

**COMPLETE PHILOSOPHICAL AND  
THEOLOGICAL TREATISES  
of  
ANSELM of CANTERBURY**

Translated  
by  
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**The Arthur J. Banning Press  
Minneapolis**

In the notes to the translations the numbering of the Psalms accords with the Douay version and, in parentheses, with the King James (Authorized) version. A reference such as "S II, 264:18" indicates "F. S. Schmitt's edition of the Latin texts, Vol. II, p. 264, line 18."

Library of Congress Control Number: 00-133229

ISBN 0-938060-37-6

Printed in the United States of America

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*CUR DEUS HOMO*  
[COMMENDATION OF THIS WORK  
TO POPE URBAN II]

Succeeding the Apostles, many of our holy Fathers and holy teachers make very many significant points regarding the rational basis of our faith. They do so not only in order to confound the foolishness of unbelievers and to break through their hardheartedness, but also in order to nourish those who, having hearts already cleansed by faith, delight in the rational basis of our faith—a rational basis for which we ought to hunger once [we have] the certainty of faith. Although [our holy Fathers make so many significant points] that we do not expect either in our own day or in future times anyone to be equal to them in contemplating the truth, nevertheless if anyone who is steadfast in faith wants to engage in investigating the rational basis for his faith, I think he ought not to be reproached. For because “the days of man are short,”<sup>1</sup> the holy Fathers were not able to say all of the things which they could have said if they had lived longer. Moreover, the rational basis of truth is so extensive and so deep that it cannot be exhausted by mortals. Furthermore, within His Church, with which He promises to remain unto the end of the world, the Lord does not cease to impart the gifts of His grace. And—not to mention other passages in which the Sacred Page summons us to rational investigation—the passage “Unless you believe you will not understand”<sup>2</sup> clearly advises us to direct our attention toward understanding, for it teaches us the way in which we ought to advance to understanding. Finally, since I discern that the understanding which we acquire in this life is a middle-way between faith and sight, I think that the more anyone advances to understanding, the closer he comes to the actual seeing for which we all long.

Strengthened, then, by these considerations, I endeavor (although I am a man of meager learning) to rise up a bit higher in order to behold (to the extent that heavenly grace deigns to grant me) the rationale for those doctrines which we believe. And when I find some point which I did not previously notice, I shall will-

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<sup>1</sup>Job 14:5. <sup>2</sup>Isaiah 7:9 (Old Latin version).

ingly disclose it to others, so that I may learn from another's judgment what I ought to safeguard.

Therefore, Pope Urban, my father and lord, you who are worthy of all Christians' loving reverence and reverential love, and whom God's providence has established as supreme pontiff within His Church: since I can present the enclosed treatise to no one else more rightly, I present it to the scrutiny of Your Holiness, so that by the authority of Your Holiness what is therein deserving of acceptance may be approved and what must be corrected may be emended.

### PREFACE<sup>1</sup>

There are certain men who without my knowledge copied for themselves the first parts of the enclosed work before it was completed and perfected. Because of these individuals I have been forced to finish this treatise as best I could and more hastily than suited me, and hence in a more abbreviated form than I had intended. For if I had been permitted to publish it unhurriedly and at a convenient time, I would have added many things which I have left unsaid. With great tribulation of heart—God knows the source and the cause of my having suffered this—I began it in England upon request and finished it in the province of Capua as an exile. In accordance with the subject-matter with which it deals I entitled it *Why God Became a [God-]man*;<sup>2</sup> and I divided it into two short books. The first of these contains the answers of believers to the objections of unbelievers who repudiate the Christian faith because they regard it as incompatible with reason. And this book goes on to prove by rational necessity—Christ being removed from sight, as if there had never been anything known about Him—that no man can possibly be saved without Him. However, in the second book—likewise proceeding as if nothing were known of Christ—I show with equally clear reasoning and truth that human nature was created in order that the whole man (i.e., with a body and a soul) would some day enjoy a happy immortality. And I show

<sup>1</sup>The *Cur Deus Homo* was completed in the mountain village of Liberi (earlier named Sclavia), above Capua, Italy, during the summer of 1098. <sup>2</sup>According to Anselm, God assumed a *particular* human nature (not *universal* human nature). Thus, he did not become *man* but became *a man*, i.e., *a human being*, viz., the God-man, the human being Jesus.

the necessity of man's attaining this end for which he was created and [show that it can be attained] only by means of a God-man. And I show that all the things which we believe about Christ ought, necessarily, to occur.

I ask all those who wish to copy this volume to affix this preface, together with all the chapter titles, before the beginning of the text. This way anyone into whose hands the volume comes will see on its countenance, so to speak, whether the whole body of the text contains anything which he may deem important.

### CHAPTER-TITLES OF BOOK I

1. The central problem governing the entire work.
2. How the things to be said are to be construed.
3. The objections of unbelievers and the replies of believers.
4. These answers seem to unbelievers to lack cogency and to be pictures, as it were.
5. The redemption of man could not have been accomplished through any other person than a divine person.
6. How unbelievers find fault with our saying that God has redeemed us by His death, that in this way He has shown His love for us, and that He came to vanquish the Devil on our behalf.
7. The Devil had no just claim against man. Why the reason for God's liberating man in this manner seems to have been based in the Devil.
8. How although the lowly things which we affirm of Christ do not apply to His divinity, nonetheless to unbelievers it seems unfitting that these things are affirmed of Him with respect to His humanity. Why it seems to them that this man did not undergo death willingly.
9. He died willingly. The meaning of the following texts: "He became obedient unto death"; "For this reason God has also exalted Him"; "I have not come to do my will"; "God spared not His own son"; "Not as I will but as You will."
10. How these same texts can rightly be interpreted in another way.
11. What sinning and making satisfaction for sin are.
12. Whether it is fitting for God to forgive sin out of mercy alone, apart from any repayment of debt.

13. Nothing ought less to be tolerated in the order of things than that the creature remove the honor owed to the Creator and not repay what he removes.
14. How the punishment of a sinner honors God.
15. Whether God lets His honor be violated even slightly.
16. The reason that the number of angels who fell is to be made up from among human beings.
17. Other angels cannot take the place of those who fell.
18. Whether there will be more holy men than there are evil angels.
19. Man cannot be saved without satisfaction for sin.
20. Satisfaction ought to be proportional to the measure of the sin. Man cannot make satisfaction by himself.
21. How grave sin is.
22. How when man permitted himself to be conquered by the Devil he did an injury to God for which he is unable to make satisfaction.
23. What it was that man, when he sinned, removed from God and cannot repay.
24. As long as man does not pay to God what he owes, he cannot be happy and is not excused because of his inability.
25. Necessarily, man is saved through Christ.

#### CHAPTER-TITLES OF BOOK II

1. Man was created *just* in order to be happy.
2. Man would not have died if he had not sinned.
3. Man will be resurrected with the body in which he lives during this present life.
4. God will accomplish with human nature that which He began.
5. Although [what God began] must be accomplished, nevertheless He will not accomplish it under the constraint of necessity. There is a necessity which diminishes or eliminates gratitude, and there is a necessity which increases it.
6. Only a God-man can make the satisfaction by means of which man is saved.
7. It is necessary that one and the same being be fully divine and fully human.
8. God ought to assume a human nature from the race of Adam

and from a virgin woman.

9. It is necessary that the Word alone and a human nature conjoin in one person.
10. This man is not required to die. How He is able to sin and not able to sin. Why He and an angel ought to be praised for their justice even though they cannot sin.
11. He dies of His own power. Mortality does not pertain to sinless human nature.
12. Although He shares our misfortunes, He is not unhappy.
13. It is not the case that along with our other infirmities He has ignorance.
14. How His death outweighs the number and the magnitude of all sins.
15. How His death blots out even the sins of those who put Him, to death.
16. How God assumed from the sinful mass a sinless human nature. The salvation of Adam and of Eve.
17. In God there is neither necessity nor impossibility. There is a necessity which compels and a necessity which does not compel.
18. How the life of Christ is paid to God for the sins of men. The sense in which Christ ought, and the sense in which He ought not, to have suffered.
19. How very reasonable it is that human salvation results from His death.
20. How great and how just the mercy of God is.
21. It is impossible for the Devil to be reconciled.
22. The truth of the Old and of the New Testament has been proved within the statements that have been made.

**WHY GOD BECAME A [GOD-]man**  
*(Cur Deus Homo)*

**BOOK I**

**CHAPTER ONE**

The central problem governing the entire work.

Often and very earnestly I have been asked by many, both by word of mouth and in letters, to write down for posterity the rational

bases of a particular problem of our faith—the rational bases that I am accustomed to give in reply to those who make inquiry. For they say that these rational considerations please them; and they regard them as satisfactory. They make their request not in order to approach faith by way of reason but in order to delight in the comprehension and contemplation of the doctrines which they believe, as well as in order to be ready, as best they can, always to give a satisfactory answer to everyone who asks of them a reason for the hope which is in us.<sup>1</sup> Unbelievers habitually raise this particular problem as an objection to us, while derisively terming Christian simplicity a foolish simplicity; and many believers repeatedly mull over this [same] problem in their minds. I mean the following problem: For what reason and on the basis of what necessity did God become a man [i.e., a human being] and by His death restore life to the world (as we believe and confess), seeing that He could have accomplished this restoration either by means of some other person (whether angelic or human) or else by merely willing it? Now, not only learned men but also many unlearned men ask about this problem and desire an explanation of it. Many individuals, then, keep asking that this problem be dealt with; and in spite of the fact that the investigation seems very difficult, the solution is intelligible to everyone and is commendable because of the utility and the elegance of the reasoning. Therefore, even though the holy Fathers have said about this problem what ought to be adequate, nevertheless what God will deign to disclose to me about this topic I will endeavor to show to those who are inquiring.

Now, issues which are examined by the method of question-and-answer are clearer, and hence more acceptable, to many minds—especially to minds that are slower. Therefore, from among those who have been making this entreaty I shall take as my fellow-disputant the one who has been urging me to this end more insistently than the others, so that in the following way Boso may ask and Anselm answer.

*Boso.* Just as right order requires that we believe the deep matters of the Christian faith before we presume to discuss them rationally, so it seems to me to be an instance of carelessness if, having been confirmed in faith, we do not strive to understand what

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<sup>1</sup>I Peter 3:15.



we believe. Indeed, assisted by the prevenient grace of God I am, it seems to me, holding so steadfastly to faith in our redemption that even if I were not in any respect able to understand what I believe, nothing could wrest me from firmness of faith. Accordingly, I ask you to disclose to me that which, as you know, many are asking about along with me: viz., for what reason and on the basis of what necessity did God—although He is omnipotent—assume the lowliness and the weakness of human nature in order to restore it?

*Anselm.* What you are asking of me exceeds my capabilities. And so, I fear to deal with matters too high for me,<sup>1</sup> lest perhaps when someone suspects or even observes that I do not give him a satisfactory answer, he may think that I have departed from true doctrine rather than that my intellect is not powerful enough to comprehend this truth.

*B.* You ought not so much to have this fear as you ought to remember that in a discussion of some problem it often happens that God discloses what at first was hidden. Moreover, you ought to expect of God's grace that if you willingly share those things which you have freely received, you will merit the receiving of the higher things to which you have not yet attained.

*A.* There is another reason why it seems to me that we cannot at all—or else can only scarcely—deal amply with this matter now. For in order to do so we need an analysis of *ability* and *necessity* and *will* and of certain other notions which are so interrelated that no one of them can be fully examined apart from the others. And so, to deal with these notions requires a separate work<sup>2</sup>—one not very easy [to compose], it seems to me, but nonetheless one not altogether useless. For an ignorance of these notions produces certain difficulties which become easy [to deal with] as a result of understanding these notions.

*B.* Where these notions become relevant you can speak briefly about them, so that we may have the knowledge which is adequate for the present work but may postpone to another time the additional points which need to be discussed.

*A.* I am also very reluctant to honor your request both because the topic is very important and because just as it deals with Him

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<sup>1</sup>Ecclesiasticus 3:22. <sup>2</sup>See Anselm's *Philosophical Fragments*.

who is beautiful in appearance above the sons of men,<sup>1</sup> so it is also adorned with a rationale which exceeds human understanding. Hence, I fear that just as I am accustomed to become indignant with untalented artists when I see the Lord Himself portrayed with an uncomely countenance, so it may happen to me [that I provoke indignation] if I presume to explore such an elegant topic by an inelegant and contemptible discourse.

*B.* This fear ought not to deter you, since just as you permit whoever can to say these things better, so you forbid no one who does not like your discourse from writing more beautifully. But so that I may exclude all your excuses: [remember that] what I am asking of you, you will be writing not for the learned but for me and for those who are seeking this solution together with me.

## CHAPTER TWO

How the things to be said are to be construed.

*A.* I observe your importunity and the importunity of those who with you seek this solution out of love and religious desire. Therefore, to the best of my ability, and assisted by God and by means of your prayers, I will attempt not so much to exhibit the solution you are seeking as to seek it with you. (In requesting this solution, you [and those others] have often promised these prayers to me, who was requesting them for this same end.) But I want everything that I say to be accepted in the following manner: If I say something which a greater authority does not confirm, then even though I seem to prove it rationally, it should be accepted as certain only in the sense that it appears to me for the time being to be thus, until God somehow reveals the matter to me more fully. But if to some extent I am able to give a satisfactory answer to your question, then assuredly it must be the case that one who is wiser-than-I would be able to give a more fully satisfactory answer. Indeed, we must realize that no matter what a man can say about this topic, the deeper rationale for so important a doctrine will still remain hidden.

## CHAPTER THREE

The objections of unbelievers and the replies of believers.

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<sup>1</sup>Psalms 44:3 (45:2).

*B.* Allow me, then, to use the words of unbelievers. For since we are fervently seeking the rational basis of our faith, it is fair that I present the objections of those who are altogether unwilling to approach our faith without rational argumentation. Although they seek a rational basis because they do not believe whereas we seek it because we do believe, nevertheless it is one and the same thing that both we and they are seeking. And if you give any reply to which Sacred Authority seems opposed, let me exhibit this Authority so that you may disclose how it is not really opposed.

*A.* Say what seems [right] to you.

*B.* The unbelievers who scoff at our simplicity raise against us the following objection: that we dishonor and affront God when we maintain that He descended into the womb of a woman, that He was born of a woman, that He grew, being nourished by milk and food for human beings, and—not to mention many other things which seem to be unsuitable for God—that He experienced weariness, hunger, thirst, scourging, and (in the midst of thieves) crucifixion and death.

*A.* We do not at all dishonor or affront God; instead, giving Him thanks from our whole heart, we laud and proclaim the ineffable depth of His mercy. For the more miraculously and wondrously He has restored us from such grave and such deserved evils in which we found ourselves—restored us to such great and such undeserved goods which we had lost—the more He has shown love and graciousness toward us. Indeed, if unbelievers would carefully consider how appropriately the restoration of human nature was obtained in this manner, they would not deride our simplicity but with us would praise God's wise loving-kindness. For it was fitting that as death had entered into the human race by the disobedience of man, so life would be restored by the obedience of man.<sup>1</sup> And [it was fitting that] as the sin which was the cause of our condemnation had its beginning from a woman, so the Author of our justification and salvation would be born from a woman. And [it was fitting that] the Devil, who had conquered man by persuading him to taste of the tree, would be conquered by man through the suffering-on-the-tree which he himself

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<sup>1</sup>Romans 5:19.

inflicted. There are also many other things which when carefully examined manifest a certain inexpressible beauty in our redemption's having been accomplished in this manner.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

These answers seem to unbelievers to lack cogency  
and to be pictures, as it were.

*B.* All of these things must be acknowledged to be beautiful and to be pictures, as it were. However, if there is not a solid foundation upon which they rest, they do not seem to unbelievers to suffice for showing why we ought to believe that God was willing to suffer these things of which we are speaking. For someone who wants to paint a picture chooses something solid upon which to paint, in order that what he paints may remain. No one paints on water or in the air, because no traces of the picture would remain there. Hence, when we exhibit to unbelievers these considerations of fittingness which you say are pictures, as it were, of a real event, then since unbelievers regard what we believe as a fiction rather than as a real event, they think that we are painting on a cloud, so to speak. Therefore, first of all we must exhibit the truth's firm rational foundation, i.e., the cogent reasoning which proves that God should or could have humbled Himself to [undergo] those things which we proclaim. Next, so that this body-of-truth, so to speak, may shine even more splendidly, these considerations of fittingness must be set forth as pictures of this body-of-truth.

*A.* Do not the following considerations seem to constitute a very cogent argument for why God ought to have done those things about which we are speaking?: viz. , that the human race—His very precious work—had utterly perished; and it was not fitting that God's plan for man should be completely thwarted; and this plan of God's could not be carried out unless the human race was set free by its very Creator.

#### CHAPTER FIVE

The redemption of man could not have been accomplished  
through any other person than a divine person.

*B.* If this liberation were said to have been accomplished in any manner at all through a person—whether an angel or a man—

other than a divine person, the human mind would find this view much more tolerable. For God could have created another man who had no sin and who was not from the sinful mass and who—as He created Adam—was not even from another man; and through this man, it seems, God's work could have been accomplished.

A. Don't you realize that man would rightly be deemed to be the servant of whatever other person would redeem him from eternal death? And if so, then man would not at all have been restored to the dignity which he would have had if he had not sinned. For man, who was meant to be the servant only of God and meant to be equal in every respect to the good angels,<sup>1</sup> would become the servant of him who is not God and whom the angels do not serve.

#### CHAPTER SIX

How unbelievers find fault with our saying that God  
has redeemed us by His death, that in this way  
He has shown His love for us, and that He came  
to vanquish the Devil on our behalf.

B. What especially astounds unbelievers is that we call this liberation *redemption*. Indeed, they ask: “In what captivity, in which prison, or in whose power were you being held from which God could free you only by redeeming you through so much effort and, in the end, through His own blood?” We answer: He has redeemed us from sins and from His own wrath and from Hell and from the power of the Devil, whom He came to vanquish on our behalf because we ourselves were unable to conquer him; moreover, He has bought back the Kingdom of Heaven for us. And because He has done all these things in this way, He has manifested how much He loves us.

But when [we make this reply] to them, they retort:

If you maintain that God, whom you say created all things by His command, was unable solely by His command, to do all the things [you have just mentioned], then you contradict yourselves, because you make Him powerless. On the other hand, if you say that He was able [to do these things solely by His command] but willed [to do them] only in the foregoing manner, then how can you show to be wise Him who you claim willed to suffer so many unbecoming things for no reason at all? For all the things which you set forth depend upon His will. For example,

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<sup>1</sup>Luke 20:36.

God's wrath is nothing other than His will-to-punish. Therefore, if He does not will to punish men's sins, man is free from sins; and he is free from God's wrath and from Hell and from the power of the Devil, all of which he suffers because of his sins; and he receives those goods of which he is deprived because of his sins. For who has power over Hell or the Devil, or who possesses the Kingdom of Heaven, except Him who created all things? Thus, whatever things you fear or desire are subject to His will, which nothing can resist. Therefore, if when He was able [to save the human race] by merely willing to, He was unwilling to save the human race except in the way you state, then (to put it mildly) look at how you impugn His wisdom. For if for no reason at all a man were to do with great strain that which He could have done effortlessly, he would surely not be judged by anyone to be wise. Indeed, your saying that God showed in this manner how much He loves you is not at all defensible unless you show that He could not at all have saved man in any other way. For if He could not have [saved man] in some other way, then perhaps it might have been necessary that He manifest His love in this way. But since, indeed, He could have saved man by another means, why is it that in order to show His love He endured and performed those things which you are claiming? Does He not show the good angels how much He loves them even though He does not endure such things for them? Now, as for your saying that He came to vanquish the Devil on your behalf: on what basis do you dare to make this claim? Does not God's omnipotence reign everywhere? How is it, then, that God needed to descend from Heaven in order to conquer the Devil?

These objections unbelievers seem to be able to raise against us.

#### CHAPTER SEVEN

The Devil had no just claim against man.

Why the reason for God's liberating man in this manner seems to have been based in the Devil.

*B.* Now, we regularly make the following claim:

In order to free man, God was required to deal with the Devil in terms of justice before dealing with him in terms of power—so that when the Devil killed Him who was God and in whom there was no reason for death, the Devil justly lost the power which he had over sinners. Otherwise God would have done unjust violence to the Devil. For the Devil justly possessed man, whom he had not seized by force; rather, man had freely delivered himself to the Devil.

But I do not see what cogency this claim has. For if the Devil or man belonged to himself, or if he belonged to someone other than to God, or if he remained in some power other than God's, per-

haps this claim might rightly be made. However, since neither the Devil nor man does belong to anyone except to God, and since neither of them exists outside [the domain of] God's power, what proceeding ought God to have undertaken with one of His servants, regarding another of His servants, in an affair that was His own, except to punish His servant who had persuaded a fellow-servant of God to forsake their common Lord and to come over to him, and who as a traitor had received a fugitive, and as a thief had received a thief together with what he had stolen from the Lord? Both of them were thieves, since under the persuasion of the one the other stole himself from his Lord. Now, if God were to do this [i.e., were to deal in this way with His servant], what could be done more justly? Or if God (who is the Judge of all) were to deliver man (who in the foregoing way had come into captivity) from the power of the one who was unjustly holding him captive—deliver him in order to punish him otherwise than at the hands of the Devil or in order simply to spare him from punishment—why would this be unjust? For although man was justly tormented by the Devil, the Devil was unjustly tormenting man. For man deserved to be punished—and by no one more fittingly than by him to whom he had consented to sinning. But the Devil was not entitled to punish man; indeed, the more he was driven to this end by a malicious impulse rather than drawn by a love for justice, the more unjust it was for him to be administering punishment. For he did not administer punishment by the command of God but by the permission of God's incomprehensible wisdom, by which God arranges even evil things rightly.

Moreover, I think that those who believe that the Devil had some just claim to possessing man are led to this conclusion by the following consideration: They see that man is justly subjected to torment by the Devil and that God justly permits this tormenting; and so they suppose that the Devil justly inflicts it. Now, it sometimes happens that some *one* thing is both just and unjust in different respects, and that for this reason the thing is judged to be either just or unjust as a whole by those who do not examine the matter carefully. For example, it happens that someone unjustly strikes an innocent man and hence himself justly deserves to be struck. However, if the one who has been struck ought not to avenge himself but nonetheless does strike the one who struck

him, he does so unjustly. Therefore, this beating is unjust with respect to the man administering it, because he ought not to have avenged himself; but it is just with respect to the one who has received it, because by unjustly delivering a blow he justly deserved to receive one. Accordingly, from different viewpoints this very same action is both just and unjust; but it can happen that it is judged by one person only as just and by another person only as unjust. Hence, in this manner the Devil is said to torment man justly, because God justly permits this tormenting and because man justly suffers it. But regarding even the fact that man is said to suffer justly: he is said to suffer justly not because of his own justice but because he is punished by the just judgment of God.

But suppose that the handwriting of the decree which the apostle declares<sup>1</sup> to have been against us and to have been blotted out by the death of Christ is alluded to. And suppose someone thinks that the apostle's reference to handwriting signifies that prior to the suffering of Christ the Devil, as if by an agreement in writing, justly required man to continue sinning—this requirement being the interest due on the first sin which he persuaded man to commit, as well as being the penalty for this first sin—so that hereby the Devil seems to prove his just claim upon man. I do not think that the matter is at all to be understood in that way. For that handwriting, to be sure, is not the Devil's because it is called “the handwriting of the decree.” And that decree was not the Devil's decree but God's. For by the just judgment of God, it was decreed and confirmed, as if in writing, that man, who had freely sinned, would not be able by himself to avoid either sin or the penalty for sin. For man is a “wind that departs and does not return.”<sup>2</sup> And “he who sins is a servant of sin.”<sup>3</sup> Now, he who sins ought not to be let-off unpunished—unless mercy spares the sinner and frees him and restores him. Therefore, we ought not to believe that by reference to this handwriting some justice on the Devil's part can be found in his tormenting of man. Indeed, even as in a good angel there is no injustice at all, so in an evil angel there is no justice at all. Therefore, there was in the Devil no reason why God ought not to use His power against him in order to liberate man.

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<sup>1</sup>Colossians 2:14. <sup>2</sup>Psalms 77:39 (78:39). <sup>3</sup>John 8:34.



CHAPTER EIGHT

How although the lowly things which we affirm of Christ do not apply to His divinity, nonetheless to unbelievers it seems unfitting that these things are affirmed of Him with respect to His humanity. Why it seems to them that this man did not undergo death willingly.

A. When God does some thing, then even though we do not see why He wills [to do it], His will ought to suffice us as a reason. For the will of God is never unreasonable.

B. True—provided it is evident that God wills the thing in question. For if reason seems to oppose [God's willing something], many persons do not at all admit that He wills it.

A. When we say that God willed those things which we believe regarding His incarnation, what seems to you to go against reason?

B. To put it briefly: that the Most High descends to such lowly things, that the Almighty does something so laboriously.

A. Those who say this do not understand what we believe. For without doubt we maintain that the divine nature is impassible—that it cannot at all be brought down from its exaltation and cannot labor in what it wills to do. And we affirm that the Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true man—one person in two natures, and two natures in one person. Therefore, when we state that God undergoes some lowliness or weakness, we understand this to be in accordance with the weakness of the human substance which He assumed, not in accordance with the sublimity of His impassible [divine] nature. Accordingly, no rational considerations are recognized to oppose our faith. For by the foregoing statement we do not signify any abasement of the divine substance; rather we declare the personal unity of the divine nature and the human nature. Therefore, we do not understand any abasement of the divine substance to have occurred in the incarnation of God; instead, we believe that the human nature was exalted.

B. So be it. Let nothing which is affirmed of Christ in accordance with the weakness of His human nature be attributed to His divine nature. But how can we show the justice or the reasonableness of God's having thus treated, or having permitted to be thus treated, that man whom the Father called His beloved son

in whom He was well-pleased,<sup>1</sup> that man whom the Son caused Himself to become? And what justice is there in delivering up unto death, in place of a sinner, the most just of all men? What man would not be adjudged worthy of condemnation if he were to condemn an innocent party in order to free a guilty one? The conclusion seems to come to the same incongruity which was mentioned above. For if God was not able to save sinners otherwise than by condemning a just man, where is His omnipotence? On the other hand, if He was able to but did not will to, how shall we defend His wisdom and justice?

A. God the Father did not treat *that* man as you seem to think He did, nor did He hand over to death someone innocent in the place of someone guilty. The Father did not force the Son to die against His will; nor did He permit Him to be put to death against His will. Instead, that man willingly underwent death in order to save men.

B. Even if [the Father did] not [compel Him to die] against His will—since He consented to the Father's will—nevertheless, in a certain respect the Father does seem to have compelled Him [to die], in that He commanded Him [to undergo death]. For it is said that Christ “humbled Himself and became obedient to the Father unto death, even unto death on the cross; for this reason God has also exalted Him.”<sup>2</sup> And [we read] that “He learned obedience by the things which He suffered,”<sup>3</sup> and that “the Father spared not His own son but delivered Him up for us all.”<sup>4</sup> And the Son Himself says: “I have come not to do my will but to do the will of Him who sent me.”<sup>5</sup> And approaching the time of His crucifixion He said: “As the Father has given me commandment, so I do.”<sup>6</sup> And again: “Shall I not drink of the chalice which my father has given me?”<sup>7</sup> And elsewhere: “Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me; nevertheless not as I will but as you will.”<sup>8</sup> Also: “Father, if this chalice cannot pass from me except I drink of it, Your will be done.”<sup>9</sup> According to all of these passages Christ seems to have undergone death more because He was compelled by obedience than because He was committed by free will.

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<sup>1</sup>Matthew 3:17. <sup>2</sup>Philippians 2:8-9. <sup>3</sup>Hebrews 5:8. <sup>4</sup>Romans 8:32. <sup>5</sup>John 6:38. <sup>6</sup>John 14:31. <sup>7</sup>John 18:11. <sup>8</sup>Matthew 26:39. <sup>9</sup>Matthew 26:42.

CHAPTER NINE

He died willingly. The meaning of the following texts: "He became obedient unto death"; "For this reason God has also exalted Him"; "I have come not to do my will"; "God spared not His own son"; "Not as I will but as You will."

A. As I see it, you are not distinguishing clearly between (1) that which He did because obedience required it and (2) that which, happening to Him because He remained obedient, He underwent even though obedience did not require it.

B. I need to have you explain this more clearly.

A. Why did the Jews persecute Him to the point of death?

B. For no other reason than that He held unwaveringly to justice and truth in His deeds and words.

A. I think that God requires this of every rational creature and that every rational creature owes this to God as a matter of obedience.

B. Yes, we ought to admit it.

A. Therefore, *that* man owed this obedience to God the Father; and His humanity owed it to His divinity; and the Father required it of Him.

B. No one doubts this point.

A. Here, then, you have what He did because obedience required it.

B. That's true. And I now see what He sustained as inflicted on Him because He persevered in obedience. For because He remained steadfast in obedience, death was inflicted on Him and He underwent death. But I do not understand how it is that obedience did not require Him to die.

A. If man had never sinned, ought he to have undergone death, or ought God to have required him to do so?

B. As we believe, man would not have died, nor would dying have been required of him. But I want to hear from you the rationale for this belief.

A. You do not deny that the rational creature was created just and was created for the purpose of being happy in the enjoyment of God.

B. No.

A. Now, you will not in the least suppose it to befit God to

compel a creature, whom He had created just and for the purpose of happiness, to be unhappy through no fault of his own. But for a man to encounter death against his will constitutes a form of unhappiness.

*B.* It is evident that if man had not sinned, God ought not to have required him to die.

*A.* Therefore, God did not compel Christ to die, for in Christ there was no sin. Instead, Christ willingly underwent death—not by obeying a command to give up His life but by obeying the command to keep justice. For He persevered so steadfastly in justice that He incurred death as a result.

But it can also be said that the Father commanded Christ to die when He commanded the thing in consequence of which Christ incurred death. In this sense, then, He did as the Father gave Him commandment; and He drank of the chalice which the Father gave; and He became obedient to the Father unto death; and thus He learned obedience—i.e., He learned the extent to which obedience ought to be kept—by the things which He suffered. But the phrase “He learned,” which is used in the text, can be interpreted in two senses. Either “He learned” is used in place of “He caused others to learn,” or else it is used because He learned in terms of experience that which He already knew-about through knowledge [other than by experience].

Now, after the apostle had said “He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” he added: “For this reason God has also exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name” (to which the words of David are similar: “He drank of the stream in the way; therefore, he lifted up his head”<sup>1</sup>). This addition was not meant in the sense (1) that Christ could not at all have arrived at this exaltation except by obedience unto death and (2) that this exaltation was conferred only as a reward for this obedience. (For even before Christ had suffered, He said that all things had been given to Him by the Father,<sup>2</sup> and that all the Father's possessions were His<sup>3</sup> as well.) Rather, the addition was meant in the sense that the Son, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, had decreed that He Himself would manifest to the world, in no other way than by dying,

<sup>1</sup>Psalms 109:7 (110:7). <sup>2</sup>Luke 10:22. <sup>3</sup>John 16:15.

the loftiness of His omnipotence. Indeed, when this [manifestation-of-loftiness] which was decreed to occur only by means of His death does occur by means of His death, is it not unfittingly said to occur *because of* His death.

Suppose that we intend to perform some action but that we decide to do beforehand another action by means of which the intended action will be done. Now, if we do the intended action after having done the action which we willed to do beforehand, the intended action is rightly said to be done because of the fact that the preceding action, on account of which the intended action was delayed, has occurred; for we decided to do the intended action only by means of the preceding action. For example, suppose that I can cross a certain river either by horse or by boat. And suppose that I decide to cross the river only by boat, and hence I postpone crossing because no ship is available. If I do cross the river after a boat has become available, then it is right to say of me: "A ship was ready; therefore he crossed over." And we speak in this manner not only when we determine to do something else *by means of* a thing which we will to occur beforehand but also when we determine to do something else only *subsequent to* the preceding thing and not by means of it. For example, suppose someone postpones eating because of the fact that on that day he has not yet attended the celebration of mass. After he has done this thing which he willed to do first, it is appropriate to say to him: "Eat something now, *because* you have done the thing on account of which you postponed eating." Therefore, it is an even less unusual expression to say that Christ was exalted *because* He underwent death, for He decreed to make Himself exalted both *after* death and *by means of* death. This expression can also be construed in the sense in which Christ the Lord is read to have advanced in wisdom and in grace with God<sup>1</sup> (i.e., not in the sense that it was really true but in the sense that He conducted Himself *as if* it were true). For after His death He was exalted *as if* this exaltation had occurred *because of* His death.

But His statement "I have come not to do my will but to do the will of Him who sent me"<sup>2</sup> is similar to His statement "My doctrine is not mine."<sup>3</sup> For what someone has not from himself but

<sup>1</sup>Luke 2:52. <sup>2</sup>John 6:38. <sup>3</sup>John 7:16.

from God he ought to speak of not so much as his own as, rather, God's. Now, no man has from himself either the truth which he teaches or a just will; instead, he has these from God. Therefore, Christ came not to do His own will but to do the will of the Father, because the just will that He possessed derived not from His humanity but from His divinity. But [the text] "God spared not His own son but *delivered* Him up for us"<sup>1</sup> means nothing other than that God did *not liberate* Him. For many statements of this type are found in Sacred Scripture. However, where He says "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me; nevertheless not as I will but as You will,"<sup>2</sup> and "If this chalice cannot pass from me except I drink of it, Your will be done":<sup>3</sup> by the reference to His own will He signifies His natural desire for security—a desire in terms of which His human flesh shunned the pain of dying.

But He speaks of the Father's will not in the sense that the Father willed the Son's death rather than the Son's life but in the sense that the Father was unwilling for the human race to be restored unless man performed some deed as great as Christ's death was to be (for reason did not demand what no man could perform). Therefore, the Son says that the Father wills His death, which He, the Son, prefers to undergo rather than to see the human race not be saved. It is as if He were to say: "Since You, Father, *do not will* that the reconciliation of the world be accomplished in any other way, I say that in this sense You *will* my death. Therefore, let this will of Yours be done—i.e., let my death occur—so that the world may be reconciled to You." For we often say that someone *wills* something because he does *not will* something else which, were he to will it, then that thing which he is said to will would not occur. For example, we say of someone who does *not will* to close a window through which a draft enters and extinguishes a lamp, that he *wills* to extinguish the lamp. In this sense, then, the Father *willed* the Son's death because He did *not will* for the *world* to be saved otherwise than by man's performing some very great deed, as I mentioned. Since no other man was able to perform this great deed: for the Son to will the salvation of men was tantamount to the Father's having commanded Him to die. Therefore, He did as the Father gave Him commandment, and

<sup>1</sup>Romans 8:32. <sup>2</sup>Matthew 26:39. <sup>3</sup>Matthew 26:42.

He drank of the chalice which the Father gave Him, being obedient unto death.

#### CHAPTER TEN

How these same texts can rightly be interpreted in another way.

A. We can also rightly understand that, in terms of the gracious will by which the Son willed to die for the salvation of the world, the Father gave the Son commandment (without, however, compelling Him), and gave Him the chalice of suffering, and did not spare Him but delivered Him up for us, and willed His death; and [in keeping this will] the Son was obedient unto death and learned obedience by the things He suffered. For even as with respect to His humanity He did not have from Himself the will to live justly but, rather, had it from the Father, so also He could not have had the will by which He willed to die (in order to perform such a good deed) except from the Father of lights, from whom comes every best gift and every perfect gift.<sup>1</sup> And just as the Father is said to *draw* someone when He bestows this will upon him, so it is not inappropriate to say that He *moves* him. For just as the Son says with regard to the Father “No one comes to me unless the Father draws him,”<sup>2</sup> so He could have said “. . . unless the Father moves him.” Similarly, He could also have said: “No one hastens to his death for my name’s sake unless the Father moves or draws him.” For since each man’s will draws or moves him toward that which he wills unwaveringly, God is not inappropriately said to draw him or to move him when He gives him such a will.

By this drawing or moving, no compelling force is signified; instead, there is signified a voluntary and devoted retaining of the good will which has been received. Therefore, if in this respect we cannot deny that the Father drew and moved the Son toward death when He gave Him that willingness, who cannot see that in this respect the Father gave Him commandment, so that he underwent death voluntarily, and gave Him the chalice of which He drank willingly? And if the Son is correctly said not to have spared Himself but to have delivered Himself up willingly for us, who would deny it to be correctly said that the Father, from whom the Son

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<sup>1</sup>James 1:17. <sup>2</sup>John 6:44.

possessed such a willingness, did not spare the Son but delivered Him up for us and willed His death? And in this same sense, when the Son freely and unwaveringly kept the will which He had received from the Father, He became obedient to the Father unto death and He learned obedience by the things which He suffered—i.e., He learned how great is the work which needed to be accomplished by means of obedience. For simple and true obedience occurs when rational nature freely and without necessity keeps the will which it has received from God.

Although the foregoing ways are able to suffice, we can also correctly interpret in other ways the statement that the Father willed the Son's death. For just as we say "he wills" of that man who causes another to will, so we also say "he wills" of that man who does not cause another to will but [merely] approves of his willing. (For example, suppose we see someone will to endure affliction bravely in order to accomplish what he is rightly willing. Even though we state that we are willing for him to endure that affliction, what we will or even like is not his torment but his willingness.) We are also accustomed to say of someone who can prevent something but does not prevent it, that he wills what he does not prevent. Therefore, since the Son's will pleased the Father, and since the Father did not prevent Him from willing what He did will or from carrying out what He willed, the Father is rightly said to have willed that the Son undergo death so graciously and beneficially—even though the Father did not delight in the Son's torment. However, [the Son said] that the chalice could not pass from Him except He drink of it. [This] He said not because He was unable to avoid death if He had willed to, but because (as I said) it was impossible for the world to be saved in any other way, and because the Son unwaveringly willed to undergo death rather than to leave the world unsaved.

He spoke these words, then, in order to teach that the human race could not be saved otherwise than by means of His death; He did not speak them in order to indicate that He could not at all avoid death. For whatever things are said about Him which are similar to what has already been said must be construed in such way that He is believed to have died not of necessity but of free will. For He was omnipotent; and we read of Him that "He was offered because He willed to



be.”<sup>1</sup> And He says, “I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore, that which He does by His own will and power He is not at all rightly said to be compelled to do.

*B.* The mere fact that God permits Him to be thus treated, even though He was willing [to be thus treated], does not seem to befit such a father in regard to such a son.

*A.* On the contrary! It is altogether appropriate that such a father give his consent to such a son if this son wills something in a way that commends God's honor and conduces to man's salvation, which could not be accomplished otherwise.

*B.* Regarding this last point we are still concerned with how His death can be shown to be reasonable and necessary; for if it cannot be, then it seems that the Son ought not to have willed His death and that the Father ought neither to have required it nor permitted it. For the question is, why was God unable to save man in any other way? Or if He was able, why did He will to do so in the above manner? For it does not seem fitting for God to have saved man in this manner; nor is it clear what Christ's death accomplishes with regard to man's salvation. For it would be strange if God so delighted in, or so needed, the blood of an innocent man that He either would or could only spare the guilty by means of this innocent man's being put to death.

*A.* Since in this inquiry you are assuming the role of those who prefer to believe nothing except what has been established in advance by reason, I would like for us to agree to accept, in the case of God, nothing that is in even the least degree unfitting and to reject nothing that is in even the slightest degree reasonable unless something more reasonable opposes it. For in the case of God, just as an impossibility results from any unfittingness, however slight, so necessity accompanies any degree of reasonableness, however small, provided it is not overridden by some other more weighty reason.

*B.* In this discussion I accept nothing more readily than [the proposal] that we both adhere to this agreement.

*A.* We are dealing only with God's incarnation and with the

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<sup>1</sup>Isaiah 53:7. <sup>2</sup>John 10:17-18.

things which we believe regarding the assumed man.

*B.* That's right.

*A.* Therefore, let us suppose the incarnation of God and the things we say about *that* man never occurred. And let us agree that (1) man was created for happiness, which cannot be possessed in this life, that (2) no one can attain happiness unless his sins have been forgiven, and that (3) no man passes through this present life without sin. And let us agree about the other things with respect to which faith is necessary for eternal salvation.

*B.* All right. For in no respect do these seem either impossible for God or unbecoming to Him.

*A.* Therefore, in order for man to attain happiness, the remission of his sins is required.

*B.* So we all believe.

#### CHAPTER ELEVEN

What sinning and making satisfaction for sin are.

*A.* Therefore, we must ask on what basis God forgives men their sins. To do this more clearly, let us first see what sinning and making satisfaction for sin are.

*B.* It is up to you to explain and up to me to pay attention.

*A.* If angels and men always rendered to God what they ought to, then they would never sin.

*B.* I cannot contradict this.

*A.* Therefore, to sin is nothing other than not to render to God what is due.

*B.* What is the debt which we owe to God?

*A.* The will of every rational creature ought to be subordinate to the will of God.

*B.* Nothing is truer.

*A.* This is the debt which angels and men owe to God. No one who pays this debt sins; and everyone who does not pay it does sin. This is the justice-of-will, or uprightness-of-will, which makes men just, or upright, in heart (i.e., in will).<sup>1</sup> This is the sole and complete honor which we owe to God and which God demands from us. For only such a will, when it is able to act, does works which are acceptable to God; and when it is not able to act, it

<sup>1</sup>Note Psalms 35:11 (36:10).

alone is acceptable in itself, since without it no work is acceptable to God. Whoever does not pay to God this honor due Him dishonors Him and removes from Him what belongs to Him; and this removal, or this dishonoring, constitutes a sin. However, as long as he does not repay what he has stolen, he remains guilty. But it is not enough for him merely to repay what has been stolen; rather, because of the wrong which has been inflicted, he ought to repay more than he has stolen. For example, if someone who injures another's health restores it, his doing so is insufficient payment unless he also gives some compensation for the painful wrong that was inflicted. Similarly, he who violates another's honor does not sufficiently repay this honor unless, in proportion to the injury caused by the dishonoring, he makes some restitution which is acceptable to the one whom he has dishonored. We must also note that when someone repays what he has unjustly stolen, he ought to return that which could not be exacted from him had he not stolen what belonged to another. Accordingly, then, everyone who sins is obliged to repay to God the honor which he has stolen. This [repayment of stolen honor] constitutes the satisfaction which every sinner is obliged to make to God.

*B.* Since we have proposed to follow reason, I have nothing which I can say against you on all these matters, even though you alarm me a bit.

#### CHAPTER TWELVE

Whether it is fitting for God to forgive sin out of mercy alone, apart from any payment of debt.

*A.* Let us go back and see whether it is fitting for God to forgive sin out of mercy alone, apart from any repayment of the honor stolen from Him.

*B.* I see no reason why it is not fitting.

*A.* To forgive sin in this manner is identical with not punishing it. Now, in the absence of satisfaction, to order sin rightly is only to punish it; therefore, if sin is not punished, something disordered is forgiven.

*B.* What you say is reasonable.

*A.* But it is not fitting that God should forgive something that is disordered within His kingdom.

*B.* If I wished to say anything different, I fear that I would be sinning.

*A.* Therefore, it is not fitting that God should forgive sin that goes thus unpunished.

*B.* This follows.

*A.* There is also something else which follows if sin that goes thus unpunished is forgiven: viz., God would be dealing with the sinner and the non-sinner in the same way—something which is unsuitable for Him [to do].

*B.* I cannot deny it.

*A.* Also consider the following point: Everyone knows that human justice is subject to law, so that God deals out the measure of recompense according to the degree of justice.

*B.* This is what we believe.

*A.* But if sin were neither paid for nor punished, it would be subject to no law.

*B.* I cannot think differently.

*A.* Therefore, if injustice is forgiven out of mercy alone, then injustice is more at liberty than is justice—something which seems especially unfitting. Moreover, this unfittingness is so extensive that it makes injustice resemble God, for as God is subject to no one's law, neither would injustice be.

*B.* I cannot oppose your reasoning. However, since God commands us to forgive completely those who sin against us,<sup>1</sup> it seems inconsistent that He commands us to do what it is unfitting for Him to do.

*A.* There is no inconsistency here, because God gives us this command so that we should not arrogate to ourselves His prerogative. For to take vengeance belongs to no one except to Him who is Lord of all.<sup>2</sup> Now, when earthly potentates rightly exercise retribution, the Lord Himself does it; for they have been ordained by Him to this end.<sup>3</sup>

*B.* You have eliminated the inconsistency which I thought was present in [your argument]. But there is something else to which I want to have your answer. God is so free that He is subject to no law and to no one else's judgment; and He is so kind that nothing more kind can be thought. Moreover, nothing except what He

<sup>1</sup>Matthew 6:12. <sup>2</sup>Romans 12:19. <sup>3</sup>Romans 13:1 and 13:4.

wills is right or fitting. Therefore, it seems strange for us to say either that He is altogether unwilling, or else that He is forbidden, to forgive a wrong done to Him; for from Him we regularly ask forgiveness for the wrongs we do to others.

A. What you say about His freedom, will, and kindness is true. Yet we ought to explicate these notions so in accordance with reason that we do not seem to oppose His dignity. For there is freedom only with respect to what is advantageous or what is fitting; and “kindness” which performs some work unbefitting to God must not be called kindness. But as for the statement that what God wills is just and what He does not will is not just: we must not interpret this to mean that if God were to will any kind of unfittingness, it would be *just* simply because He willed it. For the supposition “God wills to lie” does not warrant the inference “Lying is just,” but, instead, warrants the inference “This being is not really God.” For no will can at all will to lie except a will in which the truth has been corrupted—or better, a will which has become corrupted by abandoning the truth. Therefore, when we say “If God wills to lie,” this means “If God is of such a nature as to will to lie. . . .” And so, “Lying is just” is not inferable therefrom—unless we interpret the if-then statement as an example of our saying about two impossibilities “If this is true, then that is true,” although neither the one nor the other is true. For example, someone might say “If water is dry, then fire is wet,” neither of which component statements is true. Therefore, “If God wills such-and-such, then it is just” can be said truly only of those things which it is not unfitting for God to will. For example, if God wills that it rain, it is just that it rain; and if God wills that some man be killed, it is just that he be killed. Therefore, if it is unfitting that God do something unjustly or inordinately, then it does not pertain to His freedom, or kindness, or willingness that He forgive—without punishing him—a sinner who does not repay to Him what he has stolen.

B. You remove from me all the objections which I thought could be raised against you.

A. Consider still another reason why it was not fitting for God to do this.

B. I will gladly listen to whatever you say.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Nothing ought less to be tolerated in the order of things than that the creature remove the honor owed to the Creator and not repay what he removes.

A. Nothing ought less to be tolerated in the order of things than that the creature remove the honor owed to the Creator and not repay what he removes.

B. Nothing is clearer than this.

A. Now, nothing is more unjustly tolerated than is that thing than which nothing ought less to be tolerated.

B. This also is not unclear.

A. Therefore, you will not say, I believe, that God ought to tolerate that thing than which nothing is tolerated more unjustly, viz., that the creature not repay to God what he removes from Him.

B. Indeed, I see that it must not at all be said.

A. Likewise, if nothing is greater or better than God, then Supreme Justice (which is identical with God Himself) keeps nothing more justly than God's honor in regard to the governance of things.

B. Nothing is clearer than this either.

A. Therefore, God keeps nothing more justly than the honor of His dignity.

B. I have to admit it.

A. Do you think that God would keep His honor intact if He permitted it to be removed from Him in such way that neither did the thief repay it nor did God punish him?

B. I dare not say so.

A. Therefore, it is necessary either for the honor that has been removed to be repaid or else for punishment to result. Otherwise, either God would not be *just* to Himself or else He would not have the power to do the one or the other—heinous things even to think.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

How the punishment of a sinner honors God.

B. I think that nothing more reasonable can be said. But I want to hear from you whether the punishment of a sinner is an honor for God—or, rather, what kind of honor it is. For if the punish-

ment of a sinner is not an honor for God, then when a sinner does not repay what he has stolen but is punished instead, God loses His honor irrecoverably. But this consequence seems inconsistent with what has already been said.

A. It is impossible for God to lose His honor. Either the sinner freely repays what he owes or else God takes it from him against his will. For either a man willingly exhibits due subjection to God (be it by not sinning or be it by making payment for his sins), or else God subjects him to Himself against his will by tormenting him and in this way demonstrates that He is his master—a fact which the man refuses to acknowledge voluntarily. In this case, we must notice that as a man by sinning seizes what is God's, so God by punishing takes what is man's. Indeed, not only is that which someone already possesses said to be his own but so is that which it is in his power to possess. Therefore, since man was created in such way that he would be able to possess happiness if he did not sin: when because of his sin he is deprived of happiness and of every good, he is repaying from his own possession (although against his will) what he has seized. For although what God removes from him He does not convert to His own advantageous use (as a man converts to his own use the money which he takes away from someone else), nevertheless what God takes away conduces to His honor simply by virtue of His taking it. For by taking it away He shows that the sinner and his possessions are subject to Him.

#### CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Whether God lets His honor be violated even slightly.

B. What you say is agreeable. But there is also another question to which I request your answer. If God ought to maintain His honor in the way you are establishing, why does He allow it to be even slightly violated? For that which is in any way allowed to be injured is not maintained wholly and perfectly.

A. Nothing can be added to or subtracted from His honor, considered in itself. For His honor is, in itself, incorruptible and altogether immutable. But when each single creature keeps, either by nature or by reason, its proper place [in the order of things]—a place prescribed for it, so to speak—it is said to obey God and to honor Him. And this [holds true especially for] a rational na-

ture, which has the gift of understanding what it ought to do. When a rational nature wills what it ought to, it honors God—not because it confers anything on Him but because it willingly submits itself to His will and governance. And, as best it can, it stays in its proper place in the universe and preserves the beauty of the universe. But when it does not will what it ought, then it dishonors God from its own point of view. For it does not willingly submit itself to His governance; and it disturbs (as much as lies in its power to do so) the order and the beauty of the universe—even though it does not at all injure or tarnish God's power or dignity [in and of itself].

If those things which are encircled by the heavens wished not to continue to exist beneath the heavens, or wished to get away from the heavens, they would nonetheless be able to exist only beneath the heavens and be able to go away from the heavens only by coming toward them. For no matter from what place or to what place or by what route they would go, they would still be circumscribed by the heavens. And the farther they would get from any one part of the heavens, the closer they would get to the opposite part. Similarly, even though men and evil angels do not want to submit to the divine will and ordinance, they are unable to escape from it. For if they want to get out from under God's directive will, they run beneath His punitive will. And—if you ask about the route they traverse—they make their way only under His permissive will. And that which they perversely will or do is redirected by Supreme Wisdom towards the order and beauty of the aforementioned universe. Indeed, the voluntary making of satisfaction for wickedness, and the demand for punishment of anyone who does not make satisfaction—to pass over the fact that God causes, in many ways, good things to come from evil things—retain, in the universe, their proper place and preserve the beauty of its order. If where wickedness tries to disturb right-order Divine Wisdom did not include these things [i.e., did not provide for the making of satisfaction and the exacting of punishment], then in the universe (which God ought to order) there would occur a certain marring as a result of the violation of the order's beauty; and God would seem to fail in His governance. Just as these two results are unfitting, so they are impossible ; therefore either satisfaction or punishment must follow upon every sin.



*B.* You have satisfactorily answered my objection.

*A.* Therefore, it is evident that no one can honor or dishonor God as He is in Himself; but someone seems to do so, to the extent he can, when he subjects his will to the will of God or withdraws it from the will of God.

*B.* I do not know what I can say against this conclusion.

#### CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The reason that the number of angels who fell is to be made up from among human beings.

*A.* Let me add still another point.

*B.* You may keep talking until listening begins to weary me.

*A.* It is evident that God planned to make up—from human nature, which He created without sin—the number of angels who had fallen.

*B.* We believe it; but I would like to have a reason for it.

*A.* You are misdirecting me. For we planned to deal only with the incarnation of God, and you are interposing other questions for me.

*B.* Don't be angry, for "God loves a cheerful giver."<sup>1</sup> And no one evidences that he cheerfully gives what he promises to, more than does someone who gives more than he promises to. So answer my question gladly.

*A.* We must not doubt that those rational natures which are or will be happy in the contemplation of God were foreknown by God to exist in a calculable and perfect number, so that it is not fitting that this number be greater or lesser. For either God does not know in what number it is more suitable that these natures be created—an alternative which is false—or else, if He knows, He will create rational natures in the number which He knows to be the most suitable for His purpose. Therefore, either the angels who fell were created to be within this number, or else because they could not remain in excess of it, they fell of necessity—an absurd thing to suppose.

*B.* What you say is clearly true.

*A.* Therefore, since they ought to have been within that number: either their number must be made up, or else rational natures

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<sup>1</sup>II Corinthians 9:7.

which are foreknown to exist in a perfect number will remain in an imperfect number—something which cannot be the case.

*B.* Without doubt they are to be replaced.

*A.* Therefore, it is necessary that they be replaced from human nature, since there is no other nature from which they can be replaced.

#### CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Other angels cannot take the place of those who fell.

*B.* Why cannot fallen angels be restored? Or why cannot other angels be substituted for them?

*A.* When you perceive the difficulty of our restoration, you will discern the impossibility of their reconciliation. However, the reason other angels cannot be substituted for them—not to speak of how this [creation and substitution of other angels] seems to be inconsistent with the perfection of the original creation—is the following: Other angels ought not to be substituted unless they could be such as fallen angels would have become had they not sinned. If [they had not sinned], they would have persevered without having witnessed any punishment of sin; but after their fall this state would have been impossible for the other angels who would be substituted for them. For if both the one who is not aware of any punishment for sin and the one who always gazes upon eternal punishment remain standing in the truth, they are not equally praiseworthy. Indeed, the good angels must be thought to have been confirmed [in goodness] as a result of their own merit and not at all because of the fall of the evil angels. For if the good angels had sinned together with the evil angels, they would have been condemned with them; similarly, if the unjust angels had remained standing together with the just angels, they too would have been confirmed. Assuredly, if some of the angels were to be confirmed only because of the fall of the others, then either none of them would ever have been confirmed or else it would have been necessary for one of them to fall so that he would be punished in order for the others to be confirmed. Now, both of these consequences are absurd. Consequently, the angels who remained standing were confirmed in the way in which all of them alike would have been confirmed if they had remained standing. I discussed this way, as best I could, when I dealt with the reason why God

did not give the Devil perseverance.

*B.* You have proved that the evil angels are to be replaced from human nature. And from your reasoning it is evident that the number of elect men will not be less than the number of reprobate angels. But show, if you can, whether the number of elect men will be greater [than the number of reprobate angels].

#### CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Whether there will be more holy men than there are evil angels.

*A.* If angels were present in the perfect number (of which we have been speaking) before some of them fell, then human beings were created only as substitutes for lost angels and, clearly, they will not be more numerous than fallen angels. On the other hand, if that number was not exhausted by all the angels, then both what perished and what was originally lacking were to be completed from among human beings; and there will be more elect men than there are reprobate angels; and so we shall say that human beings were created not only for replenishing the diminished number but also for filling up the still unfilled number.

*B.* Which alternative ought rather to be maintained?: that the angels were originally created in the perfect number, or the contradictory?

*A.* I will tell you my view.

*B.* I cannot demand more from you.

*A.* If man was created after the fall of the evil angels, as some people interpret the text in Genesis, then I do not see how I can thereby prove either alternative decisively. For it seems to me to be possible that the angels were already present in perfect number and that afterwards man was created in order to restore their diminished number. And it [also seems] possible that angels were not present in perfect number, because God was delaying (as He still is) the fulfillment of that number, since He was going to create human nature at a fitting time. Thus, either He would simply fill up that still incomplete number, or else if the completed number had been diminished, He would restore it.

However, if the entire creation was created at once, and if those days, in terms of which Moses seems to say that our world was not created at once, are to be interpreted otherwise than as we experience days in which we live, then I cannot see how angels could

have been created in that completed number. Indeed, if they were so created, then I think that either some angels or human beings were going to fall of necessity or else there would be more persons in the Heavenly City than the fittingness of the perfect number would require. Therefore, if all things were created at once, then angels and the first two human beings seem to have been so present in an imperfect number that if no angel were to fall, then only what was lacking would be filled up from human beings; on the other hand, if an angel were to perish, then also what fell would be replaced from human beings. And human nature, which was weaker, would “acquit” God of blame and would confound the Devil should he impute his fall to his weakness; for human nature, though weaker, would stand steadfast. But even if human nature were to fall, it would much more greatly vindicate God against itself and the Devil, since—though created mortal and much weaker—it would (in the elect) ascend from such weakness to a place higher than that from which the Devil had fallen. Indeed, it would ascend as much higher as the good angels (equality with whom would be its due) advanced (because they persevered) after the downfall of the evil ones.

For these reasons it seems to me more likely that angels were not present in the perfect number with which the Heavenly City will be filled. For this view is possible if man was not created at the same time as the angels; and it seems to be necessary if man and angels were created at the same time. (Many regard this simultaneous creation as more likely, since we read: “He who lives forever created all things together.”)<sup>1</sup> But even if the perfection of the created world is to be construed as referring not so much to the number of individuals as to the number of natures, it is necessarily the case that human nature was created either to complement the perfection of creation or to be superfluous to it. Now, we dare not make the latter statement with regard to even the smallest worm's nature. Hence, human nature was created to occupy its own place in the created world and not merely to replace individuals of a different nature. Therefore, it is evident that even if no angel had perished, human beings would have had a place of their own in the Heavenly City. Thus, it follows that angels, be-

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<sup>1</sup>Ecclesiasticus 18:1.

fore some of them fell, were not present in that perfect number. Otherwise, either men or some angels would have had to fall, since no one could have remained in that city in excess of the perfect number.

*B.* You have accomplished a great deal.

*A.* There is also another reason, it seems to me, which strongly favors the view that angels were not created in a perfect number.

*B.* State it.

*A.* If angels were created in that perfect number, and if human beings were created only as substitutes for lost angels, then it is clear that unless angels had fallen from their happiness human beings would not ascend to it.

*B.* This is evident.

*A.* Suppose, then, someone says that elect men will rejoice as much over the loss of the angels as over their own elevation since without doubt the latter would not occur unless the former had occurred. [In that case] how could men be protected from this perverse joy, or how would we say that fallen angels will be *replaced* by human beings? For if these angels had not fallen, they would have remained free of this fault (i.e., free of rejoicing over the fall of others); but men could not be free of it. Or, indeed, what kind of happiness would men with this fault deserve? Finally, how presumptuous it would be of us to say that God would not or could not bring about this substitution apart from this fault!

*B.* Does not a similar thing happen in the case of the Gentiles, who have been called to faith because the Jews have rejected it?

*A.* No. For if all the Jews had believed, the Gentiles would still have been called, since "in every nation he who fears God and works justice is acceptable to Him."<sup>1</sup> But since the Jews spurned the Apostles, their contempt was the occasion of the Apostles' having turned to the Gentiles.

*B.* In no respect do I see anything that I can say against this.

*A.* Why does this joy over another's fall seem to you to come to each man?

*B.* Why except that each would know that he would not at all

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<sup>1</sup>Acts 10:35.

be positioned where he will be unless another had fallen from this position?

A. Therefore, if no one had this assurance, there would not be any basis for anyone to rejoice over another's downfall.

B. So it seems.

A. On the assumption that elect men will be much more numerous than the angels who fell, do you think that anyone of these elect men would have this assurance?

B. I cannot at all believe that he would have it or should have it. For with regard to the [perfect] number required for establishing that city: how could anyone know whether he was created for replenishing what was diminished or for filling up what was not yet completed? All would be certain, however, that they were created for completing that city.

A. Therefore, if there will be more human beings than reprobate angels, no one could or should know that he has been elevated to the Heavenly City only because of another's fall.

B. This is true.

A. Therefore, no one will have reason to rejoice over another's perdition.

B. So it follows.

A. We see, then, that if there will be more elect men than reprobate angels, there does not follow *that* unfittingness which is bound to follow on the assumption that there will not be more [elect men than reprobate angels]. Accordingly, since it is impossible for there to be any unfittingness in that city, it seems necessary that angels were not created in that perfect number and that there will be more blessed men than there are wretched angels.

B. I do not see how this can be denied.

A. I think that still another argument can be given for this same conclusion.

B. You ought to expound this one as well.

A. We believe that the physical mass of the world is to be transformed<sup>1</sup> for the better and that this will not occur until the number of elect men is filled up and the Blessed City completed. Moreover, [we believe that] upon completion of this city, the transformation will no longer be delayed. Hence, we can infer that from

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<sup>1</sup>II Peter 3:12-13.

the beginning God planned to perfect both [this world's physical nature and that city of rational natures] at the same time. Thus, the inferior nature, which did not sense God, would not be perfected before the superior nature, which ought to enjoy God. And in its own way the inferior nature, having been changed for the better, would “rejoice” in the perfecting of the superior nature. Indeed, every creature—each in its own way rejoicing eternally in its creator, itself, and its fellow-creatures—would rejoice over its own so glorious and so marvelous perfectedness. Thus, that which the will freely causes in rational nature, this the unsensing creature would also naturally display as a result of the governance of God. (For we are accustomed to share joyfully in the exultation of our ancestors—for example, when on the “birthdays”<sup>1</sup> of saints we delight in festive celebration, rejoicing over their glory.) Now, the view under discussion seems to be supported by the following consideration: viz., that if Adam had not sinned, God would still have delayed the completion of that city until human beings were transformed into immortal immortality (so to speak) of their bodies, upon completion of that number-of-men which God was awaiting. For in Paradise human beings had a kind of immortality—viz., an ability not to die. But this ability was not “immortal” because it was able to “die,” with the result that human beings would be unable to keep from dying.

But if the foregoing view is true—viz., that from the beginning God planned to perfect at one and the same time that rational, blessed city and this natural, insensible world—then [one of the following alternatives] seems to hold: (1) Before the downfall of the evil angels that city was not complete in its number of angels; rather, God was planning to complete it from human beings at the time He would change, for the better, the physical nature of the world. Or (2) if that city was complete in its number, it was not complete in its confirmation; and its confirmation was to be delayed even if no one within that city were to sin in the period up until the world's renewal, which we await. Or (3) if the confirmation was to be delayed no longer, the renewing of the world was to be hastened so that it would occur together with the confirmation. (NOT 3) But it is altogether unreasonable [to suppose] that

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<sup>1</sup>I.e., the day the saint enters Heaven, viz., the day of his death.

God purposed to renew immediately a newly created world and to destroy—at the very beginning, before the reason for their having been created was evident—those things which will not exist after this renewal. Consequently, then, it is not the case that angels were so present in a perfect number that their confirmation was no longer delayed; for the renewal of the new world would have had to occur immediately—a consequence which is unfitting. (NOT 2) But that God willed to delay the confirmation until the future renewal of the world also seems unfitting—especially since He had accomplished this confirmation so soon in some beings and since it is plausible that in the case of the first human beings He would have accomplished this confirmation at the time of their sin if they had not sinned, just as He did in the case of the persevering angels. It is true that men were not yet elevated to that equality-with-the-angels to which they were going to come when the number of them who would be elevated would be complete.

Nonetheless, it seems that if they had conquered, and thus had not sinned when tempted, then with all their offspring they would have been so confirmed in the justice in which they dwelt that they would not be able to sin any more—just as because they sinned and were conquered, they are so weak that as far as their own power goes they cannot exist without sin. For who would venture to say that injustice is more able to bind in servitude a man who consents to its first enticement than justice is able to confirm in freedom a man who adheres to it at the time of this first temptation? Now, since human nature was present as a whole in our first parents, it *was conquered* as a whole in them, with the result that it sinned (the sole exception being *that* man whom God was able to keep separate from the sin of Adam, even as He was able to create Him from a virgin and without recourse to the seed of a male). Similarly, human nature would have *conquered* as a whole in our first parents if they had not sinned. Therefore, the [first] alternative remains: viz., that the Heavenly City was not filled up by the original [undiminished] number of angels but was to be completed from human beings. If these considerations are correct, then there will be more elect men than there are reprobate angels.

B. What you say seems very reasonable to me. But what shall we say about its being read of God that “He appointed the bounds



of people according to the number of the children of Israel”?<sup>1</sup> Because the words “angels of God” are [sometimes] found in place of “children of Israel,” some people interpret this text in such way that the number of elect men to be elevated is construed as [exactly] corresponding to the number of good angels.

A. This interpretation is not opposed to the foregoing view provided it is not true that as many angels have fallen as have remained standing. For on the assumption that there are more elect angels than reprobate ones: it is both necessary that elect men replace reprobate angels and also possible for elect men to be equal in number to the happy angels; and so there will be a greater number of just men than there are of unjust angels.

But remember with what proviso I began to deal with your perplexity: viz., that if I say something which a greater authority does not confirm, then even though I seem to prove it rationally, it should be accepted with no other degree of certainty than that it appears this way to me for the time being, until God somehow reveals the matter to me more fully. For if I say something that unquestionably contradicts Sacred Scripture, I am certain that it is false; and I do not want to hold that view if I know it [to be false]. But there are matters concerning which different beliefs can be entertained without danger. For example, the topic we are now discussing is of this sort. (For in case we do not know whether or not more men are to be elected than angels have been lost, and in case we deem one of these alternatives to be better than the other, there is no danger to the soul, it seems to me.) Now, if in matters of this kind we so interpret the divine sayings that they seem to favor different views; and if no other passage is found where the divine words determine what must assuredly be held to, then I do not think we ought to be reproached.

As for your having cited the verse<sup>2</sup> “He appointed the bounds of people,” or nations, “according to the number of the angels of God”—a verse which in another translation reads “according to the number of the children of Israel”: both translations have either the same meaning or else different but compatible meanings. Therefore, both “angels of God” and “children of Israel” must be construed to signify good angels only or else elect men only or else

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<sup>1</sup>Deuteronomy 32:8. <sup>2</sup>*loc. cit.*

both angels and elect men together—i.e., the Heavenly City as a whole. Or else, “angels of God” [signifies] the holy angels only, and “children of Israel” [signifies] *just* men only. Or else, “children of Israel” [signifies] angels only, and “angels of God” [signifies] *just* men only. Now, if both expressions designate good angels only, then this amounts to the same thing as if only “angels of God” [had been used]. But if [both designate] the Heavenly City as a whole, then the meaning is that people (i.e., multitudes of elect men) will continue to be taken up, or that there will continue to be people in our world, until the predetermined but not yet completed number of that city becomes completed from among men.

Presently, I do not see how “children of Israel” would signify either angels alone or both angels and holy men together. But it would not be strange for *holy men* to be called “children of Israel,” even as they are called “children of Abraham.”<sup>1</sup> They can also rightly be called angels-of-God by virtue of the following considerations: (1) They imitate angelic life; (2) likeness to and equality with the angels is promised them in Heaven; (3) all who live *justly* are “angels” of God (and hence are called confessors or martyrs; for one who bears witness to, and confesses, the truth of God is His messenger, i.e., His “angel.” Moreover, if an evil man is called a devil—as the Lord says<sup>2</sup> about Judas because of the similarity of his malice [to a devil's]—then why shall not a good man be called an angel because of his imitation of justice?). Therefore, it seems to me, we can say that God has appointed the bounds of people according to the number of *elect men*; for in our world there will continue to be people and human procreation until the number of elect men is completed; and once this number is completed, the human reproduction which occurs in the present life will cease.

But if we interpret “angels of God” to indicate holy angels only and interpret “children of Israel” to indicate *just* men only, then “God appointed the bounds of people according to the number of the angels of God” can be construed in two ways: viz., either in the sense that as many people—i.e., as many human beings—as there are holy angels of God will be elevated; or in the sense that there will continue to be people until the number of the an-

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<sup>1</sup>Galatians 3:7. <sup>2</sup>John 6:71.

gels of God is filled up from among men. However, “God appointed the bounds of people according to the number of the children of Israel” can be interpreted in only one way, it seems to me: viz., in the sense that (as has been stated above) there will continue to be people in the present world until the number of holy men is elevated. Now, from either translation we may infer that as many men will be elevated as angels have remained standing. From this inference, however, there does not follow—even though lost angels are to be replaced from among men—that as many angels fell as persevered. Nonetheless, if anyone makes this latter claim, he will have to find missteps in the above-given arguments which seem to show (1) that angels, before some of them fell, were not present in that perfect number (which I referred to above) and (2) that there will be more elect men than there are evil angels.

*B.* I do not regret having made you say these things about angels, for you have not done it in vain. Return now to the point from which we digressed.

#### CHAPTER NINETEEN

Man cannot be saved without satisfaction for sin.

*A.* It has been established that God planned to replace from among men the angels who fell.

*B.* This point is certain.

*A.* Therefore, in the Heavenly City the men who will be elevated thereto in place of angels ought to be such as those whom they will there replace were going to be—i.e., [they ought to be] such as the good angels now are. Otherwise, it would not be the case that those who have fallen are *replaced*, and consequently God either could not complete the good work He began or else He would regret having begun such a good work—both of which alternatives are absurd.

*B.* Truly, [elect] men ought to be equal to the good angels.

*A.* Have the good angels ever sinned?

*B.* No.

*A.* Can you think that a man who has once sinned and has never made satisfaction to God for his sin, but is simply let-off unpunished, would be equal to an angel who has never sinned?

*B.* I can think and say these words, but I can no more grasp

their intelligibility than I can rightly think a falsehood to be a truth.

A. Therefore, in the absence of satisfaction it is not fitting for God to elevate sinful man to the places of lost angels, since truth does not permit a sinful man's being elevated to equality with the happy angels.

B. Reason demonstrates this.

A. Consider also whether in the case of man alone—disregarding the fact that he ought to be equal to the angels—God ought to elevate him in this way to any happiness, even to the kind of happiness which he possessed before he sinned.

B. State your view, and I shall examine it as best I can.

A. Let us suppose that some rich man is holding in his hand a pearl of great value which no impurity has ever touched and which no one else can remove from his hand unless he permits it. And let him be intending to hide it away in his treasury, where his most cherished and most valuable possessions are located.

B. I am imagining this just as if it were before us.

A. What if, even though he could prevent it from happening, he were to permit some envious person to knock this pearl from his hand into the mire? And what if afterwards he were to take it from the mire and store it, still dirty and unwashed, in some clean and costly receptacle, intending to treasure it henceforth in this condition? Would you think him wise?

B. How could I think this? For would it not be much better for him to retain and safeguard, as clean, the pearl which is contaminated?

A. Would not God have been acting similarly? For God was holding in His own hand, as it were, man, who in Paradise was without sin and was to be placed in the company of angels; and God permitted the Devil, incited by envy, to thrust man (who nevertheless consented) into the mire of sin (for if God had willed to prevent the Devil, the Devil could not have tempted man). Would not, I say, God have been acting similarly if without there being any cleansing (i.e., without there being any satisfaction) He had brought man—stained by the mire of sin and going to remain forever in this condition—back at least to Paradise, from which he had been cast out?

B. I dare not deny that there would be a similarity if God were

to do this. Hence, I do not grant that He can do it. For [if God were to do this], it would seem that either He was unable to complete what He had planned or else He regretted His good plan. And neither of these possibilities can befall God.

A. Therefore, believe most assuredly that without satisfaction (i.e., without voluntary payment of the debt) God cannot forgive unpunished sin and the sinner cannot arrive at happiness—even such happiness as he had before he sinned. For in this manner [i.e., without satisfaction] it would not be the case that man is really restored—not even restored to such a state as that in which he was existing prior to his sin.

B. I cannot at all refute your arguments. But why is it that we pray to God “Forgive us our debts”?<sup>1</sup> And why does every nation beseech the god in whom it believes to forgive its sins? For, on the one hand, if we pay [to God] what we owe, why do we ask Him to forgive us? Is God unjust, so that He demands again what has already been paid? On the other hand, if we do not pay it, why do we pray in vain for Him to do what He cannot do, seeing that it is unfitting to do?

A. He who does not make payment says in vain “Forgive me.” But he who does make payment also makes this supplication; for this making-of-supplication belongs to the payment. For God does not owe anything to anyone; but every creature is indebted to God. Accordingly, it is not expedient for man to deal with God as an equal with an equal. Regarding this issue it is not necessary to give you an answer now. For when you come to learn why Christ died, perhaps you will detect by yourself the answer you are seeking.

B. Well, then, the answer you have given to my perplexity satisfies me for now. The following point, however, you have demonstrated so clearly that even if I wanted to I could not doubt its truth: viz., that no man can arrive at happiness if he is sinful or can be freed from sin if he does not repay what he seized by sinning.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY

Satisfaction ought to be proportional to the measure of the sin. Man cannot make satisfaction by himself.

A. I think you will also not doubt that satisfaction ought to be

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<sup>1</sup>Matthew 6:12.

proportional to the measure of the sin.

*B.* Were it not so, sin would to some extent remain unordered—something which cannot be the case if God leaves nothing unordered in His kingdom. Now, it has already been established that even the slightest unfittingness is impossible in the case of God.

*A.* Tell me, then: what will you pay to God in proportion to your sin?

*B.* Penitence, a contrite and humbled heart, fasting and a variety of physical toil, the mercy of giving and forgiving, as well as obedience.

*A.* In all these cases what are you giving to God?

*B.* Do I not honor God when out of fear of Him and love for Him I in contrition of heart cast aside temporal mirth, when in fasting and toil I tread under foot the pleasures and repose of this life, when in giving and forgiving I generously bestow my possessions, and when in obedience I subject myself to Him?

*A.* When you render something which you would owe to God even if you had not sinned, you ought not to reckon it as payment of the debt which you owe for your sin. Now, you owe to God all of the things you have just mentioned. For in this mortal life there ought to be so much love, and so much desire to arrive at that end for which you have been created (an arrival whereunto prayer is relevant), and so much sorrow because you are not yet there, and so much fear lest you not arrive, that you ought to experience joy only over those things which give you either assistance in arriving or the hope thereof. For you do not deserve to have what you do not love and desire in proportion to its nature, and over which you do not grieve because you do not yet possess it but are still in such great danger as to whether or not you will ever possess it. To possess this, it is also a prerequisite to flee from the repose and worldly pleasures (except insofar as you know them to conduce to your aspiration to arrive at this possession) which call the soul away from that true rest and delight.

Moreover, you ought to consider that you are required to *give*—even as you recognize that what you give, you have not from yourself but from Him whose servant both you and the one to whom you give are. And nature teaches you to deal with your fellow-servant (i.e., one man dealing with another) as you would want to be

dealt with by him<sup>1</sup> and teaches that anyone who is unwilling to give of what he has ought not to receive what he does not have. Now, regarding forgiveness I will say briefly that vengeance does not at all belong to you (as I stated earlier), since you are not your own<sup>2</sup> and he who has wronged you is neither yours nor his own; rather you are both servants of one Lord and have both been created by Him out of nothing. Moreover, if you avenge yourself on your fellow-servant, you haughtily presume to exercise over him the judgment which is the prerogative of the Lord and Judge of all. Finally, in the case of obedience, what do you give to God that you do not already owe Him, to whose command you owe all that you are, all that you have, and all that you can do?

*B.* I now do not dare to say that in all these cases I am giving to God something which I do not owe to Him.

*A.* Therefore, what do you pay to God according to the measure of your sin?

*B.* If even when I do not sin I owe to God—in order to keep from sinning—myself and whatever I can do, I have nothing with which to make payment for my sin.

*A.* What, then, will become of you? How will you be able to be saved?

*B.* If I take seriously your arguments, I do not see how. But if I have recourse to my faith, then in the Christian faith, which works through love,<sup>3</sup> I have the hope that I can be saved. For we read: “If the unjust be converted from his injustice and do justice,”<sup>4</sup> all his injustices are forgotten.

*A.* This is said only to those who either looked forward to Christ before He came or believe on Him after He comes. But when we proposed to examine by reason alone whether His coming was necessary for man's salvation, we hypothesized that Christ and the Christian faith had never existed.

*B.* So we did.

*A.* Therefore, let us proceed by reason alone.

*B.* Although you lead me into difficulties, I greatly desire for you to proceed just as you have begun.

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<sup>1</sup>Matthew 7:12. <sup>2</sup>I Corinthians 6:19-20. <sup>3</sup>Galatians 5:6. <sup>4</sup>Ezekiel 18:27.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

## How grave sin is.

A. Let us assume that you do not owe all those things which you have just supposed you could render as payment for your sin. And let us see whether they can avail to making satisfaction for even one very small sin—such as taking a single look which is contrary to God's will.

B. Except for the fact that I hear you calling this sin into question, I would think that I could blot it out by a single act of remorse.

A. You have not yet considered how grave sin is.

B. Show me this now.

A. Suppose you were to find yourself in the presence of God and someone were to give you the command: "Look in that direction." And suppose that, on the contrary, God were to say: "I am absolutely unwilling for you to look." Ask yourself in your heart what there is, among all existing things, for the sake of which you ought to take that look in violation of God's will.

B. I find nothing for the sake of which I ought to do this—unless perhaps I were caught in the necessity of having to commit either this sin or some greater one.

A. Exclude this necessity, and consider with regard only to the sin in question whether you could [legitimately] commit it for the sake of saving your life.

B. I see clearly that I could not.

A. So as not to make you tarry longer: what if it were necessary either for the whole world and whatever is other than God to perish and be reduced to nothing or for you to do so small a thing which is contrary to the will of God?

B. When I consider the action itself, I see it to be something trifling. But when I reflect upon the fact that it is contrary to the will of God, I recognize that it is something extremely grave and comparable to no loss. However, we are often irreproachable in acting against someone's will, so that his possessions are safeguarded; afterwards, our having done this pleases the one against whose will we have acted.

A. This happens to a man who sometimes does not understand what is useful to him, or who cannot replace what he loses; but



God has no needs, and even as He has created all things, so He could also replace them if they were to perish.

*B.* I must admit that even for the sake of preserving the whole of creation, it is not the case that I ought to do something which is contrary to the will of God.

*A.* What if there were more than one world, full of creatures, just as this world is?

*B.* If there were an infinitely multiple number of worlds and they too were exhibited to me, I would still give the same answer.

*A.* You can do nothing more rightly. But if it were to happen that contrary to the will of God you were to take that look, consider as well what you would be able to render as payment for this sin.

*B.* I do not have anything more than what I have already mentioned.

*A.* By comparison, then, this is how gravely we sin whenever we knowingly do something, however small, contrary to the will of God. For we are always in His presence, and He always commands us not to sin.

*B.* As I see it, we are living in very great danger.

*A.* It is evident that God demands satisfaction in proportion to the extent of the sin.

*B.* I cannot deny it.

*A.* Therefore, you do not make satisfaction unless you pay something greater than is that for whose sake you ought not to have sinned.

*B.* I see both that reason requires this and that it is altogether impossible.

*A.* And God cannot elevate to happiness anyone who is at all obligated by the debt for sin, because God ought not to do so.

*B.* This verdict is exceedingly grave.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

How when man permitted himself to be conquered  
by the Devil, he did an injury to God  
for which he is unable to make satisfaction.

*A.* Listen to still another reason why it is no less difficult for man to be reconciled to God.

*B.* Unless faith consoled me, the previous reason by itself would make me despair.

*A.* Listen anyhow.

*B.* Go on speaking.

*A.* Man, who was created without sin, was placed in Paradise with an inclination toward God—placed between God and the Devil, as it were—in order that he would conquer the Devil by not consenting to his inducement toward sin. [This conquest would] vindicate and honor God as well as confound the Devil, since man, weaker [than the Devil], would not sin on earth when tempted by the Devil, who, stronger [than man], had sinned in Heaven untempted by anyone. And although man was easily able to succeed at this, he freely permitted himself—merely because of the temptation and without being compelled by any force—to be conquered according to the Devil's will and contrary to the will and honor of God.

*B.* What are you getting at?

*A.* Judge whether it is not against the honor of God for man—still having to his discredit the slanderous injury he inflicted on God—to be reconciled to God without first honoring God by defeating the Devil, just as he dishonored God when he was defeated by the Devil. But the victory ought to be such that even as man, who was strong and potentially immortal, readily consented to the Devil so as to sin (for which reason he justly incurred the penalty of mortality), so being now weak and mortal (as he has made himself), he will defeat the Devil through the impediment of death so as not at all to sin. But man cannot do this as long as, from the wound of the first sin, he is conceived and born in sin.<sup>1</sup>

*B.* I repeat: what you say is, on the one hand, proved by reason and, on the other, impossible.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

What it was that man, when he sinned,  
removed from God and cannot repay.

*A.* Listen to one more thing without which man cannot be justly reconciled and which is no less impossible.

*B.* You have already placed before us so many things required

<sup>1</sup>Psalms 50:7 (51:5).

for us to do that whatever you add to them cannot more greatly frighten me.

A. Listen anyhow.

B. I am listening.

A. When he permitted himself to be overcome by the Devil, what did man take away from God?

B. *You* tell me, as you have been doing; for I do not know what man could have added to the evils which you have already indicated.

A. Did he not remove from God whatever God had purposed to do with human nature?

B. It cannot be denied.

A. Attend to strict justice, and judge in accordance with it whether man makes to God satisfaction equal to his sin unless by conquering the Devil he restores to God exactly what he removed from God by letting himself be conquered by the Devil. The result would be that as by man's having been defeated the Devil seized what was God's and God lost it, so by man's triumphing the Devil loses [what was God's] and God regains it.

B. Nothing can more strictly or more justly be thought.

A. Do you suppose that Supreme Justice can violate this justice?

B. I do not dare to think so.

A. Therefore, man neither can nor ought, in any respect, to receive from God what God planned to give him—unless he returns to God all that he took away from Him, so that as God lost something because of man, He will also regain it because of man. This can only happen in the following way: Just as by man's defeat the whole of human nature became corrupted and leavened, as it were, with sin—and no one who is sinful is elevated by God to complete the Heavenly City—so by man's triumphing, as many men are justified from sin as were going to fill up that number which man was created to complete. But sinful man cannot at all accomplish this justification, because a sinner cannot justify a sinner.

B. Nothing is more just and nothing is more impossible. But from all these considerations it seems that, as far as regards the happiness for which man was created, God's mercy and man's hope vanish.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

As long as man does not pay to God what he owes, he cannot be happy and is not excused because of his inability.

A. Wait a little longer.

B. What further points do you have?

A. If we call unjust a man who does not pay to another man what he owes, then it is much more the case that a man who does not pay to God what he owes is unjust.

B. If a man is able to pay but does not do so, he is indeed unjust. But if he is unable to pay, how is it that he is unjust?

A. If he is not at all the cause of his inability, perhaps he can to some extent be excused. But if he is to blame for his inability, then even as the inability does not lighten the weight of his sin, so it does not excuse him from not paying his debt. Suppose that a master enjoins a task upon his servant and instructs him not to cast himself into a pit which the master points out to him and from which the servant would not at all be able to get out. And suppose this servant, spurning the command and the admonition of his master, voluntarily puts himself into the indicated pit, with the result that he is altogether unable to accomplish the work assigned to him. Do you think that his inability would serve to any extent as an excuse for his not performing the assigned task?

B. Not at all. Rather, it would serve to increase his blameworthiness, since he would have brought his inability upon himself. Indeed, he would have sinned in two ways—because he would not have done what he was instructed to do, and he would have done what he was instructed not to do.

A. So, too, man is inexcusable. For he voluntarily became obligated to that debt which he is unable to pay, and through his own doing he lapsed into his inability, so that he is unable to pay either what he owed before sinning—viz., that he keep from sinning—or what he owes because he has sinned. Indeed, this inability is blamable, because he is not obliged to have it; rather, he is obliged not to have it. For just as not having what one ought to have is blamable, so having what one ought not to have is blamable. Therefore, as man is blameworthy for not having the ability which he received in order to be able to avoid sin, so he is blameworthy for having the inability by which he is unable either to re-

tain justice and avoid sin or to pay what he owes for his sin. For he freely did that thing because of which he lost this ability and came into this state of inability. (For not having an ability which one ought to have is identical with having an inability which one ought not to have.) Therefore, the inability to pay to God what he owes—an inability which is the cause of his not paying—does not excuse a man if he does not make payment, since an effect of sin does not excuse a sin which he commits.

*B.* This [verdict] is exceedingly grave, but it must be true.

*A.* Therefore, a man who does not pay to God what he owes is unjust.

*B.* This is surely true. For he is unjust because he does not make payment; and he is unjust because he is unable to make payment.

*A.* Now, no one who is unjust will be admitted to the state of happiness; for even as happiness is a state of sufficiency in which nothing needed is lacking, so it befits only him in whom justice is so pure that there is no injustice in him.

*B.* I do not dare to believe otherwise.

*A.* Therefore, he who does not pay to God what he owes will not be able to be happy.

*B.* I cannot deny, either, that this consequence follows.

*A.* But suppose you wanted to say: "The reason that God, who is merciful, forgives the debt of one who humbly beseeches Him is that this man is unable to pay this debt." Well, God can be said to forgive only one of two things: (1) that which man ought voluntarily to pay but cannot (*viz.*, that which can make payment for a sin which ought not to have been committed even for the sake of preserving everything that is not God); (2) that which, by punishing man, God was going to take away from man against man's will, *viz.*, happiness (as I mentioned above). Now, on the one hand, if God forgives what man ought willingly to pay—forgives it simply because man is unable to pay it—what does this amount to other than that God forgives what He cannot obtain? But it is a mockery to attribute this kind of mercy to God. On the other hand, if God forgives what He was going to take away from man against man's will—forgives it because of man's inability to pay what he ought willingly to pay—God lightens the punishment and makes a man happy *because* of his sin and *because* he has what he ought not to have. For man ought not to have this inability; and

so, as long as he has it without there being satisfaction, he is sinful. But this kind of divine mercy is utterly contrary to God's justice, which allows only for punishment to be requited for sin. Therefore, as it is impossible for God to be at odds with Himself, so it is impossible for Him to be merciful in this way.

*B.* I see that a divine mercy different from this kind must be sought.

*A.* Assume that the reason why God forgives someone who does not pay what he owes is that he is unable [to pay it].

*B.* I wish it were so.

*A.* Now, all the while that this person would not make payment, either he would be willing to make payment or he would not be willing. If he willed [to pay] what he was unable to [pay], he would be needy. On the other hand, if he were unwilling [to pay what he was not able to pay], he would be unjust.

*B.* Nothing is clearer than this.

*A.* Now, whether needy or unjust, he would be unhappy.

*B.* This is also clear.

*A.* Therefore, as long as he did not make payment, he could not be happy.

*B.* If God is guided by the principle of justice, then there is no way for this unhappy, insignificant man to escape; and the mercy of God seems to vanish.

*A.* You have asked for a reason; listen to this one. I do not deny that God is merciful, for He saves men and beasts, as He has multiplied His mercy.<sup>1</sup> However, we are speaking about that ultimate mercy, by which He makes a man happy after this life. And I think that by the previously given arguments I have adequately established (1) that this happiness ought to be given only to him whose sins have been completely forgiven and (2) that this forgiveness ought to occur only after payment of the debt which is owed for sin—owed in proportion to the magnitude of the sin. If you think that there can be some objection to the previous arguments, you ought to say so.

*B.* To be sure, I do not see that any of your arguments can at all be called into question.

*A.* I do not think [they can be] either—provided they are care-

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<sup>1</sup>Psalms 35:7-8 (36:7).

fully examined. Nevertheless, if even one of all these arguments which I have given is confirmed by irrefutable truth, that ought to be sufficient. For whether the truth is irrefutably proven by one argument or by more than one argument, it is equally well safeguarded from all doubt.

*B.* So it is indeed.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Necessarily, man is saved through Christ.

*B.* How, then, will man be saved if he does not pay what he owes and if he ought not to be saved unless he pays it? Or how can we impudently maintain that God, who is rich in mercy beyond human understanding, cannot bestow this mercy?

*A.* At this point you ought to ask those who believe that Christ is not necessary for man's salvation—those in whose place you are speaking—to explain how man can be saved apart from Christ. However, if they cannot at all do so, then let them stop scoffing at us, and let them come near and join themselves to us, who do not doubt that man can be saved through Christ; or else let them give up the hope that man's salvation can somehow occur. But if they dread doing so, let them believe with us in Christ, so that they can be saved.

*B.* Let me ask you, just as I did at the beginning, to show me in what way man is saved through Christ.

*A.* Since even unbelievers admit that man can in some way be made happy, and since we have demonstrated adequately that man's salvation can by no means occur if we assume that Christ does not exist: has not the possibility of man's being saved through Christ been sufficiently proved? For it is possible for man to be saved either by means of Christ, or else by some other means, or else by no means. Therefore, if it is false that man's salvation can by no means occur, and false that it can occur by some other means, it is necessary that it occur by means of Christ.

*B.* Suppose someone perceives the reason why man's salvation cannot occur in some other manner but does not understand how it can occur through Christ. And suppose he wants to claim that it cannot occur either by means of Christ or by any other means. What answer shall we give him?

A. What answer ought to be given to someone who affirms of what must occur that it cannot occur—his reason being simply that he does not know how it occurs?

B. That he is foolish.

A. Therefore, what he says must be treated with contempt.

B. That's true. But he ought to be shown the reason why there is the thing he thinks to be impossible.

A. From what I have already said, do you not realize that it is necessary for some men to attain happiness? For if it is unfitting for God to bring a man having any stain to that end for which He created him free of every stain—lest [by so doing] He should seem either to regret the good work He had begun or to be unable to fulfill His purpose—then, much more, because of this same unfittingness, it is impossible that no man whatsoever be elevated to the end for which he was created. Therefore, either the kind of satisfaction-for-sin which I earlier showed to be required must occur outside the context of the Christian faith—something which no sound reasoning can demonstrate—or else satisfaction-for-sin must assuredly be believed to occur within the context of the Christian faith. For that which on the basis of rational necessity is inferred really to be the case ought not to be called into any doubt, even if the reason why it is true is not discerned.

B. What you say is true.

A. So what more are you asking?

B. I have not come for you to remove from me doubts about my faith but for you to show me the rational basis of my certainty. Therefore, just as you have led me rationally to the place where I see that for his sin sinful man owes to God what he cannot pay and that unless he pays [what he owes] he cannot be saved, so I want you to lead me to the place where on the basis of rational necessity I understand the following points: viz., (1) that all those things which the Catholic faith commands us to believe about Christ if we want to be saved must be true; (2) how they avail to man's salvation; and (3) how it is that God saves man by mercy although He forgives man's sin only if man pays what he owes on account of his sin. In order that your arguments may be the more certain, begin so basically that you establish them on a firm foundation.

A. May God continue to aid me now. For you do not at all spare



me or take into account the weakness of my knowledge when you impose upon me so difficult a task. Nevertheless, trusting in God rather than in myself, I shall make the attempt (since I have already commenced); and with God's help I shall do the best I can. But lest because of too lengthy a sustained-presentation weariness should arise in him who is willing to read these things: by making another beginning let us distinguish what is still to be presented from what has already been said.

## BOOK II

### CHAPTER ONE

Man was created *just* in order to be happy.

A. We ought not to doubt that God created rational nature *just* in order for it to be happy through enjoying Him. Indeed, the reason it is rational is in order to discriminate between what is just and what is unjust, between what is good and what is evil, between what is a greater good and what is a lesser good. Otherwise [i.e., could rational nature not make these discriminations], it would be the case that it was created rational in vain. But God did not create it rational in vain. Therefore, there is no doubt that it was created rational for the foregoing purpose. Similar reasoning proves that rational nature received the ability to make these discriminations in order that it would hate and shun evil, and love and choose good, and more greatly love and choose a greater good [than love and choose a lesser good]. For otherwise, it would be the case that God bestowed in vain upon rational nature this ability-to-discriminate, because rational nature would discriminate in vain if it did not love and shun in accordance with its discrimination. But for God to have bestowed in vain such a great capability would not be fitting. Thus, it is certain that rational nature was created for the purpose of loving and choosing the Supreme Good above all other things—loving and choosing it for its own sake and not for the sake of anything else. (For if [rational nature loves the Supreme Good] for the sake of something else, it really loves not the Supreme Good but this other thing.) But rational nature is able to do this only if it is just. Therefore, so that it would not be rational in vain, it was created both rational and just at