

1:12a *The One Who Has Given Me Strength*

PAUL'S HUMILITY.

CHRYSOSTOM: Consider how he abounds in the expressions of humility. For so “to me last of all he appeared,”¹ as he says. He views himself alone “as one born out of due time.” He himself is “the least of all the apostles,” and not even worthy of this appellation. And he was not content even with these, but that he might not seem in mere words to be humble-minded, he states both reasons and proofs: of his being “one born out of due time,” his seeing Jesus last; and of his being unworthy even of the name of an apostle, “his persecuting the church.” For one who is simply humble-minded sets down the reasons for his contrition. To Timothy he makes mention of these same things, saying, “I thank him who has given me strength for this, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful by appointing me to his service, though I formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted him.” HOMILIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS 38.5.

2

1:12b *He Judged Me Faithful*

LET YOUR LIFE BE OPENLY EXPOSED.

CHRYSOSTOM: If you have sinned and God has pardoned your sin, receive your pardon and give thanks. But do not be forgetful of your sin. It is not that you should fret over the thought of it, but that you may school your soul not to grow lax or relapse again into the same snares. This is what Paul did, not hiding his actions as a blasphemer, persecutor and injurer. It is as if he were saying: “Let the life of your servant be openly exposed, so that the loving kindness of the Lord might be all the more apparent. For although I have received the remission of sins, I do not reject the memory of those sins.” And this not only made transparent the loving kindness of the Lord but made the man himself the more remarkable. For when you have learned who he was before, then you will be the more astonished at him. When you see what he came to be out of what he was, then you will commend him the more. So if you have greatly sinned, you yourself upon being changed will hope all the more by seeing him. Such an example comforts those who are in despair and causes them again to stand tall. HOMILIES CONCERNING THE STATUES 12.1.3

1:13a *I Formerly Blasphemed, but I Received Mercy*

AN APPARENT CONTRADICTION.

AUGUSTINE: We heard the reading from the apostle, and perhaps some of you may be worried by what is written there, “According to the justice which is from the law, I was without reproach. Whatever was a gain for me, that I have regarded as a dead loss on account of Christ.”⁴ Cf. Phil 3:6–7. Then he went on to say, “I have reckoned it to be not only a dead loss, but even muck, that I may gain Christ and may be found in him, not having my own justice which is from the law, but the justice which is from the faith of Jesus Christ.”⁵ The question is, how could he consider conducting himself without reproach according to the justice which is from the law, to be so much muck and loss? After all, who gave the law? ... But let us listen to what he says in another place, “It was not as a result of works,” he says, “which we have done ourselves, but according to his own mercy that he saved us, by means of the bath of rebirth.”⁶ And again, “I, who was previously a blasphemer and persecutor, and an overbearing man; but I obtained mercy,” and so on.⁷ On the one hand he affirmed that he conducted himself without reproach; on the other he confessed he had been a sinner of such proportions that no sinners need despair of themselves, precisely because even Paul had found remission. SERMONS 170.1.⁸

FREE TO FALL, HELPLESS TO RISE.

AUGUSTINE: From being a persecutor he was changed into “a preacher and the teacher of the nations.”⁹ “Previously,” he says, “I was a blasphemer and persecutor and an insolent man. But the reason I obtained mercy was this, that Christ Jesus might demonstrate his forbearance first of all in me, and for the instruction of those who were going to trust him for eternal life.”¹⁰ It is by the grace of God, you see, that we are saved from our sins, in which we are languishing. God alone is the medicine that cures the soul. The soul was well able to injure itself but quite unable to cure itself. In the body, too, after all, people have it in their power to get sick, but not equally in their power to get better. I mean, if they exceed the proper limits, and live self-indulgent lives and do all the things that undermine the constitution and are injurious to health, the day comes, if that’s what they want, when they fall sick. When they’ve so fallen, though, they don’t get better. In order to fall sick, you see, they apply themselves to self-indulgence. But in order to get better, they must apply the doctor’s services to their health.... And so it goes with the soul. SERMONS 278.1–2.¹¹

GRACE GIVEN TO THE UNWORTHY AS PURE GIFT.

AUGUSTINE: What then is this “grace for grace”?¹² By faith we first win God’s favor; and for us who were not worthy to have our sins forgiven, from the very fact that, though unworthy, we received so great a gift, it is called grace. What is grace? That which is given gratuitously. That which is bestowed, not paid back. If it was owed, recompense was paid, not grace bestowed.... Having acquired this grace of faith, you will be just by faith. “For the just man lives by faith.”¹³ And you will first win God’s favor from living by faith. When you have won God’s favor from living by faith, you will receive as a reward immortality and everlasting life. And that is grace.... Paul acknowledges this grace when he says that he had before been a blasphemer and a persecutor, and insulting, “but I obtained mercy.” TRACTATES ON JOHN 3.9– 10.¹⁴

MERCY HEALS.

PETER CHRYSOLOGUS: Paul introduces a new kind of admonition by exhorting others “by the mercy of God.”¹⁵ Why does he not exhort through God’s might, or majesty, or glory? Why by his mercy? Because it was through that mercy alone that Paul escaped from the criminal state of a persecutor and obtained the dignity of his great apostolate. He himself tells us this, “For I formerly was a blasphemer, a persecutor and a bitter adversary; but I obtained the mercy of God.”¹⁶ ... “I exhort you by the mercy of God.” Paul asks—rather, God himself is asking through Paul—for God has greater desire to be loved than feared. God is asking because he wants to be not so much a Lord as a Father. SERMONS 108.¹⁷

1:13b *Acting Ignorantly in Unbelief*

I ACTED IGNORANTLY.

CHRYSOSTOM: Why then did other Jews not obtain mercy? Because what they did, they did not ignorantly but willfully, well knowing what they did... . Thus their love of power was everywhere an obstacle in their way. When they admitted that no one can forgive sins but God alone and Christ immediately did that very thing—forgive sin—which they had confessed to be a sign of divinity, this could not be a case of ignorance. But did Paul act out of such ignorance? Paul did not act, as some other Jews did, from the love of power, but from zeal. For what was the motive of his journey to Damascus? He thought the doctrine pernicious and was afraid that the preaching of it would spread everywhere... . It is for this he condemns himself, saying, “I am not fit to be called an apostle.”¹⁸ It is for this he confesses his ignorance, which was a consequence of his disbelief. HOMILIES ON 1 TIMOTHY 3. ¹⁹

WHY THE PERSECUTOR WAS CHOSEN TO WRITE SO MANY LETTERS.

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM: At this point in my discourse I confess my amazement at the wise dispensation of the Holy Spirit, in limiting the epistles of the others to a small number but granting grace to Paul, the former persecutor, to write fourteen. For it was not as though Peter and John were less than Paul that he withheld the gift in their case—God forbid!—but that his doctrine might be beyond question, he gave the grace to the former enemy and persecutor to write more, that thus we might all be confirmed in our faith. Indeed, all were astonished at Paul and said, “Is not this he who used to make havoc” previously “and who has come here for the purpose of taking us in bonds to Jerusalem?”²⁰ Do not be astonished, Paul says, “I know that ‘it is hard for me to kick against the goad.’²¹ I know that ‘I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God,’²² but ‘I acted ignorantly.’ For I considered the preaching of Christ to be the destruction of the law, for I did not know that he came ‘to fulfill the law, not to destroy it.’²³ But ‘the grace of our Lord has abounded beyond measure in me.’” CATECHETICAL LECTURES 10.18.

²⁴

1:15a *Sure and Worthy of Full Acceptance*

WHAT THE APOSTLES RECEIVED.

ATHANASIUS: What the apostles received, they passed on without change, so that the doctrine of the mysteries (the sacraments) and Christ would remain correct. The divine Word—the Son of God—wants us to be their (the apostles’) disciples. It is appropriate for them to be our teachers, and it is necessary for us to submit to their teaching alone. Only from them and those who have faithfully taught their doctrine do we get, as Paul writes, “faithful words, worthy of full acceptance.” FESTAL LETTERS 2.7.²⁵

THE HUMAN WORD.

AUGUSTINE: We heard the blessed apostle Paul saying, “The word is human²⁶ and worthy of total acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.” So it’s a human word, and worthy of total acceptance. Why human, and not divine? Without the slightest doubt, unless this word were also divine, it would not be worthy of total acceptance. But this word is both human and divine in the same sort of way that Christ himself is both man and God. So if we are right in understanding this word to be not only human but also divine, why did the apostle prefer to call it human rather than divine? ... So the aspect he chose was the one by which Christ came into the world. He came, after all, insofar as he was man. Because insofar as he was God, he was always there. SERMONS 174.1.²⁷

THE CRITIC TAKES ON THE CRITICS.

JEROME: They ²⁸ may choose to read, “It is a man’s saying, and worthy of all acceptance.” We are content to err with the Greeks, that is to say, with the apostle himself, who spoke Greek. Our version, therefore, is, “it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance.” LETTERS 27.3. ²⁹

1:15b *He Came Into the World to Save Sinners*

A GREAT INVALID.

AUGUSTINE: There was no reason for Christ the Lord to come, except to save sinners. Eliminate diseases, eliminate wounds, and there is no call for medicine. If a great doctor has come down from heaven, a great invalid must have been lying very sick throughout the whole wide world. This invalid is the whole human race. SERMONS 175.1.³⁰

ALL WHO SIN DESERVE JUST PUNISHMENT.

AUGUSTINE: “For all have sinned,” either in Adam or by themselves, “and are deprived of the glory of God.” ³¹ Consequently, the whole human mass ought to be punished, and if the deserved punishment of damnation were rendered to all, beyond all doubt it would be justly rendered. This is why those who are liberated from it by grace are not called vessels of their own merits but “vessels of mercy.” ³² But whose mercy was it but him who sent Jesus Christ into this world to save sinners, whom he foreknew, predestined, called, justified and glorified? ³³ Hence, who could be so advanced in foolish insanity as not to render ineffable thanks to the mercy of this God who liberates those whom he has wished, considering that one could not in any way reproach the justice of God in condemning all entirely? ON NATURE AND GRACE 1.4.4– 1.5.5.³⁴

1:15c *The Foremost of Sinners*

INSTRUMENTS OF THE MIRACLE OF CONVERSION.

ORIGEN: Moreover, Paul says in the epistle to Timothy, even though he himself had later become an apostle of Jesus, “this is a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” For some unknown reason he [Celsus] forgot or did not think of saying anything about Paul, who after Jesus established the churches in Christ... . Why then is it outrageous if Jesus, wanting to show

mankind the extent of his ability to heal souls, chose infamous and most wicked men and led them on so far that they were an example of the purest moral character to those who were converted by them to the gospel of Christ? AGAINST CELSUS 1.63.38

TRUE HUMILITY.

CHRYSOSTOM: It is no humility to think that you are a sinner when you really are a sinner. But whenever one is conscious of having done many great deeds but does not imagine that he is something great in himself, that is true humility. When a man is like Paul and can say, "I have nothing on my conscience," and then can add, "But I am not justified by this," 39 and can say again, "Christ Jesus came to save sinners of whom I am the chief," that is true humility. That man is truly humble who does exalted deeds but, in his own mind, sees himself as lowly. ON THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE NATURE OF GOD 5.6.40

HOW THE FIRST

AUGUSTINE: Pay attention to the apostle Paul, "The word is faithful and worthy of total acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first." He said, "of whom I am the first." How was he the first? Weren't there so many Jews who were sinners before him? Weren't there any sinners before him in the whole human race? ... So what's the meaning of "of whom I am the first"? That I am worse than all of them. By first he meant us to understand worst... Remember Saul, and you'll discover why. Isn't he the one who wasn't satisfied with only one hand to stone Stephen, and who took care of the coats of the others? Isn't he the one who persecuted the church everywhere? ... So he it is who was the number one persecutor. There was none worse than he. SERMONS 175.6–7.41

1:16a *For This Reason*

HIS CALLING BY GRACE.

CHRYSOSTOM: God indeed says that he called Paul on account of his excellent capacity, as he said to Ananias, "for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings." 48 That is to say, he was capable of service and the accomplishment of great deeds. God gives this as the reason for his call. But Paul himself everywhere ascribes it to grace and to God's inexpressible mercy. He says this in the words, "I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience for an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. "COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS 1.49

1:16b For an Example

HIS FRANK REVELATION OF HIS SINS.

CHRYSOSTOM: Paul pointed out to all the deeds he had dared to commit before. He thought that it was better for his former life to be publicized to all in order to make evident the greatness of the gift of God than to cover up his ineffable and indescribable mercy by shrinking from proclaiming his own sins to all. He therefore recounted in detail his persecutions, his plots, his fights against the church. He says, "I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God";⁵⁰ and again, "that Jesus came to save sinners of whom I am the chief." And once more, "You have heard of my former way of life in Judaism; how beyond all measure I persecuted the church of God and ravaged it."⁵¹ Indeed, to give, as it were, some kind of return to Christ for his long-suffering toward him, by telling plainly what sort he was and what an enemy and foe he had saved, he very frankly revealed the battle which in the beginning he had waged with consuming zeal against Christ. And because of this he held out good hope even to those who had despaired of themselves. HOMILIES ON JOHN 10.1.⁵²

THE DOCTOR'S TEST CASE.

AUGUSTINE: So note how this Saul, later Paul, ironically "congratulates himself" on having attained to the mercy of God, because he was found to be the first, that is the most outstanding, in sins! ... This was so that others could all say to themselves, "if Paul was cured, why should I despair? If such a desperately sick man was cured by such a great physician, who am I, not to fit those hands to my wounds, not to hasten to the care of those hands?" That people might be able to say that sort of thing, that's why Saul was made into an apostle out of a persecutor. When a doctor comes to a new place, he looks for someone there who's been despaired of and cures him, even if he finds he's very poor, provided he finds him a desperate case. He is not looking for a fee but displaying his skill. SERMONS 175.9.⁵³

STILL MAKING A BEGINNING.

ISAAC OF NINEVEH: We bring to mind how the holy apostle Paul recounts his transgressions and puts his soul in the last and nethermost place, saying, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." ... When and at what time did he say this? After great struggles, after mighty works, after the preaching of the gospel of Christ which he proclaimed throughout the whole world, after continual deaths and manifold tribulations which he suffered from the Jews and from the heathen. Even then he saw himself as only making a beginning. He was of the opinion not merely that he had not yet attained to

purity of soul but that he would not even number himself among the disciples of Christ, as was fitting. AN EPISTLE TO ABBA SYMEON OF CAESAREA.⁵⁴

1:17 *To the King of Ages*

THE DOXOLOGY.

CHRYSOSTOM: We must first turn our words to prayer. I say this because, sometimes, when prayer accompanies a teaching, it will serve to provide us with a demonstration of the things we are seeking to prove.... And Paul often does this at the beginning of his epistles. He first mentions God and then does not go on to his teaching until he pays to God the glory and praise due to him. Listen: "To the King of ages, the immortal, the invisible, the only God of wisdom, be honor and glory for ever and ever! Amen." ON THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE NATURE OF GOD 3.2.⁵⁵

DISTINGUISHABLE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

GREGORY OF NYSSA: We know that of all the names by which Deity is indicated some are expressive of the Divine majesty, employed and understood absolutely, and some are assigned with reference to the operations over us and all creation. When the apostle says, "Now to the immortal, invisible, only wise God," and the like, by these titles he suggests conceptions which represent to us the transcendent power. In other cases, however, God is spoken of in the Scriptures as gracious, merciful, full of pity, true, good, Lord, Physician, Shepherd, Way, Bread, Fountain, King, Creator, Artificer, Protector, Who is over all and through all, Who is all in all; these and similar titles contain the declaration of the operations of the Divine loving kindness in the creation. AGAINST EUNOMIUS 2.11.⁵⁶

THE COMMUNION OF FATHER AND SON.

RUFINUS OF AQUILEIA: He is the only Son of God, our Lord. For he is born One of One, because there is one brightness of light, and there is one word of the understanding. Neither does an incorporeal generation degenerate into the plural number or suffer division. The One who is born is in no way separated from the One who gives life. He is the one and only, the unique. He is as thought is to the mind, as wisdom is to the wise, as a word is to the understanding, as valor is to the brave. As the Father is said by the apostle to be "alone wise," so likewise the Son alone is called wisdom. He is then the "only Son." In glory, everlastingness, virtue, dominion, power, he is what the Father is. Yet all these he has not unoriginately as the Father but from the Father, as the Son, without beginning and equal. Although he is

the head of all things, yet the Father is the head of him. For so it is written, “The head of Christ is God.” 57
COMMENTARY ON THE APOSTLES’ CREED 6.58

THE VISION OF GOD.

AUGUSTINE: In order to attain that vision by which we see God as he is, he has warned us that our hearts must be cleansed. As objects are called visible in our fashion of speaking, so God is called invisible 59 lest he be thought to be a material body. Yet he will not deprive pure hearts of the contemplation of his essence, since this great and sublime reward is promised, on the Lord’s own word, to those who worship and love God. At the time when he appeared visibly to bodily eyes, he promised that his invisible being also would be seen by the clean of heart, “He that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.” 60 It is certain that this nature of his, which he shares with the Father, is equally as invisible as it is equally incorruptible. LETTERS 147.19.48.61

LIGHT UNAPPROACHABLE.

JEROME: But if you think that God is seen by those who are pure in heart in this world, why did Moses, who had previously said, “I have seen the Lord face to face, and my life is preserved,” afterwards plead that he might see him distinctly? And because he said that he had seen God, the Lord told him, “You cannot not see my face. For no one shall see my face and live.” 62 For this reason also the apostle calls him the only invisible God, who dwells in light unapproachable, whom no man has seen nor can see. AGAINST THE PELAGIANS 3.12.63

UNBOUNDED ALMIGHTY.

AUGUSTINE: So this faith is also a rule for salvation, to “believe in God the Father almighty,” creator of all things, “king of the ages, immortal and invisible.” He is indeed the almighty God who at the origin of the world made all things out of nothing. He is before the ages and made and governs the ages. He doesn’t, after all, grow with time, or stretch out in space, nor is he shut in or bounded by any material. He abides with and in himself as full and perfect eternity, which neither human thought can comprehend nor tongue describe. SERMONS 215.2.64

EQUALLY INVISIBLE AND IMMORTAL.

AUGUSTINE: Let us hold firmly that Father and Son and Holy Spirit in their own proper nature, their proper substance, are together and equally invisible. We believe them to be together and equally immortal, together and equally imperishable. There is one place where the apostle states all these things

simultaneously, “Now to the king of ages, immortal, invisible, imperishable, to the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” SERMONS 277.15.⁶⁵

1:18a *Timothy, My Son*

FATHERLY AUTHORITY.

CHRYSOSTOM: When again he speaks of a charge, which implies something burdensome, he adds, “This charge I commit to you, my son Timothy.” He charges him as his son, not so much with arbitrary or despotic authority. Rather as a father, he says, “My son, Timothy.” HOMILIES ON 1 TIMOTHY 5.⁶⁷

1:18b *In Accordance with the Prophetic Utterances*

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

CHRYSOSTOM: The offices of teacher and priest are of great dignity, and to bring forward one that is worthy requires God’s own calling. So it was of old, and so it is now. This choice is to be made apart from human sentiments, not looking to any temporal consideration, swayed neither by friendship nor by enmity... . In those days the calling of a priest was “in accordance with prophecy.” But what does that imply? That nothing human is to interfere with the leading of the Holy Spirit. For prophecy is not only the telling of things future but also of the present. HOMILIES ON 1 TIMOTHY 5.⁶⁹

1:19 *Shipwreck of Their Faith*

REFUSAL OF THE PILOT.

AMBROSE: The truth of the Lord encompasses him, so that he is not afraid of the terror of the night or of the thing that walks about in darkness. ⁷² Therefore, “Zabulon shall dwell by the sea. “Thus he may look upon the shipwrecks of others while himself free from danger. He may behold others driven here and there on the sea of this world, those who are borne about by every wind of doctrine, while himself persevering on the ground of an immovable faith. THE PATRIARCHS 5.26–27.⁷³

REJECTION OF DUALISM.

ATHANASIUS: But the sectarians, who have fallen away from the teaching of the church and made shipwreck concerning the faith, wrongly think that evil has some sort of eternal existence. They arbitrarily imagine another god besides the true One, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They fantasize that he is the unmade producer of evil and the head of wickedness, who is also artificer of creation. These men one can easily refute, not only from the divine Scriptures but also from the human understanding itself, the very source of these insane imaginations. *AGAINST THE HEATHEN 6.3.*⁷⁴

BLUNDERS FROM ENEMIES WITHIN.

BASIL THE GREAT: What storm at sea was ever so fierce and wild as this tempest⁷⁵ within the churches? In it every landmark of the Fathers has been moved. Every foundation, every bulwark of opinion has been shaken. Everything buoyed up on the unsound is dashed about and shaken down. We attack one another. We are overthrown by one another. If our enemy is not the first to strike us, we are wounded by the comrade at our side. If an enemy soldier is stricken and falls, his fellow soldier tramples him down. There is at least this bond of union between us that we hate our common foes, but no sooner has the enemy gone by than we find enemies in one another. And who could make a complete list of all the wrecks? Some have gone to the bottom on the attack of the enemy, some through the unsuspected treachery of their allies, some from the blundering of their own officers. We see, as it were, whole churches, crews and all, dashed and shattered upon the sunken reefs of deceitful teaching, while others of the enemies of the Spirit of salvation have seized the helm and made shipwreck of the faith. *ON THE SPIRIT 30.77.*⁷⁶

SWAMPED BY WAVES.

CHRYSOSTOM: In all circumstances, beloved, we need faith—faith, the mother of virtues, the medicine of salvation—without it we cannot grasp any teaching on sublime matters. But those who are without faith are like people trying to cross the sea without a ship. They are able to swim for a while by using hands and feet, but when they have gone farther out they are soon swamped by the waves. So, also, those who have recourse to their own reasoning before accepting any knowledge are inviting shipwreck, even as Paul speaks of those “who have made shipwreck of the faith.” *HOMILIES ON JOHN 33.1.*⁷⁷

PROFANE NOVELTIES.

VINCENT OF LÉRINS: Innumerable are the examples we must omit, since we wish to be brief. But all of them make it sufficiently clear that the customary method of most heresies consists in rejoicing in

“profane novelties,” in loathing traditional knowledge, which some rejecting have made shipwreck concerning the faith. ⁷⁸ Conversely, it is proper for Catholics to guard the “deposit,” handed down by the holy fathers, to condemn profane novelties, and, as the apostle said, “before and now I say again,” let him be anathema “if any one preach to you a gospel besides that which you have received.” ⁷⁹ COMMONITORIES 24. ⁸⁰

1:20a *Hymenaeus and Alexander*

THE NATURE OF THEIR ERROR.

ATHANASIUS: When one knows properly these timely points, ⁸¹ his understanding of the faith is right and healthy. But if he mistakes any such points, he quickly falls into heresy. Thus Hymenaeus and Alexander and their fellows were untimely when they said that the resurrection had already been. The Galatians were untimely in the other direction in making much of circumcision now. AGAINST THE ARIANS 1.54.2.

⁸²

1:20b *Delivered to Satan That They May Learn*

SEPARATED FROM THE FOLD.

CHRYSOSTOM: As executioners, though themselves laden with numberless crimes, are made the correctors of others; so it is here with the evil spirit... . He [the offender] was then immediately expelled from the common assembly, separated from the fold. They became deserted and destitute. They were delivered to the wolf. HOMILIES ON 1 TIMOTHY 5.⁸⁶

INCREASING CONSTRAINTS.

BASIL THE GREAT: Those whom the usual penalties do not recall to their senses, and even exclusion from prayers does not lead to repentance, must be subjected to the canons given by the Lord. For it has been written, “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault, between you and him. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two others along with you. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” ⁸⁹ Now, this truly has been done in the case of this man. Once he was accused; in the presence of one or two he was convicted; a third time, in the presence of the church. Since, therefore, we have solemnly protested to him and he has not acquiesced, let him for the future be excommunicated. And let it be announced to all

the village that he is not to be admitted to any participation in the ordinary relations of life, so that, by our refusal to associate with him, he may become wholly the food for the devil. LETTERS 288.⁹⁰

CORRECTION A GOOD WORK.

AUGUSTINE: Let us learn, brethren, when actions are alike, to distinguish the intentions of the actors; otherwise, if we shut our eyes to this, we might judge falsely, and we might accuse well-wishers of doing us harm. Likewise, when the same apostle says that he delivered up certain men to Satan, “that they may learn not to blaspheme,” did he render evil for evil, or did he, rather, judge that it was a good work to correct evil men even by evil? LETTERS 93.2.7.⁹¹

OUT OF LOVE.

AUGUSTINE: Out of love the apostle delivered a man up to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. REPLY TO FAUSTUS THE MANICHAEAN 22.79.⁹²

WHO MADE THE DEVIL?

AUGUSTINE: Again they say, “Who made the devil?” He made himself; for the devil was made by sinning, not by nature. “Or,” they say, “God should not have made him if he knew that he would sin.” On the contrary, why should he not have made him? For through his own justice and providence God corrects many as a result of the malice of the devil. Or have you perhaps not heard the apostle Paul saying, “And I handed them over to Satan so that they might learn not to blaspheme”? ON GENESIS, AGAINST THE MANNICHAEANS 2.28.42.⁹³