a wise complacency, as of things which constitute in an especial manner the good works of the good. It is owing to this sin of vulgar pride that even some great men have drifted from the sure anchorage of the divine nature, and have floated down into the shame of idolatry.

Whence the apostle again in the same epistle, wherein he so firmly maintains the principle of grace, after saying that he was a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise, and professing himself ready, so far as to him pertained, to preach the gospel even to those who lived in Rome, adds: ”I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. This is the righteousness of God, which was veiled in the Old Testament, and is revealed in the New; and it is called the righteousness of God, because by His bestowal of it He makes us righteous, just as we read that ”salvation is the Lord’s,” because He makes us safe. And this is the faith ”from which” and ”to which” it is revealed,-from the faith of them who preach it, to the faith of those who obey it. By this faith

of Jesus Christ - that is, the faith which Christ has given to us -we believe it is from God that we now have, and shall have more and more, the ability of living righteously; wherefore we give Him thanks with that dutiful worship with which He only is to be worshipped.

Chapter 19 [XII]-The Knowledged of God Through the Creation.

And then the apostle very properly turns from this point to describe with detestation those men who, light-minded and puffed up by the sin which I have mentioned in the preceding chapter, have been carried away of their own conceit, as it were, through empty space where they could find no resting-place, only to fall shattered to pieces against the vain figments of their idols, as against stones. For, after he had commended the piety of that faith, whereby, being justified, we must needs be pleasing to God, he proceeds to call our attention to what we ought to abominate as the opposite. ”For the wrath of God,” says he, ”is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them: for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood through the things that are made, even His eternal power and divinity; so that they are without excuse: because, knowing God, they yet glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image madelike to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four fooled beasts, and to creeping things.

Observe, he does not say that they were ignorant of the truth, but that they held down the truth inunrighteousness. For it occurred to him, that hewould inquire whence the knowledge of the truthcould be obtained by those to whom God hadnot given the law; and he was not silent on the source whence they could have obtained it: for he declares that it was through the visible works of creation that they arrived at the knowledge of the invisible attributes of the Creator. And, in very deed, as they continued to possess great faculties for searching, so they were able to find. Wherein then lay their impiety? Because ”when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, nor gave Him thanks, but became vain in their imaginations. Vanity is a disease especially of those who mislead themselves, and ”think themselves to be something, when they are nothing. Such men, indeed, darken themselves in that swelling pride, the foot of which the holy singer prays that it may not come against him, after saying, ”In Thy light shall we see light; from which very light of unchanging truth they turn aside, and ”their foolish heart is darkened. For theirs was not a wise heart, even

though they knew God; but it was foolish rather, because they did not glorify Him as God, or give Him thanks; for ”He said unto man, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.

So by this conduct, while ”professing themselves to be wise” (which can only be understood to mean that they attributed this to themselves), ”they became fools.”

Chapter 20.-The Law Without Grace.

Now why need I speak of what follows? For why it was that by this their impiety those men -I mean those who could have known the Creator through the creature-fell (since ”God resisteth the proud”) and whither they plunged, is better shown in the sequel of this epistle than we can here mention. For in this letter of mine we have not undertaken to expound this epistle, but only mainly on its authority, to demonstrate, so far as we are able, that we are assisted by divine aid towards the achievement of righteousness,-not merely because God has given us a law fall of good and holy precepts, but because our very will without which we cannot do any good thing, is assisted and elevated by the importation of the Spirit of grace, without which help mere teaching is ”the letter that killeth,” forasmuch as it rather holds them guilty of transgression, than justifies the ungodly. Now just as those who come to know the Creator through the creature received no benefit towards salvation, from their knowledge, - because ”though they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, nor gave Him thanks, although professing themselves to be wise;” - so also they who know from the law how man ought to live, are not made righteous by their knowledge, because, ”going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

Chapter 21 [XIII.] - the Law of Works and the Law of Faith.

The law, then, of deeds, that is, the law of works, whereby this boasting is not excluded, and the law of faith, by which it is excluded, differ from each other; and this difference it is worth our while to consider, if so be we are able to observe and discern it. Hastily, indeed, one might say that the law of works lay in Judaism, and the law of faith in Christianity; forasmuch as circumcision and the other works prescribed by the law are just those which the Christian system no longer retains. But there is a fallacy in this distinction, the greatness of which I have for some time been endeavoring to expose; and to such as are acute in appreciating distinctions, especially to yourself and those like you, I have possibly succeeded in my effort. Since, however, the subject is an important one, it will not be unsuitable, if with a view to its illustration, we linger over the many testimonies which again and again meet our view. Now, the apostle says that that law by which no man is justified, entered in that the offence might abound, and yet in order to save it from the aspersions of the ignorant and the accusations of the impious, he defends this very law in such words as these: "What shall we say then? Is, the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known concupiscence, except the law had said, Thou shall not covet.

But sin, taking occasion, wrought, by the commandment, in me all manner of concupiscence," He says also: "The law indeed is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good; but sin, that it might appear sin, worked death in me by that which is good. It is therefore the very letter that kills which says, "Thou shalt not covet," and it is of this that he speaks in a passage which I have before referred to: "By the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: seeing that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare His righteousness at this time; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. And then he adds the passage which is now under consideration: "Where, then, is your boasting? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by

the law of faith. And so it is the very law of works itself which says, ”Thou shalt not covet; because thereby comes the knowledge of sin.

Now I wish to know, if anybody will dare to tell me, whether the law of faith does not say to us, ”Thou shalt not covet”? For if it does not say so to us, what reason is there why we, who are placed under it, should not sin in safety and with impunity? Indeed, this is just what those people thought the apostle meant, of whom he writes: ”Even as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that good may come; whose damnation is just. If, on the contrary, it too says to us, ”Thou shall not covet” (even as numerous passages in the gospels and epistles so often testify and urge), then why is not this law also called the law of works? For it by no means follows that, because it retains not the ”works”of the ancient sacraments, - even circumcision and the other ceremonies, - it therefore has no ”works” in its own sacraments, which are adapted to the present age; unless, indeed, the question was about sacramental works, when mention was made of the law, just because by it is the knowledge of sin, and therefore nobody is justified by it, so that it is not by it that boasting is excluded, but by the law of faith, whereby the just man lives. But is there not by it too the knowledge of sin, when even it says, ”Thou shall not covet?”

Chapter 22.-No Man Justified by Works.

What the difference between them is, I will briefly explain. What the law of works enjoins by menace, that the law of faith secures by faith. The one says, ”Thou shalt not covet; the other says, ”When I perceived that nobody could be continent, except God gave it to him; and that this was the very point of wisdom, to know whose gift she was; I approached unto the Lord, and I besought Him. This indeed is the very wisdom which is called piety, in which is worshipped ”the Father of lights, from whom is every best giving and perfect gift. This worship, however, consists in the sacrifice of praise and giving of thanks, so that the worshipper of God boasts not in himself, but in Him. Accordingly, by the law of works, God says to us, Do what I command thee; but by the law of faith we say to God, Give me what Thou commandest. Now this is the reason why the law gives its command, - to admonish us what faith ought to do, that is, that he to whom the command is given, if he is as yet unable to perform it, may know what to ask for; but if he has at once the ability, and complies with the command, he ought also to be aware from whose gift the ability comes.

”For we have received not the spirit of this world,” says again that most constant preacher of grace, ”but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. What, however, ”is the spirit of this world,” but the spirit of pride? By it their foolish heart is darkened, who, although knowing God, glorified Him not as God, by giving Him thanks. Moreover, it is really by this same spirit that they too are deceived, who, while ignorant of the righteousness of God, and wishing to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to God’s righteousness. It appears to me, therefore, that he is much more ”a child of faith” who has learned from what source to hope for what he has not yet, than he who attributes to himself whatever he has; although, no doubt, to both of these must be preferred the man who both has, and at the same time knows from whom he has it, if nevertheless he does not believe himself to be what he has not yet attained to. Let him not fall into the mistake of the Pharisee, who, while thanking God for what he possessed, yet failed to ask for any further gift, just as if he stood in, want of nothing for the increase or perfection of his righteousness.

Now, having duly considered and weighed all these circumstances and testimonies, we conclude that a man is not justified by the precepts of a holy life, but by faith in Jesus Christ,-in a word, not by the law of works, but by the law of faith; not by the letter,but by the spirit; not by the merits of deeds, but by free grace.

Chapter 23 [XIV.] -How the Decalogue Kills, If Grace Be Not Present.

Although, therefore, the apostle seems to reprove and correct those who were being persuaded to be circumcised, in such terms as to designate by the word ”law” circumcision itself and other similar legal observances, which are now rejected as shadows of a future substance by Christians who yet hold what those shadows figuratively promised; he at the same time nevertheless would have it to be clearly understood that the law, by which he says no man is justified, lies not merely in those sacramental institutions which contained promissory figures, but also in those works by which whosoever has done them lives holily, and amongst which occurs this prohibition: ”Thou shalt not covet. Now, to make our statement all the clearer, let us look at the Decalogue itself. It is certain, then, that Moses on the mount received the law, that he might deliver it to the people, written on tables of stone by the finger of God. It is summed up in these ten commandments, in which there is no precept about circumcision, nor anything concerning those animal sacrifices which have ceased to be offered by Christians. Well, now, I should like to be told what there is in these ten commandments, except the observance of the Sabbath, which ought not to be kept by a Christian,-whether it prohibit the making and worshipping of idols and of any other gods than the one true God, or the taking of God’s name in vain; or prescribe honour to parents;

or give warning against fornication, murder, theft, false witness, adultery, or coveting other men’s property? Which of these commandments would any one say that the Christian ought not to keep? Is it possible to contend that it is not the law which was written on those two tables that the apostle describes as ”the letter that killeth,” but the law of circumcision and the other sacred rites which are now abolished? But then how can we think so, when in the law occurs this precept, ”Thou shall not covet,” by which very commandment, notwithstanding its being holy, just, and good, ”sin,” says the apostle, ”deceived me, and by it slew me? What else can this be than ”the letter” that ”killeth”?

Chapter 24.-The Passage in Corinthians.

In the passage where he speaks to the Corinthians about the letter that kills, and the spirit that gives life, he expresses himself more clearly, but he does not mean even there any other "letter" to be understood than the Decalogue itself, which was written on the two tables. For these are His words: "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who hath made us fit, as ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more shall the ministration of righteousness abound in glory. A good deal might be said about these words; but perhaps we shall have a more fitting opportunity at some future time.

At present, however, I beg you to observe how he speaks of the letter that killeth, and contrasts therewith the spirit that giveth life. Now this must certainly be "the ministration of death written and engraven in stones," and "the ministration of condemnation," since the law entered that sin might abound. But the commandments themselves are so useful and salutary to the doer of them, that no one could have life unless he kept them. Well, then, is it owing to the one precept about the Sabbath-day, which is included in it, that the Decalogue is called "the letter that killeth? Because, forsooth, every man that still observes that day in its literal appointment is carnally wise, but to be carnally wise is nothing else than death? And must the other nine commandments, which are rightly observed in their literal form, not be regarded as belonging to the law of works by which none is justified, but to the law of faith whereby the just man lives? Who can possibly entertain so absurd an opinion as to suppose that "the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones," is not said equally of all the ten commandments, but only of the solitary one touching the Sabbath-day? In which class do we place that which is thus spoken of: "The law worketh

wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression? and again thus: ”Until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law?

and also that which we have already so often quoted: ”By the law is the knowledge of sin? and especially the passage in which the apostle has more clearly expressed the question of which we are treating: ”I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet?”

Chapter 25. - the Passage in Romans.

Now carefully consider this entire passage, and see whether it says anything about circumcision, or the Sabbath, or anything else pertaining to a foreshadowing sacrament. Does not its whole scope amount to this, that the letter which forbids sin fails to give man life, but rather ”killeth,” by increasing concupiscence, and aggravating sinfulness by transgression, unless indeed grace liberates us by the law of faith, which is in Christ Jesus, when His love is ”shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us? The apostle having used these words: ”That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter,” goes on to inquire, ”What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay; I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, worked death in me by that which is good;

that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual; whereas I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. But then it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing. To will, indeed, is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that which I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, through Jesus Christ out Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Chapter 26.-No Fruit Good Except It Grow from the Root of Love.

It is evident, then, that the oldness of the letter, in the absence of the newness of the spirit, instead of freeing us from sin, rather makes us guilty by the knowledge of sin. Whence it is written in another part of Scripture, "He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow," - not that the law is itself evil, but because the commandment has its good in the demonstration of the letter, not in the assistance of the spirit; and if this commandment is kept from the fear of punishment and not from the love of righteousness, it is servilely kept, not freely, and therefore it is not kept at all. For no fruit is good which does not grow from the root of love. If, however, that faith be present which worketh by love, then one begins to delight in the law of God after the inward man, and this delight is the gift of the spirit, not of the letter; even though there is another law in our members still warring against the law of the mind, until the old state is changed, and passes into that newness which increases from day to day in the inward man, whilst the grace of God is liberating us from the body of this death through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Chapter 27 [XV.] - Grace, Concealed in the Old Testament, is Revealed in the New.

This grace hid itself under a veil in the Old Testament, but it has been revealed in the New Testament according to the most perfectly ordered dispensation of the ages, forasmuch as God knew how to dispose all things. And perhaps it is a part of this hiding of grace, that in the Decalogue, which was given on Mount Sinai, only the portion which relates to the Sabbath was hidden under a prefiguring precept. The Sabbath is a day of sanctification; and it is not without significance that, among all the works which God accomplished, the first sound of sanctification was heard on the day when He rested from all His labours. On this, indeed, we must not now enlarge. But at the same time I deem it to be enough for the point now in question, that it was not for nothing that the nation was commanded on that day to abstain from all servile work, by which sin is signified; but because not to commit sin belongs to sanctification, that is, to God's gift through the Holy Spirit. And this precept alone among the others, was placed in the law, which was written on the two tables of stone, in a prefiguring shadow, under which the Jews observe the Sabbath, that by this very circumstance it might be signified that it was then the time for concealing the grace, which had to be revealed in the New Testament by the death of Christ, - the rending, as it were, of the veil. "For when," says the apostle, "it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."

Chapter 28 [XVI] - Why the Holy Ghost is Called the Finger of God.

”Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Now this Spirit of God, by whose gift we are justified, whence it comes to pass that we delight not to sin, - in which is liberty; even as, when we are without this Spirit, we delight to sin, - in which is slavery, from the works of which we must abstain; - this Holy Spirit, through whom love is shed abroad in our hearts, which is the fulfilment of the law, is designated in the gospel as ”the finger of God.” Is it not because those very tables of the law were written by the finger of God, that the Spirit of God by whom we are sanctified is also the finger of God, in order that, living by faith, we may do good works through love? Who is not touched by this congruity, and at the same time diversity? For as fifty days are reckoned from the celebration of the Passover (which was ordered by Moses to be offered by slaying the typical lamb, to signify, indeed, the future death of the Lord) to the day when Moses received the law written on the tables of stone by the finger of God, so, in like manner, from the death and resurrection of Him who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, there were fifty complete days up to the time when the finger of God - that is, the Holy Spirit-gathered together in one perfect company those who believed.

Chapter 29 [XVII.]-A Comparison of the Law of Moses and of the New Law.

Now, amidst this admirable correspondence, there is at least this very considerable diversity in the cases, in that the people in the earlier instance were deterred by a horrible dread from approaching the place where the law was given; whereas in the other case the Holy Ghost came upon them who were gathered together in expectation of His promised gift. There it was on tables of stone that the finger of God operated; here it was on the hearts of men. There the law was given outwardly, so that the unrighteous might be terrified; here it was given inwardly, so that they might be justified. For this, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment,"-such, of course, as was written on those tables,- "it is briefly comprehended," says he, "in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Now this was not written on the tables of stone, but "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." God's law, therefore, is love. "To it the carnal mind is not subject, neither indeed can be;" but when the works of love are written on tables to alarm the carnal mind, there arises the law of works and "the letter which killeth" the transgressor; but when love itself is shed abroad in the hearts of believers, then we have the law of faith, and the spirit which gives life to him that loves.

Chapter 30.-The New Law Written Within.

Now, observe how consonant this diversity is with those words of the apostle which I quoted not long ago in another connection, and which I postponed for a more careful consideration afterwards: ”Forasmuch,” says he, ”as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. See how he shows that the one is written without man, that it may alarm him from without; the other within man himself, that it may justify him from within. He speaks of the ”fleshy tables of the heart,” not of the carnal mind, but of a living agent possessing sensation, in comparison with a stone, which is senseless. The assertion which he subsequently makes,-that ”the children of Israel could not look stedfastly on the end of the face of Moses,” and that he accordingly spoke to them through a veil, -signifies that the letter of the law justifies no man, but that rather a veil is placed on the reading of the Old Testament, until it shall be turned to Christ, and the veil be removed; -in other words, until it shall be turned to grace, and be understood that from Him accrues to us the justification, whereby we do what He commands. And He commands, in order that, because we lack in ourselves, we may flee to Him for refuge.

Accordingly, after most guardedly saying, ”Such trust have we through Christ to God-ward,” the apostle immediately goes on to add the statement which underlies our subject, to prevent our confidence being attributed to any strength of our own. He says: ”Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us fit to be ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

Chapter 31 [XVIII.]-The Old Law Ministers Death; The New, Righteousness.

Now, since, as he says in another passage, ”the law was added because of transgression,” meaning the law which is written externally to man, he therefore designates it both as ”the ministration of death,” and ”the ministration of condemnation; but the other, that is, the law of the New Testament, he calls ”the ministration of the Spirit” and ”the ministration of righteousness,” because through the Spirit we work righteousness, and are delivered from the condemnation due to transgression. The one, therefore, vanishes away, the other abides; for the terrifying schoolmaster will be dispensed with, when love has succeeded to fear. Now ”where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But that this ministration is vouchsafed to us, not on account of our deserving, but from His mercy, the apostle thus declares: ”Seeing then that we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, let us faint not; but let us renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor adulterating the word of God with deceit. By this ”craftiness” and ”deceitfulness” he would have us understand the hypocrisy with which the arrogant would fain be supposed to be righteous. Whence in the psalm, which the apostle cites in testimony of this grace of God, it is said, ”Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin, and in whose mouth is no guile. This is the confession of lowly saints, who do not boast to be what they are not. Then, in a passage which follows not long after, the apostle writes thus:

”For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. This is the knowledge of His glory, whereby we know that He is the light which illumines our darkness. And I beg you to observe how he inculcates this very point: ”We have,” says he, ”this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. When further on he commends in glowing terms this same grace, in the Lord Jesus Christ, until he comes to that vestment of the righteousness of faith, ”clothed with which we cannot be found naked,” and whilst longing for which ”we groan, being burdened” with

mortality, ”earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven,” ”that mortality might be swallowed up of life;” - observe what he says: ”Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit; and after a little he thus briefly draws the conclusion of the matter: ”That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. This is not the righteousness whereby God is Himself righteous, but that whereby we are made righteous by Him.

Chapter 32 [XIX.] - the Christian Faith Touching the Assistance of Grace.

Let no Christian then stray from this faith, which alone is the Christian one; nor let any one, when he has been made to feel ashamed to say that we become righteous through our own selves, without the grace of God working this in us, - because he sees, when such an allegation is made, how unable pious believers are to endure it, -resort to any subterfuge on this point, by affirming that the reason why we cannot become righteous without the operation of God's grace is this, that He gave the law, He instituted its teaching, He commanded its precepts of good. For there is no doubt that, without His assisting grace, the law is "the letter which killeth;" but when the life-giving spirit is present, the law causes that to be loved as written within, which it once caused to be feared as written without.

Chapter 33.-The Prophecy of Jeremiah Concerning the New Testament.

Observe this also in that testimony which was given by the prophet on this subject in the clearest way: ”Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will consummate a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt. Because they continued not in my covenant, I also have rejected them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” What say we to this? One nowhere, or hardly anywhere, except in this passage of the prophet, finds in the Old Testament Scriptures any mention so made of the New Testament as to indicate it by its very name. It is no doubt often referred to and foretold as about to be given, but not so plainly as to have its very name mentioned. Consider then carefully, what difference God has testified as existing between the two testaments - the old covenant and the new.

Chapter 34. - the Law; Grace.

After saying, ”Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt,” observe what He adds: ”Because they continued not in my covenant. He reckons it as their own fault that they did not continue in God’s covenant, lest the law, which they received at that time, should seem to be deserving of blame. For it was the very law that Christ” came not to destroy, but to fulfil. Nevertheless, it is not by that law that the ungodly are made righteous, but by grace; and this change is effected by the life-giving Spirit, without whom the letter kills. ”For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. Out of this promise, that is, out of the kindness of God, the law is fulfilled, which without the said promise only makes men transgressors, either by the actual commission of some sinful deed, if the flame of concupiscence have greater power than even the restraints of fear, or at least by their mere will, if the fear of punishment transcend the pleasure of lust.

In what he says, ”The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe,” it is the benefit of this ”conclusion” itself which is asserted. For what purposes ”hath it concluded,” except as it is expressed in the next sentence: ”Before, indeed, faith came, we were kept under the law, concluded for the faith which was afterwards revealed? The law was therefore given, in order that grace might be sought; grace was given, in order that the law might be fulfilled. Now it was not through any fault of its own that the law was not fulfilled, but by the fault of the carnal mind;and this fault was to be demonstrated by the law, and healed by grace. ”For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Accordingly, in the passage which we cited from the prophet, he says, ”I will consummate a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah,” - and what means I will consummate but I will fulfil? -”not, according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt.”

Chapter 35 [XX.] -The Old Law; The New Law.

The one was therefore old, because the other is new. But whence comes it that one is old and the other new, when the same law, which said in the Old Testament, ”Thou shalt not covet,” is fulfilled by the New Testament? ”Because,” says the prophet, ”they continued not in my covenant, I have also rejected them, saith the Lord.” It is then on account of the offence of the old man, which was by no means healed by the letter which commanded and threatened, that it is called the old covenant; whereas the other is called the new covenant, because of the newness of the spirit, which heals the new man of the fault of the old. Then consider what follows, and see in how clear a light the fact is placed, that men who bare faith are unwilling to trust in themselves: ”Because,” says he, ”this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.” See how similarly the apostle states it in the passage we have already quoted: ”Not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart,” because ”not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.” And I apprehend that the apostle in this passage had no other reason for mentioning ”the New Testament” (”who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit”), than because he had an eye to the words of the prophet, when he said ”Not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart,” inasmuch as in the prophet it runs: ”I will write it in their hearts.”

Chapter 36 [XXI.] -The Law Written in Our Hearts.

What then is God's law written by God Himself in the hearts of men, but the very presence of the Holy Spirit, who is "the finger of God," and by whose presence is shed abroad in our hearts the love which is the fulfilling of the law, and the end of the commandment? Now the promises of the Old Testament are earthly; and yet (with the exception of the sacramental ordinances which were the shadow of things to come, such as circumcision, the Sabbath and other observances of days, and the ceremonies of certain meats, and the complicated ritual of sacrifices and sacred things which suited "the oldness" of the carnal law and its slavish yoke) it contains such precepts of righteousness as we are even now taught to observe, which were especially expressly drawn out on the two tables without figure or shadow: for instance, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt do no murder, "Thou shalt not covet," "and whatsoever other commandment is briefly comprehended in the saying, Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself." Nevertheless, whereas as in the said Testament earthly and temporal promises are, as I have said, recited, and these are goods of this corruptible flesh (although they prefigure those heavenly and everlasting blessings which belong to the New Testament), what is now promised is a good for the heart itself, a good for the mind, a good of the spirit, that is, an intellectual good; since it is said, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write them," - by which He signified that men would not fear the law which alarmed them externally, but would love the very righteousness of the law which dwelt inwardly in their hearts.

Chapter 37 [XXII.] -The Eternal Reward.

He then went on to state the reward: ”I will be their God, and they shall be my people. This corresponds to the Psalmist’s words to God: ”It is good for me to hold me fast by God. ”I will be,” says God, ”their God, and they shall be my people. What is better than this good, what happier than this happiness, -to live to God, to live from God, with whom [is the fountain of life, and in whose light we shall see light? Of this life the Lord Himself speaks in these words: ”This is life eternal that they may know Thee the only true God, land Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent,” - that is, Thee and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent,” the one true God. For no less than this did Himself promise to those who love Him: ”He that loveth me, keepeth my commandments; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him” - in the form, no doubt, of God, wherein He is equal to the Father; not in the form of a servant, for in this He will display Himself even to the wicked also. Then, however, shall that come to pass which is written, ”Let the ungodly man be taken away, that he see not the glory of the Lord. Then also shall” the wicked go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.

Now this eternal life, as I have just mentioned, has been defined to be, that they may know the one true God. Accordingly John again says: ”Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. This likeness begins even now to be reformed in us, while the inward man is being renewed from day to day, according to the image of Him that created him.

Chapter 38 [XXIII.]-The Re-Formation Which is Now Being Effected, Compared with the Perfection of the Life to Come.

But what is this change, and how great, in comparison with the perfect eminence which is then to be realized? The apostle applies some sort of illustration, derived from well-known things, to these indescribable things, comparing the period of childhood with the age of manhood. ”When I was a child,” says he, ”I used to speak as a child, to understand as a child, to think as a child; but when I became a man, I put aside childish things.” He then immediately explains why he said this in these words ”For now we see by means of a mirror, darkly but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

Chapter 39 [XXIV]-The Eternal Reward Which is Specially Declared in the New Testament, Foretold by the Prophet.

Accordingly, in our prophet likewise, whose testimony we are dealing with, this is added, that in God is the reward, in Him the end, in Him the perfection of happiness, in Him the sum of the blessed and eternal life. For after saying, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people," he at once adds, "And they shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least even unto the greatest of them." Now, the present is certainly the time of the New Testament, the promise of which is given by the prophet in the words which we have quoted from his prophecy. Why then does each man still say even now to his neighbour and his brother," Know the Lord?" Or is it not perhaps meant that this is everywhere said when the gospel is preached, and when this is its very proclamation? For on what ground does the apostle call himself "a teacher of the Gentiles," if it be not that what he himself implies in the following passage becomes realized: "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Since, then, this preaching is now everywhere spreading, in what way is it the time of the New Testament of which the prophet spoke in the words, "And they shall not every man teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them," unless it be that he has included in his prophetic forecast the eternal reward of the said New Testament, by promising us the most blessed contemplation of God Himself?

Chapter 40. - How that is to Be the Reward of All; The Apostle Earnestly Depends Grace.

What then is the import of the ”All, from the least unto the greatest of them,” but all that belong spiritually to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah,-that is, to the children of Isaac, to the seed of Abraham? For such is the promise, wherein it was said to him, ”In Isaac shall thy seed be called; for they which are the children of the flesh are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, Atthis time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth,) it was said unto her, ”The eider shall serve the younger. This is the house of Israel, or rather the house of Judah, on account of Christ, who came of the tribe of Judah. This is the house of the children of promise, -not by reason of their own merits, but of the kindness of God. For God promises what He Himself performs: He does not Himself promise, and another perform; which would no longer be promising, but prophesying. Hence it is ”not of works, but of Him that calleth,” lest the result should be their own, not God’s;

lest the reward should be ascribed not to His grace, but to their due; and so grace should be no longer grace which was so earnestly defended and maintained by him who, though the least of the apostles, laboured more abundantly than all the rest,-yet not himself, but the grace of God that was with him. ”They shall all know me,” He says,-”All,” the house of Israel and house of Judah. ”All,” however, ”are not Israel which are of Israel,” but they only to whom it is said in ”the psalm concerning the morning aid” (that is, concerning the new refreshing light, meaning that of the new testament), ”All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all ye the seed of Israel. All the seed, without exception, even the entire seed of the promise and of the called, but only of those who are the called according to His purpose. ”For whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified. ”Therefore it is of faith,

that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed: not to that only which is of the law,"-that is, which comes from the Old Testament into the New,-"but to that also which is of faith," which was indeed prior to the law, even "the faith of Abraham,"-meaning those who imitate the faith of Abraham,-" who is the father of us all;

as it is written, I have made thee the father of many nations. Now all these predestinated, called, justified, glorified ones, shall know God by the grace of the new testament, from the least to the greatest of them.

Chapter 41.-The Law Written in the Heart, and the Reward of the Eternal Contemplation of God, Belong to the New Covenant; Who Among the Saints are the Least and the Greatest.

As then the law of works, which was written on the tables of stone, and its reward, the land of promise, which the house of the carnal Israel after their liberation from Egypt received, belonged to the old testament, so the law of faith, written on the heart, and its reward, the beatific vision which the house of the spiritual Israel, when delivered from the present world, shall perceive, belong to the new testament. Then shall come to pass what the apostle describes: ”Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away,” -even that imperfect knowledge of ”the child” in which this present life is passed, and which is but ”in part,””by means of a mirror darkly. Because of this, indeed, ”prophecy” is necessary, for still to the past succeeds the future; and because of this, too, ”tongues” are required,-that is, a multiplicity of expressions, since it is by different ones that different things are suggested to him who does not as yet contemplate with a perfectly purified mind the everlasting light of transparent truth. ”When that, however, which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away,” then, what appeared to the flesh in assumed flesh shall display Itself as It is in Itself to all who love It; then, there shall be eternal life for us to know the one very God; then shall we be like Him, because ”we shall then know, even as we are known;

then ”they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least unto the greatest of them. Now this may be understood in several ways: Either, that in that life the saints shall differ one from another in glory, as star from star. It matters not how the expression runs,-whether

(as in the passage before us) it be, ”From the least unto the greatest of them,” or the other way, From the greatest unto the least. And, in like manner, it matters not even if we understand ”the least” to mean those who simply believe, and ”the greatest” those who have been further able to understand-so far as may be in this world-the light which is incorporeal and unchangeable. Or, ”the least” may mean those who are later in time; whilst by ”the greatest” He may have intended to indicate those who were prior in time. For they are all to receive the promised vision of God hereafter, since it was for us that they foresaw the future which would be better than their present, that they without us should not arrive at complete perfection. And so the earlier are found to be the lesser, because they were less deferred in time; as in the case of the gospel ”penny a day,” which is given for an illustration. This penny they are the first to receive who came last into the vineyard.

Or, ”the least and the greatest” ought perhaps to be taken in some other sense, which at present does not occur to my mind.

Chapter 42 [XXV.]-Difference Between the Old and the New Testaments.

I beg of you, however, carefully to observe, as far as you can, what I am endeavouring to prove with so much effort. When the prophet promised a new covenant, not according to the covenant which had been formerly made with the people of Israel when liberated from Egypt, he said nothing about a change in the sacrifices or any sacred ordinances, although such change, too, was without doubt to follow, as we see in fact that it did follow, even as the same prophetic scripture testifies in many other passages; but he simply called attention to this difference, that God would impress His laws on the mind of those who belonged to this covenant, and would write them. their hearts, whence the apostle drew his conclusion,-"not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart; and that the eternal recompense of this righteousness was not the land out of which were driven the Amorites and Hittites, and other nations who dwelt there, but God Himself, "to whom it is good to hold fast," in order that God's good that they love, may be the God Himself whom they love, between whom and men nothing but sin produces separation; and this is remitted only by grace. Accordingly, after saying, "For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them," He instantly added, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

By the law of works, then, the Lord says, "Thou shalt not covet: " but by the law of faith He says, "Without me ye can do nothing; for He was treating of good works, even the fruit of the vine-branches. It is therefore apparent what difference there is between the old covenant and the new,-that in the former the law is written on tables, while in the latter on hearts; so that what in the one alarms from without, in the other delights from within; and in the former man becomes a transgressor through the letter that kills, in the other a lover through the life-giving spirit. We must therefore avoid saying, that the way in which God assists us to work righteousness, and "works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure," is by externally addressing to our faculties precepts of holiness; for He gives His increase internally, by shedding love abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us."

Chapter 43 [XXVI.]-A Question Touching the Passage in the Apostle About the Gentiles Who are Said to Do by Nature the Law's Commands, Which They are Also Said to Have Written on Their Hearts.

Now we must see in what sense it is that the apostle says, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts," lest there should seem to be no certain difference in the new testament, in that the Lord promised that He would write His laws in the hearts of His people, inasmuch as the Gentiles have this done for them naturally. This question therefore has to be sifted, arising as it does as one of no inconsiderable importance. For some one may say, "If God distinguishes the new testament from the old by this circumstance, that in the old He wrote His law on tables, but in the new He wrote them on men's hearts, by what are the faithful of the new testament discriminated from the Gentiles, which have the work of the law written on their hearts, whereby they do by nature the things of the law, as if, forsooth, they were better than the ancient people, which received the law on tables, and before the new people, which has that conferred on it by the new testament which nature has already bestowed on them?"

Chapter 44.-The Answer Is, that the Passage Must Be Understood of the Faithful of the New Covenant.

Has the apostle perhaps mentioned those Gentiles as having the law written in their hearts who belong to the new testament? We must look at the previous context. First, then, referring to the gospel, he says, ”It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealedfrom faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. Then he goes on to speak of the ungodly, who by reason of their pride profit not by the knowledge of God, since they did not glorify Him as God, neither were thankful. He then passes to those who think and do the very things which they condemn, - having in view, no doubt, the Jews, who made their boast of God’s law, but as yet not mentioning them expressly by name; and then he says, ”Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: but glory, honour, and peace, to every soul that doeth good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law; for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

Who they are that are treated of in these words, he goes on to tell us: ”For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law,” and so forth in the passage which I have quoted already. Evidently, therefore, no others are here signified under the name of Gentiles than those whom he had before designated by the name of ”Greek” when he said, ”To the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Since then the gospel is ”the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and, also to the Greek; and since ”indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, are upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek: but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that doeth good; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek; since, moreover, the Greek is indicated by the term ”Gentiles” who do by nature the things contained in the law, and which have the work of the law written in their hearts: it follows that such Gentiles as

have the law written in their hearts belong to the gospel, since to them, on their believing, it is the power of God unto salvation. To what Gentiles, however, would he promise glory, and honour, and peace,in their doing good works, if living without the grace of the gospel?

Since there is no respect of persons with God, and since it is not the hearers of the law, but the doers thereof, that are justified, it follows that any man of any nation, whether Jew or Greek, who shall believe, will equally have salvation under the gospel. "For there is no difference," as he says afterwards; "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by His grace. How then could he say that any Gentile person, who was a doer of the law, was justified without the Saviour's grace?

Chapter 45.-It is Not by Their Works, But by Grace, that the Doers of the Law are Justified; God's Saints and God's Name Hallowed in Different Senses.

Now he could not mean to contradict himself in saying, "The doers of the law shall be justified," as if their justification came through their works, and not through grace; since he declares that a man is justified freely by His grace without the works of the law, intending by the term "freely" nothing else than that works do not precede justification. For in another passage he expressly says, "If by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But the statement that "thedoers of the law shall be justified " must be so understood, as that we may know that they are not otherwise doers of the law, unless they be justified, so that justification does not subsequently accrue to them as doers of the law, but justification precedes them as doers of the law. For what else does the phrase "being justified" signify than being made righteous, - by Him, of course, who justifies the ungodly man, that he may become a godly one instead? For if we were to express a certain fact by saying, "The men will be liberated," the phrase would of course be understood as asserting that the liberation would accrue to those who were men already; but if we were to say, The men will be created, we should certainly not be understood as asserting that the creation would happen to those who were already in existence, but that they became men by the creation itself.

If in like manner it were said, The doers of the law shall be honoured, we should only interpret the statement correctly if we supposed that the honour was to accrue to those who were already doers of the law: but when the allegation is, "The doers of the law shall be justified," what else does it mean than that the just shall be justified? for of course the doers of the law are just persons. And thus it amounts to the same thing as if it were said, The doers of the law shall be created,- not those who were so already, but that they may

become such; in order that the Jews who were hearers of the law might hereby understand that they wanted the grace of the Justifier, in order to be able to become its doers also. Or else the term "They shall be justified" is used in the sense of, They shall be deemed, or reckoned as just, as it is predicated of a certain man in the Gospel, "But he, willing to justify himself," - meaning that he wished to be thought and accounted just. In like manner, we attach one meaning to the statement, "God sanctifies His saints," and another to the words, "Sanctified be Thy name;

" for in the former case we suppose the words to mean that He makes those to be saints who were not saints before, and in the latter, that the prayer would have that which is always holy in itself be also regarded as holy by men, - in a word, be feared with a hallowed awe.

Chapter 46.- How the Passage of the Law Agrees with that of the Prophet.

If therefore the apostle, when he mentioned that the Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law, and have the work of the law written in their hearts, intended those to be understood who believed in Christ, - who do not come to the faith like the Jews, through a precedent law,-there is no good reason why we should endeavour to distinguish them from those to whom the Lord by the prophet promises the new covenant, telling them that He will write His laws in their hearts, inasmuch as they too, by the grafting which he says had been made of the wild olive, belong to the self-same olive-tree, -in other words, to the same people of God. There is therefore a good agreement of this passage of the apostle with the words of the prophet so that belonging to the new testament means having the law of God not written on tables, but on the heart,- that is, embracing the righteousness of the law with innermost affection, where faith works by love. Because it isby faith that God justifies the Gentiles;

and the Scripture foreseeing this, preached the gospel before to Abraham, saying, ”In thy seed shall all nations be blessed,” in order that by this grace of promise the wild olive might be grafted into the good olive, and believing Gentiles might be made children of Abraham, ”in Abraham’s seed, which is Christ,” by following the faith of him who, without receiving the law written on tables, and not yet possessing even circumcision, ”believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now what the apostle attributed to Gentiles of this character,-how that ”they have the work of the law written in their hearts; must be some such thing as what he says to the Corinthians: ”not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. For thus do they become of the house of Israel, when their uncircumcision is accounted circumcision, by the fact that they do not exhibit the righteousness of the law by the excision of the flesh, but keep it by the charity of the heart. ”If,” says he, ”the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And therefore in the house of the true Israel, in which is no guile, they are partakers of the new testament, since God puts His laws into their mind, and writes them

in their hearts with his own finger, the Holy Ghost, by whom is shed abroad in them the love which is the" fulfilling of the law."

Chapter 47 [XXVII.]-The Law ”Being Done by Nature” Means, Done by Nature as Restored by Grace.

Nor ought it to disturb us that the apostle described them as doing that which is contained in the law ”by nature,”-not by the Spirit of God, not by faith, not by grace. For it is the Spirit of grace that does it, in order to restore in us the image of God, in which we were naturally created. Sin, indeed, is contrary to nature, and it is grace that heals it,-on which account the prayer is offered to God, ”Be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee.” Therefore it is by nature that men do the things which are contained in the law; for they who do not, fail to do so by reason of their sinful defect. In consequence of this sinfulness, the law of God is erased out of their hearts; and therefore, when, the sin being healed, it is written there, the prescriptions of the law are done ”by nature,”-not that by nature grace is denied, but rather by grace nature is repaired. For ”by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men; in which all have sinned;” wherefore ”there is no difference: they all come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace.” By this grace there is written on the renewed inner man that righteousness which sin had blotted out; and this mercy comes upon the human race through our Lord Jesus Christ. ”For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”

Chapter 48.-The Image of God is Not Wholly Blotted Out in These Unbelievers; Venial Sins.

According to some, however, they who do by nature the things contained in the law must not be regarded as yet in the number of those whom Christ's grace justifies, but rather as among those some of whose actions (although they are those of ungodly men, who do not truly and rightly worship the true God) we not only cannot blame, but even justly and rightly praise, since they have been done-so far as we read, or know, or hear-according to the rule of righteousness; though at the same time, were we to discuss the question with what motive they are done, they would hardly be found to be such as [deserve the praise and defence which are due torighteous conduct. [XXVIII. Still, since God's image has not been so completely erased in the soul of man by the stain of earthly affections, as to have left remaining there not even the merest lineaments of it whence it might be justly said that man, even in the ungodliness of his life, does, or appreciates, some things contained in the law;

if this is what is meant by the statement that "the Gentiles, which have not the law" (that is, the law of God), "do by nature the things contained in the law," and that men of this character" are a law to themselves," and "show the work of the law written in their hearts,"-that is to say, what was impressed on their hearts when they were created in the image of God has not been wholly blotted out:-even in this view of the subject, that wide difference will not be disturbed, which separates the new covenant from the old, and which lies in the fact that by the new covenant the law of God is written in the hearts of believers, whereas in the old it was inscribed on tables of stone. For this writing in the heart is effected by renovation, although it had not been completely blotted out by the old nature. For just as that image of God is renewed in the mind of believers by the new testament, which impiety had not quite abolished (for there had remained undoubtedly that which the soul of man cannot be except it be rational), so also the law of God, which had not been wholly blotted out there by unrighteousness, is certainly written thereon, renewed by grace. Now in the

Jews the law which was written on tables could not effect this new inscription, which is justification, but only transgression.

For they too were men, and there was inherent in them that power of nature, which enables the rational soul both to perceive and do what is lawful; but the godliness which transfers to another life happy and immortal has "a spotless law, converting souls," so that by the light thereof they may be renewed, and that be accomplished in them which is written, "There has been manifested over us, O Lord, the light of Thy countenance. Turned away from which, they have deserved to grow old, whilst they are incapable of renovation except by the grace of Christ,-in other words, without the intercession of the Mediator; there being "one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all. Should those be strangers to His grace of whom we are treating, and who (after the manner of which we have spoken with sufficient fulness already) "do by nature the things contained in the law," of what use will be their "excusing thoughts" to them "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men," unless it be perhaps to procure for them a milder punishment?

For as, on the one hand, there are certain venial sins which do not hinder the righteous man from the attainment of eternal life, and which are unavoidable in this life, so, on the other hand, there are some good works which are of no avail to an ungodly man towards the attainment of everlasting life, although it would be very difficult to find the life of any very bad man whatever entirely without them. But inasmuch as in the kingdom of God the saints differ in glory as one star does from another, so likewise, in the condemnation of everlasting punishment, it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that other city; whilst some men will be twofold more the children of hell than others. Thus in the judgment of God not even this fact will be without its influence,-that one man will have sinned more, or less, than another, even when both are involved in the ungodliness that is worthy of damnation.

Chapter 49.-The Grace Promised by the Prophet for the New Covenant.

What then could the apostle have meant to imply by,-after checking the boasting of the Jews, by telling them that ”not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified,” -immediately afterwards speaking of them ”which, having not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law,” if in this description not they are to be understood who belong to the Mediator’s grace, but rather they who, while not worshipping the true God with true godliness, do yet exhibit some good works in the general course of their ungodly lives? Or did the apostle perhaps deem it probable, because he had previously said that ”with God there is no respect of persons,” and had afterwards said that ”God is not the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles,” -that even such scanty little works of the law, as are suggested by nature, were not discovered in such as received not the law, except as the result of the remains of the image of God; which He does not disdain when they believe in Him, with whom there is no respect of persons? But whichever of these views is accepted, it is evident that the grace of God was promised to the new testament even by the prophet, and that this grace was definitively announced to take this shape,-God’s laws were to be written in men’s hearts;

and they were to arrive at such a knowledge of God, that they were not each one to teach his neighbour and brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all were to know Him, from the least to the greatest of them. This is the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which love is shed abroad in our hearts, -not, indeed, any kind of love, but the love of God, ”out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith,” by means of which the just man, while living in this pilgrim state, is led on, after the stages of ”the glass,” and ”the enigma,” and ”what is in part,” to the actual vision, that, face to face, he may know even as he is known. For one thing has he required of the Lord, and that he still seeks after, that he may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, in order to behold the pleasantness of the Lord.

Chapter 50 [XXIX.]-Righteousness is the Gift of God.

Let no man therefore boast of that which he seems to possess, as if he had not received it; nor let him think that he has received it merely because the external letter of the law has been either exhibited to him to read, or sounded in his ear for him to hear. For "if righteousness is by the law, then Christ has died in vain. Seeing, however, that if He has not died in vain, He has ascended up on high, and has led captivity captive, and has given gifts to men, it follows that whosoever has, has from this source. But whosoever denies that he has from Him, either has not, or is in great danger of being deprived of what he has. "For it is one God which justifies the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith; in which clauses there is no real difference in the sense, as if the phrase "by faith" meant one thing, and "through faith" another, but only a variety of expression. For in one passage, when speaking of the Gentiles,-that is, of the uncircumcision,-he says, "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen by faith; and again, in another, when speaking of the circumcision, to which he himself belonged, he says, "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed in Jesus Christ.

Observe, he says that both the uncircumcision are justified by faith, and the circumcision through faith, if, indeed, the circumcision keep the righteousness of faith. For the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith, -by obtaining it of God, not by assuming it of themselves. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. And why? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works -in other words, working it out as it were by themselves, not believing that it is God who works within them. "For it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of His own good pleasure. And hereby "they stumbled at the stumbling-stone. For what he said, "not by faith, but as it were by works," he most clearly explained in the following words: "They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Then are we still in doubt what are those works of the law

by which a man is not justified, if he believes them to be his own works, as it were, without the help and gift of God, which is "by the faith of Jesus Christ?

And do we suppose that they are circumcision and the other like ordinances, because some such things in other passages are read concerning these sacramental rites too? In this place, however, it is certainly not circumcision which they wanted to establish as their own righteousness, because God established this by prescribing it Himself. Nor is it possible for us to understand this statement, of those works concerning which the Lord says to them, "Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition; because, as the apostle says, Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. He did not say, Which followed after their own traditions, framing them and relying on them. This then is the sole distinction, that the very precept, "Thou shalt not covet," and God's other good and holycommandments, they attributed to themselves; whereas, that man may keep them, God must work in him through faith in Jesus Christ, who is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. That is to say, every one who is incorporated into Him and made a member of His body, is able, by His giving the increase within, to work righteousness. It is of such a man's works that Christ Himself has said, "Without me ye can do nothing."

Chapter 51.-Faith the Ground of All Righteousness.

The righteousness of the law is proposed in these terms,-that whosoever shall do it shall live in it; and the purpose is, that when each has discovered his own weakness, he may not by his own strength, nor by the letter of the law (which cannot be done), but by faith, conciliating the Justifier, attain, and do, and live in it. For the work in which he who does it shall live, is not done except by one who is justified. His justification, however, is obtained by faith; and concerning faith it is written, "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring down Christ therefrom; or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is (says he), the word of faith which we preach: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. As far as he is saved, so far is he righteous. For by this faith we believe that God will raise even us from the dead,-even now in the spirit, that we may in this present world live soberly, righteously, and godly in the renewal of His grace;

and by and by in our flesh, which shall rise again to immortality, which indeed is the reward of the Spirit, who precedes it by a resurrection which is appropriate to Himself,-that is, by justification. "For we are buried with Christ by baptism unto death, thatlike as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walkin newness of life. By faith, therefore, in Jesus Christ we obtain salvation,-both in so far as it is begun within us in reality, and in so far as its perfection is waited for in hope; "for whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. "How abundant," says the Psalmist, "is the multitude of Thy goodness, O Lord, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, and hast perfected for them that hope in Thee! By the law we fear God; by faith we hope in God: but from those who fear punishment grace is hidden. And the soul which labours under this fear, since it has not conquered its evil concupiscence, and from which this fear, like a harsh master, has not departed,-let it flee by faith for refuge to the mercy of God, that He may give it what He commands, and may, by inspiring into it the sweetness of His gracethrough His Holy Spirit, cause the soul to delight more in what He teaches it, than it delights in what opposes His instruction.

In this manner it is that the great abundance of His sweetness,- that is, the law of faith,-His love which is in our hearts, and shed abroad, is perfected in them that hope in Him, that good may be wrought by the soul, healed not by the fear of punishment, but by the love of righteousness.

Chapter 52 [XXX.]-Grace Establishes Free Will.

Do we then by grace make void free will? God forbid! Nay, rather we establish free will. For even as the law by faith, so free will by grace, is not made void, but established. For neither is the law fulfilled except by free will but by the law is the knowledge of sin, by faith the acquisition of grace against sin, by grace the healing of the soul from the disease of sin, by the health of the soul freedom of will, by free will the love of righteousness, by love of righteousness the accomplishment of the law. Accordingly, as the law is not made void, but is established through faith, since faith procures grace whereby the law is fulfilled; so free will is not made void through grace, but is established, since grace cures the will whereby righteousness is freely loved. Now all the stages which I have here connected together in their successive links, have severally their proper voices in the sacred Scriptures. The law says: ”Thou shall not covet. Faith says: ”Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee. Grace says: ”Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. Health says: ”O Lord my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me. Free will says: ”I will freely sacrifice unto Thee. Love of righteousness says: ”Transgressors told me pleasant tales, but not according to Thy law, O Lord.

How is it then that miserable men dare to be proud, either of their free will, before they are freed, or of their own strength, if they have been freed? They do not observe that in the very mention of free will they pronounce the name of liberty. But ”where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. If, therefore, they are the slaves of sin, why do they boast of free will? For by what a man is overcome, to the same is he delivered as a slave. But if they have been freed, why do they vaunt themselves as if it were by their own doing, and boast, as if they had not received? Or are they free in such sort that they do not choose to have Him for their Lord who says to them: ”Without me ye can do nothing; and ”If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed?”

Chapter 53 [XXXI.]-Volition and Ability.

Some one will ask whether the faith itself, in which seems to be the beginning either of salvation, or of that series leading to salvation whichI have just mentioned, is placed in our power. We shall see more easily, if we first examine with some care what "our power" means. Since, then, there are two things,-will and ability; it follows that not every one that has the will has therefore the ability also, nor has every one that possesses the ability the will also; for as we sometimes will what we cannot do, so also we sometimes can do what we do not will. From the words themselves when sufficiently considered, we shall detect, in the very ring of the terms, the derivation of volition from willingness, and of ability from ableness. Therefore, even as the man who wishes has volition, so also the man who can has ability. But in order that a thing may be done by ability, the volition must be present. For no man is usually said to do a thing with ability if he did it unwillingly. Although, at the same time, if we observe more precisely, even what a man is compelled to do unwillingly, he does, if he does it, by his volition; only he is said to be an unwilling agent, or to act against his will, because he would prefer some other thing. He is compelled, indeed, by some unfortunate influence, to do what he does under compulsion, wishing to escape it or to remove it out of his way.

For if his volition be so strong that he prefers not doing this to not suffering that, then beyond doubt he resists the compelling influence, and does it not. And accordingly, if he does it, it is not with a full and free will, but yet it is not without will that he does it; and inasmuch as the volition is followed by its effect, we cannot say that he lacked the ability to do it. If, indeed, he willed to do it, yielding to compulsion, but could not, although we should allow that a coerced will was present, we should yet say that ability was absent. But when he did not do the thing because he was unwilling, then of course the ability was present, but the volition was absent, since he did it not, by his resistance to the compelling influence. Hence it is that even they who compel, or who persuade, are accustomed to say, Why don't you do what you have in your ability, in order to avoid this evil? While they who are utterly unable to do what they are compelled to do, because they are supposed to be able usually answer by excusing themselves, and say, I would do it if it were in my ability. What then do we ask more, since we call that ability when to the volition is added the faculty of doing?

Accordingly, every one is said to have that in his ability which he does if he likes, and does not if he dislikes.

Chapter 54.-Whether Faith Be in a Man's Own Power.

Attend now to the point which we have laid down for discussion: whether faith is in our own power? We now speak of that faith which we employ when we believe anything, not that which we give when we make a promise; for this too is called faith. We use the word in one sense when we say, "He had no faith in me," and in another sense when we say, "He did not keep faith with me. The one phrase means, "He did not Believe what I said; the other, "He did not do what he promised. According to the faith by which we believe, we are faithful to God; but according to that whereby a thing is brought to pass which is promised, God Himself even is faithful to us; for the apostle declares, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. Well, now, the former is the faith about which we inquire, Whether it be in our power? even the faith by which we believe God, or believe on God. For of this it is written, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. And again, "To him that believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Consider now whether anybody believes, if he be unwilling; or whether he believes not, if he shall have willed it. Such a position, indeed, is absurd (for what is believing but consenting to the truth of what is said?

and this consent is certainly voluntary): faith, therefore, is in our own power. But, as the apostle says: "There is no power but comes from God," what reason then is there why it may not be said to us even of this: "What hast thou which thou hast not received?" -for it is God who gave us even to believe. Nowhere, however, in Holy Scripture do we find such an assertion as, There is no volition but comes from God. And rightly is it not so written, because it is not true: otherwise God would be the author even of sins (which Heaven forbid!), if there were no volition except what comes from Him; inasmuch as an evil volition alone is already a sin, even if the effect be wanting,-in other words, if it has not ability. But when the evil volition receives ability to accomplish its intention, this proceeds from the judgment of God, with whom there is no unrighteousness. He indeed punishes after this manner; nor is His chastisement unjust because it is secret. The ungodly man, however, is not aware that he is being punished, except when he unwillingly discovers by an open penalty how much evil he has willingly committed. This is just what the apostle says of certain men: "God

hath given them up to the evil desires of their own hearts, . . . to do those things that are not convenient. Accordingly, the Lord also said to Pilate:

"Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above. But still, when the ability is given, surely no necessity is imposed. Therefore, although David had received ability to kill Saul, he preferred sparing to striking him. Whence we understand that bad men receive ability for the condemnation of their depraved will, while good men receive ability for trying of their good will.

Chapter 55 [XXXII.]-What Faith is Laudable.

Since faith, then, is in our power, inasmuch as every one believes when he likes, and, when he believes, believes voluntarily; our next inquiry, which we must conduct with care, is, What faith it is which the apostle commends with so much earnestness? For indiscriminate faith is not good. Accordingly we find this caution: ”Brethren, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.” Nor must the clause in commendation of love, that it ”believeth all things,” be so understood as if we should detract from the love of any one, if he refuses to believe at once what he hears. For the same love admonishes us that we ought not readily to believe anything evil about a brother; and when anything of the kind is said of him, does it not judge it to be more suitable to its character not to believe? Lastly, the same love, ”which believeth all things,” does not believe every spirit. Accordingly, charity believes all things no doubt, but it believes in God. Observe, it is not said, Believes in all things. It cannot therefore be doubted that the faith which is commended by the apostle is the faith whereby we believe in God.

Chapter 56.-The Faith of Those Who are Under the Law Different from the Faith of Others.

But there is yet another distinction to be observed,-since they who are under the law both attempt to work their own righteousness through fear of punishment, and fail to do God's righteousness, because this is accomplished by the love to which only what is lawful is pleasing, and never by the fear which is forced to have in its work the thing which is lawful, although it has something else in its will which would prefer, if it were only possible, that to be lawful which is not lawful. These persons also believe in God; for if they had no faith in Him at all, neither would they of course have any dread of the penalty of His law. This, however, is not the faith which the apostle commends. He says: "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The fear, then, of which we speak is slavish; and therefore, even though there be in it a belief in the Lord, yet righteousness is not loved by it, but condemnation is feared. God's children, however, exclaim, "Abba, Father,"-one of which words they of the circumcision utter; the other, they of the uncircumcision,-the Jew first, and then the Greek; since there is "one God, which justifieth the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. When indeed they utter this call, they seek something; and what do they seek, but that which they hunger and thirst after?

And what else is this but that which is said of them, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled? Let, then, those who are under the law pass over hither, and become sons instead of slaves; and yet not so as to cease to be slaves, but so as, while they are sons, still to serve their Lord and Father freely. For even this have they received; for the Only-begotten "gave them power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; and He advised them to ask, to seek, and to knock, in order to receive, to find, and to have the gate opened to them, adding by way of rebuke, the words : "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him? When, therefore, that strength of sin, the law, inflamed the sting of death, even sin, to take occasion and by the

commandment work all manner of concupiscence in them, of whom were they to ask for the gift of continence but of Him who knows how to give good gifts to His children? Perhaps, however, a man, in his folly, is unaware that no one can be continent except God give him the gift. To know this, indeed, he requires Wisdom herself.

Why, then, does he not listen to the Spirit of his Father, speaking through Christ's apostle, or even Christ Himself, who says in His gospel, "Seek and ye shall find; " and who also says to us, speaking by His apostle: "If any one of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given to him. Let him, however, ask in faith, nothing wavering? " This is the faith by which the just man lives; this is the faith whereby he believes on Him who justifies the ungodly; this is the faith through which boasting is excluded, either by the retreat of that with which we become self-inflated, or by the rising of that with which we glory in the Lord. This, again, is the faith by which we procure that largess of the Spirit, of which it is said: "We indeed through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. But this admits of the further question, Whether he meant by "the hope of righteousness" that by which righteousness hopes, or that whereby righteousness is itself hoped for? For the just man, who lives by faith, hopes undoubtedly for eternal life; and the faith likewise, which hungers and thirsts for righteousness, makes progress therein by the renewal of the inward man day by day, and hopes to be satiated therewith in that eternal life, where shall be realized that which is said of God by the psalm: "Who satisfieth thy desire with good things.

This, moreover, is the faith whereby they are saved to whom it is said: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. This, in short, is the faith which works not by fear, but by love; not by dreading punishment, but by loving righteousness. Whence, therefore, arises this love,-that is to say, this charity,-by which faith works, if not from the source whence faith itself obtained it? For it would not be within us, to what extent soever it is in us, if it were not diffused in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us. Now "the love of God" is said to be shed abroad in our hearts, not because He loves us, but because He makes us lovers of Himself; just as "the righteousness of God" is used in the sense of our being made righteous by His gift; and "the salvation of the Lord," in that we are saved by Him; and "the faith of Jesus Christ," because He makes us believers in Him. This is that righteousness of God, which He not only teaches us by the precept of His law, but also bestows upon us by the gift of His Spirit.

Chapter 57 [XXXIII.]-Whence Comes the Will to Believe?

But it remains for us briefly to inquire, Whether the will by which we believe be itself the gift of God, or whether it arise from that free will which is naturally implanted in us? If we say that it is not the gift of God, we must then incur the fear of supposing that we have discovered some answer to the apostle's reproachful appeal: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" -even some such an answer as this: "'See, we have the will to believe, which we did not receive. See in what we glory,-even in what we did not receive!'" If, however, we were to say that this kind of will is nothing but the gift of God, we should then have to fear lest unbelieving and ungodly men might not unreasonably seem to have some fair excuse for their unbelief, in the fact that God has refused to give them this will. Now this that the apostle says, "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His own good pleasure," belongs already to that grace which faith secures, in order that good works may be within the reach of man,-even the good works which faith achieves through the love which is shed abroad in the heart by theHoly Ghost which is given to us. If we believe that we may attain this grace (and of course believe voluntarily), then the question arises whence we have thiswill?-if from nature, why it is not at everybody's command, since the same God made all men? if from God's gift, then again, why is not the gift open to all, since "He will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth?"

Chapter 58.-The Free Will of Man is an Intermediate Power.

Let us then, first of all, lay down this proposition, and see whether it satisfies the question before us: that free will, naturally assigned by the Creator to our rational soul, is such a neutral power, as can either incline towards faith, or turn towards unbelief. Consequently a man cannot be said to have even that will with which he believes in God, without having received it; since this rises at the call of God out of the free will which he received naturally when he was created. God no doubt wishes all men to be saved and to come into the knowledge of the truth; but yet not so as to take away from them free. will, for the good or the evil use of which they may be most righteously judged. This being the case, unbelievers indeed do contrary to the will of God when they do not believe His gospel; nevertheless they do not therefore overcome His will, but rob their own selves of the great, nay, the very greatest, good, and implicate themselves in penalties of punishment, destined to experience the power of Him in punishments whose mercy in His gifts they despised. Thus God's will is for ever invincible; but it would be vanquished, unless it devised what to do with such as despised it, or if these despises could in any way escape from the retribution which He has appointed for such as they.

Suppose a master, for example, who should say to his servants, I wish you to labour in my vineyard, and, after your work is done, to feast and take your rest l but who, at the same time, should require any who refused to work to grind in the mill ever after. Whoever neglected such a command would evidently act contrary to the master's will; but he would do more than that,-he would vanquish that will, if he also escaped the mill. This, however, cannot possibly happen under the government of God. Whence it is written, "God hath spoken once,"-that is, irrevocably,-although the passage may refer also to His one only Word. He then adds what it is which He had irrevocably uttered, saying: "Twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God. Also unto Thee, O Lord, doth mercy belong: because Thou wilt render to every man according to his work. He therefore will be guilty unto condemnation under God's power, who shall think too contemptuously of His mercy to believe in Him. But whosoever shall put his trust in Him, and yield himself up to Him, for the forgiveness of all his sins, for the cure of all his corruption, and for the kindling and illumination of his soul by His warmth and light, shall have good works by his grace; and by them he shall be even

in his body redeemed from the corruption of death, crowned, satisfied with blessings,-not temporal, but eternal,-above what we can ask or understand.

Chapter 59.-Mercy and Pity in the Judgment of God.

This is the order observed in the psalm, where it is said: ”Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His recompenses; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercy; who satisfieth thy desire with good things. And lest by any chance these great blessings should be despaired of under the deformity of our old, that is, mortal condition, the Psalmist at once says, ”Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle’s; as much as to say, All that you have heard belongs to the new man and to the new covenant. Now let us consider together briefly these things, and with delight contemplate the praise of mercy, that is, of the grace of God. ”Bless the Lord, O my soul,” he says, ”and forget not all His recompenses. Observe, he does not say blessings, but recompenses; because He recompenses evil with good. ”Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: this is done in the sacrament of baptism. ”Who healeth all thy diseases: this is effected by the believer in the present life, while the flesh so lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, that we do not the things we would; whilst also another law in our members wars against the law of our mind; whilst to will is present indeed to us but not how to perform that which is good.

These are the diseases of a man’s old nature which, however, if we only advance with persevering purpose, are healed by the growth of the new nature day by day, by the faith which operates through love. ”Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; this will take place at the resurrection of the dead in the last day. ”Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercy; this shall be accomplished in the day of judgment; for when the righteous King shall sit upon His throne to render to every man according to his works, who shall then boast of having a pure heart? or who shall glory of being clean from sin? It was therefore necessary to mention God’s loving-kindness and tender mercy there, where one might expect debts to be demanded and deserts recompensed so strictly as to leave no room for mercy. He crowns, therefore, with loving-kindness and tender mercy; but even so according to works. For he shall be separated to the right hand, to whom, it is said, ”I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat. There will, however, be also ”judgment without mercy; but it will be for him” that hath not showed mercy. But ”blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” of God. Then, as soon as those on the left hand shall have gone into eternal

fire, the righteous, too, shall go into everlasting life, because He says: "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

And with this knowledge, this vision, this contemplation, shall the desire of their soul be satisfied; for it shall be enough for it to have this and nothing else,-there being nothing more for it to desire, to aspire to, or to require. It was with a craving after this full joy that his heart glowed who said to the Lord Christ, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us; and to whom the answer was returned," He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Because He is Himself the eternal life, in order that men may know the one true God, Thee and whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ. If, however, he that has seen the Son has also seen the Father, then assuredly he who sees the Father and the Son sees also the Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son. So we do not take away free will, whilst our soul blesses the Lord and forgets not all His recompenses; nor does it, in ignorance of God's righteousness, wish to set up one of its own; but it believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, and until it arrives at sight, it lives by faith,-even the faith which works by love. And this love is shed abroad in our hearts, not by the sufficiency of our own will, nor by the letter of the law, but by the Holy Ghost who has been given to us.

Chapter 60 [XXXIV.]-The Will to Believe is from God.

Let this discussion suffice, if it satisfactorily meets the question we had to solve. It may be, however, objected in reply, that we must take heed lest some one should suppose that the sin would have to be imputed to God which is committed by free will, if in the passage where it is asked, ”What hast thou which thou didst not receive? the very will by which we believe is reckoned as a gift of God, because it arises out of the free will which we received at our creation. Let the objector, however, attentively observe that this will is to be ascribed to the divine gift, not merely because it arises from our free will, which was created naturally with us; but also because God acts upon us by the incentives of our perceptions, to will and to believe, either externally by evangelical exhortations, where even the commands of the law also do something, if they so far admonish a man of his infirmity that he betakes himself to the grace that justifies by believing; or internally, where no man has in his own control what shall enter into his thoughts, although it appertains to his own will to consent or to dissent.

Since God, therefore, in such ways acts upon the reasonable soul in order that it may believe in Him (and certainly there is no ability whatever in free will to believe, unless there be persuasion or summons towards some one in whom to believe), it surely follows that it is God who both works in man the willing to believe, and in all things prevents us with His mercy. To yield our consent, indeed, to God’s summons, or to withhold it, is (as I have said) the function of our own will. And this not only does not invalidate what is said, ”For what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but it really confirms it. For the soul cannot receive and possess these gifts, which are here referred to, except by yielding its consent. And thus whatever it possesses, and whatever it receives, is from God; and yet the act of receiving and having belongs, of course, to the receiver and possessor. Now, should any man be for constraining us to examine into this profound mystery, why this person is so persuaded as to yield, and that person is not, there are only two things occurring to me, which I should like to advance as my answer: ”O the depth of the riches! and ”Is there unrighteousness with God? If the man is displeased with such an answer, he must seek more learned disputants; but let him beware lest he find presumptuous ones.

Chapter 61 [XXXV.]-Conclusion of the Work.

Let us at last bring our book to an end. I hardly know whether we have accomplished our purpose at all by our great prolixity. It is not in respect of you, [my Marcellinus,] that I have this misgiving, for I know your faith; but with reference to the minds of those for whose sake you wished me to write,-who so much in opposition to my opinion, but (to speak mildly, and not to mention Him who spoke in His apostles) certainly against not only the opinion of the great Apostle Paul, but also his strong, earnest, and vigilant conflict, prefer maintaining their own views with tenacity to listening to him, when he ”beseeches them by the mercies of God,” and tells them, ”through the grace of God which was given to him, not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God had dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

Chapter 62.-He Returns to the Question Which Marcellinus Had Proposed to Him.

But I beg of you to advert to the question which you proposed to me, and to what we have made out of it in the lengthy process of this discussion. You were perplexed how I could have said that it was possible for a man to be without sin, if his will were not wanting, by the help of God's aid, although no man in the present life had ever lived, was living, or would live, of such perfect righteousness. Now, in the books which I formerly addressed to you, I set forth this very question. I said: "If I were asked whether it be possible for a man to be without sin in this life, I should allow the possibility, by the grace of God, and his own free will; for I should have no doubt that the free will itself is of God's grace,-that is, has its place among the gifts of God,-not only as to its existence, but also in respect of its goodness; that is, that it applies itself to doing the commandments of God. And so, God's grace not only shows what ought to be done, but also helps to the possibility of doing what it shows. You seemed to think it absurd, that a thing which was possible should be unexampled. Hence arose the subject treated of in this book; and thus did it devolve on me to show that a thing was possible although no example of it could be found.

We accordingly adduced certain cases out of the gospel and of the law, at the beginning of this work,-such as the passing of a camel through the eye of a needle; and the twelve thousand legions of angels, who could fight for Christ, if He pleased; and those nations which God said He could have exterminated at once from the face of His people, -none of which possibilities were ever reduced to fact. To these instances may be added those which are referred to in the Book of Wisdom, suggesting how many are the strange torments and troubles which God was able to employ against ungodly men, by using the creature which was obedient to His beck, which, however, He did not employ. One might also allude to that mountain, which faith could remove into the sea, although, nevertheless, it was never done, so far as we have ever read or heard. Now you see how thoughtless and foolish would be the man who should say that any one of these things is impossible with God, and how opposed to the sense of Scripture would be his assertion. Many other cases of this kind may occur to

anybody who reads or thinks, the possibility of which with God we cannot deny, although an example of them be lacking.

Chapter 63.-An Objection.

But inasmuch as it may be said that the instances which I have been quoting are divine works, whereas to live righteously is a work that belongs to ourselves, I undertook to show that even this too is a divine work. This I have done in the present book, with perhaps a fuller statement than is necessary, although I seem to myself to have said too little against the opponents of the grace of God. And I am never so much delighted in my treatment of a subject as when Scripture comes most copiously to my aid; and when the question to be discussed requires that ”he that glorieth should glory in the Lord; and that we should in all things lift up our hearts and give thanks to the Lord our God, from whom, ”as the Father of lights, every good and every perfect gift cometh down. Now if a gift is not God’s gift, because it is wrought by us, or because we act by His gift, then it is not a work of God that ”a mountain should be removed into the sea,” inasmuch as, according to the Lord’s statement, it is by the faith of men that this is possible. Moreover, He attributes the deed to their actual operation: ”If ye have faith in yourselves as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, ”Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and it shall be done, and nothing shall be impossible to you.

Observe how He said ”to you,” not ”to Me” or ”to the Father; and yet it is certain that no man does such a thing without God’s gift and operation. See how an instance of perfect righteousness is unexampled among men, and yet is not impossible. For it might be achieved if there were only applied so much of will as suffices for so great a thing. There would, however, be so much will, if there were hidden from us none of those conditions which pertain to righteousness; and at the same time these so delighted our mind, that whatever hindrance of pleasure or pain might else occur, this delight in holiness would prevail over every rival affection. And that this is not realized, is not owing to any intrinsic impossibility, but to God’s judicial act. For who can be ignorant, that what he should know is not in man’s power; nor does it follow that what he has discovered to be a desirable object is actually desired, unless he also feel a delight in that object, commensurate with its claims on his affection? For this belongs to health of soul.

Chapter 64 [XXXVI.]-When the Commandment to Love is Fulfilled.

But somebody will perhaps think that we lack nothing for the knowledge of righteousness, since the Lord, when He summarily and briefly expounded His word on earth, informed us that the whole law and the prophets depend on two commandments; nor was He silent as to what these were, but declared them in the plainest words: "Thou shall love," said He, "the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. What is more surely true than that, if these be fulfilled, all righteousness is fulfilled? But the man who sets his mind on this truth must also carefully attend to another,-in how many things we all of us offend, while we suppose that what we do is pleasant, or, at all events, not unpleasing, to God whom we love; and afterwards, having (through His inspired word, or else by being warned in some clear and certain way) learned what is not pleasing to Him, we pray to Him that He would forgive us on our repentance. The life of man is full of examples of this. But whence comes it that we fall short of knowing what is pleasing to Him, if it be not that He is to that extent unknown to us? "For now we see through aglass, darkly; but then face to face. Who, however, can make so bold, on arriving far enough, to say:

"Then shall I know even as also I am known," as to think that they who shall see God will have no greater love towards Him than they have who now believe in Him? or that the one ought to be compared to the other, as if they were very near to each other? Now, if love increases just in proportion as our knowledge of its object becomes more intimate, of course we ought to believe that there is as much wanting now to the fulfilment of righteousness as there is defective in our love of it. A thing may indeed be known or believed, and yet not loved; but it is an impossibility that a thing can be loved which is neither known nor believed. But if the saints, in the exercise of their faith, could arrive at that great love, than which (as the Lord Himself testified) no greater can possibly be exhibited in the present life,-even to lay down their lives for the faith, or for their brethren, -then after their pilgrimage here, in which their walk is by "faith," when they shall have reached the "sight" of that final happiness which we hope for, though as yet we see it not, and wait for in patience, then undoubtedly love itself shall be not only greater than that which we here experience, but

far higher than all which we ask or think; and yet it cannot be possibly more than "with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind.

For there remains in us nothing which can be added to the whole; since, if anything did remain, there would not be the whole. Therefore the first commandment about righteousness, which bids us love the Lord with all our heart, and soul, and mind (the next to which is, that we love our neighbour as ourselves), we shall completely fulfil in that life when we shall see face to face. But even now this commandment is enjoined upon us, that we may be reminded what we ought by faith to require, and what we should in our hope look forward to, and, "forgetting the things which are behind, reach forth to the things which are before. And thus, as it appears to me, that man has made a far advance, even in the present life, in the righteousness which is to be perfected hereafter, who has discovered by this very advance how very far removed he is from the completion of righteousness.

Chapter 65.-In What Sense a Sinless Righteousness in This Life Can Be Asserted.

Forasmuch, however, as an inferior righteousness may be said to be competent to this life, whereby the just man lives by faith although absent from the Lord, and, therefore, walking by faith and not yet by sight, -it may be without absurdity said, no doubt, in respect of it, that it is free from sin; for it ought not to be attributed to it as a fault, that it is not as yet sufficient for so great a love to God as is due to the final, complete, and perfect condition thereof. It is one thing to fail at present in attaining to the fulness of love, and another thing to be swayed by no lust. A man ought therefore to abstain from every unlawful desire, although he loves God now far less than it is possible to love Him when He becomes an object of sight; just as in matters connected with the bodily senses, the eye can receive no pleasure from any kind of darkness, although it may be unable to look with a firm sight amidst refulgent light. Only let us see to it that we so constitute the soul of man in this corruptible body,that, although it has not yet swallowed up and consumed the motions of earthly lust in that super-eminent perfection of the love of God, it nevertheless, in that inferior righteousness to which we have referred, gives no consent to the aforesaid lust for the purpose of effecting any unlawful thing.

In respect, therefore, of that immortal life, the commandment is even now applicable: ”Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might; but in reference to the present life the following: ”Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. To the one, again, belongs, ”Thou shalt not covet; to the other, ”Thou shalt not go after thy lusts. To the one it appertains to seek for nothing more than to continue in its perfect state; to the other it belongs actively to do the duty committed to it, and to hope as its reward for the perfection of the future life,-so that in the one the just man may live forevermore in the sight of that happiness which in this life was his object of desire; in the other, he may live by that faith whereon rests his desire for the ultimate blessedness as its certain end. (These things being so, it will be sin in the man who lives by faith ever to consent to an unlawful delight,-by committing not only frightful

deeds and crimes, but even trifling faults; sinful, if he lend an ear to a word that ought not to be listened to, or a tongue to a phrase which shouldnot be uttered;

sinful, if he entertains a thought in his heart in such a way as to wish that an evil pleasure were a lawful one, although known to be unlawful by the commandment,-for this amounts to a consent to sin, which would certainly be carried out in act, unless fear of punishment deterred. Have such just men, while living by faith, no need to say: ”Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors? And do they prove this to be wrong which is written, ”In Thy sight shall no man living be justified? and this: ”If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us? and, ”There is no manthat sinneth not; and again, ”There is not on the earth a righteous man, who doeth good and sinneth not” (for both these statements are expressed in a general future sense,-”sinneth not,” ”will not sin,”-not in the past time, ”has not sinned”)?-and all other places of this purport contained in the Holy Scripture? Since, however, these passages cannot possibly be false, it plainly follows, to my mind, that whatever be the quality or extent of the righteousness which we may definitely ascribe to the present life, there is not a man living in it who is absolutely free from all sin; and that it is necessary for every one to give, that it may be given to him; and to forgive, that it may be forgiven him;

and whatever righteousness he has, not to presume that he has it of himself, but from the grace of God, who justifies him, and still to go on hungering and thirsting for righteousness from Him who is the living bread, and with whom is the fountain of life; who works in His saints, whilst labouring amidst temptation in this life, their justification in such manner that He may still have somewhat to impart to them liberally when they ask, and something mercifully to forgive them when they confess.

Chapter 66.-Although Perfect Righteousness Be Not Found Here on Earth, It is Still Not Impossible.

But let objectors find, if they can, any man, while living under the weight of this corruption, in whom God has no longer anything to forgive; unless nevertheless they acknowledge that such an individual has been aided in the attainment of his good character not merely by the teaching of the law which God gave, but also by the infusion of the Spirit of grace-they will incur the charge of ungodliness itself, not of this or that particular sin. Of course they are not at all able to discover such a man, if they receive in a becoming manner the testimony of the divine writings. Still, for all that, it must not by any means be said that the possibility is lacking to God whereby the will of man can be so assisted, that there can be accomplished in every respect even now in a man, not that righteousness only which is of faith, but that also in accordance with which we shall by and by have to live for ever in the very vision of God.

For if he should now wish even that this corruptible in any particular man should put on incorruption, and to command him so to live among mortal men (not destined himself to die) that his old nature should be wholly and entirely withdrawn, and there should be no law in his members warring against the law of his mind, -moreover, that he should discover God to be everywhere present, as the saints shall hereafter know and behold Him,-who will madly venture to affirm that this is impossible? Men, however, ask why He does not do this; but they who raise the question consider not duly the fact that they are human. I am quite certain that, as nothing is impossible with God so also there is no iniquity with Him. Equally sure am I that He resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. I know also that to him who had a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure, it was said, when he besought God for its removal once, twice, nay thrice: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. There is, therefore, in the hidden depths of God's judgments, a certain reason why every mouth even of the righteous should be shut in its own praise, and only opened for the praise

of God. But what this certain reason is, who can search, who investigate, who know? So ”unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

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.