Against the Pelagians

Jerome (c. AD 347–420)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

Book 1

1. Atticus. I hear, Critobulus, that you have written that man can be without sin, if he chooses; and that the commandments of God are easy. Tell me, is it true? Critobulus. It is true, Atticus; but our rivals do not take the words in the sense I attached to them. A. Are they then so ambiguous as to give rise to a difference as to their meaning? I do not ask for an answer to two questions at once. You laid down two propositions; the one, that man can be without sin, if he chooses: the other, that God's commandments are easy. Although, therefore, they were uttered together, let them be discussed separately, so that, while our faith appears to be one, no strife may arise through our misunderstanding each other. C. I said, Atticus, that man can be without sin, if he chooses; not, as some maliciously make us say, without the grace of God (the very thought is impiety), but simply that he can, if he chooses; the aid of the grace of God being presupposed.

A. Is God, then, the author of your evil works? C. By no means. But if there is any good in me, it is brought to perfection through His impulse and assistance. A. My question does not refer to natural constitution, but to action. For who doubts that God is the Creator of all things? I wish you would tell me this: the good you do, is it your's or God's? C. It is mine and God's: I work and He assists. A. How is it then that everybody thinks you do away with the grace of God, and maintain that all our actions proceed from our own will? C. I am surprised, Atticus, at your asking me for the why and wherefore of other people's mistakes, and wanting to know what I did not write, when what I did write is perfectly clear. I said that man can be without sin, if he chooses. Did I add, without the grace of God?

A. No; but the fact that you added nothing implies your denial of the need of grace. C. Nay, rather, the fact that I have not denied grace should be regarded as tantamount to an assertion of it. It is unjust tosuppose we deny whatever we do not assert. A. You admit then that man can be sinless, if he chooses, but with the grace of God. C. I not only admit it, but freely proclaim it. A. So then he who does away with the grace of God is in error. C. Just so. Or rather, he ought to be thought impious, seeing that all things are governed by the pleasure of God, and that we owe our existence and the faculty of individual choice and desire to the goodness of God, the Creator. For that we have free will, and according to our own choice incline to good or evil, is part of His grace who made us what we are, in His own image and likeness.

2. A. No one doubts, Critobulus, that all things depend on the judgment of Him Who is Creator of all, and that whatever we have ought to be attributed to His goodness. But I should like to know respecting this faculty, which you attribute to the grace of God, whether you reckon it as part of the gift bestowed in our creation, or suppose it energetic in our separate actions, so that we avail ourselves of its assistance continually; or is it the case that, having been once for all created and endowed with free will, we do what we choose by our own choice or strength? For I know that very many of your party refer all things to the grace of God in such a sense that they understand the power of the will to be a gift not of a particular, but of a general character, that is to say, one which is bestowed not at each separate moment, but once for all at creation.

C. It is not as you affirm; but I maintain both positions, that it is by the grace of God we were created such as we are, and also that in our several actions we are supported by His aid. A. We are agreed, then, that in good works, besides our own power of choice, we lean on the help of God; in evil works we are prompted by the devil. C. Quite so; there is no difference of opinion on that point. A. They are wrong, then, who strip us of the help of God in our separate actions. The Psalmist sings: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain;" and there are similar passages. But these men endeavour by perverse, or rather ridiculous interpretations, to twist his words to a different meaning.

3. C. Am I bound to contradict others when you have my own answer? A. Your answer to what effect? That they are right, or wrong? C. What necessity compels me to set my opinion against other men's? A. You are bound by the rules of discussion, and by respect for truth. Do you not know that every assertion either affirms, or denies, and that what is affirmed or denied ought to be reckoned among good or bad things? You must, therefore, admit, and no thanks to you, that the statement to which my question relates is either a good thing or a bad. C. If in particular actions we must have the help of God, does it follow that we are unable to make a pen, or mend it when it is made? Can we not fashion the letters, be silent or speak, sit, stand, walk or run, eat or fast, weep or laugh, and so on, without God's assistance?

A. From my point of view it is clearly impossible. C. How then have we free will, and how can we guard the grace of God towards us, if we cannot do even these things without God? 4. A. The bestowal of the grace of free will is not such as to do away with the support of God in particular actions. C. The help of God is not made of no account; inasmuch as creatures are preserved through the grace of free will once for all given to them. For if without God, and except He assist me in every action, I can do nothing. He can neither with justice crown me for my good deeds, nor punish me for my evil ones, but in each case He will either receive His own or will condemn the assistants He gave. A. Tell me, then, plainly, why you do away with the grace of God. For whatever you destroy in the parts you must of necessity deny in the whole.

C. I do not deny grace when I assert that I was so created by God, that by the grace of God it was put within the power of my choice either to do a thing or not to do it. A. So God falls asleep over our good actions, when once the faculty of free will has been given; and we need not pray to Him to assist us in our separate actions, since it depends upon our own choice and will either to do a thing if we choose, or not to do it if we do not choose. 5. C. As in the case of other creatures, the conditions of elicit creation are observed; so, when once the power of free will was granted, everything was left to our own choice. A. It follows, as I said, that I ought not to beg the assistance of God in the details of conduct, because I consider it was given once for all.

C. If He co-operates with me in everything the result is no longer mine, but His Who assists, or rather works in and with me; and all the more because I can do nothing without Him. A. Have you not read, pray, "that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy!" From this we understand that to will and to run is ours, but the carrying into effect our willing and running pertains to the mercy of God, and is so effected that on the one hand in willing and running free will is preserved; and on the other, in consummating our willing and running, everything is left to the power of God. Of course, I ought now to adduce the frequent testimony of Scripture to show that in the details of conduct the saints intreat the help of God, and in their several actions desire to have Him for their helper and protector. Read through the Psalter, and all the utterances of the saints, and you will find their actions never unaccompanied by prayer to God. And this is a clear proof that you either deny the grace which you banish from the parts of life; or if you concede its presence in the parts, a concession plainly much against your will, you must have come over to the views of us who preserve free will for man, but so limit it that we do not deny the assistance of God in each action.

6. C. That is a sophistical conclusion and a mere display of logical skill. No one can strip me of the power of free will; otherwise, if God were really my helper in what I do, the reward would not be due to me, but to Him who wrought in me. A. Make the most of your free will; arm your tongue against God, and therein prove yourself free, if you will, to blaspheme. But to go a step farther, there is no doubt as to your sentiments, and the delusions of your profession have become as clear as day. Now, let us turn back to the starting-point of our discussion. You said just now that, granted God's assistance, man may be sinless if he chooses. Tell me, please, for how long? For ever, or only for a short time? C. Your question is unnecessary. If I say for a short time, for ever will none the less be implied. For whatever you allow for a short time, you will admit may last for ever.

A. I do not quite understand your meaning. C. Are you so senseless that yon do not recognize plain facts? 7. A. I am not ashamed of my ignorance. And both sides ought to be well agreed on a definition of the subject of dispute. C. I maintain this: he who can keep himself from sin one day, may do so another day: if be can on two, he may on three; if on three, on thirty: and so on for three hundred, or three thousand, or as long as ever he chooses to do so. A. Say then at once that a man may be without sin for ever, if he chooses. Can we do anything

we like? C. Certainly not, for I cannot do all I should like; but all I say is this, that a man can be without sin, if be chooses. A. Be so good as to tell me this: do you think I am a man or a beast?

C. If I had any doubt as to whether you were a man, or a beast, I should confess myself to be the latter. A. If then, as you say, I am a man, how is it that when I wish and earnestly desire not to sin, I do transgress? C. Because your choice is imperfect. If you really wished not to sin, you really would not. A. Well then, you who accuse me of not having a real desire, are you free from sin because you have a real desire? C. As though I were talking of myself whom I admit to be a sinner, and not of the few exceptional ones, if any, who have resolved not to sin. 8. A. Still, I who question, and you who answer, both consider ourselves sinners. C. But we are capable of not being so, if we please. A. I said I did not wish to sin, and no doubt your feeling is the same. How is it then that what we both wish we can neither do?

C. Because we do not wish perfectly. A. Show me any of our ancestors who had a perfect will and the power in perfection. C. That is not easy. And when I say that a man may be without sin if he chooses, I do not contend that there ever have been such; I only maintain the abstract possibility-if he chooses. For possibility of being is one thing, and is expressed in Greek by th dunamei (possibility); being is another, the equivalent for which is th energeia (actuality). I can be a physician; but meanwhile I am not. I can be an artisan; but I have not yet learnt a trade. So, whatever I am able to be, though I am not that yet, I shall be if I choose.

9. A. Art is one thing, that which is above art is another. Medical skill, craftsmanship, and so on, are found in many persons; but to be always without sin is a characteristic of the Divine power only. Therefore, either give me an instance of those who were for ever without sin; or, if you cannot find one, confess your impotence, lay aside bombast, and do not mock the ears of fools with this being and possibility of being of yours. For who will grant that a man can do what no man was ever able to do? You have not learnt even the rudiments of logic. For if a man is able, he is no longer unable. Either grant that some one was able to do what you maintain was possible to be done; or if no one has had this power, you must, though against your will, be held to this position, that no one is able to effect what yet you profess to be possible. That was the point at issue between the powerful logicians, Diodorus and Chrysippus, in their discussion of possibility. Diodorus says that alone can possibly happen which is either true or will be true. And whatever will be, that, he says, must of necessity happen. But whatever will not be, that cannot possibly happen. Chrysippus, however, says that things which will not be might happen; for instance, this pearl might be broken, even though it never will. They, therefore, who say that a man can be without sin if he chooses, will not be able to prove the truth of the assertion, unless they show that it will come to pass. But whereas the whole future is uncertain, and especially such things as have never occurred, it is clear that they say something will be which will not be. And Ecclesiastes supports this decision: ”All that shall be, has already been in former ages.”

10. C. Pray answer this question: has God given possible or impossible commands? A. I see your drift. But I must discuss it later on, that we may not, by confusing different questions, leave our audience in a fog. I admit that God has given possible commands, for otherwise He would Himself be the author of injustice, were He to demand the doing of what cannot possibly be done. Reserving this until later, finish your argument that a man can be without sin, if he chooses. You will either give instances of such ability, or, if no one has had the power, you will clearly confess that a man cannot avoid sin always. C. Since you press me to give what I am not bound to give, consider what our Lord says, "That it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." And yet he said a thing might possibly happen, which never has happened. For no camel has ever gone through a needle's eye.

A. I am surprised at a prudent man submitting evidence which goes against himself. For the passage in question does not speak of a possibility, but one impossibility is compared with another. As a camel cannot go through a needle's eye, so neither will a rich man enter the kingdom of heaven. Or, if you should be able to show that a rich man does enter the kingdom of heaven, it follows, also, that a camel goes through a needle's eye. You must not instance Abraham and other rich men, about whom we read in the Old Testament, who, although they were rich, entered the kingdom of heaven; for, by spending their riches on good works, they ceased to be rich; nay, rather, inasmuch as they were rich, not for themselves, but for others, they ought to be called God's stewards rather than rich men. But we must seek evangelical perfection, according to which there is the command, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, follow Me."

11. C. You are caught unawares in your own snare. A. How so? C. You quote our Lord's utterance to the effect that a man can be perfect. For when He says, "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, follow Me," He shows that a man, if he chooses, and if he does what is commanded, can be perfect? A. You have given me such a terrible blow that I am almost dazed. But yet the very words you quote, "If thou wilt be perfect," were spoken to one who could not, or rather would not, and, therefore, could not; show me now, as you promised, some one who would and could. C. Why am I compelled to produce instances of perfection, when it is clear from what the Saviour said to one, and through one to all, "If thou wilt be perfect" that it is possible for men to be perfect?

A. That is a mere shuffle. You still stick fast in the mire. For, either, if a thing is possible, it has occurred at some time or other; or, if it never has happened, grant that it is impossible.
12. C. Why do I any longer delay? You must be vanquished by the authority or Scripture. To pass over other passages, you must be silenced by the two in which we read the praises of Job, and of Zacharias and Elizabeth. For, unless I am deceived, it is thus written in the book of Job: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, a true worshipper of God, and one who kept himself from every evil thing." And again: "Who is he that reproveth one that is righteous and free from sin, and speaketh words without knowledge?" Also, in the Gospel according to Luke, we read: "There

was in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah: and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." If a true worshipper of God is also without spot and without offence, and if those who walked in all the ordinances of the Lord are righteous before God, I suppose they are free from sin, and lack nothing that pertains to righteousness.

A. You have cited passages which have been detached not only from the rest of Scripture, but from the books in which they occur. For even Job, after he was stricken with the plague, is convicted of having spoken many things against the ruling of God, and to have summoned Him to the bar: "Would that a man stood with God in the judgment as a son of man stands with his fellow. And again: "Oh that I had one to hear me! that the Almighty might hear my desire, and that the judge would himself write a book! And again: "Though I be righteous, mine own mouth shall condemn me: though I be perfect, it shall prove me perverse. If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my bands never so clean, Thou hast dyed me again and again with filth. Mine own clothes have abhorred me. And of Zacharias it is written, that when the angel promised the birth of a son, he said: "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. For which answer he was at once condemned to silence: "Thou shalt be silent, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall come to pass, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. From this it is clear that men are called righteous, and said to be without fault; but that, if negligence comes over them, they may fall;

and that a man always occupies a middle place, so that he may slip from the height of virtue into vice, or may rise from vice to virtue; and that he is never safe, but must dread shipwreck even in fair weather; and, therefore, that a man cannot be without sin. Solomon says, "There is not a righteous man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not"; and likewise in the book of Kings: "There is no man that sinneth not. So, also, the blessed David says: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me from hidden faults, and keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins. And again: "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. Holy Scripture is full of passages to the same effect.

13. C. But what answer will you give to the famous declaration of John the Evangelist: "We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but the begetting of God keepeth him, and the evil one toucheth him not. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one?"

A. I will requite like with like, and will show that, according to you, the little epistle of the Evangelist contradicts itself. For, if whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not because His seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God, how is it that the writer says in the same place: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us? You cannot explain. You hesitate and are confused. Listen to the same Evangelist telling us that "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We are then righteous when we confess

that we are sinners, and our righteousness depends not upon our own merits, but on the mercy of God, as the Holy Scripture says, "The righteous man accuseth himself when he beginneth to speak," and elsewhere, "Tell thy sins that thou mayest be justified. "God hath shut up all under sin, that He may have mercy upon all. And the highest righteousness of man is this-whatever virtue he may be able to acquire, not to think it his own, but the gift of God. He then who is born of God does not sin, so long as the seed of God remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

But seeing that, while the householder slept, an enemy sowed tares, and that when we know not, a sower by night scatters in the Lord's field darnel and wild oats among the good corn, this parable of the householder in the Gospel should excite our fears. He cleanses his floor, and gathers the wheat into his garner, but leaves the chaff to be scattered by the winds, or burned by the fire. And so we read in Jeremiah, "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. The chaff, moreover, is separated from the wheat at the end of the world, a proof that, while we are in the mortal body, chaff is mixed with the wheat. But if you object, and ask why did the Apostle say "and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," I reply by asking you what becomes of the reward of his choice? For if a man does not sin because he cannot sin, free will is destroyed, and goodness cannot possibly be due to his efforts, but must be part of a nature unreceptive of evil.

14. C. The task I set you just now was an easy one by way of practice for something more difficult. What have you to say to my next argument? Clever as you are, all your skill will not avail to overthrow it. I shall first quote from the Old Testament, then from the New. Moses is the chief figure in the Old Testament, our Lord and Saviour in the New. Moses says to the people, "Be perfect in the sight of the Lord your God." And the Saviour bids the Apostles "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Now it was either possible for the hearers to do what Moses and the Lord commanded, or, if it be impossible, the fault does not lie with them who cannot obey, but with Him who gave impossible commands. A. This passage to the ignorant, and to those who are unaccustomed to meditate on Holy Scripture, and who neither know nor use it, does appear at first sight to favour your opinion. But when you look into it, the difficulty soon disappears. And when you compare passages of Scripture with others, that the Holy Spirit may not seem to contradict Himself with changing place and time, according to what is written, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts," the truth will show itself, that is, that Christ did give a possible command when He said: "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," and yet that the Apostles were not perfect.

C. I am not talking of what the Apostles did, but of what Christ commanded. And the fault does not lie with the giver of the command, but with the hearers of it, because we cannot admit the justice of him who commands without conceding the possibility of doing what is commanded. A. Good! Don't tell me then that a man can be without sin if he chooses, but that a man can be what the Apostles were not. C. Do you think me fool enough to dare say such a thing? A. Although you do not say it in so many words, however reluctant you may

be to admit the fact, it follows by natural sequence from your proposition. For if a man can be without sin, and it is clear the Apostles were not without sin, a man can be higher than the Apostles: to say nothing of patriarchs and prophets whose righteousness under the law was not perfect, as the Apostle says, "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God: being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiator."

14a. C. This way of arguing is intricate and brings the simplicity which becomes the Church into the tangled thickets of philosophy. What has Paul to do with Aristotle? or Peter with Plato? For as the latter was the prince of philosophers, so was the former chief of the Apostles: on him the Lord's Church was firmly founded, and neither rushing flood nor storm can shake it. A. Now you are rhetorical, and while you taunt me with philosophy, you yourself cross over to the camp of the orators. But listen to what your same favourite orator says: "Let us have no more commonplaces: we get them at home." C. There is no eloquence in this, no bombast like that of the orators, who might be defined as persons whose object is to persuade, and who frame their language accordingly. We are seeking unadulterated truth, and use unsophisticated language. Either the Lord did not give impossible commands, so that they are to blame who did not do what was possible; or, if what is commanded cannot be done, then not they who do not things impossible are convicted of unrighteousness, but He Who commanded things impossible, and that is an impious statement.

A. I see you are much more disturbed than is your wont; so I will not ply you with arguments. But let me briefly ask what you think of the well-known passage of the Apostle when he wrote to the Philippians: "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have yet apprehended: but one thing I do; forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on towards the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, even this shall God reveal unto you," and so on; no doubt you know the rest, which, in my desire to be brief, I omit. He says that he had not yet apprehended, and was by no means perfect; but, like an archer, aimed his arrows at the mark set up (more expressively called skopoj in Greek), lest the shaft, turning to one side or the other, might show the unskilfulness of the archer. He further declares that he always forgot the past, and ever stretched forward to the things in front, thus teaching that no heed should be paid to the past, but the future earnestly desired;

so that what to-day he thought perfect, while he was stretching forward to better things and things in front, to-morrow proves to have been imperfect. And thus at every step, never standing still, but always running, he shows that to be imperfect which we men thought perfect, and teaches that our only perfection and true righteousness is that which is measured by the excellence of God. "I press on towards the goal," he says, "unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Oh, blessed Apostle Paul, pardon me, a poor creature

who confess my faults, if I venture to ask a question. You say that you had not yet obtained, nor yet apprehended, nor were yet perfect, and that you always forgot the things behind, and stretched forward to the things in front, if by any means you might have part in the resurrection of the dead, and win the prize of your high calling. How, then, is it that you immediately add, "As many therefore as are perfect are thus minded"? (or, let us be thus minded, for the copies vary). And what mind is it that we have, or are to have? that we are perfect? that we have apprehended that which we have not apprehended, received what we have not received, are perfect who are not yet perfect? What mind then have we, or rather what mind ought we to have who are not perfect?

To confess that we are imperfect, and have not yet apprehended, nor yet obtained, this is true wisdom in man: know thyself to be imperfect; and, if I may so speak, the perfection of all who are righteous, so long as they are in the flesh, is imperfect. Hence we read in Proverbs: "To understand true righteousness. For if there were not also a false righteousness, the righteousness of God would never be called true. The Apostle continues: "and if ye are otherwise minded, God will also reveal that to you. This sounds strange to my ears. He who but just now said, "Not that I have already obtained, or am already perfect "; the chosen vessel, who was so confident of Christ's dwelling in him that he dared to say "Do ye seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me? "and yet plainly confessed that he was not perfect; he now gives to the multitude what he denied to himself in particular, he unites himself with the rest and says, "As many of us as are perfect, let us be thus minded. But why he said this, he explains presently.

Let us, he means, who wish to be perfect according to the poor measure of human frailty, think this, that we have not yet obtained, nor yet apprehended, nor are yet perfect, and inasmuch as we are not yet perfect, and, perhaps, think otherwise than true and perfect perfection requires, if we are minded otherwise than is dictated by the full knowledge of God, God will also reveal this to us, so that we may pray with David and say, "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."

15. All this makes it clear that in Holy Scripture there are two sorts of perfection, two of righteousness, and two of fear. The first is that perfection, and incomparable truth, and perfect righteousness and fear, which is the beginning of wisdom, and which we must measure by the excellence of God; the second, which is within the range not only of men, but of every creature, and is not inconsistent with our frailty, as we read in the Psalms: "In Thy sight shall no man living be justified," is that righteousness which is said to be perfect, not in comparison with God, but as recognized by God. Job, and Zacharias, and Elizabeth, were called righteous, in respect of that righteousness which might some day turn to unrighteousness, and not in respect of that which is incapable of change, concerning which it is said, "I am God, and change not. And this is that which the Apostle elsewhere writes: "That which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth"; because, that is, the righteousness of the law, in comparison of the grace of the Gospel, does not seem to be righteousness at all. "For if," he says, that which passeth

away was with glory, much more that which remaineth is in glory. And again, "We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. And, "For now we see in a mirror, darkly;

but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known. And in the Psalms, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. And again, "When I thought how I might know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God, and considered their latter end. And in the same place, "I was as a beast before thee: nevertheless I am continually with thee. And Jeremiah says, "Every man is become brutish and without knowledge. And to return to the Apostle Paul, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men. And much besides, which I omit for brevity's sake.

16. C. My dear Atticus, your speech is really a clever feat of memory. But the labour you have spent in mustering this host of authorities is to my advantage. For I do not any more than you compare man with God. but with other men, in comparison with whom he who takes the trouble can be perfect. And so, when we say that man, if he chooses, can be without sin, the standard is the measure of man, not the majesty of God, in comparison with Whom no creature can be perfect.

A. Critobulus, I am obliged to you for reminding me of the fact. For it is just my own view that no creature can be perfect in respect of true and finished righteousness. But that one differs from another, and that one man's righteousness is not the same as another's, no one doubts; nor again that one may be greater or less than another, and yet that, relatively to their own status and capacity, men may be called righteous who are not righteous when compared with others. For instance, the Apostle Paul, the chosen vessel who laboured more than all the Apostles, was, I suppose, righteous when he wrote to Timothy, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day: and not only to me, but also to all them that love His appearing. Timothy, his disciple and imitator, whom he taught the rules of action and the limits of virtue, was also righteous. Are we to think there was one and the same righteousness in them both, and that he had not more merit who laboured more than all? "In my Father's house are many mansions. I suppose there are also different degrees of merit. "One star differeth from another star in glory," and in the one body of the Church there are different members.

The sun has its own splendour, the moon tempers the darkness of the night; and the five heavenly bodies which are called planets traverse the sky in different tracks and with different degrees of luminousness. There are countless other stars whose movements we trace in the firmament. Each has its own brightness, and though each in respect of its own is perfect, yet, in comparison with one of greater magnitude, it lacks perfection. In the body also with its different members, the eye has one function, the hand another, the foot another. Whence the Apostle says, "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Are all Apostles? are all prophets?

are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But desire earnestly the greater gifts. But all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as He will. And here mark carefully that he does not say, as each member desires, but as the Spirit Himself will. For the vessel cannot say to him that makes it, "Why dost thou make me thus or thus? Hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

And so in close sequence he added, "Desire earnestly the greater gifts," so that, by the exercise of faith and diligence, we may win something in addition to other gifts, and may be superior to those who, compared with us, are in the second or third class. In a great house there are different vessels, some of gold, some of silver, brass, iron, wood. And yet while in its kind a vessel of brass is perfect, in comparison with one of silver it is called imperfect, and again one of silver, compared with one of gold, is inferior. And thus, when compared with one another, all things are imperfect and perfect. In a field of good soil, and from one sowing, there springs a crop thirty-fold, sixty-fold, or a hundred-fold. The very numbers show that there is disparity in the parts of the produce, and yet in its own kind each is perfect. Elizabeth and Zacharias, whom you adduce and with whom you cover yourself as with an impenetrable shield, may teach us how far they are beneath the holiness of blessed Mary, the Lord's Mother, who, conscious that God was dwelling in her, proclaims without reserve, "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name. And His mercy is unto generations and generations of them that fear Him: He hath showed strength with His arm.

Where, observe, she says she is blessed not by her own merit and virtue, but by the mercy of God dwelling in her. And John himself, a greater than whom has not arisen among the sons of men, is better than his parents. For not only does our Lord compare him with men, but with angels also. And yet he, who was greater on earth than all other men, is said to be less than the least in the kingdom of heaven.

17. Need we be surprised that, when saints are compared, some are better, some worse, since the same holds good in the comparison of sins? To Jerusalem, piecred and wounded with many sins, it is said, "Sodom is justified by thee." It is not because Sodom, which has sunk for ever into ashes, is just in herself, that it is said by Ezekiel, "Sodom shall be restored to her former estate"; but that, in comparison with the more accursed Jerusalem, she appears just. For Jerusalem killed the Son of God; Sodom through fulness of bread and excessive luxury carried her lust beyond all bounds. The publican in the Gospel who smote upon his breast as though it were a magazine of the worst thoughts, and, conscious of his offences, dared not lift up his eyes, is justified rather than the proud Pharisee. And Thamar in the guise of a harlot deceived Judah, and in the estimation of this man himself who was deceived, was worthy of the words, "Thamar is more righteous than I." All this goes to prove that not only in comparison with Divine majesty are men far from perfection, but also when compared with angels, and other men who have climbed the heights of virtue. You may

be superior to some one whom you have shown to be imperfect, and yet be outstripped by another; and consequently may not have true perfection, which, if it be perfect, is absolute.

18. C. How is it then, Atticus, that the Divine Word urges us to perfection?

A. I have already explained that in proportion to our strength each one, with all his power, must stretch forward, if by any means he may attain to, and apprehend the reward of his high calling. In short Almighty God, to whom, as the Apostle teaches, the Son must in accordance with the dispensation of the Incarnation be subjected, that "God may be all in all," clearly shows that all things are by no means subject to Himself. Hence the prophet anticipates his own final subjection, saying, "Shall not my soul be subject to God alone? for of Him cometh my salvation." And because in the body of the Church Christ is the head, and some of the members still resist, the body does not appear to be subject even to the head. For if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, and the whole body is tortured by the pain in one member. My meaning may be more clearly expressed thus. So long as we have the treasure in earthen vessels, and are clothed with frail flesh, or rather with mortal and corruptible flesh, we think ourselves fortunate if, in single virtues and separate portions of virtue, we are subject to God. But when this mortal shall have put on immortality, and this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and death shall be swallowed up in the victory of Christ, then will God be all in all: and so there will not be merely wisdom in Solomon, sweetness in David, zeal in Elias and Phinees, faith in Abraham, perfect love in Peter, to whom it was said, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?" zeal for preaching in the chosen vessel, and two or three virtues each in others, but God will be wholly in all, and the company of the saints will rejoice in the whole band of virtues, and God will be all in all.

19. C. Do I understand you to say that no saint, so long as he is in this poor body, can have all virtues? A. Just so, because now we prophesy in part, and know in part. It is impossible for all things to be in all men, for no son of man is immortal. C. How is it, then, that we read that he who has one virtue appears to have all? A. By partaking of them, not possessing them, for individuals must excel in particular virtues. But I confess I don't know where to find what you say you have read. C. Are you not aware that the philosophers take that view? A. The philosophers may, but the Apostles do not. I heed not what Aristotle, but what Paul, teaches. C. Pray does not James the Apostle write that he who stumbles in one point is guilty of all?

A. The passage is its own interpreter. James did not say, as a starting-point for the discussion, he who prefers a rich man to a poor man in honour is guilty of adultery or murder. That is a delusion of the Stoics who maintain the equality of sins. But he proceeds thus: "He who said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, said also, Thou shalt not kill: but although thou dost not kill, yet, if thou commit adultery, thou art become a transgressor of the law." Light offences are compared with light ones, and heavy offences with heavy ones. A fault that deserves the rod must not be avenged with the sword; nor must a crime worthy of the sword, be checked with the rod. C. Suppose it true that no saint has all the virtues: you will surely grant that within the range of his ability, if a man do what he can, he is perfect.

A. Do you not remember what I said before? C. What was it? A. That a man is perfect in respect of what he has done, imperfect in respect of what he could not do. C. But as he is perfect in respect of what he has done, because he willed to do it, so in respect of that which constitutes him imperfect, because he has not done it, he might have been perfect, had he willed to do it.

A. Who does not wish to do what is perfect? Or who does not long to grow vigorously. in all virtue? If you look for all virtues in each individual, you do away with the distinctions of things, and the difference of graces, and the variety of the work of the Creator, whose prophet cries aloud in the sacred song: "In wisdom hast thou made them all. Lucifer may be indignant because he has not the brightness of the moon. The moon may dispute over her eclipses and ceaseless toil, and ask why she must traverse every month the yearly orbit of the sun. The sun may complain and want to know what he has done that he travels more slowly than the moon. And we poor creatures may demand to know why it is that we were made men and not angels; although your teacher, the Ancient, the fountain from which these streams flow, asserts that all rational creatures were created equal and started fairly, like charioteers, either to succumb halfway, or to pass on rapidly and reach the wished-for goal. Elephants, with their huge bulk, and griffins, might discuss their ponderous frames and ask why they must go on four feet, while flies, midges, and other creatures like them have six feet under their tiny wings, and there are some creeping things which have such an abundance of feet that the keenest vision cannot follow their countless and simultaneous movements. Marcion and all the heretics who denied the Creator's works might speak thus.

Your principle goes so far that while its adherents attack particular points, they are laying hands on God; they are asking why He only is God, why He envies the creatures, and why they are not all endowed with the same power and importance. You would not say so much (for you are not mad enough to openly fight against God), yet this is your meaning in other words, when you give man an attribute of God, and make him to be without sin like God Himself. Hence the Apostle, with his voice of thunder, says, concerning different graces: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; and differences of ministrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of workings, but the same God, Who worketh all things in all."

20. C. You push this one particular point too far in seeking to convince me that a man cannot have all excellences at the same time. As though God were guilty of envy, or unable to bestow upon His image and likeness a correspondence in all things to his Creator. A. Is it I or you who go too far? You revive, questions already settled, and do not understand that likeness is one thing, equality another; that the former is a painting, the latter, reality. A real horse courses over the plains; the painted one with his chariot does not leave the wall. The Arians do not allow to the Son of God what you give to every man. Some do not dare to confess the perfect humanity of Christ, lest they should be compelled to accept the belief that He had the sins of a man as though the Creator were unequal to the act of creating, and

the title Son of Man were co-extensive with the title Son of God. So either set me something else to answer, or lay aside pride and give glory to God.

C. You forget a former answer of yours, and have been so busy forging your chain of argument, and careering through the wide fields of Scripture, like a horse that has slipped its bridle, that you have not said a single word about the main point. Your forgetfulness is a pretext for escaping the necessity of a reply. It was foolish in me to concede to you for the nonce what you asked, and to suppose that you would voluntarily give up what you had received, and would not need a reminder to make you pay what you owed. A. If I mistake not, it was the question of possible commands of which I deferred the answer. Pray proceed as you think best. 21. C. The commands which God has given are either possible or impossible. If possible, it is in our power to do them, if we choose. If impossible, we cannot be held guilty for omitting duties which it is not given us to fufil. Hence it results that, whether God has given possible or impossible commands, a man can be without sin if he chooses.

A. I beg your patient attention, for what we seek is not victory over an opponent, but the triumph of truth over falsehood. God has put within the power of mankind all arts, for we see that a vast number of men have mastered them. To pass over those which the Greeks call bananusoi, as we may say, the manual arts, I will instance grammar, rhetoric, the three sorts of philosophy-physics, ethics, logic-geometry also, and astronomy, astrology, arithmetic, music, which are also parts of philosophy; medicine, too, in its threefold division-theory, investigation, practice; a knowledge of law in general and of particular enactments. Which of us, however clever he may be, will be able to understand them all, when the most eloquent of orators, discussing rhetoric and jurisprudence, said: ”A few may excel in one, in both no one can. You see, then, that God has commanded what is possible, and yet, that no one can by nature attain to what is possible. Similarly he has given different rules and various virtues, all of which we cannot possess at the same time. Hence it happens that a virtue which in one person takes the chief place, or is found in perfection, in another is but partial; and yet, he is not to blame who has not all excellence, nor is he condemned for lacking that which he has not; but be is justified through what he does possess.

The Apostle described the character of a bishop when he wrote to Timothy, ”The bishop, therefore, must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, modest, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach; no brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all modesty. And again, ”Not a novice, lest, being puffed up, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have good testimony from them that are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Writing also to his disciple Titus, he briefly points out what sort of bishops he ought to ordain: ”For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge; if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. For the bishop must be blameless (or free from accusation, for so much is conveyed by the original) as God’s steward; not self-willed, not

soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality, kind, modest, just, holy, temperate; holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers.

I will not now say anything of the various rules relating to different persons, but will confine myself to the commands connected with the bishop.

22. God certainly wishes bishops or priests to be such as the chosen vessel teaches they should be. As to the first qualification it is seldom or never that one is found without reproach; for who is it that has not some fault, like a mole or a wart on a lovely body? If the Apostle himself says of Peter that he did not tread a straight path in the truth of the Gospel, and was so far to blame that even Barnabas was led away into the same dissimulation, who will be indignant if that is denied to him which the chief of the Apostles had not? Then, supposing you find one, "the husband of one wife, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality," the next attribute-didaktikon, apt to teach, not merely as the Latin renders the word, apt to be taught-you will hardly find in company with the other virtues. A bishop or priest that is a brawler, or a striker, or a lover of money, the Apostle rejects, and in his stead would have one gentle, not contentious, free from avarice, one that rules well his own house, and what is very hard, one who has his children in subjection with all modesty, whether they be children of the flesh or children of the faith. "With all modesty," he says. It is not enough for him to have his own modesty unless it be enhanced by the modesty of his children, companions, and servants, as David says, "He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall minister unto me.

Let us consider, also, the emphasis laid on modesty by the addition of the words "having his children in subjection with all modesty. Not only in deed but in word and gesture must he hold aloof from immodesty, lest perchance the experience of Eli be his. Eli certainly rebuked his sons, saying, "Nay, my sons, nay; it is not a good report which I hear of you. He chided them, and yet was punished, because he should not have chided, but cast them off. What will he do who rejoices at vice or lacks the courage to correct it? Who fears his own conscience, and therefore pretends to be ignorant of what is in everybody's mouth? The next point is that the bishop must be free from accusation, that he have a good report from them who are without, that no reproaches of opponents be levelled at him, and that they who dislike his doctrine may be pleased with his life. I suppose it would not be easy to find all this, and particularly one "able to resist the gain-sayers," to check and overcome erroneous opinions. He wishes no novice to be ordained bishop, and yet in our time we see the youthful novice sought after as though he represented the highest righteousness. If baptism immediately made a man righteous, and full of all righteousness, it was of course idle for the Apostle to repel a novice; but baptism annuls old sins, does not bestow new virtues;

it looses from prison, and promises rewards to the released if he will work. Seldom or never, I say, is there a man who has all the virtues which a bishop should have. And yet if a bishop lacked one or two of the virtues in the list, it does not follow that he can no longer be called righteous, nor will he be condemned for his deficiencies, but will be crowned for what he

has. For to have all and lack nothing is the virtue of Him "Who did no sin; neither was guile found in His mouth; Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; Who, confident in the consciousness of virtue, said, "Behold the prince of this world cometh, and findeth nothing in me; "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God gave Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth. If, then, in the person of a single bishop you will either not find at all, or with difficulty, even a few of the things commanded, how will you deal with the mass of men in general who are bound to fulfil all the commandments?

23. Let us reason from things bodily to things spiritual. One man is swift-fooled, but not strong-handed. That man's movements are slow, but he stands firm in battle. This man has a fine face, but a harsh voice: another is repulsive to look at, but sings sweetly and melodiously. There we see a man of great ability, but equally poor memory; here is another whose memory serves him, but whose wits are slow. In the very discussions with which when we were boys we amused ourselves, all the disputants are not on a level, either in introducing a subject, or in narrative, or in digressions, or wealth of illustration, and charm of peroration, but their various oratorical efforts exhibit different degrees of merit. Of churchmen I will say more. Many discourse well upon the Gospels, but in explaining an Apostle's meaning are unequal to themselves. Others, although most acute in the New Testament are dumb in the Psalms and the Old Testament. I quite agree with Virgil-Non omnia possumus omnes; and seldom or never is the rich man found who in the abundance of his wealth has everything in equal proportions. That God has given possible commands, I admit no less than you. But it is not for each one of us to make all these possible virtues our own, not because our nature is weak, for that is a slander upon God, but because our hearts and minds grow weary and cannot keep all virtues simultaneously and perpetually.

And if you blame the Creator for having made you subject to weariness and failure, I shall reply, your censure would be still more severe if you thought proper to accuse Him of not having made you God. But you will say, if I have not the power, no sin attaches to me. You have sinned because you have not done what another could do. And again, he in comparison with whom you are inferior will be a sinner in respect of some other virtue, relatively to you or to another person; and thus it happens that whoever is thought to be first, is inferior to him who is his superior in some other particular.

24. C. If it is impossible for man to be without sin, what does the Apostle Jude mean by writing, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you without sin, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish"? This is clear proof that it is possible to keep a man without sin and without blemish. A. You do not understand the passage. We are not told that a man can be without sin, which is your view, but that God, if He chooses, can keep a man free from sin, and of His mercy guard him so that he may be without blemish. And I say that all things are possible with God; but that everything which a man desires is not

possible to him, and especially, an attribute which belongs to no created thing you ever read of. C. I do not say that a man is without sin, which, perhaps, appears to you to be possible; but that he may be, if he chooses. For actuality is one thing, possibility another. In the actual we look for an instance; possibility implies that our power to act is real.

A. You are trifling, and forget the proverb, "Don't do what is done." You keep turning in the same mire, and only make more dirt. I shall, therefore, tell you, what is clear to all, that you are trying to establish a thing that is not, never was, and, perhaps, never will be. To employ your own words, and show the folly and inconsistency of your argument, I say that you are maintaining an impossible possibility. For your proposition, that a man can be without sin if he chooses, is either true or false. If it be true, show me who the man is; if it be false, whatever is false can never happen. But let us have no more of these notions. Hissed off the stage, and no longer daring to appear in public, they should stay on the book shelves, and not let themselves be heard. 25. Let us proceed to other matters. And here I must speak uninterruptedly, so far, at least, as is consistent with giving you an opportunity of refuting me, or asking any question you think fit.

C. I will listen patiently, though I cannot say gladly. The ability of your reasoning will strike me all the more, while I am amazed at its falsity. A. Whether what I am going to say is true or false, you will be able to judge when you have heard it. C. Follow your own method. I am resolved, if I am unable to answer, to hold my tongue rather than assent to a lie. A. What difference does it make whether I defeat you speaking or silent, and, as it is in the story of Proteus, catch you asleep or awake? C. When you have said what you like, you shall hear what you will certainly not like. For though truth may be put to hard shifts it cannot be subdued.

A. I want to sift your opinions a little, that your followers may know what an inspired genius you are. You say, "It is impossible for any but those who have the knowledge of the law to be without sin"; and you, consequently, shut out from righteousness a large number of Christians, and, preacher of sinlessness though you are, declare nearly all to be sinners. For how many Christians have that knowledge of the law which you can find but seldom, or hardly at all, in many doctors of the Church? But your liberality is so great that, in order to stand well with your Amazons, you have elsewhere written, "Even women ought to have a knowledge of the law," although the Apostle preaches that women ought to keep silence in the churches, and if they want to know anything consult their husbands at home. And you are not content with having given your cohort a knowledge of Scripture, but you must delight yourself with their songs and canticles, for you have a heading to the effect that "Women also should sing unto God." Who does not know that women should sing in the privacy of their own rooms, away from the company of men and the crowded congregation? But you allow what is not lawful, and the consequence is, that, with the support of their master, they make an open show of that which should be done with modesty, and with no eye to witness.

26. You go on to say, "The servant of God should utter from his lips no bitterness, but ever that which is sweet and pleasant"; and as though a servant of God were one thing, a doctor and priest of the Church another, forgetting what was previously laid down, you say in another heading, "A priest or doctor ought to watch the actions of all, and confidently rebuke sinners, lest he be responsible for them and their blood be required at his hands. And, not satisfied with saying it once, you repeat it, and inculcate that, "A priest or doctor should flatter no one, but boldly rebuke all, lest he destroy both himself and those who hear him. Is there so little harmony in one and the same work that you do not know what you have previously said? For if the servant of God ought to utter no bitterness from his mouth, but always that which is sweet and pleasant, it follows either that a priest and doctor will not be servants of God who ought to confidently rebuke sinners, and flatter no one, but boldly reprove all: or, if a priest and a doctor are not only servants of God, but have the chief place among His servants, it is idle to reserve smooth and pleasant speeches for the servants of God, for these are characteristic of heretics and of them who wish to deceive;

as the Apostle says, "They that are such serve not our Lord Christ but their own belly, and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent. Flattery is always insidious, crafty, and smooth. And the flatterer is well described by the philosophers as "a pleasant enemy. Truth is bitter, of gloomy visage and wrinkled brow, and distasteful to those who are rebuked. Hence the Apostle says, "Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? And the comic poet tells us that "Obsequiousness is the mother of friendship, truth of enmity. Wherefore we also eat the Passover with bitter herbs, and the chosen vessel teaches that the Passover should be kept with truth and sincerity. Let truth in our case be plain speaking, and bitterness will instantly follow.

27. In another place you maintain that "All are governed by their own free choice." What Christian can bear to hear this? For if not one, nor a few, nor many, but all of us are governed by our own free choice, what becomes of the help of God? And how do you explain the text, "A man's goings are ordered by the Lord"? And "A man's way is not in himself"; and "No one can receive anything, unless it be given him from above"; and elsewhere, "What hast thou which thou didst not receive? But if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" Our Lord and Saviour says: "I am come down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me." And in another place, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done." And in the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done as in heaven, so on earth." How is it that you are so rash as to do away with all God's help? Elsewhere, you make a vain attempt to append the words "not without the grace of God"; but in what sense you would have them understood is clear from this passage, for you do not admit His grace in separate actions, but connect it with our creation, the gift of the law, and the power of free will.

28. The argument of the next section is, "In the day of judgment, no mercy will be shown to the unjust and to sinners, but they must be consumed in eternal fire. Who can bear this, and suffer you to prohibit the mercy of God, and to sit in judgment on the sentence of the

Judge before the day of judgment, so that, if He wished to show mercy to the unjust and the sinners, He must not, because you have given your veto? For you say it is written in the one hundred and fourth Psalm, "Let sinners cease to be in the earth, and the wicked be no more. And in Isaiah, "The wicked and sinners shall be burned up together, and they who forsake God shall be consumed. Do you not know that mercy is sometimes blended with the threatenings of God? He does not say that they must be burnt with eternal fires, but let them cease to be in the earth, and the wicked be no more. For it is one thing for them to desist from sin and wickedness, another for them to perish for ever and be burnt in eternal fire. And as for the passage which you quote from Isaiah, "Sinners and the wicked shall be burned up together," he does not add for ever. "And they who forsake God shall be consumed. This properly refers to heretics, who leave the straight path of the faith, and shall be consumed if they will not return to the Lord whom they have forsaken.

And the same sentence is ready for you if you neglect to turn to better things. Again, is it not marvellous temerity to couple the wicked and sinners with the impious, for the distinction between them is great? Every impious person is wicked and a sinner; but we cannot conversely say every sinner and wicked person is also impious, for impiety properly belongs to those who have not the knowledge of God, or, if they have once had it, lose it by transgression. But the wounds of sin and wickedness, like faults in general, admit of healing. Hence, it is written, "Many are the scourges of the sinner"; it is not said that he is eternally destroyed. And through all the scourging and torture the faults of Israel are corrected, "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. It is one thing to smite with the affection of a teacher and a parent; another to be madly cruel towards adversaries. Wherefore, we sing in the first Psalm, "The impious do not rise in the judgment," for they are already sentenced to destruction; "nor sinners in the counsel of the just. To lose the glory of the resurrection is a different thing from perishing for ever. "The hour cometh," he says, "In which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment.

And so the Apostle, in the same sense, because in the same Spirit, says to the Romans, "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned under law, shall be judged by law. The man without law is the unbeliever who will perish for ever. Under the law is the sinner who believes in God, and who will be judged by the law, and will not perish. If the wicked and sinners are to be burned with everlasting fire, are you not afraid of the sentence you pass on yourself, seeing that you admit you are wicked and a sinner, while still you argue that a man is not without sin, but that he may be. It follows that the only person who can be saved is an individual who never existed, does not exist, and perhaps never will, and that all our predecessors of whom we read must perish. Take your own case. You are puffed up with all the pride of Cato, and have Milo's giant shoulders; but is it not amazing temerity for you, who are a sinner, to take the name of a teacher? If you are righteous, and, with a false humility, say you are a sinner, we may be

surprised, but we shall rejoice at having so unique a treasure, and at reckoning amongst our friends a personage unknown to patriarch, prophet, and Apostle.

And if Origen does maintain that no rational creatures ought to be lost, and allows repentance to the devil, what is that to us, who say that the devil and his attendants, and all impious persons and transgressors, perish eternally, and that Christians, if they be overtaken by sin, must be saved after they have been punished?

29. Besides all this you add two chapters which contradict one another, and which, if true, would effectually close your mouth. "Except a man have learned, he cannot be acquainted with wisdom and understand the Scriptures. And again, "He that has not been taught, ought not to assume that he knows the law. You must, then, either produce the master from whom you learned, if you are lawfully to claim the knowledge of the law; or, if your master is a person who never learned from any one else, and taught you what he did nor know himself, it follows that you are not acting rightly in claiming a knowledge of Scripture, when you have not been taught, and in starting as a master before you have been a disciple. And yet, perhaps, with your customary humility, you make your boast that the Lord Himself, Who teaches all knowledge, was your master, and that, like Moses in the cloud and darkness, face to face, you hear the words of God, and so, with the halo round your head, take the lead of us. And even this is not enough, but all at once you turn Stoic, and thunder in our ears Zeno's proud maxims. "A Christian ought to be so patient that if any one wished to take his property he would let it go with joy. Is it not enough for us patiently to lose what we have, without returning thanks to him who ill-treats and plunders us, and sending after him all blessings?

The Gospel teaches that to him who would go to law with us, and by strife and litigation take away our coat, we must give our cloak also. It does not enjoin the giving of thanks and joy at the loss of our property. What I say is this, not that there is any enormity in your view, but that everywhere you are prone to exaggeration, and indulge in ambitious flights. This is why you add that "The bravery of dress and ornament is an enemy of God. What enmity, I should like to know, is there to- wards God if my tunic is cleaner than usual, or if the bishop, priest, or deacon, or any other ecclesiastics, at the offering of the sacrifices walk in white? Beware, ye clergy; beware, ye monks; widows and virgins, you are? peril unless the people see you begrimed with dirt, and clad in rags. I say nothing of lay-men, who proclaim open war and enmity against God if they wear costly and elegant apparel.

30. Let us hear the rest. "We must love our enemies as we do our neighbours"; and immediately, falling into a deep slumber, you lay down this proposition: "We must never believe an enemy." Not a word is needed from me to show the contradiction here. You will say that both propositions are found in Scripture, but you do not observe the particular connection in which the passages occur. I am told to love my enemies and pray for my persecutors. Am I bidden to love them as though they were my neighbours, kindred, and friends, and to make no difference between a rival and a relative? If I love my enemies as my neighbours, what more affection can I show to my friends? If you had maintained this position, you ought to

have taken care not to contradict yourself by saying that we must never believe an enemy. But even the law teaches us how an enemy should be loved. If an enemy's beast be fallen, we must raise it up. And the Apostle tells us, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. For by so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head," not by way of curse and condemnation, as most people think, but to chasten and bring him to repentance, so that, overcome by kindness, and melted by the warmth of love, he may no longer be an enemy.

31. Your next point is that "the kingdom of heaven is promised even in the Old Testament," and you adduce evidence from the Apocrypha, although it is clear that the kingdom of heaven was first preached under the Gospel by John the Baptist, and our Lord and Saviour, and the Apostles. Read the Gospels. John the Baptist cries in the desert, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; and concerning the Saviour it is written, "From that time He began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And again, "Jesus went round about the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the kingdom of God." And He commanded His Apostles to "go and preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But you call us Manichaeans because we prefer the Gospel to the law, and say that in the latter we have the shadow, in the former, the substance, and you do not see that your foolishness goes hand in hand with impudence. It is one thing to condemn the law, as Manichaeus did; it is another to prefer the Gospel to the law, for this is in accordance with apostolic teaching. In the law the servants of the Lord speak, in the Gospel the Lord Himself; in the former are the promises, in the latter their fulfilment; there are the beginnings, here is perfection; in the law the foundations of works are laid; in the Gospel the edifice is crowned with the top-stone of faith and grace. I have mentioned this to show the character of the teaching given by our distinguished professor.

32. The hundredth heading runs thus: "A man can be without sin, and easily keep the commandments of God if he chooses," as to which enough has already been said. And although he professes to imitate, or rather complete the work of the blessed martyr Cyprian in the treatise which the latter wrote to Quirinus, he does not perceive that he has said just the opposite in the work under discussion. Cyprian, in the fifty-fourth heading of the third book, lays it down that no one is free from stain and without sin, and he immediately gives proofs, among them the passage in Job, "Who is cleansed from uncleanness? Not he who has lived but one day upon the earth. And in the fifty-first Psalm, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. And in the Epistle of John, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. You, on the other hand, maintain that "A man can be without sin," and that you may give your words the semblance of truth, you immediately add, "And easily keep the commandments of God, if he chooses," and yet they have been seldom or never kept by any one. Now, if they were easy, they ought to have been kept by all. But if, to concede you a point, at rare intervals some one may be found able to keep them, it is clear that what is rare is difficult.

And by way of supplementing this and displaying the greatness of your own virtues (we are to believe, forsooth, that you bring forth the sentiment out of the treasure of a good conscience), you have a heading to the effect that: "We ought not to commit even light offences. And for fear some one might think you had not explained in the work the meaning of light, you add that, "We must not even think an evil thought," forgetting the words, "Who understands his offences? Clear thou me from hidden faults, and keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, O Lord. You should have known that the Church admits even failures through ignorance and sins of mere thought to be offences; so much so that she bids sacrifices be offered for errors, and the high priest who makes intercession for the whole people previously offers victims for himself. Now, if he were not himself righteous, he would never be commanded to offer for others. Nor, again, would he offer for himself if he were free from sins of ignorance. If I were to attempt to show that error and ignorance is sin, I must roam at large over the wide fields of Scripture.

33. C. Pray have you not read that "He who looks upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart?" It seems that not only are the look and the allurements to vice reckoned as sin, but whatever it be to which we give assent. For either we can avoid an evil thought, and consequently may be free from sin; or, if we cannot avoid it, that is not reckoned as sin which cannot be avoided. A. Your argument is ingenious, but you do not see that it goes against Holy Scripture, which declares that even ignorance is not without sin. Hence it was that Job offered sacrifices for his sons, lest, perchance, they had unwittingly sinned in thought. And if, when one is cutting wood, the axe-head flies from the handle and kills a man, the owner is commanded to go to one of the cities of refuge and stay there until the high priest dies; that is to say, until he is redeemed by the Saviour's blood, either in the baptistery, or in penitence which is a copy of the grace of baptism, through the ineffable mercy of the Saviour, who would not have any one perish, nor delights in the death of sinners, but would rather that they should be converted and live.

C. It is surely strange justice to hold me guilty of a sin of error of which my conscience does not accuse itself. I am not aware that I have sinned, and am I to pay the penalty for an offence of which I am ignorant? What more can I do, if I sin voluntarily? A. Do you expect me to explain the purposes and plans of God? The Book of Wisdom gives an answer to your foolish question: "Look not into things above thee, and search not things too mighty for thee." And elsewhere, "Make not thyself overwise, and argue not more than is fitting." And in the same place, "In wisdom and simplicity of heart seek God." You will perhaps deny the authority of this book; listen then to the Apostle blowing the Gospel trumpet: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?" Your questions are such as he elsewhere describes: "But foolish and ignorant questioning avoid, knowing that they gender strifes." And in Ecclesiastes (a book concerning which there can be no doubt) we read, "I said, I will be wise, but it was far from me. That which is exceeding deep, who can find it out?" You ask me to tell you why the

potter makes one vessel to honour, another to dishonour, and will not be satisfied with Paul, who replies on behalf of his Lord, "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"

The remainder of this book is occupied by a series of quotations from the Old Testament, designed to show that it is not only the outer and conscious act which is reckoned sinful, but the opposition to the Divine will, which is often implicit and half-conscious. Occasionally, also, the speaker shows how the texts quoted enforce the argument which he has before used, that men may be spoken of as righteous in a general sense, yet by no means free from sins of thought or desire, if not of act. The passages quoted are:Gen. viii. 21. I will not curse the ground *131for the mind of man is set on evil from his youth. xvii. 17, xviii. 12. Abraham and Sarah laughing at the promise. xxxvii. 35. Jacob's excessive grief.Exod. xxi. 12, 13. The guilt of one who slays another unawares.Lev. iv. 2, 27. Offerings for sins of ignorance. v. 3. Offerings for ceremonial uncleanness.

ix. 1. Offerings for Aaron at his consecration. xii. 6. Offerings for women after childbirth. xiv. 1, 6, xvi. 6, xii. 7. Offerings for the leper. xv. 31, xvi. 2, xvi. 5. Offerings for the people on the day of atonement. xxii. 14. Eating the hallowed things ignorantly; compared with 1 Cor. xi. 27, 28, of careless participation in Sacrament.Numbers vi. 1. Offerings for the Nazarite. xiv. 7, vii. 28, 29. Offerings for imploring God's Mercy. xxviii. 15, 22, xxix. 5, v. 11, 17. Offerings at the feast. Numbers xxxv. 13. The cities of refuge provided for manslayers.Deut. ix. 6, xviii. 13. Isreal warned not to boast of rightousness. xviii. 9-12, v. 14, 15. Perfection used only of avoiding idolatry. xxii. 8. The housetop without a parapet makes a man guilty. xxiii. 2. Defilement from unconsious personal acts.Josh. vii. 12. The people made guilty by the sin of Achan. xi. 19, 20. The racial guilt of the Canaanites.1 Sam. xiv. 27. Jonathan made guilty by tasting the honey.

xvi. 6. The lord sees the heart, not the outward appearence.2 Sam. iv. 11. Ishbosheth spoken of as righteous. vi. 7, 8. Uzzah smitten for carelessness. 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. David's numbering the people. 1 Kings viii. 46. Solomon's Prayer-There is none that sinneth not. xiv. 5. The prophet detecting the motive Jeroboam's wife. 2 Kings iv. 27. Elijah seeing the Shunamite's heart.1 Chron. ii. 32. Sept. Half-prophets.Habakkuk iii. 1. Vulgate. A prayer"for sins of ignorance" ("upon Shigionoth"), supposed to be in recognition of over-boldness in i. 2-4.Ezek. xlvi. 20. The sacrifice of Ezekiel's restored temple.Jer. x. 23. The way of man not in himself. xvii. 9. The heart deceitful.Prov. xiv. 12. A way that seemeth right to a man. xix. 21. Many devices in a man's heart? xx. 9. Who can say, I have a clean heart? 17. Who will boast that he is clean? Eccl. vii. 16. The heart of a man is full of wickedness.

Book 2

This book can hardly be said to form part of a dialogue. It is rather an argument from Scripture to prove the point of the Augustinian arguer, Atticus. From the fourth chapter onwards it consists, like the last five chapters of Book I., of a chain of Scripture texts, taken from the New Testament and the Prophets, to show the universality of sin, and thus to refute the Pelagian assertion that a man can be without sin if he wills. We shall, therefore, give, as in the previous case, a list of the texts and the first words of them, only giving Jerome's words where he introduces some original remark of his own, or some noteworthy comment. The Pelagian begins by reiterating the dilemma: If the commandments are given to be obeyed, then man can be without sin; if he is, by his creation, such that he must be a sinner, then God, not he, is the author of sin. To the argument that sacrifices are enjoined for sins of ignorance, he replies by appealing from the Old Testament to the New, which leads to a discussion (2, 3) on St. Paul's description of the conflict with sin, in Romans vii. Paul, it is argued, speaks not as a sinner, but as a man, and thus confesses the sinfulness of humanity. That men may be without ingrained vice is possible; that they can be without sin is not. This leads the Augustinian, Atticus, resuming his list of testimonies, to the fact that, though men are found who are righteous as avoiding wickedness (kaki/a), yet none is without sin (a0nama/rthtoj).

In Psalm xxxii. 5. One who speaks of himself as "holy," yet confesses his transgression. Prov. xxiv. 16. Explains this, "The righteous falls, but sins again." xviii. 17, LXX. and xviii. 17 Vulgate. A righteous man accuses himself when he begins to speak. Ps. lviii. 3. Sinners are estranged from the womb; that is, either, as St. Paul says (Rom. v. 14), they sin "after the similitude of Adam";or,"when Christ, as the firstborn, opened the virgin's womb" (Exod. xiii. 2). The heretics refused to acknowledge the mystery, which was prefigured by the Eastern door of the Temple (Ezek. xliv. 2), which closed againwhen once the High Priest had gone through it. Job iv. 17-21. Shall mortal man be just with God? vii. 1. The life of man is temptation. 20, 21. If I have sinned, what can I do? ix. 15, ix. 16. If I were righteous, he would not hear me.

29-31. If I wash myself with snow water, etc. x. 15. If I be righteous, etc. xiv. 4, Job xiv. 5. Who will be free from uncleanliness? Not one. Prov. xvi. 26, LXX. Man toileth in sorrow. Job xl. 4. Wha shall I answer thee? Prov. xx. 9. "Who will boast that he has a

clean heart?" which shows at least that the commandments are not easy, as Pelagius says they are. 1 John v. 3. "His commandments are not grievous," and Matt. xi. 30. "My yoke is easy," are true only in comparison with Judaism, and should be compared with Acts xv. 10. A yoke ...which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear. James iv. 11. "Thou judgest the law." that is, if you say that the condemnation of sins of ignorance is unreasonable. That we all sin in such ways is evident from James i. 20. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." But anger is constantly condemned as in

Prov. xv. 1, LXX. "Wrath destroys even wise men." Eph. iv. 26. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Matt. v. 22. He who is angry ...shall be in danger of council. Eccles. xi. 19. "I am the most foolish of all men." This is said by Christ in the person of humanity. So Ps. lxix. 5. "God, Thou knowest my foolishness." But 1 Cor. i. 25. The foolishness of God is wiser than men. Ecclus. i. 18. "In much wisdom is much grief," shows the wise man's sense of imperfection. So viii. 7. "I hated my life,"and 14. "There be righteous men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked;" that is, God sees evil where we do not. 17. "However much a man may labor, yet he shall not find it;" and ix. 2, 3. There is one event to all. The heart ...is full of evil.

x. 1. "Dead flies cause the ointment to stink;"That is, almost everyone is defiled by heresy or other faults. 1 Pet. ii. 17, 18. Judgement must begin at the house of God.

6. There are four emotions which agitate mankind, two relating to the present, two to the future; two to good, and two to evil. There is sorrow, called in Greek lu/ph, and joy, in Greek xara/ or h9donh/, although many translate the latter word by voluptas, pleasure; the one of which is referred to evil, the other to good. And we go too far if we rejoice over such things as we ought not, as, for example, riches, power, distinctions, the bad fortune of enemies, or their death; or, on the other hand, if we are tortured with grief on account of present evils, adversity, exile, poverty, weakness, and the death of kindred, all of which is forbidden by the Apostle. And again, if we covet those things which we consider good, inheritance, distinctions, unvaried prosperity, bodily health, and the like, in the possession of which we rejoice and find enjoyment; or if we fear those things which we deem adverse. Now, according to the Stoics, Zeno that is to say and Chrysippus, it is possible for a perfect man to be free from these emotions; according to the Peripatetics, it is difficult and even impossible, an opinion which has the constant support of all Scripture. Hence Josephus, the historian of the Maccabees, said that the emotions can be subdued and governed, not extirpated, and Cicero's five books of "Tusculan Disputations" are full of these discussions. Accordto the Apostle, the weakness of the body and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places fight against us.

And the same writer tells us that the works of the flesh and the works of the spirit are manifest, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that we do not the things that we would. If we do not what we would, but what we would not, how can you say that a man can be without sin if he chooses? You see that neither an Apostle, nor any believer can perform what he wishes. "Love covereth a multitude of sins," not so much sins of the past as sins of

the present, that we may not sin any more while the love of God abideth in us. Wherefore it is said concerning the woman that was a sinner, "Her sins which are many are forgiven her, for she loved much. And this shows us that the doing what we wish does not depend merely upon our own power, but upon the assistance which God in His mercy gives to our will.

7. The quotations from Scripture are now continued: In 1 John i. 5, John i. 7, John i. 8, Matt. v. 14, Christ and the Apostles are called the Light of the world. The world therefore is darkness. 1 Tim. vi. 16. God only hath immortality and is"only wise"; yet others,like the Prince of Tyre (Ezek. xxviii. 3), are wise derivatively. So we are pure, but only by grace. Thus 1 John i. 7. The blood of Christ cleanses us. Job xxv. 5, Job xxv. 6. The stars are not pure in his sight. Gal. ii. 16. "By the law no flesh shall be justified;" butRom. iii. 1, 24, 28, 30. Being justified freely through His grace, etc. vi. 14. Not under the law, but under grace. ix. 16. Not of him that willeth, but of God which showeth mercy. ix. 30-32. The Gentiles ...attained to the righteousness by faith.

x. 2. Christ is the end of the law to every one that believeth. 8. The Apostle confesses his need of this grace for his work. 1 Cor. i. 1-3. Grace to you from God. 7, 8. That ye come behind in no gift-that no flesh may glory in His sight. 1 Cor. iii. 6-10. Paul planted ...but God gave the increase. 18, 19. If any man thinketh himself to be wise, let him become a fool. iv. 4. I know nothing against myself, yet I am not hereby justified. 7. What have ye that ye did not receive? 19. I will come to you, if the Lord will. 9. The Apostle shows also his need of grace himself. 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10. By the grace of God I am what I am, etc. 2 Cor. iii. 4-6. Our sufficiency is of God. Gal. ii. 16. We have believed, that we might, be justified by faith.

ii. 21. If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead for nought. iii. 10, 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. 24. The law our teacher to bring us to Christ. v. 4. Ye are severed from Christ, ye that would be justified by the law. Phil. ii. 13. It is God that worketh in you. 2 Thess. iii. 3. The Lord is faithful, He shall establish you. 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21. O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee. Tit. iii. 4-7. The kindness and mercy of God our Saviour saved us. 11. We now turn to the Gospels "and supplement the flickering flame of the Apostolic light with the brightness of the lamp of Christ." Matt. v. 22. "Every man who is angry ...shall be in danger of the council." Which of us is not here condemned? 23, 24. "First be reconciled to thy brother." Who is there that finds this command easy?

37. "Let your speech be Yea, yea, Nay, nay." Who has ever kept this commandment? The Psalmist says Ps. cxvi. 11. All men are liars. Matt. vi. 34. "Be not anxious for to-morrow." Do you fulfil this? vii. 14. "Narrow is the gate which leadeth to life." How can you say that the commandments are easy? Luke ix. 58. "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." This is interpreted by Is. xxviii. 12. "Receive him that is weary, and this is my rest;" and Is. lxvi. 1, 2. "On whom shall I rest but on him that is humble?" Christ finds few on whom to rest. How then can His commands be said to be easy? Matt. ix. 12, 13. "I came not to call the righteous." "They that are whole need not the physician." Had the world not been full of sin, Christ would not have come. So

Ps. xii. 1. Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth. xiv. 1, 3. They are corrupt ...none doeth good. Matt. x. 9. "Get you no gold ...nor shoes." Who has fulfilled this? Not even the Apostles, for Acts xii. 8. The angel bids Peter to bind on his sandals. Matt. x. 22-34. Describes the persecutions of Christ's followers, and gives the command to take up the cross. Are these easy? xiv. 31. Even Peter's faith fails, and he begins to sink. xv. 19, 20. Out of the heart came evil thoughts, etc. xvi. 25. Whosoever will lose his life will find it. xviii. 7. "Woe to the man through whom stumbling cometh." But James iii. 2. In many things we all stumble or err. Phil. ii. 21. All seek their own. Matt. xix. 21. The young lawyer had kept all the law, yet failed. xxiii. 26-28. The woes on the Pharisees fall in their measure upon all.

Matt. xxvi. 39. "Not as I will, but as Thou will." Yet Critobulus says, by his own will he can do right. Mark xiv. 37. "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" They could not. vi. 5. He could do no mighty works because of their unbelief. vii. 24. "He went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon." If Christ could not do as he wished, how can we? ix. 5. Peter's request at the Transfiguration shows his ignorance. xiii. 32. Even the Son knows not all things; how then can we? xiv. 35. If it be possible. How can you say it is possible every hour to avoid sin? Mark xvi. 14. Even the Apostles showed unbelief and hardness of heart. 1 John v. 19. The world lieth in the evil one. Luke i. 20. Even Zacharias disbelieved God's message. Matt. xvii. 15. The disciples could not relieve the lunatic, because of unbelief.

Mark iv. 34. The disciple's dispute about precedence. Luke ix. 54. James and John show a vindictive spirit. xiv. 26, 27. The commands to forsake all and take up the cross are not easy. xvi. 15. That which is exalted among men is abomination in the sight of God. xvii. 1. It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come. xvii. 6. The Apostles' faith was not even like a grain of mustard seed. James iii. 2. Matt. xvii. 19. Luke xviii. 1. We are always to pray. This shows our weakness. 27. Who, then, can be saved? It is possible, but to God only. xxii. 24. The contest for precedence at the last supper. 31, 32. Peter's faith almost overcome by Satan. Luke xxii. 43. Even Christ in his agony needs an angel to strengthen Him. 46. Pray that ye enter not into temptation. John v. 30. Even Christ says, "I cannot do anything by myself"; and

vii. 10. Was irresolute about going up to the Feast of Tabernacles. 19. None of you doeth the law. viii. 3. None of the accusers of the woman taken in adultery were without sin. Christ wrote their names in the earth (Jerem. xvii. 13). x. 8. All who came (not who were sent; Jerem. xiv. 15) before Christ were robbers. xvii. 12. I kept them-they did not keep themselves. Acts xv. 39. Paul and Barnabas quarrelled. xvi. 6, 7. They were forbidden to preach where they chose. 18. Even the Apostles, with their full light, show their dependence on grace. Acts xvii. 30. The times before Christ were times of ignorance. 1 Cor. iv. 19. I will come if the Lord will. James ii.10. To stumble in one point is to be guilty of all. iii. 2. In many things we all stumble. 8. The tongue is a deadly poison.

James iv. 1. Wars arise from our lust. David indeed said, Ps. xxvi. 2. "Examine me and prove me," etc. This self-confidence led to his fall. li. 1. Have mercy on me, O God. lxxx.

5. "Thou feedest us with the bread of tears." Similarly Ps. xxx. 6, 7. I said I shall never be moved ...Thou didst hide Thy face. xxxii. 5. I said I will confess my sin, xxxvii. 5, 6. He shall make thy righteousness as the light. 39. The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord. xxxviii. 7. There is no soundness in my flesh. Rom. vii. 18. In my flesh dwelleth no good thing. Ps. xxxviii. 8. Vulgate. My loins are filled with deceits. xxxix. 5. He hath made our days as handbreadths. lxix. 5. My sins are not hid from thee. lxxvii. 2. My soul refused to be comforted. 10. This is the changing of the right hand of theMost High.

Ps. lxxxix. 2. Mercy shall be built up forever. xci. 6. From "the thing that walketh in darkness" who can be free? For xi. 2. "The wicked bend their bow"-an image of theheretics. xcii. 14. Those that are planted in the house of the Lordshall flourish. ciii. 8, 10. The Lord is full of compassion. 2 Sam. viii. 13, 14. David receives the promises with the humble confession of his weakness. "Is this the law of man, O God?" xvi. 10. He humbles himself under Abishai's violence and Shimei's curse. xvii. 14. And is delivered only by God's confounding the counsel of Ahithophel. 1 Kings xiv. 8. It was God who gave Jeroboam the kingdom. 1 Kings xv. 11. Asa, though a good man, was faulty. xix. 4. Elijah fled from Jezebel. Ps. cxviii. 6. The Lord is my keeper. 2 Chron. xvii. 3. Jehoshaphat prospers because the Lord is with him. Yet

xix. 2. He is rebuked for joining with Ahab. 2 Chron. xxii. 9. Ahaziah received burial among kings because descended from righteous Jehoshaphat. 2 Kings xviii. 3, 4, 7. Hezekiah did great things, but only through the Lord's help. 14. He gave the consecrated gold to the king of Assyria. 22. Even the best kings of Judah were imperfect. 2 Kings xx. 1, 5. Hezekiah wept when death was at hand, and recovered through special mercy. 13, 17. But he sinned in receiving the Babylonian envoys. 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. He fell by the lifting up of his heart. xxxiv. 2. Josiah was a righteous man; yet 22, 23. He needed the aid of Huldah; and xxxv. 22. He was slain through not heeding God's warning; and 23. The prophets also are weak and sinful. Lam. iv. 20. Jeremiah lamented his fall. Numb. xx. 10, 12. Moses is punished for his sin at Meribah. This is the meaning of Ps. cxli. 6. Vulgate. Their judges were swallowed up, joined to the Rock, etc.

Hosea ii. 19. God in mercy forgives Israel's unfaithfulness. xi. 9. "I will not enter into the city." Only the Holy One is not joined to the mass of ungodliness. Amos vi. 13. We turn righteousness into wormwood. Jonah i. 14. The sailors confess that God is just in raising the storm. Micah vii. 2. The godly man is perished from the earth, etc. vi. 8. The command of justice, mercy, and a humble walk with God is only possible to humble faith, for Ps. cxl. 6. "The wicked walk on every side," and James iv. 6. God giveth grace to the humble. Habakkuk iii. 16. Let rottenness enter into my bones, if only I mayrest, etc. Zech. iii. 1. Joshua is represented as clothed in filthy garments, and is freed through God's mercy.

But Jovinian's heir says "I am quite free from sin, I have no filthy garments, I am governed by my own will, I am greater than an Apostle. The Apostle does what he would not, and what he would he does not; but I do what I will, and what I would not I do not: the kingdom of heaven has been prepared for me, or rather I have by my virtuous life prepared it for

myself. Adam was subject to punishment, and so are others who think themselves guilty after the similitude of Adam's transgressions; I and my crew alone have nothing to fear. Other men shut up in their cells and who never see women, because, poor creatures! they do not listen to my words, are tormented with desire: crowds of women may surround me, I feel no stirring of concupiscence. For to me may be applied the words, 'Holy stones are rolled upon the ground,' and the reason why I am insensible to the attraction of sin is that in the power of free will I carry Christ's trophy about with me. But let us listen to God proclaiming by the mouth of Isaiah: "O my people, they which call thee happy cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

Who is the greatest subverter of the people of God-he who, relying on the power of free choice, despises the help of the Creator, and is satisfied with following his own will, or he who dreads to be judged by the details of the Lord's commandments? To men of this sort, God says, "Woe unto you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own sight. Isaiah, if we follow the Hebrew, laments and says, "Woe is me because I have been silent, because I am a man of unclean lips: and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the Lord of Hosts. He for his meritorious and virtuous life enjoyed the sight of God, and conscious of his sins confessed that he had unclean lips. Not that he had said anything repugnant to the will of God, but because, either from fear, or from a deep sense of shame, he had been silent, and had not reproved the errors of the people so freely as a prophet should. When do we sinners rebuke offenders, we who flatter wealth and accept the persons of sinners for the sake of filthy lucre? for we shall hardly say that we speak with perfect frankness to men of whose assistance we stand in need. Suppose that we do not such things as they, suppose we keep ourselves from every form of sin; to refrain from speaking the truth is certainly sin.

In the Septuagint, however, we do not find the words "because I have been silent," but "because I was pricked," that is with the consciousness of sin; and thus the words of the prophet are fulfilled. "My life was turned into misery while I was pierced by the thorn. He was pricked by the thorn of sin: you are decked with the flowers of virtue. "The moon shall be ashamed, and the sun confounded, when the Lord shall punish the host of heaven on high. This is explained by another passage. "Even the stars are unclean in His sight," and again, "He chargeth His angels with folly. The moon is ashamed, the sun is confounded, and the sky covered with sackcloth, and shall we fearlessly and joyously, as though we were free from all sin, face the majesty of the Judge, when the mountains shall melt away, that is, all who are lifted up by pride, and all the host of the heavens, whether they be stars, or angelic powers, when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall fade away like leaves?

The argument is now carried on mostly by the quotation of passages from the prophets: Is xxxiv. 5. "My sword hath drunk its fill in the heavens. It will come down in Edom." How much more is there wrath against sin on earth! Edom means blood, which cannot inherit the kingdom (1 Cor. xv. 50). xlv. 9. Woe unto him who striveth with his Maker. liii. 6. We

have all gone astray like sheep. Ezek. xvi. 14. Jerusalem is perfect in beauty; yet Ezek. xvi. 60, 61. Her salvation is not of merit but of mercy. Nahum i. 3. Though he cleanse, yet will he not make thee innocent. 1 Cor. xv. 9. I am not worthy-because I persecuted. Ezek. xx. 43, 44. When pardoned, Jerusalem will still remember her sin. Let us confess with shame that these are the utterances of men who have already won their reward; sinners upon earth, and still in our frail and mortal bodies let us adopt the language of the saints in heaven who have even been endowed with incorruption and immortality. "And ye say the way of the Lord is not equal, when your ways are not equal." It is Pharisaic pride to attribute to the injustice of the Creator sins which are due to our own will, and to slander His righteousness. The sons of Zadok, the priests of the spiritual temple, that is the Church, go not out to the people in their ministerial robes, lest by human intercourse they may lose their holiness and be defiled. And do you suppose that you, in the thick of the throng, and an ordinary individual, are pure?

26. Let us hastily run through the prophet Jeremiah: Jerem. v. 1, 2. Is there any that doeth justly, etc. vii. 21, 22. God rejects the sacrifices, because of the worshippers' evil lives. xiii. 23. Can the Ethiopian change his skin? Jerem. xvii. 14. "Heal me, O Lord," Otherwise Jeremiah could only say, as in the text next quoted, xx. 14, 17, 18. Cursed be the day wherein I was born, etc. xxiii. 23. Am I a God at hand, etc. So conscious is he of God's power. xxiv. 6, 7. God, not they themselves, will plant them, etc. xxvi. 21-24. Jeremiah needed the help of Ahikam. How much more do we need that of God. Jerem. xxxi. 34. The promise of the new covenant. xxxii. 30. The children of Israel have perpetually done evil. xxxvii. 18, 19. Yet Jeremiah himself trembled before Zedekiah. Jerem. xxx. 10, 11. Fear not, O Jacob, for I am with thee.

Amos vi. 14. "We have taken us horns by our own strength." Theseare the boasts of heretics. But Is. xvi. 6. His strength (Moab's) is by no means according to his arrogance. Jerem. i. 7, 20. Men's sin will only be abolished because God is gracious to them. If you will abandon your assertions ofnatural ability, I will concede that your whole contention stands good, but only by the gift of God. Lam. iii. 26-42. It is good that a man should quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. Dan. iv. 17. The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. Ps. cxiii. 7, 8. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust. Is. xl. 17. He deeth what He will in heaven and in earth. The words of 2 Maccabees v. 17, which say that Antiochus Epiphanes had power to overthrow the Temple, "because of the multitude of sins," are quoted in connection with the confessions of Daniel.

Dan. ix. 5. "We have sinned and dealt perversely," which is shown by 20. "While I was yet praying," etc., to be a personal, not only a national confession. 24. The prophecy of the seventy weeks shows that the prophet looked to God alone for the establishment of righteousness. So then, until that end shall come, and this corruptible and mortal shall put on incorruption and immortality, we must be liable to sin; not, as you falsely say, owing to the fault of our nature and creation, but through the frailty and fickleness of human will, which varies from moment to moment; because God alone changeth not. You ask in what

respects Abel, Enoch, Joshua the son of Nun, or Elisha, and the rest of the saints have sinned. There is no need to look for a knot in a bulrush; I freely confess I do not know; and I only wish that, when sins are manifest, I might still be silent. "I know nothing against myself," says St. Paul, "yet am I not hereby justified." "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Before Him no man is justified. And so Paul says confidently, "All bare sinned, and come short of the glory of God"; and "God hath shut up all under sin that He may have mercy upon all"; and similarly in other passages which we have repeated again and again.

Book 3

1. Critob. I am charmed with the exuberance of your eloquence, but at the same time I would remind you that, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not transgression." And how does it bear upon the question before us? You will surely admit that those who have received Christian baptism are without sin. And that being free from sin they are righteous. And that once they are righteous, they can, if they take care, preserve their righteousness, and so through life avoid all sin.

Attic. Do you not blush to follow the opinion of Jovinian, which has been exploded and condemned? For he relies upon just the same proofs and arguments as you do; nay, rather, you are all eagerness for his inventions, and desire to preach in the East what was formerly condemned at Rome, and not long ago in Africa. Read then the reply which was given to him, and you will there find the answer to yourself. For in the discussion of doctrines and disputed points, we must have regard not to persons but to things. And yet let me tell you that baptism condones past offences, and does not preserve righteousness in the time to come; the keeping of that is dependent on toil and industry, as well as earnestness, and above all on the mercy of God. It is ours to ask, to Him it belongs to bestow what we ask; ours to begin, His it is to finish; ours to offer what we can, His to fulfil what we cannot perform. "For except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. Wherefore the Apostle bids us so run that we may attain. All indeed run, but one receiveth the crown. And in the Psalm it is written, "O Lord, thou hast crowned us with thy favour as with a shield. For our victory is won and the crown of our victory is gained by His protection and through His shield;

and here we run that hereafter we may attain; there he shall receive the crown who in this world has proved the conqueror. And when we have been baptized we are told, "Behold thou art made whole; sin no more lest a worse thing happen unto thee. And again, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man profane the temple of God, him shall God destroy. And in another place, "The Lord is with you so long as ye are with Him: if ye forsake Him, He will also forsake you. Where is the man, do you suppose, in whom as in a shrine and sanctuary the purity of Christ is permanent, and in whose case the serenity of the temple is saddened by no cloud of sin? We cannot always have the same countenance, though the philosophers falsely boast that this was the

experience of Socrates; how much less can our minds be always the same! As men have many expressions of countenance, so also do the feelings of their hearts vary. If it were possible for us to be always immersed in the waters of baptism, sins would fly over our heads and leave us untouched. The Holy Spirit would protect us. But the enemy assails us, and when conquered does not depart, but is ever lying in ambush, that he may secretly shoot the upright in heart.

2. In the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which is written in the Chaldee and Syrian language, but in Hebrew characters, and is used by the Nazarenes to this day (I mean the Gospel according to the Apostles, or, as is generally maintained, the Gospel according to Matthew, a copy of which is in the library at Caesarea), we find, "Behold, the mother of our Lord and His brethren said to Him, John Baptist baptizes for the remission of sins; let us go and be baptized by him. But He said to them, what sin have I committed that I should go and be baptized by him? Unless, haply, the very words which I have said are only ignorance. And in the same volume, "If thy brother sin against thee in word, and make amends to thee, receive him seven times in a day. Simon, His disciple, said to Him, "Seven times in a day? The Lord answered and said to him, "I say unto thee until seventy times seven. Even the prophets, after they were anointed with the Holy Spirit, were guilty of sinful words. Ignatius, an apostolic man and a martyr, boldly writes, "The Lord chose Apostles who were sinners above all men. It is of their speedy conversion that the Psalmist sings, "Their infirmities were multiplied; afterwards they made haste. If you do not allow the authority of this evidence, at least admit its antiquity, and see what has been the opinion of all good churchmen.

Suppose a person who has been baptized to have been carried off by death either immediately, or on the very day of his baptism, and I will generously concede that he neither thought nor said anything whereby, through error and ignorance, he fell into sin. Does it follow that he will, therefore, be without sin, because he appears not to have overcome, but to have avoided sin? Is not the true reason rather that by the mercy of God he was released from the prison of sins and departed to the Lord? We also say this, that God can do what He wills; and that man of himself and by his own will cannot, as you maintain, be without sin. If he can, it is idle for you now to add the word grace, for, with such a power, he has no need of it. If, however, he cannot avoid sin without the grace of God, it is folly for you to attribute to him an ability which he does not possess. For whatever depends upon another's will, is not in the power of him whose ability you assert, but of him whose aid is clearly indispensable.

3. C. What do you mean by this perversity, or, rather, senseless contention? Will you not grant me even so much-that when a man leaves the waters of baptism he is free from sin? A. Either I fail to express my meaning clearly, or you are slow of apprehension. C. How so? A. Remember both what you maintained and also what I say. You argued that a man can be free from sin if he chooses. I reply that it is an impossibility; not that we are to think that a man is not free from sin immediately after baptism, but that that time of sinlessness

is by no means to be referred to human ability, but to the grace of God. Do not, therefore, claim the power for man, and I will admit the fact. For how can a man be able who is not able of himself? Or what is that sinlessness which is conditioned by the immediate death of the body? Should the man's life be prolonged, he will certainly be liable to sins and to ignorance.

C. Your logic stops my mouth. You do not speak with Christian simplicity, but entangle me in some fine distinctions between being and ability to be. A. Is it I who play these tricks with words? The article came from your own workshop. For you say, not that a man is free from sin, but that he is able to be; I, on the other hand, will grant what you deny, that a man is free from sin by the grace of God, and yet will maintain that he is not able of himself. C. It is useless to give commandments if we cannot keep them. A. No one doubts that God commanded things possible. But because men do not what they might, therefore the whole world is subject to the judgment of God, and needs His mercy. On the other hand, if you can produce a man who has fulfilled the whole law, you will certainly be able to show that there is a man who does not need the mercy of God. For everything which can happen must either take place in the past, the present, or the future. As to your assertion that a man can be without sin if he chooses, show that it has happened in the past, or at all events that it does happen at the present day; the future will reveal itself. If, however, you can point to no one who either is, or has been, altogether free from sin, it remains for us to confine our discussion to the future. Meanwhile, you are vanquished and a captive as regards two out of three periods of time, the past and the present. If anyone hereafter shall be greater than patriarchs, prophets, apostles, inasmuch as he is without sin, then you may perhaps be able to convince future generations as to their time.

4. C. Talk as you like, argue as you please, you will never wrest from me free will, which God bestowed once for all, nor will you be able to deprive me of what God has given, the ability if I have the will.

A. By way of example let us take one proof: "I have found David, the Son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, who shall do all My will. There is no doubt that David was a holy man, and yet he who was chosen that he might do all God's will is blamed for certain actions. Of course it was possible for him who was chosen for the purpose to do all God's will. Nor is God to blame Who beforehand spoke of his doing all His will as commanded, but blame does attach to him who did not what was foretold. For God did not say that He had found a man who would unfailingly do His bidding and fulfil His will, but only one who would do all His will. And we, too, say that a man can avoid sinning, if he chooses, according to his local and temporal circumstances and physical weakness, so long as his mind is set upon righteousness and the string is well stretched upon the lyre. But if a man grow a little remiss it is with him as with the boatman pulling against the stream, who finds that, if he slackens but for a moment, the craft glides back and he is carried by the flowing waters whither he would not. Such is the state of man; if we are a little careless we learn our weakness, and find that our power is limited.

Do you suppose that the Apostle Paul, when he wrote "the coat (or cloak) that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments," was thinking of heavenly mysteries, and not of those things which are required for daily life and to satisfy our bodily necessities? Find me a man who is never hungry, thirsty, or cold, who knows nothing of pain, or fever, or the torture of strangury, and I will grant you that a man can think of nothing but virtue. When the Apostle was struck by the servant, he delivered himself thus against the High Priest who commanded the blow to be given: "God shall strike thee, thou whited wall. We miss the patience of the Saviour Who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and opened not His mouth, but mercifully said to the smiter, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me? We do not disparage the Apostle, but declare the glory of God Who suffered in the flesh and overcame the evil inflicted on the flesh and the weakness of the flesh-to say nothing of what the Apostle says elsewhere: "Alexander, the coppersmith, did me much evil; the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense him in that day."

5. C. I have been longing to say something, but have checked the words as they were bursting from my lips. You compelme to say it. A. Who hinders you from saying what you think? Either what you are going to say is good-and you ought not to deprive us of what is good-or it is bad, and, therefore, it is not regard for us, but shame that keeps you silent. C. I will say, I will say after all, what I think. Your whole argument tends to this: You accuse nature, and blame God for creating man such as he is. A. Is this what you wished, and yet did not wish, to say? Pray speak out, so that all may have the benefit of your wisdom. Are you censuring God because he made man to be man? Let the angels also complain because they are angels. Let every creature discuss the question, Why it is as it was created? and not what the Creator could have made it. I must now amuse myself with the rhetorical exercises of childhood, and passing from the gnat and the ant to cherubim and seraphim, inquire why each was not created with a happier lot. And when I reach the exalted powers, I will argue the point: Why God alone is only God, and did not make all things gods? For, according to you, He will either be unable to do so, or will be guilty of envy. Censure Him, and demand why He allows the devil to be in this world, and carry off the crown when you have won the victory.

C. I am not so senseless as to complain of the existence of the devil, through whose malice death entered into the world; but what grieves me is this: that dignitaries of the Church, and those who usurp the title of master, destroy free will; and once that is destroyed, the way is open for the Manichaeans. A. Am I the destroyer of free will because, throughout the discussion, my single aim has been to maintain the omnipotence of God as well as free will? C. How can you have free will, and yet say that man can do nothing without God's assistance? A. If he is to be blamed who couples free will and God's help, it follows that we ought to praise him who does away with God's help. C. I am not making God's help unnecessary, for to His grace we owe all our ability; but I and those who think with me keep both within their own bounds. To God's grace we assign the gift of the power of free choice;

to our own will, the doing, or the not doing, of a thing; and thus rewards and punishments for doing or not doing can be maintained.

6. A. You seem to me to be lost in forgetfulness, and to be going over the lines of argument already traversed as though not a word had been previously said. For, by this long discussion, it has been established float the Lord, by the same grace wherewith He bestowed upon us free choice, assists and supports us in our individual actions. C. Why, then, does He crown and praise what He has Himself wrought in us? A. That is to say, our will which offered all it could, the toil which strove in action, and the humility which ever looked to the help of God. C. So, then, if we have not done what He commanded, either God was willing to assist us, or He was not. If He was willing and did assist us, and yet we have not done what we wished, then He, and not we, has been overcome. But if He would not help, the man is not to be blamed who wished to do His will, but God, who was able to help, but would not.

A. Do you not see that your dilemma has landed you in a deep abyss of blasphemy? Whichever way you take it, God is either weak or malevolent, and He is not so much praised because He is the author of good and gives His help, as abused for not restraining evil. Blame Him, then, because He allows the existence of the devil, and has suffered, and still suffers, evil to be done in the world. This is what Marcion asks, and the whole pack of heretics who mutilate the Old Testament, and have mostly spun an argument something like this: Either God knew that man, placed in Paradise, would transgress His command, or He did not know. If He knew, man is not to blame, who could not avoid God's foreknowledge, but He Who created him such that he could not escape the knowledge of God. If He did not know, in stripping Him of foreknowledge you also take away His divinity. Upon the same showing God will be deserving of blame for choosing Saul, who was to prove one of the worst of kings. And the Saviour must be convicted either of ignorance, or of unrighteousness, inasmuch as He said in the Gospel, "Did I not choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil? Ask Him why He chose Judas, a traitor? Why He entrusted to him the bag when He knew that he was a thief? Shall I tell you the reason? God judges the present, not the future.

He does not make use of His foreknowledge to condemn a man though He knows that he will hereafter displease Him; but such is His goodness and unspeakable mercy that He chooses a man who, He perceives, will meanwhile be good, and who, He knows, will turn out badly, thus giving him the opportunity of being converted and of repenting. This is the Apostle's meaning when he says, "Dost thou not know that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Who will render to every man according to his works. For Adam did not sin because God knew that he would do so; but God inasmuch as He is God, foreknew what Adam would do of his own free choice. You may as well accuse God of falsehood because He said by the mouth of Jonah: "Yet three days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. But God will reply by the mouth of Jeremiah, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and

to break down, and to destroy it; if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;

if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them. Jonah, on a certain occasion, was indignant because, at God's command, he had spoken falsely; but his sorrow was proved to be ill founded, since he would rather speak truth and have a countless multitude perish, than speak falsely and have them saved. His position was thus illustrated: "Thou grievest over the ivy (or gourd), for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night; and should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand? If there was so vast a number of children and simple folk, whom you will never be able to prove sinners, what shall we say of those inhabitants of both sexes who were at different periods of life? According to Philo, and the wisest of philosophers, Plato (so the "Timaeus" tells us), in passing from infancy to decrepit old age, we go through seven stages, which so gradually and so gently follow one another that we are quite insensible of the change.

C. The drift of your whole argument is this-what the Greeks call autecousion, and we free will, you admit in terms, but in effect destroy. For you make God the author of sin, in asserting that man can of himself do nothing, but that he must have the help of God to Whom is imputed all we do. But we say that, whether a man does good or evil, it is imputed to him on account of the faculty of free choice, inasmuch as he did what he chose, and not to Him Who once for all gave him free choice. A. Your shuffling is to no purpose; you are caught in the snares of truth. For upon this showing, even if He does not Himself assist, according to you He will be the author of evil, because He might have prevented it and did not. It is an old maxim that if a man can deliver another from death and does not, he is a homicide.

C. I withdraw and yield the point; you have won; provided, however, that victory is the subverting of the truth by specious words, that is to say, not by truth, but by falsehood. For I might make answer to you in the Apostle's words, "Though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge." When you speak, your rhetorical tricks are too much for me, and I seem to agree with you; but when you stop speaking, it all goes out of my head, and I see quite clearly that your argument does not flow from the fountains of truth and Christian simplicity, but rests on the laboured subtleties of the philosophers. A. Do you wish me, then, once more to resort to the evidence of Scripture? If so, what becomes of the boast of your disciples that no one can answer your arguments or solve the questions you raise?

C. I not only wish, but am eager that you should do so. Show me any place in Holy Scripture where we find that, the power of free choice being lost, a man does what of himself he either would not, or could not do.

8. A. We must use the words of Scripture not as you propose, but as truth and reason demand. Jacob says in his prayer, "If the Lord God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a token, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee. He did not say, If thou preserve my free choice, and I gain by my toil food and raiment, and return to my father's house. He refers everything to the will of God, that he may be found worthy to receive that for which he prays. On Jacob's return from Mesopotamia an army of angels met him, who are called God's camp. He afterwards contended with an angel in the form of a man, and was strengthened by God; whereupon, instead of Jacob, the supplanter, he received the name, the most upright of God. For he would not have dared to return to his cruel brother unless he had been strengthened and secured by the Lord's, help. In the sequel we read, "The sun rose upon him after he passed over Phanuel," which is, being interpreted, the face of God.

Hence Moses also says, "I have seen the Lord face to face, and my life is preserved," not by any natural quality-but by the condescension of God, Who had mercy. So then the Sun of Righteousness rises upon us when God makes His face to shine upon us and gives us strength. Joseph in Egypt was shut up in prison, and we next hear that the keeper of the prison, believing in his fidelity, committed everything to his hand. And the reason is given: "Because the Lord was with him: and whatsoever he did, the Lord made it to prosper. Wherefore, also, dreams were suggested to Pharaoh's attendants, and Pharaoh had one which none could interpret, that so Joseph might be released, and his father and brethren fed, and Egypt saved in the time of famine. Moreover, God said to Israel, in a vision of the night, "I am the God of thy fathers; fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will make of thee there a great nation, and I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again, and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes. Where in this passage do we find the power of free choice? Is not the whole circumstance that he ventured to go to his son, and entrust himself to a nation that knew not the Lord, due to the help of the God of his fathers? The people was released from Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm;

not the hand of Moses and Aaron, but of Him who set the people free by signs and wonders, and at last smote the firstborn of Egypt, so that they who at first were persistent in keeping the people, eagerly urged them to depart. Solomon says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Understand what He says-that we must not trust in our wisdom, but in the Lord alone, by Whom the steps of a man are directed. Lastly, we are bidden to show Him our ways, and make them known, for they are not made straight by our own labour, but by His assistance and mercy. And so it is written, "Make my way right before Thy face," so that what is right to Thee may seem also right to me. Solomon says the same- "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established. Our thoughts are

then established when we commit all we do to the Lord our helper, resting it, as it were, upon the firm and solid rock, and attribute everything to Him.

9. The Apostle Paul, rapidly recounting the benefits of God, ended with the words, ”And who is sufficient for these things? Wherefore, also, in another place he says, ”Such confidence have we through Christ to Godward; not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God; Who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. Do we still dare to pride ourselves on free will, and to abuse the benefits of God to the dishonour of the giver? Whereas the same chosen vessel openly writes, ”We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves. Therefore, also, in another place, checking the impudence of the heretics, he says, ”He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth. And again, ”In nothing was I behind the very chiefest Apostles, though I be nothing. Peter, disturbed by the greatness of the miracles he witnessed, said to the Lord, ”Depart from me, for I am a sinful man. And the Lord said to His disciples, ”I am the vine and ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for apart from Me ye can do nothing.

Just as the vine branches and shoots immediately decay when they are severed from the parent stem, so all the strength of men fades and perishes, if it be bereft of the help of God. ”No one,” He says, ”can come unto Me except the Father Who sent Me draw him. When He says, ”No one can come unto Me,” He shatters the pride of free will; because, even if a man will to go to Christ, except that be realized which follows-”unless My heavenly Father draw him”-desire is to no purpose, and effort is in vain. At the same time it is to be noted that he who is drawn does not run freely, but is led along either because he holds back and is sluggish, or because he is reluctant to go.

10. Now, how can a man who cannot by his own strength and labour come to Jesus, at the same time avoid all sins? and avoid them perpetually, and claim for himself a name which belongs to the might of God? For if He and I are both without sin, what difference is there between me and God? One more proof only I will adduce, that I may not weary you and my hearers. Sleep was removed from the eyes of Ahasuerus, whom the Seventy call Artaxerxes, that he might turn over the memoirs of his faithful ministers and come upon Mordecai, by whose evidence he was delivered from a conspiracy; and that thus Esther might be more acceptable, and the whole people of the Jews escape imminent death. There is no doubt that the mighty sovereign to whom belonged the whole East, from India to the North and to Ethiopia, after feasting sumptuously on delicacies gathered from every part of the world would have desired to sleep, and to take his rest, and to gratify his free choice of sleep, had not the Lord, the provider of all good things, hindered the course of nature, so that in defiance of nature the tyrant’s cruelty might be overcome. If I were to attempt to produce all the instances in Holy Writ, I should be tedious. All that the saints say is a prayer to God;

their whole prayer and supplication a strong wrestling for the pity of God, so that we, who by our own strength and zeal cannot be saved, may be preserved by His mercy. But when we are concerned with grace and mercy, free will is in part void; in part, I say, for so much as this depends upon it, that we wish and desire, and give assent to the course we choose. But it depends on God whether we have the power in His strength and with His help to perform what we desire, and to bring to effect our toil and effort.

11. C. I simply said that we find the help of God not in our several actions, but in the grace of creation and of the law, that free will might not be destroyed. But there are many of us who maintain that all we do is done with the help of God. A. Whoever says that must leave your party. Either, then, say the same yourself and join our side, or, if you refuse, you will be just as much our enemy as those who do not hold our views. C. I shall be on your side if you speak my sentiments, or rather you will be on mine if you do not contradict them. You admit health of body, and deny health of the soul, which is stronger than the body. For sin is to the soul what disease or a wound is to the body. If then you admit that a man may be healthy so far as he is flesh, why do you not say he may be healthy so far as he is spirit?

A. I will follow in the line you point out, "and you to-day Shall ne'er escape; where'r you call, I come." C. I am ready to listen.

A. And I to speak to deaf ears. I will therefore reply to your argument. Made up of soul and body, we have the nature of both substances. As the body is said to be healthy if it is troubled with no weakness, so the soul is free from fault if it is unshaken and undisturbed. And yet, although the body may be healthy, sound, and active, with all the faculties in their full vigour, yet it suffers much from infirmities at more or less frequent intervals, and, however strong it may be, is sometimes distressed by various humours; so the soul, bearing the onset of thoughts and agitations, even though it escape shipwreck, does not sail without danger, and remembering its weakness, is always anxious about death, according as it is written, "What man is he that shall live and not see death?"-death, which threatens all mortal men, not through the decay of nature, but through the death of sin, according to the prophet's words, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Besides, we know that Enoch and Elias have not yet seen this death which is common to man and the brutes. Show me a body which is never sick, or which after sickness is ever safe and sound, and I will show you a soul which never sinned, and after acquiring virtues will never again sin.

The thing is impossible, and all the more when we remember that vice borders on virtue, and that, if you deviate ever so little, you will either go astray or fall over a precipice. How small is the interval between obstinacy and perseverance, miserliness and frugality, liberality and extravagance, wisdom and craft, intrepidity and rashness, caution and timidity! some of which are classed as good, others as bad. And the same applies to bodies. If you take precautions against biliousness, the phlegm increases. If you dry up the humours too quickly, the blood becomes heated and vitiated with bile, and a sallow hue spreads over the countenance. Without question, however much we may exercise all the care of the physician, and regulate our diet, and be free from indigestion and whatever fosters disease, the

causes of which are in some cases hidden from us and known to God alone, we shiver with cold, or burn with fever, or howl with colic, and implore the help of the true physician, our Saviour, and say with the Apostles, "Master, save us, we perish"

12. C. Granted that no one could avoid all sin in boyhood, youth, and early manhood; can you deny that very many righteous and holy men, after falling into vice, have heartily devoted themselves to the acquisition of virtue and through these have escaped sin? A. This is what I told you at the beginning-that it rests with ourselves either to sin or not to sin, and to put the hand either to good or evil; and thus free will is preserved, but according to circumstances, time, and the state of human frailty; we maintain, however, that perpetual freedom from sin is reserved for God only, and for Him Who being the Word was made flesh without incurring the defects and the sins of the flesh. And, because I am able to avoid sin for a short time, you cannot logically infer that I am able to do so continually. Can I fast, watch, walk, sing, sit, sleep perpetually?

C. Why then in Holy Scripture are we stimulated to aim at perfect righteousness? For example: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," and "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." And God says to Abraham, "I am thy God, be thou pleasing in My sight, and be thou without spot, or blame, and I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." If that is impossible which Scripture testifies, it was useless to command it to be done.

A. You play upon Scripture until you wear a question threadbare, and remind me of the platform tricks of a conjurer who assumes a variety of characters, and is now Mars, next moment Venus; so that he who was at first all sternness and ferocity is dissolved into feminine softness. For the objection you now raise with an air of novelty-"Blessed are the pure in heart," "Blessed are the undefiled in the way," and "Be without spot," and so forth-is refuted when the Apostle replies, "We know in part, and we prophesy in part," and, "Now we see through a mirror darkly, but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. And therefore we have but the shadow and likeness of the pure heart, which hereafter is destined to see God, and, free from spot or stain, to live with Abraham. However great the patriarch, prophet, or Apostle may be, it is said to them, in the words of our Lord and Saviour, "If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father Which is in heaven give good things to them which ask Him? Then again even Abraham, to whom it was said, "Be thou without spot and blame," in the consciousness of his frailty fell upon his face to the earth.

And when God had spoken to Him, saying, "Thy wife Sarai shall no longer be called Sarai, but Sara shall her name be, and I will give thee a son by her, and I will bless him and he shall become a great nation, and kings of nations shall spring from him," the narrative at once proceeds to say, "Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, "Nay, but Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son, and thou shall call his name Isaac," and

so on. He certainly had heard the words of God, "I am thy God, be thou pleasing in My sight, and without spot"; why then did he not believe what God promised, and why did he laugh in his heart, thinking that he escaped the notice of God, and not daring to laugh openly? Moreover he gives the reasons for his unbelief, and says, "How is it possible for a man that is an hundred years old to beget a son of a wife that is ninety years old? "Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee," he says. "Ishmael whom thou once gavest me. I do not ask a hard thing, I am content with the blessing I have received. God convinced him by a mysterious reply. He said, "Yea.

The meaning is, that shall come to pass which you think shall not be. Your wife Sara shall bear you a son, and before she conceives, before he is born, I will give the boy a name. For, from your error in secretly laughing, your son shall be called Isaac, that is laughter. But if you think that God is seen by those who are pure in heart in this world, why did Moses, who had previously said, "I have seen the Lord face to face, and my life is preserved," afterwards entreat that he might see him distinctly? And because he said that he had seen God, the Lord told him, "Thou canst not see My face. For man shall not see My face, and live. Wherefore also the Apostle calls Him the only invisible God, Who dwells in light unapproachable, and Whom no man hath seen, nor can see. And the Evangelist John in holy accents testifies, saying, "No man hath at any time seen God. The only begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. He Who sees, also declares, not how great He is Who is seen, nor how much He knows Who declares; but as much as the capacity of mortals can receive.

13. And whereas you think he is blessed who is undefiled in the way, and walks in His law, you must interpret the former clause by the latter. From the many proofs I have adduced you have learnt that no one has been able to fulfil the law. And if the Apostle, in comparison with the grace of Christ, reckoned those things as filth which formerly, under the law, he counted gain, so that he might win Christ, how much more certain ought we to be that the reason why the grace of Christ and of the Gospel has been added is that, under the law, no one could be justified? Now if, under the law, no one is justified, how is he perfectly undefiled in the way who is still walking and hastening to reach the goal? Surely, he who is in the course, and who is advancing on the road, is inferior to him who has reached his journey's end. If, then, he is undefiled and perfect who is still walking in the way and advancing in the law, what more shall he have who has arrived at the end of life and of the law? Hence the Apostle, speaking of our Lord, says that, at the end of the world, when all virtues shall receive their consummation, He will present His holy Church to Himself without spot or wrinkle, and yet you think that Church perfect, while yet in the flesh, which is subject to death and decay.

You deserve to be told, with the Corinthians, "Ye are already perfect, ye are already made rich: ye reign without us, and I would that ye did reign, that we might also reign with you"- since true and stainless perfection belongs to the inhabitants of heaven, and is reserved for that day when the bridegroom shall say to the bride, "Thou art all fair, my love; and

there is no spot in thee. And in this sense we must understand the words: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, as children of God, without blemish"; for He did not say ye are, but may be. He is contemplating the future, not stating a case pertaining to the present; so that here is toil and effort, in that other world the rewards of labour and of virtue. Lastly, John writes: "Beloved, we are sons of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him even as He is. Although, then, we are sons of God, yet likeness to God, and the true contemplation of God, is promised us then, when He shall appear in His majesty.

14. From this swelling pride springs the audacity in prayer which marks the directions in your letter to a certain widow as to how the saints ought to pray. "He," you say, "rightly lifts up his hands to God; he pours out supplications with a good conscience who can say, 'Thou knowest, Lord, how holy, how innocent, how pure from all deceit, wrong, and robbery are the hands which I spread out unto Thee; how righteous, how spotless, and free from all falsehood are the lips with which I pour forth my prayers unto Thee, that Thou mayest pity me.'" Is this the prayer of a Christian, or of a proud Pharisee like him who says in the Gospel, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, robbers, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. Yet he merely thanks God because, by His mercy, he is not as other men: he execrates sin, and does not claim his righteousness as his own. But you say, "Now Thou knowest how holy, how innocent, how pure from all deceit, wrong, and robbery are the hands which I spread out before Thee. He says that he fasts twice in the week, that he may afflict his vicious and wanton flesh, and he gives tithes of all his substance. For "the ransom of a man's life is his riches.

You join the devil in boasting, "I will ascend above the stars, I will place my throne in heaven, and I will be like the Most High. David says, "My loins are filled with illusions"; and "My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness"; and "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant"; and "In Thy sight no man living shall be justified. You boast that you are holy, innocent, and pure, and spread out clean hands unto God. And you are not satisfied with glorying in all your works, unless you say that you are pure from all sins of speech; and you tell us how righteous, how spotless, how free from all falsehood your lips are. The Psalmist sings, "Every man is a liar"; and this is supported by apostolical authority: "That God may be true," says St. Paul, "and every man a liar"; and yet you have lips righteous, spotless, and free from all falsehood. Isaiah laments, saying, "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips"; and afterwards one of the seraphim brings a hot coal, taken with the tongs, to purify the prophet's lips, for he was not, according to the tenor of your words, arrogant, but he confessed his own faults. Just as we read in the Psalms, "What shall be due unto thee, and what shall be done more unto thee in respect of a deceitful tongue?

Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals that make desolate. And after all this swelling with pride, and boastfulness in prayer, and confidence in your holiness, like one fool trying to per-

suade another, you finish with the words "These lips with which I pour out my supplication that Thou mayest have pity on me. If you are holy, if you are innocent, if you are cleansed from all defilement, if you have sinned neither in word nor deed-although James says, "He who offends not in word is a perfect man," and "No one can curb his tongue"-how is it that you sue for mercy? so that, forsooth, you bewail yourself, and pour out prayers because you are holy, pure, and innocent, a man of stainless lips, free from all falsehood, and endowed with a power like that of God. Christ prayed thus on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Why art Thou so far from helping Me? And,again, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," and "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And this is He, who, returning thanks for us, had said, "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth."

15. Our Lord so instructed His Apostles that, daily at the sacrifice of His body, believers make bold to say, "Our Father, Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name"; they earnestly desire the name of God, which in itself is holy, to be hallowed in themselves; you say, "Thou knowest, Lord, how holy, how innocent, and how pure are my hands. Then they say: "Thy Kingdom come," anticipating the hope of the future kingdom, so that, when Christ reigns, sin may by no means reign in their mortal body, and to this they couple the words, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven"; so that human weakness may imitate the angels, and the will of our Lord may be fulfilled on earth; you say, "A man can, if he chooses, be free from all sin. The Apostles prayed for the daily bread, or the bread better than all food, which was to come, so that they might be worthy to receive the body of Christ; and you are led by your excess of holiness and well established righteousness to boldly claim the heavenly gifts. Next comes, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.

No sooner do they rise from the baptismal font, and by being born again and incorporated into our Lord and Saviour thus fulfil what is written of them, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered," than at the first communion of the body of Christ they say, "Forgive us our debts," though these debts had been forgiven them at their confession of Christ; but you in your arrogant pride boast of the cleanness of your holy hands and of the purity of your speech. However thorough the conversion of a man may be, and however perfect his possession of virtue after a time of sins and failings, can such persons be as free from fault as they who are just leaving the font of Christ? And yet these latter are commanded to say, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors"; not in the spirit of a false humility, but because they are afraid of human frailty and dread their own conscience. They say, "Lead us not into temptation"; you and Jovinian unite in saying that those who with a full faith have been baptized cannot be further tempted or sin. Lastly, they add. "But deliver us from the evil one. Why do they beg from the Lord what they have already by the power of free will? Oh, man, now thou hast been made clean in the laver, and of thee it is said, "Who is this that cometh up all white, leaning upon her beloved?

The bride, therefore, is washed, yet she cannot keep her purity, unless she be supported by the Lord. How is it that you long to be set free by the mercy of God, you who but a little

while ago were released from your sins? The only explanation is the principle by which we maintain that, when we have done all, we must confess we are unprofitable.

16. So then your prayer outdoes the pride of the Pharisee, and you are condemned when compared with the Publican. He, standing afar off, did not dare to lift up his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful unto me a sinner. And on this is based our Lord's declaration, "I say unto you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. The Apostles are humbled that they may be exalted. Your disciples are lifted up that they may fall. In your flattery of the widow previously mentioned you are not ashamed to say that piety such as is found on earth, and truth which is everywhere a stranger, had made their home with her in preference to all others. You do not recollect the familiar words, "O my people, they which call thee blessed cause thee to err, and destroy the paths of thy feet"; and you expressly praise her and say, "Happy beyond all thought are you! how blessed! if righteousness, which is believed to be now nowhere but in Heaven, is found with you alone on earth. Is this teaching or slaying? Is it raising from earth, or casting down from heaven, to attribute that to a poor creature of a woman, which angels would not dare arrogate to themselves?

If piety, truth, and righteousness are found on earth nowhere but in one woman, where shall we find your righteous followers, who, you boast, are sinless on earth? These two chapters on prayer and praise you and your disciples are wont to swear are none of yours, and yet your brilliant style is so clearly seen in them, and the elegance of your Ciceronian diction is so marked that, although you strut about with the slow pace of a tortoise, you have not the courage to acknowledge what you teach in private and expose for sale. Happy man! whose books no one writes out but your own disciples, so that whatever appears to be unacceptable, you may contend is not your own but some one else's work. And where is the man with ability enough to imitate the charm of your language?

17. C. I can put it off no longer; my patience is completely overcome by your iniquitous words. Tell me, pray, what sin have little infants committed. Neither the consciousness of wrong nor ignorance can be imputed to those who, according to the prophet Jonah, know not their right hand from their left. They cannot sin, and they can perish; their knees are too weak to walk, they utter inarticulate cries; we laugh at their attempts to speak; and, all the while, poor unfortunates! the torments of eternal misery are prepared for them. A. Ah! now that your disciples have turned masters you begin to be fluent, not to say eloquent. Antony, an excellent orator, whose praises Tully loudly proclaims, says that he had seen many fluent men, but so far never an eloquent speaker; so don't amuse me with flowers of oratory which have not grown in your own garden, and with which the ears of inexperience and of boyhood are wont to be tickled, but plainly tell me what you think.

C. What I say is this-you must at least allow that they have no sin who cannot sin. A. I will allow it, if they have been baptized into Christ; and if you will not then immediately bind me to agree with your opinion that a man can be without sin if he chooses; for they neither

have the power nor the will; but they are free from all sin through the grace of God, which they received in their baptism. C. You force me to make an invidious remark and ask, Why, what sin have they committed? that you may immediately have me stoned in some popular tumult. You have not the power to kill me, but you certainly have the will. A. He slays a heretic who allows him to be a heretic. But when we rebuke him we give him life; you may die to your heresy, and live to the Catholic faith.

C. If you know us to be heretics, why do you not accuse us? A. Because the Apostle teaches me to avoid a heretic after the first and second admonition, not to accuse him. The Apostle knew that such an one is perverse and self-condemned. Besides, it would be the height of folly to make my faith depend on another man's judgment. For supposing some one were to call you a Catholic, am I to immediately give assent? Whoever defends you, and says that you rightly hold your perverse opinions, does not succeed in rescuing you from infamy, but charges himself with perfidy. Your numerous supporters will never prove you to be a Catholic, but will show that you are a heretic. But I would have such opinions as these suppressed by ecclesiastical authority; otherwise we shall be in the case of those who show some dreadful picture to a crying child. May the fear of God grant us this-to despise all other fears. Therefore, either defend your opinions, or abandon what you are unable to defend. Whoever may be called in to defend you must be enrolled as a partisan, not as a patron.

18. C. Tell me, pray, and rid me of all doubts, why little children are baptized. A. That their sins may be forgiven them in baptism. C. What sin are they guilty of? How can any one be set free who is not bound?

A. You ask me! The Gospel trumpet will reply, the teacher of the Gentiles, the golden vessel shining throughout the world: "Death reigned from Adam even unto Moses: even over those who did not sin after the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a figure of Him that was to come. And if you object that some are spoken of who did not sin, you must understand that they did not sin in the same way as Adam did by transgressing God's command in Paradise. But all men are held liable either on account of their ancient forefather Adam, or on their own account. He that is an infant is released in baptism from the chain which bound his father. He who is old enough to have discernment is set free from the chain of his own or another's sin by the blood of Christ. You must not think me a heretic because I take this view, for the blessed martyr Cyprian, whose rival you boast of being in the classification of Scripture proofs, in the epistle addressed to Bishop Fidus on the Baptism of Infants speaks thus: "Moreover, if even the worst offenders, and those who previous to baptism sin much against God, once they believe have the gift of remission of sins, and no one is kept from baptism and from grace, how much more ought not an infant to be kept from baptism seeing that, being only just born, he has committed no sin?

He has only, being born according to the flesh among Adam's sons, incurred the taint of ancient death by his first birth. And he is the more easily admitted to remission of sins because of the very fact that not his own sins but those of another are remitted to him. And so, dearest brother, it was our decision in council that no one ought to be kept by us from

baptism and from the grace of God, Who is merciful to all, and kind, and good And whereas this rule ought to be observed and kept with reference to all, bear in mind that it ought so much the more to be observed with regard to infants themselves and those just born, for they have the greater claims on our assistance in order to obtain Divine mercy, because their cries and tears from the very birth are one perpetual prayer."

19. That holy man and eloquent bishop Augustin not long ago wrote to Marcellinus (the same that was afterwards, though innocent, put to death by heretics on the pretext of his taking part in the tyranny of Heraclian) two treatises on infant baptism, in opposition to your heresy which maintains that infants are baptized not for remission of sins, but for admission to the kingdom of heaven, according as it is written in the Gospel, "Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. He addressed a third, moreover, to the same Marcellinus, against those who say as do you, that a man can be free from sin, if he chooses, without the help of God. And, recently, a fourth to Hilary against this doctrine of yours, which is full of perversity. And be is said to have others on the anvil with special regard to you, which have not yet come to hand. Wherefore, I think I must abandon my task, for fear Horace's words may be thrown at me, "Don't carry firewood into a forest. For we must either say the same as he does, and that would be superfluous; or, if we wished to say something fresh, we should find our best points anticipated by that splendid genius.

One thing I will say and so end my discourse, that you ought either to give us a new creed, so that, after baptizing children into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you may baptize them into the kingdom of heaven; or, if you have one baptism both for infants and for persons of mature age, it follows that infants also should be baptized for the remission of sins after the likeness of the transgression of Adam. But if you think the remission of another's sins implies injustice, and that he has no need of it who could not sin, cross over to Origen, your special favourite, who says that ancient offences committed long before in the heavens are loosed in baptism. You will then be not only led by his authority in other matters, but will be following his error in this also.

Prologue

Dialogue Between Atticus, a Catholic, and Critobulus, a Heretic.
The anti-Pelagian Dialogue is the last of Jerome's controversial works, having been written in the year 417, within three years of his death. It shows no lack of his old vigour, though perhaps something of the prolixity induced by old age. He looks at the subject more calmly than those of the previous treatises, mainly because it lay somewhat outside the track of his own thoughts. He was induced to interest himself in it by his increasing regard for Augustin, and by the coming of the young Spaniard, Orosius, in 414, from Augustin to sit at his feet. Pelagius also had come to Palestine, and, after an investigation of his tenets, at a small council at Jerusalem, in 415, presided over by Bishop John, and a second, at Diospolis in 416, had been admitted to communion. Jerome appears to have taken no part in these proceedings, and having been at peace with Bishop John for nearly twenty years, was no doubt unwilling to act against him. But he had come to look upon Pelagius as infected with the heretical "impiety," which he looked upon (i. 28) as far worse than moral evil; and connected him, as we see from his letter to Ctesiphon (CXXXIII.), with Origenism and Rufinus; and he brings his great knowledge of Scripture to bear upon the controversy. He quotes a work of Pelagius, though giving only the headings, and the numbers of the chapters, up to 100 (i. 26-32);

and, though at times his conviction appears weak, and there are passages (i. 5, ii. 6-30, iii. 1) which give occasion to the observation that he really, if unconsciously, inclined to the views of Pelagius, and that he is a "Synergist," not, like Augustin, a thorough predestinarian, the Dialogue, as a whole, is clear and forms a substantial contribution to our knowledge. Although its tone is less violent than that of his ascetic treatises, it appears to have stirred up the strongest animosity against him. The adherents of Pelagius attacked and burned the monasteries of Bethlehem, and Jerome himself only escaped by taking refuge in a tower. His sufferings, and the interference of Pope Innocentius in his behalf, may be seen by referring to Letters CXXXV.-CXXXVII., with the introductory notes prefixed to them.

The following is a summary of the argument: Atticus, the Augustinian, at once (c. 1) introduces the question: Do you affirm that, as Pelagius affirms, men can live without sin? Yes, says the Pelagian Critobulus, but I do not add, as is imputed to us, "without the grace of God. Indeed, the fact that we have a free will is from grace. Yes, replies Atticus, but what

is this grace? Is it only our original nature, or is it needed in every act. In every act, is the reply (2); yet one would hardly say that we cannot mend a pen without grace (3), for, if so, where is our free will? But, says Atticus (5), the Scriptures speak of our need of God's aid in everything. In that case, says Critobulus, the promised reward must be given not to us but to God, Who works in us. Reverting then to the first point stated, Atticus asks, does the possibility of sinlessness extend to single acts, or to the whole life? Certainly to the whole as well as the part, is the answer. But we wish, or will to be sinless; why then are we not actually sinless? Because (8) we do not exert our will to the full. But (9) no one has ever lived without sin. Still, says the Pelagian, God commands us to be perfect, and he does not command impossibilities. Job, Zacharias, and Elizabeth are represented as perfectly righteous. No, it is answered (12), faults are attributed to each of them.

John says, "He that is born of God sinneth not" (13); yet, "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves. The Apostles, though told to be perfect (14) were not perfect: and St. Paul says (14a), "I count not myself to have apprehended. Men are called just and perfect only in comparison of others (16), or because of general subjection to the will of God (18), or according to their special characteristics (19), as we may speak of a bishop as excellent in his office, though he may not fulfil the ideal of the pastoral epistles (22).

The discussion now turns to the words of Pelagius' book. "All are ruled by their own will" (27). No; for Christ says, "I came not to do My own will." "The wicked shall not be spared in the judgment." But we must distinguish between the impious or heretics who will be destroyed (28) and Christian sinners who will be forgiven. Some of his sayings contradict each other or are trifling (29, 30). "The kingdom of heaven is promised in the Old Testament." Yes, but more fully in the New. Returning to the first thesis, "That a man can be without sin if he wills it," the Pelagian says, If things, like desires which arise spontaneously and have no issue, are reckoned blamable, we charge the sin on our Maker; to which it is only answered that, though we cannot understand God's ways, we must not arraign His justice. In the rest of the book, Atticus alone speaks, going through the Old Testament, and showing that each of the saints falls into some sin, which, though done in ignorance or half-consciousness, yet brings condemnation with it.

Prologue.

1. After writing the letter to Ctesiphon, in which I replied to the questions propounded, I received frequent expostulations from the brethren, who wanted to know why I any longer delayed the promised work in which I undertook to answer all the subtleties of the preachers of Impassibility. For every one knows what was the contention of the Stoics and Peripatetics, that is, the old Academy, some of them asserted that the paqh, which we may call emotions, such as sorrow, joy, hope, fear, can be thoroughly eradicated from the minds of men; others that their power can be broken, that they can be governed and restrained, as unmanageable horses are held in check by peculiar kinds of bits. Their views have been explained by Tully in the "Tusculan Disputations," and Origen in his "Stromata" endeavours to blend them with ecclesiastical truth. I pass over Manichaeus, Priscillianus, Evagrius of Ibora,

Jovinianus, and the heretics found throughout almost the whole of Syria, who, by a perversion of the import of their name, are commonly called Massalians, in Greek, Euchites, all of whom hold that it is possible for human virtue and human knowledge to attain perfection, and arrive, I will not say merely at a likeness to, but an equality with God; and who go the length of asserting that, when once they have reached the height of perfection, even sins of thought and ignorance are impossible for them.

And although in my former letter addressed to Ctesiphon and aimed at their errors, so far as time permitted, I touched upon a few points in the book which I am now endeavouring to hammer out, I shall adhere to the method of Socrates. What can be said on both sides shall be stated; and the truth will thus be clear when both sides express their opinions. Origen is peculiar in maintaining on the one hand that it is impossible for human nature to pass through life without sin, and on the other, that it is possible for a man, when he turns to better things, to become so strong that he sins no more.

2. I shall add a few words in answer to those who say that I am writing this work because I am inflamed with envy. I have never spared heretics, and I have done my best to make the enemies of the Church my own. Helvidius wrote against the perpetual virginity of Saint Mary. Was it envy that led me to answer him, whom I had never seen in the flesh? Jovinianus, whose heresy is now being fanned into flame, and who disturbed the faith of Rome in my absence, was so devoid of gifts of utterance, and had such a pestilent style that he was a fitter object for pity than for envy. So far as I could, I answered him also. Rufinus did all in his power to circulate the blasphemies of Origen and the treatise "On First Principles" (Peri 'Arxwn), not in one city, but throughout the whole world. He even published the first book of Eusebius' "Apology for Origen" under the name of Pamphilus the martyr, and, as though Origen had not said enough, vomited forth a fresh volume on his behalf. Am I to be accused of envy because I answered him? and was his eloquence such a rushing torrent as to deter me through fear from writing or dictating anything in reply? Palladius, no better than a villainous slave, tried to impart energy to the same heresy, and to excite against me fresh prejudice on account of my translation of the Hebrew. Was I envious of such distinguished ability and nobility?

Even now the mystery of iniquity worketh, and every one chatters about his views: yet I, it seems, am the only one who is filled with envy at the glory of all the rest; I am so poor a creature that I envy even those who do not deserve envy. And so, to prove to all that I do not hate the men but their errors, and that I do not wish to vilify any one, but rather lament the misfortune of men who are deceived by knowledge falsely so-called, I have made use of the names of Atticus and Critobulus in order to express our own views and those of our opponents. The truth is that all we who hold the Catholic faith, wish and long that, while the heresy is condemned, the men may be reformed. At all events, if they will continue in error, the blame does not attach to us who have written, but to them, since they have preferred a lie to the truth. And one short answer to our calumniators, whose curses fall upon their own heads, is this, that the Manichaean doctrine condemns the nature of man,

destroys free will, and does away with I the help of God. And again, that it is manifest madness for man to speak of himself as being what God alone is. Let us so walk along the royal road that we turn neither to the right hand nor to the left;

and let us always believe that the eagerness of our wills is governed by the help of God. Should any one cry out that he is slandered and boast that he thinks with us; he will then show that he assents to the true faith, when he openly and sincerely condemns the opposite views. Otherwise his case will be that described by the prophet: ”And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not returned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly. It is a smaller sin to follow evil which you think is good, than not to venture to defend what you know for certain is good. If we cannot endure threats, injustice, poverty, how shall we overcome the flames of Babylon? Let us not lose by hollow peace what we have preserved by war. I should be sorry to allow my fears to teach me faithlessness, when Christ has put the true faith in the power of my choice.

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.