

SCRIPTURAL AND SACRAMENTAL SIGNS

Augustine's *Answer to Faustus*

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Introduction

In exile during the mid-380s, the Manichean Bishop Faustus wrote a work titled *The Chapters*, in which he defends Manichean doctrine against Catholic criticisms. Almost half of these chapters defend some aspect of Manichean rejection of the Old Testament, while most of the other chapters take up the Manichean denial that Jesus was born. Augustine's *Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*, composed in 397–398 on the heels of *On Christian Doctrine*, takes up each of Faustus's thirty-three chapters in turn.¹ I will focus my attention on those chapters that have particularly to do with the Old Testament: thus, in Augustine's work, Books 4, 6, 9, 10, 12–19, 22, and 30–32. Although these Books inevitably contain some repetition, nonetheless when taken as a whole they constitute an extraordinary Christian theology of the Old Testament and its relation to the New. Having developed his theology of scriptural signs in *On Christian Doctrine*, he here develops it further. As Paula Fredriksen observes, "Typology served Augustine as his weapon of choice against Faustus."²

Few theologians today, however, are aware of the contribution that *Answer to Faustus, a Manichean* makes to later theology of Scripture and theology of the sacraments. Despite his frequent quotations from Augustine, Peter Lombard does not directly cite *Answer to Faustus* even once in Book 4 of his *Sentences*, where he treats the sacraments.³ In their eleventh-century controversy with Berengarius, too, Lanfranc of Canterbury and Guitmund of Bec repeatedly cite Augustine but never his *Answer to Faustus*.⁴ By contrast, Thomas Aquinas quotes *Answer to Faustus*

1 See Augustine, *Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*, trans. Roland Teske, S.J. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2007). All subsequent quotations are taken from this translation and page numbers in subsequent footnotes refer to this edition.

2 Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 240 (see pages 213–223 and 232–234 for discussions of Faustus's critique of the Old Testament in the context of the anti-Judaism of earlier Catholic authors).

3 He does cite *Answer to Faustus* once by mistake (he attributes the quotation to Augustine's *On Genesis*). See Peter Lombard, *The Sentences*, Book 4: *On the Doctrine of Signs*, trans. Giulio Silano (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2010), 192.

4 See Lanfranc of Canterbury, *On the Body and Blood of the Lord* and Guitmund of Aversa, *On the Truth of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist*, trans. Mark G. Vaillancourt (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2009).

frequently in his treatises in the *Summa theologiae* on the Old Law and on the sacraments, and later scholastic theologians follow his lead.⁵ Yet modern scholars other than Paula Fredriksen have severely neglected *Answer to Faustus*. Eugene TeSelle's 350-page *Augustine the Theologian* ignores *Answer to Faustus* entirely, as does Peter Brown's *Augustine of Hippo* and Henry Chadwick's *Augustine: A Very Short Introduction*.⁶ Even the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* contains abundant citations of Augustine but only one from *Answer to Faustus*, and then not with any relation to Scripture or to the sacraments.⁷

In a lecture delivered at the inaugural Wilken Colloquium at Baylor University, Peter Leithart highlights the influence of *Answer to Faustus* in the sixteenth-century controversies between Catholics and Protestants. As Leithart remarks, due to the lack of secondary literature on *Answer to Faustus*, "We need a brief overview of the treatise, and it would not hurt to have a monograph on it."⁸ In what follows, I cannot offer a monograph but I do hope to provide a "brief overview" of the portions of *Answer to Faustus* relevant to Scripture and the sacraments. For each Book I first review Faustus's critique of the Catholic position, and then examine in detail Augustine's reply. My goal is to assist in reinserting *Answer to Faustus* into contemporary theological discussion of Scripture (especially regarding typological interpretation) and the sacraments.

Book 4: The OT Promises

In Book 4, Faustus responds to the question, "Do you accept the Old Testament?" His reply is that he could only accept it if it contained his inheritance. He argues that the Old Testament speaks only of the inheritance of the Jews, namely the land of Canaan. Only those who obey the laws of Israel—circumcision, the food laws, and so forth—will receive this land. Since Faustus does not obey these laws, and is not among those who will inherit the land of Canaan, he finds that the Old Testament has nothing to offer him.

Augustine answers Faustus by conceding that the laws and promises of the Old Testament refer literally to the people of Israel alone, but he argues that these laws and promises prefigure something greater. Since the Manicheans accept St.

5 See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [Summary of Theology], I–II, q. 100, a. 12; I–II, q. 103, a. 4; I–II, q. 106, a. 4, ad 2; I–II, q. 107, a. 1, obj. 2; I–II, q. 107, a. 3, ad 2; III, q. 61, a. 1, *sed contra*; III, q. 61, a. 3, obj. 2; III, q. 61, a. 4, *sed contra*; III, q. 65, a. 1, obj. 4; trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981).

6 See Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970); Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2000); Henry Chadwick, *Augustine: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1986).

7 See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), no. 1849.

8 Peter J. Leithart, "More than a Dainty Sip: Old and New in Augustine's *Contra Faustum*," unpublished essay, p. 3, n. 7. See also Leithart's "Conjugating the Rites: Old and New in Augustine's Theory of Signs," *Calvin Theological Journal* 34 (1999): 136–147.

Paul as an authority, Augustine seeks to ground his theology of the Old Testament in the teachings of Paul. Paul makes clear that the Old Testament has a strongly figural meaning: "All these were symbols of us. ... All these things happened to them as symbols, but they were written down on account of us, upon whom the end of the ages has come" (1 Cor. 10:6, 11). The Greek word is *tupikos*, from which the English word typology derives. The "symbols" that Paul has in view have to do with the exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt, especially God's guiding the people in a "pillar of cloud" (Exod. 13:21), leading the people across the sea on dry land (Exod. 14:22), feeding the people with "bread from heaven" (Exod. 16:4), and giving the people water from a rock (Exod. 17:6). Paul holds that these events from Israel's history prefigure Christ and the Church: "I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same supernatural food and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:1–4). For Paul, this typological interpretation of Israel's exodus serves as a warning to Christians, since God punished the murmuring of the Israelites and their desire to return to Egypt, by allowing them to die in the wilderness rather than to reach the promised land.

Augustine argues that Paul here instructs the Church on how to understand the covenantal promises and laws that God gave the people of Israel. These covenantal promises and laws prefigure their fulfillment in Christ. The Israelites who received these promises and laws in expectation of their fulfillment were already united by faith with Christ. On this view, the Church of Christ was already present in Israel, although Israel knew Christ only through figures rather than in the way that we now know him. Augustine quotes the risen Jesus: "It was necessary that all the things be fulfilled that were written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and the psalms" (Luke 24:44). It thus cannot be that the Old Testament, as Faustus supposes, teaches only about the promise of the land of Canaan to the Jews who follow circumcision, the food laws, and so forth. It must be that the Old Testament teaches about the saving power of Jesus, including his crucifixion and Resurrection. The fact that Jesus is not raised to a renewed earthly life, but rather is glorified, shows that the promises of God to Israel are about more than long life for the Jews in the land of Canaan. The promises of God pertain ultimately to the glory that has been revealed in the risen Lord.

On this basis, Augustine holds that the authors of the Old Testament were guided by God, both in their words and in their deeds, to signify prophetically through material images the glorious fulfillment that was to come. The whole history of the people of Israel was prophetic. God used even the sins of the people to show his intention to fulfill his covenants with Israel in a manner that would go well beyond the literal sense of dwelling peacefully in the land of Canaan.

Books 6, 9, and 10: The Law

Whereas Book 4 focuses on the promises, Book 6 takes up the law. Recall that Faustus thinks that he must reject the Old Testament not only because he does not want (nor is he included in) the reward of dwelling forever in Canaan, but also because he does not observe circumcision, the food laws, and so forth. Faustus argues that Catholics too reject the law as useless, and he criticizes Catholics as dissemblers for their attempt to praise the Old Testament while rejecting its core practices.

Augustine replies that God in fact gave Israel two kinds of laws: laws that are intended to regulate behavior, and laws that are intended to symbolize something regarding the relationship of Israel to God. Circumcision and the food laws are the latter kind. They are symbolic indicators of the people's relationship to God. Because they cannot achieve the intimacy that they symbolize, they foreshadow their own fulfillment. They do not serve any other necessary purpose, by contrast to laws that regulate behavior in a necessary way, such as we find in the Decalogue. Now that the fulfillment has come, Christians do not observe the laws that have a symbolic function in the Old Testament, since Christians observe the realities that these laws symbolized. An example is circumcision: Christians observe the circumcision of the heart prefigured by the circumcision of the flesh (see Deut. 30:6, Rom. 4:11). Faustus holds that holiness could not be signified by the circumcision of the male sexual organ, but Augustine points out that sexual generation is not despised by God. To become children of God, we must first become children through sexual generation. If God wishes, God can symbolize spiritual begetting by means of the circumcision of an organ involved in physical begetting.⁹

The strict Sabbath rest of the Old Testament provides Augustine with an example of why Christians should continue to care about the Old Testament's symbolic laws, even though we no longer practice them. The law regarding the Sabbath rest symbolizes the eternal rest to which Jesus, at the right hand of the Father, is leading his people. By reading about this reality as prefigured by the deeds and words of the people of Israel, we are helpfully taught to make this reality the center of our lives. Similarly, reading about the various animal sacrifices guides the Christian to reflect upon the sacrifice of Christ, symbolized by all the animal sacrifices. Since the laws about animal sacrifices symbolize Israel's intimacy with God in worship, without being able in themselves to accomplish this reality, the meaning of the animal sacrifices is fulfilled, not evacuated, by Jesus' death on the Cross and our participation in this sacrifice in Eucharistic worship. In the same

9 As Fredriksen shows, Augustine's positive interpretation of circumcision contrasts sharply with earlier pagan and Catholic critiques of circumcision. See Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*, 250–54; 316–19. Fredriksen's thesis is that by affirming that the Jews had been right to observe God's commandments literally and that these commandments were good (even though now fulfilled), Augustine "stood centuries of traditional anti-Jewish polemic, both orthodox and heterodox, on its head" (*Augustine and the Jews*, 244).

vein, the food laws forbid eating certain things on symbolic grounds. Thus an animal that does not ruminate is “unclean” because it symbolizes humans who do not recall and meditate upon the words of wisdom that they have heard (see Prov. 21:20). By abstaining from eating this kind of animal, people are guided in avoiding this defect. Again, the laws regarding the feast of tabernacles or regarding wearing a garment woven of wool and linen (Deut. 22:11) have symbolic rather than regulative value. Now that Jesus has shown us the path of life, the symbolism of these laws is no longer necessary and his followers no longer need to observe the laws.

Even so, we can still benefit from the prophetic authority of these laws. As Augustine says, “The scripture that then required symbolic actions is therefore now a witness to the realities that were symbolized, and those practices that were then observed for the purpose of foretelling events are now read out for the purpose of confirming them.”¹⁰ He finds confirmation of this in 1 Corinthians 9:9–10, “For it is written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.’ Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake.” Throughout Book 6, Augustine pauses frequently to show that the practices and beliefs of the Manicheans are rooted in profound contradiction and absurdity, by contrast to the meaningfulness of the Jewish and Catholic practices and beliefs.

In Book 9, Faustus notes that the apostles who were born Jews were permitted to abandon the laws of the Old Testament. He argues therefore that as a gentile he is justified in ignoring the Old Testament completely. He compares the Old Testament to a bitter tree and the New Testament to a sweet tree. Augustine points out in reply that Paul thinks of the gentiles as grafted onto the root of Israel (see Rom. 11). To be a Christian means to be joined to that root, rather than to do as Faustus has done and reject the root.

Book 10 records a similar argument on Faustus’s part. He urges that the Old Testament and its promises regarding long life in Canaan are the property of the Jews, and in obedience to the Decalogue (as recorded also in Jesus’ teaching) he must not covet the Jews’ property. Augustine repeats the distinction between regulative and prophetic laws. Christians do not need to obey the prophetic laws, but neither can these laws be ignored. Rather, these laws now bear testimony to their fulfillment by Christ. The arrival of the reality does not displace the figure, because the figure continues to instruct us about the reality. Augustine again appeals to 1 Corinthians 10:11 to make clear that the Old Testament was written for Christians as well as for the Jewish people, even though the Jews were specially chosen by God to receive and obey the laws in a literal way prior to Christ’s coming.

10 Augustine, *Answer to Faustus*, Bk. 6, Chap. 9, p. 104.

Books 12 and 13: The Prophets

In Book 12 Faustus argues that there is no need for prophetic testimony to Christ, because God testifies to Christ at his baptism by John (Matt. 3:17), and because Jesus also testifies that he has come forth from the Father (John 8:18; 16:28). Augustine replies that the Jewish prophets foretold Christ and that their prophecies remain important for Christian faith. Since, as has already been noted, Faustus accepts the authority of Paul, Augustine uses Paul's authority to make the case regarding the testimony of the prophets to Christ and the value of their testimony for Christians. Romans 1:2, for instance, teaches that the gospel of Jesus Christ was promised through the prophets; Galatians 3:16 speaks of the promises made to Abraham and to his offspring (Christ) in whom all nations will be blessed. Elsewhere Paul praises the advantages that God has given to the Jewish people. By listening to the prophets' testimony, we avoid inventing a false understanding of Christ like the one into which the Manicheans have fallen. Augustine goes through the Old Testament and finds numerous prophecies, including the creation of man in the image of God (perfected in Christ as the new Adam), the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam (fulfilled by the Church being formed through the blood that flowed from Christ's wounded side), the marriage of man and woman being an image of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:32), the death of Abel as a figure of the death of Christ, the mark of Cain as foreshadowing the mark (and bodily protection) of the Jewish people after the crucifixion of Christ and the destruction of the Temple,¹¹ Noah's ark as a figure of the Church, Joseph's suffering at the hands of his brothers and being honored by the Egyptians (gentiles) as a figure of Christ, the symbolism of the Passover lamb, the royal and priestly power of David, Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering servant, Daniel's prophecy of the son of man, and many others. Faustus claims that no Jewish witnesses are needed, but Paul himself quotes Isaiah in Romans 10 precisely to show that the testimony of the Jewish prophets is needed in the proclamation of the gospel, to whose truth the prophets attest.¹² It is not for nothing that Abraham is "the father of all believers" (Rom. 4:11).

Book 13 continues the same debate: Faustus argues that even if the Jewish prophets foretold Christ, it should not matter to gentile Christians. Gentile Christians owe nothing to the Jewish prophets, but rather owe all to Christ himself. For Jews, the indirect testimony of the prophets may be of value, but not to non-Jews to whom the prophets never preached. Christ's direct word and example convert the gentiles, and so they do not need the prophets.

Augustine replies by taking another angle, this time focused on the term "Christ." Where, he asks, did Faustus learn the name "Christ"? It has its meaning from the Old Testament. The people of Israel were expecting a "Christ," an

11 For discussion see Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*, 263–277, 319.

12 See Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*, 320–324.

anointed one, to come and fulfill the role of priest and king in Israel. Paul and the Gospels introduce Jesus Christ in terms of the expectations of the prophets of Israel. Here Augustine has recourse again to Paul's affirmation that God had promised the gospel of Jesus Christ "through his prophets in the holy scriptures" (Rom. 1:2), and Augustine also appeals to Matthew's use of Isaiah 7:14 in announcing the birth of Jesus Christ. Against Faustus's claim that no witnesses other than Christ are needed, Augustine points to the role that Mani plays for Faustus, since Mani styled himself in his letters "an apostle of Jesus Christ." Mani's errors show Augustine how important it is to understand what "Christ" means through the Jewish people whom God had instructed on this matter. Whether Jesus is the "Christ" becomes apparent in light of the Jewish testimonies to the coming of the Christ. Not only Paul and Matthew, but also Jesus in the Gospel of John makes precisely this point: "Search the scriptures in which you think that you have eternal life; they bear witness concerning me. ... If you believed Moses, you would also believe me, for he wrote about me" (Jn. 5:39, 46). Believing truly about Christ requires learning from trustworthy witnesses, and the very witnesses that Christ himself commends (the Old Testament prophets) are rejected by Faustus in favor of Mani.

In addition, Augustine argues that the prophets bear witness to events that have occurred since the coming of Christ and thus have to do with the gentiles rather than strictly with the Jews. Regarding the Roman persecution of the Church of Christ, and of the Church's universal extension, he quotes Psalm 2:2, "The kings and princes of the earth have risen and gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ," and Psalm 2:8, "I will give you the nations as your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your possession." He also quotes various passages from Isaiah and Jeremiah, and from Paul quoting Isaiah, that prophesy the destruction of the idols and the rise of faith among the gentile nations. The Old Testament also assists in understanding why some members of the Church of Christ fall away from holiness and produce divisions. As Paul says, "whatever was written before was written to teach us so that through patience and the consolation of the scriptures we may have hope in God" (Rom. 15:4).

Book 14: Did Moses Curse Christ?

According to Faustus, Moses is anathema because he cursed Christ in Deuteronomy 21:23: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is accursed by God." This is the topic of Book 14. Augustine first points out that the Manicheans deny that Christ had a mortal body, so that the curse would not, therefore, apply to their Christ. He goes on to connect Moses' curse in Deuteronomy with the curse that God applied to eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When the first humans ate of that tree, human nature was disordered and they suffered the curse of death. When the innocent

Christ hung on the tree, he bore the curse for us. In this regard Augustine quotes Paul extensively: “He became a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13); “God sent his son in the likeness of sinful flesh so that from sin he might condemn sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3); “Him who did not know sin he made sin on our behalf so that we might be the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 10:21). On the wood of the cross, Christ bore the curse of sin and death for us and redeemed us from this curse. Augustine expresses his gratitude for being rescued both from the curse and from the false teaching of the Manicheans, whose doctrine had captivated him for many years. The death that we must avoid is the death of the soul. Christ’s death, which bears the curse, frees us from the condemnation of our souls.

Book 15: Accepting Both Testaments a Monstrosity?

Book 15 contains yet another argument from Faustus for rejecting the Old Testament. He proposes that one can be fully nourished by the Old Testament (as the Jews were and are today), or fully nourished by the New Testament, or half-nourished by both. To accept both Testaments means to be only half-nourished by the New Testament; it is like diluting honey with a half-portion of vinegar. To change the metaphor, the Church should receive only Christ’s Testament. The Testament of the Jews, with its promises of long life in Canaan, has no place in the Church, because the Church is already fully enriched by the bridal gift of Christ’s own Testament. Indeed, Faustus holds that the God of the Jews has proven himself unable to fulfill his promises to the Jews, whereas the risen Christ has shown that he can fulfill his promises. Again changing the metaphor, Faustus argues that to accept both Testaments is to turn the Christian faith into a monstrous entity, like a centaur that is half-horse and half-man but fully neither. In defense of his position, he quotes Romans 7:2–3, where Paul suggests that continuing in the observance of the law, now that the law is dead and we have been united to Christ, is like adultery. We must now worship only the God of the New Testament.

Augustine’s response begins with the metaphor of diluting the honey with vinegar. If Faustus is right, then Paul himself must be guilty of diluting the gospel, because Paul begins by calling himself “the servant of Christ Jesus, who was called to be an apostle” (Rom. 1:1) and in the same sentence brings in God’s promises “through his prophets in the holy scriptures concerning his Son, who was born as a descendant of David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:2–3). If employing the Old Testament necessarily dilutes the New, then Paul has done it and should be rejected. But as Jesus suggests, the proper way to understand the two Testaments is to think of the householder “who brings forth from his storeroom new and old things” (Matt. 13:52). Augustine argues that the Old and New Testaments are not two completely different things, laid side-by-side as it were. Rather, since the words and deeds of the Old Testament prefigure the deeds of the New, the Old Testament is interiorly related to the New. The patriarchs and prophets of the Old

Testament looked forward in faith to a future fulfillment that goes beyond anything that they had experienced. They desired an intimacy with God far greater than could be accomplished simply by long life in Canaan. In figures, they spoke of the Messianic fulfillment that they loved. Their writings, as prophetic, relate interiorly to the reality revealed in the New Testament. Failure to appreciate this interior relationship of figure and reality leads to imagining that the Old and New Testaments are related like two separate substances, honey and vinegar, so that one has the law on this side and Christ on the other. Augustine's point is that this is a false separation. Thus, for example, the conversion of the gentiles is not solely a New Testament reality; it is prophesied and prefigured in the Old Testament. The Old Testament cannot be put to the side like an alien substance that competes for space with the New.

In this vein Augustine observes that a favorite Manichean text in which Paul teaches that the Corinthians are "a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Cor. 3:3), in fact builds upon Jeremiah 31:33 and Ezekiel 11:19. The Decalogue is not foreign to Christians, but rather describes the loving relationship to God and neighbor that the grace of the Holy Spirit enables us to fulfill.

Augustine answers Faustus's charge of adultery with another god by quoting Deuteronomy 6:4, which teaches the one God in whom Christians believe, and by contrasting this faith with Manichean belief in many spirit-beings who are begotten of God's own substance and in Mani as the perfect teacher of divine realities. Going through the list of the Ten Commandments, Augustine shows how Manichean doctrine undermines each one of them. With respect to 2 Corinthians 3:6, "The letter kills, but the spirit gives life," he argues that Paul here no more intends to condemn the law than Paul intends to condemn knowledge when he writes, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor. 8:1). The problem is not with the letter of the law, or with knowledge, but with the pride of sinners: "The law is good if anyone uses it lawfully" (1 Tim. 1:8), but as Paul also says, "It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure" (Rom. 7:13). Even the Manicheans, Augustine notes at the end of Book XV, have been expressly foretold in Scripture. Thus Paul warns that "in the last times some will withdraw from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and to the teaching of demons lying in their hypocrisy. Having their conscience seared and forbidding marriage, they will abstain from the food that God created for those who believe and know the truth to receive with thanksgiving. For every creature of God is good" (1 Tim. 4:1–4).

Book 16: Did Moses Only “Accidentally” Write About the Christ?

In Book 16 Faustus turns to the claim of Christ in John 5:46, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me.” Faustus notes that it would be possible to affirm that Moses wrote of Christ, without thereby receiving the Old Testament. Moses might have inadvertently written about Christ. After all, even the demons testified to Christ. Yet, not finding any evidence that Moses wrote of Christ, Faustus prefers to think that this passage was not really said by Jesus but instead is a later interpolation. The evidence that is often adduced in favor of Moses writing about Christ—for instance Deuteronomy 18:18, “I will raise up for them from among their brothers a prophet like you”—Faustus finds to be unpersuasive, since Christ was God rather than being a sinful prophet like Moses. Faustus denies that believing Moses would lead to believing Christ, because the two teach quite opposite things (for example, about the Sabbath and food laws). Even had Moses written of Christ, Christians should avoid the Old Testament because the law of Moses would only enslave Christians.

Augustine responds by insisting that everything that Moses wrote prefigures Christ or praises Christ’s grace and glory. For example, the temple, animal sacrifice, the altar, and the Mosaic priesthood are all mentioned positively by Christ in the Gospels,¹³ and their figurative meaning is shown when Christ compares his body to the temple (Jn. 2:19) and when Paul calls believers the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:17). Augustine challenges Faustus’s claim that Jesus did not say the words attributed to him in John 5:46. There is no basis for denying the authenticity of the verses that contradict one’s position, especially if one then builds one’s case on other seemingly more amenable verses. He then takes up the verse mentioned by Faustus, Deuteronomy 18:18. The differences between Christ and Moses are obvious, but these differences do not mean that Christ is not a prophet like Moses. Christ does not need to be like Moses in every way in order to be like him. After all, Christ is described as like a “lamb” and a “rock” in the New Testament. Likeness does not require equivalence. Because Christ is God, Christ is not like Moses; but at the same time because Christ is a man, Christ is like Moses. Christ is not a sinner, but he is like a sinner in the sense that God sent him “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3). Jesus speaks of himself as a prophet in Matthew 13:57. Jesus leads us into the kingdom of heaven, just as Moses was called to lead the people of Israel into the promised land. Moses’ literal successor was named Jesus (Joshua), thereby prefiguring his true successor.

Furthermore, Moses is not as bad as Faustus suggests. At the Transfiguration, after all, Moses and Elijah merited to stand with Jesus. Jesus makes clear that the God proclaimed by Moses—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see Matt. 8:11; 22:32)—is the true God, despite Manichean claims to the contrary. Jesus

13 On Augustine’s positive reading of the Temple sacrifices, see Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*, 246–250.

was not a prophet who sought to lead the Jews away from their God in violation of Deuteronomy 13:1–2.¹⁴ Indeed, this very passage from Moses foreshadows Mani's leading people away from Christ. Insofar as they teach Moses' law, Jesus honors those who "sit upon the chair of Moses" (Matt. 23:2), although he warns against their hypocrisy.

Augustine's point is that there is plenty of reason to believe that Deuteronomy 18:18 applies to Christ. Once this is recognized, one comes to appreciate why Jesus taught that Moses, in all his writings, "wrote about me" (Jn. 5:46). Moses and his writings signify Christ in diverse ways. For instance, when Moses, striking the rock that according to Paul signifies Christ, doubts the power of God, Moses foreshadows those who nailed Christ to the cross (and the water that flows from the rock foreshadows the grace that flows from the cross). Moses' death on the mountain, similarly, signifies the death of pride that occurs when Christ's glory is recognized. Moreover, even wicked men in the Old Testament, as in the New, are able to speak symbolically of Jesus. With respect to Moses' teachings about the Sabbath and unclean foods, Faustus does not take into account the difference in times. The literal observance of the Sabbath foreshadowed the eternal Sabbath into which the risen Christ leads us. Circumcision of the flesh foreshadowed the circumcision of the heart won by Christ's cross. The commandment that circumcision be undertaken on the eighth day corresponds to Christ's rising on the eighth day after the Sabbath. The clean and unclean animals symbolize behaviors that place us within or outside the Church. In each case, the figure taken literally cannot accomplish intimacy with God, but the figure promotes faith that God will accomplish this reality for us through Christ. Catholics receive Moses' commandments by observing "them all no longer in figures but in the realities that those figures foretold by their signification."¹⁵

Book 17, 18, and 19: Matthew 5:17 and the Fulfillment of the Law

Book 17 addresses Faustus's claim that Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them," was invented by Matthew or interpolated into the Gospel by a later writer. Faustus emphasizes that the reason why many Jews of Jesus' time thought that he was abolishing the law and the prophets is because he was indeed doing so, as can be seen by his numerous additions to and subtractions from the law of Moses. On this view, Jesus deliberately violated the warning of Deuteronomy 5:32, where Moses says, "You shall observe these commandments that I am giving to you today,

14 On the development in Augustine's thought on this point, see Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*, 255. In his *Commentary on Galatians* and *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine held that Jesus violated the Jewish law, whereas Augustine denies this in *Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*.

15 Augustine, *Answer to Faustus*, Bk. 16, Chap. 32, p. 225.

O Israel. Be careful not to turn aside from them either to the left or to the right, and do not add anything to them or take anything away."

Since one of Faustus's arguments is that Matthew was not actually present on the mountain when Jesus gave this sermon, Augustine points out that neither were Mani and Faustus. If Matthew is not to be believed for this reason, then neither are Mani and Faustus. But Augustine gladly grants that Jesus did indeed seem to be a destroyer of the law and prophets to those Jews who did not understand him. Quoting Paul, Augustine notes that "the fulfillment of the law is love" (Rom. 13:10). Jesus fulfills the law in two ways: by loving God and neighbor, and by bringing about what the law had prefigured. He thereby fulfills the law, as John says, in "grace and truth" (Jn. 1:17). He does not add or subtract from the law, but instead he carries out the law through the grace of charity and the truth of fulfilled prophecy.

Matthew 5:17 is also the subject of Book 18, where Faustus again presses his claim that both Manicheans and Christians obviously reject Moses' commandments by refusing to circumcise, to obey the laws about unclean foods, and to sacrifice animals. Augustine replies by directing Faustus's attention to Jeremiah 31:31–33:

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Augustine's point is that the Old Testament explicitly looks forward to a New Testament. As such, it is to be expected that the Old Testament is not yet God's final word for his people, but rather contains symbolic words and deeds that prepare the people for God's final word. When God gives his new covenant, the reality toward which the symbols pointed will be revealed, and the full meaning of the symbols will also thereby be revealed. This has happened in Jesus Christ, just as Paul shows in 2 Corinthians 3. Christians now observe the symbols in the reality, which is different from supposing that the symbols themselves have been rejected. By contrast, the pagan rites were rejected by the Jewish people and are rejected by Christians. The Jewish Sabbath took place on the same day that pagans dedicated to Saturn, but the Sabbath's purpose, far from being similar to pagan worship of creatures, was to foreshadow our rest in the risen Christ. As Paul says of the Sabbath and other Jewish festivals, "These are only a shadow of what is to come;

but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col. 2:17). The Jewish animal sacrifices did not imagine that God is placated for sin by the blood of animals; instead they pre-figured our redemption by Christ's blood.¹⁶ Christ fulfills what the law of Moses symbolized. Just as the symbols are fulfilled in Christ and the Church, so also the commandments are fulfilled by love of God and love of neighbor: "On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:40).

In Book 19, Faustus is willing to grant that Jesus said what Matthew 5:17 reports him to have said. Faustus argues, however, that Jesus said it to placate his enemies at the time, and Jesus did not actually mean the Jewish law or the Jewish prophets. Faustus identifies three kinds of law: the Jewish law, the natural law of the gentiles, and the law of the truth (the law of Christians). He also states that not only the Jews, but also the gentiles and the Christians have prophets. According to Faustus, the commandments that Jesus goes on to mention, such as "You shall not kill" (Matt. 5:21), are found long ago among the gentiles. It is these gentile laws that will be fulfilled by the law of truth. The law of the Jews, by contrast, is rejected by Jesus in a series of statements where he tells his audience, "You have heard that it was said" (Matt. 5:38), and then goes on to teach the opposite. Faustus emphasizes once more that he and Catholics should agree on this point, because both Manicheans and Catholics reject circumcision, the food laws, animal sacrifice, and so forth. If Christ had come to fulfill and not to destroy the Jewish law, then both Manicheans and Catholics would need to become Jews so as to observe these commandments. If Catholics imagine that Christ does not destroy the Jewish law, then by their own rejection of the Jewish law they are destroying the Jewish law and simultaneously disobeying Christ.

Augustine, in reply, begins by once more quoting 1 Corinthians 10:6, "All these things were symbols of us," and in confirmation of Christ's mission of fulfillment he adds 2 Corinthians 1:19–20, "He was not 'yes' and 'no,' but there was only 'yes' in him, for all promises of God were 'yes' in him." He then dismisses Faustus's notion that there are three kinds of law (and prophets) to which Jesus might be referring. John 1:17 and 5:46 are clear that Jesus has in view the law of Moses. Paul says of the law of Moses, "The law, therefore, is holy, and the commandment is holy, just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). The law of Moses humbled its recipients by showing them how easily they failed, thereby making ready for faith in Christ. The law served as a "schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:25) preparing for the freedom that faith in Christ gives through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Christ fulfills the righteousness of the law, and, by faith, transformed by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we share in his fulfillment. Even in grace we fail to fulfill it perfectly, and so we rely on Christ to intercede for us and mediate God's forgiveness to us (see 1 John 2:1–2). In this way, Christ fulfills the prophecies and the divine promises. The fact that the prophecies and promises have been fulfilled is the reason why Christians no

16 See Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*, 250.

longer obey the commandments that symbolized this fulfillment. Christians are not circumcised in the flesh, for example, because Christ's resurrection fulfilled the spiritual birth symbolized by circumcision. Yet this does not mean that Christians are now bereft of sacraments. On the contrary, since the resurrection of the dead has happened to Christ but not to us, Christ has given us the sacrament of baptism to symbolize our participation in Christ's death and resurrection.

Augustine develops further this theology of sacramental signs. Every religion, he argues, requires visible signs in order to unite people. Giving the example of Simon Magus, Augustine points out that these visible signs are misused by those who latch on to their outward aspect and fail to see that their purpose is holiness, charity, and faith, but even so the signs should not be rejected. God gave his chosen people visible signs that symbolized the coming of Christ, and many of his chosen people performed these sacraments in faith, hoping for God's salvation rather than trusting in the outward form. When Christ came, he fulfilled the sacraments that symbolized him. He instituted more powerful (and fewer) sacraments that unite his people in him and, when performed in faith, lead us to the resurrection life that he now possesses.¹⁷ Just as those living before Christ obeyed their sacramental signs often at great personal cost because of their faith in what was to come, so also, living after Christ, we too should not hesitate to endure all hardships for baptism and the Eucharist, in faith that we will receive the resurrection and eternal life won by Christ. What we believe in by faith has already been accomplished in Christ.

The sacraments of the Old Testament and of the New testify to the same faith, namely faith in Christ who redeems his people and leads his people to everlasting life with God.¹⁸ The change in sacraments does not indicate a change in the realities of faith, as if there were no unity between Old and New Testaments. Rather, the old sacraments signify the Christ who is to come, and the new sacraments signify the Christ who has come. The God who ordains the sacraments, and the purpose for which he ordains them, remains the same, despite the necessary change in the bodily actions and words of the sacramental signs. Again, the change in sacraments was necessary to ensure that Christians did not signify, by obeying the sacraments of the Mosaic law, that Christ was still to come. Christ has indeed come and fulfilled the sacraments that symbolized his coming.

Why, then, did St. Paul circumcise Timothy (see Acts 16:1–3)? If Christ fulfilled the old sacraments that symbolized his coming, then how is it that we

17 For Augustine's treatment of the sacraments in Book 19, see Phillip Cary, *Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2008), 236–237. Mistakenly I think, Cary argues that for Augustine the "virtus sacramenti" is simply our piety.

18 See Cary, *Outward Signs*, 240–243. Insisting on "the ontological powerlessness of external things in Augustine's thought" (244), Cary holds that Augustine thinks of Christ as exemplifying and signifying, but not causing or accomplishing, our salvation. With regard both to the sacraments and to Christ, however, Cary overstates his case.

find Paul, after Christ has died and risen, still performing the old sacraments as if Christ had not in fact come? Augustine explains that the old sacraments, since they were truly from God, could not simply be rejected as if they were things that had no value. Rather, it had to be shown that they had been fulfilled, not merely negated. Their divine ordination meant that the apostles had to treat them with respect, especially given the unity of faith between the Old and New Testaments. A change in sacramental signs had to be undertaken slowly or else it could have been misunderstood as a rejection of the Old Testament and the God of the Old Testament—the very thing the Manicheans had done. Those who had been raised under the Old Testament's sacramental signs were not forced to give them up, but at the same time those gentiles who came to faith were not forced to adopt the Old Testament sacraments.¹⁹

Augustine recognizes, of course, that there nonetheless arose a serious controversy among the first Christians regarding whether or not the gentiles needed to obey the Old Testament sacraments. This was the theme of the council of Jerusalem described in Acts 15, and it also appears in Paul's letters (for example, Gal. 2). It was difficult for those who had been born prior to Jesus' death and resurrection, and who had thus grown up under the Old Testament sacraments, to accept that the prophetic sacraments had served their purpose now that Christ had in fact come. The apostles walked a fine line between seeming to reject the value of these divinely ordained sacraments and failing to acknowledge that their prophetic role had now ended. Augustine argues that the apostles, led in this regard by Paul, made the right pastoral decision in permitting those who had grown up under the law to keep the sacraments of the law, while insisting that new believers recognize Christ's fulfillment of the Mosaic sacraments. The apostles' insistence that the Mosaic law and its sacraments had been fulfilled by Christ, so that observance of these sacraments now had to cease lest Christian sacramental practice falsely testify that Christ has not yet come, resulted in break-away groups such as the Symmachians (Nazareans) that continued to require all believers in Christ to obey the Mosaic law. These groups were known to both Augustine and Faustus.

Augustine also distinguishes between commandments that have to do with conduct and laws that are in some way symbolic. Christians continue to obey the commandments that have to do with conduct, such as "You shall not make an idol for yourself" (Lev. 26:1). Christians worship the God who gave these commandments, so Christians obey them through the grace of the Holy Spirit given by Christ. With respect to the symbolic laws, Christians obey them not in themselves but in their fulfillment in Christ. The commandments are fulfilled by a person who has faith working through love (see Gal. 5:6). The symbolic laws (the sacraments) are fulfilled by the coming of what they symbolized. Regarding the latter, Augustine notes that "they were not destroyed but fulfilled, because Christ

19 For discussion see Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*, 256–257.

showed that they were neither invalid nor deceptive when he made known what their significance promised.”²⁰

Returning to Faustus’s claim that Christ fulfilled the law of the gentiles and destroyed the law of Moses, Augustine emphasizes that Christ fulfilled Moses’ law and strengthened it by attending to the inner dispositions from which flow our actions. Some commandments, however, were indeed shown by Christ to be suited for the people of Israel but not for Christians. Augustine argues that God gave some commandments that fit the particular time but not all times. For example, Exodus 21:24, “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,” helped to form the people of Israel in their time and place, but was abolished by Jesus, in a certain sense at least. Yet even in this case, Jesus abolished it only because his coming fulfilled the time, so that a new time has begun. Fulfillment, not abolition, is the core reality. With respect to Faustus’s notion that Christ fulfilled the law of the gentiles by adding (for example) restraints on anger and lust (see Matt. 5:22, 28), Augustine points out that if the gentiles did not know to restrain their anger and lust, none of them could have been righteous, whereas in fact through faith some of them were righteous, among them Enoch, who “walked with God” (Gen. 5:24). Regarding Christ’s commandment that people not swear at all (see Matt. 5:34), Augustine observes that both Paul and the Manicheans swear oaths. Christ here is warning against perjury and against the danger, caused by a habit of swearing oaths, of unintentionally falling into perjury. Not swearing at all frees us from the danger of perjury, but in certain circumstances oaths are permitted. Thus Christ does not negate, but instead strengthens the Mosaic law regarding oaths (see Lev. 19:12).

Faustus had pressed the point that Christ rejected the Mosaic law that required the Jews to love their neighbors but did not require them to love outsiders (for example, Lev. 19:18). Augustine responds that Paul, too, teaches that some persons are hateful to God and deserve to die (see Rom. 1:30–32). The key here is to distinguish the way in which charitable persons love their enemies from the way in which charitable persons hate their enemies. The enemies of charitable persons should be loved as human beings, but their sin should be hated. We should love a person’s human nature but hate the sinful distortion of human nature in that person. It is a mark of true love toward the sinner to want the sinner to be freed from sin. Similarly, the Mosaic law about “an eye for an eye” served to restrain uncontrolled vengeance. Jesus did not reject vengeance altogether: someone who has suffered an injury still deserves repayment. It is not wrong for a Christian to ask for the payment of a debt. Even so, Jesus makes clear that the fine line between desiring repayment in a just manner and desiring repayment in an uncontrolled, angry, and bitter manner is not easy to walk, and so it is safest, spiritually speaking, not to demand repayment at all. In this sense, rather than abolishing the Mosaic law, Christ’s teaching ensures that what the Mosaic law sought—the avoidance of

20 Augustine, *Answer to Faustus*, Bk. 19, Chap.19, p. 250.

uncontrolled vengeance—will be more easily attained. Augustine's interpretation here fits with his interpretation of Christ's commandment against swearing oaths. In the same way, he argues that Christ's rejection of divorce fits with the intention of Deuteronomy 24:1, which was to restrain people from dismissing their wives. Moreover, by making us charitable through the grace of the Holy Spirit, Christ not only teaches about the law but enables us to fulfill it, so that we can love God and neighbor and attain to the kingdom of heaven.

Augustine also adduces texts from the Old Testament (especially the wisdom literature) that teach, as Christ does, against anger and lust and in favor of love of enemy and mercy. Similarly, when Christ teaches against divorce, he appeals in his argument to Genesis 2:24. Not only does Christ not negate the law of Moses, he agrees with Moses against the Manicheans in appreciating the good of marriage.

Augustine again observes that the goals of being made holy and living in everlasting union with God are present in both Testaments. Although these goals and the path by which we attain them are often hidden in the Old Testament and are clearly revealed only in the New, the holy people of the Old Testament lived by faith and thus were already united to these goals. By faith, guided by the many symbols of the Old Testament, they already believed in the one who would come, filled with the Holy Spirit, to take away sin and to unite us with God in resurrection and eternal life. The coming of Christ thus fulfills God's promises and, by the outpouring of grace, enables us to fulfill God's law of love.

Book 22: Were the Old Testament Authors Liars?

Book 22 is the longest of all the Books in *Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*. Faustus argues that neither he, nor the Manicheans, are enemies of the law and the prophets. On the contrary, he is willing to believe that what was written in the Old Testament books about the patriarchs and prophets is false. If the Old Testament books are true, however, then it is clear that the patriarchs and prophets lived unrighteous lives.

The law of the gentiles, Faustus maintains, was good. This law, shared by the best men of all nations, can be found in such commandments as "You shall not commit adultery" (Exod. 20:14). But the Jewish writers took this law and intermingled it with all sorts of nonsense about circumcision, animal sacrifices, and so forth. To be holy, we need to obey the true law, but the intermingled nonsensical laws have nothing to do with holiness, as Catholics show by not obeying them. In rejecting the Jewish laws (and Judaism), Faustus does not thereby reject the law, properly understood. The prophets and patriarchs wrote and did abominable things. Perhaps the prophets, in writing about the patriarchs, lied about them, in which case the reputation of the patriarchs could be salvaged. Faustus bemoans the Old Testament's portrait of God. The true God would not have worried about the first man and woman eating from a particular tree, for example. Nor would he

have been jealous, angry, and bloodthirsty against various peoples, including his own. He would not have destroyed thousands of men because a few among them had committed a small sin. He would not have threatened to obliterate the whole human race. Faustus can only hope that the prophet or prophets who wrote such things were lying. Certainly such authors were not holy.

Abraham's copulation with his wife's maidservant, with his wife's knowledge, strikes Faustus as disgusting, as does Abraham's lying to Abimelech and to Pharaoh. What kind of husband would cause, by his own lies, his wife to become a king's concubine? Abraham's brother Lot is a drunk who has incestuous intercourse with his two daughters. Isaac too is a liar, and Jacob a philanderer with his two wives and their maidservants. Judah has intercourse with his daughter-in-law, who deceives him by posing as a prostitute. Moses is a murderer and robber, and takes many wives. David has countless wives and still commits adultery with Bathsheba because of his rapacious lust, after which he orders that Bathsheba's husband be killed. Solomon too has countless wives and concubines. Hosea even blames God for commanding him to marry a prostitute. Far from being holy, these men are criminals, and the God that they depict is hardly better—unless the whole Old Testament is a lie, which would be much better than supposing it to be true.

Augustine here is led to offer an extended defense and explanation of the behavior and writings of the Old Testament prophets and patriarchs, as well as the God whom they portray. After briefly distinguishing once more between the commandments—fulfilled by love of God and neighbor—and the promises/symbols of the law, he begins with the portrait of God and creation in Genesis 1. First John 1:5 states that "God is light," and this divine light (wisdom) makes all created light, whether spiritual or bodily. God did not, therefore, previously dwell in the "darkness" that "was over the abyss" (Gen. 1:2). Nor, when God "saw that the light was good" (Gen. 1:4), did that surprise God. Nor are we to suppose that God's question, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9), means that God did not know where Adam was.

Augustine then points out that if Faustus is committed to reading the Old Testament in a flat-footed manner, by supposing that the Old Testament teaches that God dwelt in darkness or that God was surprised to see that his work was good, then Faustus will also have to apply the same defective exegetical technique to the New Testament. Christ, after all, chose Judas among the twelve; does this mean that Christ lacked foresight? In his parable of the wise and foolish virgins, Christ speaks of shutting the door on the five foolish virgins; does this mean that Christ is eager to lock us out? When Christ teaches that we must lose our lives for his sake, does this mean that Christ is bloodthirsty? When Christ warns sternly about judgment and punishment, does this mean that Christ is an arbitrary and wrathful God? In a parable, for example, Christ says that those who lack a wedding garment will be thrown "into the outer darkness" (Matt. 21:13). Is Christ, then,

arbitrary and wrathful? The same question pertains to the Father who hands over his innocent Son to death (Rom. 8:32) or to the God who permits his saints to endure terrible tribulations.

Having shown that Faustus's mode of exegesis would distort the New Testament (which Faustus accepts), in the same way that it distorts the Old Testament, Augustine observes that pagans could teach Faustus something about reading Scripture. Pagans, Augustine thinks, could understand that God is creator of the world and that God rejoices in the world's goodness. Pagans could understand that God is not to be blamed if he gives a good law and people do not follow it, even if God foreknows that many will fail to follow it. Pagans have some sense of divine providence and of the symbolic role of animal sacrifices, even if pagans have abused sacrificial worship by offering it to demons. Pagans might be open to learning the truth of prophetic discourse. Pagans certainly can understand different modes of speech, and they will recognize that the term "jealous," for instance, can have a much wider range of meaning than Faustus allows. Pagans would be able to understand that God, in sparing neither the wicked nor the just, does so to punish the wicked and to purify and perfect the just.

Faustus's notion of a dark, ignorant, bloodthirsty, jealous, and arbitrarily wrathful Old Testament God thus gives way, on a fair reading, to the God who is light, who foreknows all things, who jealously guards his people against idolatry, who punishes justly, and who purifies those who are on the way to salvation. By contrast, the Manichean God, whom Augustine goes on to describe, truly is monstrous in his relation to the things that he begets from his own substance. After all, the Manicheans believe that God is trapped, as spirit, within animals and foods that are offered in sacrifice to idols. Manicheans believe that God weakly gives up his own members, begotten of his own substance, to the realm of darkness without their free consent, and that God's members are punished in this realm of darkness by being caught up into the darkness.

What about Faustus's charge that the patriarchs and prophets were vicious rather than virtuous? No matter how vicious they were, Augustine argues, they were not as vicious as the Manichean God. In his view, no further answer would be needed if he were responding only to the Manicheans, but the purpose of his response is also to instruct Christians. The principle on which Augustine builds his answer is that "not only the language but also the life of those persons was prophetic, and that the whole kingdom of the nation of the Hebrews was a great prophet because it was prophetic of someone great."²¹ To this principle, Augustine adds the point that sin is a violation of God's eternal law. The Holy Spirit heals fallen humans so that, through faith, we can know what God's eternal law is and obey his law by works of love.

21 Augustine, *Answer to Faustus*, Bk. 22, Chap. 24, p. 316.

On these foundations, the first question that Augustine takes up is whether Abraham violated the eternal law by having sexual intercourse with Hagar, Sarah's maidservant. Here he argues that Abraham sought this sexual intercourse solely for the purpose of having children, a purpose that accords with God's law for sexual intercourse. Sarah, too, acted from the desire to have children. Although God had promised that Abraham would have a child, he had not told him how this would come about. Since Sarah was barren, it was reasonable for Sarah to call upon her maidservant to serve as the mother of Abraham's child; and Abraham was reasonable to obey Sarah's wishes. Since Hagar was Sarah's maidservant, Augustine considers that Sarah could justly command Hagar in this regard.

Regarding Abraham's supposedly deceiving Abimelech and Pharaoh, Augustine points out that Sarah truly was Abraham's half-sister. Abraham did not lie; he simply did not tell the whole truth. He withheld part of the truth for good reason, namely fear that he would be killed by these kings so that they could take Sarah by force. In stating only that Sarah was his sister, he trusted that God would ensure that Sarah would not be abused, and his trust was shown to be well-founded. Augustine also suggests that Sarah is a figure of the Church, which, in a hidden way, is the chaste bride of Christ in the midst of the earthly kingdoms of the world, symbolized by Abimelech and Pharaoh. He also interprets Lot symbolically, not only with respect to Lot's life in Sodom (which can symbolize the life of the saints among the wicked), but also with respect to his drunken sexual intercourse with his daughters (which can symbolize the illegitimate use of the Mosaic law made by those Israelites whose understanding of the law was darkened).

Augustine does not thereby justify the vicious behavior of Lot in getting drunk, or of Lot's daughters in their incestuous actions. Rather, he argues that their evil actions were permitted by God and were recorded in Scripture for our prophetic instruction. As for Lot and his daughters, God justly judged their evil actions. Yet Augustine observes that Lot's daughters undertook this behavior for the sake of having children after the destruction of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah, and not simply out of lust. Above all, he makes clear that Scripture narrates these actions without approving them, although Scripture narrates them for a reason.

Augustine considers that having many wives need not be a violation of God's eternal law. It is custom, not the eternal law, that determines how many wives are permissible at a given time and place. Since the fundamental purpose of marriage within God's providential order is the propagation of the human race, the number of wives permissible to one man depends on the need for the begetting of children. So long as the man does not seek wives on account of lust, having more than one wife does not necessarily violate God's law. As for the role of the maidservants, Augustine interprets it in the same way as he did for Abraham and Sarah. Jacob was obedient to his wives in the matter of sexual intercourse, and the purpose was

consistently the begetting of children for the good of the household. Augustine also draws symbolic meanings from the two wives, the two maidservants, and various events in their lives. For example, Leah symbolizes action, Rachel contemplation. Jacob's active life of moral virtue (Leah) is fulfilled by contemplative wisdom (Rachel). The active life of virtue is loved for its fruits, just as Leah is honored for her children. The contemplative life needs the time that we all too often give to the active life, just as Rachel is sometimes jealous of Leah.

Scripture does not defend the actions of Judah, who sinned by having sexual intercourse with his daughter-in-law and by selling his brother into slavery. Yet Scripture counts Judah among the twelve patriarchs of Israel, and Judah is honored because David and Christ descend from him. How could God have permitted this? Augustine replies that even Judas served as one of the twelve apostles. Since Judah is a sinner, furthermore, Jacob's prophecy regarding Judah (Gen. 49:10) clearly describes not Judah but one who will come from his line, thereby preparing the people for Christ. When David sinned most egregiously, the prophet Nathan rebuked him. David's sins are not honored, although David's good deeds are, especially his humble repentance. Repentant sinners who bear much spiritual fruit in God's eyes excel those who do not commit egregious sins but who nonetheless lack interior humility. Augustine observes that in accord with his humanity, Christ descended not only from good people, but from wicked people; in accord with his divinity, Christ was miraculously born of a virgin.

Faustus despises Moses, but Augustine ardently praises him. Chosen by God to lead Israel, Moses was humble, obedient, vigorous, vigilant, and patient with his often wayward people. Even so, Moses violated God's eternal law by killing the Egyptian. At that time, Moses' zeal for God was powerful but not yet rightly ordered; he had not yet been trained for obedience by God's revelation of himself on Mount Sinai. Similarly, Saul showed a powerful zeal for God in persecuting the Church, but when Christ converted him on the Damascus Road, Paul's zeal became rightly ordered and effective. Again, Peter's defense of Jesus by cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest was disordered, but Peter's zeal, when rightly ordered by Christ's Resurrection, enabled him to shepherd the Church. Scripture praises not the vice but the zealous heart that, when disciplined, has the potential for great good.

What about Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac, Moses' despoiling of the Egyptians, and Moses' and Joshua's wars? Did Abraham, Moses, and Joshua sin in these actions, and did God violate his own eternal law by commanding them? Augustine explains that God is the lawgiver whose authority governs human lives and possessions. The Egyptians were oppressing the Israelites by forcing them to work for next to nothing. On their own authority, the Israelites could not have rightly stolen from the Egyptians. But God, who has authority over all things, commanded the redistribution, and Moses was just to implement it. Regarding

the taking of life, God likewise has authority over all lives. If God had deemed that Isaac should die at that time, his will in this regard would have been just, and given God's rightful authority, Abraham would have been just in carrying out God's command. Wars undertaken even by legitimate human authority can be just, so long as their true goal is peace rather than vengeance or the desire to dominate others. It is not only the Old Testament that permits soldiering, but also the New (see Lk. 3:14, Matt. 8:9; 22:21). Just wars do not violate God's law, and so God can act directly to punish pride and achieve peace by commanding war. All lives are in the hand of God, and Moses and Joshua would have sinned had they disobeyed God's commands.

Yet Augustine does not end there, as if killing and war were unqualified goods. In the Old Testament, God shows that human kingdoms and military victories are under his power and judgment. God's sovereignty over temporal kingdoms, however, is a figure of what is revealed in the New Testament, namely the true eternal kingdom of God. In the New Testament, Christ conquers by renouncing this life, and he leads his followers into a kingdom not of this world. The martyrs follow Christ by laying down their lives for this eternal kingdom, rather than by conquering earthly kingdoms. Believers worship God not in hope of a temporal kingdom—as might seem to be the case when the Old Testament's witness to the kingdom of Israel is not read as a figure—but in hope of an eternal kingdom. Assured of the resurrection of the body, believers give their lives for this eternal kingdom willingly, like sheep among wolves (see Matt. 10:16). In spreading the kingdom of God, we must imitate Christ's Cross rather than Moses' and Joshua's wars. This does not negate the Old Testament's demonstration that earthly kingdoms are under the power and judgment of God, a lesson that Christian rulers must continue to take to heart. In God's providence, his commands differ for different times.

Augustine concludes that we should not, like Faustus, criticize what God has willed for others. The will of God is just. We are just when we love God and love everything else for God's sake, that is to say, when we love the will of God as we see it worked out and accomplished in others. We cannot know, however, precisely how God is working in others. If God permits someone to die at a young age, for example, we cannot know whether this was a punishment or a blessing. An early death could be a just punishment, or it could be a divine blessing that saves the person from trials that would have caused the person to fall spiritually. This ignorance should instruct us when we see how God differently commands his followers in the Old and New Testaments. We know that Christ's followers are called by God to die at the hands of sinners rather than to seek to defend the kingdom of God by military means, but this knowledge should not set us up to condemn the Israelites who were commanded by God to punish pride and establish peace through military conquests. Likewise, Paul's command that a sinner be excommunicated (1 Cor. 5:5) has Moses' capital punishment of Israel's rebels (Exod.

32, Num. 16) as its figure, but this prophetic meaning does not thereby signify that Moses sinned. On the contrary, Moses rightly obeyed God, just as Paul did. The outward action differed, but the inward disposition of love toward God and neighbor was the same. Neither Moses nor Paul offered the other cheek when he was attacked—Paul called his attacker a “whitewashed wall” (Acts 23:3)—but in both cases their inward disposition was in accord with Christ’s command to love one’s enemies.

Faustus singled out Hosea, who married a prostitute by God’s command, and Solomon for special scorn. In response, Augustine points out that surely a prostitute can repent and become a chaste wife. Christ, after all, teaches that “prostitutes and publicans will enter the kingdom of heaven ahead of you” (Matt. 5:39). Solomon, for his part, receives the condemnation of Scripture, not only for his lust but also for his idolatry. Solomon is an exemplar of virtue in some ways, but a warning against vice in other ways.

Augustine devotes the remainder of Book 22 to showing how the lives of the men criticized by Faustus also have a prophetic role in Scripture. Even their evil deeds, he argues, can prefigure goods that God will bring about. Evildoers do not of course mean for this to be the case, nor does God approve their wicked actions. Nonetheless, God can use their evil deeds for his purposes. An example of this is Caiaphas’s speech, which he meant for Jesus’ destruction but which unwittingly prophesied Jesus’ saving work (Jn. 11:50–51). In his figural interpretation of Judah’s sexual intercourse with his daughter-in-law, Augustine makes much of the meaning of the names “Tamar” and “Judah” (including its Latin meaning), as well as the meaning of the name of the town to which Judah came, “Timnah.” Sitting at the gate, Tamar symbolizes the Church, called from the nations and desiring the seed of Abraham; she receives in secret the marks of holiness, symbolized by the ring, necklace, and staff. The names “David,” “Uriah,” and “Hittite” come in for similar figural exposition. Solomon’s foreign wives symbolize, perhaps, the churches in gentile nations. Solomon’s surpassing wisdom, followed by his terrible fall, symbolize the mingling of good and bad people in the Church. The prophetic significance of Hosea’s marriage to Gomer, a prostitute, is explained by the prophet himself in Hosea 1–2, and its fulfillment is made clear by Paul and Peter (see Rom. 9 and 1 Pet. 2). Moses’ despoiling of the Egyptians symbolizes the fruitful use that the Church can make of some pagan philosophy. Moses’ command that the idolaters who worshipped the golden calf be killed (Exod. 32) foreshadows the destruction of vices. What Moses did to the golden calf symbolizes the spiritual power of righteous zeal, the word of God, and the water of baptism.

Augustine gives many more examples, but the key point is clear: everything in the Old Testament has a figural meaning. Every word and deed in the Old Testament can be fruitfully reread in light of Christ so as to discern prophetic meaning. This is because the Old Testament tells the story of God’s formation of

his people, and Christ fully reveals how and for what goal God forms his people. At the same time, Augustine defends the holiness of the patriarchs and prophets, as we have seen: the books of the Old Testament are not to be rejected on the grounds that their authors were not worthy of the New Testament. He finds that the Old Testament contains examples of humans in all spiritual conditions, so that we can imitate the good (especially in their repentance) and reject the bad. If we find something in the Old Testament that does not seem to have a figural meaning or seems superfluous, this is an invitation to seek more deeply the figural or mystical meaning. God gives us the Old Testament, like the New, for our salvation. Finally, Augustine observes that even if the patriarchs were as bad as Faustus says, they were not nearly as bad as the Manichean God, whose very substance is embedded in the bodies of sinners and who yielded his members, at some past point in time, to the forces of darkness. In arguing that the patriarchs were unworthy of imitation, Faustus fails to see that it is his own false God who is unworthy of imitation. Indeed, Faustus himself, merely by the goodness of his existence, is much better than the Manichean God he worships.

Book 30: 1 Timothy 4:1–3

In Book 30, Faustus replies to how Catholics apply 1 Timothy 4:1–3 to the Manicheans. 1 Timothy 4:1–3 states, “Certain persons will withdraw from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits, to the teachings of demons. They will speak lies in their hypocrisy, having a seared conscience, forbidding marriage, and abstaining from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe.” Faustus does not believe that Paul actually wrote this, but he is willing to suppose for the sake of argument that Paul did. If Paul did write it, then Paul must be saying that Moses and the prophets taught demonic teachings. After all, it is Moses and the prophets who claim that God deems some foods unclean, thereby “abstaining from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe.” Such foods include the flesh of pigs, rabbits, shellfish, and so forth. The prophet Daniel records that he himself, as well as Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, abstained from meat and fasted in obedience to God’s law, a further instance of the behavior that Paul rejects in 1 Timothy. Even if Paul said such a thing, therefore, Paul was speaking against the Old Testament (and in favor of the Manicheans). Faustus adds that Catholics encourage consecrated virginity and abstain from meat during Lent, and so Catholics, too, come under Paul’s condemnation, if the passage was in fact written by Paul. Further, if Paul were the author of 1 Timothy 4:1–3, he would be condemning both himself and Christ, because Paul favored virginity and Christ encouraged those who “have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:12). Faustus also claims that the apostle John was a virgin.

Against Faustus's attempt to show that if Catholics accept 1 Timothy 4:1–3 they will also have to reject the Old Testament, Augustine remarks that Faustus has failed to recognize why Catholics quote this passage in opposition to Manichean teachings. Certainly Catholics sometimes abstain from meat, and Catholics also encourage virginity. To abstain from meat or to encourage virginity is not to fall into "the teachings of demons." Nor does the Mosaic law teach demonic doctrine with respect to its food laws, because these laws were symbolic as Augustine has previously explained. Rather, the Manicheans take the crucial extra step by arguing both that certain foods are evil by their nature, and that marital intercourse is evil by its nature. It is this exaggeration that constitutes "the teachings of demons," because these Manichean doctrines vilify the work of the Creator God. By denying that the true God created certain foods and by rejecting marriage because it propagates the human race and thus continues the cycle of embodiment, the Manicheans spread the view that God is not the Creator and that matter is evil by nature.

Book 31: Titus 1:15 and Acts 10:12–16

Another text often quoted against the Manicheans is Titus 1:15, "For the clean all things are clean, but for the unclean and those who are defiled nothing is clean, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled." Book 31 takes this verse as its subject. As he did with 1 Timothy 4:1–3, Faustus argues that Titus 1:15 applies much better to Moses and the prophets than it does to the Manicheans. After all, Moses and the prophets reject the view that "all things are clean." They must therefore be "defiled" in "their mind and their conscience." Such men could have known nothing of God. In the same vein, Catholics who purport to obey the New Testament also abstain from foods. If Titus 1:15 is correct, this abstinence shows that Catholics too are "defiled." Having turned Titus 1:15 against Catholics, Faustus takes up another text often quoted against Manicheans, namely Acts 10:12–16, where Peter in a trance sees a sheet with "all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air" let down from heaven, and where God declares all these foods clean. Faustus considers that this text commits Catholics to eating such disgusting foods as snakes and other vermin.

Augustine responds, as in the previous chapter, by noting that the issue has to do not with the Old Testament food laws or with other abstinence from foods, but rather with the Manichean claim that some things are evil by nature. Moses affirms that God, upon creating all things, pronounced them "very good" (Gen. 1:31). This is the very point that Manicheans deny, because they consider that matter comes from Satan rather than from God. The supposition that material things are evil by nature is what Paul has in view when he tells Titus that "for the unclean and those who are defiled nothing is clean."

Book 32: The Manichean's Selective Reading of the New Testament

In Book 32, Faustus defends his selective reading of the New Testament. As we have seen, he does not accept certain parts of the New Testament as authentic. Rather, when verses seem to conflict, he accepts only the verses that fit with Manichean doctrine and assumes that the other verses have been interpolated. He points out that Catholics read the Old Testament in this same way. Indeed, Catholics ignore almost the entirety of the Old Testament, whereas they obey the entirety of the New Testament. It would be much more logical, Faustus thinks, for Catholics to agree that both the Old Testament and the New Testament have interpolated material, especially since Jesus and his apostles did not write the New Testament but instead it was written much later. Faustus blames the later writers for pretending that their writings were authored by the apostles or by the earliest followers of the apostles.

On this basis, Faustus reiterates his earlier observations that Catholics reject most of the Old Testament laws and that Catholics prefer to ignore the unsavory doings of the patriarchs and prophets. He also brings up, as clearly unacceptable and absurd, the law that requires a surviving brother to marry the wife of his dead brother, if his brother died without having children, and to father children with her. If this law and the others like it are bad, then the Old Testament, as the source of many such laws, should be rejected. At the very least, Catholics should stop hypocritically blaming Manicheans for being selective in what to accept from the New Testament. He lists various laws from the Old Testament that, if they were accepted by Catholics, would decisively undermine Catholic faith, including laws that curse those who hang upon a tree (Deut. 21:23), that curse men who do not raise up offspring in Israel, that curse uncircumcised males (Gen. 17:14), and that condemn to death Sabbath violators (Num. 15:35).

Faustus is aware of the Catholic answer that the Old Testament foretells the coming of Christ and that the laws bind God's people only up to the time of Christ's coming, at which point Christ teaches what laws still apply. This answer should, however, explain to Catholics why the Manicheans accept the New Testament selectively. After all, the Manicheans affirm the New Testament's promise that Christ will send the Paraclete, and the Paraclete teaches the Manicheans what to accept from the New Testament. Just as Catholics think that Christ allows them to reject many (or most) Old Testament laws, so also Manicheans think that the Paraclete allows them to accept as authentic only those sayings in the New Testament that truly honor the Son of the Father. Among the New Testament sayings that do not honor the Son are those that connect him to the flesh or to Judaism, for example, that he was born of a woman, that he was circumcised, that he offered the prescribed Temple sacrifices, that he was baptized, and that he was tempted by the devil in the wilderness. The Manicheans accept his crucifixion, mystically understood, and they also accept as authentic most of his teachings.

Augustine replies that, in contrast to Faustus's view of the New Testament, Catholics do not consider the Old Testament to be corrupted. He repeats that God's commandments were appropriate to the time and place, and truthfully symbolized Christ. The Old Testament predicted its own fulfillment, as in Jeremiah 31's prophecy of a new covenant. This fulfillment is repeatedly attested by Paul, whose authority the Manicheans accept. Paul teaches that Christians, including gentiles, "are the seed of Abraham" (Gal. 3:29); that the laws regarding food, festivals, and the Sabbath were "shadows of things to come" (Col. 2:17); and that "[t]hese things happened to them in figures, but they were written down for the correction of us upon whom the end of the ages has come" (1 Cor. 10:11). If Faustus had understood Paul's words, says Augustine, he would have understood that (for example) the law commanding the surviving brother to marry the wife of his dead brother, if his brother died childless, not only does not command a crime, but also has a symbolic meaning with regard to Christ. The symbolic meaning has to do with preaching the Gospel in order to raise up children for Christ, who has died, rather than for oneself. Faustus would also have observed that the Christian celebration of the Eucharist fulfills the Jewish celebration of the Pasch. The Jewish sacrament points to the one who is to come, while the Christian sacrament remembers the one who has come. Augustine also repeats his argument that while the first Christians distanced themselves only slowly from the Jewish sacraments, in order to show respect for the law of Moses, later Christians rightly did not observe the law of Moses, since Christ has fulfilled it. Due to the difference in times, sacraments that foreshadowed the coming of Christ are no longer fitting sacraments for those who know that Christ has come. The fulfillment is not a negation: "We praise, accept, and approve all the things that were written in those books of the Old Testament as having been written with the greatest truth and the greatest usefulness for eternal life."²²

Augustine goes on to defend the New Testament against Faustus's charge that it contains internal contradictions and was not written by the apostles. He challenges the basis upon which the Manicheans identify the Paraclete with Mani. He underscores that the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit, who was given to the apostolic community when Jesus was glorified. The authority of Mani cannot suffice for determining which of the teachings of the New Testament about Christ are true. Manichean doctrine has no real basis other than personal opinion for determining which New Testament teachings are acceptable. Indeed, only by accepting the truth of the Old Testament can Manicheans learn to recognize the truth of the New Testament witness to Christ, and give up Mani's inventions about Christ.²³

22 Augustine, *Answer to Faustus*, Bk. 30, Chap.14, p. 417.

23 See Augustine, *Answer to Faustus*, Bk. 32, Chap. 22, p. 423.

Conclusion

The first set of Books—4, 6, 9, and 10—centers Augustine’s reply to Faustus around Paul’s typological teaching that “[t]hese things happened to them in figures, but they were written down for the correction of us upon whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor. 10:11) and that “[t]hese are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ” (Col. 2:17). In the second set of Books—12–19—Augustine focuses on the fact that even though the Old Testament foreshadows the New, the advent of Christ does not negate the Old Testament. The Old Testament remains necessary for attesting to the truth of the realities. For example, we learn the meaning of the name “Christ” from the Old Testament, which prepares us to appreciate the Christ of the New. Having rejected the Old Testament, the Manicheans are unable to understand accurately the New Testament’s portrait of Christ. The Old Testament does not claim to contain its goal within itself, but instead promises that it will be fulfilled by Christ. Augustine’s view of the Old Testament as figurative, then, does not undermine the value of the Old Testament.

The third set of Books—22 and 30–32—affirms the value of the Old Testament from a different angle. Augustine criticizes Faustus for a flat-footed reading of the Old Testament. If one insists on a rigidly anthropomorphic interpretation of God’s wrath in the Old Testament, then one will be compelled to find in the New Testament a divine Father who thirsts for the blood of his innocent Son. Since the patriarchs and prophets encountered God and wrote about him, their testimony to God would be impaired if it could be shown that they were egregious, untrustworthy sinners. Augustine both defends the patriarchs and prophets, and shows that the sins of the patriarchs, such as David’s adultery with Bathsheba, are condemned rather than commended. Augustine also differentiates New Testament fasting and Old Testament abstinence from certain foods, from Manichean rejection of matter as evil by nature. Here again a more appreciative reading of the Old Testament would have enabled Faustus to understand the teachings of Christ and the Church. Once the prophetic character of the Old Testament laws has been recognized and the enduring value of Old Testament affirmed, the truth about the Creator God becomes clear.

As the Creator of all, this God is opposed by no eternal principle of evil. Rather, he uses scriptural and sacramental signs to lead his people typologically, both before and after the coming of Christ, to union with himself.