

## ***2:13 Sanctification by the Spirit***

### **Sanctification Is One.**

Ambrose: And the apostle also teaches that the Holy Spirit sanctifies. For he speaks thus, “We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brothers dearly beloved of the Lord; because God chose you as first fruits for salvation, in sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.” So, then, the Father sanctifies, the Son also sanctifies, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies; but the sanctification is one, and the grace of the sacrament is one. Of the Holy Spirit 3.4.27–28.<sup>1</sup>

## ***2:14–15 The Traditions You Were Taught***

### **The Creed.**

Cyril of Jerusalem: In learning and professing the faith, embrace and guard that only which is now delivered to you by the church and confirmed by all the Scriptures. For since not everyone has the education and the leisure required to read and know the Scriptures, to prevent the soul perishing from ignorance, we sum up the whole doctrine of the faith in a few lines.... For the present, just listen and memorize the creed as I recite it, and you will receive in due course the testimony from Scripture of each of its propositions. For the articles of faith have not been composed to please human desire, but the most important points collected from the Scriptures make up one complete teaching of the faith. And just as the mustard seed in a small grain contains in embryo many future branches, so also the creed embraces in a few words all the religious knowledge in both the Old and New Testament. Pay attention, therefore, brothers, and cling to the teachings which are now delivered to you, and “write them on the tablet of your heart.”<sup>2</sup> Catechetical Lectures 5.12.<sup>3</sup>

## ***2:15 By Word of Mouth or by Letter***

### **Unwritten Tradition.**

Basil the Great: In answer to the objection that the doxology in the form “with the Spirit” has no written authority, we maintain that if there is no other instance of that which is unwritten, then this must not be received. But if the greater number of our mysteries are admitted into our constitution without written authority, then, in company with the many others, let us receive this one. For I hold it apostolic to abide

also by the unwritten traditions. “I praise you,” it is said, “that you remember me in all things and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you,”<sup>4</sup> and “Hold fast the traditions which you have been taught whether by word or by our epistle.” On the Spirit 29.71.<sup>5</sup>

### **Delivered Without Writing.**

Chrysostom: Paul did not instruct Timothy in his duty through letters alone, but also through the spoken word. He shows this, both in many other passages, as where he says, “whether by word or our epistle,” and especially here.<sup>6</sup> Let us not, therefore, suppose that Paul spoke anything imperfectly that was related to doctrine. For he delivered many things to Timothy without writing. He reminds him of these when he says, “Hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard from me.” After the manner of artists, I have impressed on you the image of virtue, fixing in your soul a sort of rule, model and outline of all things pleasing to God. Therefore, cling to these things, and whether you are meditating on any matter of faith or love, or of a sound mind, form your ideas from what I have taught you. It will not be necessary to consult others for examples, when all has been deposited within yourself. Homilies on Second Timothy 3.1.7

## ***3:1 Speed on and Triumph***

### **The Soul Hastens.**

Ambrose: Good, indeed, is prudence, but mercy is sweet. Few attain the former, whereas the latter comes to all men. “By reason of your loving-kindness, the souls renewed in the spirit love you.” On this account it is also said to the soul, “Your youth shall be renewed like the eagle’s.”<sup>1</sup> For the psalmist spoke to the soul and said, “Bless the Lord, O my soul.”<sup>2</sup> And therefore the soul hastens to the Word and asks that she be drawn to him, so that she may not, perhaps, be left behind, for “the Word of God runs and is not bound.” Isaac, or The Soul 3.10.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Word Is Powerful.**

Augustine: He also says to the Thessalonians, “For the rest, brothers, pray for us that the word of the Lord may run and may be glorified even as among you; that we may be delivered from troublesome and evil men, for not all men have faith.” How else could the word of God run and be glorified except by the conversion to the faith of those to whom it is preached, when Paul says to present believers, “Even as among you”? Surely he knows that this is accomplished by him to whom he wishes prayer to be made

that this may be so, and also that he may be delivered through their prayers from troublesome and evil men. It is for this reason that he adds, “For not all men have faith,” as if to say, “The word of God will not be glorified among all, even though you are praying” because those who were likely to believe were the ones “who were ordained to life everlasting,”<sup>4</sup> predestined “to the adoption of children through Jesus Christ to himself” and chosen “in him before the foundation of the world.”<sup>5</sup> No one is so unlearned, so carnal, so slow of wit as not to see that God does what he commands us to ask him to do. Letters 217.7.27.<sup>6</sup>

### **Like Rapidly Grinding Millstones.**

Maximus of Turin: Through the operation of these millstones—the new and the old covenants—the holy church, then, acts with unceasing care so as to draw out the fine flour of a clean heart from hidden thoughts, once the roughness of sins has been scattered, and to produce spiritual food from their kernels when they have been cleansed by the heavenly commandments. The apostle Paul says about this food, “I gave you milk to drink, not food,”<sup>7</sup> and again, “Solid food is for the perfect, who have their faculties trained by habit,”<sup>8</sup> and so forth. Purifying our hearts from all that is human, the faithful soul strives to offer God as it were the finest wheat, as holy David says, “A broken spirit is a sacrifice to God.”<sup>9</sup> The gospel rushes forward with such speed, however, that only the wise know of its movement. About this speed the blessed Paul says with understanding, “May the word of God speed on and be made glorious in us.” But in the eyes of the foolish the gospel seems to stand still, I say, because they neglect its commands, for they do not believe that what has been written will come to pass. Sermons 20.4.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Significance of Mutual Intercessory Prayer.**

Augustine: With this in mind, dearly beloved, let us always look forward with longing toward our everlasting joy. Let us always pray for fortitude in our temporal labors and trials. Let us offer prayers for one another. Let my prayers be offered for you, and yours for me. And, brothers, do not think that you need my prayers, but that I have no need of yours. We have mutual need of one another’s prayers, for those reciprocal prayers are enkindled by charity and—like a sacrifice offered on the altar of piety—are fragrant and pleasing to the Lord. If the apostles used to ask for prayers on their own behalf, how much more does it behoove me to do so? For I am far from being their equal, although I long to follow their footsteps as closely as possible. But I have neither the wisdom to know nor the rashness to say what progress I have made. Sermons 13.10.<sup>11</sup>

### **3:2 Not All Have Faith**

#### **Two Kinds of Grace.**

Augustine: For a man swollen with pride in comparison to another might say, "My faith distinguishes me," or "my justice" or whatever. It is to prevent such ideas that the good teacher asks, "But what do you have that you have not received?" <sup>13</sup> Did you not receive it from him who chose to distinguish you from another? It was he who chose to give you what another did not receive. "But if you have received, why do you glory as if you had not received it?" Now I ask, is the apostle concerned here with anything else than that "He who glories should glory in the Lord"? <sup>14</sup> But nothing is so contrary to this sentiment than for anyone to glory in his own merits as if he and not the grace of God were responsible for them. I refer to that grace that distinguishes the good from the wicked, not one which is common to the good and the wicked. On this premise the grace by which we are living and rational creatures, and thus distinguished from beasts, would be enmeshed in nature. The grace by which the beautiful are distinguished from the ugly, or the intelligent from the stupid, is a grace that perceives nature. But that person whose pride the apostle was trying to restrain was not puffing himself up in comparison to the beasts, nor in comparison to the gifts of nature that might exist even in the worst of men. Rather, he was puffed up because he attributed some good thing which pertained to the morally good life to himself and not to God. Thus, he deserved to hear the rebuke, "For who distinguishes you? Or what do you have that you have not received?" For though the ability to possess faith belongs to our nature, is that also true of the actual possession of faith? "For not all men have faith," although all men have the possibility of having faith. On the Predestination of the Saints 1.5.10.<sup>15</sup>

#### **He Will Come Again As Before.**

Augustine: Then, therefore, they afterwards marveled at the fact that they saw him ascending and they rejoiced that he went up to heaven, for the precedence of the Head is the hope of the members. <sup>16</sup> Moreover, they heard the angelic message, "men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to heaven? This Jesus ... shall come in the same way as you have seen him going up to heaven." <sup>17</sup> What is the significance of "he will come in the same way"? He will come in that same form, so that the Scripture may be fulfilled, "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced." <sup>18</sup> He shall come to men; he shall come as a Man; but he shall come as the God-Man. He shall come as true God and true Man to make men like God. He has ascended as Judge of heaven; he has expressed himself as Herald of heaven. Let us stand justified so that we may not fear the judgment that is to come. As a matter of fact, he did ascend; those

who announced it to us witnessed it. The people who did not see it believed; still some incredulous persons mocked, “for not all have faith.” Sermons 265.1.19

### ***3:5 May the Lord Direct Your Hearts***

#### **No Human Motive.**

Basil the Great: We are convinced that action taken by one or two pious men is done through the counsel of the Spirit. Since there is no human motive placed before their eyes, and saintly men are moved to action not with an aim of personal advantage but after having proposed to themselves what is pleasing to God, it is evident that it is the Lord who directs their hearts. And whenever spiritual men are the initiators of plans, and the people of the Lord follow them in harmony of thought, who will doubt that the plan has been arrived at in communion with our Lord Jesus Christ, who poured out his blood for the churches? Letters 229.20