

On Grace and Free Will

By Saint Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430)

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Written by St. Augustine of Hippo in A.D. 426 or 427

Addressed to [Valentinus](#) and the [monks](#) of Adrumetum, and completed in one book.

Chapter 1 [I.]—The Occasion and Argument of This Work.

With reference to those [persons](#) who so preach and defend man's [free will](#), as boldly to deny, and endeavour to do away with, the [grace](#) of God which calls us to Him, and delivers us from our [evil](#) deserts, and by which we obtain the good deserts which lead to everlasting life: we have already said a good deal in discussion, and committed it to writing, so far as the Lord has vouchsafed to enable us. But since there are some [persons](#) who so defend God's [grace](#) as to deny man's [free will](#), or who suppose that [free will](#) is denied when [grace](#) is defended, I have determined to write somewhat on this point to your Love, my brother [Valentinus](#), and the rest of you, who are serving God together under the impulse of a mutual [love](#). For it has been told me concerning you, brethren, by some members of your brotherhood who have visited us, and are the bearers of this communication of ours to you, that there are dissensions among you on this subject. This, then, being the case, dearly beloved, that you be not disturbed by the obscurity of this question, I counsel you first to thank God for such things as you understand; but as for all which is beyond the reach of your [mind](#), [pray](#) for understanding from the Lord, observing, at the same time peace and [love](#) among yourselves; and until He Himself lead you to perceive what at present is beyond your comprehension, walk firmly on the ground of which you are sure. This is the advice of the [Apostle Paul](#), who, after saying that he was not yet perfect, [Philippians 3:12](#) a little later adds, "Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded," [Philippians 3:15](#) —meaning perfect to a certain extent, but not having attained to a perfection sufficient for us; and then immediately adds, "And if, in any thing, you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule." [Philippians 3:16](#) For by walking in what we have attained, we shall be able to advance to what we have not yet attained,—God revealing it to us if in anything we are otherwise minded,—provided we do not give up what He has already revealed.

Chapter 2 [II.]—He Proves the Existence of Free Will in Man from the Precepts Addressed to Him by God.

Now He has revealed to us, through His [Holy Scriptures](#), that there is in a man a free choice of will. But how He has revealed this I do not recount in human language, but in divine. There is, to begin with, the fact that God's precepts themselves would be of no use to a man unless he had free choice of will, so that by performing them he might obtain the promised rewards. For they are given that no one might be able to plead the excuse of [ignorance](#), as the Lord says concerning the [Jews](#) in the gospel: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they would not have [sin](#); but now they have no excuse for their [sin](#)." [John 15:22](#) Of what [sin](#) does He speak but of that great one which He foreknew, while speaking thus, that they would make their own—that is, the death they were going to inflict upon Him? For they did not have "no [sin](#)" before Christ came to them in the flesh. The apostle also says: "The [wrath](#) of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold back the [truth](#) in unrighteousness; because that which may be [known](#) of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him are from the creation of the world clearly seen—being understood by the things that are made—even His [eternal](#) power and Godhead, so that they are inexcusable." [Romans 1:18-20](#) In what sense does he pronounce them to be "inexcusable," except with reference to such excuse as human [pride](#) is apt to allege in such words as, "If I had only [known](#), I would have done it; did I not fail to do it because I was [ignorant](#) of it?" or, "I would do it if I [knew](#) how; but I do not [know](#), therefore I do not do it"? All such excuse is removed from them when the precept is given them, or the [knowledge](#) is made manifest to them how to avoid [sin](#).

Chapter 3.—Sinners are Convicted When Attempting to Excuse Themselves by Blaming God, Because They Have Free Will.

There are, however, [persons](#) who attempt to find excuse for themselves even from [God](#). The Apostle James says to such: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of [God](#); for God cannot be tempted with [evil](#), neither tempts He any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own [lust](#), and enticed. Then, when [lust](#) has conceived, it brings forth [sin](#): and [sin](#), when it is finished, brings forth death." [James 1:13-15](#) Solomon, too, in his book of Proverbs, has this answer for such as wish to find an excuse for themselves from God Himself: "The folly of a man spoils his ways; but he blames God in his heart." [Proverbs 19:3](#) And in the book of Ecclesiasticus we read: "Say not, It is through the Lord that I fell away; for you ought not to do the things that He [hates](#); nor say, He has caused me to [err](#); for He has no need of the sinful man. The Lord [hates](#) all abomination, and they that [fear](#) God [love](#) it not. He Himself made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of His counsel. If you be willing, you shall keep His commandments, and perform [true](#) fidelity. He has set fire and water before you: stretch forth your hand unto whether you will. Before man is life and death, and whichsoever pleases him shall be given to him." [Sirach 15:11-17](#) Observe how very plainly is set before our view the free choice of the human will.

Chapter 4.—The Divine Commands Which are Most Suited to the Will Itself Illustrate Its Freedom.

What is the import of the fact that in so many passages God requires all His commandments to be kept and fulfilled? How does He make this requisition, if there is no [free will](#)? What means "the [happy](#) man," of whom the Psalmist says that "his will has been the law of the Lord"? Does he not clearly enough show that a man by his own will takes his stand in the law of God? Then again, there are so many commandments which in some way are expressly adapted to the human will; for instance, there is, "Be not overcome of [evil](#)," [Romans 12:1](#) and others of similar import, such as, "Be not like a horse or a mule, which have no understanding;" and, "Reject not the counsels of your mother;" [Proverbs 1:8](#) and, "Be not wise in your own conceit;" [Proverbs 3:7](#) and, "Despise not the chastening of the Lord;" [Proverbs 3:11](#) and, "Forget not my law;" [Proverbs 3:1](#) and, "Forbear not to do good to the poor;" [Proverbs 3:27](#) and, "Devise not [evil](#) against your friend;" [Proverbs 3:29](#) and, "Give no heed to a worthless [woman](#);" [Proverbs 5:2](#) and, "He is not inclined to understand how to do good;" and, "They refused to attend to my counsel;" [Proverbs 1:30](#) with numberless other passages of the inspired Scriptures of the [Old Testament](#). And what do they all show us but the free choice of the human will? So, again, in the evangelical and apostolic books of the [New Testament](#) what other lesson is taught us? As when it is said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth;" [Matthew 6:19](#) and, "Fear not them which kill the body;" [Matthew 10:28](#) and, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself;" [Matthew 16:24](#) and again, "Peace on earth to men of good will." [Luke 2:14](#) So also that the [Apostle Paul](#) says: "Let him do what he wills; he [not if he marry. Nevertheless, he that stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well.](#)" [1 Corinthians 7:36-37](#) And so again, "If I do this willingly, I have a reward;" [1 Corinthians 9:17](#) while in another passage he says, "Be sober and righteous, and [sin](#) not;" [1 Corinthians 15:34](#) and again, "As you have a readiness to will, so also let there be a prompt performance;" [2 Corinthians 8:11](#) then he remarks to Timothy about the younger [widows](#), "When they have begun to wax wanton against [Christ](#), they choose to marry." So in another passage, "All that will to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer [persecution](#);" [2 Timothy 3:12](#) while to Timothy himself he says, "Neglect not the gift that is in you." [1 Timothy 4:14](#) Then to Philemon he addresses this explanation: "That your benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but of your own will." Servants also he advises to [obey](#) their masters "with a good will." [Ephesians 6:7](#) In strict accordance with this, James says: "Do not [err](#), my beloved brethren . . . and have not the [faith](#) of [our Lord Jesus Christ](#) with respect to [persons](#);" and, "Do not speak [evil](#) one of another." [James 4:11](#) So also John in his Epistle writes, "Do not [love](#) the world," [1 John 2:15](#) and other things of the same import. Now wherever it is said, "Do not do this," and "Do not do that," and wherever there is any requirement in the divine admonitions for the work of the will to do anything, or to refrain from doing anything, there is at once a sufficient [proof](#) of [free will](#). No man, therefore, when he [sins](#), can in his heart blame God for it, but every man must impute the fault to himself. Nor does it detract at all from a man's own will when he performs any act in accordance with [God](#). Indeed, a work is then to be pronounced a good one when a person does it willingly; then,

too, may the reward of a good work be hoped for from Him concerning whom it is written, "He shall reward every man according to his works." [Matthew 16:27](#)

Chapter 5.—He Shows that Ignorance Affords No Such Excuse as Shall Free the Offender from Punishment; But that to Sin with Knowledge is a Graver Thing Than to Sin in Ignorance.

The excuse such as men are in the [habit](#) of alleging from [ignorance](#) is taken away from those [persons](#) who [know](#) God's commandments. But neither will those be without punishment who [know](#) not the law of [God](#). "For as many as have [sinned](#) without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have [sinned](#) in the law shall be judged by the law." [Romans 2:12](#) Now the apostle does not appear to me to have said this as if he meant that they would have to suffer something worse who in their [sins](#) are [ignorant](#) of the law than they who [know](#) it. [III.] It is seemingly worse, no [doubt](#), "to perish" than "to be judged;" but inasmuch as he was speaking of the [Gentiles](#) and of the [Jews](#) when he used these words, because the former were without the law, but the latter had received the law, who can venture to say that the [Jews](#) who [sin](#) in the law will not perish, since they refused to [believe](#) in [Christ](#), when it was of them that the apostle said, "They shall be judged by the law"? For without [faith](#) in Christ no man can be delivered; and therefore they will be so judged that they perish. If, indeed, the condition of those who are [ignorant](#) of the law of God is worse than the condition of those who [know](#) it, how can that be [true](#) which the Lord says in the gospel: "The servant who [knows](#) not his lord's will, and commits things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; whereas the servant who [knows](#) his lord's will, and commits things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with many stripes"? [Luke 12:47-48](#) Observe how clearly He here shows that it is a graver matter for a man to [sin](#) with [knowledge](#) than in [ignorance](#). And yet we must not on this account betake ourselves for refuge to the shades of [ignorance](#), with the view of finding our excuse therein. It is one thing to be [ignorant](#), and another thing to be unwilling to [know](#). For the will is at fault in the case of the man of whom it is said, "He is not inclined to understand, so as to do good." But even the [ignorance](#), which is not theirs who refuse to [know](#), but theirs who are, as it were, simply [ignorant](#), does not so far excuse any one as to exempt him from the punishment of [eternal fire](#), though his failure to [believe](#) has been the result of his not having at all heard what he should [believe](#); but probably only so far as to mitigate his punishment. For it was not said without reason: "Pour out Your [wrath](#) upon the [heathen](#) that have not [known](#) You;" nor again according to what the apostle says: "When He shall come from heaven in a flame of fire to take vengeance on them that [know](#) not God." [But yet in order that we may have that knowledge](#) that will prevent our saying, each one of us, "I did not [know](#)," "I did not hear," "I did not understand;" the human will is summoned, in such words as these: "Wish not to be as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding;" although it may show itself even worse, of which it is written, "A stubborn servant will not be reproved by words; for even if he understand, yet he will not [obey](#)." [Proverbs 29:19](#) But when a man says, "I cannot do what I am commanded, because I am mastered by my concupiscence," he has no longer any excuse

to plead from [ignorance](#), nor reason to blame God in his heart, but he recognises and laments his own [evil](#) in himself; and still to such an one the apostle says: "Be not overcome by [evil](#), but overcome [evil](#) with good;" [Romans 12:21](#) and of course the very fact that the injunction, "Consent not to be overcome," is addressed to him, undoubtedly summons the determination of his will. For to consent and to refuse are functions proper to will.

Chapter 6 [IV.]—God's Grace to Be Maintained Against the Pelagians; The Pelagian Heresy Not an Old One.

It is, however, to be feared lest all these and similar testimonies of [Holy Scripture](#) (and undoubtedly there are a great many of them), in the maintenance of [free will](#), be understood in such a way as to leave no room for God's assistance and [grace](#) in leading a godly life and a good conversation, to which the [eternal](#) reward is due; and lest poor wretched man, when he leads a good life and performs good works (or rather thinks that he leads a good life and performs good works), should dare to [glory](#) in himself and not in the [Lord](#), and to put his hope of righteous living in himself alone; so as to be followed by the [prophet](#) Jeremiah's malediction when he says, "Cursed is the man who has hope in man, and makes strong the flesh of his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord." [Understand, my brethren, I pray](#) you, this passage of the [prophet](#). Because the [prophet](#) did not say, "Cursed is the man who has hope in his own self," it might seem to some that the passage, "Cursed is the man who has hope in man," was spoken to prevent man having hope in any other man but himself. In order, therefore, to show that his admonition to man was not to have hope in himself, after saying, "Cursed is the man who has hope in man," he immediately added, "And makes strong the flesh of his arm." He used the word "arm" to designate *power in operation*. By the term "*flesh*," however, must be understood *human frailty*. And therefore he makes strong the flesh of his arm who supposes that a power which is frail and weak (that is, human) is sufficient for him to perform good works, and therefore puts not his hope in God for help. This is the reason why he subjoined the further clause, "And whose heart departs from the Lord." Of this character is the Pelagian [heresy](#), which is not an ancient one, but has only lately come into [existence](#). Against this system of [error](#) there was first a good deal of discussion; then, as the ultimate resource, it was referred to sundry episcopal councils, the proceedings of which, not, indeed, in every instance, but in some, I have despatched to you for your perusal. In order, then, to our performance of good works, let us not have hope in man, making strong the flesh of our arm; nor let our heart ever depart from the Lord, but let it say to him, "Be Thou my helper; forsake me not, nor despise me, O God of my [salvation](#)."

Chapter 7.—Grace is Necessary Along with Free Will to Lead a Good Life.

Therefore, my dearly beloved, as we have now [proved](#) by our former testimonies from [Holy Scripture](#) that there is in man a free determination of will for living rightly and acting rightly; so now let us see what are the divine testimonies concerning the [grace](#) of [God](#), without which we are not able to do any good thing. And first of all, I will say something about the very profession which you make in your brotherhood. Now your society, in which you are leading lives of continence, could not hold together unless you despised conjugal pleasure. Well, the Lord was one day conversing on this very topic, when His [disciples](#) remarked to Him, "If such be the case of a [man](#) with his wife, it is not good to marry." He then answered them, "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." [Matthew 19:10](#) And was it not to Timothy's [free will](#) that the apostle appealed, when he exhorted him in these words: "Keep yourself continent"? [1 Timothy 5:22](#) He also explained the power of the will in this matter when He said, "Having no necessity, but possessing power over his own will, to keep his virgin." [1 Corinthians 7:37](#) And yet "all [men](#) do not receive this saying, except those to whom the power is given." Now they to whom this is not given either are unwilling or do not fulfil what they will; whereas they to whom it is given so will as to accomplish what they will. In order, therefore, that this saying, which is not received by all [men](#), may yet be received by some, there are both the gift of [God](#) and [free will](#).

Chapter 8.—Conjugal Chastity is Itself the Gift of God.

It is concerning conjugal [chastity](#) itself that the apostle treats, when he says, "Let him do what he will, he [not if he marry](#);" [1 Corinthians 7:36](#) and yet this too is God's gift, for the [Scripture](#) says, "It is by the Lord that the [woman](#) is joined to her husband." Accordingly the teacher of the [Gentiles](#), in one of his discourses, commends both conjugal [chastity](#), whereby adulteries are prevented, and the still more perfect continence which foregoes all cohabitation, and shows how both one and the other are severally the gift of [God](#). Writing to the Corinthians, he admonished married [persons](#) not to defraud each other; and then, after his admonition to these, he added: "But I could wish that all [men](#) were even as I am myself," [1 Corinthians 7:7](#) —meaning, of course, that he abstained from all cohabitation; and then proceeded to say: "But every man has his own gift of [God](#), one after this manner, and another after that." [1 Corinthians 7:7](#) Now, do the many precepts which are written in the law of [God](#), forbidding all fornication and [adultery](#), indicate anything else than [free will](#)? Surely such precepts would not be given unless a man had a will of his own, wherewith to [obey](#) the divine commandments. And yet it is God's gift which is indispensable for the observance of the precepts of [chastity](#). Accordingly, it is said in the Book of Wisdom: "When I [knew](#) that no one could be continent, except God gives it, then this became a point of wisdom to [know](#) whose gift it was." [Wisdom 8:21](#) "Every man," however, "is tempted when he is drawn away of his own [lust](#), and enticed" [James 1:14](#) not to observe and keep these [holy](#) precepts of [chastity](#). If he should say in respect of these commandments, "I wish to keep them, but am mastered by my concupiscence," then the [Scripture](#) responds to his [free will](#), as I have already said: "Be not overcome of [evil](#), but overcome [evil](#) with good." [Romans 12:21](#) In order, however, that this victory may be gained, [grace](#) renders its help; and were not this help given, then the law would be nothing but the strength of [sin](#). For concupiscence is increased and receives greater energies from the prohibition of the law, unless the spirit of [grace](#) helps.

This explains the statement of the great Teacher of the [Gentiles](#), when he says, "The sting of death is [sin](#), and the strength of [sin](#) is the law." [1 Corinthians 15:56](#) See, then, I [pray](#) you, whence originates this confession of weakness, when a man says, "I desire to keep what the law commands, but am overcome by the strength of my concupiscence." And when his will is addressed, and it is said, "Be not overcome of [evil](#)," of what avail is anything but the succour of God's [grace](#) to the accomplishment of the precept? This the apostle himself afterwards stated; for after saying "The strength of [sin](#) is the law," he immediately subjoined, "But thanks be to [God](#), who gives us the victory, through [our Lord Jesus Christ](#)." [1 Corinthians 15:57](#) It follows, then, that the victory in which [sin](#) is vanquished is nothing else than the gift of [God](#), who in this contest helps [free will](#).

Chapter 9.—Entering into Temptation. Prayer is a Proof of Grace.

Wherefore, our Heavenly Master also says: "Watch and [pray](#), that you enter not into [temptation](#)." [Matthew 26:41](#) Let every man, therefore, when fighting against his own concupiscence, [pray](#) that he enter not into [temptation](#); that is, that he be not drawn aside and enticed by it. But he does not enter into [temptation](#) if he conquers his [evil](#) concupiscence by good will. And yet the determination of the human will is insufficient, unless the Lord grant it victory in answer to [prayer](#) that it enter not into [temptation](#). What, indeed, affords clearer evidence of the [grace](#) of God than the acceptance of [prayer](#) in any petition? If our Saviour had only said, "Watch that you enter not into [temptation](#)," He would appear to have done nothing further than admonish man's will; but since He added the words, "and [pray](#)," He showed that God helps us not to enter into [temptation](#). It is to the [free will](#) of man that the words are addressed: "My son, remove not yourself from the chastening of the Lord." [Proverbs 3:11](#) And the Lord said: "I have [prayed](#) for you, Peter, that your [faith](#) fail not." [Luke 22:32](#) So that a man is assisted by [grace](#), in order that his will may not be uselessly commanded.

Chapter 10 [V.]—Free Will and God's Grace are Simultaneously Commended.

When God says, "Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you," [Zechariah 1:3](#) one of these clauses—that which invites our return to God—evidently belongs to our will; while the other, which promises His return to us, belongs to His [grace](#). Here, possibly, the [Pelagians](#) think they have a justification for their opinion which they so prominently advance, that God's [grace](#) is given according to our merits. In the East, indeed, that is to say, in the province of Palestine, in which is the city of Jerusalem, Pelagius, when examined in person by the [bishop](#), did not venture to affirm this. For it happened that among the objections which were brought up against him, this in particular was objected, that he maintained that the [grace](#) of God was given according to our merits,—an opinion which was so diverse from catholic doctrine, and so hostile to the [grace](#) of [Christ](#), that unless he had [anathematized](#) it, as laid to his charge, he himself must have been [anathematized](#) on its account. He pronounced, indeed, the required [anathema](#) upon the

dogma, but how insincerely his later books plainly show; for in them he maintains absolutely no other opinion than that the [grace](#) of God is given according to our merits. Such passages do they collect out of the [Scriptures](#),—like the one which I just now quoted, "Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you,"—as if it were owing to the merit of our turning to God that His [grace](#) were given us, wherein He Himself even turns unto us. Now the [persons](#) who hold this opinion fail to observe that, unless our turning to God were itself God's gift, it would not be said to Him in [prayer](#), "Turn us again, O God of hosts;" and, "You, O [God](#), wilt turn and quicken us;" and again, "Turn us, O God of our [salvation](#),"—with other passages of similar import, too numerous to mention here. For, with respect to our coming unto Christ, what else does it mean than our being turned to Him by believing? And yet He says: "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." [John 6:65](#)

Chapter 11.—Other Passages of Scripture Which the Pelagians Abuse.

Then, again, there is the [Scripture](#) contained in the second book of the Chronicles: "The Lord is with you when you are with Him: and if you shall seek Him you shall find Him; but if you forsake Him, He also will forsake you." [2 Chronicles 15:2](#) This passage, no [doubt](#), clearly manifests the choice of the will. But they who maintain that God's [grace](#) is given according to our merits, receive these testimonies of Scripture in such a manner as to [believe](#) that our merit lies in the circumstance of our "being with [God](#)," while His [grace](#) is given according to this merit, so that He too may be with us. In like manner, that our merit lies in the fact of "our seeking [God](#)," and then His [grace](#) is given according to this merit, in order that we may find Him." Again, there is a passage in the first book of the same Chronicles which declares the choice of the will: "And you, Solomon, my son, [know](#) the [God](#) of your father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing [mind](#), for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts; if you seek Him, He will be found of you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off for ever." [1 Chronicles 28:9](#) But these people find some room for human merit in the clause, "If you seek Him," and then the [grace](#) is thought to be given according to this merit in what is said in the ensuing words, "He will be found of you." And so they labour with all their might to show that God's [grace](#) is given according to our merits,—in other words, that [grace](#) is not [grace](#). For, as the apostle most expressly says, to them who receive reward according to merit "the recompense is not reckoned of [grace](#) but of debt." [Romans 4:4](#)

Chapter 12.—He Proves Out of St. Paul that Grace is Not Given According to Men's Merits.

Now there was, no [doubt](#), a decided merit in the [Apostle Paul](#), but it was an [evil](#) one, while he [persecuted](#) the [Church](#), and he says of it: "I am not meet to be called an [apostle](#), because I [persecuted](#) the Church of [God](#)." [1 Corinthians 15:9](#) And it was while he had this [evil](#) merit that a good one was rendered to him instead of the [evil](#); and, therefore, he went

on at once to say, "But by the [grace](#) of God I am what I am." [1 Corinthians 15:10](#) Then, in order to exhibit also his [free will](#), he added in the next clause, "And His [grace](#) within me was not in vain, but I have laboured more abundantly than they all." This [free will](#) of man he appeals to in the case of others also, as when he says to them, "We beseech you that you receive not the [grace](#) of [God](#) in vain." [2 Corinthians 6:1](#) Now, how could he so enjoin them, if they received God's [grace](#) in such a manner as to lose their own will? Nevertheless, lest the will itself should be deemed capable of doing any good thing without the [grace](#) of [God](#), after saying, "His [grace](#) within me was not in vain, but I have laboured more abundantly than they all," he immediately added the qualifying clause, "Yet not I, but the [grace](#) of God which was with me." [1 Corinthians 15:10](#) In other words, Not I alone, but the [grace](#) of God with me. And thus, neither was it the [grace](#) of God alone, nor was it he himself alone, but it was the [grace](#) of God with him. For his call, however, from heaven and his conversion by that great and most effectual call, God's [grace](#) was alone, because his merits, though great, were yet [evil](#). Then, to quote one passage more, he says to Timothy: "But be a co-labourer with the gospel, according to the power of [God](#), who saves us and calls us with His [holy](#) calling,—not according to our works but according to His own purpose and [grace](#), which was given us in [Christ Jesus](#)." [2 Timothy 1:8-9](#) Then, elsewhere, he enumerates his merits, and gives us this description of their [evil](#) character: "For we ourselves also were formerly foolish, unbelieving, deceived, serving various [lusts](#) and pleasures, living in [malice](#) and [envy](#), hateful, and hating one another." [Titus 3:3](#) Nothing, to be sure, but punishment was due to such a course of [evil](#) desert! [God](#), however, who returns good for [evil](#) by His [grace](#), which is not given according to our merits, enabled the apostle to conclude his statement and say: "But when the kindness and [love](#) of our Saviour God shone upon us,—not of works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renewal of the [Holy Ghost](#), whom He shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by His [grace](#), we should be made heirs according to the hope of [eternal](#) life." [Titus 3:4-7](#)

Chapter 13 [VI.]—The Grace of God is Not Given According to Merit, But Itself Makes All Good Desert.

From these and similar passages of Scripture, we gather the [proof](#) that God's [grace](#) is not given according to our merits. The [truth](#) is, we see that it is given not only where there are no good, but even where there are many [evil](#) merits preceding: and we see it so given daily. But it is plain that when it has been given, also our good merits begin to be,—yet only by means of it; for, were that only to withdraw itself, man falls, not raised up, but precipitated by [free will](#). Wherefore no man ought, even when he begins to possess good merits, to attribute them to himself, but to [God](#), who is thus addressed by the Psalmist: "Be Thou my helper, forsake me not." By saying, "Forsake me not," he shows that if he were to be forsaken, he is unable of himself to do any good thing. Wherefore also he says: "I said in my abundance, I shall never be moved," for he thought that he had such an abundance of good to call his own that he would not be moved. But in order that he might be taught whose that was, of which he had begun to boast as if it were his own, he was admonished by the gradual desertion of God's [grace](#), and says: "O Lord, in Your

good pleasure You added strength to my beauty. Thou did, however, turn away Your face, and then I was troubled and distressed." Thus, it is necessary for a man that he should be not only justified when unrighteous by the [grace](#) of [God](#),—that is, be changed from unholiness to righteousness,—when he is requited with good for his [evil](#); but that, even after he has become justified by [faith](#), [grace](#) should accompany him on his way, and he should lean upon it, lest he fall. On this account it is written concerning the Church herself in the book of Canticles: "Who is this that comes up in white raiment, leaning upon her kinsman?" [Song of Songs 8:5](#) Made white is she who by herself alone could not be white. And by whom has she been made white except by Him who says by the [prophet](#), "Though your [sins](#) be as purple, I will make them white as snow"? [Isaiah 1:18](#) At the time, then, that she was made white, she deserved nothing good; but now that she is made white, she walks well;—but it is only by her continuing ever to lean upon Him by whom she was made white. Wherefore, Jesus Himself, on whom she leans that was made white, said to His [disciples](#), "Without me ye can do nothing." [John 15:5](#)

Chapter 14.—Paul First Received Grace that He Might Win the Crown.

Let us return now to the [Apostle Paul](#), who, as we have found, obtained God's [grace](#), who recompenses good for [evil](#), without any good merits of his own, but rather with many [evil](#) merits. Let us see what he says when his final sufferings were approaching, writing to Timothy: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the [faith](#)." [2 Timothy 4:6-7](#) He enumerates these as, of course, now his good merits; so that, as after his [evil](#) merits he obtained [grace](#), so now, after his good merits, he might receive the crown. Observe, therefore, what follows: "There is henceforth laid up for me," he says, "a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." [2 Timothy 4:8](#) Now, to whom should the righteous Judge award the crown, except to him on whom the merciful Father had bestowed [grace](#)? And how could the crown be one "of righteousness," unless the [grace](#) had preceded which "justifies the ungodly"? How, moreover, could these things now be awarded as of debt, unless the other had been before given as a free gift?

Chapter 15.—The Pelagians Profess that the Only Grace Which is Not Given According to Our Merits is that of the Forgiveness of Sins.

When, however, the [Pelagians](#) say that the only [grace](#) which is not given according to our merits is that whereby his [sins](#) are forgiven to [man](#), but that that which is given in the end, that is, [eternal](#) life, is rendered to our preceding merits: they must not be allowed to go without an answer. If, indeed, they so understand our merits as to acknowledge them, too, to be the gifts of [God](#), then their opinion would not deserve reprobation. But inasmuch as they so preach human merits as to declare that a man has them of his own self, then most rightly the apostle replies: "Who makes you to differ from another? And what have you,

that you did not receive? Now, if you received it, why do you [glory](#) as if you had not received it?" [1 Corinthians 4:7](#) To a man who holds such views, it is perfect [truth](#) to say: It is His own gifts that God crowns, not your merits,—if, at least, your merits are of your own self, not of Him. If, indeed, they are such, they are [evil](#); and God does not crown them; but if they are good, they are God's gifts, because, as the Apostle James says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights." [James 1:17](#) In accordance with which John also, the Lord's forerunner, declares: "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven" [John 3:27](#) — from heaven, of course, because from thence came also the [Holy Ghost](#), when Jesus ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. If, then, your good merits are God's gifts, God does not crown your merits as your merits, but as His own gifts.

Chapter 16 [VII.]—Paul Fought, But God Gave the Victory: He Ran, But God Showed Mercy.

Let us, therefore, consider those very merits of the [Apostle Paul](#) which he said the Righteous Judge would recompense with the crown of righteousness; and let us see whether these merits of his were really his own—I mean, whether they were obtained by him of himself, or were the gifts of [God](#). "I have fought," says he, "the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the [faith](#)." [2 Timothy 4:7](#) Now, in the first place, these good works were nothing, unless they had been preceded by good thoughts. Observe, therefore, what he says concerning these very thoughts. His words, when writing to the Corinthians, are: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of [God](#)." [2 Corinthians 3:5](#) Then let us look at each several merit. "I have fought the good fight." Well, now, I want to [know](#) by what power he fought. Was it by a power which he possessed of himself, or by strength given to him from above? It is impossible to suppose that so great a teacher as the apostle was [ignorant](#) of the law of [God](#), which proclaims the following in Deuteronomy: "Say not in your heart, My own strength and energy of hand has wrought for me this great power; but you shall remember the Lord your [God](#), how it is He that gives you strength to acquire such power." [Deuteronomy 8:17](#) And what avails "the good fight," unless followed by victory? And who gives the victory but He of whom the apostle says himself, "Thanks be to [God](#), who gives us the victory through [our Lord Jesus Christ](#)"? [1 Corinthians 15:57](#) Then, in another passage, having quoted from the Psalm these words: "Because for Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for slaughter," he went on to declare: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us." [Romans 8:37](#) Not by ourselves, therefore, is the victory accomplished, but by Him who has loved us. In the second clause he says, "I have finished my course." Now, who is it that says this, but he who declares in another passage, "So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy." [Romans 9:16](#) And this sentence can by no means be transposed, so that it could be said: It is not of [God](#), who shows mercy, but of the man who wills and runs. If any person be bold enough to express the matter thus, he shows himself most plainly to be at issue with the apostle.

Chapter 17.—The Faith that He Kept Was the Free Gift of God.

His last clause runs thus: "I have kept the [faith](#)." But he who says this is the same who declares in another passage, "I have obtained mercy that I might be faithful."

[1 Corinthians 7:25](#) He does not say, "I obtained mercy because I was faithful," but "in order that I might be faithful," thus showing that even [faith](#) itself cannot be had without God's mercy, and that it is the gift of [God](#). This he very expressly teaches us when he says, "For by [grace](#) are you saved through [faith](#), and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of [God](#)." [Ephesians 2:8](#) They might possibly say, "We received [grace](#) because we [believed](#);" as if they would attribute the [faith](#) to themselves, and the [grace](#) to [God](#). Therefore, the apostle having said, "You are saved through [faith](#)," added, "And that not of yourselves, but it is the gift of [God](#)." And again, lest they should say they deserved so great a gift by their works, he immediately added, "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

[Ephesians 2:9](#) Not that he denied good works, or emptied them of their value, when he says that God renders to every man according to his works; [Romans 2:6](#) but because works proceed from [faith](#), and not [faith](#) from works. Therefore it is from Him that we have works of righteousness, from whom comes also [faith](#) itself, concerning which it is written, "The just shall live by [faith](#)." [Habakkuk 2:4](#)

Chapter 18.—Faith Without Good Works is Not Sufficient for Salvation.

Unintelligent [persons](#), however, with regard to the apostle's statement: "We conclude that a man is justified by [faith](#) without the works of the law," [Romans 3:28](#) have thought him to mean that [faith](#) suffices to a [man](#), even if he lead a bad life, and has no good works. Impossible is it that such a character should be deemed "a vessel of election" by the apostle, who, after declaring that "in Christ Jesus neither [circumcision](#) avails anything, nor uncircumcision," [Galatians 5:6](#) adds at once, "but [faith](#) which works by [love](#)." It is such [faith](#) which severs God's faithful from unclean [demons](#),—for even these "[believe](#) and tremble," [James 2:19](#) as the Apostle James says; but they do not do well. Therefore they possess not the [faith](#) by which the just man lives,—the [faith](#) which works by [love](#) in such wise, that God recompenses it according to its works with [eternal](#) life. But inasmuch as we have even our good works from [God](#), from whom likewise comes our [faith](#) and our [love](#), therefore the selfsame great teacher of the [Gentiles](#) has designated "[eternal](#) life" itself as His gracious "gift." [Romans 6:23](#)

Chapter 19 [VIII.]—How is Eternal Life Both a Reward for Service and a Free Gift of Grace?

And hence there arises no small question, which must be solved by the Lord's gift. If [eternal](#) life is rendered to good works, as the [Scripture](#) most openly declares: "Then He shall reward every man according to his works:" [Matthew 16:27](#) how can [eternal](#) life be a

matter of [grace](#), seeing that [grace](#) is not rendered to works, but is given gratuitously, as the apostle himself tells us: "To him that works is the reward not reckoned of [grace](#), but of debt;" [Romans 4:4](#) and again: "There is a remnant saved according to the election of [grace](#);" with these words immediately subjoined: "And if of [grace](#), then is it no more of works; otherwise [grace](#) is no more [grace](#)?" [Romans 11:5-6](#) How, then, is [eternal](#) life by [grace](#), when it is received from works? Does the apostle perchance not say that [eternal](#) life is a [grace](#)? Nay, he has so called it, with a clearness which none can possibly gainsay. It requires no acute [intellect](#), but only an attentive reader, to discover this. For after saying, "The wages of [sin](#) is death," he at once added, "The [grace](#) of God is [eternal](#) life through Jesus Christ our Lord." [Romans 6:23](#)

Chapter 20.—The Question Answered. Justification is Grace Simply and Entirely, Eternal Life is Reward and Grace.

This question, then, seems to me to be by no means capable of solution, unless we understand that even those good works of ours, which are recompensed with [eternal](#) life, belong to the [grace](#) of [God](#), because of what is said by the Lord Jesus: "Without me ye can do nothing." [John 15:5](#) And the apostle himself, after saying, "By [grace](#) are you saved through [faith](#); and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast;" [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) saw, of course, the possibility that men would think from this statement that good works are not necessary to those who [believe](#), but that [faith](#) alone suffices for them; and again, the possibility of men's boasting of their good works, as if they were of themselves capable of performing them. To meet, therefore, these opinions on both sides, he immediately added, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." [Ephesians 2:10](#) What is the purport of his saying, "Not of works, lest any man should boast," while commending the [grace](#) of [God](#)? And then why does he afterwards, when giving a reason for using such words, say, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works"? Why, therefore, does it run, "Not of works, lest any man should boast"? Now, hear and understand. "Not of works" is spoken of the works which you suppose have their origin in yourself alone; but you have to think of works for which [God](#) has moulded (that is, has formed and created) you. For of these he says, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Now he does not here speak of that creation which made us human beings, but of that in reference to which one said who was already in full manhood, "Create in me a clean heart, O [God](#);" concerning which also the apostle says, "Therefore, if any man be in [Christ](#), he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of [God](#)." [2 Corinthians 5:17-18](#) We are framed, therefore, that is, formed and created, "in the good works which" we have not ourselves prepared, but "[God](#) has before ordained that we should walk in them." It follows, then, dearly beloved, beyond all [doubt](#), that as your good life is nothing else than [God](#)'s [grace](#), so also the [eternal](#) life which is the recompense of a good life is the [grace](#) of [God](#); moreover it is given gratuitously, even as that is given gratuitously to which it is given. But that to which it is given is solely and simply [grace](#); this therefore is also that which is given to it, because it is its reward;—[grace](#) is for [grace](#),

as if remuneration for righteousness; in order that it may be [true](#), because it is [true](#), that God "shall reward every man according to his works."

Chapter 21 [IX.]—Eternal Life is "Grace for Grace."

Perhaps you ask whether we ever read in the [Sacred Scriptures](#) of "[grace for grace](#)." Well you possess the [Gospel](#) according to John, which is perfectly clear in its very great light. Here John the Baptist says of Christ: "Of His fulness have we all received, even [grace for grace](#)." [John 1:16](#) So that out of His fulness we have received, according to our [humble](#) measure, our particles of ability as it were for leading good lives—"according as God has dealt to every man his measure of [faith](#);" [Romans 12:3](#) because "every man has his proper gift of [God](#); one after this manner, and another after that." [1 Corinthians 7:7](#) And this is [grace](#). But, over and above this, we shall also receive "[grace for grace](#)," when we shall have awarded to us [eternal](#) life, of which the apostle said: "The [grace](#) of God is [eternal](#) life through Jesus Christ our Lord," [Romans 6:23](#) having just said that "the wages of [sin](#) is death." Deservedly did he call it "wages," because everlasting death is awarded as its proper due to diabolical service. Now, when it was in his power to say, and rightly to say: "But the wages of righteousness is [eternal](#) life," he yet preferred to say: "The [grace](#) of God is [eternal](#) life;" in order that we may hence understand that God does not, for any merits of our own, but from His own divine compassion, prolong our [existence](#) to everlasting life. Even as the Psalmist says to his [soul](#), "Who crowns you with mercy and compassion." Well, now, is not a crown given as the reward of good deeds? It is, however, only because He works good works in good men, of whom it is said, "It is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure," [Philippians 2:13](#) that the Psalm has it, as just now quoted: "He crowns you with mercy and compassion," since it is through His mercy that we perform the good deeds to which the crown is awarded. It is not, however, to be for a moment supposed, because he said, "It is God that works in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure," that [free will](#) is taken away. If this, indeed, had been his meaning, he would not have said just before, "Work out your own [salvation](#) with [fear](#) and trembling." [Philippians 2:12](#) For when the command is given "to work," their [free will](#) is addressed; and when it is added, "with [fear](#) and trembling," they are warned against boasting of their good deeds as if they were their own, by attributing to themselves the performance of anything good. It is pretty much as if the apostle had this question put to him: "Why did you use the phrase, 'with [fear](#) and trembling'?" And as if he answered the inquiry of his examiners by telling them, "For it is God which works in you." Because if you [fear](#) and tremble, you do not boast of your good works—as if they were your own, since it is God who works within you.

Chapter 22 [X.]—Who is the Transgressor of the Law? The Oldness of Its Letter. The Newness of Its Spirit.

Therefore, brethren, you ought by [free will](#) not do [evil](#) but do good; this, indeed, is the lesson taught us in the law of [God](#), in the [Holy Scriptures](#)—both Old and New. Let us, however, read, and by the Lord's help understand, what the apostle tells us: "Because by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the

[knowledge](#) of [sin](#)." [Romans 3:20](#) Observe, he says "*the knowledge*," not "the destruction," of [sin](#). But when a [man knows sin](#), and [grace](#) does not help him to avoid what he [knows](#), undoubtedly the law works [wrath](#). And thus the apostle explicitly says in another passage. His words are: "The law works [wrath](#)." [Romans 4:15](#) The reason of this statement lies in the fact that God's [wrath](#) is greater in the case of the transgressor who by the law [knows sin](#), and yet commits it; such a man is thus a transgressor of the law, even as the apostle says in another sentence, "For where no law is, there is no transgression." [Romans 4:15](#) It is in accordance with this principle that he elsewhere says, "That we may serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter;" [Romans 7:6](#) wishing *the law* to be here understood by "the oldness of the letter," and what else by "newness of spirit" than [grace](#)? Then, that it might not be thought that he had brought any accusation, or suggested any blame, against the law, he immediately takes himself to task with this inquiry: "What shall we say, then? Is the law [sin](#)? God forbid." He then adds the statement: "Nay, I had not [known sin](#) but by the law;" [Romans 7:6-7](#) which is of the same import as the passage above quoted: "By the law is the [knowledge of sin](#)." [Romans 3:20](#) Then: "For I had not [known lust](#)," he says, "except the law had said, 'You shall not [covet](#).'" [Exodus 20:17](#) But [sin](#), taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law [sin](#) was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, [sin](#) revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For [sin](#), taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is [holy](#); and the commandment [holy](#), just, and good. Was, then, that which is [good](#) made death unto me? God forbid. But [sin](#), that it might appear [sin](#), worked death in me by that which is [good](#),—in order that the sinner, or the [sin](#), might by the commandment become beyond measure." [Romans 7:7-13](#) And to the Galatians he writes: "[Knowing](#) that a man is not justified by the works of the law, except through [faith](#) in [Jesus Christ](#), even we have [believed](#) in [Jesus Christ](#), that we might be justified by the [faith](#) of [Christ](#), and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." [Galatians 2:16](#)

Chapter 23 [XI.]—The Pelagians Maintain that the Law is the Grace of God Which Helps Us Not to Sin.

Why, therefore, do those very vain and perverse [Pelagians](#) say that the law is the [grace](#) of God by which we are helped not to [sin](#)? Do they not, by making such an allegation, unhappily and beyond all [doubt](#) contradict the great apostle? He, indeed, says, that by the law [sin](#) received strength against man; and that man, by the commandment, although it be [holy](#), and just, and good, nevertheless dies, and that death works in him through that which is [good](#), from which death there is no deliverance unless the Spirit quickens him, whom the letter had killed,—as he says in another passage, "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." [2 Corinthians 3:6](#) And yet these obstinate [persons](#), blind to God's light, and deaf to His voice, maintain that the letter which kills gives life, and thus gainsay the quickening Spirit. "Therefore, brethren" (that I may warn you with better effect in the words of the apostle himself), "we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; for if you live after the flesh you shall die; but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live." [Romans 8:12-13](#) I have said this to deter your [free will](#) from

[evil](#), and to exhort it to good by apostolic words; but yet you must not therefore [glory](#) in man,—that is to say, in your own selves,—and not in the [Lord](#), when you live not after the flesh, but through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh. For in order that they to whom the apostle addressed this language might not exalt themselves, thinking that they were themselves able of their own spirit to do such good works as these, and not by the Spirit of [God](#), after saying to them, "If you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live," he at once added, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of [God](#), they are the sons of [God](#)." [Romans 8:14](#) When, therefore, you by the Spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh, that you may have life, glorify Him, praise Him, give thanks to Him by whose Spirit you are so led as to be able to do such things as show you to be the children of [God](#); "for as many as are led by the Spirit of [God](#), they are the sons of [God](#)."

Chapter 24 [XII.]—Who May Be Said to Wish to Establish Their Own Righteousness. "God's Righteousness," So Called, Which Man Has from God.

As many, therefore, as are led by their own spirit, trusting in their own [virtue](#), with the addition merely of the law's assistance, without the help of [grace](#), are not the sons of [God](#). Such are they of whom the same apostle speaks as "being [ignorant](#) of God's righteousness, and wishing to establish their own righteousness, who have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of [God](#)." [Romans 10:3](#) He said this of the [Jews](#), who in their self-assumption rejected [grace](#), and therefore did not [believe](#) in [Christ](#). Their own righteousness, indeed, he says, they wish to establish; and this righteousness is of the law,—not that the law was established by themselves, but that they had constituted their righteousness in the law which is of [God](#), when they supposed themselves able to fulfil that law by their own strength, [ignorant](#) of God's righteousness,—not indeed that by which God is Himself righteous, but that which man has from [God](#). And that you may [know](#) that he designated as *theirs* the righteousness which is of the law, and as *God's* that which man receives from [God](#), hear what he says in another passage, when speaking of Christ: "For whose sake I counted all things not only as loss, but I deemed them to be dung, that I might win Christ, and be found in Him—not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the [faith](#) of [Christ](#), which is of [God](#)." [Philippians 3:8-9](#) Now what does he mean by "not having my own righteousness, which is of the law," when the law is really not his at all, but God's,—except this, that he called it his own righteousness, although it was of the law, because he thought he could fulfil the law by his own will, without the aid of [grace](#) which is through [faith](#) in Christ? Wherefore, after saying, "Not having my own righteousness, which is of the law," he immediately subjoined, "But that which is through the [faith](#) of [Christ](#), which is of [God](#)." This is what they were [ignorant](#) of, of whom he says, "Being [ignorant](#) of God's righteousness,"—that is, the righteousness which is of God (for it is given not by the letter, which kills, but by the life-giving Spirit), "and wishing to establish their own righteousness," which he expressly described as the righteousness of the law, when he said, "Not having my own righteousness, which is of the law;" they were not subject to the righteousness of [God](#),—in other words, they submitted not themselves to the [grace](#) of [God](#). For they were under the law, not under [grace](#), and therefore [sin](#) had dominion over

them, from which a man is not freed by the law, but by [grace](#). On which account he elsewhere says, "For [sin](#) shall not have dominion over you; because you are not under the law, but under [grace](#)." [Romans 6:14](#) Not that the law is [evil](#); but because they are under its power, whom it makes guilty by imposing commandments, not by aiding. It is by [grace](#) that any one is a doer of the law; and without this [grace](#), he who is placed under the law will be only a hearer of the law. To such [persons](#) he addresses these words: "You who are justified by the law are fallen from [grace](#)." [Galatians 5:4](#)

Chapter 25 [XIII.]—As The Law is Not, So Neither is Our Nature Itself that Grace by Which We are Christians.

Now who can be so insensible to the words of the apostle, who so foolishly, nay, so insanely [ignorant](#) of the purport of his statement, as to venture to affirm that the law is [grace](#), when he who [knew](#) very well what he was saying emphatically declares, "You who are justified by the law are fallen from [grace](#)"? Well, but if the law is not [grace](#), seeing that in order that the law itself may be kept, it is not the law, but only [grace](#) which can give help, will not nature at any rate be [grace](#)? For this, too, the [Pelagians](#) have been bold enough to aver, that [grace](#) is the nature in which we were created, so as to possess a rational [mind](#), by which we are enabled to understand,—formed as we are in the image of [God](#), so as to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creeps upon the earth. This, however, is not the [grace](#) which the apostle commends to us through the [faith](#) of [Jesus Christ](#). For it is certain that we possess this nature in common with ungodly men and unbelievers; whereas the [grace](#) which comes through the [faith](#) of Jesus Christ belongs only to them to whom the [faith](#) itself appertains. "For all [men](#) have not [faith](#)." [Now, as the apostle, with perfect truth](#), says to those who by wishing to be justified by the law have fallen from [grace](#), "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain;" [Galatians 2:21](#) so likewise, to those who think that the [grace](#) which he commends and [faith](#) in Christ receives, is nature, the same language is with the same degree of [truth](#) applicable: if righteousness come from nature, then Christ is dead in vain. But the law was in [existence](#) up to that time, and it did not justify; and nature [existed](#) too, but it did not justify. It was not, then, in vain that Christ died, in order that the law might be fulfilled through Him who said, "I have come not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it;" [Matthew 5:17](#) and that our nature, which was lost through Adam, might through Him be recovered, who said that "He was come to seek and to save that which was lost;" in whose coming the old fathers likewise who loved God [believed](#).

Chapter 26.—The Pelagians Contend that the Grace, Which is Neither the Law Nor Nature, Avails Only to the Remission of Past Sins, But Not to the Avoidance of Future Ones.

They also maintain that God's [grace](#), which is given through the [faith](#) of [Jesus Christ](#), and which is neither the law nor nature, avails only for the remission of [sins](#) that have been committed, and not for the shunning of future ones, or the subjugation of those which are now assailing us. Now if all this were [true](#), surely after offering the petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," we could hardly go on and say, "And lead us not into [temptation](#)." [Matthew 6:12-13](#) The former petition we present that our [sins](#) may be forgiven; the latter, that they may be avoided or subdued,—a favour which we should by no means beg of our Father who is in heaven if we were able to accomplish it by the [virtue](#) of our human will. Now I strongly advise and earnestly require your Love to read attentively the book of the blessed Cyprian which he wrote *On the Lord's Prayer*. As far as the Lord shall assist you, understand it, and commit it to memory. In this work you will see how he so appeals to the [free will](#) of those whom he edifies in his treatise, as to show them, that whatever they have to fulfil in the law, they must ask for in the [prayer](#). But this, of course, would be utterly empty if the human will were sufficient for the performance without the help of [God](#).

Chapter 27 [XIV.]—Grace Effects the Fulfilment of the Law, the Deliverance of Nature, and the Suppression of Sin's Dominion.

It has, however, been shown to demonstration that instead of really maintaining [free will](#), they have only inflated a theory of it, which, having no stability, has fallen to the ground. Neither the [knowledge](#) of God's law, nor nature, nor the mere remission of [sins](#) is that [grace](#) which is given to us through [our Lord Jesus Christ](#); but it is this very [grace](#) which accomplishes the fulfilment of the law, and the liberation of nature, and the removal of the dominion of [sin](#). Being, therefore, convicted on these points, they resort to another expedient, and endeavour to show in some way or other that the [grace](#) of God is given us according to our merits. For they say: "Granted that it is not given to us according to the merits of good works, inasmuch as it is through it that we do any good thing, still it is given to us according to the merits of a good will; for," say they, "the good will of him who [prays](#) precedes his [prayer](#), even as the [will](#) of the believer preceded his [faith](#), so that according to these merits the [grace](#) of God who hears, follows."

Chapter 28.—Faith is the Gift of God.

I have already discussed the point concerning [faith](#), that is, concerning the [will](#) of him who believes, even so far as to show that it appertains to [grace](#),—so that the apostle did not tell us, "I have obtained mercy because I was faithful;" but he said, "I have obtained mercy in order to be faithful." [1 Corinthians 7:25](#) And there are many other passages of similar import,—among them that in which he bids us "think soberly, according as God has dealt out to every man the proportion of [faith](#);" [Romans 12:3](#) and that which I have already quoted: "By [grace](#) are you saved through [faith](#); and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of [God](#);" [Ephesians 2:8](#) and again another in the same Epistle to the Ephesians: "Peace be to the brethren, and [love](#) with [faith](#), from [God](#) the [Father](#), and the [Lord Jesus](#)

Christ;" [Ephesians 6:23](#) and to the same effect that passage in which he says, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to [believe](#) in Him, but also to suffer for His sake." [Philippians 1:29](#) Both alike are therefore due to the [grace](#) of [God](#),—the [faith](#) of those who [believe](#), and the patience of those who suffer, because the apostle spoke of both as *given*. Then, again, there is the passage, especially noticeable, in which he says, "We, having the same spirit of [faith](#)," [2 Corinthians 4:13](#) for his phrase is not "*the knowledge of faith*," but "*the spirit of faith*;" and he expressed himself thus in order that we might understand how that [faith](#) is given to us, even when it is not sought, so that other blessings may be granted to it at its request. For "how," says he, "shall they call upon Him in whom they have not [believed](#)?" [Romans 10:14](#) The spirit of [grace](#), therefore, causes us to have [faith](#), in order that through [faith](#) we may, on [praying](#) for it, obtain the ability to do what we are commanded. On this account the apostle himself constantly puts [faith](#) before the law; since we are not able to do what the law commands unless we obtain the strength to do it by the [prayer](#) of [faith](#).

Chapter 29.—God is Able to Convert Opposing Wills, and to Take Away from the Heart Its Hardness.

Now if [faith](#) is simply of [free will](#), and is not given by [God](#), why do we [pray](#) for those who will not [believe](#), that they may [believe](#)? This it would be absolutely useless to do, unless we [believe](#), with perfect propriety, that Almighty God is able to turn to belief wills that are perverse and opposed to [faith](#). Man's [free will](#) is addressed when it is said, "Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." But if God were not able to remove from the human heart even its obstinacy and hardness, He would not say, through the [prophet](#), "I will take from them their heart of stone, and will give them a heart of flesh." [Ezekiel 11:19](#) That all this was foretold in reference to the [New Testament](#) is shown clearly enough by the apostle when he says, "You are our epistle, . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living [God](#); not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." [2 Corinthians 3:2-3](#) We must not, of course, suppose that such a phrase as this is used as if those might live in a fleshly way who ought to live spiritually; but inasmuch as a stone has no feeling, with which man's hard heart is compared, what was there left Him to compare man's intelligent heart with but the flesh, which possesses feeling? For this is what is said by the [prophet](#) Ezekiel: "I will give them another heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their [God](#), says the Lord." [Ezekiel 11:19-20](#) Now can we possibly, without extreme absurdity, maintain that there previously [existed](#) in any man the good merit of a good will, to entitle him to the removal of his stony heart, when all the while this very heart of stone signifies nothing else than a will of the hardest kind and such as is absolutely inflexible against God? For where a good will precedes, there is, of course, no longer a heart of stone.

Chapter 30.—The Grace by Which the Stony Heart is Removed is Not Preceded by Good Deserts, But by Evil Ones.

In another passage, also, by the same [prophet, God](#), in the clearest language, shows us that it is not owing to any good merits on the part of [men](#), but for His own name's sake, that He does these things. This is His language: "This I do, O house of [Israel](#), but for mine [holy](#) name's sake, which you have profaned among the [heathen](#), whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the [heathen](#), which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the [heathen](#) shall [know](#) that I am the Lord, says the [Lord God](#), when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the [heathen](#), and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle you with clean water, and you shall be clean: from all your own filthiness, and from all your [idols](#) will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and the stony heart shall be taken away out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and will [cause](#) you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them." [Ezekiel 36:22-27](#) Now who is so blind as not to see, and who so stone-like as not to feel, that this [grace](#) is not given according to the merits of a good will, when the Lord declares and testifies, "It is I, O house of [Israel](#), who do this, but for my [holy](#) name's sake"? Now why did He say "It is I that do it, but for my [holy](#) name's sake," were it not that they should not think that it was owing to their own good merits that these things were happening, as the [Pelagians](#) hesitate not unblushingly to say? But there were not only no good merits of theirs, but the Lord shows that [evil](#) ones actually preceded; for He says, "But for my [holy](#) name's sake, *which you have profaned among the [heathen](#).*" Who can fail to observe how dreadful is the [evil](#) of profaning the Lord's own [holy](#) name? And yet, for the sake of this very name of mine, says He, which you have profaned, I, even I, will make you good, but not for your own sakes; and, as He adds, "I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the [heathen](#), which you have profaned in the midst of them." He says that He sanctifies His name, which He had already declared to be [holy](#). Therefore, this is just what we [pray](#) for in the Lord's Prayer—"Hallowed be Your name." We ask for the hallowing among [men](#) of that which is in itself undoubtedly always [holy](#). Then it follows, "And the [heathen](#) shall [know](#) that I am the Lord, says the [Lord God](#), when I shall be sanctified in you." Although, then, He is Himself always [holy](#), He is, nevertheless, sanctified in those on whom He bestows His [grace](#), by taking from them that stony heart by which they profaned the name of the Lord.

Chapter 31 [XV.]—Free Will Has Its Function in the Heart's Conversion; But Grace Too Has Its.

Lest, however, it should be thought that men themselves in this matter do nothing by [free will](#), it is said in the Psalm, "Harden not your hearts;" and in Ezekiel himself, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, which you have impiously committed against me; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; and keep all my commandments. For why will

you die, O house of [Israel](#), says the Lord? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, says the Lord God: and turn ye, and live." [Ezekiel 18:31-32](#) We should remember that it is He who says, "Turn ye and live," to whom it is said in [prayer](#), "Turn us again, O God." We should remember that He says, "Cast away from you all your transgressions," when it is even He who justifies the ungodly. We should remember that He says, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit," who also promises, "I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you." [Ezekiel 36:26](#) How is it, then, that He who says, "Make you," also says, "I will give you"? Why does He command, if He is to give? Why does He give if man is to make, except it be that He gives what He commands when He helps him to [obey](#) whom He commands? There is, however, always within us a [free will](#),—but it is not always good; for it is either free from righteousness when it serves [sin](#),—and then it is [evil](#),—or else it is free from [sin](#) when it serves righteousness,—and then it is [good](#). But the [grace](#) of God is always good; and by it it comes to pass that a man is of a good will, though he was before of an [evil](#) one. By it also it comes to pass that the very good will, which has now begun to be, is enlarged, and made so great that it is able to fulfil the divine commandments which it shall wish, when it shall once firmly and perfectly wish. This is the purport of what the [Scripture](#) says: "If you will, you shall keep the commandments;" [Sirach 15:15](#) so that the man who wills but is not able [knows](#) that he does not yet fully will, and [prays](#) that he may have so great a will that it may suffice for keeping the commandments. And thus, indeed, he receives assistance to perform what he is commanded. Then is the [will](#) of use when we have ability; just as ability is also then of use when we have the will. For what does it profit us if we will what we are unable to do, or else do not will what we are able to do?

Chapter 32 [XVI.]—In What Sense It is Rightly Said That, If We Like, We May Keep God's Commandments.

The [Pelagians](#) think that they [know](#) something great when they assert that "[God](#) would not command what He [knew](#) could not be done by man." Who can be [ignorant](#) of this? But God commands some things which we cannot do, in order that we may [know](#) what we ought to ask of Him. For this is [faith](#) itself, which obtains by [prayer](#) what the law commands. He, indeed, who said, "If you will, you shall keep the commandments," did in the same book of Ecclesiasticus afterwards say, "Who shall give a watch before my mouth, and a seal of wisdom upon my lips, that I fall not suddenly thereby, and that my tongue destroy me not." [Sirach 22:27](#) Now he had certainly heard and received these commandments: "Keep your tongue from [evil](#), and your lips from speaking guile." Forasmuch, then, as what he said is [true](#): "If you will, you shall keep the commandments," why does he want a watch to be given before his mouth, like him who says in the Psalm, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth"? Why is he not satisfied with God's commandment and his own will; since, if he has the will, he shall keep the commandments? How many of God's commandments are directed against [pride](#)! He is quite aware of them; if he will, he may keep them. Why, therefore, does he shortly afterwards say, "O [God](#), Father and God of my life, give me not a [proud](#) look"? [Sirach 23:4](#) The law had long ago said to him, "You shall not [covet](#);" [Exodus 20:17](#) let

him then only will, and do what he is bidden, because, if he has the will, he shall keep the commandments. Why, therefore, does he afterwards say, "Turn away from me concupiscence"? [Sirach 23:5](#) Against luxury, too, how many commandments has God enjoined! Let a man observe them; because, if he will, he may keep the commandments. But what means that cry to [God](#), "Let not the greediness of the belly nor [lust](#) of the flesh take hold on me!"? [Sirach 23:6](#) Now, if we were to put this question to him personally, he would very rightly answer us and say, From that [prayer](#) of mine, in which I offer this particular petition to [God](#), you may understand in what sense I said, "If you will, you may keep the commandments." For it is certain that we keep the commandments if we will; but because the will is prepared by the Lord, we must ask of Him for such a force of will as suffices to make us act by the willing. It is certain that it is we that *will* when we will, but it is He who makes us will what is [good](#), of whom it is said (as he has just now expressed it), "The will is prepared by the Lord." [Proverbs 8:35](#) Of the same Lord it is said, "The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and his way does He will." Of the same Lord again it is said, "It is God who works in you, even to will!" [Philippians 2:13](#) It is certain that it is we that act when we act; but it is He who makes us act, by applying efficacious powers to our will, who has said, "I will make you to walk in my statutes, and to observe my judgments, and to do them." [Ezekiel 36:27](#) When he says, "I will make you . . . to do them," what else does He say in fact than, "I will take away from you your heart of stone," from which used to arise your inability to act, "and I will give you a heart of flesh," [Ezekiel 36:26](#) in order that you may act? And what does this promise amount to but this: I will remove your hard heart, out of which you did not act, and I will give you an [obedient](#) heart, out of which you shall act? It is He who causes us to act, to whom the human suppliant says, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth." That is to say: Make or enable me, O Lord, to set a watch before my mouth,—a benefit which he had already obtained from God who thus described its influence: "I set a watch upon my mouth."

Chapter 33 [XVII.]—A Good Will May Be Small and Weak; An Ample Will, Great Love. Operating and Co-operating Grace.

He, therefore, who wishes to do God's commandment, but is unable, already possesses a good will, but as yet a small and weak one; he will, however, become able when he shall have acquired a great and robust will. When the [martyrs](#) did the great commandments which they [obeyed](#), they acted by a great will,—that is, with great [love](#). Of this [love](#) the Lord Himself thus speaks: "Greater [love](#) has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." [John 15:13](#) In accordance with this, the apostle also says, "He that loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law. For this: You shall not commit [adultery](#), You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not [covet](#); and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, You shall [love](#) your neighbour as yourself. [Leviticus 19:18](#) Love works no ill to his neighbour: therefore [love](#) is the fulfilling of the law." [Romans 13:8-10](#) This [love](#) the Apostle Peter did not yet possess, when he for [fear](#) thrice denied the Lord. [Matthew 26:69-75](#) "There is no [fear](#) in [love](#)," says the Evangelist John in his first Epistle, "but perfect [love](#) casts out [fear](#)." [1 John 4:18](#) But yet, however small and imperfect his [love](#) was, it was not wholly

wanting when he said to the Lord, "I will lay down my life for Your sake;" [John 13:37](#) for he supposed himself able to effect what he felt himself willing to do. And who was it that had begun to give him his [love](#), however small, but He who prepares the will, and perfects by His co-operation what He initiates by His operation? Forasmuch as in beginning He works in us that we may have the will, and in perfecting works with us when we have the will. On which account the apostle says, "I am confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of [Jesus Christ](#)." [Philippians 1:6](#) He operates, therefore, without us, in order that we may will; but when we will, and so will that we may act, He co-operates with us. We can, however, ourselves do nothing to effect good works of [piety](#) without Him either working that we may will, or co-working when we will. Now, concerning His working that we may will, it is said: "It is God which works in you, even to will." [Philippians 2:13](#) While of His co-working with us, when we will and act by willing, the apostle says, "We [know](#) that in all things there is co-working for good to them that [love](#) God." What does this phrase, "all things," mean, but the terrible and cruel sufferings which affect our condition? That burden, indeed, of [Christ](#), which is heavy for our infirmity, becomes light to [love](#). For to such did the Lord say that His burden was light, [Matthew 11:30](#) as Peter was when he suffered for [Christ](#), not as he was when he denied Him.

Chapter 34.—The Apostle's Eulogy of Love. Correction to Be Administered with Love.

This charity, that is, this will glowing with intensest [love](#), the apostle eulogizes with these words: "Who shall separate us from the [love](#) of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or [persecution](#), or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? (As it is written, For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor [angels](#), nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the [love](#) of [God](#), which is in [Christ Jesus our Lord](#)." [Romans 8:35-39](#) And in another passage he says, "And yet I show unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of [men](#) and of [angels](#), and have not [love](#), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of [prophecy](#), and understand all [mysteries](#), and all [knowledge](#); and though I have all [faith](#), so that I could remove mountains, and have not [love](#), I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the [poor](#), and though I give my body to be burned, and have not [love](#), it profits me nothing. Love suffers long, and is kind; [love](#) envies not; [love](#) vaunts not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no [evil](#); rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the [truth](#); bears all things, [believes](#) all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." And a little afterwards he says, "And now abides [faith](#), hope, [love](#), these three; but the greatest of these is [love](#). Follow after [love](#)." He also says to the Galatians, "For, brethren, you have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by [love](#) serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, You shall [love](#) your neighbour as yourself." This is the same in effect as what he writes to the Romans: "He

that loves another has fulfilled the law." [Romans 13:8](#) In like manner he says to the Colossians, "And above all these things, put on [love](#), which is the bond of perfectness." [Colossians 3:14](#) And to Timothy he writes, "Now the end of the commandment is [love](#);" and he goes on to describe the quality of this [grace](#), saying, "Out of a pure heart, and of a good [conscience](#), and of [faith](#) unfeigned." [1 Timothy 1:5](#) Moreover, when he says to the Corinthians, "Let all your things be done with [love](#)," [1 Corinthians 16:14](#) he shows plainly enough that even those chastisements which are deemed sharp and bitter by those who are corrected thereby, are to be administered with [love](#). Accordingly, in another passage, after saying, "Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all [men](#)," he immediately added, "See that none render [evil](#) for [evil](#) unto any man." [Therefore, even when the unruly are corrected, it is not rendering evil for evil](#), but contrariwise, good. However, what but [love](#) works all these things?

Chapter 35.—Commendations of Love.

The Apostle Peter, likewise, says, "And, above all things, have fervent [love](#) among yourselves: for [love](#) shall cover the multitude of [sins](#)." [1 Peter 4:8](#) The Apostle James also says, "If you fulfil the royal law, according to the [Scripture](#), You shall [love](#) your neighbour as yourself, you do well." [James 2:8](#) So also the Apostle John says, "He that loves his brother abides in the right;" [1 John 2:10](#) again, in another passage, "Whosoever does not righteousness is not of [God](#), neither he that loves not his brother; for this is the message which we have heard from the beginning, that we should [love](#) one another." [1 John 3:10-11](#) Then he says again, "This is His commandment, that we should [believe](#) in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and [love](#) one another." [1 John 3:23](#) Once more: "And this commandment have we from Him that he who loves God [love](#) his brother also." [1 John 4:21](#) Then shortly afterwards he adds, "By this we [know](#) that we [love](#) the children of [God](#), when we [love God](#), and keep His commandments; for this is the [love](#) of [God](#), that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." [1 John 5:2-3](#) While, in his second Epistle, it is written, "Not as though I wrote a new commandment unto you, but that which we had from the beginning, that we [love](#) one another."

Chapter 36.—Love Commended by Our Lord Himself.

Moreover, the Lord Jesus Himself teaches us that the whole law and the [prophets](#) hang upon the two precepts of [love](#) to [God](#) and [love](#) to our neighbour. Concerning these two commandments the following is written in the [Gospel](#) according to St. Mark: "And one of the [scribes](#) came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him: Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him: The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O [Israel](#)! the Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall [love](#) the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your [soul](#), and with all your [mind](#), and with all your strength. [Deuteronomy 6:4-5](#) This is the first commandment. And the second is like it: You shall [love](#) your neighbour as yourself. [Leviticus 19:18](#) There is none other commandment greater than these." [Mark 12:28-31](#) Also, in the [Gospel](#) according to St. John, He says, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you [love](#) one another; as I have loved you, that you also [love](#) one another. By

this shall all [men know](#) that you are my [disciples](#), if you have [love](#) to one another." [John 13:34-35](#)

Chapter 37 [XVIII.]—The Love Which Fulfils the Commandments is Not of Ourselves, But of God.

All these commandments, however, respecting [love](#) or charity (which are so great, and such that whatever action a man may think he does well is by no means well done if done without [love](#)) would be given to men in vain if they had not free choice of will. But forasmuch as these precepts are given in the law, both old and new (although in the new came the [grace](#) which was promised in the old, but the law without [grace](#) is the letter which kills, but in [grace](#) the Spirit which gives life), from what source is there in men the [love](#) of [God](#) and of one's neighbour but from God Himself? For indeed, if it be not of God but of [men](#), the [Pelagians](#) have gained the victory; but if it come from [God](#), then we have vanquished the [Pelagians](#). Let, then, the Apostle John sit in judgment between us; and let him say to us, "Beloved, let us [love](#) one another." [1 John 4:7](#) Now, when they begin to extol themselves on these words of John, and to ask why this precept is addressed to us at all if we have not of our own selves to [love](#) one another, the same apostle proceeds at once, to their confusion, to add, "For [love](#) is of [God](#)." [1 John 4:7](#) It is not of ourselves, therefore, but it is of [God](#). Wherefore, then, is it said, "Let us [love](#) one another, for [love](#) is of [God](#)," unless it be as a precept to our [free will](#), admonishing it to seek the gift of God? Now, this would be indeed a thoroughly fruitless admonition if the will did not previously receive some donation of [love](#), which might seek to be enlarged so as to fulfil whatever command was laid upon it. When it is said, "Let us [love](#) one another," it is law; when it is said, "For [love](#) is of [God](#)," it is [grace](#). For God's "wisdom carries law and mercy upon her tongue." [Proverbs 3:16](#) Accordingly, it is written in the Psalm, "For He who gave the law will give blessings."

Chapter 38.—We Would Not Love God Unless He First Loved Us. The Apostles Chose Christ Because They Were Chosen; They Were Not Chosen Because They Chose Christ.

Let no one, then, deceive you, my brethren, for we should not [love](#) God unless He first loved us. John again gives us the plainest [proof](#) of this when he says, "We [love](#) Him because He first loved us." [1 John 4:19](#) Grace makes us lovers of the law; but the law itself, without [grace](#), makes us nothing but breakers of the law. And nothing else than this is shown us by the words of our Lord when He says to His [disciples](#), "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." [John 15:16](#) For if we first loved Him, in order that by this merit He might [love](#) us, then we first chose Him that we might deserve to be chosen by Him. He, however, who is the Truth says otherwise, and flatly contradicts this vain conceit of men. "You have not chosen me," He says. If, therefore, you have not chosen me, undoubtedly you have not loved me (for how could they choose one whom they did

not [love](#)?). "But I," says He, "have chosen you." And then could they possibly help choosing Him afterwards, and preferring Him to all the blessings of this world? But it was because they had been chosen, that they chose Him; not because they chose Him that they were chosen. There could be no merit in men's choice of [Christ](#), if it were not that God's [grace](#) was prevenient in His choosing them. Whence the [Apostle Paul](#) pronounces in the Thessalonians this benediction: "The Lord make you to increase and abound in [love](#) one toward another, and toward all [men](#)." [This benediction to love](#) one another He gave us, who had also given us a law that we should [love](#) each other. Then, in another passage addressed to the same church, seeing that there now [existed](#) in some of its members the disposition which he had wished them to cultivate, he says, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your [faith](#) grows exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other abounds." [This he said lest they should make a boast of the great good which they were enjoying from God](#), as if they had it of their own mere selves. Because, then, your [faith](#) has so great a growth (this is the purport of his words), and the [love](#) of every one of you all toward each other so greatly abounds, we ought to thank God concerning you, but not to praise you, as if you possessed these gifts of yourselves.

Chapter 39.—The Spirit of Fear a Great Gift of God.

The apostle also says to Timothy, "For God has not given to us the spirit of [fear](#), but of power, and of [love](#), and of a sound mind." [2 Timothy 1:7](#) Now in respect of this passage of the apostle, we must be on our guard against supposing that we have not received the spirit of the [fear](#) of [God](#), which is undoubtedly a great gift of [God](#), and concerning which the [prophet](#) Isaiah says, "The [Spirit of the Lord](#) shall rest upon you, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of [knowledge](#) and [piety](#), the spirit of the [fear](#) of the Lord." [Isaiah 11:2](#) It is not the [fear](#) with which Peter denied Christ that we have received the spirit of, but that [fear](#) concerning which Christ Himself says, "Fear Him who has power to destroy both [soul](#) and body in [hell](#); yea, I say unto you, Fear Him." [Luke 12:5](#) This, indeed, He said, lest we should deny Him from the same [fear](#) which shook Peter; for such cowardice he plainly wished to be removed from us when He, in the preceding passage, said, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." [Luke 12:4](#) It is not of this [fear](#) that we have received the spirit, but of power, and of [love](#), and of a sound mind. And of this spirit the same [Apostle Paul](#) discourses to the Romans: "We [glory](#) in tribulations, [knowing](#) that tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope makes not ashamed; because the [love](#) of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the [Holy Ghost](#), which is given unto us." Not by ourselves, therefore, but by the [Holy Ghost](#) which is given to us, does it come to pass that, through that very [love](#), which he shows us to be the gift of [God](#), tribulation does not do away with patience, but rather produces it. Again, he says to the Ephesians, "Peace be to the brethren, and [love](#) with [faith](#)." [Ephesians 6:23](#) Great blessings these! Let him tell us, however, whence they come. "From [God](#) the [Father](#)," says he immediately afterwards, "and the [Lord Jesus Christ](#)." [John 1:5](#) These great blessings, therefore, are nothing else than God's gifts to us.

Chapter 40 [XIX.]—The Ignorance of the Pelagians in Maintaining that the Knowledge of the Law Comes from God, But that Love Comes from Ourselves.

It is no wonder that light shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not. [John 1:5](#) In John's Epistle the Light declares, "Behold what manner of [love](#) the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of [God](#)." [1 John 3:1](#) And in the Pelagian writings the darkness says, "Love comes to us of our own selves." Now, if they only possessed the [true](#), that is, [Christian love](#), they would also [know](#) whence they obtained possession of it; even as the apostle [knew](#) when he said, "But we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of [God](#), that we might [know](#) the things that are freely given to us of [God](#)." [1 Corinthians 2:12](#) John says, "[God](#) is [love](#)." [1 John 4:16](#) And thus the [Pelagians](#) affirm that they actually have God Himself, not from [God](#), but from their own selves! and although they allow that we have the [knowledge](#) of the law from [God](#), they will yet have it that [love](#) is from our very selves. Nor do they listen to the apostle when he says, "Knowledge puffs up, but [love](#) edifies." [1 Corinthians 8:1](#) Now what can be more absurd, nay, what more insane and more alien from the very sacredness of [love](#) itself, than to maintain that from God proceeds the [knowledge](#) which, apart from [love](#), puffs us up, while the [love](#) which prevents the possibility of this inflation of [knowledge](#) springs from ourselves? And again, when the apostle speaks of "the [love](#) of Christ as surpassing [knowledge](#)," [Ephesians 3:19](#) what can be more insane than to suppose that the [knowledge](#) which must be subordinated to [love](#) comes from [God](#), while the [love](#) which surpasses [knowledge](#) comes from man? The [true faith](#), however, and sound doctrine declare that both graces are from [God](#); the [Scripture](#) says, "From His face comes [knowledge](#) and understanding;" [Proverbs 2:6](#) and another Scripture says, "Love is of [God](#)." [1 John 4:7](#) We read of "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding." [Isaiah 11:2](#) Also of "the Spirit of power, and of [love](#), and of a sound mind." [2 Timothy 1:7](#) But [love](#) is a greater gift than [knowledge](#); for whenever a man has the gift of [knowledge](#), [love](#) is necessary by the side of it, that he be not puffed up. For "[love](#) envies not, vaunts not itself, is not puffed up." [1 Corinthians 13:4](#)

Chapter 41 [XX.]—The Wills of Men are So Much in the Power of God, that He Can Turn Them Whithersoever It Pleases Him.

I think I have now discussed the point fully enough in opposition to those who vehemently oppose the [grace](#) of [God](#), by which, however, the human will is not taken away, but changed from bad to good, and assisted when it is [good](#). I think, too, that I have so discussed the subject, that it is not so much I myself as the inspired Scripture which has spoken to you, in the clearest testimonies of [truth](#); and if this divine record be looked into carefully, it shows us that not only men's good wills, which God Himself converts from bad ones, and, when converted by Him, directs to good actions and to [eternal](#) life, but also those which follow the world are so entirely at the disposal of [God](#), that He turns

them whithersoever He wills, and whensoever He wills,—to bestow kindness on some, and to heap punishment on others, as He Himself judges right by a counsel most secret to Himself, indeed, but beyond all [doubt](#) most righteous. For we find that some [sins](#) are even the punishment of other [sins](#), as are those "vessels of [wrath](#)" which the apostle describes as "fitted to destruction;" [Romans 9:22](#) as is also that hardening of [Pharaoh](#), the purpose of which is said to be to set forth in him the power of [God](#); as, again, is the flight of the [Israelites](#) from the face of the enemy before the city of Ai, for [fear](#) arose in their heart so that they fled, and this was done that their [sin](#) might be punished in the way it was right that it should be; by reason of which the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, "The children of [Israel](#) shall not be able to stand before the face of their enemies." What is the meaning of, "They shall not be able to stand"? Now, why did they not stand by [free will](#), but, with a will perplexed by [fear](#), took to flight, were it not that God has the lordship even over men's wills, and when He is [angry](#) turns to [fear](#) whomsoever He pleases? Was it not of their own will that the enemies of the children of [Israel](#) fought against the people of [God](#), as led by Joshua, the son of Nun? And yet the [Scripture](#) says, "It was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against [Israel](#) in battle, that they might be exterminated." [Joshua 11:20](#) And was it not likewise of his own will that the [wicked](#) son of Gera cursed King David? And yet what says David, full of [true](#), and deep, and [pious](#) wisdom? What did he say to him who wanted to smite the reviler? "What," said he, "have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? Let him alone and let him curse, because the Lord has said unto him, Curse David. Who, then, shall say, Wherefore have you done so?" [2 Samuel 16:9-10](#) And then the inspired Scripture, as if it would confirm the king's profound utterance by repeating it once more, tells us: "And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth from my bowels, seeks my life: how much more may this Benjamite do it! Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord has bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on my humiliation, and will requite me good for his cursing this day." [2 Samuel 16:11-12](#) Now what [prudent](#) reader will fail to understand in what way the Lord bade this profane man to curse David? It was not by a command that He bade him, in which case his [obedience](#) would be praiseworthy; but He inclined the man's will, which had become debased by his own perverseness, to commit this [sin](#), by His own just and secret judgment. Therefore it is said, "The Lord said unto him." Now if this person had [obeyed](#) a command of [God](#), he would have deserved to be praised rather than punished, as we [know](#) he was afterwards punished for this [sin](#). Nor is the reason an obscure one why the Lord told him after this manner to curse David. "It may be," said the humbled king, "that the Lord will look on my humiliation, and will requite me good for his cursing this day." See, then, what [proof](#) we have here that God uses the hearts of even [wicked](#) men for the praise and assistance of the good. Thus did He make use of Judas when betraying Christ; thus did He make use of the [Jews](#) when they crucified Christ. And how vast the blessings which from these instances He has bestowed upon the nations that should [believe](#) in Him! He also uses our worst enemy, the [devil](#) himself, but in the best way, to exercise and try the [faith](#) and [piety](#) of good men,—not for Himself indeed, who [knows](#) all things before they come to pass, but for our sakes, for whom it was necessary that such a discipline should be gone through with us. Did not Absalom choose by his own will the counsel which was detrimental to him? And yet the reason of his doing so was that the Lord had heard his father's [prayer](#) that it might be so. Wherefore the [Scripture](#) says that "the Lord appointed to defeat the good counsel of

Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring all [evils](#) upon Absalom." [2 Samuel 17:14](#) It called Ahithophel's counsel "*good*," because it was for the moment of advantage to his purpose. It was in favour of the son against his father, against whom he had rebelled; and it might have crushed him, had not the Lord defeated the counsel which Ahithophel had given, by acting on the heart of Absalom so that he rejected this counsel, and chose another which was not expedient for him.

Chapter 42 [XXI]—God Does Whatsoever He Wills in the Hearts of Even Wicked Men.

Who can help trembling at those judgments of God by which He does in the hearts of even [wicked](#) men whatsoever He wills, at the same time rendering to them according to their deeds? Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, rejected the salutary counsel of the old men, not to deal harshly with the people, and preferred listening to the words of the young men of his own age, by returning a rough answer to those to whom he should have spoken gently. Now whence arose such conduct, except from his own will? Upon this, however, the ten tribes of [Israel](#) revolted from him, and chose for themselves another king, even [Jeroboam](#), that the [will](#) of [God](#) in His [anger](#) might be accomplished which He had predicted would come to pass. [1 Kings 12:8-14](#) For what says the [Scripture](#)? "The king hearkened not unto the people; for the turning was from the Lord, that He might perform His saying, which the Lord spoke to Ahijah the Shilonite concerning [Jeroboam](#) the son of Nebat." [1 Kings 12:15](#) All this, indeed, was done by the [will](#) of [man](#), although the turning was from the Lord. Read the books of the Chronicles, and you will find the following passage in the second book: "Moreover, the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the [Philistines](#), and of the Arabians, that were neighbours to the [Ethiopians](#); and they came up to the land of Judah, and ravaged it, and carried away all the substance which was found in the king's house." [2 Chronicles 21:16-17](#) Here it is shown that God stirs up enemies to devastate the countries which He adjudges deserving of such chastisement. Still, did these [Philistines](#) and Arabians invade the land of Judah to waste it with no will of their own? Or were their movements so directed by their own will that the [Scripture](#) lies which tells us that "the Lord stirred up their spirit" to do all this? Both statements to be sure are [true](#), because they both came by their own will, and yet the Lord stirred up their spirit; and this may also with equal [truth](#) be stated the other way: The Lord both stirred up their spirit, and yet they came of their own will. For the Almighty sets in motion even in the innermost hearts of men the movement of their will, so that He does through their agency whatsoever He wishes to perform through them,—even He who [knows](#) not how to will anything in unrighteousness. What, again, is the purport of that which the man of God said to King Amaziah: "Let not the army of [Israel](#) go with you; for the Lord is not with [Israel](#), even with all the children of Ephraim: for if you shall think to obtain with these, the Lord shall put you to flight before your enemies: for God has power either to strengthen or to put to flight"? [2 Chronicles 25:7-8](#) Now, how does the power of God help some in [war](#) by giving them confidence, and put others to flight by injecting [fear](#) into them, except it be that He who has made all things according to His own will, in heaven and on earth, also works in the hearts of men? We read also what Joash, king of [Israel](#), said when he sent a message to Amaziah, king of Judah, who

wanted to fight with him. After certain other words, he added, "Now tarry at home; why do you challenge me to thine hurt, that you should fall, even you, and Judah with you?" [2 Kings 14:10](#) Then the [Scripture](#) has added this sequel: "But Amaziah would not hear; for it came of [God](#), that he might be delivered into their hands, because they sought after the gods of Edom." [2 Chronicles 25:20](#) Behold, now, how [God](#), wishing to punish the [sin](#) of [idolatry](#), wrought this in this man's heart, with whom He was indeed [justly angry](#), not to listen to sound advice, but to despise it, and go to the battle, in which he with his army was routed. God says by the [prophet](#) Ezekiel, "If the [prophet](#) be deceived when he has spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that [prophet](#): I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people [Israel](#)." [Ezekiel 14:9](#) Then there is the book of Esther, who was a [woman](#) of the people of [Israel](#), and in the land of their captivity became the wife of the foreign King Ahasuerus. In this book it is written, that, being driven by necessity to interpose in behalf of her people, whom the king had ordered to be slain in every part of his dominions, she [prayed](#) to the Lord. So strongly was she urged by the necessity of the case, that she even ventured into the royal presence without the king's command, and contrary to her own custom. Now observe what the [Scripture](#) says: "He looked at her like a bull in the vehemence of his indignation; and the queen was afraid, and her colour changed as she fainted; and she bowed herself upon the head of her delicate maiden which went before her. But God turned the king, and transformed his indignation into gentleness." The Scripture says in the Proverbs of Solomon, "Even as the rush of water, so is the heart of a king in God's hand; He will turn it in whatever way He shall choose." [Proverbs 21:1](#) Again, in the 104th Psalm, in reference to the Egyptians, one reads what God did to them: "And He turned their heart to [hate](#) His people, to deal subtly with His servants." Observe, likewise, what is written in the letters of the [apostles](#). In the Epistle of [Paul](#), the Apostle, to the Romans occur these words: "Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness, through the [lusts](#) of their own hearts;" [Romans 1:24](#) and a little afterwards: "For this [cause](#) God gave them up unto vile affections;" [Romans 1:26](#) again, in the next passage: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their [knowledge](#), God gave them over to a reprobate [mind](#), to do those things which are not convenient." [Romans 1:28](#) So also in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostle says of sundry [persons](#), "Inasmuch as they received not the [love](#) of the [truth](#), that they might be saved; therefore also God shall send them strong delusion, that they should [believe](#) a lie; that they all might be judged who [believed](#) not the [truth](#), but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Chapter 43.—God Operates on Men's Hearts to Incline Their Wills Whithersoever He Pleases.

From these statements of the inspired word, and from similar passages which it would take too long to quote in full, it is, I think, sufficiently clear that God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills whithersoever He wills, whether to good deeds according to His mercy, or to evil after their own deserts; His own judgment being sometimes manifest, sometimes secret, but always righteous. This ought to be the fixed and immovable conviction of your heart, that there is no unrighteousness with [God](#). Therefore, whenever you read in the [Scriptures](#) of Truth, that men are led aside, or that

their hearts are blunted and hardened by [God](#), never [doubt](#) that some ill deserts of their own have first occurred, so that they [justly](#) suffer these things. Thus you will not run counter to that proverb of Solomon: "The foolishness of a man perverts his ways, yet he blames God in his heart." [Proverbs 19:3](#) Grace, however, is not bestowed according to men's deserts; otherwise [grace](#) would be no longer [grace](#). [Romans 11:6](#) For [grace](#) is so designated because it is given gratuitously. Now if God is able, either through the agency of [angels](#) (whether good ones or [evil](#)), or in any other way whatever, to operate in the hearts even of the [wicked](#), in return for their deserts,—whose [wickedness](#) was not made by Him, but was either derived originally from Adam, or increased by their own will,—what is there to wonder at if, through the [Holy Spirit](#), He works good in the hearts of the [elect](#), who has wrought it that their hearts become good instead of [evil](#)?

Chapter 44 [XXII.]—Gratuitous Grace Exemplified in Infants.

Men, however, may suppose that there are certain good deserts which they think are precedent to justification through God's [grace](#); all the while failing to see, when they express such an opinion, that they do nothing else than deny [grace](#). But, as I have already remarked, let them suppose what they like respecting the case of adults, in the case of infants, at any rate, the [Pelagians](#) find no means of answering the difficulty. For these in receiving [grace](#) have no will; from the influence of which they can pretend to any precedent merit. We see, moreover, how they cry and struggle when they are [baptized](#), and feel the divine [sacraments](#). Such conduct would, of course, be charged against them as a great impiety, if they already had [free will](#) in use; and notwithstanding this, [grace](#) cleaves to them even in their resisting struggles. But most certainly there is no prevenient merit, otherwise the [grace](#) would be no longer [grace](#). Sometimes, too, this [grace](#) is bestowed upon the children of unbelievers, when they happen by some means or other to fall, by reason of God's secret [providence](#), into the hands of [pious persons](#); but, on the other hand, the children of [believers](#) fail to obtain [grace](#), some hindrance occurring to prevent the approach of help to rescue them in their danger. These things, no [doubt](#), happen through the secret [providence](#) of [God](#), whose judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out. These are the words of the apostle; and you should observe what he had previously said, to lead him to add such a remark. He was discoursing about the [Jews](#) and [Gentiles](#), when he wrote to the Romans—themselves [Gentiles](#)—to this effect: "For as you, in times past, have not [believed God](#), yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not [believed](#), that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy; for God has concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all." [Romans 11:30-32](#) Now, after he had thought upon what he said, full of wonder at the certain [truth](#) of his own assertion, indeed, but astonished at its great depth, how God concluded all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all,—as if doing [evil](#) that good might come,—he at once exclaimed, and said, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and [knowledge](#) of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" [Romans 11:33](#) Perverse men, who do not reflect upon these unsearchable judgments and untraceable ways, indeed, but are ever prone to censure, being unable to understand, have supposed the apostle to say, and censoriously

gloried over him for saying, "Let us do [evil](#), that good may come!" God forbid that the apostle should say so! But men, without understanding, have thought that this was in fact said, when they heard these words of the apostle: "Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound; but where [sin](#) abounded, [grace](#) did much more abound."

[Romans 5:20](#) But [grace](#), indeed, effects this purpose—that good works should now be wrought by those who previously did [evil](#); not that they should persevere in [evil](#) courses and suppose that they are recompensed with good. Their language, therefore, ought not to be: "Let us do [evil](#), that good may come;" but: "We have done [evil](#), and good has come; let us henceforth do good, that in the future world we may receive good for good, who in the present life are receiving good for [evil](#)." Wherefore it is written in the Psalm, "I will sing of mercy and judgment unto You, O Lord." When the [Son of man](#), therefore, first came into the world, it was not to judge the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. [John 3:17](#) And this dispensation was for mercy; by and by, however, He will come for judgment—to judge the quick and the dead. And yet even in this present time [salvation](#) itself does not eventuate without judgment—although it be a hidden one; therefore He says, "For judgment I have come into this world, that they which see not may see, and that they which see may be made blind." [John 9:39](#)

Chapter 45 [XXIII]—The Reason Why One Person is Assisted by Grace, and Another is Not Helped, Must Be Referred to the Secret Judgments of God.

You must refer the matter, then, to the hidden determinations of [God](#), when you see, in one and the same condition, such as all infants unquestionably have,—who derive their hereditary [evil](#) from Adam,—that one is assisted so as to be [baptized](#), and another is not assisted, so that he dies in his very bondage; and again, that one [baptized](#) person is left and forsaken in his present life, who God foreknew would be ungodly, while another [baptized](#) person is taken away from this life, "lest that [wickedness](#) should alter his understanding;" [Wisdom 4:11](#) and be sure that you do not in such cases ascribe unrighteousness or un wisdom to [God](#), in whom is the very fountain of righteousness and wisdom, but, as I have exhorted you from the commencement of this treatise, "whereto you have already attained, walk therein," and "even this shall God reveal unto you," [Philippians 3:15](#) —if not in this life, yet certainly in the next, "for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed." [Matthew 10:26](#) When, therefore, you hear the Lord say, "I the Lord have deceived that [prophet](#)," [Ezekiel 14:9](#) and likewise what the apostle says: "He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens," [Romans 9:18](#) [believe](#) that, in the case of him whom He permits to be deceived and hardened, his [evil deeds](#) have deserved the judgment; while in the case of him to whom He shows mercy, you should loyally and unhesitatingly recognise the [grace](#) of the God who "renders not [evil](#) for [evil](#); but contrariwise blessing." [1 Peter 3:9](#) Nor should you take away from [Pharaoh free will](#), because in several passages God says, "I have hardened [Pharaoh](#);" or, "I have hardened or I will harden [Pharaoh's](#) heart;" for it does not by any means follow that [Pharaoh](#) did not, on this account, harden his own heart. For this, too, is said of him, after the removal of the fly-plague from the Egyptians, in these words of the [Scripture](#): "And [Pharaoh](#) hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the

people go." [Exodus 8:32](#) Thus it was that both God hardened him by His just judgment, and [Pharaoh](#) by his own [free will](#). Be then well assured that your labour will never be in vain, if, setting before you a good purpose, you persevere in it to the last. For [God](#), who fails to render, according to their deeds, only to those whom He liberates, will then "recompense every man according to his works." [Matthew 16:27](#) God will, therefore, certainly recompense both [evil](#) for [evil](#), because He is just; and good for [evil](#), because He is [good](#); and good for good, because He is [good](#) and just; only, [evil](#) for good He will never recompense, because He is not [unjust](#). He will, therefore, recompense [evil](#) for [evil](#)—punishment for unrighteousness; and He will recompense good for [evil](#)—[grace](#) for unrighteousness; and He will recompense good for good—[grace](#) for [grace](#).

Chapter 46 [XXIV.]—Understanding and Wisdom Must Be Sought from God.

Peruse attentively this treatise, and if you understand it, give God the praise; but where you fail to understand it, [pray](#) for understanding, for God will give you understanding. Remember what the [Scriptures](#) say: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of [God](#), who gives to all [men](#) liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given to him." [James 1:5](#) Wisdom itself comes down from above, as the Apostle James himself tells us. There is, however, another wisdom, which you must repel from you, and [pray](#) against its remaining in you; this the same apostle expressed his detestation of when he said, "But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, . . . this is not the wisdom which descends from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For wherever there is envying and strife, there is also confusion, and every [evil](#) work. But the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good works, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." [James 3:14-17](#) What blessing, then, will that man not have who has [prayed](#) for this wisdom and obtained it of the Lord? And from this you may understand what [grace](#) is; because if this wisdom were of ourselves, it would not be from above; nor would it be an object to be asked for of the God who created us. Brethren, [pray](#) ye for us also, that we may live "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the [glorious](#) appearing of [our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ](#)," [Titus 2:12](#) to whom belong the [honour](#), and the [glory](#), and the kingdom, with the Father and the [Holy Ghost](#), for ever and ever. [Amen](#).