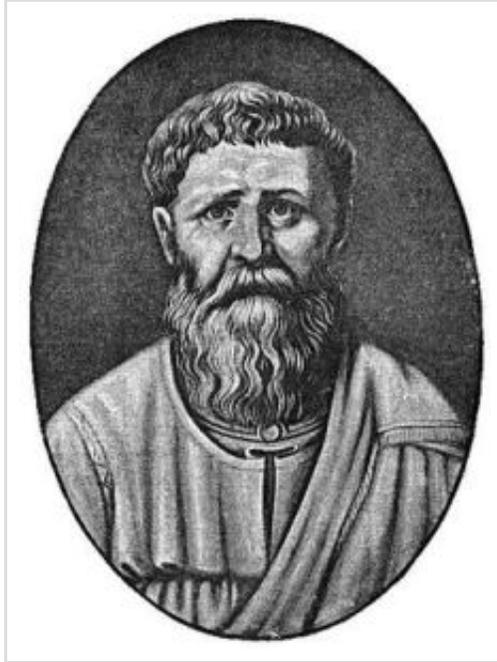


Augustine: Proto-1689 Federalist



Augustine: Proto-1689 Federalist
<http://www.1689federalism.com>
Compiled by Brandon Adams

Note:

Augustine believed in the Adamic Covenant of Works: Adam was a federal and natural representative of all men. He was working towards the reward of immutability. All his descendants broke the covenant when he sinned, imputing original sin to all of them. In this regard, he was in agreement with both 1689 Federalism and Westminster Federalism.

However, the rest of his covenant theology agreed with 1689 Federalism, in contrast to Westminster Federalism.

He believed in a Dichotomous Abrahamic Covenant wherein two distinct seeds were given two distinct promises. "[T]wo things are promised to Abraham, the one, that his seed should possess the land of Canaan... but the other far more excellent, not about the carnal but the spiritual seed, through which he is the father, not of the one Israelite nation, but of all nations who follow the footprints of his faith."

The first promise was fulfilled during Solomon's reign. The Old Covenant governed this earthly promise. Abraham's fleshly seed would still inhabit that land today if they had obeyed the law. Augustine taught both a material and formal republication of the covenant of works at Mt.

Sinai. The letter condemned men by the eternal law and was also a covenant of works for life in the land of Canaan. It was an earthly city (City of Man) that signified another heavenly city (City of God), which was the Jerusalem above. In Gal 4:22-31 Augustine identified Hagar, the bondwoman, with the Old Covenant itself, properly, and not, as Calvin, an abuse or perversion of the Old Covenant. He went so far as to say that placing the Old Covenant on par with the New Covenant in terms of its promise, was to abolish "the distinction which has been drawn by Apostolic and catholic authority." And that "as much injury is done to the New [Covenant], when it is put on the same level with the Old [Covenant], as is inflicted on the Old itself when men deny it to be the work of the supreme God of goodness [i.e. Marcion]."

The New Covenant, on the other hand, was the Jerusalem above, the freewoman, the heavenly City of God. It was the fulfillment of the second promise given to Abraham, in the death of Christ, it's mediator. However, its effect reached back in time to the fall. It was by the New Covenant alone that all men in history have been saved. "Whence we can easily see who they are that appertain to the earthly, and who to the heavenly kingdom. But then the happy persons, who even in that early age were by the grace of God taught to understand the distinction now set forth, were thereby made the children of promise, and were accounted in the secret purpose of God as heirs of the New Testament [Covenant]; although they continued with perfect fitness to administer the Old Testament [Covenant] to the ancient people of God, because it was divinely appropriated to that people in God's distribution of the times and seasons." "The men of God who at that time understood this according to the ordering of the times, were indeed the stewards and bearers of the old testament [covenant], but are shown to be the heirs of the new. Shall we deny that he belongs to the new testament [covenant] who says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me"?" In agreement with baptists, Augustine interpreted Jer 31 as referring to the blessing of regeneration and insisted that only the elect were "heirs" or members of the New Covenant. "Now all these predestinated, called, justified, glorified ones, shall know God by the grace of the new testament [covenant], from the least to the greatest of them."

Augustine agreed with 1689 Federalism, in contrast to Westminster Federalism, on the following key passages:

Jeremiah 31:33-34; Hebrews 8:6-13 (The New Covenant is entirely regenerate)

Galatians 4:22-31 (The two children refer to the two promises of the Abrahamic Covenant and the bondwoman is the Old Covenant properly)

Romans 9:8 ("They are not all Israel" = New Covenant; "who are of Israel" = Old Covenant)

2 Corinthians 3:1-11 (Letter = Old Covenant, not law abstracted from covenant)

The "covenant of grace under two administrations" is found nowhere. Instead, Augustine equates the New Covenant with what we call the Covenant of Grace and describes all men as saved through it working (what we would call) retroactively.

Take note of Augustine use of the word "testament". By it he means "covenant" unless he specifically notes he is referring to the collection of Scriptures. "Therefore, by a custom of speech already prevailing, in one way the law and all the prophets who prophesied until John are called the "Old Testament;" although this is more definitely called the "Old Instrument" rather than the "Old Testament;" "... "The fact is, that the phrase Old Testament is constantly employed in two different ways... we are accustomed, in our ordinary use of words, to

designate all those Scriptures of the law and the prophets which were given previous to the Lord's incarnation, and are embraced together by canonical authority, under the name and title of the Old Testament..."

Compare all of this with [The Covenant in the Church Fathers](#), Andrew Woolsey.

Covenant of Works

City of God

Book XVI: [The history of the city of God from Noah to the time of the kings of Israel.](#)

Chapter 27.—[Of the Male, Who Was to Lose His Soul If He Was Not Circumcised on the Eighth Day, Because He Had Broken God's Covenant.](#)

When it is said, "The male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people, because he hath broken my covenant," (Gen 17:14) some may be troubled how that ought to be understood, since it can be no fault of the infant whose life it is said must perish; nor has the covenant of God been broken by him, but by his parents, who have not taken care to circumcise him. **But even the infants, not personally in their own life, but according to the common origin of the human race, have all broken God's covenant in that one in whom all have sinned.** (Rom 5:12, 19) Now there are many things called God's covenants besides those two great ones, the old and the new, which any one who pleases may read and know. **For the first covenant, which was made with the first man, is just this: "In the day ye eat thereof, ye shall surely die."** (Gen 2:17) Whence it is written in the book called Ecclesiasticus, "All flesh waxeth old as doth a garment. For the covenant from the beginning is, Thou shall die the death." (Ecc 15:17) Now, as **the law was more plainly given afterward**, and the apostle says, "Where no law is, there is no prevarication," (Rom 4:15) on what supposition is what is said in the psalm true, "I accounted all the sinners of the earth prevaricators," (Ps 119:119) except that all who are held liable for any sin are accused of dealing deceitfully (prevaricating) with some law? If on this account, then, even the infants are, according to the true belief, born in sin, not actual but original, so that we confess they have need of grace for the remission of sins, certainly it must be acknowledged that in the same sense in which they are sinners they are also prevaricators of that law which was given in Paradise, according to the truth of both scriptures, "I accounted all the sinners of the earth prevaricators," and "Where no law is, there is no prevarication." And thus, because circumcision was the sign of regeneration, and the infant, on account of the **original sin by which God's covenant was first broken**, was not undeservedly to lose his generation unless delivered by regeneration, these divine words are to be understood as if it had been said, Whoever is not born again, that soul shall perish from his people, because he hath broken my covenant, since he also has sinned in Adam with all others. For had He said, Because he hath broken this my covenant, He would have compelled us to understand by it only this of circumcision; but since He has not expressly said what covenant the infant has broken, we are free to understand Him as speaking of that covenant of which the breach can be ascribed to an infant. Yet if any one contends that it is said of nothing else than circumcision, that in it the infant has broken the covenant of God because, he is not circumcised, he must seek some method of explanation by which it may be understood without absurdity (such as this) that he has broken the covenant, because it has been broken in him although not by him. Yet in this case also it is to be observed that the soul of the

infant, being guilty of no sin of neglect against itself, would perish unjustly, unless original sin rendered it obnoxious to punishment.

Abrahamic Covenant

City of God

Book XVI: [The history of the city of God from Noah to the time of the kings of Israel.](#)
Chapter 16.—[Of the Order and Nature of the Promises of God Which Were Made to Abraham.](#)

God's promises made to Abraham are now to be considered; for in these the oracles of our God, that is, of the true God, began to appear more openly concerning the godly people, whom prophetic authority foretold. The first of these reads thus: "And the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, and go into a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and magnify thy name; and thou shall be blessed: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all tribes of the earth be blessed." (Gen 12:1-3) **Now it is to be observed that two things are promised to Abraham, the one, that his seed should possess the land of Canaan,** which is intimated when it is said, "Go into a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation;" but **the other far more excellent, not about the carnal but the spiritual seed, through which he is the father, not of the one Israelite nation, but of all nations who follow the footprints of his faith,** which was first promised in these words, "And in thee shall all tribes of the earth be blessed."

City of God

Book XVI: [The history of the city of God from Noah to the time of the kings of Israel.](#)
Chapter 18.—[Of the Repeated Address of God to Abraham, in Which He Promised the Land of Canaan to Him and to His Seed.](#)

Abraham, then, having departed out of Haran in the seventy-fifth year of his own age, and in the hundred and forty-fifth of his father's, went with Lot, his brother's son, and Sarah his wife, into the land of Canaan, and came even to Sichem, where again he received the divine oracle, of which it is thus written: "And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said unto him, Unto thy seed will I give this land." (Gen 12:7) **Nothing is promised here about that seed in which he is made the father of all nations, but only about that by which he is the father of the one Israelite nation; for by this seed that land was possessed.**

City of God

Book XVI: [The history of the city of God from Noah to the time of the kings of Israel.](#)
Chapter 43.—[Of the Times of Moses and Joshua the Son of Nun, of the Judges, and Thereafter of the Kings, of Whom Saul Was the First, But David is to Be Regarded as the Chief, Both by the Oath and by Merit.](#)

...On the death of Moses, Joshua the son of Nun ruled the people, and led them into the land of promise, and divided it among them. By these two wonderful leaders wars were also carried on most prosperously and wonderfully, God calling to witness that they had got these victories not so much on account of the merit of the Hebrew people as on account of the sins

of the nations they subdued. After these leaders there were judges, when **the people were settled in the land of promise, so that, in the meantime, the first promise made to Abraham began to be fulfilled about the one nation, that is, the Hebrew, and about the land of Canaan; but not as yet the promise about all nations, and the whole wide world, for that was to be fulfilled, not by the observances of the old law, but by the advent of Christ in the flesh, and by the faith of the gospel.** And it was to prefigure this that it was not Moses, who received the law for the people on Mount Sinai, that led the people into the land of promise, but Joshua, whose name also was changed at God's command, so that he was called Jesus. But in the times of the judges prosperity alternated with adversity in war, according as the sins of the people and the mercy of God were displayed...

City of God

Book XVI: [The history of the city of God from Noah to the time of the kings of Israel.](#)
Chapter 2. — [At What Time the Promise of God Was Fulfilled Concerning the Land of Canaan, Which Even Carnal Israel Got in Possession.](#)

In the preceding book we said, that **in the promise of God to Abraham two things were promised from the beginning, the one, namely, that his seed should possess the land of Canaan,** which was intimated when it was said, "Go into a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation;" (Gen 12:1-2) but **the other far more excellent, concerning not the carnal but the spiritual seed, by which he is the father, not of the one nation of Israel, but of all nations who follow the footsteps of his faith,** which began to be promised in these words, "And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen 12:3) And thereafter we showed by yet many other proofs that these two things were promised. Therefore the seed of Abraham, that is, the people of Israel according to the flesh, already was in the land of promise; and there, not only by holding and possessing the cities of the enemies, but also by having kings, had already begun to reign, the promises of God concerning that people being already in great part fulfilled: not only those that were made to those three fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and whatever others were made in their times, but those also that were made through Moses himself, by whom the same people was set free from servitude in Egypt, and by whom all bygone things were revealed in his times, when he led the people through the wilderness. But neither by the illustrious leader Jesus the son of Nun, who led that people into the land of promise, and, after driving out the nations, divided it among the twelve tribes according to God's command, and died; nor after him, in the whole time of the judges, was the promise of God concerning the land of Canaan fulfilled, that it should extend from some river of Egypt even to the great river Euphrates; nor yet was it still prophesied as to come, but its fulfillment was expected. **And it was fulfilled through David, and Solomon his son, whose kingdom was extended over the whole promised space; for they subdued all those nations, and made them tributary. And thus, under those kings, the seed of Abraham was established in the land of promise according to the flesh, that is, in the land of Canaan,** so that nothing yet remained to the complete fulfillment of that earthly promise of God, except that, so far as pertains to temporal prosperity, the Hebrew nation should remain in the same land by the succession of posterity in an unshaken state even to the end of this mortal age, if it obeyed the laws of the Lord its God. But since God knew it would not do this, He used His temporal punishments also for training His few faithful ones in it, and for giving needful warning to those who should

afterwards be in all nations, **in whom the other promise, revealed in the New Testament, was about to be fulfilled through the incarnation of Christ.**

Jerusalem Above & Below

City of God

Book XVI: [The history of the city of God from Noah to the time of the kings of Israel.](#)

Chapter 2.—Of the Children of the Flesh and the Children of the Promise.

There was indeed on earth, so long as it was needed, a symbol and foreshadowing image of this city, which served the purpose of reminding men that such a city was to be rather than of making it present; and this image was itself called the holy city, as a symbol of the future city, though not itself the reality. Of this city which served as an image, and of that free city it typified, Paul writes to the Galatians in these terms: *“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond maid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bond woman was born after the flesh, but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not, for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond woman and her son: for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. And we, brethren, are not children of the bond woman, but of the free, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”* **This interpretation of the passage, handed down to us with apostolic authority, shows how we ought to understand the Scriptures of the two covenants—the old and the new. One portion of the earthly city became an image of the heavenly city, not having a significance of its own, but signifying another city, and therefore serving, or “being in bondage.”** For it was founded not for its own sake, but to prefigure another city; and this shadow of a city was also itself foreshadowed by another preceding figure. For Sarah’s handmaid Agar, and her son, were an image of this image. **And as the shadows were to pass away when the full light came, Sarah, the free woman, who prefigured the free city (which again was also prefigured in another way by that shadow of a city Jerusalem), therefore said, “Cast out the bond woman and her son; for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac,”** or, as the apostle says, “with the son of the free woman.” In the earthly city, then, we find two things—its own obvious presence, and its symbolic presentation of the heavenly city. Now citizens are begotten to the earthly city by nature vitiated by sin, but to the heavenly city by grace freeing nature from sin; whence the former are called “vessels of wrath,” the latter “vessels of mercy.” And this was typified in the two sons of Abraham,—Ishmael, the son of Agar the handmaid, being born according to the flesh, while Isaac was born of the free woman Sarah, according to the promise. Both, indeed, were of Abraham’s seed; but the one was begotten by natural law, the other was given by gracious promise. In the one birth, human action is revealed; in the other, a divine

kindness comes to light.

City of God

Book XVII: [The history of the city of God from the kings and prophets to Christ.](#)

Chapter 3.—[Of the Three-Fold Meaning of the Prophecies, Which are to Be Referred Now to the Earthly, Now to the Heavenly Jerusalem, and Now Again to Both.](#)

Wherefore just as that divine oracle to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the other prophetic signs or sayings which are given in the earlier sacred writings, so also the other prophecies from this time of the kings pertain **partly to the nation of Abraham's flesh, and partly to that seed of his in which all nations are blessed as fellow-heirs of Christ by the New Testament**, to the possessing of eternal life and the kingdom of the heavens. Therefore they pertain partly to the bond maid who gendereth to bondage, that is, the **earthly Jerusalem**, which is in bondage with her children; but partly to the free city of God, that is, the **true Jerusalem** eternal in the heavens, whose children are all those that live according to God in the earth: but there are some things among them which are understood to pertain to both,— to the bond maid properly, to the free woman figuratively. (Gal 4:22-31)

Therefore prophetic utterances of three kinds are to be found; forasmuch as there are some relating to the earthly Jerusalem, some to the heavenly, and some to both. I think it proper to prove what I say by examples. The prophet Nathan was sent to convict king David of heinous sin, and predict to him what future evils should be consequent on it. Who can question that this and the like pertain to the terrestrial city, whether publicly, that is, for the safety or help of the people, or privately, when there are given forth for each one's private good divine utterances whereby something of the future may be known for the use of temporal life? But where we read, "*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make for the house of Israel, and for the house of Judah, a new testament: not according to the testament that I settled for their fathers in the day when I laid hold of their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my testament, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the testament that I will make for the house of Israel: after those days, saith the Lord, I will give my laws in their mind, and will write them upon their hearts, and I will see to them; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people;*" (Heb 8:8-10) without doubt this is prophesied to the Jerusalem above, whose reward is God Himself, and whose chief and entire good it is to have Him, and to be His. But this pertains to both, that the city of God is called Jerusalem, and that it is prophesied the house of God shall be in it; and this prophecy seems to be fulfilled when king Solomon builds that most noble temple. For these things both happened in the earthly Jerusalem, as history shows, and were types of the heavenly Jerusalem. And this kind of prophecy, as it were compacted and commingled of both the others in the ancient canonical books, containing historical narratives, is of very great significance, and has exercised and exercises greatly the wits of those who search holy writ. For example, **what we read of historically as predicted and fulfilled in the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, we must also inquire the allegorical meaning of, as it is to be fulfilled in the seed of Abraham according to faith.** And so much is this the case, that some have thought there is nothing in these books either foretold and effected, or effected although not foretold, that does not insinuate something else which is to be referred by figurative signification to the city of God on high, and to her children who are pilgrims in this life. But if this be so, then the utterances of the prophets, or

rather the whole of those Scriptures that are reckoned under the title of the Old Testament, will be not of three, but of two different kinds. For there will be nothing there which pertains to the terrestrial Jerusalem only, if whatever is there said and fulfilled of or concerning her signifies something which also refers by allegorical prefiguration to the celestial Jerusalem; but there will be only two kinds one that pertains to the free Jerusalem, the other to both. But just as, I think, they err greatly who are of opinion that none of the records of affairs in that kind of writings mean anything more than that they so happened, so I think those very daring who contend that the whole gist of their contents lies in allegorical significations. Therefore I have said they are threefold, not two-fold. Yet, in holding this opinion, I do not blame those who may be able to draw out of everything there a spiritual meaning, only saving, first of all, the historical truth. For the rest, what believer can doubt that those things are spoken vainly which are such that, whether said to have been done or to be yet to come, they do not beseech either human or divine affairs? Who would not recall these to spiritual understanding if he could, or confess that they should be recalled by him who is able?

City of God

Book XVII: [The history of the city of God from the kings and prophets to Christ.](#)

Chapter 4.—[About the Prefigured Change of the Israelitic Kingdom and Priesthood, and About the Things Hannah the Mother of Samuel Prophetied, Personating the Church.](#)

...Therefore may the Church say, "I am made glad in Thy salvation. For there is none holy as the Lord, and none is righteous as our God;" as holy and sanctifying, just and justifying. (Rom 3:26) "There is none holy beside Thee;" because no one becomes so except by reason of Thee. And then it follows, "Do not glory so proudly, and do not speak lofty things, neither let vaunting talk come out of your mouth. For a God of knowledge is the Lord." He knows you even when no one knows; for "he who thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing deceiveth himself." (Gal 6:3) These things are said to the adversaries of the city of God who belong to Babylon, who presume in their own strength, and glory in themselves, not in the Lord; **of whom are also the carnal Israelites, the earth-born inhabitants of the earthly Jerusalem**, who, as saith the apostle, "being ignorant of the righteousness of God," (Rom 10:3) that is, which God, who alone is just, and the justifier, gives to man, "and wishing to establish their own," that is, which is as it were procured by their own selves, not bestowed by Him, "are not subject to the righteousness of God," just because they are proud, and think they are able to please God with their own, not with that which is of God, who is the God of knowledge, and therefore also takes the oversight of consciences, there beholding the thoughts of men that they are vain, (Psalm 94:11; 1 Cor 3:20) if they are of men, and are not from Him. "And preparing," she says, "His curious designs." What curious designs do we think these are, save that the proud must fall, and the humble rise? These curious designs she recounts, saying, "The bow of the mighty is made weak, and the weak are girded with strength." The bow is made weak, that is, the intention of those who think themselves so powerful, that without the gift and help of God they are able by human sufficiency to fulfill the divine commandments; and those are girded with strength whose inward cry is, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak."...

City of God

Book XVII: [The history of the city of God from the kings and prophets to Christ.](#)

Chapter 6.—[Of the Jewish Priesthood and Kingdom, Which, Although Promised to Be](#)

[Established for Ever, Did Not Continue; So that Other Things are to Be Understood to Which Eternity is Assured.](#)

...In this way, too, the kingdom of Saul himself, who certainly was reprobated and rejected, was the shadow of a kingdom yet to come which should remain to eternity... Whence also that which Samuel says to Saul, "Since thou hast not kept my commandment which the Lord commanded thee, whereas now the Lord would have prepared thy kingdom over Israel for ever, yet now thy kingdom shall not continue for thee; and the Lord will seek Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord will command him to be prince over His people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee,"¹ (1 Sam 13:13-14) is not to be taken as if God had settled that Saul himself should reign for ever, and afterwards, on his sinning, would not keep this promise; nor was He ignorant that he would sin, but **He had established his kingdom that it might be a figure of the eternal kingdom...**

[City of God](#)

Book XVII: [The history of the city of God from the kings and prophets to Christ.](#)

Chapter 7. — [Of the Disruption of the Kingdom of Israel, by Which the Perpetual Division of the Spiritual from the Carnal Israel Was Prefigured.](#)

...But the Scripture has not what is read in most Latin copies, "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel out of thine hand this day," but just as we have set it down it is found in the Greek copies, "The Lord hath rent the kingdom from Israel out of thine hand;" that the words "out of thine hand" may be understood to mean "from Israel." Therefore this man figuratively represented the people of Israel, which was to lose the kingdom, Christ Jesus our Lord being about to reign, not carnally, but spiritually... And among them is Israel, from whom, as His persecutor, Christ took away the kingdom; although the Israel in whom there was no guile may have been there too, a sort of grain, as it were, of that chaff. For certainly thence came the apostles, thence so many martyrs, of whom Stephen is the first, thence so many churches, which the Apostle Paul names, magnifying God in their conversion.

Of which thing I do not doubt what follows is to be understood, "And will divide Israel in twain," to wit, into Israel pertaining to the bond woman, and Israel pertaining to the free. **For these two kinds were at first together, as Abraham still clave to the bond woman, until the barren, made fruitful by the grace of God, cried, "Cast out the bond woman and her son."** (Gen 21:10)...

We see that this sentence concerning this division of the people of Israel, divinely uttered in these words, has been altogether irremediable and quite perpetual. For whoever have turned, or are turning, or shall turn thence to Christ, it has been according to the foreknowledge of God, not according to the one and the same nature of the human race. Certainly none of the Israelites, who, cleaving to Christ, have continued in Him, shall ever be among those Israelites who persist in being His enemies even to the end of this life, but shall for ever remain in the separation which is here foretold. For the Old Testament, from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, (Gal 4:25) profiteth nothing, unless because it bears witness to the New Testament. Otherwise, however long Moses is read, the veil is put over their heart; but when any one shall turn thence to Christ, the veil shall be taken away. (2 Cor 3:15-16) **For the very desire of those who turn is changed from the old to the new,**

so that each no longer desires to obtain carnal but spiritual felicity... That stone of the helper is the mediation of the Saviour, by which we go from the old Massephat to the new,— that is, from the desire with which **carnal happiness was expected in the carnal kingdom to the desire with which the truest spiritual happiness is expected in the kingdom of heaven**; and since nothing is better than that, the Lord helpeth us hitherto.

City of God

Book XVII: [The history of the city of God from the kings and prophets to Christ.](#)

Chapter 10.—[How Different the Acts in the Kingdom of the Earthly Jerusalem are from Those Which God Had Promised, So that the Truth of the Promise Should Be Understood to Pertain to the Glory of the Other King and Kingdom.](#)

...The following part of this psalm goes on to say what in the meantime, while He was delayed, was to become of the kingdom of the earthly Jerusalem, where it was hoped He would certainly reign: “Thou hast overthrown the covenant of Thy servant; Thou hast profaned in the earth his sanctuary. Thou hast broken down all his walls; Thou hast put his strong-holds in fear. All that pass by the way spoil him; he is made a reproach to his neighbors. Thou hast set up the right hand of his enemies; Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Thou hast turned aside the help of his sword, and hast not helped him in war. Thou hast destroyed him from cleansing; Thou hast dashed down his seat to the ground. Thou hast shortened the days of his seat; Thou hast poured confusion over him.” (Ps 89:39-45) **All these things came upon Jerusalem the bond woman, in which some also reigned who were children of the free woman, holding that kingdom in temporary stewardship, but holding the kingdom of the heavenly Jerusalem, whose children they were, in true faith, and hoping in the true Christ.** But how these things came upon that kingdom, the history of its affairs points out if it is read.

City of God

Book XVII: [The history of the city of God from the kings and prophets to Christ.](#)

Chapter 12.—[To Whose Person the Entreaty for the Promises is to Be Understood to Belong, When He Says in the Psalm, “Where are Thine Ancient Compassions, Lord?” Etc.](#)

But the rest of this psalm runs thus: “Where are Thine ancient compassions, Lord, which Thou swarest unto David in Thy truth? Remember, Lord, the reproach of Thy servants, which I have borne in my bosom of many nations; wherewith Thine enemies have reproached, O Lord, wherewith they have reproached the change of Thy Christ.” (Ps 89:49-51) Now it may with very good reason be asked whether this is spoken in the person of those Israelites who desired that the promise made to David might be fulfilled to them; or rather of the Christians, who are Israelites not after the flesh but after the Spirit. (Rom 3:28-29)

City of God

Book XVII: [The history of the city of God from the kings and prophets to Christ.](#)

Chapter 13.—[Whether the Truth of This Promised Peace Can Be Ascribed to Those Times Passed Away Under Solomon.](#)

...Therefore the place of this promised peaceful and secure habitation is eternal, and of right belongs eternally to Jerusalem the free mother, where the genuine people of Israel shall be: for this name is interpreted “Seeing God;” in the desire of which reward a pious life is to be

led through faith in this miserable pilgrimage. (Israel—a prince of God; Peniel—the face of God ([Gen. xxxii. 28–30](#)).

Old Covenant vs New Covenant

[A Work on the Proceedings of Pelagius.](#)

Chapter 13 [V.]—[The Fifth Item of the Accusation; And Pelagius' Answer.](#)

After the judges had accorded their approbation to this answer of Pelagius, another passage which he had written in his book was read aloud: “The kingdom of heaven was promised even in the Old Testament.” Upon this, Pelagius remarked in vindication: “This can be proved by the Scriptures: but heretics, in order to disparage the Old Testament, deny this. I, however, simply followed the authority of the Scriptures when I said this; for in the prophet Daniel it is written: ‘The saints shall receive the kingdom of the Most. High.’” (Dan 7:18) After they had heard this answer, the synod said: “Neither is this opposed to the Church’s faith.”

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Chapter 14.—[Examination of This Point. The Phrase “Old Testament” Used in Two Senses. The Heir of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament There Were Heirs of the New Testament.](#)

Was it therefore without reason that our brethren were moved by his words to include this charge among the others against him? Certainly not. The fact is, that the phrase *Old Testament* is constantly employed in two different ways,—in one, following the authority of the Holy Scriptures; in the other, following the most common custom of speech. For the Apostle Paul says, in his Epistle to the Galatians: “Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman. . . . Which things are an allegory: for these are the *two testaments*; the one which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and is conjoined with the Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children; whereas the Jerusalem which is above is free, and is the mother of us all.” (Gal 4:21-26) Now, inasmuch as the Old Testament belongs to bondage, whence it is written, “Cast out the bond-woman and her son, for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac,” (Gal 4:30) but the kingdom of heaven to liberty; what has the kingdom of heaven to do with the Old Testament? Since, however, as I have already remarked, we are accustomed, in our ordinary use of words, to designate all those Scriptures of the law and the prophets which were given previous to the Lord’s incarnation, and are embraced together by canonical authority, under the name and title of *the Old Testament*, what man who is ever so moderately informed in ecclesiastical lore can be ignorant that the kingdom of heaven could be quite as well promised in those early Scriptures as even the New Testament itself, to which the kingdom of heaven belongs? At all events, in those ancient Scriptures it is most distinctly written: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will consummate a new testament with the house of Israel and with the house of Jacob; not according to the testament that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt.” (Jer 31:31, 32) This was done on Mount Sinai. But then there had not yet risen the prophet Daniel to say: “The saints shall receive the kingdom of the Most High.” (Dan 7:18) For by these words he foretold the merit not of the Old, but of the New Testament. In the same manner did the same prophets foretell that Christ Himself would come, in whose blood the

New Testament was consecrated. Of this Testament also the apostles became the ministers, as the most blessed Paul declares: "He hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not in its letter, but in spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (2 Cor 3:6) **In that testament, however, which is properly called the Old, and was given on Mount Sinai, only earthly happiness is expressly promised. Accordingly that land, into which the nation, after being led through the wilderness, was conducted, is called the land of promise, wherein peace and royal power, and the gaining of victories over enemies, and an abundance of children and of fruits of the ground, and gifts of a similar kind are the promises of the Old Testament. And these, indeed, are figures of the spiritual blessings which appertain to the New Testament;** but yet the man who lives under God's law with those earthly blessings for his sanction, is precisely the heir of the Old Testament, for just such rewards are promised and given to him, according to the terms of the Old Testament, as are the objects of his desire according to the condition of the old man. But whatever blessings are there figuratively set forth as appertaining to the New Testament require the new man to give them effect. And no doubt the great apostle understood perfectly well what he was saying, when he described the two testaments as capable of the allegorical distinction of the bond-woman and the free, — attributing the children of the flesh to the Old, and to the New the children of the promise: "**They,**" says he, "**which are the children of the flesh, are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.**" (Rom 9:8) **The children of the flesh, then, belong to the earthly Jerusalem, which is in bondage with her children; whereas the children of the promise belong to the Jerusalem above, the free, the mother of us all, eternal in the heavens. (Gal 4:25, 26) Whence we can easily see who they are that appertain to the earthly, and who to the heavenly kingdom. But then the happy persons, who even in that early age were by the grace of God taught to understand the distinction now set forth, were thereby made the children of promise, and were accounted in the secret purpose of God as heirs of the New Testament; although they continued with perfect fitness to administer the Old Testament to the ancient people of God, because it was divinely appropriated to that people in God's distribution of the times and seasons.**

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Chapter 15.—[The Same Continued.](#)

How then should there not be a feeling of just disquietude entertained by the children of promise, children of the free Jerusalem, which is eternal in the heavens, when they see that **by the words of Pelagius the distinction which has been drawn by Apostolic and catholic authority is abolished, and Agar is supposed to be by some means on a par with Sarah?** He therefore does injury to the scripture of the Old Testament with heretical impiety, who with an impious and sacrilegious face denies that it was inspired by the good, supreme, and very God, — as Marcion does, as Manichæus does, and other pests of similar opinions. On this account (that I may put into as brief a space as I can what my own views are on the subject), **as much injury is done to the New Testament, when it is put on the same level with the Old Testament, as is inflicted on the Old itself when men deny it to be the work of the supreme God of goodness.** Now, when Pelagius in his answer gave as his reason for saying that even in the Old Testament there was a promise of the kingdom of heaven, the testimony of the prophet Daniel, who most plainly foretold that

the saints should receive the kingdom of the Most High, it was fairly decided that the statement of Pelagius was not opposed to the catholic faith, although not according to the distinction which shows that the earthly promises of Mount Sinai are the proper characteristics of the Old Testament; nor indeed was the decision an improper one, considering that mode of speech which designates all the canonical Scriptures which were given to men before the Lord's coming in the flesh by the title of the "Old Testament." The kingdom of the Most High is of course none other than the kingdom of God; otherwise, anybody might boldly contend that the kingdom of God is one thing, and the kingdom of heaven another.

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[Book III Chapter 6 \[IV.\]—The Calumny Concerning the Old Testament and the Righteous Men of Old.](#)

Now if these things are so, out of these things are rebutted those which they subsequently object to us. For what catholic would say that which they charge us with saying, "that the Holy Spirit was not the assister of virtue in the old testament," unless when we so understand "the old testament [covenant]" in the manner in which the apostle spoke of it as "gendering from Mount Sinai into bondage"? But because in it was prefigured the new testament [covenant], **the men of God who at that time understood this according to the ordering of the times, were indeed the stewards and bearers of the old testament [covenant], but are shown to be the heirs of the new. Shall we deny that he belongs to the new testament who says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me"?** (Ps 51:10) or he who says, "He hath set my feet upon a rock, and directed my goings; and he hath put a new song in my mouth, even a hymn to our God"? (Psalm 40:2-3) or that father of the faithful before the old testament which is from Mount Sinai, of whom the apostle says, "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; yet even a man's testament, when it is confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto. To Abraham and to his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one; and to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say," said he, "that the testament confirmed by God, the law which was made four hundred and thirty years after, does not weaken, so as to make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." **(Gal 3:15)**

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[Book III Chapter 7.—The New Testament is More Ancient Than the Old; But It Was Subsequently Revealed.](#)

Here, certainly, if we ask whether this testament [covenant], which, he says, being confirmed by God was not weakened by the law, which was made four hundred and thirty years after, is to be understood as the new or the old one, who can hesitate to answer "**the new, but hidden in the prophetic shadows until the time should come wherein it should be revealed in Christ**"? For if we should say the old, what will that be which genders from Mount Sinai to bondage? For there was made the law four hundred and thirty years after, by which law he asserts that this testament of the promise of Abraham could not be weakened; and he will have this which was made by Abraham to pertain rather to us, whom he will have to be children of the freewoman, not of the bondwoman, heirs by the promise, not by the law,

when he says, "For if the inheritance be by the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." (Gal 3:18) So that, because the law was made four hundred and thirty years after, it might enter that the offence might abound; (Rom 4:20) since by sin the pride of man presuming on his own righteousness is convinced of transgression, and where sin abounded grace much more abounded (Rom 4:20) by the faith of the now humble man failing in the law and taking refuge in God's mercy. Therefore, when he had said, "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no longer of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise," (Gal 3:18) as if it might be said to him, "Why then was the law made afterwards?" "he added and said, "What then is the law?" (Gal 3:19) To which interrogation he immediately replied, "It was added because of transgression, until the seed should come to which the promise was made." (Gal 3:19) This he says again, thus: "For if they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect: because the law worketh wrath: for where there is no law, there is no transgression." (Rom 4:14) What he says in the former testimony: "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise," this he says in the latter: "For if they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void; and the promise is made of none effect;" sufficiently showing that **to our faith (which certainly is of the new testament) belongs what God gave to Abraham by promise.** And what he says in the former testimony, "What then is the law?" and answered, "It was added for the sake of transgression," this he instantly added in the latter testimony, "For the law worketh wrath: for where there is no law, there is no transgression."

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[Book III Chapter 8.—All Righteous Men Before and After Abraham are Children of the Promise and of Grace.](#)

Whether, then, Abraham, or righteous men before him or after him, even to Moses himself, by whom was given the testament [covenant] gendering to bondage from Mount Sinai, or the rest of the prophets after him, and the holy men of God till John the Baptist, they are all children of the promise and of grace according to Isaac the son of the freewoman,—not of the law, but of the promise, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Far be it from us to deny that righteous Noah and the righteous men of the earlier times, and whoever from that time till the time of Abraham could be righteous, either manifestly or hiddenly, belong to the Jerusalem which is above, who is our mother, although they are found to be earlier in time than Sarah, who bore the prophecy and figure of the free mother herself. How much more evidently, then, after Abraham, to whom that promise was declared, that he should be called the father of many nations, must all, whoever have pleased God, be esteemed the children of the promise! For from Abraham, and the righteous men who followed him, the generation is not found more true, but the prophecy more plain.

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[Book III Chapter 11.—Distinction Between the Children of the Old and of the New Testaments.](#)

But there is plainly this great difference, that they who are established under the law, whom the letter killeth, do these things either with the desire of gaining, or with the fear of losing earthly happiness; and that thus they do not truly do them, since fleshly desire, by which sin is rather bartered or increased, is not healed by desire of another kind. These pertain to the old testament, which genders to bondage; because carnal fear and desire make them

servants, gospel faith and hope and love do not make them children. But they who are placed under grace, whom the Spirit quickens, do these things of faith which worketh by love in the hope of good things, not carnal but spiritual, not earthly but heavenly, not temporal but eternal; especially believing on the Mediator, by whom they do not doubt but that a Spirit of grace is ministered to them, so that they may do these things well, and that they may be pardoned when they sin. **These pertain to the new testament [covenant], are the children of promise, and are regenerated by God the Father and a free mother. Of this kind were all the righteous men of old, and Moses himself, the minister of the old testament, the heir of the new,—because of the faith whereby we live, of one and the same they lived, believing the incarnation, passion, and resurrection of Christ as future, which we believe as already accomplished,**—even until John the Baptist himself, as it were a certain limit of the old dispensation, who, signifying that the Mediator Himself would come, not with any shadow of the future or allegorical intimation, or with any prophetic announcement, but pointing Him out with his finger, said: “Behold the Lamb of God; behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) As if saying, Whom many righteous men have desired to see, on whom, as about to come, they have believed from the beginning of the human race itself, concerning whom the promises were spoken to Abraham, of whom Moses wrote, of whom the law and the prophets are witnesses: “Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.” From this John and afterwards, all those things concerning Christ began to become past or present, which by all the righteous men of the previous time were believed, hoped for, desired, as future. Therefore the faith is the same as well in those who, although not yet in name, were in fact previously Christians, as in those who not only are so but are also called so; and in both there is the same grace by the Holy Spirit. Whence says the apostle: “We having the same Spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.” (2 Cor 4:13)

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[Book III Chapter 12.—The Old Testament is Properly One Thing—The Old Instrument Another.](#)

Therefore, by a custom of speech already prevailing, in one way the law and all the prophets who prophesied until John are called the “Old Testament;” although this is more definitely called the “Old Instrument” rather than the “Old Testament;” but this name is used in another way by the apostolical authority, whether expressly or impliedly. For the apostle is express when he says, “Until this day, as long as Moses is read, remaineth the same veil in the reading of the old testament; because it is not revealed, because it is made of no effect in Christ.” (2 Cor 3:14) For thus certainly the old testament referred to the ministry of Moses. Moreover, he says, “That we should serve in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter,” (Rom 7:6) **signifying that same testament [covenant] under the name of the letter.** In another place also, “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit maketh alive.” (2 Cor 3:6) And here, by the mention of the new, he certainly meant the former to be understood as the old. But much more evidently, although he did not say either old or new, **he distinguished the two testaments [covenants] and the two sons of Abraham, the one of the bondwoman, the other of the free,** as I have above mentioned. For what can be more express than his saying, “Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, have ye not heard the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a

freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are in allegory; for these are the two testaments; the one in the Mount Sinai, gendering to bondage, which is Agar. For Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, which is associated with Jerusalem which now is, for it is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother?" (Gal 4:21) What is more clear, what more certain, what more remote from all obscurity and ambiguity to the children of the promise? And a little after, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." (Gal 4:28) Also a little after, "But we, brethren, are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free," (Gal 4:31) with the liberty with which Christ has made us free. **Let us, therefore, choose whether to call the righteous men of old the children of the bondwoman or of the free.** Be it far from us to say, of the bondwoman; **therefore if of the free, they pertain to the new testament [covenant]** in the Holy Spirit, whom, as making alive, the apostle opposes to the killing letter. For on what ground do they not belong to the grace of the new testament [covenant], from whose words and looks we convict and rebut such most frantic and ungrateful enemies of the same grace as these?

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[Book III Chapter 13. — Why One of the Covenants is Called Old, the Other New.](#)

But some one will say, "In what way is that called the old which was given by Moses four hundred and thirty years after; and that called the new which was given so many years before to Abraham?" Let him who on this subject is disturbed, not litigiously but earnestly, first understand that when from its earlier time one is called "old," and from its posterior time the other "new," it is the revelation of them that is considered in their names, not their institution. Because the old testament was revealed through Moses, by whom the holy and just and good law was given, whereby should be brought about not the doing away but the knowledge of sin,—by which the proud might be convicted who were desirous of establishing their own righteousness, as if they had no need of divine help, and being made guilty of the letter, might flee to the Spirit of grace, not to be justified by their own righteousness, but by that of God—that is, by the righteousness which was given to them of God. For as the same apostle says, "By the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and by the prophets." (Rom 3:20-21) Because the law, by the very fact that in it no man is justified, affords a witness to the righteousness of God. For that in the law no man is justified before God is manifest, because "the just by faith lives." (Gal 3:11) Thus, therefore, although the law does not justify the wicked when he is convicted of transgression, it sends to the God who justifieth, and thus affords a testimony to the righteousness of God. Moreover, the prophets offer testimony to God's righteousness by fore-announcing Christ, "who is made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor 1:30-31) But that law was kept hidden from the beginning, when nature itself convicted wicked men, who did to others what they would not have done to themselves. But the revelation of the new testament in Christ was made when He was manifested in the flesh, wherein appeared the righteousness of God—that is, the righteousness which is to men from God. For hence he says, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested." (Rom 3:21) **This is the reason why the former is called the old testament, because it was revealed in the earlier time; and the latter the new, because it was revealed in the later time. In a word, it is because the old testament**

pertains to the old man, from which it is necessary that a man should make a beginning; but the new to the new man, by which a man ought to pass from his old state. Thus, in the former are earthly promises, in the latter heavenly promises; because this pertained to God's mercy, that no one should think that even earthly felicity of any kind whatever could be conferred on anybody, save from the Lord, who is the Creator of all things. But if God is worshipped for the sake of that earthly happiness, the worship is that of a slave, belonging to the children of the bondmaid; but if for the sake of God Himself, so that in the life eternal God may be all things in all, it is a free service belonging to the children of the freewoman, who is our mother eternal in the heavens—who first seemed, as it were, barren, when she had not any children manifest; but now we see what was prophesied concerning her: "Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for there are many children of the desolate more than of her who has an husband," (Isa. 54:1) that is, more than of that Jerusalem, who in a certain manner is married in the bond of the law, and is in bondage with her children. In the time, then, of the old testament, we say that the Holy Spirit, in those who even then were the children of promise according to Isaac, was not only an assistant, which these men think is sufficient for their opinion, but also a bestower of virtue; and this they deny, attributing it rather to their free will, in contradiction to those fathers who knew how to cry unto God with truthful piety, "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength." (Ps 18:1)

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Chapter 34.—[The Law; Grace.](#)

After saying, "Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt," observe what He adds: "Because they continued not in my covenant." He reckons it as their own fault that they did not continue in God's covenant, lest the law, which they received at that time, should seem to be deserving of blame. For it was the very law that Christ "came not to destroy, but to fulfil." (Matt 5:17) Nevertheless, it is not by that law that the ungodly are made righteous, but by grace; and this change is effected by the life-giving Spirit, without whom the letter kills. "For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Gal 3:21-22) Out of this promise, that is, out of the kindness of God, the law is fulfilled, which without the said promise only makes men transgressors, either by the actual commission of some sinful deed, if the flame of concupiscence have greater power than even the restraints of fear, or at least by their mere will, if the fear of punishment transcend the pleasure of lust. In what he says, "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe," it is the benefit of this "*conclusion*" itself which is asserted. For what purposes "*hath it concluded*," except as it is expressed in the next sentence: "Before, indeed, faith came, we were kept under the law, *concluded* for the faith which was afterwards revealed?" (Gal 3:23) **The law was therefore given, in order that grace might be sought; grace was given, in order that the law might be fulfilled.** Now it was not through any fault of its own that the law was not fulfilled, but by the fault of the carnal mind; and this fault was to be demonstrated by the law, and healed by grace. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might

be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom 8:3,4) Accordingly, in the passage which we cited from the prophet, he says, "I will consummate a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah," (Jer 31:31)—**and what means I will consummate but I will fulfil?—"not, according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt."** (Jer 31:32)

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Chapter 35 [XX.]—[The Old Law; The New Law.](#)

The one was therefore old, because the other is new. But whence comes it that one is old and the other new, when the same law, which said in the Old Testament, "Thou shalt not covet," (Ex 20:17) is fulfilled by the New Testament? "Because," says the prophet, "they continued not in my covenant, I have also rejected them, saith the Lord." (Jer 31:32) **It is then on account of the offence of the old man, which was by no means healed by the letter which commanded and threatened, that it is called the old covenant; whereas the other is called the new covenant, because of the newness of the spirit, which heals the new man of the fault of the old.** Then consider what follows, and see in how clear a light the fact is placed, that men who bare faith are unwilling to trust in themselves: "Because," says he, "this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." (Jer 31:33) See how similarly the apostle states it in the passage we have already quoted: "Not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," (2 Cor 3:3) because "not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God." (2 Cor 3:3) And I apprehend that the apostle in this passage had no other reason for mentioning "the New Testament" ("who hath made us able ministers of the *New Testament*; not of the letter, but of the spirit"), than because he had an eye to the words of the prophet, when he said "Not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," inasmuch as in the prophet it runs: "I will write it in their hearts." (Jer 31:33)

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Chapter 36 [XXI.]—[The Law Written in Our Hearts.](#)

What then is God's law written by God Himself in the hearts of men, but the very presence of the Holy Spirit, who is "the finger of God," and by whose presence is shed abroad in our hearts the love which is the fulfilling of the law, (Rom 13:10) and the end of the commandment? (1 Tim 1:5) **Now the promises of the Old Testament are earthly;** and yet (with the exception of the sacramental ordinances which were the shadow of things to come, such as circumcision, the Sabbath and other observances of days, and the ceremonies of certain meats, (See [Retractions 2.37](#)) and the complicated ritual of sacrifices and sacred things which suited "the oldness" of the carnal law and its slavish yoke) it contains such precepts of righteousness as we are even now taught to observe, which were especially expressly drawn out on the two tables without figure or shadow: for instance, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt do no murder," "Thou shalt not covet," (Ex 20:13, 14, 17) "and whatsoever other commandment is briefly comprehended in the saying, Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself." (Rom 13:9) Nevertheless, whereas as **in the said Testament earthly and temporal promises are, as I have said, recited, and these are goods of this corruptible flesh (although they prefigure those heavenly and everlasting blessings**

which belong to the New Testament), what is now promised is a good for the heart itself, a good for the mind, a good of the spirit, that is, an intellectual good; since it is said, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write them," (Jer 31:33) —by which He signified that men would not fear the law which alarmed them externally, but would love the very righteousness of the law which dwelt inwardly in their hearts.

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Chapter 40.—[How that is to Be the Reward of All; The Apostle Earnestly Defends Grace.](#)

What then is the import of the "All, from the least unto the greatest of them," but all that belong spiritually to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah,—that is, to the children of Isaac, to the seed of Abraham? For such is the promise, wherein it was said to him, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called; for they which are the children of the flesh are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth,) it was said unto her, "The elder shall serve the younger." (Rom 9:7-12) This is the house of Israel, or rather the house of Judah, on account of Christ, who came of the tribe of Judah. This is the house of the children of promise,—not by reason of their own merits, but of the kindness of God. For God promises what He Himself performs: He does not Himself promise, and another perform; which would no longer be promising, but prophesying. Hence it is "not of works, but of Him that calleth," (Rom 9:11) lest the result should be their own, not God's; lest the reward should be ascribed not to His grace, but to their due; and so grace should be no longer grace which was so earnestly defended and maintained by him who, though the least of the apostles, laboured more abundantly than all the rest,—yet not himself, but the grace of God that was with him. (1 Cor 15:9-10) "They shall all know me," (Jer 31:34) **He says,—“All,” the house of Israel and house of Judah. “All,” however, “are not Israel which are of Israel,” (Rom 9:6) but they only to whom it is said in “the psalm concerning the morning aid” (Ps 22) (that is, concerning the new refreshing light, meaning that of the new testament [covenant]),** "All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all ye the seed of Israel." (Ps 22:23) All the seed, without exception, even the entire seed of the promise and of the called, but only of those who are the called according to His purpose. (Rom 8:28) "For whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." (Rom 8:30) "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed: not to that only which is of the law,"—that is, which comes from the Old Testament into the New,—“but to that also which is of faith,” which was indeed prior to the law, even “the faith of Abraham,”—meaning those who imitate the faith of Abraham,—“who is the father of us all; as it is written, I have made thee the father of many nations." (Rom 4:16-17) **Now all these predestinated, called, justified, glorified ones, shall know God by the grace of the new testament [covenant], from the least to the greatest of them.**

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Chapter 41.—[The Law Written in the Heart, and the Reward of the Eternal Contemplation of God, Belong to the New Covenant; Who Among the Saints are the Least and the Greatest.](#)

As then the law of works, which was written on the tables of stone, and its reward, the land of promise, which the house of the carnal Israel after their liberation from Egypt received, belonged to the old testament [covenant], so the law of faith, written on the heart, and its reward, the beatific vision which the house of the spiritual Israel, when delivered from the present world, shall perceive, belong to the new testament [covenant]. Then shall come to pass what the apostle describes: "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away," (1 Cor 13:8)—even that imperfect knowledge of "the child" (1 Cor 13:11) in which this present life is passed, and which is but "in part," "by means of a mirror darkly." (1 Cor 13:12) Because of this, indeed, "prophecy" is necessary, for still to the past succeeds the future; and because of this, too, "tongues" are required,—that is, a multiplicity of expressions, since it is by different ones that different things are suggested to him who does not as yet contemplate with a perfectly purified mind the everlasting light of transparent truth. "When that, however, which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away," (1 Cor 13:10) then, what appeared to the flesh in assumed flesh shall display itself as it is in itself to all who love it; then, there shall be eternal life for us to know the one very God; (John 17:3) then shall we be like Him, (1 John 3:2) because "we shall then know, even as we are known;" (1 Cor 13:12) then "they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least unto the greatest of them." (**Jer 31:34**) Now this may be understood in several ways: Either, that in that life the saints shall differ one from another in glory, as star from star. It matters not how the expression runs,—whether (as in the passage before us) it be, "From the least unto the greatest of them," or the other way, From the greatest unto the least. And, in like manner, it matters not even if we understand "*the least*" to mean those who simply believe, and "*the greatest*" those who have been further able to understand—so far as may be in this world—the light which is incorporeal and unchangeable. Or, "*the least*" may mean those who are later in time; whilst by "*the greatest*" He may have intended to indicate those who were prior in time. For they are all to receive the promised vision of God hereafter, since it was for us that they foresaw the future which would be better than their present, that they without us should not arrive at complete perfection. (Heb 11:40) And so the earlier are found to be the lesser, because they were less deferred in time; as in the case of the gospel "penny a day," which is given for an illustration. (Matt 20:8) This penny they are the first to receive who came last into the vineyard. Or, "the least and the greatest" ought perhaps to be taken in some other sense, which at present does not occur to my mind.

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Chapter 42 [XXV.]—[Difference Between the Old and the New Testaments.](#)

I beg of you, however, carefully to observe, as far as you can, what I am endeavouring to prove with so much effort. **When the prophet promised a new covenant, not according to the covenant which had been formerly made with the people of Israel when liberated from Egypt, he said nothing about a change in the sacrifices or any sacred ordinances, although such change, too, was without doubt to follow, as we see in fact that it did follow, even as the same prophetic scripture testifies in many other passages; but he simply called attention to this difference, that God would impress His laws on the mind of those who belonged to this covenant, and would write them in their hearts, (Jer 31:32-33) whence the apostle drew his conclusion,—“not with ink, but with the Spirit of**

the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart;" (2 Cor 3:3) and that the eternal recompense of this righteousness was not the land out of which were driven the Amorites and Hittites, and other nations who dwelt there, (Josh 12) but God Himself, "to whom it is good to hold fast," (Ps 73:78) in order that God's good that they love, may be the God Himself whom they love, between whom and men nothing but sin produces separation; and this is remitted only by grace. Accordingly, after saying, "For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them," He instantly added, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer 31:34) By the law of works, then, the Lord says, "Thou shalt not covet:" (Ex 20:17) but by the law of faith He says, "Without me ye can do nothing;" (John 15:5) for He was treating of good works, even the fruit of the vine-branches. It is therefore apparent what difference there is between the old covenant and the new,—that in the former the law is written on tables, while in the latter on hearts; so that what in the one alarms from without, in the other delights from within; and in the former man becomes a transgressor through the letter that kills, in the other a lover through the life-giving spirit. We must therefore avoid saying, that the way in which God assists us to work righteousness, and "works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure," (Phil 2:13) is by externally addressing to our faculties precepts of holiness; for He gives His increase internally, (1 Cor 3:7) by shedding love abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us." (Rom 5:5)

Old Covenant

City of God

Book XVI: [The history of the city of God from Noah to the time of the kings of Israel.](#)
Chapter 2.—[At What Time the Promise of God Was Fulfilled Concerning the Land of Canaan, Which Even Carnal Israel Got in Possession.](#)

...And it was fulfilled through David, and Solomon his son, whose kingdom was extended over the whole promised space; for they subdued all those nations, and made them tributary. And thus, under those kings, the seed of Abraham was established in the land of promise according to the flesh, that is, in the land of Canaan, so that nothing yet remained to the complete fulfillment of that earthly promise of God, except that, so far as pertains to temporal prosperity, the Hebrew nation should remain in the same land by the succession of posterity in an unshaken state even to the end of this mortal age, **if it obeyed the laws of the Lord its God.** But since God knew it would not do this, He used His temporal punishments also for training His few faithful ones in it, and for giving needful warning to those who should afterwards be in all nations, in whom the other promise, revealed in the New Testament, was about to be fulfilled through the incarnation of Christ.

A Treatise Against Two Letters of the Pelagians.

Book III Chapter 3.—[Scriptural Confirmation of the Catholic Doctrine.](#)

This is what we say; this is that about which they object to us that we say "that the law was so given as to be a cause of greater sin." They do not hear the apostle saying, "For the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression;" (Rom 4:15) and, "The law was added for the sake of transgression until the seed should come to whom the promise was made;" (Gal 3:19) and, "If there had been a law given which could have given life,

righteousness should altogether have been by the law; but the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Gal 3:21, 23) Hence it is that **the Old Testament, from the Mount Sinai, where the law was given, gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. "Now we," says he, "are not children of the bondmaid but of the freewoman." (Gal 4:24, 31)** Therefore they are not children of the freewoman who have accepted the law of the letter, whereby they can be shown to be not only sinners, but moreover transgressors; but they who have received the Spirit of grace, whereby the law itself, holy and just and good, may be fulfilled. This is what we say: let them attend and not contend; let them seek enlightenment and not bring false accusations.

[A Treatise Against Two Letters of the Pelagians.](#)
[Book III Chapter 9.—Who are the Children of the Old Covenant.](#)

But **those belong to the old testament [covenant], "which gendereth from Mount Sinai to bondage,"** which is Agar, who, when they have received a law which is holy and just and good, think that the letter can suffice them for life; and do not seek the divine mercy, so as they may become doers of the law, but, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and wishing to establish their own righteousness, are not subject to the righteousness of God. Of this kind was that multitude which murmured against God in the wilderness, and made an idol; and that multitude which even in the very land of promise committed fornication after strange gods. But this multitude, even in the old testament itself, was strongly rebuked. **They, moreover, whoever they were at that time who followed after those earthly promises alone which God promises there, and who were ignorant of that which those promises signify under the new testament [covenant], and who kept God's commandments with the desire of gaining and with the fear of losing those promises,**—certainly did not observe them, but only seemed to themselves to observe. For there was no faith in them that worked by love, but earthly cupidity and carnal fear. But he who thus fulfils the commandments beyond a doubt fulfils them unwillingly, and then does not do them in his heart; for he would rather not do them at all, if in respect of those things which he desires and fears he might be allowed to neglect them with impunity. And thus, in the will itself within him, he is guilty; and it is here that God, who gives the command, looks. **Such were the children of the earthly Jerusalem, concerning which the apostle says, "For she is in bondage with her children," (Gal 4:25) and belongs to the old testament [covenant] "which gendereth to bondage from Mount Sinai, which is Agar."** Of that same kind were they who crucified the Lord, and continued in the same unbelief. Thence there are still their children in the great multitude of the Jews, although now the new testament as it was prophesied is made plain and confirmed by the blood of Christ; and the gospel is made known from the river where He was baptized and began His teachings, even to the ends of the earth. And these Jews, according to the prophecies which they read, are dispersed everywhere over all the earth, that even from their writings may not be wanting a testimony to Christian truth.

[A Treatise Against Two Letters of the Pelagians.](#)
[Book III Chapter 10.—The Old Law Also Given by God.](#)

And it is for this reason that God made the old testament [covenant], because it pleased God to veil the heavenly promises in earthly promises, as if established in reward, until the fulness of time; and to give to a people which longed for earthly blessings, and therefore had a hard

heart, a law, which, although spiritual, was yet written on tables of stone. Because, with the exception of the sacraments of the old books, which were only enjoined for the sake of their significance (although in them also, since they are to be spiritually understood, the law is rightly called spiritual), the other matters certainly which pertain to piety and to good living must not be referred by any interpretation to some significancy, but are to be done absolutely as they are spoken. Assuredly no one will doubt that that law of God was necessary not alone for that people at that time, but also is now necessary for us for the right ordering of our life. For if Christ took away from us that very heavy yoke of many observances, so that we are not circumcised according to the flesh, we do not immolate victims of the cattle, we do not rest even from necessary works on the Sabbath, retaining the seventh in the revolution of the days, and other things of this kind; but keep them as spiritually understood, and, the symbolizing shadows being removed, are watchful in the light of those things which are signified by them; shall we therefore say, that when it is written that whoever finds another man's property of any kind that has been lost, should return it to him who has lost it, (Lev 6:3) it does not pertain to us? and many other like things whereby people learn to live piously and uprightly? and especially the Decalogue itself, which is contained in those two tables of stone, apart from the carnal observance of the Sabbath, which signifies spiritual sanctification and rest? For who can say that Christians ought not to be observant to serve the one God with religious obedience, not to worship an idol, not to take the name of the Lord in vain, to honour one's parents, not to commit adulteries, murders, thefts, false witness, not to covet another man's wife, or anything at all that belongs to another man? Who is so impious as to say that he does not keep those precepts of the law because he is a Christian, and is established not under the law, but under grace?