

Kerux 25:1 (May 2010):11-23

The *Tractoria* of Prudentius of Troyes (d. 861)

by Francis X. Gumerlock

Introduction: Prudentius and the Ninth-Century Predestination Controversy

When the doctrine of predestination, the relationship of grace to free will, and the extent of Christ's atonement became topics of debate in the mid-ninth century, Gottschalk of Orbais was not alone in asserting the inability of the human will to choose good apart from special enabling grace, God's predestination of the elect to salvation and the reprobate to merited punishment, and the shedding of Christ's blood for all believers.¹ Remigius of Lyons, Florus of Lyons, Lupus of Fierrières, and Prudentius of Troyes similarly promoted such strict Augustinian tenets as the faith of the Church. This article briefly introduces the life and writings of Prudentius, and provides a translation of his *Tractoria*, which contains four chapters that succinctly illustrate his doctrine of grace.

The Life and Writings of Prudentius Related to Predestination

Born in Spain and then named Galino, Prudentius moved to the Frankish empire, was educated in the palace school. He was appointed chaplain to the Frankish court of

¹ For an argument against the notion that Gottschalk stood virtually alone in a world gone Semi-Pelagian, see Francis X. Gumerlock, "Predestination in the Century Before Gottschalk," (Part 1) *Evangelical Quarterly* 81:3 (July 2009):195-209; (Part 2) *Evangelical Quarterly* 81:4 (Oct 2009):319-337.

Louis the Pious and later elevated to the bishopric of Troyes sometime before 847.²

Some of his writings are printed in Volume 115 of *Patrologia Latina*. Four of them are related to his theology of grace during the Gottschalk controversy.

1. *Letter to Hincmar and Pardulus (Epistola ad Hincmarum et Pardulum)*. The priest-monk Gottschalk of Orbais was tried and condemned for errors related to predestination at a synod in Mainz in 848 and afterward at another synod at Quierzy in the spring of 849. At the latter council Hincmar, bishop of Reims, had Gottschalk flogged and defrocked, and then imprisoned him in the monastery at Hautvilliers. Since Gottschalk's teaching had been fairly influential and his writings were well circulated, Hincmar invited a number of theologians to dialogue on the issues that Gottschalk raised. Probably in 849, Prudentius wrote to Hincmar and Pardulus of Laon in this letter divided into thirteen chapters.³ Perhaps concerned that Augustine's doctrine was not being condemned with Gottschalk, Prudentius begins in the first chapter by saying that the Roman popes attested to the catholic orthodoxy of Augustine, and mentions Innocent, Zosimus, Celestine, Leo the Great, and Gregory the Great as supporters of Augustine. In

² On Prudentius, see A.H. Tegels, "Prudentius of Troyes, St.," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., Vol. 11 (New York: Gale, 2003), 793; Michael Walsh, "Prudentius Galindo," in his *Dictionary of Christian Biography* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 988; E.A. Livingston and F. L. Cross, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1342.

³ PL 115:971-1010.

the second chapter Prudentius shows how Prosper of Aquitaine and Fulgentius of Ruspe defended Augustine's doctrine. Chapter three and four speak of three questions that were currently in dispute: the predestination of the reprobate, whether the death of Christ died only for the elect, and whether it is the will of God that all humans be called and saved. Chapters five through the end contain a collection of citations from church fathers which answered these matters:

- Chs. 5-7 From the writings of Augustine
- Ch. 8 From Fulgentius' *Ad Monimum*
- Ch. 9 From Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Iob*
- Ch. 10 From Isidore of Seville and Jerome
- Ch. 11 From Prosper of Aquitaine's *Responsiones ad Capitula Gallorum*
- Ch. 12 From Cassiodorus' *On the Psalms* and Bede
- Ch. 13 From various authors on the issue of grace and free will.

The citations are mainly on the subject of predestination and show that Prudentius believed in the predestination of the elect and the just foreordination of the punishment, but not the sin, of the reprobate. Toward the end of the letter, Prudentius shows his sentiment on grace and free will: that the human will is not free for righteousness, but that freeing grace must precede the movement of the will toward God.

This letter is unavailable in English translation.

2. *On Predestination against John the Scot (De Praedestinatione contra Joannem Scotum cognomento Erigenam)*. When Hincmar realized that many leaders in the church, while not condoning Gottschalk's behavior (which was seen by both sides as arrogant,

rebellious, and somewhat bizarre), held positions regarding the doctrine of salvation that resembled Gottschalk's, he invited John Scottus Eriugena, an erudite teacher in the palace school, to write on the issue. At the end of 850 or in early 851 Eriugena wrote a book on predestination in nineteen chapters that denied two-fold predestination.⁴ Soon afterward, Wenilo the bishop of Sens excerpted many statements that Eriugena had written, and sent them to Prudentius for refutation. Against these, Prudentius took up his pen in the autumn of 851 or in 852, and published *On Predestination against John the Scot* with a preface addressed to Wenilo.⁵

Prudentius' method was to cite a short statement from Eriugena's work that he considered erroneous, and to follow it with a lengthy correction. Prudentius supported his corrections with three hundred and fifteen patristic quotes from the writings of Jerome, Augustine, Fulgentius, Leo, Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville, and Bede.⁶ According to James C. Prichard, a historian of the nineteenth-century, Prudentius found Eriugena's propositions "full of Pelagianism and other heresy, and accused their author of making an impudent and treacherous attack upon catholic doctrine, under the pretext of opposing Godeschalcus."⁷ According to a 1988 book on Eriugena by John J.

⁴ John Scottus Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*. Mary Brennan, trans. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998).

⁵ PL 115:1009-1366.

⁶ For the number of patristic quotes, John J. O'Meara, *Eriugena* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 48.

⁷ James C. Prichard, *The Life and Times of Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims* (London: John Henry Parker, 1849), 149. On Prudentius' use of Augustine, see Pierre Petitmengin,

O'Meara, Prudentius' refutation accused the Scot "of Pelagianism, of impudent blasphemy, sophistical folly, vanity, and the use of vain knowledge instead of the opinion of Scripture and the Fathers."⁸

Positively, Prudentius taught in this work that God ordains, disposes, dispenses, destines, and predestines the things that He did or is going to do (Isa 45:11), and this includes his creation and destining of the fire of hell (Matt 25:41).⁹ On free will, Prudentius asked: "How can you call that free which, you say, has been so spoiled as a punishment for original sin that it can neither wish to live rightly nor is able to live so, if it wishes...?"¹⁰ For Prudentius, divine grace creates in man a will to do good, as the Apostle said: *For it is God who works in you to will and to do* (Phil 2:13).¹¹

On Predestination against John the Scot is also not available in English translation.

"D'Augustin a Prudence de Troyes: les citations augustiniennes dans un manuscrit d'auteur," in *De Tertullien aux Mazarabes. Mélanges Jacques Fontaine*, Vol. 2 (Paris, 1992).

⁸ O'Meara, *Eriugena*, 48.

⁹ PL 115:1022

¹⁰ PL 115:1087. Citation from John Marenbon, "John Scotus and Carolingian Theology: From the *De Praedestinatione*, Its Background and Its Critics, to the *Periphyseon*," in Margaret T. Gibson and Janet L. Nelson, eds., *Charles the Bald. Court and Kingdom*, 2nd rev. ed. (Burlington, VT: Viviarum, 1990), 312.

¹¹ PL 115:1052; Cf. David Ganz, "The Debate on Predestination," in Gibson and Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, 285-302 at 293.

3. *Tractate or Letter to Wenilo (Epistola Tractoria ad Venilonem)*.¹² In 856, a gathering of bishops met in Sens for the ordination of a certain Aeneas to the bishopric of Paris.¹³ On this occasion Prudentius addressed this letter to Wenilo, the archbishop of Sens, and to the other bishops in attendance. He said that he could not attend due to sickness, but was sending a priest named Arnold as a legate from his church. Prudentius continued that he consents to the ordination, if Aeneas would subscribe to four “chapters,” or brief statements representing the teaching of the church against the Pelagians. Because Prudentius addressed the letter not only to Wenilo but to all of the bishops, it is referred to as a *Tractoria*, meaning a tractate or treatise. It was Prudentius’ hope that all of the bishops in attendance would affirm their consent to the chapters.

The first chapter expresses the inability of the human will to choose anything good after the Fall, and assigns the beginning of a good will to the grace of God. The second asserts two-fold predestination. The third says that the blood of Christ was shed for all believers; and the fourth states that the saving will of God extends to those who are actually saved.

¹² PL 115:1365-1368.

¹³ For the date of 856, Friedrich Kempf, Hans-Georg Beck, Eugen Ewig, and Josef Andreas Jungmann, *The Church in the Age of Feudalism*. Anselm Biggs, trans. (Saint Louis: Herder and Herder, 1969), 163; Pietro Palazzini, *Dizionario dei Concili*, Vol. 5 (Vatican City: Città Nuova Editrice, 1963), 151; Michael Ott, “Prudentius,” *The Original Catholic Encyclopedia* at <http://oce.catholic.com>.

Realizing that some of the bishops (including possibly himself) had subscribed to the canons of Quierzy in 853, Prudentius nevertheless wants it known that *these* four chapters are what the Church every day confesses, preaches, and holds.

How the bishops gathered at Sens responded to the *Tractoria* is unknown, but there is no evidence of a negative reaction to it. Hence, the four chapters are often referred to in literature as the canons of the Council of Sens of 856.

The *Tractoria* is translated below.

4. *The Annals of St. Bertin (Annales Bertiniani)*. Prudentius also edited a good portion of a historical chronicle called the *Annals of St. Bertin*. The short entries in the chronicle for the years 835-861 that Prudentius wrote provide valuable additions to our historical knowledge of the mid-ninth century.

Interestingly, under the year 859, Prudentius explained that Pope Nicholas I confirmed the teaching of double predestination and particular redemption. He wrote: “Pope Nicholas faithfully confirmed and catholicly [sic] decreed concerning the grace of God and free will, the truth of double predestination, and the blood of Christ and how it was shed for all believers.”¹⁴ What exactly Prudentius was referring to in this statement would make a great subject for research, an academic paper, or an article.¹⁵

Another value of the *Annals* is its entry about Gottschalk. It reads:

¹⁴ Janet L. Nelson, trans., *The Annals of St-Bertin*. Ninth-Century Histories, Vol. 1 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 91.

¹⁵ On Pope Nicholas, see Jane Carol Bishop, “Pope Nicholas I and the First Age of Papal Independence,” Ph.D. diss (Columbia University, 1980).

Gottschalk, a man of Gaul, a monk and priest of the monastery of Orbais of the parish of Soissons, was bloated with his knowledge and given to certain superstitions. He went to Italy in the name of religion, but was then shamefully banished. He next sought out Dalmatia, Pannonia, and Noricum, and taught there with pernicious speech and writing certain things—especially under the name of predestination—opposed to our salvation. In the presence of King Louis the German he was discovered and convicted by a council of bishops. Finally he was forced to return to the metropolitan city of his diocese, Rheims, over which that venerable man Hincmar presides. To the extent that he deserved to be punished for his lack of faith, he received it there. That most strenuous defender of the Christian faith, King Charles [the Bald] called together a council of the holy bishops of that diocese and commanded Gottschalk to be presented before them. [Gottschalk] was lead in, was publicly whipped, and was forced to cast into flames his books with their many assertions.¹⁶

This short account offers a helpful chronology, written by a contemporary, of the travels of Gottschalk and the ecclesiastical trouble into which he landed. The language with which Prudentius refers to Gottschalk in the entry is evidence that many of the strict Augustinians, whose theology was similar to that of Gottschalk, had distanced themselves from his person.¹⁷ Gottschalk's request in his *Longer Confession* for a trial

¹⁶ Cited in Paul Edward Dutton, ed., *Carolingian Civilization. A Reader* (Petersborough, Ontario: Broadview, 1993), 50.

¹⁷ Bernard Boller, *Gottschalk d'Orbais de Fulda à Hautvillers: une dissidence* (Paris: Editions SDE, 2004), 124, note 257, makes this same observation.

by ordeal did not sit well with them; and this is probably what Prudentius had in mind when he wrote that he was “given to certain superstitions.”¹⁸ Prudentius also described Gottschalk’s speech as “pernicious” and opposed to salvation. An almost universal criticism among Gottschalk’s contemporaries was the manner in which he taught two-fold predestination, in a way that seemed to leave no room for the conversion of sinners through repentance.¹⁹

In addition, Prudentius referred to Gottschalk as one “bloated” with knowledge. The ecclesiastical leaders of the time were amazed at Gottschalk’s ability to recite large portions of church fathers from memory,²⁰ but interpreted his tendency to be argumentative as a sign of pride. Florus of Lyons, whose theological views, like those of

¹⁸ Cyrille Lambot, ed., *Oeuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescalc d’Orbais* (Louvain: “Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense” Bureaux, 1945), 74-5. An English translation of Gottschalk’s *Longer Confession* is in Ronald Hanko, “Gotteschalk’s Doctrine of Double Predestination,” *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* 12:1 (1978):31-64. A new translation of it is forthcoming in Victor Genke and Francis X. Gumerlock, *Gottschalk of Orbais: Translated Texts of a Medieval Predestination Controversy*, which is completed and currently under consideration for publication by an academic press in the United States. On Gottschalk, Matthew Gillis is currently finishing his doctoral dissertation at the University of Virginia entitled “Reform and Authority in the Carolingian World: A Study of Gottschalk of Saxony.”

¹⁹ Francis X. Gumerlock, “Gottschalk of Orbais: A Medieval Predestinarian,” *Kerux* 22:3 (Dec 2007):17-34 at 26-7.

²⁰ Hinemar of Reims, *Epistola ad Nicholam*, PL 126:45-46.

Prudentius, resembled Gottschalk's in many respects, also seemed annoyed by the wandering monk's pugnacity, stubbornness, and unwillingness to receive correction. At the end of his *Sermon on Predestination*, Florus exhorted his readers to close their ears "against the wicked tongue of this very vain and very wretched man [Gottschalk]." He continued:

For, although he is ready to argue and is obstinate against the truth, this unfortunate man, inflated with a diabolical spirit [i.e. pride], preferred to separate himself from the church of Christ and its ministers than to turn away from his profane and vain speech.²¹

An English translation of *The Annals of St. Bertin* by Janet L. Nelson was published in 1991.

Other Writings of Prudentius

Volume 115 of Migne's *Patrologia Latina* contains a historical notice on Prudentius, dated 1861, that lists other writings by him including *Praecepta ex Veteri et Novo Testamento* (*Precepts from the Old and New Testaments*), *Poemata* (*Poems*), *Vitam beatae Maurae [sic] virginis Trecentis* (*Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary from Troyes*), and possibly *Collectanea ex CL psalmis* (*Commentaries on the 150 Psalms*).²²

²¹ Florus of Lyons, *Sermo de praedestinatione*. PL 119:102 and PL 125:59. Translation mine. A translation of the entire sermon is forthcoming in Genke and Gumerlock, *Gottschalk of Orbais*.

²² PL 115:971-972.

A Puzzling Question

Hincmar, in Chapter 21 of his *De Praedestinatione dissertatio posterior*, written in 856 after Prudentius' *Tractoria*, expressed amazement that Prudentius had subscribed to a canon on free will at the Council of Quierzy (in 853) but afterward wrote the 'four chapters' to Wenilo.²³ If this account is accurate, it means that after Prudentius' *Letter to Hincmar and Pardulus*, and after writing his treatise *On Predestination* against Eriugena, Prudentius consented, approved of, and subscribed to the canons of Quierzy which can be summarized as follows: There is only one predestination, that of the elect; the free will of man is healed through grace; God wills all men to be saved; and Christ suffered for all men.²⁴ Then shortly thereafter Prudentius wrote the *Tractoria*, which counters the canons of Quierzy.

Several explanations have been put forward in the literature for why Prudentius would have approved the canons of Quierzy. Victor Genke questions the veracity of Hincmar's account.²⁵ C.J. Thorne, Jr. suggested that Prudentius subscribed "either out of reverence for Hincmar or fear of Charles the Bald", the king of France (West Franks) and grandson of Charlemagne who had called the council to stop the dispute over

²³ Hincmar, *De praedestinatione dissertatio posterior*, 21. PL 125:182.

²⁴ The canons are in PL 121:1085-1086; PL 125:63-64. English translation in Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*. Roy J. Deferrari, trans. (Saint Louis: Herder, 1957), 126-7.

²⁵ Genke and Gumerlock, Introduction to *Gottschalk of Orbais*: "If Hincmar is to be trusted at this point, Prudentius of Troyes subscribed to the document, too."

predestination.²⁶ Paul Burns wrote similarly that Prudentius may have been intimidated by the presence of the emperor at the Council of Quierzy.²⁷

I think another possibility exists. Because Quierzy was convened for the purpose of settling the controversy that had polarized the Frankish ecclesiastical leaders, perhaps Prudentius saw the canons as vague enough to allow for his strict Augustinian interpretation of them. Predestination could rightly be explained as one, but having two aspects, as Gottschalk had explained in his *Longer Confession*.²⁸ And what strict Augustinian would disagree with the statement of Quierzy that free will is healed through grace? As for God wanting all to be saved and Christ suffering for all, there is similar phraseology in Scripture,²⁹ so perhaps he affirmed the statement with the knowledge that so-called “universalist” passages can be interpreted as synecdochic figures of speech meaning “many.”

Or perhaps, as Prichard thinks,³⁰ the views of Prudentius were not as solidified in 853 at the time of the Council of Quierzy as they would later become, especially after

²⁶ For example, C. G. Thorne, Jr., “Prudentius (Galindo) (d. 861),” in J.D. Douglas, ed., *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Revised ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 810.

²⁷ “St. Prudentius, Bishop (861)” under April 6 in Paul Burns, ed., *Butler’s Lives of the Saints. New Full Edition*, Vol. 4 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 36.

²⁸ Gottschalk, *Longer Confession*. Lambot, 67-8.

²⁹ 1 Tim 2:4; Rom 8:32.

³⁰ Prichard, *Life and Times of Hincmar*, 154: “It appears indeed that Prudentius was long in much uncertainty as to these questions, and with difficulty made up his mind.”

855 when the bishops of Lyons, Vienne, and Arles opposed the doctrine of Eriugena at the Council of Valence and upheld two-fold predestination.³¹ The similarity in theology between the later theology of Prudentius and that of the theologians of Lyons, and the possibility of their influence upon Prudentius, is hinted upon by James Ussher and Timothy Roberts.³²

The question of Prudentius' alleged inconsistency merits additional research. Such research might include a comparative investigation between Prudentius' earlier and later writings on the issue, and comparison of Prudentius' *Tractoria* with the theology of Remigius and Florus of Lyons and with the canons of the Council of Valence, which reflected the theology of these leaders from Lyons.

Conclusion: The Contributions of Prudentius

According to one scholar, "Prudentius was regarded by his contemporaries as being among the most learned theologians of his day."³³ His writings show that he held a prominent place in the discussion on predestination in the Frankish Church in the mid-

³¹ The canons of the Council of Valence are translated in Denzinger, *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 127-32.

³² James Ussher, *Gotteschalci, et praedestinationae controversiae ab eo motae*, *Historia* (Dublin, 1631), reprinted in *The Whole Works of the Most Rev. James Ussher*, Vol. 4. (Dublin: Hodges, Smith, and Co., 1864), 172; Timothy Roland Roberts, "A Translation and Critical Edition of Ratramnus of Corbie's De Predestinatione [sic] Dei," Ph.D. diss (University of Missouri-Columbia, 1977), 15.

³³ Burns, *Butler's Lives of the Saints, New Full Edition*, 4:37.

ninth century. After Hincmar condemned Gottschalk and opened the discussion on predestination to other theologians, Prudentius poured through the writings of the Fathers, and found that Augustine and others did teach that the punishment of the reprobate, merited by their sins, was divinely foreordained. This he expressed in his *Letter to Hincmar and Pardulus*.

When Eriugena's *On Predestination* entered the debate, archbishop Wenilo of Sens saw many problems with Eriugena's treatment of the issues, and entrusted to Prudentius the task of refuting it. This shows that Wenilo very much respected Prudentius' orthodoxy, his command of the Fathers, and his ability to refute Eriugena, one of the most distinguished teachers in the empire. There is no doubt that Prudentius' *On Predestination against John the Scot* influenced the widespread distaste for Eriugena's treatise.³⁴

In the *Annals of St. Bertin*, Prudentius uniquely informed posterity that Pope Nicholas I decreed that double predestination and definite atonement were Catholic doctrines. Finally, Prudentius' *Tractoria* to Wenilo and the bishops gathered for the ordination of Aeneas contains strict Augustinian tenets in its four chapters, and strongly encouraged both Aeneas and the other bishops to subscribe to them. Prudentius' insistence on making subscription to two-fold predestination and particular redemption a requirement for ordination is very unusual in ancient and medieval Christianity. In the

³⁴ The Council of Valence in 855 expressed its disgust for Eriugena's treatise referred to as "Scottish hodge-podge," and produced canons against its propositions. After such reactions, even Hincmar distanced himself from Eriugena.

middle ages it seems to be an anomaly; and for this Prudentius deserves a place in the history of doctrine.

Prudentius of Troyes

Tractate

Epistle of Saint Prudentius, bishop of Troyes, to Wenilo, which he sent through a vicar on the occasion of the ordination of Aeneas of Paris, since he was not able to be there.

Prudentius most sincerely wishes eternal salvation in the Lord to the venerable father and the rest of the fathers and brothers, beloved and reverend fellow bishops.

Having been afflicted with almost every known infirmity, I am prohibited from attending your holy and desirable gathering. This [infirmity] is understood to pertain to the most just judgment of God as far as it concerns the merit of my sins, but as far as it concerns His undeserved and unfailing mercies, it pertains to His most merciful bounty. However, as far as I am able, I exhibit the presence of my consent through letters and through our church's legate, the priest Arnold. Because he who should be ordained, having been instructed by all in the apostolic see and by the writings and sayings of the blessed fathers Innocent, Zosimus, Boniface, Sixtus, Leo, Gelasius, Celestine, Gregory, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, Isidore, Primasius, Fulgentius, Gregory, Jerome, Cassiodorus, Bede, and other equally catholic and orthodox men, wishes by confessing to subscribe, and by subscribing to confess, particularly to the four chapters which the whole catholic church has fought for and been victorious against Pelagius and the

followers of his heresy, and has entrusted for the memory of posterity in very extensive literature carrying authority and truth, I profess my consent to his ordination. However, if [he confesses and subscribes] to other opinions, I absolutely do not consent, nor do I recommend that the faithful of Christ consent.

Although I have no doubt that your prudence is more vigorous than my aged knowledge, I have judged it necessary to briefly attach a series of four chapters, set forth so that your goodness may more easily recognize what I believe and to what truth I consent.

Concerning Free Will

First. Evidently, that one should confess that free will, lost in Adam by the merit of disobedience, is restored to us and freed through our Lord Jesus Christ. Meanwhile [we live] in hope [of salvation]; later [we shall possess it] in reality, just as the Apostle says, “For in hope we have been saved” (Rom 8:24). Nevertheless, we should assign the grace of the omnipotent God to every good work, whether in proposing, beginning, working out, or finishing with perseverance. And we should know that without it we are in no way able to do anything good, whether to propose, or to will, or to work.

Concerning Twofold Predestination

Second. That one should believe and confess that by the most high and secret counsel of the omnipotent God, some were predestined to life by the gratuitous mercy of God before all ages, and some were predestined to punishment by an inscrutable judgment. Evidently, whether unto salvation or unto damnation, He has predestined what

he had foreknown He was going to do in judging, as the prophet says, “He who made the things that are future” (Isa 45:11).

Concerning the Death of Christ

Third. That one should believe and confess with all catholics that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for all persons believing in Him throughout the whole world, but not for those who never believed in Him, do not believe today, or will never believe, as the Lord Himself says, “For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28).

Concerning the Will of God

Fourth. That one should believe and confess that the omnipotent God wills to save whomever [He wants], and that no one is in any way able to be saved unless He saves them; and all those to be saved, He willed to be saved. And from this, [concerning] those who are not saved, it is clearly not His will that they should be saved, as the prophet says, “All things whatsoever God willed, He did in heaven and on earth, in the sea, and in all of the abyss” (Ps 135:6).

Also, it may be that some have consented, approved, and subscribed to other opinions, which the Church universally condemned against Pelagius. Nevertheless, against him and his companions, the Church every day rejoices over, confesses, preaches, holds, and will hold these things, having been delivered from his very depraved opinions through the apostolic see, at the insistence of the most blessed Aurelius, bishop of

Carthage, and Augustine, with two hundred and fourteen other bishops, and having been made common throughout the whole world through many epistles as well as books. May He [God], through His bounty, deign to forever preserve these things happily through all of your consent, [knowing that] your praiseworthy paternity and fraternity is unbreakable and very strong through heavenly grace.