

ON DEATH



THEOLOGICAL COMMONPLACES

ON
DEATH
PART TWO

JOHANN GERHARD

Translated by Richard J. Dinda
Edited by Joshua J. Hayes and Heath R. Curtis
General Editor Benjamin T. G. Mayes



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GENERAL EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

This volume contains the final part of Johann Gerhard's commonplace *On Death*, originally published in 1621 in the eighth volume of Gerhard's *Theological Commonplaces*. The eighth volume of the original edition also includes the commonplace *On the Resurrection of the Dead*.¹ The commonplace *On Death* is the first of the author's six commonplaces on the last things (eschatology).²

Modern readers might wonder how it would be possible to fill two volumes in our series with only the topic of death. And is it worth reading, especially all the intricate discussions on what happens to the soul after death and before the resurrection, and on the activities of the saints in heaven? Modern readers will find value in this volume as it addresses death not only narrowly but also more broadly with other important topics for Christian faith and pastoral care of souls.

- The teaching on the intermediate state between death and resurrection is important both because it is so taught in Scripture but also because of our modern, scientific views of anthropology, in which a soul independent of the body's nervous system is hard for some Christians to imagine.
- The lengthy treatment of the saints clarifies the life of the blessed in heaven (e.g., Does Grandma know what's happening in my life?), affirms Evangelical Lutheran love and honor for the saints, and thoroughly rejects the invocation and trust in the saints practiced in the Roman Catholic Church, which Gerhard demonstrates is actually idolatrous.
- Gerhard offers useful applications of the doctrine of death, or the usefulness of remembering one's future death, by distinguishing true Christian consolation from Stoic, philosophical ways of facing death.
- Gerhard's collection of prayers and letters on death provides a significant resource for pastoral care and reflections on the art of dying, powerful texts of beauty and comfort which would have been lost to Christian memory if not for this translation.

1 Johann Gerhard, *Locorum Theologicorum . . . Tomus Octavus: In quo continentur haec Capita: 29. De Morte. 30. De Resurrectione mortuorum* (Jena: Steinmann, 1621).

2 For the earlier stages of this commonplace and events of Gerhard's life around the time of this publication, see *On Death, Part One* (Commonplace XXIX/1), ix–x.

EDITIONS OF THE *THEOLOGICAL COMMONPLACES*

There are four main editions of Gerhard's *Theological Commonplaces*: the Jena edition of 1610 (the edition printed during Gerhard's lifetime), the Frankfurt/Hamburg edition of 1657 (edited by Johann Ernst Gerhard, the author's son), the Tübingen edition of 1762 (edited by Johann Friedrich Cotta), and the Berlin/Leipzig edition of 1863 (edited by Edward Preuss). Dr. Richard Dinda made his translation from the Preuss edition, and we have edited the text with an eye not only on Preuss but also on the Cotta edition, which was employed to correct the many typographical errors of Preuss's edition (some of which were carried forward from the Frankfurt/Hamburg edition). At the top of each page of the Concordia edition, references are given to both the Cotta and Preuss editions. Thus "C3:44" means "Cotta edition, volume 3, page 44," and "P1:143" means "Preuss edition, volume 1, page 143."

In the preface to his edition, Preuss said that he was reprinting the Jena edition of 1610. However, instead of including the original Commonplaces I–VII of the Jena edition, Preuss substituted the four commonplaces he found at the beginning of the Frankfurt/Hamburg edition. These were published in 1625, after Gerhard had finished his *Theological Commonplaces*, with the title "Exegesis, or a more copious explanation of certain articles of the Christian religion." They were not meant to be a substitute for the 1610 Commonplaces I–VII but were intended as a supplement. It is these "Exegesis" Commonplaces that Preuss included, and it is the same that we have previously presented to our readers in the volumes covering Exegesis I–IV. These "Exegesis" Commonplaces have been included with printings of Gerhard's *Theological Commonplaces* since the Frankfurt/Hamburg edition; therefore they do belong in this series.

The enumeration of the commonplaces has also presented difficulties. Both Preuss and Cotta presented different numbering systems than the seventeenth-century editions of the *Theological Commonplaces*. We have decided to follow the original enumeration as found in the Jena and Frankfurt/Hamburg editions. A comparison chart is included on p. x.

In the Concordia edition, we refer to the commonplaces included both in the original Jena edition and in Preuss's edition as, for example, "Commonplace XI." We refer to the "Exegesis" Commonplaces included in Preuss's edition as "1625 Exegesis, Commonplace II." And we refer to the original Commonplaces I–VII, which were not included in Preuss's edition, as "1610 Commonplace V." In the indices, reference is given first to the commonplace number, then to the section number. For example: "E3.34" means "1625 Exegesis, Commonplace III, § 34." And "8.55" means "1610 Commonplace VIII, § 55." This manner of indexing will allow the reader to refer to any edition of the *Theological Commonplaces* from the seventeenth century to the present.

Preuss's edition and this Concordia edition occasionally surround sections of text with double asterisks (**). These sections are Gerhard's marginal notes on his *Theological Commonplaces* that his son included in the Frankfurt/Hamburg edition.

THIS VOLUME

Gerhard often gives enumerated lists in the *Theological Commonplaces*. Often sublists are embedded within these lists, and since Gerhard uses arabic numerals for all the lists, the enumeration becomes confusing. Gerhard's eighteenth-century editor, Johann Friedrich Cotta, tried to clarify the nesting of lists by sometimes using Roman numerals or letters. Our edition has generally followed Cotta's enumeration, but at times even Cotta's enumeration is confusing. Rather than confusing things further, we have often let Cotta's numbering stand.

Preuss's edition lists the six commonplaces on the last things as "treatises." At the top margin of volumes 8–9 in that edition, a commonplace number is only given for the first commonplace, *On Death*. After that, the other last things are listed as the "second treatise" through to the "sixth treatise."³ Nevertheless, on the half-title page of the Preuss edition, the commonplace numbers are given. This manner of treating the "last things" content goes back to the original Jena edition, where commonplace numbers were listed on the title page, but within the volume the commonplaces after *On Death* were labeled as the second through sixth treatises.⁴ For the sake of clarity, we follow the reference system as listed on the title pages of the original Jena edition.⁵

The publication of Gerhard's *Theological Commonplaces* could not happen without the cooperation of a skilled and dedicated team. Joshua J. Hayes took on the main labor of editing, assisted in this volume by Heath R. Curtis and me. Curtis also translated the "concluding flourish" below, pp. 325–37. Richard J. Dinda († 2017), the original translator, and Paul T. McCain († 2020), Concordia Publishing House interim president (2002–6) and publisher (2006–20), are remembered with Christian piety for helping to make this project come about in the first place. Dawn Mirly Weinstock has served as production editor for the series from the beginning. Many other colleagues, both within and outside of Concordia Publishing House, have given their advice and support. For all of these people, the Christian readership and I give thanks to God.

May Christ, who is victor over death and the restorer of life, be the death of our death. May He begin in us spiritual life in this life and complete it in the life to come. Amen.

Benjamin T. G. Mayes

3 *Ioannis Gerhard Loci Theologici . . . Tomus Octavus* (Berolini: Gust. Schlawitz, 1870); *Ioannis Gerhard Loci Theologici . . . Tomus Nonus* (Lipsiae: J. C. Hinrichs, 1875). These are the last two volumes of the edition begun by Edward Preuss, though Preuss is not listed as editor for these volumes.

4 For the Jena ed., see above, p. vii n. 1.

5 See p. x.

COMPARISON OF EDITIONS OF GERHARD'S *LOCI*

Title	Frankfurt/ Hamburg (1657)*	Cotta (1762)	Preuss (1863)
On the Nature of Theology (Exegesis)	E preface	E preface	Preface
On Holy Scripture (Exegesis)	E1	E1	1
On the Nature of God (Exegesis)	E2	E2	2
On the Most Holy Mystery of the Trinity (Exegesis)	E3	E3	3
On the Person and Office of Christ (Exegesis)	E4	E4	4
On Holy Scripture	1	1	
On the Interpretation of Scripture	2	2	
On the Nature of God	3	3	
On the Three Elohim	4	4	
On God the Father and His Eternal Son	5	4, part 2	
On the Holy Spirit	6	5, part 3 [!]	
On the Person and Office of Christ	7	5	
On Creation and Angels	8	6	5
On Providence	9	7	6
On Election and Reprobation	10	8	7
On the Image of God in Man before the Fall	11	9	8
On Original Sin	12	10	9
On Actual Sins	13	11	10
On Free Choice	14	12	11
On the Law of God	15	13	12
On the Ceremonial and Forensic Laws	16	14	13
On the Gospel	17	15	14
On Repentance	18	16	15
On Justification through Faith	19	17	16
On Good Works	20	18	17
On the Sacraments	21	19	18
On Circumcision and the Paschal Lamb	22	20	19
On Holy Baptism	23	21	20
On the Holy Supper	24	22	21
On the Church	25	23	22
On the Ecclesiastical Ministry	26	24	23
On Political Magistracy	27	25	24
On Marriage, Celibacy, and Similar Topics	28	26	25
On Death	29	27	26
On the Resurrection of the Dead	30	28	27
On the Last Judgment	31	29	28
On the End of the World	32	30	29
On Hell, or Eternal Death	33	31	30
On Eternal Life	34	32	31

* The Jena ed. (1610) has the same enumeration, except that it lacks the Exegesis. Our edition follows this enumeration as well.

COMMONPLACE XXIX

ON DEATH

PART TWO

CHAPTER VIII [CONTINUED]

SECTION IV: CONCERNING THE SLEEP OF SEPARATED SOULS

§ 293. Earlier we demonstrated ([*On Death, Part One* (Commonplace XXIX/1)], § 154) that the question about the state and condition of souls which have departed from the dwelling of the body can be reduced to two chief points. The first concerns the *where*, the dwelling into which souls are taken after one's death and which we said could be termed the soul's holding [ψυχοδχεϊον]. The latter deals with the activity and experience, that is, what those separated souls do or do not do, whether they are completely anesthetized, overcome by an Epimenidean sleep,¹ lying at rest without action or deeds until Judgment Day or whether they perform and experience various things according to the condition and state of their different dwellings. We have already discussed the first point in sufficient detail. Therefore it remains for us to delve into the second, intending to discuss the same with equal clarity.

Many of the ancient teachers of the church seem to hold a sort of soul sleep [ψυχοπαννυχία]. That is, they seem to have claimed that the souls of the dead are at rest in sleep, that they have been deprived of a sense of both good and evil, that they experience neither eternal bliss nor damnation, that they rest until the resurrection of the dead and Judgment Day in a place halfway between heaven and earth, that they are held still, excluded from the vision of God in a certain *where* away from hell (where the souls of the ungodly are kept) and where they await union with their bodies, which will be resurrected, and the possession of eternal bliss. In support of this opinion they generally cite Justin from the Greek fathers (or whoever else is the author of the *Quaestiones*, for the learned are correct in doubting whether they are Justin's), who (in q. 60 which the heathen ask Christians) writes: "The account of Lazarus and the rich man is not true history." He then gives his reason and adds: "For before the resurrection a reward is not given to anyone for the things he has done in life." Again (q. 76): "If there are no rewards for works before the resurrection, what advantage did the thief have when his spirit was brought into paradise?" But he answers:

The advantage for the thief was this: that he actually received the benefit of faith through which he was considered worthy to be united with the fellowship of the saints, where he is kept until the day of the resurrection and remuneration, and has a sense of paradise from his sense of understanding, as it is called, by which souls

¹ The philosopher Epimenides (7th–6th century BC) was thought to have slept in a cave for fifty-seven years. See Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.109–15 (LCL 184:114–21).

see themselves and the things which are beneath them, in addition to the angels and demons.

Irenaeus (*Adv. haeres.*, bk. 5, toward the end of ch. 31) writes:

When the Lord departed in the midst of the shadow of death to where the souls of the dead were, and then later rose again in the body and was taken up after the resurrection, it is clear that the souls of His disciples, on whose behalf the Lord did this, will also depart into the invisible place God has defined for them. They will stay there until the resurrection, and then undergo the resurrection. After they receive their bodies and rise up completely—that is, in the flesh, just as the Lord rose again—then they will come into the presence of God.

Origen (on Leviticus, hom. 7) speaks about the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles and says:

For they have not yet received their joy, not even the apostles, but even they themselves keep waiting so that I may become a partaker of their joy. For when they depart from here, the saints do not immediately obtain the full rewards for their merits but are still waiting for us, though we are tarrying, though you are idle, etc. Therefore you see that Abraham is still waiting to obtain the things that are perfect, and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets are waiting for us so that they may have perfect bliss along with us.

[Origen again] (*Περί ἀρχῶν*, toward the end of bk. 2) writes: “I think that each of the saints who departs this life remains in a location placed on earth, a location which Holy Scripture calls ‘paradise,’ as in a place of learning and, so to speak, an auditorium or school for souls where they are taught about all the things they had seen on earth.”

Titus of Bostra (commentary on Luke 23) explains the paradise that Christ promised the thief as “a receptacle, in its way distinct from the region of heaven.” (Scholars deservedly doubt that those commentaries on Luke are the work of Titus because in several places their author cites Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, and Isidore of Pelusium, who were boys when Titus died, for he died during the reign of Valens, according to Jerome, *De script. eccles.*)

Chrysostom (on 1 Corinthians, hom. 39, on those words: “If in this life we only hope in Christ, we are more wretched than all people” [15:19]):

What are you saying, Paul? That your spirit will not survive? It will indeed be immortal. But let them be immortal six hundred times over and nevertheless without the flesh they will not enjoy those wonders, as they also will not be punished with punishments. For, as Paul says, all things will be revealed before the judgment seat of Christ so that each may receive what he has done through his body, whether that be good or evil [cf. 2 Cor. 5:10]. For if our body does not rise again, our soul will remain uncrowned and will be outside of heavenly bliss.

[Chrysostom again] (on Hebrews, hom. 28):

You must also understand what and how great it is that while you pass the time, Abraham and Paul sit and wait in order that they may receive the reward then, for unless we also come there, the Savior prophesied to them that they would not receive their reward, just as a good father who loves his children tells his good and genuine sons who are completing their work that he will not give them anything

to eat unless their other brothers come too (etc.). Lest they should seem to have something ahead of us if they were crowned first before us, He defined one time for the crowning of all, and the one who lived so many years earlier will receive his crown right alongside you.

And [Chrysostom continues] later on: “They precede us in the contest, but they do not precede us in the crowns. For if we are all one body, then greater happiness is occasioned for the body from the fact that we are crowned at the same time together, and not one part at a time.”

In other sermons he commonly calls that place the “atrium of the pious” [τὸ τῶν ἱερῶν πρόθυρον] (as Bernard calls it “the atrium distinct from the house of the Lord,” as we shall see later [§ 294]), because souls tarry there like those who wait in front of the doors of their rulers, in the entryways of the palaces, to be admitted into the inner rooms, into the presence of the prince. Similar statements occur in Hom. 40 on Genesis; *Ad populum Antiochenum* (hom. 33); Hom. 7 on Hebrews, where he calls the place where the souls of the pious are gathered “the bosom of Abraham”; and in the *Imperf. in Matth.* (hom. 34), which is extant among the works of Chrysostom.

Theodoret writes in his commentary on Hebrews 11: “The contests of the saints have been very many and very great, but they have not yet received their crowns, for God is awaiting the contests of the others so that, after the race has been run, He may declare all who gained the victory the victors and give them their prizes at the same time.”

Theophylact writes (on Luke 16) that the tale of Lazarus and the rich man is a parable and not history “because the good and evil things have not yet been distributed to the just and the unjust.” He writes (on Luke 23):

Others have said that the thief has not yet been allotted his portion in paradise, but because the promise of the Lord is unchangeable and cannot mislead, therefore He said, “Today you will be with Me in paradise” [Luke 23:43]. On the other hand, some who have seemed especially to grasp the meaning explain it in this way: that the good things promised to us are not entry into paradise or the ascent to it but the kingdom of heaven, for the kingdom and paradise do not seem to be the same place to me. For eye has not seen nor ear heard the goods of the kingdom [cf. 1 Cor. 2:9]; but the eye of Adam saw paradise, and his ear heard of these things (etc.).

[Theophylact again] (on Hebrews 11): “The saints still have not yet obtained any of the promises of heaven.”

Oecumenius (commentary on the same passage) writes: “The saints have earned the witness that through faith they have pleased God, but they have not yet received the good things promised to the righteous,” etc.

Bishop Arethas of Caesarea (in his commentary on Revelation 6) writes:

Through these words the saints seem to be asking for the end of the world. Therefore they are commanded to wait patiently until the consummation of their brothers, lest they be consummated without them, according to the divine apostle. Therefore, being freed from all weightiness through the hope for these things, a hope which with the intellect contemplates [these matters] as in a mirror, they deservedly rejoice as they rest in the bosom of Abraham. For this has been said by many saints: everyone

who cultivates virtue has been allotted a worthy place from which he obtains a certain conjecture about his future glory.

The commentaries of Arethas were gathered from the writings of Andreas, bishop of Caesarea; thus it is clear that he held to the same opinion.

Euthymius says (on Luke 16): “The account of Lazarus and the rich man is a parable which shows what is going to happen after Judgment Day.” On Luke 23, Euthymius distinguishes paradise from the kingdom and says, “Then, indeed, He gave him a place in paradise as a pledge of His kingdom, which is the enjoyment of indescribable and eternal goods which eye has not seen nor ear heard [cf. 1 Cor. 2:9].”

§ 294. Of the Latin fathers, Tertullian seems to have thought this way, as we see in many passages. He writes (*Apolog.*, ch. 47, p. 78): “We call ‘paradise’ the place of divine pleasantness appointed to receive the spirits of the saints, separated by a sort of wall of that fiery zone from the knowledge of the common world.”

[Tertullian again] (*De anim.*, ch. 55):

If Christ does not ascend into the heights of heaven before descending into the lower parts of earth, so that He may there make the patriarchs and prophets partakers of Himself, then you have to believe that hell is a subterranean region and hold off at arm’s length those who, with quite enough pride, do not think that the souls of the faithful are worthy of the infernal region. [Such men are] servants above their Lord and disciples above their Master who would certainly reject the comfort of the resurrection if they had to receive it in the bosom of Abraham. Heaven is open to no one while the earth still endures; for when the world has passed away, then the kingdom of heaven will be opened.

And toward the end of that chapter: “You have from us a booklet about paradise in which we claimed that every soul is kept in the lower world until the day of the Lord.” Chapter 58 (p. 296): “Therefore you say that, willing or not, all souls are within the lower worlds where there are now punishments or refreshments for them.”

[Tertullian again] (*Adv. Marcion.*, bk. 4, ch. 34, p. 441): “I call this region” (appointed to receive the souls of the pious dead) “‘the bosom of Abraham.’ Although it is not heavenly, nevertheless it is higher than hell. It will give interim comfort for the souls of the righteous until the consummation of the universe brings about the resurrection of all with the fullness of their reward. Then will the heavenly promise appear, which Marcion arrogates for his [god], as if it was never announced by the Creator.” There are similar things in [Tertullian’s] *Scorpiac.* (ch. 12, *de iudic. Domini*); in the fragment of *De paradiso*, ch. 11; etc.

Victorinus Martyr (on Revelation 6) says, “The souls of the dead find themselves under the altar, that is, under the earth.” Also: “On the Last Day the reward of the saints will be eternal; and of the wicked, damnation.”

Lactantius (*Div. instit.*, bk. 7, ch. 21): “No one should think that souls are judged immediately after death, for all are kept under one common protection until the time should come when the great Judge will conduct His examination of merits.”

Hilary (on Psalm 38): “This is the law of human necessity that, after the burial of their bodies,” (entirely all) “souls descend into the lower regions. The Lord has not rejected this law for the consummation of the true man.”

Ambrose (*De Cain.*, bk. 2, ch. 2): “The soul is loosed from the body, and after the end of this life, it is somehow set apart for future judgment.” *De bon. mortis* (ch. 10): “It was enough for them to say that ‘souls seek Hades,’ that is, a place that is not seen, which in Latin we call ‘hell’ [*infernum*].”

In his hymn *De exseq. defunct.*, Prudentius teaches that souls descend into an earthly paradise or into the bosom of Abraham:

Behold, there now lies open a bright path
 To a broad paradise for the faithful, and
 Man is permitted to approach that grove
 Which the serpent had taken away.

Augustine (*Retract.*, bk. 1, ch. 14): “In regard to the saints who have already died, it is rightly questioned as to whether it should be said that they are already in possession” (of bliss). In Letter 111 *ad Fortunatus*, Augustine concludes this from the words of Jerome: “We will see the face of God when we go forth among the angels, that is, when we shall have become the equals of the angels, which will be at the resurrection of the dead.” *Enchir.* (ch. 108): “The time that lies between one’s death and the final resurrection contains souls whose receptacles have been concealed.” *De Gen. ad lit.* (bk. 12, ch. 35): “There should be no doubt at all that one’s soul, when it puts aside the flesh after death, is thus unable to see an unchangeable substance as the holy angels see it.” On Psalm 36 (conc. 1): “After this brief life you will not yet be where the saints will be to whom it was said, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the origin of the world’ [Matt. 25:34]. You will not yet be there. Who is ignorant of this? But you will already be able to be where the formerly ulcerated pauper rests, whom the arrogant rich man saw afar off while in the midst of his torments. You will await the Day of Judgment assuredly secure in that rest.”

Bernard (*De omnibus sanctis*, serm. 3): “You will note, unless I am mistaken, that there are three states of the souls of the saints. The first, of course, is within a corruptible body. The second, without the body. The third, in the consummation of bliss. The first, in the tabernacle; the second, in the entryway; the third, in the house of God.” And later: “Souls will not enter that most blessed house of the Lord without us nor without their own bodies, that is, not the saints without the common crowd, not the spirits without their bodies.” On Revelation 6 (serm. 4) [Bernard] states that [in the statement] “behold the souls of the dead beneath the altar” [Rev. 6:9], the altar must be understood to mean the humanity of Christ. He says: “The souls of the martyrs are beneath the altar because they only see the humanity of Christ. After Judgment Day they will be exalted above the altar to see the essence of God.”

§ 295. Bellarmine (*De beat. sanct.*, chs. 4–5) tries to pull these many statements together into a suitable meaning. As to Justin, he says, “He is speaking about complete retribution, when the entire man will rejoice or be tortured in body and soul.” As for Irenaeus: “He merely means that at this time souls are not in the complete bliss which Christ is in, who is in bliss in spirit and in body.” As for Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylactus, and Oecumenius, he says that “they are speaking about the glory or crown of the body.” As to Hilary, [Bellarmine says]: “He is speaking about the time of the Old Testament, when heaven had still been closed.” As for Ambrose, [Bellarmine

says]: “He only denies that souls have knowledge of the time when the last judgment will happen. He is speaking about the repayment of a reward which will be given both to the soul and to the body publicly before the entire world.” Regarding Prudentius, [Bellarmine says]: “He is speaking figuratively, saying the bosom of Abraham and the earthly paradise, indicating the kingdom of heaven.”

As for Augustine, [Bellarmine says]: “At times he had doubts about the place where the souls of the blessed are, but later, after considering the matter more carefully, he had a more correct opinion.” And also: “He thought that the souls of the saints do indeed see God, but not so perfectly as they will see Him after the resurrection because the natural desire to have a body does not allow the souls to be borne to God with full effort.” (Sixtus Senensis, *Bibl. annot.* 169, bk. 5, p. 388, adds: “Augustine had no doubts about the glory of souls but about the degrees and quantity or consummation of glory before the judgment, namely, as to whether they were equal to the angels in seeing God or whether they saw something less.”)

Finally, as to Bernard, [Bellarmine says]: “He follows Augustine and says that it is not the case that separated souls have no vision of God whatsoever, but that they lack that complete vision which the soul will have when it is carried to God with full force.”

Now obviously we are not denying that some of the statements of the pious ancients can be explained in a suitable way, especially of those who elsewhere explained their intent more clearly. Nevertheless the following cannot be denied:

(1) Very many of these statements have been composed in such a way that they can be taken in a good sense only through violent twisting. So here also the statement applies from the theologians of Douai (*Censura Bertrami*, inserted into the *Index expurgator.*), where they openly admit that they endure and excuse very many errors in other ancient catholic writers besides Bertramus, often denying [the plain meaning] with a concocted commentary and twisting the sense into something suitable for them when they are opposed in their disputations.

(2) Hence Bellarmine himself admits that “Arethas and Euthymius of the Greeks and Tertullian, Lactantius, and Victorinus of the Latins cannot be fittingly explained.”

(3) Sander (*De visib. eccles. monarch.*, bk. 7) expressly asserts concerning John XXII: “This is his error: that the souls of the saints who are resting in the Lord will not see God nor enjoy the glory or bliss of heaven before Judgment Day, an opinion he had in common with many fathers, both Greek and Latin.”

(4) Alphonsus de Castro (*Adv. haeres.*, bk. 3, s.v. *beatitudo*, heres. 6) asserts: “Bernard, Theophylactus, and Irenaeus believed the same thing as John XXII. Irenaeus indicates this openly; in Theophylactus, he marvels that it was not noted by the editor; but about Bernard it is clearer than daylight.”

(5) The Jesuit Theodorus Peltanus (in his *Annotat.* on Titus of Bostra) observes that “that is the opinion either of Chrysostom or of Titus, in whose work he proves from the words of Chrysostom that it is the opinion of many of the ancients.”

CHAPTER [X]: ON THE USE OF THIS COMMONPLACE

§ 482[a].¹ At last we come to the use of this last thing, and this use is both (1) theoretical and (2) practical.

The theoretical is both didactic and reproving [ἐλεγκτικός], in order that we may correctly learn the doctrine of death from God's Word and speak with godly zeal against any corruptions of it.

The practical use is both exhorting [παραινετικός] and consoling [παρακλητικός]. (1) The exhorting use includes the necessary admonition that every day we be mindful of our own mortality and that we prepare ourselves for death early every day, every hour, and, in fact, every minute. But in order that we may show ourselves obedient to this admonition we need to be moved and driven: (1) by divine commands, both general, in reference to marking the last things with continual meditation (Sirach 7:[36]; 28:6; 38:21), among which last things death holds the first place and for that reason is called "the last thread of things"; and specifically, in reference to meditating on death. Eccl. 12:1 and 5: "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, because one day a man goes to his eternal home." As often as God sets before our eyes the funeral rites of others, so often do we know that He is admonishing us of our own mortality. As often as we gaze upon cemeteries, the resting places and tombs of bones, the "graves" [μνημεία] from "remembering" [μυμνήσκειν] for the Greeks, and the monuments [*monumenta*] for the Latins, so often does the reminder of our own death come upon us, for the dead person addresses us from the tomb through Sirach (38:22): "Remember my doom, for yours is like it; yesterday it was mine, and today it is yours." As often as God sends illnesses to us, so often does He remind us of our mortality, because illnesses are the heralds and precursors of death.

(2) The sighs of the saints. Ps. 39:4–5: "Lord, let me know my end and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is! Behold, You have made my life a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing in Your sight." Ps. 90:12: "Make us to know the number of our days that we may teach our heart to wisdom." Every day our eyes note the funeral rites of others. Meanwhile, we still do not notice, do not think, do not give attention to the fact that we are also going to die. Therefore David and Moses, men of God, ask earnestly that God through His Spirit would instill this salutary meditation in our hearts.

(3) The warnings of the fathers. Origen (on Exodus, hom. 9): "The bells around the hem on the robe of the chief priest admonish us never to keep silent about the last days of our life but that we should always make noise about them, discuss and speak about them."

¹ All editions of the *Theological Commonplaces* follow the first edition in repeating § 482. We have added "a" and "b" to differentiate the two sections that are numbered "482."

Jerome (Letter *ad Heliodorus*): “It is the opinion of Plato that the entire life of wise men involves meditating on death. Therefore we should also think ahead as to what we will be at some time and take note that what we do not want cannot be very far away.”

Ephraem (*De compunct. cord.*, bk. 1, ch. 7): “Learn from yesterday and today how yesterday passed like a morning flower but that today will pass like an evening shadow.”

Gregory (in a sermon): “Our Lord wanted us not to know our last hour for this reason: that one may be able always to suspect it and that we may hurry to it without interruption, inasmuch as we cannot foresee it.”

Bernard (*De inter. domo*, ch. 45): “We ought to be thinking every hour about whither we are headed every minute.”

Climacus admonishes: “Everyone should always hold his death before his eyes and betroth it to himself with the indissoluble bond of matrimony so that he eats and sleeps with it and, when he wakes at night, keeps watch with it, that he always fears death in life so that he can escape the fear of death. For the more he fears it when it is absent, the less will he fear it when it comes.”

(4) The deeds of the pious. Many people took care to carve out tombs for themselves while they were still alive and well. For examples see Gen. 50:5; 2 Chron. 16:14; Isa. 22:16; Matt. 27:60. Messodanus, already an old man, was invited by a friend to dinner the next day. He said: “Why do you invite me for tomorrow, because I have not had a tomorrow for many years? Every day I have been waiting for the coming of my death, which should never surprise us unless sometimes it bother us when we are incautious about it.”

Guido Bituricensis (*Hist. eccles.*) says that in Constantinople it was the custom that on that very day when the emperor received his imperial crown, a gravedigger would approach him as he sat upon his lofty throne and present to him several types of stones, from which the emperor might select one with which he wished his tomb to be made. This is according to Camerarius (*Medit. hist.*, part 1, ch. 12, from Isidore).

The very highly praised Emperor Maximilian II for several years before his death always kept with him a cheap casket, not only in his bedroom, but also whenever he traveled he took it along with the rest of the baggage he wanted to take, so that he might always have a constant reminder of his own mortality.

(5) The words and examples of the more sensible heathen. Plato (*Theag.*):² “The life of the wise is the constant meditation of death.”

Seneca (Letter 26):³ “It is uncertain where death awaits you; therefore expect it everywhere.” Also:⁴ “No one takes approaching death joyfully, unless he has adapted himself to it for a long time.” Again:⁵ “Throughout life one must learn how to live; and throughout life one must learn how to die.” Letter 25:⁶ “Whatever you do, always look to

2 Cf. *Theages* (LCL 201).

3 Seneca the Younger, *Epistles* 26.7 (LCL 75:191).

4 Seneca the Younger, *Epistles* 26.12 (LCL 75:218–19).

5 Seneca the Younger, *De Brevitate Vitae* 7 (LCL 254:304–5).

6 Seneca the Younger, *Epistles* 114 (LCL 77:318–19).

death.” Also:⁷ “Every day should be arranged as if it were our last. Make death your friend by meditating on it so that, if chance allows it, you may go out to meet it.” Letter 30:⁸ “Think about death always so that you may not fear it.” Letter 71:⁹ “Live as if you were about to leave. Set before yourself the fact that a time will come to leave this dwelling place. You will be happier at the need to depart.”

Zaleucus (introduction to his *Legum suarum Locrensibus latarum*) adds this: “Over all who are about to die there sweeps repentance for the injustices they recall that they have committed, as well as a great desire by which they want all the life demanded of them to have been righteous. Therefore it is necessary for each person in every act to make a friend for himself of that time with his thoughts as if it were present. It is in this way that he fosters a concern for what is just and honorable.”

Stobaeus (Sermon 42) says that Epictetus said this (quoting *Melissa*, lib. 10, orat. 19): “May death and destruction and all the other terrible things be before your eyes every day. May you ponder them always, and may you not desire them excessively.”

Musonius (in Stobaeus, serm. 1) was asked: “Who would best be able to close his last day?” He answered: “He who has always proposed that the last day of his life was upon him. One does not live the current day well unless he lives by anticipating it as his last.”

Herodotus mentions (bk. 2) that that custom had been accepted among the Egyptians that at a banquet someone would carry around a wooden cadaver as close as possible to the real thing, show it to the guests, and say, “As you look at this, drink and enjoy yourself, for you will look like this after death.”¹⁰

Coelius Rhodig[ianus] (*Lect. antiq.*, bk. 10, ch. 37) tells how King Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, commanded the boy to cry out to him daily: “King Philip, remember that you are a man and mortal.”

In regard to Saladin, the Egyptian sultan, Fulgosis (bk. 7, ch. 2) writes that in solemn processions he took care to be carried about in an old tunic and at the same time ordered a herald to go ahead and cry out: “Saladin, pacifier of Asia, carries only this with him from this world.”

(6) Our great need. Death threatens us every hour and, in fact, every moment. Therefore it is necessary that we prepare ourselves for it every minute, lest it catch us unawares and give us over to eternal death, for “eternity depends on that one moment.” Death lies in wait for us everywhere; therefore it is necessary that we await it everywhere, lest it assault us in some place where we have not been sufficiently fortified and strengthened. Seneca (Letter 67):¹¹ “Death cuts away the life of some in mid-flower. It interrupts the very beginning of others. One dies in the middle of his supper; for another, death is a continuation of his sleep. Another is done in by copulation.” Thus because we nowhere and never are free from the peril of death, we should not be lazy and remiss in our daily meditation on death.

7 Cf. Seneca the Younger, *Epistles* 12 (LCL 75:70–71).

8 Seneca the Younger, *Epistles* 30.18 (LCL 75:220–21).

9 Seneca the Younger, *Epistles* 70.17 (LCL 76:64–65).

10 Herodotus, *The Persian Wars* 2.78 (LCL 117:364–65).

11 Seneca the Younger, *Epistles* 66.43 (LCL 76:28–29).

(7) Its very great usefulness. Indeed, meditation on death provides a very great usefulness which Ludovicus Granatensis (*De quatt. novis.*) divides under seven headings, for it is beneficial

(1) for a greater fear of God and for a more diligent preparation for death through repentance over sins already committed and caution over future ones; (2) for the contempt of the world and the humiliation of it; (3) to embrace a virtuous life; (4) to strengthen patience in every tribulation; (5) to strengthen faith and hope in the life to come; (6) to kindle love for God and one's neighbor; (7) to hunger more deeply for eternal life.

Bonaventure (*Diaeta*, [bk.] 7, ch. 36): “The consideration of death produces six particular results: (1) to flee sins, (2) to despise the world, (3) to despise oneself, (4) to control this life correctly, (5) to restrain present joy, (6) to divine correctly the present life and the life to come.”

§ 482[b].¹² We can also grasp the advantage of this meditation by way of this distribution: that it is an effective incentive and encouragement to do good and a salutary antidote and preventive medicine for escaping evil.

(1) It is an incentive for being quick to repent. He who has placed before his eyes the frailty of this life and the dreadfulness of a death that threatens at every moment will not postpone his repentance until the following day because he cannot promise himself a tomorrow of life ([Sirach] 5:[7]). (Cf. *On Repentance* [Commonplace XVIII], § 141, part 4.) How easily and quickly a thread breaks in spinning! Just as easily and quickly does the shuttle of our life break. Job 7:6: “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle,” on which passage Gregory comments in this way:

In a fitting comparison, time is compared to a weaver’s warp because, as the warp advances each day with its threads, so mortal life advances each day. But as it proceeds to grow, it stretches to the point where it will be cut. For as the perceived times pass by, those that are left for the future are abbreviated. For as it is woven the warp depends upon two pieces of wood, as the lower thread weaves so also the one above must duplicate its weaving. And so as it increases, there is a subtraction from that which remains. In the very same way we weave the times of our life as they are spent as if underneath, and from above we double over those to come because the more that becomes the past, the less there is of the future.

In Isa. 38:12, King Hezekiah uses the same metaphor: “My life is cut off as if by the weaver. While I am still going along in order, He cuts me off”; that is, in the very first threads which arrange my life, He cuts off my warp and all my earthly hopes. Therefore because we might have to depart at this very hour from the dwelling place of this body and the world, who would want to put off repentance another hour? Augustine (Letter 3): “Our last day will always be before our eyes, and we shall rise again when it becomes light. Let us not trust that we shall reach the evening; and when we have gone to bed, let us not be confident that the morning will come. Thus we shall be able to restrain our bodies easily from vices and wicked desires.”

¹² All editions of the *Theological Commonplaces* follow the first edition in repeating § 482. We have added “a” and “b” to differentiate the two sections that are numbered “482.”

(2) For disdain and despising worldly things. When Esau realized that he was about to die, he said to his brother, Jacob (Gen. 25:32): “Behold, I am going to die. What good is my birthright to me?” To be sure, he said this from a profane spirit, but the godly heart applies and directs these words to a salutary use when it concludes from them that meditations about death induce a contempt for the things of this world. In Ps. 39:7, after David had carefully noted his own mortality and the vanity of mundane possessions, he quickly added: “And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in You”; that is, I find no foundation for hope in earthly, transitory things, no support for any joy. I turn away my heart from them and lift it up to You. Ps. 73:18, 20, 26: “You have set them in a slippery place. They are like a dream when one awakes. On waking, you despise their phantoms. You, O Lord, are the rock of my heart and my portion forever.”

Jerome (Letter *ad Paulinus*): “He who believes that he is going to die soon easily despises all present things.”

Augustine (on Psalm 38, toward the end):

For on this earth what is certain except death? Consider all the good or bad things of this life, either those things that are in righteousness itself or in iniquity itself. What is there that is certain here except death? Have you been making progress? You know what you are today; you do not know what you will be tomorrow. You hope for money; there is no certainty that it will come. You hope for a wife; there is no certainty that you will obtain one, nor is there a certainty as to what kind you will get. You hope for children; there is no certainty that they will be born. If they are born, there is no certainty that they will live. If they live, there is no certainty whether they will advance in virtue or fall away. Wherever you turn, all things are uncertain, and only death is certain. You are poor, but there is no certainty that you will become rich. You are untaught, but there is no certainty that you will become learned. Your health is feeble, but it is uncertain that you will become well. Furthermore, you are born; it is certain that you will die (etc.). Thus all things here are uncertain where death alone is certain. Even its hour is uncertain. That alone is much to beware which alone may not be avoided.

Bernard (*De mod. bene vivend. ad sor.*, serm. 8): “If we remind ourselves of our death every day, we gladly hold all earthly things in disdain. If we have the day of our death in mind, we quickly despise all the things that are in this world.”

(3) For yearning for eternal life and for an appetite for heavenly things. He who thinks he will die shortly despises earthly things and with all the affection of his heart hungers for heavenly things as he cries out with David (Ps. 39:12): “I am Your passing guest, a pilgrim like all my fathers.” I am a guest of the world but a citizen and inhabitant of heaven; and with Paul (Heb. 13:14): “For here we have no lasting city, but we seek a city that is to come.” Here the adversative conjunction “but” [ἀλλά] has at the same time the force of an inference: “We have no lasting city here; therefore we seek a city that is to come.”

Jerome (*Ad Cyprian.*, part 4, p. 45): “He who every day remembers that he is about to die holds present things in contempt and hurries on to what will be.”

(4) To true patience in adversity. Death is the last physician of illnesses and the end of all evils. Therefore he who thinks that he will soon die patiently endures his sicknesses and any adversities which will end at death. The disasters of this life the apostle calls

CHAPTER [XI]: SETS FORTH THE DEFINITION OF DEATH

§ 487. The following definition of death, considered in and of itself, can be given: Death is the punishment called down upon the human race because of sin, and it dissolves the union of soul and body. Or it may be defined in this way: death is the separation of the soul from the body which is imposed on men as a punishment so that the greatness of God's anger against sin may be more clearly seen. These definitions are constructed from Gen. 3:19; Ps. 90:10; Rom. 5:12; 6:23; 8:10; etc.

May Christ, who is victor over death and the restorer of life, be the death of our death. May He begin in us spiritual life in this life and complete it in the life to come. Amen.

As a concluding flourish we shall here quote some meditations and prayers of the godly poured out with ardent devotion at the very end of life and related materials of this sort.

Jacob the patriarch (Gen. 49:18): “I look for Your salvation, O Lord.” The *Targum Hierosolymitanum* comments on these words:

Our father Jacob said: “I do not await the redemption of Gideon, son of Joash, which is a temporal salvation, nor the redemption of Samson, which is a transitory salvation, but I look for the redemption of the Messiah, Son of David, who is to come so that He may lead the sons of Israel to Himself. It is His redemption that my soul desires.”

[The words of] Christ hanging on the cross for us.

- (1) To His heavenly Father: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).
- (2) To the converted thief: “Amen, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).
- (3) To His mother Mary: “Behold, this is your son.” To the disciple John: “Behold, this is your mother” (John 19:26–27).
- (4) To His heavenly Father: “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34).
- (5) To the bystanders: “I thirst” (John 19:28).
- (6) To the bystanders again: “It is finished” (John 19:30).
- (7) To His heavenly Father: “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit” (Luke 23:[46]). (See *Harm. de pass.*, ch. 14, p. 659.)

These words of Christ teach us the form of a good death [εὐθανασία], namely, that from the heart we ought to forgive our neighbor who has offended us, turn ourselves to God through prayer, arrange our will regarding our domestic affairs, think only about paradise, and commend our souls into the hands of the heavenly Father. (Compare Cramerus, *Hortul. animae, repurgat. semit.* 7, p. 438.)

The prayer of the Venerable Bede on the seven words that Christ spoke while hanging on the cross.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who said while hanging on the cross: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”: Grant that in Your love I may pardon all who have done evil to me. And You who said to the thief: “Today you will be with Me in paradise”: Grant me so to live that in the hour of my death You may say to me: “Today you will be with Me in paradise.” And You who said to Your mother: “Woman, behold your son,” and then to the disciple: “Behold, your mother”: Grant that Your love and true charity may associate me with Your mother. And You who said, “Eli, eli, lama asabathani,” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”: Grant that I should say in all my tribulation and anguish: “My Father, my Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner, and help me, my King and my God, who have redeemed me with Your own blood.” And You who said, “I thirst”: Grant that I may

ever thirst for the fount of living water. And You who said, “Father into Your hands I commend My spirit”: Grant that at my departure I may be able, completely and freely, to say to You, “Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit, receive me coming unto You, because now You have arranged the end of my temporal life.” And You who said, “It is finished”: Grant that I may merit to hear that sweetest voice of Yours, namely: “Come, My friend, My love, My spouse, come, for I have already espoused you and supplied your wants. Come, so that you may go with Me, with the angels, and with My saints to feast in My kingdom, to rejoice and remain through infinite ages.” Amen.

Stephen the protomartyr: “Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. Lord Jesus, take up my spirit. O Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:55, 59, [60]).

Paul the apostle: “I am already being sacrificed, and the time of my ending is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. For the rest, the crown of righteousness is stored up for me, which the Lord, the just Judge, will give to me on that day, not only to me but also to those who love His coming” (2 Tim. 4:6–8).

The prayer attributed to St. Dionysius:

Sweetest Lord Jesus, the splendor of the Father’s glory and the sun of righteousness, who deigned for me, Your unworthy servant, to suffer the most vile form of sorrow, who gave Your soul on Mount Calvary for the redemption of the world and prayed to commend it to the Father: grant me equally to carry in my heart the sorrow of this, Your most bitter death, and also always Your love; and grant that I may work toward dying with You through the daily mortification of all vice, so that as the end of my life draws near I may be able to breathe in the light of Your mercies and to enter happily with You into the joy of paradise. Be near me as I die, help me in my agony, hasten as I yearn, defend me from enemies, rescue me from hardship, console me as I groan, comfort me as I tremble, revive me as I fail, take me up as I breathe my last. May Your last word on the cross be the final word for me in this light, and when I can bear no more, fulfill my last desire. Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit; You have redeemed me, God of truth. Amen.

The prayer attributed to St. Polycarp:

O Lord Jesus Christ, when I must leave this life, then grant me a quiet and blessed hour and a peaceful falling asleep, so that with a true acknowledgment and confession of Your grace, with peace and joy, I may return my spirit and my wretched little soul and commit them into Your hands, lest I waste away too long, since indeed what I am promised is a thousand times better; and grant me that while in my body I have rest in the earth, I may keep watch and be made a coheir of the resurrection of all believers unto eternal life, that I may joyfully praise You and glorify You and give You thanks in all eternity for all Your innumerable benefits which You gave to me during the whole time of my pilgrimage. O Lord, do not call in Your debts and do not remember the sins of my youth, but have mercy on me according to Your great mercy, and sustain me in firm faith and consolation to my last breath, lest sin, death, and the devil harm me, or my own flesh render me unable to bear it. Amen.

The prayer of the same Polycarp which Eusebius quotes in *Histor. ecclesiast.* (bk. 4, ch. 15):

Father of Your beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we receive knowledge of You, God of the angels and powers and every creature and of every race of the just who live before You: I give You thanks that You have deigned me worthy in this day and hour that I might receive a place in the number of the martyrs, in the people of Christ, unto the resurrection of eternal life of both soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Spirit, in which [my soul] is taken up into Your sight today as sacrifice, rich and acceptable, just as You have prepared, for so You were pleased beforehand and You have accomplished, You are the true God who knows not how to lie. Wherefore also I praise You for all things, I bless You, I glorify You through the eternal Priest, Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, through whom with You and Him and the Holy Spirit be glory now and in the coming ages of ages. Amen.

Cyprian in *De mortalitate* (serm. 4, p. 213):

When a certain man from among our colleagues in the priesthood was worn out with infirmity and when, worried by the nearness of death, he prayed for a respite for himself, then there stood by the praying man who was near to dying a youth, venerable in honor and majesty, of exceeding stature, shining in aspect, whom human sight could scarcely gaze upon with carnal eyes as he stood there, unless a man who were about to leave this age could see him. This [youth], and not without some indignation of mind and voice, spoke and said, “Do you all fear to suffer? Do you all not wish to depart? What shall I do with you all?” It is the voice of one rebuking and warning, who does not consent to the present concern of those worried about persecution and heedless of their summons, but he sets his mind on what is to come. Our brother and colleague who was about to die heard what he should speak to others, for he who was about to die heard this so that he should speak it. For he heard not for himself but for us. For what could the man now departing learn? But he taught us who remained to know that the priest who prayed for a respite was rebuked so that we might understand what is expedient for all.

The prayer of Cyprian which he spoke on the day of his passion (*Opera*, p. 511):

Lord, holy Father, holy God, holy and holy, my God, for who is greater than You? I give thanks and praise to You, God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob, God of our fathers, God of the apostles and God of the prophets and God of the martyrs, who was before the foundation of the world, God of the living, who will come to judge the living and the dead, who are the true God, who sit above the cherubim and seraphim and look out over the abyss, who see all things before they arise, who have power and restore, who have power to make the dry places green. You who are the commanding Lord of all, free me from this age and hear me while I pray as You heard the sons of Israel in the land of Egypt. And they did not even believe You nor Your servant Moses. Woe for my sins! When You rise up to destroy the earth, in what crack of the rubble shall I hide myself from Your power? To what mountain shall I say, “Cover me,” and to what hill, “Hide me from the fear of the Lord,” when You rise up to destroy the earth? O Lord, I beg, help me; do not judge me according to my deeds, for I have in no wise been obedient to Your commandments. Hear me while I pray; as You heard Jonah in the belly of the whale, so also hear me and rescue me from death unto life, as the Ninevites covered themselves with dust and ashes and

did penance. I make confession in Your sight for all my sins, before You, the lover of repentance; have mercy on me. But David also said, “O Lord, for Your name’s sake, forgive my sin” [Ps. 25:11]. I also beg Your Majesty for pardon: forgive all my sin, and hear me while I pray as You heard the three young men from the chamber of fire, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, and sent Your angel with a heap of dew, and Nebuchadnezzar was set before his kingdom a madman, because You are the King of those who reign and the Lord of those who command, who alone have immortality and dwell in inaccessible light which no man has seen nor eye can see. Hear me while I pray as You heard Daniel from the lions’ den and sent Habbakuk, the prophet, and he brought food to him and said, “Eat this food because God sent it to you.” And Daniel said, “The Lord does not abandon the one who asks Him.” Hear me while I pray as You heard Tobit and Sarah while they prayed in the garden of their house, then Raphael, the angel, offered their prayers for them; so also hear my prayers and admit my prayers to Your holy court and continually send Your angel that He might blot out my sins, as You blotted out the unclean spirit from Sarah, the daughter of Reguel, and illumine my heart as You illumined the eyes of Tobit. Hear me while I pray as You heard Hezekiah, the king of Judah, and took his infirmity from him; so also take from me the infirmity of the flesh and increase my faith as You increased his life with fifteen years. Free me from the midst of this age as You freed Yourself secretly from the midst of the courtyard; free me from all the infirmity of my flesh. I pray You, Father of majesty, who in the fullness of time have had mercy on us, sending us Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord God and Savior, born of the Virgin Mary of the Holy Spirit, announced by the angel Gabriel, through whom You have freed us from the danger of impending death. And I pray You, O Son of the living God, who did such miracles, who in Cana of Galilee made wine from water on account of Israel, who opened blind eyes, who made the deaf to hear, who restored to paralytics the use of their limbs, who loosed the tongues of the mute, who cleansed the vexed from demons, who made the lame to leap like deer, who freed the woman from the profusion of blood, who raised the dead, who walked on water, who took falling Peter by the hand, who laid the foundation of the sea and set its limit and said, “Thus far shall you come, and here shall your power be broken”: I beg You, O Son of the living God, on account of all my deeds, You who are in heaven, the Son in the Father and the Father ever in You, who sit above the cherubim and the seraphim honoring You. The angels, archangels, an unnumbered number attend You, fearing and quaking at Your honor and power, crying in a great voice and saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth.” You Yourself made a testament for us: “Ask and you will receive; knock and it will be opened unto you. Whatever you ask from the Father in My name, I will ask from the Father so that you will receive it” [Matt. 7:7; cf. John 14:13]. I ask You that I may receive; I seek that I may find; I knock that it may be opened unto me; I ask in Your name so that You may ask from the Father and that it may be given to me. I am prepared to pour out my blood as a victim on account of Your name and to undergo whatever torment. You are the Lord, my helper and defender: defend me from my adversary. May Your angel of light protect me because You have said that “believing when you ask in prayer, it will be given to you” [Matt. 21:22]. Every man is a liar, but You are true [cf. Num. 23:19]. You have the power, O Lord, to give to me every heavenly mystery as You have promised, so that I may be worthy to see the face of Your saints. Let Your Spirit work in me, let Your will be done in me, because I

vow all the days of my life to You who suffered under Pontius Pilate, made the good confession, who, having been crucified, descended and trampled the sting of death. Death is defeated; the enemy, the devil, is defeated. You rose from the dead and appeared to Your apostles, You sit at the right hand of the Father, You will come again to judge the living and the dead. You will reign: free me from the hand of those who seek my life. By Your name free me from the power of the adversary so that You may give me the work of victory over my enemy, because You are the powerful judge and advocate of the prayers and petitions of our souls. Day and night You intercede for my sins, You offer my prayer to Your Father. And You, O Lord, holy Father, deign to regard my pleas as You regarded the offerings of Abel. Deign to free me from fire and everlasting punishment and from all torment, because You have set right what was wrong through the good and blessed Jesus Christ, our Savior, through whom there shall be for You praise, honor, power, glory, world without end. Amen.

Martin, bishop (in Sulpicius Severus, Letter 3 *ad Bassulam socrum*):

Grave, O Lord, is the battle of a corporeal army, and it is enough that I have struggled this far, but if You command me to stop here in this labor for Your camp, I do not refuse, nor shall I argue that my age has grown weak. Devoted to Your work, I will serve out time under Your banner; where You have commanded, I will march. And however old [I may be] when the longed-for dismissal from labor shall come, nevertheless my spirit will be the victor over the years, and I will not know surrender to old age, and if You now spare my age, Your will, O Lord, is good for me, but those things which I fear, You yourself will guard.

Ambrose, bishop of Milan (in Paulinus's *Vita* of the same):

While he lay on his bed, noblemen and friends were coming to him, trying to persuade him to ask the Lord for a lengthening of his life. But he spoke this most splendid statement, worthy of an apostolic man: "I have not lived among you in such a way that I should be ashamed of how I lived, nor am I afraid to die, for we have a good Lord." Augustine praised and preached this quip of Ambrose, quoting Posidonius's life of the same, as the height of wisdom and piety. For he said, "I am not afraid to die, for we have a good Lord," to mean that he should not be thought to be presuming to put his trust in his own cleansed way of life. And he said, "Nor have I lived among you in such a way that I should be ashamed of how I have lived," to show how men might know a man. For knowing the examination of divine justice, he said that rather than confiding in his own merits he would confide in the good Lord, to whom he also daily prayed in the Lord's Prayer: Forgive us our trespasses.

A certain bishop at the time of Augustine (in Posidonius's *Vita* of the same):

When Augustine had been paying court to one of his fellow bishops, a very dear friend, who needed visiting since he drew near to death, that man gestured with his hand, indicating that he was leaving the world. When Augustine responded that it was necessary for the church for him to live, he said, lest he be thought to be held by a desire for life: "If I am never to die, fine; but if I am to die eventually, why not now?" Augustine marveled at and praised this statement.

Bernard (quoted by Guilelmus the Abbot, in bk. 1, ch. 13 of his *Vita* of the same):

When he seemed to draw his last breath, in the departure of his mind he saw himself standing before the tribunal of the Lord. But Satan was also there in the adversary's place, striking him with horrible accusations. But when he had prosecuted everything, and it was time for the man of God to speak his part, not terrified at all nor disturbed, he said: "I confess that I am unworthy, nor am I able to obtain the kingdom of heaven by my own merits. But my Lord has obtained it by a twofold right: by the inheritance of the Father and by the merit of His Passion. He is content with the one; He gives me the other. And by the right of His gift, claiming it for myself, I am not confounded." The enemy was confounded by this word, the courtroom was adjourned, and the man of God returned to his senses.

The same response of Bernard set into verse.

I have passed through the lost times of my hard life,
 But there remains for wretched me a sole and certain hope,
 That Christ the Redeemer by a twofold right doth heaven
 Possess and the happy joys of the kingdom of the Father.
 The first is because He is born from the eternal mind of His Parent;
 The second, because He merited the blessed reign by the cross.
 Content with the first, the heaven which He possesses as an heir
 God gives to me by the right which He merited by His death.

A formula for consoling the sick (attributed to Anselm in his letters, among the manuscripts in the libraries of England and of others):

The priest would say: "Do you rejoice that you will die in the Christian faith?"

Let him respond: "Yes."

"Do you confess that you have lived so wickedly that by your merits you have deserved eternal punishment?"

Let him respond: "Yes."

"Are you sorrowful for these?"

Let him respond: "Yes."

"Do you have the will to make amends if you had the time?"

Let him respond: "Yes."

"Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for you?"

Let him respond: "Yes."

"Do you give thanks to Him?"

Let him respond: "Yes."

"Do you believe that you cannot be saved except through His death?"

Let him respond: "Yes."

"Come, therefore, while your soul remains in you, place your faith in His death alone; put trust in nothing else; commit your whole self to His death; shield your whole self with this alone; hide yourself in His death. And if Your Lord should wish to judge you, say, 'Lord, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and Your judgment; otherwise I contend not with You.' And if He should say to you, 'You are a sinner,' say: 'Lord, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between You and my sins.' If He should say to you, 'You deserve condemnation,' say: 'Lord, I place the

death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my merits, and I offer His own in place of the merits which I ought to have, nor do I have any others.' If He should say that He is wrathful against you, say: 'Lord, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and Your wrath.'"

When this is done, let the sick man say this three times: "Into Your hands I commend my spirit."

(Compare Cramerus's edition of the *Hortul. animae*, p. 415.)

Georgius Fabricius (*Supplement. chronici Misnensis*):

A certain provost, Afranus, summoned a young canon of his order, an erudite and good man, and asked him to do three favors for him if he happened to be with him in his [final] struggle. When he promised to do so, [Afranus] said the first would be that "you should remind me of the sweat of Christ which flowed forth copiously from His breast in His anguish, lest I be overwhelmed by the multitude of my sins in my torment. Second, that you remind me of the sorrows and hardships which Christ bore on the cross, lest I feel the rigor and punishment of my transgressions in my infirmity. Finally, that you remind me of the words which Christ spoke, how He prayed for those who crucified Him and promised paradise to the thief, lest I myself lose heart in my last breath; that Christ may receive me into His hand and deign to open the heavens for me, which I have in no way deserved because of my own merits, and obtain the heavenly kingdom." These things the canon promised. The young man told this to many men because he saw how his teacher would die with alacrity, and afterward in many places he used these words so that by way of consolation he might be of service to the dying.

The prayers of Dr. Martin Luther when he was about to die (according to Sleidanus, *Histor.*, bk. 16):¹

My heavenly Father, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God of all consolation, I give You thanks that You have revealed Your Son, Jesus Christ, to me. I have believed in Him; I have confessed Him; I have loved Him; I have celebrated Him. The Roman pontiff and the rest of the impious crowd have persecuted Him and brought calumnies against Him. I ask You, my Lord Jesus, receive my poor soul. My heavenly Father, even if I am torn from this life, though I must now set aside this body, yet I know for certain that I will dwell with You forever, for I cannot be torn away from You by anyone.

Philipp Melanchthon's [prayer] for a good exit from life:

Why should I fear death? Death is nothing, death is an image,
For I rely, O great Christ, on Your merit.
Thus far I live as a worm; perhaps I shall die within the hour,
For although death is certain, my fatal hour is hidden.
Therefore, to You, O Son of God, I entrust myself. O Redeemer,
Whether I live or die, I live by Your blood.

1 Cf. Justus Jonas and Michael Coelius, *Report on the Christian Departure of Martin Luther* (1546), AE Bio:14.

Julius Caesar Scaliger:

O wandering soul! Why do you recoil from the dying Christ?
 Life was willing to die upon the wood, lest you perish in death.
 Death came by a tree, but on a tree life was redeemed.
 The one Adam restored life which the other had lost.
 O God Christ, was Your death not able to merit these things?
 I shall die with You and with You I shall rise from death.
 O wandering soul! I gaze upon the open heavens,
 And Christ at the right hand, calling us to His kingdom.
 Go, hasten, go O blessed, go on to better things.
 Do not tremble. Since God attends, despise dangers.
 The sheep bleat, and the sound is known to You, O sweetest Jesus.
 The sheep bleat and sleep; be near, O good Shepherd.
 With Your bent crook also open Your goodness to Your lamb.
 I shall die in the praises of Christ never to die.
 With Christ I die; with Christ I rise from death.

Scaliger again:

Go forth, O much worn [soul], from these miserable ruins.
 Go forth and leave the servile kingdoms for the servants.
 Dare, O houseguest, to put an end to the fearful darkness
 Of exile and seek the hoped-for seats of the fatherland.
 Despise the sorrows of a cast-off and false light.
 Now, right here, toss aside the rude crowd. Heaven's free
 Pledges we will now take possession of, promised Olympus.
 You only, O Son of God, the pious victim of all, Jesus,
 Look upon us, You who are the one hope for all souls.
 Cast off death by Your novel death, and by Your new life clothe [us] in life.

Anonymous:

In You, O Christ, how happily has death died,
 Since [Your] death is instead the beginning of life.
 Having departed from the living, [You] are the origin of a better life.
 O Christ, would that I may die thus!

Duke John Albert of Mecklenburg (in Cramerus, *Hortul. anim. semit.* 7, p. 456, and in the appendix to *Tract. de mysterio corporis spiritualis*, p. 188):

Now, therefore, how truly blessed and fortunate it is that I feel the coming of the end of this wandering life and my laborious pilgrimage; now, therefore, I joyfully accept this happy announcement of my blessed migration. The time has come, so wearied by the race, tired of the road, worn out by the course, I depart from this less than ideal and dirty lodging place of so brief a stay, and I go on to the long hoped-for and wished-for fatherland, whose walls even now seem to my sight not so very far off. Therefore since I tarry just a while longer, not having a lodging place [of my own], God Himself has given one. I make my emigration from this life as from a guestroom, not as from a home, while joyfully giving thanks. O happy departure from this life! O most happy day, the very day of my migration, my new birthday, consecrated to my triumph! This only remains of my labors: the struggle of all my dangers and

cares, that my redemption, my salvation, my life, now as if from a long and difficult sailing voyage, comes to the safe and altogether tranquil port. Now the dawn, the harbinger of the bright sun, shows itself. Now the sun of my justice, the Son of God, Jesus Christ Himself, rises near me and sets a clear light to scatter my darkness and opens my path to the stars, that is, to the eternal kingdom of heaven, a path cleansed from thorns and thistles by His own blood. Rejoice, O my soul. What shall I say is mine? Indeed, the soul of Christ. For you have been redeemed by His precious blood; rejoice, I say, O soul, and be glad in God, my salvation. Go with Lot out of Sodom, and look not back. Cross the Red Sea so that you may escape from the hands of your persecutors and enter into the land flowing with milk and honey. Look to heavenly things; despise the mortal. You have been born for heaven, you have been redeemed for heaven, you have been elected and sanctified for heaven, you are owed to heaven. In that place a most joyous seat has long since been prepared for you by the blood of the innocent, slain Lamb. Cast your eyes there, look there, and with longing put away the troublesome burden of the unclean flesh. Now the bosom of Abraham is open to you; now the heavens themselves are open to you as they were to Christ when He rose from His Baptism. Now paradise is open to you, a branch grafted into Christ by faith and cleansed by His blood. Do you feel distress at your departure? Hold on a little while; the time is short until God will free you. Hold on with a great and unbroken spirit and endure with strength. Sustain your labors for just one brief moment of time, and then at once the debt is dissolved; having matured, the debt is dissolved without incurring again, which is in many ways better than to linger longer in this wicked world. You shall not die but live an eternal life, and you will declare the words of the Lord. One day in that most holy council of the blessed is better than all the ages of mortal life. But you, O body, have taken up too much time being nourished, cared for, protected, restored, you, I say, by whose weight my soul has too often been held down to earth, less freely able to apply itself to heavenly things. Therefore, that the sentence of God may stand, since you were taken from earth, to earth return; and as the brief interval of all kinds of illnesses and human calamities have until now held sway for you, making threats as through so many signs, now hold your peace, go into your little chamber, close the door, slink off meanly, let your indignity depart. Your corruption shall be a cleansing; you will come forth more glorious by far. You are sown corruptible; you shall rise incorruptible. You are sown in shame; you shall rise with glory. You are sown weak; you shall rise strong and lively. You have borne the earthly person; you shall bear the heavenly person, and in your flesh you shall see the face of God. You will be satisfied since you will awaken to His image; a return to life is most certainly promised to you. But even if you are sent away from the entirety of reality, nevertheless you will never be sent away by your Lord, who is the bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, to whom you have been engrafted. You will go forth when He recalls you; you will swiftly return the deposit. By one little word He called forth from the tomb Lazarus, alive and clearly vigorous, though he had been rotting and putrefying. In the same way, He will show His power in your enlivening. Now indeed you are crucified, you are tortured, and you suffer hardship; it is but a moment and soon, soon you will be freed. All of nature is touched by the desire for its own end and desires to see the last day of its mortal condition. And do you refuse the rest? Will you not obey when called by the high command, called from the station of life as from a mandated post in a fortress? Come, then, may death make haste, press on,

GLOSSARY

- a posteriori***. “From the latter” or “from the standpoint of after”; from the effects of something. A proof is called *a posteriori* when a cause is proved by effects. This is an inductive proof.
- a priori***. “From the former” or “from the standpoint of before”; from the cause of something. A proof is called *a priori* when effects are proved by the cause. This is a deductive proof.
- accident**. An incidental property of a thing, that which affects something and is outside its essence. For example, “whiteness” can be an accident of a wall, but it is not of its substance. **See also** substance.
- cause, efficient**. Something by means of which something else happens and on which the effect of that happening depends; that which brings about an effect.
- cause, final**. The same as an “end.” **See** end.
- cause, formal**. That which gives being to an effect by forming a material. **See also** form.
- cause, instrumental**. A kind of efficient cause, also called a “secondary cause” or an “organic cause.” In producing an effect, the instrumental cause makes a specific contribution, but it operates only in virtue of motion or power given it from the principal cause. **See also** cause, principal.
- cause, principal**. An efficient cause, also called a “primary cause.” In producing an effect, the principal efficient cause is not an instrument of some cause that is higher or more primary in its class or genus. **See also** cause, instrumental.
- end**. Aim, purpose, goal, the cause for which a doer acts or that for whose sake something happens.
- fallacy of division and composition**. An invalid argument that assumes that what is true of the whole must also be true of each of its parts and that what is true of a part must be true of the whole.
- fallacy of the conclusion (fallacy of the consequent)**. Committed by confusing the antecedent and consequent parts of a conditional sentence. For example, it is true that if Joe is a man, he is an animal. But it is a fallacy of the consequent to say that if Spot is an animal, he is a man.
- fallacy of the end (*fallacia finis*)**. Positing something as an end which is not an end, that is, when a false purpose for a statement is set forth as its true purpose.
- fallacy of the undistributed to distributed**. A fallacious argument that moves from what is unspecified to what is specified. It starts from a premise of something that holds true for part of a set and concludes that this same thing holds true for the entire set.

- form.** That which completes another thing or determines it or through which it operates. Or, what makes a thing to be what it is. For example, the form of a statue of Martin Luther is the likeness to said person, regardless of the material from which the statue is made.
- material (or matter, *materia*).** The potential and determinable part of a composite, that is, that from which something arises or of which it consists; the second cause—natural, internal, and essential—from which bodies are made and consist.
- principle (*principium*).** A source or origin from which something proceeds or emanates.
- related things, or correlated things, or correlatives, by the nature of.** Among the rules governing relations, Micraelius states: “Related things are together both in nature and in recognition, so that when one is posited, the other is posited too, and when one is recognized, the other is recognized too.” As an example, Micraelius mentions “father” and “son” (*Lexicon Philosophicum*, s.v. “Relatio”). Thus upon learning that Isaac is a son, you know that there must be a father. The one implies the other.
- same in number.** The same thing, though place, form, and size may differ. For example, old Plato and young Plato are same in number; **See also** same in species.
- same in species.** The same kind of thing, though the sameness belongs to different individuals. Peter and Paul are the same in species. **See also** same in number.
- subordinates.** Noncontradictory things or propositions of which one is categorized under the other; positing one does not exclude the other.

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WORKS CITED

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Authors are generally alphabetized by family name. Since the last name of some authors is not a family name, but the name of a location (e.g., Thomas Aquinas), readers should check to see whether the author is alphabetized by a name other than the last name.

The key below corresponds to the abbreviations employed in either the full title or the English title columns on the following pages. Also included is a list of abbreviations commonly found in the citations and in the footnotes in this volume.

Abbreviation	Full Title
AC	Augsburg Confession
ACW	<i>Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation.</i> Westminster, MD: Newman, 1946–89; New York: Paulist, 1990–
AE	<i>Luther's Works.</i> American Edition. Vols. 1–30 edited by Jaroslav Pelikan. Vols. 56–82 edited by Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes. St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–. Vols. 31–55 edited by Helmut T. Lehmann. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–86
ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers.</i> Edited by A. Roberts. Reprint: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950–51
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
<i>Apocrypha, The</i>	<i>The Apocrypha: The Lutheran Edition with Notes.</i> St. Louis: Concordia, 2012

- BSLK *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*. 12th edition. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998
- CCSL *Corpus Christianorum: Series latina*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–
- Chemnitz's Works Chemnitz, Martin. *Chemnitz's Works*. Various translators. 9 volumes. St. Louis: Concordia, 1971–
- Concordia *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*. 2nd ed. St. Louis: Concordia, 2006
- CR *Corpus Reformatorum*. Halle, Braunschweig, Berlin, 1834–
- CSEL *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1866–
- CWE *Collected works of Erasmus*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974–
- E ex *D. Martini Lutheri exegetica opera latina*. Erlangae: sumtibus Caroli Heyderi, 1829–86
- FC *The Fathers of the Church*. Edited by R. J. Deferrari. New York, 1947ff.
- GCS *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller*. Leipzig, 1897ff.
- Kolb-Wengert Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000
- LCC Library of Christian Classics. Edited by J. Baillie, J. T. McNeill, H. P. van Dusen. Philadelphia, 1953ff.
- LCL Loeb Classical Library. London: Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912–
- LFC *Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church*. Edited by Pusey, Ekble, and Newman. Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1800–1881
- LXX Septuagint
- NPNF¹ *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Series 1. 14 vols. Edited by Ph. Schaff and H. Wace. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952
- NPNF² *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Series 2. 14 vols. Edited by Ph. Schaff and H. Wace. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952
- PG *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1857–66
- PL *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Garnier, 1844–65
- SA Smalcald Articles
- SC *Sources Chrétiennes*. Edited by H. de Lubac and J. Daniélou. Paris, 1941ff.
- SCH *Studies in Church History*. London: Ecclesiastical History Society, 1964ff.
- Triglotta *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, German-Latin-English*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1921
- TTH *Translated Texts for Historians*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989–
- Vg Vulgate translation of the Bible
- WA *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. 73 vols. in 85. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1883–
- WA DB *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Deutsche Bibel*. 12 vols. in 15. Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1906–
- WSA *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*. Edited by J. E. Rotelle. New York: New City Press, 1990–

adnot.	annotation	loc. cit.	<i>loco citato</i> (in the aforementioned place)
ann.	year	no.	number
arg.	argument	op. cit.	in the aforementioned work
art.	article	orat.	oration
bk.	book	p.	page
bks.	books	pp.	pages
c. or can.	canon	prop.	proposition
cent.	century	q.	question
cf.	confer	qq.	questions
ch.	chapter	resp.	response
chs.	chapters	s.d.	without a date
class.	classification	sect.	section
col.	column	serm.	sermon
conc.	conclusion <i>or</i> sermon	sess.	session
cons.	consideration	s.n.	without a name
difficult.	difficulty	s.v.	under the word
disp.	disputation	th. or thes.	thesis
dist.	distinction	tit.	title
dub.	doubt, dubitation	tom.	tome
fol.	folio	tr. or tract.	treatise
fols.	folios	v.	verse
heres.	heresy	vv.	verses
hom. or homil.	homily	vol.	volume
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i> (in the same place)	§	paragraph
lect.	reading	§§	paragraphs
lib.	book		

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