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III

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THE WORKS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

A Translation for the 21st Century

Part I - Books

Volume 17:

New Testament III

THE WORKS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

A Translation for the 21st Century

New Testament III

I/17

A Commentary on Some Statements in the Apostle's Epistle to the Romans

(Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistula Apostoli ad Romanos)

A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians *(Expositio Epistulae ad Galatas)*

An Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans *(Epistulae ad Romanos inchoata expositio)*

The Mirror *(Speculum)*

Translations by Gerard Deighan

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General Introduction by Boniface Ramsey

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General Introduction

This volume completes the translation of Augustine's works devoted exclusively to the New Testament in this series and includes another work that deals with both the Old and New Testaments.

Of the four treatises translated here, the first three are commentaries on the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians. All three were written during the years 394-395, and only the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* is a complete exposition of the text. One of the two writings on the Epistle to the Romans, *A Commentary on Some Statements in the Apostle's Epistle to the Romans*, was never intended to do more than address some passages in the epistle that had raised questions among a group of clerics in Carthage with whom Augustine had been discussing the epistle. The other, entitled *An Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, which had begun as an attempt to exegete the entire epistle, examines only its first seven verses; Augustine then abandoned the project—which would have been monumental if he had continued it—as too demanding.

The fourth work in this volume, *The Mirror*, was produced more than thirty years after the first three. It is unique among Augustine's writings in that it consists overwhelmingly of passages from both the Old and New Testaments that Augustine believed could serve as a moral mirror in which readers ought to be able to see a reflection of themselves. While Augustine does not cite passages from all the books of the Old Testament (he surprisingly omits Genesis), he includes passages from every book of the New. His own comments are very brief; apart from the introduction, they mostly serve as connectors between a given book of Scripture and the one that follows it.

**A COMMENTARY
ON SOME STATEMENTS IN THE
APOSTLE'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS**

Introduction

Of his *Commentary on Some Statements in the Apostle's Epistle to the Romans*, Augustine writes, "While I was still a presbyter, it happened that the Apostle's Epistle to the Romans was read among us who were together at Carthage,¹ and I was asked some things by the brothers. When I responded to them as well as I could, they wanted what I said to be written down rather than to be spoken without being recorded."² Augustine says that he acceded to their wishes.

Augustine begins his *Commentary* by emphasizing the central subject of Romans, "the works of the law and grace." Quoting Rom 3:20—*No flesh shall be made righteous in the law in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin*—he makes an important comment: "Some people think that this and similar passages may be cited to demean the law. Indeed, we must read these texts quite carefully to see that neither is the law condemned by the Apostle nor human free will removed."³ He then introduces one of the keys to understanding his *Commentary*—namely, the four stages of human existence, which are before the law, under the law, under grace, and in peace.⁴ Before the law humanity pursues the desires of the flesh, whereas under the law humanity struggles against these desires but is overcome. However, when human beings implore the Liberator, grace enables them to resist sinful desires. Yet they will have to resist these desires until the resurrection and transformation of their mortal bodies, when they will have perfect peace.

Before the law humanity is captivated by its own desires. The giving of the law was, according to Paul, intended to increase the sin.⁵ Now conscious of sin, humanity still cannot refrain from sinning; only grace

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1. The occasion of his visit to Carthage may have been the Council of June 26, 394. See O. Perler and J.-L. Maier, *Les Voyages de saint Augustin* (Paris 1969) 162-63.
 2. *Revisions* I,23 (22), 1.
 3. §12 (13-18). In his implicit campaign against the Manicheans Augustine "emphasizes man's moral autonomy while preserving both the goodness of the Old Law and the gratuitous nature of God's grace" (Paula Fredriksen Landes, *Augustine on Romans. Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans, Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [Chico, Cal. 1982] ix).
 4. See §12 (13-18).
 5. See Rom 5:20.

can enable it to do that. To obtain grace, human beings must choose to respond positively to God's call, which means responding in faith and turning to Christ. "With free will [humankind] is able to believe in the Liberator and to receive grace, so that, being liberated and helped by him who bestows that [grace], it may no longer sin but instead [may be] with the law and in the law, fulfilling it with God's charity, which it was unable to do in fear."⁶

According to Augustine, humankind's freedom of the will appears to be jeopardized in Rom 9.⁷ Paul notes that even before the twins Jacob and Esau were born and had done anything good or evil, God had said, *I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau* (Rom 9:13; Mal 1:2-3). Augustine explains this statement by referring to God's foreknowledge, by which he knows the character even of those who have not yet been born. This does not mean that God chooses works, however, since Paul has clearly repudiated this idea. Rather, God chooses faith: he chooses the one (Jacob) who he foreknew would believe in him but rejects the other (Esau) who he foreknew would not believe in him. Augustine goes so far as to say, "What we believe, therefore, is ours, but the good that we do is from him who gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe in him."⁸ And later: "If the person who is called follows the One who is calling, which is within his free choice, he will also merit the Holy Spirit, through whom he would be able to carry out what is good. If he abides in him, which is no less within his free choice, he will merit eternal life as well, which cannot be spoiled by any sin."⁹

Similar is the case of Pharaoh, which is dealt with at length in §54 (62). God hardened Pharaoh's heart because he foresaw Pharaoh's unbelief and punished him by making him disobedient. And so Augustine can say, "It is not works but faith that initiates merit." Augustine corrects this remark in his *Revisions* by saying, "But I neither thought that the merit of faith was itself a gift of God, nor did I say that it needed to be examined."¹⁰

The interpretation that Augustine reached regarding Jacob and Esau did not last long. In Letter 37, sent to Simplician in the period 396-398 in response to a question of his on the Epistle to the Romans, Augustine

6. §37 (44).

7. See §52 (60).

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. *Revisions* I,23 (22), 3.

returns to what Paul says about Jacob and Esau in Rom 9:10-29. This time Augustine argues that God's choice of Jacob over Esau cannot be based on God's foreknowledge of them because then God's sovereignty would be dependent upon human activity. In his discussion of this specific response to Simplician in his *Revisions*, Augustine comments, "In answering this question I in fact strove on behalf of the free choice of the human will, but God's grace conquered, and otherwise I would have been unable to arrive at understanding what the Apostle said with the most evident truthfulness, *For who sets you apart? What do you possess that you have not received? But, if you have received, why do you boast as though you had not received?* (1 Cor 4:7)"¹¹ This verse would dominate Augustine's understanding of grace to the end of his life. The argument from unaided human merit, whether based on works or on faith, must bow before the inscrutable mystery of the divine will.¹² It is God who enables human beings to perform meritorious acts, which he then crowns as his own gifts.¹³

The present English translation by Father Gerard Deighan is based on the Latin text edited by Johannes Divjak and published in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 84 (Vienna 1971) 3-52. There is also an English translation in Paula Fredriksen Landes, *Augustine on Romans: Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans, Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Chico, Cal. 1982) 1-49.

11. Ibid. II,1 (28), 1.

12. See Rom 11:33, quoted in *Miscellany of Questions in Response to Simplician* I, 2, 16 and 22.

13. See *Grace and Free Choice* 6, 15.

Revisions I, 23 (22)

1. While I was still a presbyter, it happened that the Apostle's Epistle to the Romans was read among us who were together at Carthage, and I was asked some things by the brothers. When I responded to them as well as I could, they wanted what I said to be written down rather than to be spoken without being recorded. When I acceded to them, one book was added to my previous works.

In that book I said, "When [Paul] says, *We know that the law is spiritual, but I am fleshly* (Rom 7:14), he shows clearly that the law cannot be fulfilled except by spiritual persons, such as the grace of God produces."¹⁴ This I was unwilling to accept as representing the Apostle, who was already spiritual, but as representing the human person, set under the law and not yet under grace.¹⁵ For that was how I first understood these words, which later, after having read some expositors of Divine Scripture whose authority swayed me,¹⁶ I considered more carefully, and I saw that what he said—*We know that the law is spiritual, but I am fleshly*—could also be applied to the Apostle himself. I have carefully pointed this out, as well as I could, in the books that I have recently written against the Pelagians.¹⁷

In that book this was also said: *But I am fleshly*, and so forth, up to the passage where it says, *Wretched man that I am, who will free me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (Rom 7:24-25)¹⁸ I said that this was a description of a person still set under the law and not yet under grace, who wishes to do what is good but, overcome by the desire of the flesh, does what is evil. Nothing frees him from the domination of this desire but *the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Rom 7:25). By the gift of the Holy Spirit, through whom *charity has been poured out in our hearts* (Rom 5:5), it overcomes the desires of the flesh, so that we do not yield to them so as to do what is evil but so that, instead, we do what is good. That is how at this moment

14. §34 (41).

15. See Rom 1:11; 6:14-15.

16. E.g., Ambrose, *On Penitence* I,3,13.

17. See *The Grace of Christ* 43; *Answer to the Two Letters of the Pelagians* I,17-25; *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian* I,99; Sermon 154; *The City of God* XXII,21; and also *Revisions* I,26 (25), 2, question 66.

18. See §38 (45-46).

the Pelagian heresy is overthrown, which wants the charity whereby we live good and holy lives to come not from God but from ourselves. But, in the books that we published against them,¹⁹ we showed that those words are better applied to the spiritual person who is already set under grace. This is because of the body of the flesh, which is not yet spiritual but will be such in the resurrection of the dead, and also because of the desire of the flesh, with which the saints are in conflict. Although they do not yield to it for the purpose of evil, nonetheless in this life they are not spared its disturbances, which they resist as they fight against them, but they will not have them in that [life] where *death will be swallowed up in victory* (1 Cor 15:54). And because of this desire and its disturbances, which are resisted in such a way that they nonetheless exist in us, each saint who is already set under grace can say all those things that I have said here were the words of the person who is not yet set under grace but under the law. It would be too long to show this here, and where I have shown it has been mentioned.

2. Again, I was discussing what it was that God chose in the one who was not yet born, whom he said that the older would serve, and what he rejected in him who was older and similarly not yet born. (Although it was long afterwards that the prophetic testimony was offered,²⁰ this is what is said about them in that respect: *I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau* [Rom 9:13].) In this regard I reasoned as follows: "In his foreknowledge, then, God did not choose anyone's works that he was going to bestow, but in his foreknowledge it was faith that he chose, so that he himself chose the one who he foreknew was going to believe in him, to whom he would give the Holy Spirit, so that by doing good works he would also attain to eternal life."²¹ I had not yet carefully examined, nor up to that point had I found, what sort of thing grace's choosing might be, of which the same Apostle says, *A remnant was saved through grace's choosing* (Rom 11:15). It is not grace, to be sure, if any merits were to precede it, so that what is given would be paid back on account of merits, not in accordance with grace but as something owed, rather than as a gift.

19. See *The Grace of Christ* 39,43-44; *Answer to the Two Letters of the Pelagians* I,10,17; *The Perfection of Human Righteousness* 11,28.

20. See Mal 1:2-3. This prophetic testimony was offered long afterwards because the original incident is recorded toward the beginning of the Old Testament, in Gn 27:1-45. Malachy is the final prophetic book in the Old Testament.

21. §52 (60).

Then I said immediately after that, “For the same Apostle says, *The same God who works all in all* (1 Cor 12:6), but nowhere is it said, ‘God believes all in all,’” and then I added, “What we believe, therefore, is ours, but the good that we do is from him who gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe.”²² I would certainly not have said this if I knew then that even faith itself is among God’s gifts that are given *in the same Spirit* (1 Cor 12:9). Each²³ is ours, then, because of the choice of the will, and yet each is given by the Spirit of faith and charity. For not charity alone, but, as it is written, *charity with faith is from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ* (Eph 6:23).

3. And what I said shortly afterwards is certainly true: “For believing and willing are ours, but it is [God’s] to give to those who believe and who will the ability to do good through the Holy Spirit, *through whom charity is poured out in our hearts*.”²⁴ But by this same rule, however, both are [God’s], because it is he who readies the will,²⁵ and both are ours, because nothing is done unless we will it.

And for the same reason what I also said later is entirely true: “We are unable to will unless we are called, and, although we will after our calling, our willing and our running are insufficient unless God supplies the strength to the runners and leads them where he is calling them,” after which I added, “It is clear, then, that *it is not because of the one who wills or because of the one who runs but because of God, who is merciful* (Rom 9:16), that we do what is good.”²⁶ But I discussed inadequately the calling itself, which comes about in accordance with God’s plan. For it does not apply to all who are called but only to those who have been chosen. And so what I said shortly afterwards I said most truly: “Just as in those whom God chooses it is not works but faith that initiates merit, so that it is by God’s gift that they do what is good, so in those whom he condemns it is lack of faith and ungodliness that initiate the merit of punishment, so that by reason of the punishment itself they also do what is bad.”²⁷ But I neither thought that the merit of faith was itself a gift of God, nor did I say that it needed to be examined.

22. Ibid.

23. I.e., faith and good works, or faith and charity.

24. §53 (61).

25. See Prv 8:35 LXX.

26. §54 (62).

27. Ibid.

4. And in another passage I said, "For the one to whom he is merciful he causes to do what is good, and the one whom he hardens he abandons to do what is bad. But that mercy is also bestowed on the antecedent merit of faith, and that hardening on antecedent ungodliness."²⁸ That is certainly true. Yet it still had to be examined whether the merit of faith also comes from God's mercy²⁹—that is, whether that mercy is brought about in a person because he is faithful or whether it has been brought about so that he might be faithful. We read that the Apostle says, *I received mercy so that I might be faithful* (1 Cor 7:25). He did not say "because I was faithful." To be sure, then, it is given to a faithful person, but it was also given so that he might be faithful. And so I said most correctly in another passage in the same book, "If we are called not by works but by God's mercy so that we may believe, and if he makes it possible for us who believe to do what is good, this mercy should not be begrudged to the gentiles."³⁰ Nonetheless I did not discuss carefully the call whereby God's plan is carried out.

This book begins in this way: "These are the meanings in the epistle of the apostle Paul to the Romans."³¹

28. Ibid.

29. Another reading has "whether the merit of faith precedes God's mercy," which is the contrary but not opposed to Augustine's argument.

30. §56 (64).

31. The wording given here is slightly different from the wording in the critical text of the *Commentary* itself.

A Commentary on Some Statements in the Apostle's Epistle to the Romans

These are the meanings [of some statements] in the apostle Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The first thing that everyone should know is that this epistle deals with the question of the works of the law and grace.

1 (1).³² *According to the Spirit of sanctification from the resurrection of the dead* (Rom 1:4)—that is, the gift of the Spirit was received after [Christ's] resurrection, but [Paul] speaks of the resurrection [not of Christ but] of the dead, because in Christ we have all been crucified and have risen.

2 (2). *That I may share a spiritual grace with you* (Rom 1:11)—namely, the love of God and neighbor, so that through Christ's charity [the Jews] would not be envious of those gentiles who had been called to the gospel.

3 (3). *The anger of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness* (Rom 1:18), and so forth. Likewise, Solomon says of those who are wise in this world: *If their knowledge was so great that they could appraise the world, how was it that they did not more easily discover the Lord and Creator of that world?* (Wis 13:9) Those whom Solomon reproved failed to recognize the Creator through his creation, but those whom the Apostle reproved recognized him but failed to give thanks. Claiming to be wise they became foolish, and sank down to the worship of images.³³ When he was speaking to the Athenians, the same Apostle clearly showed that the wise among the gentiles had discovered the Creator, for when he said, *For in him we live and move and have our being*, he added, *just as some of those whom you quote have said* (Acts 17:28). If he began by reproving the gentiles' ungodliness, it was in order to show that they could arrive at grace once they had converted. For it would be unjust if they could suffer the punishment of ungodliness but not receive the reward of faith.

32. Each section is introduced with a brief phrase like "He [Paul] said that" (*Quod autem ait*). These phrases are omitted in this translation.

Two systems of enumeration are used here. The first is the more recent one from the critical edition in *Corpus Christianorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 84 (1971). The second, in parentheses, is from the earlier but often-cited edition in *Patrologia Latina* 35 (1841).

33. See Rom 1:21-23.

4 (4). *Knowing God, they did not glorify him as God, nor did they give thanks* (Rom 1:21). This is the origin of sin, of which it has been said, *The beginning of all sin is pride* (Sir 10:15). If they had given thanks to God, who had granted them this wisdom, they would not have attributed anything to themselves in their thoughts. Therefore, they were handed over by the Lord to the desires of their hearts, to do improper things.³⁴

5 (5). *He handed them over* (Rom 1:24). This means that he let them go off to the desires of their hearts. [Paul] says that in being handed over to the desires of their hearts they received from God a fitting recompense.³⁵

6 (6). *God handed them over to a wicked way of thinking*, and so forth, [Paul] says, *full of every wickedness* (Rom 1:28.29). This means that the things of which he is now speaking involve doing injury—that is, criminal acts.³⁶ Previously he was talking about forms of moral corruption known as depravities.³⁷ These lead to criminal acts, since in pursuing the deadly sweetness of a depravity a person will try to remove those who stand in the way, and so will proceed to criminal acts. This is also the order we find in that passage in the Wisdom of Solomon where, after [the author] has mentioned a range of depravities, he says, *Let us encircle the poor and righteous man, since he is of no use to us* (Wis 2:12), and so forth.

7 (7-8). *Not only those who do such things but even those who agree with those who do them* (Rom 1:32). This means that whatever they did they did not do unwillingly, but, by agreeing with bad deeds, they give their approval even to things that they did not do, and in this, [Paul] says, they have already committed sin. *Therefore, you are without excuse, O every one of you who judges* (Rom 2:1). When he says *every one*, he already manages to point not only to the gentile but also to the Jew who wanted to judge the gentiles according to the law.

8 (9). *You are storing up anger for yourself on the day of anger*. God's anger always means punishment. And so [Paul] says, *of the righteous judgment of God* (Rom 2:5). It should be noted that even in the New Testament we find mention of God's anger. When people who object to the old law hear of God's anger in the Old Testament, they find fault with it, since of course God is not subject to perturbations as we are; as Solo-

34. See Rom 1:24.28.

35. See Rom 1:27.

36. "Criminal acts": *facinora*.

37. "Depravities": *flagitia*.

mon says, *But you, O Lord of hosts, judge with tranquillity* (Wis 12:18). However, as has been said, anger signifies punishment.

9 (10). *Their conscience bears witness* (Rom 2:15). This agrees with that passage from the apostle John where he says, *Dearly beloved, if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our conscience*³⁸ (1 Jn 3:20), and so forth.

10 (11). *According to the Spirit, not the letter* (Rom 2:29)—that is, that the law is to be understood according to the Spirit, not according to what it literally says, which was certainly how it was taken by those who interpreted circumcision in a fleshly rather than a spiritual way.

11 (12). *His praise is not from human beings but from God*. This goes with the previous phrase: *The one who is a Jew inwardly*. (Rom 2:29)

12 (13-18). *No flesh shall be made righteous by the law in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin* (Rom 3:20), and so forth. Some people think that this and similar passages may be cited to demean the law. Indeed, we must read these texts quite carefully to see that neither is the law condemned by the Apostle nor human free will removed.

To this end let us distinguish the following four stages of human existence: before the law, under the law, under grace, and in peace. Before the law we pursue the desire of the flesh; under the law we are attracted by it; under grace we neither pursue it nor are attracted by it; and in peace the desire of the flesh does not exist. Before the law, therefore, we put up no resistance, because not only do we desire and thereby sin but we even approve of our sins. Under the law we fight but are conquered; we acknowledge that the things we do are bad, and in acknowledging that they are bad we really do not want to do them, but, because grace has not yet come, we are defeated. During this stage we are shown our prostrate condition, and, while wishing to get up and falling again, we are the more gravely afflicted. Hence it is said here, *The law entered in so that sin might increase* (Rom 5:20), which is why it is also said now, *since through the Law comes knowledge of sin*, for the law is not the removal of sin, because sin is taken away by grace

38. "God is greater than our conscience: *maior est deus conscientiae nostrae*. Augustine elsewhere quotes 1 Jn 3:20 correctly: "God is greater than our heart" (*maior est deus corde nostro*). Here we may presume that his text read *cordis nostri* ("than our heart") and Augustine spontaneously modified this to *conscientiae nostrae* ("than our conscience"). In the translation I presume that the genitive would have been understood by Augustine as reflecting the Greek genitive of comparison.

alone. The law is good, then, inasmuch as it forbids what ought to be forbidden and commands what ought to be commanded. But, when someone thinks that he can fulfill the law by his own strength and not by the grace of his Liberator, not only is his presumption of no avail but it is actually damaging, so that he is both seized by an even more ardent desire for sin and is also found to be a transgressor in his sins, *for where there is no law, neither is there transgression* (Rom 4:15). So then, when someone in this prostrate condition recognizes that he is unable to rise by himself, he should beg the Liberator's help. Grace comes, then, which forgives past sins and helps the one who is struggling and bestows the charity of righteousness and takes away fear. When this happens, although certain desires of the flesh fight against our spirit as long as we are in this life, so that they may lead us into sin, nonetheless, when the spirit does not consent to these desires, because it is established in God's grace and charity, a person ceases to sin. For it is not in the base desire itself that we sin but rather in our consent. Relevant here is what the same Apostle says, *Therefore, let not sin reign in your mortal body to make you obey its desires* (Rom 6:12), for with this he shows that, by not obeying these desires, we do not allow sin to reign in us. But, because these desires are born from the mortality of the flesh, which we derive from the first sin of the first human being, from whom we are born in the flesh, they will not cease unless we merit that transformation which is promised to us in the resurrection of the body, where, once we are established in the fourth stage, there will be perfect peace. But our peace will be perfect because nothing will offer resistance to those who do not resist God. This is what the Apostle says: *The body is indeed dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. If, then, the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit dwelling in you.* (Rom 8:10-11) Free will, then, existed perfectly in the first human being, but in our case, before grace, there is no free will such that we would not sin but only so that we would not want to sin. But grace brings it about that we not only want to act rightly but are also able to do so, not by our strength but with the help of the Liberator, who will also grant us perfect peace in the resurrection—perfect peace resulting from a good will. For [as it says,] *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will* (Lk 2:14).

13 (19). *Do we therefore annul the law through faith? By no means, but rather we establish the law* (Rom 3:31)—that is, we confirm it. But how was the law to be confirmed if not by righteousness? But it is the righteousness that comes through faith, since all those things that the law was unable to fulfill have been fulfilled by faith.

14 (20). *For, if Abraham was made righteous by works, he has glory, but not in God's eyes* (Rom 4:2)—that is, while Abraham did not seek glory apart from the law from the works of the law, as though he might fulfill the law by his own strength, since the law had not yet been given, that glory was God's, not his. He was not made righteous by his own merit, as though by works, but by faith, by God's grace.

15 (21). *For one who works, wages are not assigned according to grace but according to what is due* (Rom 4:4). [Paul] meant in the way that people pay wages to one another. But God has given by grace, because he gave to sinners, so that they might live righteously through faith—that is, so that they might perform good works. The fact that we perform good works after having already received grace is not to be attributed to us but to him who has made us righteous through grace. For, if it were his will to give the wages that were due, he would give sinners the punishment that was their due.

16 (22). *Who makes the ungodly righteous* (Rom 4:5)—that is, he makes the ungodly person godly, so that from then on he may remain in that very godliness and righteousness, because [the ungodly person] has been made righteous in order to be righteous, not so that he could consider himself at liberty to sin.

17 (23). *For the law brings about anger* (Rom 4:15) means punishment and applies to that stage when a person is under the law.

18 (24). *Before God in whom he believed* (Rom 4:17) meant faith in the inner person in the sight of God, not in human display, such as fleshly circumcision is.

19 (25). What is said of Abraham—*giving glory to God* (Rom 4:20)—is directed against those who sought their own glory from the works of the law in the sight of human beings.

20 (26). *Not only that, but we also glory in our tribulations* (Rom 5:3), and so forth. This gradually leads to the charity of God. [Paul] says that we have this charity by the gift of the Spirit. He shows that all those things that we could attribute to ourselves should in fact be attributed to God, who through the Holy Spirit has deigned to grant us his grace.

21 (27-28). *For, until the law, sin was in the world* (Rom 5:13) is to be understood as “until grace came.” This is directed against those who think that sins could be taken away through the law, for the Apostle says that sins were brought to light by the law, not taken away, when he says, *But sin was not reckoned when there was no law* (Rom 5:13), for he does not say, “There was no sin,” but, *Sin was not reckoned*. Nor was it taken away when the law was given, but it began to be reckoned—that is, to become manifest. Consequently, we should not think that *until the law* was said as though there was already no sin under the law; rather, *until the law* was said so that you would include the whole period of the law up until the end of the law, which is Christ.³⁹

22 (29,1). *But death reigned from Adam until Moses even in those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam’s transgression* (Rom 5:14). This may be phrased in two ways: either *death reigned in the likeness of Adam’s transgression*, because even those who did not sin died from the origin of death in Adam; or, as is more likely, *Death reigned even in those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam’s transgression*, but they sinned before the law, so that those who received the law should be understood to have sinned in the likeness of Adam’s transgression, because Adam, too, sinned after having received the law in the form of a command.⁴⁰ Surely what is said, *until Moses*, should be understood as the whole period of the law.

Adam is called *a pattern of the one to come* (Rom 5:14), but by way of contrast: just as death came through him, so life comes through our Lord.

23 (29,2). *But the gift is not like the offense* (Rom 5:15). The gift is superior in two ways. On the one hand, grace is much more abundant, since through it, of course, life is lived eternally, whereas through the death of Adam death reigned temporally. On the other hand, while by the condemnation of a single offense the death of many came about through Adam, through our Lord Jesus Christ grace was given for eternal life by the forgiveness of many offenses. But [Paul] explains the second difference in this way when he says, *And the gift is not like that which came about through one sinner. For judgment, indeed, came from one person for condemnation, but grace came from many offenses for righteousness*. (Rom 5:16) What is said, *from one person*, indicates [one] offense, therefore, since there follows, *but grace came from many*

39. See Rom 10:4.

40. I.e., the command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; see Gn 2:17.

offenses. Hence, the difference is this—that in Adam a single offense was condemned, whereas many were forgiven by the Lord. In what follows he maintains both these differences, so that this is the explanation: *For, if on account of one person's trespass, death reigned through the one, all the more will they who receive an abundance of grace and righteousness reign in life through the one Jesus Christ* (Rom 5:17). What he said—*all the more will they reign*—refers to eternal life, then, whereas what he said—*they will receive an abundance of grace*—refers to the forgiveness of the many offenses.

After these differences have been explained, he returns to the pattern with which he began, whose order he had interrupted when he said, *For, just as through one person sin entered into this world, and through sin death* (Rom 5:12). He returns to this now when he says, *And so, just as through the trespass of one person all were brought to condemnation, so also through the righteousness of one person all were brought to the righteousness of life. For, just as though the disobedience of one person many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one person many will be made righteous.* (Rom 5:18-19) This is the pattern of the future Adam, about which he had begun to speak earlier.⁴¹ By digressing on some differences in respect to him he had interrupted the sequence to which he returns and which he completes when he says, *And so, just as through the trespass of one person all*, and so forth.

24 (30). *The law entered so that sin might increase* (Rom 5:20). With this particular phrase [Paul] has clearly shown that the Jews were ignorant of the plan that lay behind the giving of the law. For it was not given as being capable of bestowing life, since it is grace that bestows life through faith. Rather, the law was given in order to show how many and how tight the chains of sin are by which those are bound who presume to fulfill righteousness by their own powers. Thus did sin abound, when desire, too, was made more ardent by its prohibition, and those who sinned against the law incurred the additional charge of transgression. The one who gives thought to the second stage in those four stages⁴² understands this.

25 (31). *What shall we say, then? Shall we remain in sin so that grace may increase? By no means! We who have died to sin, how shall we live in it?* (Rom 6:1-2) With this he shows that it was the case with past sins

41. See Rom 5:14.

42. I.e., the four stages referred to in §12 (13-18) above.

that they would be forgiven, and that grace super-increased inasmuch as past sins were remitted. Therefore, whoever still seeks increases of sin in order to experience an increase of grace does not understand that grace is not at all working in him, for the work of grace is that we should die to sin.

26 (32-34). *We know this, that our old self has been crucified with him, so that the body of sin may be destroyed* (Rom 6:6). This is related to what was said by Moses: *Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree* (Dt 21:13), for the crucifixion of the old self is represented in the Lord's cross, just as the renewal of the new self is represented in his resurrection. But it is clear that we act according to that old self, which is cursed, because of which no one doubts that sin is spoken of in connection with the Lord—that he bore our sins,⁴³ and made sin for us,⁴⁴ and that he condemned sin by sin.⁴⁵

But what does it mean to destroy the body of sin? He himself has explained: *So that we may no longer be slaves to sin* (Rom 6:6). And there is also what he says: *If we have died with Christ* (Rom 6:8)—that is, if we have been crucified with Christ, for he says in another passage, *For those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their flesh with its vices and desires* (Gal 5:24). Moses, then, did not curse the Lord but prophesied what his crucifixion would reveal.

27 (35). *For sin will have no dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace* (Rom 6:14). This certainly now pertains to the third stage, where a person already serves the law of God in his mind, although he serves the law of sin in his flesh. For he does not obey the desire to sin, although desires continue to disturb and urge him to consent—until the body, too, is given life and death is swallowed up in victory.⁴⁶ Because we do not consent to base desires, then, we are in grace, and sin does not reign in our mortal body.⁴⁷ In the passage where he says, *We who have died to sin, how shall we live in it?* (Rom 6:2), he gives an excellent description of the person who is established in grace. But the one whom sin dominates, although he wishes to resist sin, is still under the law, not yet under grace.

43. See Is 53:12 LXX; 1 Pt 2:24.

44. See 2 Cor 5:21, and §40 below, which makes clear that Augustine understood *peccatum fecit* ("he made sin") as *Christus peccatum fecit* ("Christ made sin").

45. See Rom 8:3.

46. See 1 Cor 15:54.

47. See Rom 6:12.

28 (36). *For a married woman is bound to the law under her husband while her husband is alive, but if her husband has died, she is released from the law* (Rom 7:2), and so forth. It should be noted that this image differs from the reality that it is used to illustrate in this respect: [In terms of the image, Paul] says that the husband dies, with the result that the woman, freed from the law of the husband, may assuredly marry whom she pleases. But [in terms of the reality], he speaks of the soul as though it were a woman, but of the man as though he were the sinful passions that work in the members [of the body] to bear fruit for death—that is, to bring forth offspring worthy of such a union. And the law that was given is not for the removal of sin or for liberation from sin but to bring sin to light before grace. Thus it comes about that those who are placed under the law are swept along by a more ardent desire to sin, and they also sin all the more by transgressing [the law]. Consequently, there are three factors here—the soul, represented by the woman; the sinful passions, represented by the husband; and the law, represented by the law of the husband. Yet he does not say that the soul is freed from dead sins as though from a dead husband but rather that the soul itself dies to sin and is freed from the law, so as to belong to another husband—that is, Christ—since it has died to sin, although this happens while sin itself is, so speak, still alive. This takes place when we neither obey nor consent to the desires and the various enticements to sin that still remain in us, while we are serving the law of God in our mind, because we have died to sin. But sin will also die when the transformation of the body has occurred in the resurrection. Of this he says later on: *He will give life to your mortal bodies as well because of the Spirit abiding in you* (Rom 8:11).

29 (37,1). *Having found an opportunity, sin, through the law, brought about every desire in me* (Rom 7:8). It must be understood that not every desire existed until it was increased by prohibition. For desire is increased by prohibition when the grace of the Liberator is lacking, and therefore not every desire exists until it is prohibited. But when it is prohibited in the absence of grace, as we have said, desire grows to such an extent that it is all-encompassing—that is, consummate—in its nature, so that it even acts against the law and, by transgressing [the law], heaps up wickedness.

30 (37,2). *For without the law, sin is dead* (Rom 7:8). [Paul] did not say *sin is dead* because it does not exist but because it is in hiding. This he makes clear in what follows, when he says, *But sin, in order that it might appear as sin, brought about death in me through what is good*

(Rom 7:13). For the law is good, but without grace it merely brings sins to light and does not take them away.

31 (38). *I once lived without the law* (Rom 7:9), which is to be understood as “I seemed to myself to be alive, because sin was hidden before the commandment.” And what [Paul] says—*But, when the commandment came, sin came back to life, but I died* (Rom 7:9)—should be taken to mean “Sin began to appear, but I recognized that I was dead.”

32 (39). *For sin, having found an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it, it killed me* (Rom 7:11). This is said because the fruit of forbidden desire is sweeter, which is why whatever sins are committed secretly are sweeter, although it is a deadly sweetness. Hence, in an image of false teaching in Solomon, a woman is seated and beckoning the foolish to come to her, and she is described as saying, *Eat hidden bread gladly, and drink sweet and secret water* (Prv 9:17).⁴⁸ That sweetness is the opportunity for sin that was found through the commandment, which, when it is longed for, always disappoints and turns to greater bitterness.

33 (40). *Did what is good, therefore, become death for me? By no means! But sin, in order that it might appear as sin, brought about death for me through something good.* (Rom 7:13) Here [Paul] makes very clear what he had said previously, *for without the law, sin is dead* (Rom 7:8), was said because it is in hiding, since now he says that it is something not good—that is, the law that became death for him. Rather, sin brought about death through the goodness of the law—that is, so that it would appear as sin—because it was hiding without the law. For a person knows that he is dead when he acknowledges that he is unable to fulfill what has been justly commanded and sins more, thanks to the wickedness of the transgression, than if it were not prohibited. This is what he says in what follows: *So that through the commandment the sinner or the sin*⁴⁹ *might become immeasurable* (Rom 7:13). Before the commandment it was less, because *where there is no law, neither is there transgression* (Rom 4:15).

34 (41). *We know that the law is spiritual, but I am fleshly* (Rom 7:14). He shows clearly that the law cannot be fulfilled except by spiritual persons, such as the grace of God produces.⁵⁰ For whoever has been made

48. The Book of Proverbs has traditionally been attributed to Solomon.

49. “The sinner or the sin”: *peccator aut peccatum*, according to Augustine’s Latin text.

50. See Augustine’s comment in *Revisions* I,23 (22), 1. (E.P.)

like the law itself easily fulfills what it commands; he is not under it but with it. But he is no longer obsessed with temporal goods nor terrified by temporal evils.

35 (42). *I have been sold under sin* (7:14) is to be understood to mean that by sinning a person sells his soul to the devil, receiving as payment the sweetness of temporal pleasure. That is also why our Lord is called Redeemer,⁵¹ because we were sold in the way that was mentioned.

36 (43). *I do not know what I do* (Rom 7:15). To those of less understanding this can seem to contradict the sentence where he said, *Sin, in order that it might appear as sin, brought about death for me through something good* (Rom 7:13), for how would it appear if it is unknown? But *I do not know*, as it is said in this passage, should be understood as "I do not approve." For, just as darkness is not seen but is perceived in comparison with light, perceiving darkness means not seeing. Likewise sin, because it is not illuminated by the light of righteousness, is discerned by a lack of understanding, just as darkness is perceived by a lack of seeing. Relevant here is what is said in the Psalm: *Who understands his offenses?* (Ps 19:12)

37 (44). *For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate. But if I do what I do not want, I am agreeing with the law, because it is good.* (Rom 7:19.21) Here the law is well defended against every reproach. Yet one must be careful not to think that the free choice of will is being taken away from us, which is not the case. For it is humankind set under the law, before grace, that is being described now. For then [humankind] is bound by its sins, while trying to live righteously by its own strength without the help of God's liberating grace. But with free will it is able to believe in the Liberator and to receive grace, so that, being liberated and helped by him who bestows that [grace], it may no longer sin and thus may cease to be under the law but instead [may be] with the law and in the law, fulfilling it with God's charity, which it was unable to do in fear.

38 (45-46). *I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind and holding me captive under the law of sin that is in my members* (Rom 7:23). [Paul] is speaking of the law of sin, by which whoever is entwined in fleshly habits is bound. He says that this [law] fights against the law of his mind and holds him captive under the law of sin, which is understood to describe the person who is not yet under

51. "Redeemer": *redemptor*—i.e., one who buys something back.

grace.⁵² For if the habit of the flesh merely fought us and did not hold us captive, there would be no condemnation, for condemnation has to do with obeying and serving our base fleshly desires. But even if such desires are present and unceasing, yet we do not obey them, we are not held captive and are already under the grace that he will speak about when he calls out and implores the Liberator's help, so that charity may be able [to achieve] through grace what fear was unable [to achieve] through the law. For he said, *Wretched man that I am! Who will free me from the body of this death?* And he added, *The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (Rom 7:24-25)

With this [Paul] begins to describe a person established under grace, who is at the third stage of those four that we distinguished previously.⁵³ What follows immediately pertains to this stage—*Therefore, in my mind I myself serve the law of God, but in my flesh the law of sin* (Rom 7:25)—because, even if fleshly desires exist, he no longer serves them by consenting to them in order to commit sin; in his mind he is established under grace and serves the law of God, whereas his flesh [serves] the law of sin. By *the law of sin* he means the mortal condition arising from Adam's transgression, by which we became mortal. For from this fall of the flesh fleshly desire harasses us, and in keeping with this he says in another passage, *We too were by nature children of wrath, just like the others* (Eph 2:3).⁵⁴

39 (47). *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus* (Rom 8:1). [Paul] clearly shows that there is no condemnation if fleshly desires exist but if they are not obeyed and lead to sin. This touches on those who are established under the law, not yet under grace, for those who are established under the law not only have desire fighting [against them] but are also taken captive when they obey it. But it does not touch on those who serve the law of God in their mind.

40 (48). *For what was impossible for the law, inasmuch as it was weakened by the flesh, God sent his Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin, and by sin he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit* (Rom 8:3-4). This teaches very clearly that the

52. See *Retractions* I,23 (22),1.

53. See §12 (13-18) above.

54. Augustine's comments on Rom 7:24-25 are corrected in *Revisions* I,23 (22),1. (E.P.)

same precepts of the law, although they were supposed to be fulfilled, were not fulfilled because the law was given, before grace, to those who were obsessed with fleshly goods. From these they sought to obtain happiness, and they feared nothing except when adversity threatened goods like that, and therefore, whenever those temporal goods were jeopardized, they readily neglected the precepts of the law. And so the law was weakened by the non-fulfillment of what it commanded, not by any fault of its own but by the flesh—that is, by those people who in their appetite for fleshly goods did not love the righteousness of the law but preferred temporal comforts to it. Hence our Liberator, the Lord Jesus Christ, by taking on mortal flesh came *in the likeness of the flesh of sin*.

For death was what was due to the flesh of sin. But the death of the Lord was an act of condescension, not something owed, and yet this taking on of mortal—although not sinful—flesh the Apostle refers to as sin, because, when one who is immortal dies, it is as though he is committing a sin. But, he says, *by sin he condemned sin in the flesh*, for the death of the Lord brought it about that death would not be feared, and that from then on temporal goods would not be longed for nor temporal evils dreaded in those in whom there was that fleshly wisdom⁵⁵ because of which the precepts of the law could not be fulfilled. Once this wisdom has been destroyed and removed in the Lordly Man,⁵⁶ the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, when there is no more walking according to the flesh but rather according to the Spirit. Hence it was very truly said, *I have come not to abolish the law but to fulfill it* (Mt 5:17). *Therefore, charity is the fullness of the law* (Rom 13:10), and charity belongs to those who walk according to the Spirit, for it pertains to the grace of the Holy Spirit. For, when there was no charity of righteousness, the law was not fulfilled.

41 (40). *The wisdom of the flesh is inimical to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be* (Rom 8:7). [Paul] explains that he said *inimical* lest anyone think that there was some sort of nature stemming from a hostile principle that God did not create, which acts adversely

55. “Wisdom”: *prudentia*, which is usually translated as “prudence” but as “wisdom” in this context.

56. “Lordly Man”: *homine dominico*. In *Retractions* I,19 (18),8, Augustine regrets ever having used the term *homo dominicus* to refer to Christ, although he says that it could certainly be used to refer to a good Christian.

against God.⁵⁷ A person is called an enemy⁵⁸ of God, then, who does not obey his law and does this on account of the wisdom of the flesh—that is, when he has an appetite for temporal goods and fears temporal evils. For wisdom is usually defined in terms of having an appetite for good things and avoiding evil ones. For this reason the Apostle rightly speaks of *the wisdom of the flesh*, by which non-lasting things are desired by people as great goods, and there is fear that things that must eventually be lost will be lost. But wisdom like this is not able to obey the law of God, but the law is obeyed when this wisdom has been annihilated, so that the wisdom of the Spirit may take its place, thanks to which our hope is not in temporal goods nor our fear in [temporal] evils. For the nature of the soul is the same, possessing both the wisdom of the flesh when it pursues inferior things and the wisdom of the Spirit when it chooses higher things, just as the nature of water is the same when it hardens in the cold and liquefies in the heat. That is why it was said, *It is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be*, just as it was rightly said that snow is unable to be heated, nor can it be, since it melts when heat is applied and warms into water, and no one can call it snow any longer.

42 (50). *The body is indeed dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness* (Rom 8:10). A dead body is called mortal.⁵⁹ Because of this mortality, the need for earthly things agitates the soul and arouses certain desires, but we who now serve the law of God in our mind do not obey them in order to sin.

43 (51). *If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus Christ from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit dwelling in you* (Rom 8:11). This now points to the fourth stage of those four stages that we distinguished previously.⁶⁰ But this stage is not to be found in this life, for it has to do with the hope whereby we await the redemption of our body, when this corruptibility will put on incorruptibility and this mortality will put on immortality.⁶¹ There is perfect peace there, because the soul suffers no disturbances from the body, which has now been given life and been changed into a heavenly substance.

57. This was a tenet of Manicheanism. (E.P.)

58. “Inimical...enemy”: *inimica...inimicus*.

59. “Dead...mortal”: *mortuum...mortale*.

60. See §12 (13-18) above.

61. See 1 Cor 15:53-54.

44 (52). *For you did not receive the spirit of slavery unto fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption of children, in which we cry out Abba, Father!* (Rom 8:15) Here a very clear distinction is made between the eras of the two Testaments, for the former has to do with fear, whereas the New has to do with charity. But the question arises: What is the spirit of slavery? The Spirit of adoption as children is certainly the Holy Spirit. The spirit of slavery, then, is that one which is in fear, which has the power of death, because those who lived under the law, not under grace, were in slavery throughout their lives on account of that very fear.⁶²

It should not be surprising that those who sought after temporal goods received [this spirit] by divine providence, not because the law and the commandment [derive from this spirit]. For *the law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good* (Rom 7:12), but that spirit of slavery is by no means good. Those who receive it are unable to fulfill the precepts of the law that was given, as long as they are slaves to the desires of the flesh and have not yet been taken up into adoption as children by the grace of the Liberator, because even the spirit of slavery itself does not have anyone in its power unless he has been handed over to it by the ordering of divine providence, since God's justice bestows on each person what is his. This power the Apostle had received when he says of certain persons, *I have handed them over to Satan, so that they may learn not to blaspheme* (1 Tim 1:20), and again, of someone else, *I have now, he says, decided to hand over to Satan such a person for the destruction of his flesh, so that his soul may be saved* (1 Cor 5:3-5).

Those, then, who are not yet under grace and are established under the law are defeated by sins, in order to obey their fleshly desires, and by their transgression they increase the guilt of their offenses. They have received the spirit of slavery—that is, the spirit of him who has the power of death. For, if we understand the spirit of slavery as the spirit of a human being himself, the Spirit of adoption itself also begins to be understood as an improved version of [that human spirit]. But, because we take the Spirit of adoption as the Holy Spirit, whom he clearly alludes to when he says, *The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit* (Rom 8:16), the consequence is that we must understand that spirit of slavery as the one whom sinners serve. Thus, just as the Holy Spirit frees one from the fear of death, so also the spirit of slavery, who has the power of death, keeps one guilty

62. See Heb 2:14-15.

by the terror of that same death, with the result that one would turn to the Liberator for his help, even though the Devil, who always wants him to be in his power, is unwilling.

45 (53). *For the expectation of creation awaits the revelation of the children of God, for creation is subject to vanity not of its own accord, and so forth, as far as what he says, And we too groan within ourselves, awaiting adoption, the redemption of our body* (Rom 8:19-23). This must be understood in such a way that we do not imagine that there is a sense of grieving and groaning in trees and vegetables and stones and other such created things (for this is the error of the Manicheans⁶³), nor should we suppose that the holy angels are subject to vanity and think of them that they will be freed from the slavery of death, since of course they will not die. Rather, let us think of the whole creation, not in a negative sense, in terms of humankind itself. For it is not the case that every created thing can be only spiritual, of which the angels are the supreme example; or animal, as is quite evident in the life of animals;⁶⁴ or corporeal, which can be seen or touched. But all of this is also in humankind, because humankind consists of spirit and soul and body.

Therefore, *creation awaits the revelation of the children of God*. Whatever toil there is now in humankind and [whatever] is subject to corruption [awaits] that manifestation, about which the same Apostle says, *You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory*. (Col 3:3-4) John also says, *Dearly beloved, we are children of God now, and what we shall be has not yet appeared. But we know that, when it appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is*. (1 Jn 3:2) And so creation—which is now subject to vanity in humankind as long as it is caught up with temporal things, which pass away like a shadow—awaits this revelation of the children of God. Hence also in the Psalm it is said, *Humankind has become like vanity; its days pass away like a shadow* (Ps 144:4). Solomon, too, speaks of vanity when he says, *Vanity of vanities; and all is vanity! What gain is there for a person for all his labor, with which he labors under the sun?* (Eccl 1:2-3) Again, David says about this, *Why do you love vanity and seek after lies?* (Ps 4:2)

63. See, e.g., *The Catholic Way of Life and the Manichean Way of Life* II, 16, 39-17, 56.

64. “Animal...animals”: *animalis...bestiarum*. “Animal” means possessing a soul—in this case the soul of an animal.

[Paul], though, says that creation was not subjected to vanity of its own accord, because that subjection is punitive. For, as humankind sinned of its own accord, it was *not* of its own accord that it was condemned, yet this condemnation was not inflicted on our nature without the hope of reparation, and so he says, *On account of him who subjected it in hope, because creation itself, too, will be set free from the slavery of death into the freedom of the glory of the children of God* (Rom 8:20-21)—that is, it itself, which is simply creation, has not yet been joined to the number of the sons of God, yet, in those who were going to believe, the Apostle saw what he speaks about—that *creation will be set from the slavery of death*, so that it would not be a slave to death, to which all sinners are enslaved. For it is said to the sinner, *By death you shall die* (Gn 2:17).

But *it shall be set free from the slavery of death into the freedom of the glory of the children of God*—that is, so that it too may arrive at the freedom of the glory of the children of God through faith. When it did not have this faith, it was simply called *creation*, and what follows refers to it: *For we know that creation groans and is in pain until now* (Rom 8:22). For they were the ones who were yet to believe, who even in their spirit were subject to toilsome errors. But, lest anyone think that this was said only of their toil, [Paul] also adds [something] about those who had already believed. For, although they were serving the law of God in their spirit—that is, in their mind—nonetheless, because the law of sin is served in the flesh⁶⁵ as long we suffer the troubles and enticements of our mortality, he continued and said, *Not only that, but we ourselves too, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves* (Rom 8:23). Therefore, he says, it is not only what is simply called *creation* that groans and is in pain in those who have not yet believed and are thus not yet numbered among the children of God, but we ourselves as well, who believe and have the first fruits of the Spirit, because now by the Spirit we cling to God through faith, and therefore we are no longer called *creation* but rather *children of God*. Yet *we too groan within ourselves, awaiting adoption, the redemption of our body* (Rom 8:23). For this adoption, which has already taken place in those who have believed, took place in the spirit, not in the body. For, although the spirit has already been changed and by the reconciliation effected by faith has turned away from its errors to God, the body has not yet been transformed as well into that

65. See Rom 7:25.

heavenly metamorphosis. Even in those who have believed, therefore, that revelation is still awaited which will come at the resurrection of the body and which belongs to that fourth stage, when there will be perfect peace and eternal repose for us in every respect, when no decay will assail us nor any trouble disturb us on any side.

46 (54). *Likewise, the Spirit aids our weakness, for we do not know what to pray for as we ought* (Rom 8:26). [Paul] is obviously speaking of the Holy Spirit, which is clear from what follows, where he says, *because he intercedes for the saints according to God* (Rom 8:27).

We do not know what to pray for as we ought for two reasons: because what is to be in the future, which we are hoping for and which we are aiming at, is not yet manifest; and [because] in this life itself many things can seem to us to be beneficial that are detrimental, and detrimental that are beneficial. For, when tribulation falls upon a servant of God as a test or a correction, it sometimes seems useless to the less discerning. But if it is referred to what is said, *Grant us aid in tribulation, and futile is the salvation of humankind* (Ps 60:11), it is understood that God frequently aids us by way of tribulation and that it is futile to hope for a salvation that is sometimes detrimental, when it entwines the soul in the pleasure and love of this life. Hence there is this too: *I found tribulation and grief, and I called on the name of the Lord* (Ps 116:3-4), for, when it says *I found*, it means something beneficial, for we only rejoice rightly if we have found what we were searching for. Therefore, *we do not know what to pray for as we ought*, because God knows both what is expedient for us in this life and what he is going to give us after this life. *But the Spirit himself intercedes with unutterable sighs* (Rom 8:26). He says that the Spirit sighs, because he makes us sigh, stirring up through charity a desire for the life to come, as he says, *The Lord your God tests you to know if you love him* (Dt 13:3)—that is, to make you know, for nothing lies hidden from God.

47 (55). *Those whom he called he also made righteous* (Rom 8:30) can be problematic and raise the question as to whether all those who have been called are made righteous. Elsewhere, however, we read, *Many are called, but few are chosen* (Mt 22:14). Yet, since the chosen have certainly also been called, it is clear that only those who have been called have been made righteous—although not all who have been called but [only] those *who have been called according to his plan* (Rom 8:28), as [Paul] said previously. It is God's plan, though, that must be accepted, not theirs. [Paul] explains what *according to his plan* means when he says,

Because those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son (Rom 8:29), for not all who are called are called according to his plan, since this plan is based on God's foreknowing and predestining. He has not predestined anyone except one who he knew was going to believe and would follow his call, whom he also refers to as *chosen*. For many do not come when they are called, but no one comes who has not been called.

48 (56). *So that he might be the first-born among many brothers* (Rom 8:29). [Paul] clearly teaches that our Lord is to be understood one way as only-begotten and another way as first-born,⁶⁶ for when he is called only-begotten he has no brothers and is by nature the Son of God, the Word in the beginning, through whom all things were made.⁶⁷ But, according to his taking on of humanity⁶⁸ and the dispensation of the incarnation, by which he even deigned to call us, who are not sons by nature, to adoption as sons, he is called first-born because of the addition of brothers. For, when he is called the first, he is certainly not the only one, but he is going to be followed by the brothers whom he precedes. Thus, in another passage [Paul] calls him the first-born from the dead, so that he might be the one taking the first place.⁶⁹ For before him there was no resurrection of the dead, so that they would no longer die, whereas after him there is [a resurrection] of many saints, whom he is not ashamed to call brothers⁷⁰ on account of their very sharing in humanity.

49 (57). *Who will separate us from the charity of Christ? Tribulation or distress or persecution?* (Rom 8:35), and so forth. This follows from an earlier statement, where [Paul] says, *Yet, if we suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified with him, I think that the sufferings of this time are not worth comparing to the future glory that will be revealed in us* (Rom 8:17-18). For this entire passage is directed to that exhortation, so that those to whom he is speaking would not be broken by persecutions, [which would happen] if they were to live according to the wisdom of the flesh, which has an appetite for temporal goods and dreads temporal evils.

50 (58). *For I am certain* (he did not say "For I think"; he maintained with complete faith) *that neither any death, nor temporal life as it is*

66. "Only-begotten...first-born": *unigenitum...primogenitum*.

67. See Jn 1:1-3.

68. "Taking on of humanity": *susceptionem...hominis*.

69. See Col 1:18.

70. See Heb 2:11.

promised, nor any of the other things that are mentioned after these can turn a believer away from the charity of God.⁷¹ No one separates [us from God], then—neither one who threatens death, because the one who believes in Christ will live even though he die, nor one who promises life, because [Christ] gives eternal life, for the promise of temporal life is to be despised in comparison with that of eternal life. Nor does an *angel* separate [us from God], because he says, *Even if an angel comes down from heaven and proclaims to you something other than you have received, let him be accursed!* (Gal 1:8-9) Nor a *principality*—that is, a hostile one, because [Christ] has stripped off these principalities and powers, triumphing over them in himself.⁷² *Neither things present nor things to come*—that is, temporal things, whether they are pleasurable or burdensome or give hope or cause fear. Nor a *power*, and here a hostile power should be understood, in keeping with what [Christ] says: *No one will seize a strong man's goods unless he first ties up the strong man* (Mt 12:29). *Nor height nor depth*, for often an empty curiosity about things that cannot be discovered or that are discovered to no purpose,⁷³ whether in the heavens or in the deeps, separates us from God, unless charity wins out, which invites us to sure spiritual realities not through the futility of things that are outside us but through the inner self. *Nor any other created thing*. This can be understood in two ways: either as a visible created thing, because we too—that is, the soul—are a created thing, although invisible, so that this would mean that no other created thing—that is, the love of bodies—separates us; or, more likely, [as meaning] that no other created thing separates us from the charity of God, since there is no other creature between us and God that would intrude itself and cut us off from his embrace. For there is no other created thing superior to human minds, which are rational, but God is [superior].

51 (59). *To them belong the fathers, from whom is Christ according to the flesh*, and he added, *who is God over all, blessed forever* (Rom 9:5). This is a commendation of faith in its utter fullness, because we confess our Lord both as the Son of Man in terms of his taking on of flesh and, in terms of eternity, as God, the Word in the beginning,⁷⁴ blessed over all

71. See Rom 8:38-39.

72. See Col 2:15.

73. Augustine is especially condemnatory of curiosity, which he associates with the lust of the eyes (1 Jn 2:16). See, e.g., *Confessions* X,35,54-57.

74. See Jn 1:1.

forever. Because the Jews held only to a part of this confession, they were refuted by the Lord, for, when he asked them whose son the Christ was, they replied, *David's* (Mt 22:42), but this was in terms of the flesh. As to his divinity, however, that he is God, they made no reply. Hence the Lord said to them, *How is it, then, that in the Spirit David calls him Lord?* (Mt 22:43) Thus they would understand that, by confessing only that Christ was the son of David, they had failed to mention the fact that Christ was the Lord of that same David, for the former is in keeping with his taking on of flesh, while the latter is in keeping with the eternity of his divinity.

52 (60).⁷⁵ *They were not yet born nor had they done anything good or bad, so that the plan of God might remain according to his choice, not because of works but because of his call. It was said to [Rebecca] that the older would serve the younger, as it is written, I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau.* (Rom 9:11-12) This leads some to think that the apostle Paul did away with the free choice of the will by which we merit God by the good of godliness or offend him by the evil of ungodliness. For they say that antecedent to any works, whether good or bad, God loved one of the two who were not yet born and hated the other. We reply that this happened through God's foreknowledge, whereby he knew what sort of person each one would be even before they were born.

But suppose someone says, "Did God, then, choose in him whom he loved, although they did not yet exist, what he foreknew was going to be? If he chose their works, how is it that the Apostle says that the choice was not made on the basis of works?" Hence it must be understood that good works come about through love, but there is love in us through the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the same Apostle says, *The charity of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us* (Rom 5:5). No one, therefore, should boast of his works, which he has through a gift of God, as if they were his, since love itself brings about in him what is good. What, then, did God choose? For, if he gives the Holy Spirit—through whom love brings about what is good—to whomever he wishes, how did he choose to whom to give it? For without merit there is no choosing, for all are equal antecedent to merit, and among things that are utterly equal there can be no talk of choosing. But, because the Holy Spirit is only given to believers, God certainly did not choose the works, which he himself bestows when he gives the Holy Spirit, so that

75. Augustine comments on and corrects §§52-55 in *Revisions* I, 23 (22), 2-3. (E.P.)

we may accomplish what is good through charity; but yet he chose faith. For, unless a person believes in him and perseveres in the intention of receiving it, he does not receive the gift of God—that is, the Holy Spirit, through whom good can be accomplished, thanks to the charity that has been poured out.

In his foreknowledge, then, God did not choose anyone's works that he was going to bestow, but in his foreknowledge it was faith that he chose, so that he himself chose the one who he foreknew was going to believe in him, to whom he would give the Holy Spirit, so that by doing good works he would also attain to eternal life. For the same Apostle says, *The same God who works all in all* (1 Cor 12:6), but nowhere is it said, "God believes all in all." What we believe, therefore, is ours, but the good that we do is from him who gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe in him.

This example [of Jacob and Esau] was offered to certain Jews who believed in Christ, who boasted of works performed antecedent to grace and said that they merited the grace of the gospel thanks to their antecedent good works, although there can be no good works in anyone except in a person who has received grace. But there is grace when a calling is accorded to a sinner, although no merits of his have preceded except for condemnation.⁷⁶ If the person who is called follows the One who is calling, which is within his free choice, he will also merit the Holy Spirit, through whom he would be able to carry out what is good. If he abides in him, which is no less within his free choice, he will merit eternal life as well, which cannot be spoiled by any sin.

53 (61). *I will take pity on whom I will take pity, and I will grant mercy to whom I will be merciful* (Rom 9:15; Ex 33:19). This shows that there is no injustice with God, which certain people can claim when they hear, *Before they were born, I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau. For I will take pity on whom I will take pity.* For God first took pity on us when we were sinners by calling us. *On whom I will take pity*, then, he says, in order to call him, *I will still take pity* when he has believed. But what does "still" mean if not that he gives the Holy Spirit to the one who believes and the one who asks? Once it has been given, he will grant mercy to whom he

76. Although we are accustomed to speak of merit in a positive sense, Augustine uses the term in a negative sense as well, as when a sinner accumulates merits for condemnation.

has been merciful—that is, in order to make him merciful, so that he can do good through love.

And so, no one should dare to attribute to himself the fact that he acts mercifully, since it was God who through the Holy Spirit gave him the love without which no one can be merciful. Hence, God did not choose welldoers but rather believers, so that he might make them welldoers. For believing and willing are ours, but it is [God's] to give to those who believe and those who will the ability to do good through the Holy Spirit, *through whom the charity of God is poured out in our hearts*, so that he may make us merciful.

54 (62). *Therefore, it is not because of the one who wills or because of the one who runs but because of God, who is merciful* (Rom 9:16). Here [Paul] does not do away with the free choice of the will; rather, he says that our willing is insufficient unless God helps us by making us merciful, so that we may do good through the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is referring to what he said previously, *I will take pity on whom I will take pity, and I will grant mercy to whom I will grant mercy*. Because we are unable to will unless we are called, and, although we will after our calling, our willing and our running are insufficient unless God supplies strength to the runners and leads them where he is calling them. It is clear, then, that *it is not because of the one who wills or because of the one who runs but because of God, who is merciful*, that we do what is good, although our will is also present, which is capable of nothing on its own.

This also leads to the testimony of Pharaoh's punishment, since Scripture says of Pharaoh, *I raised you up for this purpose, that I might display my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in the whole world* (Rom 9:17; Ex 9:16). For thus we read in Exodus, *Pharaoh's heart was hardened* (e.g., Ex 7:13), so that he would not be moved by the most obvious signs. The fact that Pharaoh did not obey God's commands was already a consequence of his punishment. No one can say, however, that that hardening of heart happened to Pharaoh undeservedly, but it was based on the judgment of God, who meted out the appropriate punishment for his unbelief. It is not charged against him that he did not obey at that time, since with his hardened heart he was unable to obey, but rather that his heart was hardened by his previous unbelief, which made him deserving [of punishment]. For, just as in those whom God chooses, it is not works but faith that initiates merit, so that it is by God's gift that they do what is good, so in those whom he condemns it is lack of faith

and ungodliness that initiate the merit of punishment, so that by reason of the punishment itself they also do what is bad, as the same Apostle says earlier, *And, since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God handed them over to a wicked way of thinking, so that they would do improper things* (Rom 1:28). Hence the Apostle concludes in this way, *Therefore he has mercy on whom he wills and hardens whom he wills* (Rom 9:18), for the one to whom he is merciful he causes to do what is good, and the one whom he hardens he abandons to do what is bad. But that mercy is also bestowed on the antecedent merit of faith and that hardening on antecedent ungodliness, with the result that we do what is good in virtue of God's gift and what is bad in virtue of his punishment, yet in such a way that the free choice of will is not removed from a person, whether for believing in God and so receiving mercy or for ungodliness and so receiving punishment.

Having reached this conclusion, [Paul] introduces a question as though from an opponent, for he says, *You say to me, then, Why does he still find fault? For who resists his will?* (Rom 9:19) He responds to this question in such a way that we may understand that the initial merits of faith and of ungodliness can [only] be manifest to spiritual persons and those who no longer live according to the earthly self, and how a foreknowing God chooses those who are going to believe and condemns unbelievers, neither choosing the former on account of their works nor condemning the latter on account of their works, but rewarding the faith of the former so that they may do what is good, and hardening the ungodliness of the latter so that, when they have been abandoned, they may do what is bad. Because, as I have said, this understanding is [only] manifest to spiritual persons but is far removed from fleshly wisdom, [Paul] rebuts his questioner by advising him that he must first put off the self of clay, so that he may merit to explore these things through the Spirit. And so he says, *O man, who are you to answer back to God? Does the thing that was formed say to the one who formed it, Why did you make me? Does not the potter have the power to make a vessel from the same lump—indeed, one for honor and another for dishonor?* (Rom 9:20-21) As long as you are something that is formed, he says, and belong to the mass of clay and have not yet been conducted to spiritual things, so that as a spiritual person you may judge all things and be judged by no one,⁷⁷ you must refrain from this

77. See 1 Cor 2:15.

kind of questioning and not answer God back. Whoever is desirous of knowing God's design must first be received into friendship with him, which can only happen in the case of spiritual persons who already bear the image of the heavenly self, for at that point he says, *I shall not call you servants but friends, for I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father* (Jn 15:15). As long as you are a potter's vessel, then, [the outer self] must first be shattered in you by that iron rod of which it is said, *You shall rule them with an iron rod and shatter them like a potter's vessel* (Ps 2:9). Then, when the outer self is destroyed and the inner one is renewed and is rooted and established in charity, you can comprehend the length, breadth, height and depth and even the all-surpassing knowledge of the charity of God.⁷⁸ Now, then, since God made some vessels for honor and some for dishonor from the same lump, it is not for you to question this—whoever you are who are still living in accord with that lump, that is, thinking in fleshly and earthly terms.

55 (63). *He bore with much patience the vessels of wrath, which were completed for destruction* (Rom 9:22). With this [Paul] has clearly indicated the hardness of heart that was produced in Pharaoh, which arose from a hidden former godlessness that God nonetheless endured patiently, until it came to that time when it was appropriate for him to impose a punishment upon him. This was for the correction of those whom he had decided to free from error and, after calling them back, to bring them to his worship and godliness, granting them his aid in response to their prayers and sighs.

56 (64). *Us as well, whom he called not only from the Jews but also from the gentiles, as he says in Hosea, I will call my people those who were not my people* (Rom 9:24-25; Hos 2:23), and so forth. The point of this whole discussion leads to this: [Paul] has been teaching that it is by God's mercy that we do what is good, not like the Jews, who boast of their works. They thought that when they received the gospel it was supposed to be bestowed on them because of their merits, and so they did not want it to be given to the gentiles. They must give up this pride now and understand that, if we are called not by works but by God's mercy so that we may believe, and if he makes it possible for us who believe to do what is good, this mercy should not be begrudged to the gentiles, as though the Jews had a higher merit, which they do not have at all.

78. See Eph 3:16-19.

57 (65). *Isaiah cries out on Israel's behalf: If the number of the children of Israel were like the sand of the sea, a remnant will be saved* (Rom 9:27; Is 10:22-23). This shows how God is the cornerstone joining both walls in himself,⁷⁹ for the testimony of the prophet Hosea was spoken on behalf of the gentiles, *I will call a people not mine my people, and one that is not loved loved* (Hos 2:24), and the testimony of Isaiah was spoken on behalf of Israel, that *a remnant will be saved* (Is 10:22), so that [the remnant] that has believed in Christ may be reckoned among Abraham's offspring. Thus he brings both peoples into harmony, just as the Lord testifies in the Gospel when he says about the gentiles, *I have other sheep that are not of this fold which I must lead, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd* (Jn 10:16).

58 (66). *Brothers, the good will of my heart and my prayer to God is for the sake of their salvation* (Rom 10:1). With this [Paul] now begins to speak of his hope for the Jews, lest the gentiles, for their part, dare to grow proud against them. For, just as the pride of the Jews who boasted as though [everything depended] on their works had to be rebutted, so also the gentiles had to be confronted lest they were to boast as though they were favored above the Jews.

59 (67). *The word is near, in your mouth and in your heart—that is, the word of faith that we preach—because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For in the heart there is faith that leads to righteousness, but by the mouth confession is made for salvation.* (Rom 10:8-10) This whole passage refers to what was said previously: *For the Lord will perfect and shorten his word upon the earth* (Rom 9:28). For, once the innumerable and intricate rituals⁸⁰ by which the Jewish people were weighed down were removed, it came about by God's mercy that we might reach salvation by a short confession of faith.

60 (68). Following the testimony of Moses, he said, *I will make you jealous of a non-nation; I will arouse you to anger against a foolish nation* (Rom 10:19; Dt 32:21). By saying *a foolish nation* [Paul] explained his having said *a non-nation*, as though [a nation] that is foolish ought not to be called a nation. Yet he says that the Jewish people had to be aroused to anger by [a foolish nation's] faith, because they accepted

79. See Eph 2:20.

80. "Rituals": *sacramentis*.

what [the Jews] rejected. Otherwise *against a non-nation, against a foolish nation* certainly [means] that, although the nation was foolish, the whole idol-worshipping population nonetheless laid aside its paganism by believing. Hence also these words: *If, therefore, an uncircumcised man maintains the righteousness of the law, will not his uncircumcision be reckoned as circumcision?* (Rom 2:26) Thus the meaning is as follows: “I will make you jealous of the one that has become a non-nation by laying aside its paganism through faith in Christ, although it had been a foolish idol-worshipping nation.”

61 (69). *Has God rejected his people? By no means! For I too am an Israelite, from the offspring of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.* (Rom 11:1) This refers to what [Paul] said previously: *But the word of God cannot fail, for not all who are from Israel are Israelites, nor are all sons because they are Abraham's offspring, but your offspring shall be called in Isaac* (Rom 9:6-7). Thus, those who have believed in the Lord from it—namely, from the people of the Jews—shall be reckoned as offspring. In the same vein he says previously, *A remnant will be saved* (Rom 9:27).

62 (70). *So, I say, have they offended thus in order to fall? By no means! But by their offense salvation has come to the gentiles.* (Rom 11:11) [Paul] does not say that they did not fall but rather that their fall was not in vain, since it led to the salvation of the gentiles. Therefore, they did not offend in order to fall—that is, only in order to fall, as though for their own punishment alone—but so that their fall might help the gentiles to salvation. Then, from this passage onwards, he begins to praise the people of the Jews even for the very fall of their unbelief, so that the gentiles would not grow proud, because even the Jews' fall was of great value for the gentiles' salvation; but the gentiles should be that much more on their guard, lest pride lead them to a similar fall.

63 (71). *If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for in doing this you will be heaping fiery coals upon his head* (Rom 12:20). This can seem to many to contradict the saying in which the Lord commanded us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us,⁸¹ or even what the same Apostle said previous to this, *Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them* (Rom 12:14), and again, *Repaying no one evil for evil* (Rom 12:17). For how does anyone love a person to whom he gives food and drink in order to heap fiery

81. See Mt 5:44.

coals upon his head, if the fiery coals in that passage mean some severe punishment? For that reason [Paul] must be understood to have said that, when we do good to him, we are moving the one who has offended us to repent of his deed. For those fiery coals serve to burn up—that is, to crush—the spirit, which is, so to speak, the head of the soul, in which all wickedness is burned away, when through penitence a person is changed for the better. They are like those fiery coals of which it is said in the Psalms, *What shall be given to you, or what shall be added to you for your deceitful tongue? The sharp arrows of the mighty one, along with devastating coals.* (Ps 120:3-4)

64 (72). *Every soul should submit to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God* (Rom 13:1). [Paul] very rightly warns that no one should swell up with pride, because he has been called by his Lord to freedom and become a Christian, and imagine that on this life's journey he should not keep to his own rank and consider that he does not have to submit to the higher authorities to whom the governance of temporal affairs has been handed over for the time being. For, when we realize that we are made up of a soul and a body and that, as long as we are in this temporal life, we also use temporal things in support of living this life, it behooves us, in respect to what pertains to this life, to submit to the authorities—that is, to the persons who administer human affairs with some honor. But, in respect to our faith in God and our having been called to his kingdom, it behooves us not to submit to anyone who wishes to destroy in us the very thing that God deigned to grant us for eternal life.

Hence, if anyone thinks that, because he is a Christian, he does not have to pay taxes or tributes or show due honor to those authorities that look after these things, he is in great error. Likewise, if anyone thinks that he should submit in such a way as even to imagine that a person who has some high position in the administration of temporal affairs has authority in regard to his faith, he has slipped into a greater error. But the standard to be maintained is that which the Lord himself prescribes—that we give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.⁸² For, although we are called to that kingdom where there will be no this-worldly authority, still, as long as we are on this journey, until we reach that world where every principality and authority is reduced to nothing, we bear with our condition for the sake of order itself in human affairs, never acting in-

82. See Mt 22:21.

sincerely, and in that very regard being obedient not so much to human beings as to God, who commands these things.

65 (73). *Do you want not to fear the person in authority? Do good, and you will have praise from him.* (Rom 13:3) This could be problematic to some, when they recall that Christians have often suffered persecution from those authorities. Was it because they did not do what was good, then, that they were not only not praised by those authorities but were even struck with punishments and put to death? The words of the Apostle, then, should be examined, for he does not say, “Do good, and the person in authority will praise you,” but rather, *Do good, and you will have praise from him.* For, whether he endorses your good deed or persecutes you, *you will have praise from him*, either when you win him over to obedience to God or when you earn a crown because of his persecution. This is also to be understood in what follows, when he says, *For he is God's minister for you for the good* (Rom 13:4), even if to his own detriment.

66 (74). *Be subject because of necessity* (Rom 13:5). This means that we should understand that it is necessary that we ought to be subject on account of this life, offering no resistance if those who have been given authority over temporal things wish to deprive us of them. They are transitory, and thus our subjection does not involve goods that are lasting, as it were, but rather those that are necessary for this life. Yet, because [Paul] said, *Be subject because of necessity*, lest anyone would not be subject with an upright mind and a pure love, he added and said, *not only on account of anger but also on account of conscience* (Rom 13:5)—that is, not only to avoid anger, which can also be feigned, but so that in your conscience you may be sure that you are acting out of love for the person to whom you have been subjected by the command of your Lord, *who wants all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth* (1 Tim 2:4). For when he said this, it had to do with those very authorities. This is what he advises slaves in another passage, *Not serving to be seen, as though pleasing human beings* (Eph 6:6), so that, because they are subject to their masters, they would not hate them or desire to win their favor by deceitful means.

67 (75). *The one who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law* (Rom 13:8). This shows that the fullness of the law resides in love—that is, in charity. And that is why the Lord, too, says that the whole law and all the prophets depend on those two commands—that is, the love of God and

of one's neighbor.⁸³ That is why, as well, he who came to fulfill the law bestowed his love through the Holy Spirit, so that charity would fulfill later what fear was previously unable to fulfill. That is why there is also this from the same Apostle: *Charity is the fulfillment of the law* (Rom 13:10); and this: *The end of the law is charity from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith* (1 Tim 1:5).

68 (76). *And knowing the time, that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep* (Rom 13:11). This pertains to what was said, *Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation* (2 Cor 6:2), for the time of the gospel is being indicated, and the moment for saving those who believe in God.

69 (77). *And do not provide for the flesh with its desires* (Rom 13:14). This shows that providing for the flesh is not blameworthy when the things that are provided are necessary for bodily health. But if they are for the sake of superfluous pleasures and indulgences, so that a person takes delight in the things that he desires by way of the flesh, he is justifiably reprehensible, since he is providing for the flesh in its desires, *because the one who sows in his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh* (Gal 6:8)—that is, the one who finds joy in fleshly pleasures.

70 (78). *Welcome the one who is weak in faith, not with judgments about thoughts* (Rom 14:1). [Paul] is saying that we should welcome the one who is weak in faith and support his weakness with our strength, and we should not judge his thoughts—that is, we should not dare, as it were, to pass sentence on another's person's heart, which we do not see. And so he continues and says, *One person, in fact, believes that he can eat everything, but let the one who is weak eat vegetables* (Rom 14:2), because in those days there were already many who were strong in faith and—knowing that, in keeping with the Lord's teaching, what enters the mouth does not defile, but rather what comes out⁸⁴—used to eat whatever food they wished with a clear conscience. But some weaker persons abstained from meat and wine, lest they unwittingly stumble on something that was sacrificed to idols, for at that time all the meat that had been sacrificed was sold at the market, and the gentiles used to offer libations to their effigies from the early wine and would even make certain sacrifices in the winepresses themselves. The Apostle, therefore, commands those

83. See Mt 22:37–40 par.

84. See Mt 15:11.

who used to consume such things with a clear conscience not to despise the weakness of the ones who abstained from such food and drink, and likewise [he commands] the weak not to consider as defiled those who did not abstain from meat and drank wine. Apropos of this, he goes on to say, *The one who eats should not judge*—that is, despise—*the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat should not judge the one who eats* (Rom 14:3). For the strong ones used to look down arrogantly at the weaker ones, and the weak ones used to make rash judgments on the strong ones.

71 (79). *Who are you, that you judge another's servant?* (Rom 14:4) [Paul] says this for this reason—so that, with respect to things that can be done with either a good or a bad intention, we would leave the judgment to God and not dare to pass sentence on someone else's heart, which we do not see. But, in the case of things which are so clear that they obviously cannot be done with a good and pure intention, it is not blameworthy if we make a judgment. Hence, when [Paul] speaks about food, he does not want us to be judges, but rather God, since the intention behind the act is unknown. But, in the case of that heinous defilement, when a certain person had his father's wife, it had to be judged by the commandments,⁸⁵ for that man could not say that he had committed such a monstrously disgraceful deed with a good intention. Therefore, whatever deeds appear in such a way that it is impossible to say, "I did it with a good intention," they ought to be judged by us; but whatever ones take place in such a way that it is uncertain with what intention they are taking place, they ought not to be judged [by us] but should be left to God's judgment, as it is written, *The things that are hidden belong to God, but those that are open belong to you and to your children* (Dt 29:29).

72 (80). *One person, indeed, judges from day to day, but another judges every day* (Rom 14:5). Leaving aside for the moment a more profound examination, it seems to me that this was not said of two human beings but of humankind and God. For it is humankind that judges from day to day, for it can judge one way today and another way tomorrow, so that, for example, someone who has been convicted of and has confessed [a crime], whom it condemns today as evil, it may find good tomorrow, when he is reformed; or, vice versa, someone whom it praises today as righteous, it may find corrupt tomorrow. But the one who judges every day is God,

85. See 1 Cor 5:1.

because he knows not only what sort of person each individual is but also what sort of person he is going to be each day. Therefore, [Paul] says, *Let each one be fully convinced in his own understanding* (Rom 14:5)—that is, let him only dare to judge to the extent that it is granted to human understanding or to each human being. *The one who is wise concerning the day*, he says, *is wise in the Lord* (Rom 14:6)—that is, the very fact that he judges the present day well [means that he] is wise in the Lord. But this is judging the day well—to know that hope should not be abandoned for the future reformation of one whose manifest fault you have judged in the present.

73 (81). *Blessed is the one who does not judge himself in what he approves* (Rom 14:22). This is best referred to what [Paul] said previously: *Let our good, then, not be maligned* (Rom 14:16). For this is also what he said just now, before this statement: *The belief that you hold in yourself, hold also before God* (Rom 14:22). Thus, because this belief is good, whereby we believe that *all things are pure to the pure* (Tit 1:15), and we approve of ourselves in that belief, we should always use well this very good of ours. Otherwise, if we have abused that good and made it a stumbling block for the weak brothers, we would be sinning against those brothers, and we would be judging ourselves in that good itself, when we scandalize the weak by way of the good in which we approve of ourselves, although this very belief is to our liking.

74 (82). *For I say that Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the sake of God's truth, in order to confirm the promises made to the fathers and so that the gentiles would glorify God for his mercy* (Rom 15:8-9). [Paul] says this so that the gentiles would understand that Christ the Lord was sent to the Jews and so that they would not grow proud. For, when the Jews rejected what was sent to them, it came about that the gospel was preached to the gentiles as well, which is recorded very clearly in the Acts of the Apostles, when the apostles say to the Jews, *The word had to be preached to you first, but, since you judged yourselves unworthy, behold, we are turning to the gentiles* (Acts 13:46). Then there is also the Lord's testimony itself, when he says, *I have been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel* (Mt 15:24); and again, *It is not good to give the children's bread to the dogs* (Mt 15:26). If the gentiles reflected on this carefully, they would understand that they should not use this belief of theirs that they now hold—that *all things are pure to the pure*—to taunt what weak persons there may be from

the circumcision, who do not dare to touch any meat at all because of its connection to idols.

75 (83). *That I may be a minister of Christ Jesus among the gentiles, consecrating the gospel of God, so that an acceptable offering of the gentiles may be made, sanctified in the Holy Spirit* (Rom 15:16)—in other words, so that the gentiles may be offered to God as an acceptable sacrifice, when they are sanctified through the gospel as believers in Christ, as [Paul] also says previously, *Therefore, I beseech you, brothers, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God* (Rom 12:1).

76 (84). *I beseech you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause dissensions and scandals contrary to the teaching that you learned* (Rom 16:17). This is to be understood of those about whom [Paul] wrote to Timothy, saying, *When I was going to Macedonia, I asked you to remain in Ephesus to denounce certain persons, so that they would not teach something different and pay heed to fables and interminable genealogies, which lead to questions rather than to edification from God, which is in faith* (1 Tim 1:3-4), and to Titus, *For there are many insubordinate persons, idle talkers and seducers of minds, especially those who are from the circumcision, who should be refuted, who, by teaching what is not right for the sake of base gain, are subverting every household. One of them, indeed, their own prophet, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.* (Tit 1:10-12) This is related to what he also says here, *For they do not serve Christ the Lord but their own belly* (Rom 16:18). Of these people he says in another passage, *Their god is their belly* (Phil 3:19).



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