393 To Call

God calls us. He calls us by these verses:[[1]](#endnote-1) by promises, threats, beatings, gifts, instinct, and teaching. The king calls us by a letter, as Augustine says, *De 83 questionibus*, question 68,[[2]](#endnote-2) no one can want to do well, unless warned by God and called, either on the outside or on the inside. Therefore, to the supper of the Gospels, not all who are called, come. Nor those who do come, can come, unless they are called. Therefore, nor ought they ascribe it to themselves who come, because they who come are called, nor they who do not want to come, they ought to because they have been called.

¶ Therefore the call before it is merited is worked by the one calling. For God calls them who are not as is, who are in Rom. 8[:28]. “And whom he predestinated, them he also called, Rom. 8[:30]. Note there that some confident of their innocence, therefore they come at the calling of God, just as that young man, Matt. 19[:20] who said he had kept the commandment of God in his youth. Others seeing themselves called as sinners come quickly, such as Matthew the publican. Chrysostom, *Homilia* 29,[[3]](#endnote-3) I suppose that in the beginning not by the bare word did God call the apostles, but by virtue of the Holy Spirit he called them and led them. And again, he dismissed those in their free will so that by their labor they may be justified by attendant grace. For because we are called, it is of God, because however we live worthy of the call, it is equally ours and God’s. However, in what way and to which end God thus calls, Augustine says in the book *Super Genesin*, c. 6,[[4]](#endnote-4) the beginning of a knowing creature is eternal wisdom. Which beginning remaining unchangeably, in no way did it cease to speak by hidden inspiration of the call to that creature whose beginning it is, so that it may be converted to that from which it is, because otherwise it could not be perfected.

¶ Wherefore it is to be noted here that some are invited to God through human preaching, some are drawn by internal inspiration, others are lacerated and as if forced that they come through tribulation, Luke [14:23]: “Compel them to come in.”

Again, if dogs and birds obey the voice of their lord, why not rather man, if the demon obeys it is worse that man does not obey, if the ribald calls out the proclamation of the king no one contradicts him, but now Christ calls out merciful salvation, which is that you will be sanctified, 1 Thess. 4[:7]: “For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification.” And however by this fact they contradict, therefore the one obeying Christ’s calling because he is the highest power, for also the insensible creatures obey, Baruch 3[:33]: “He that sends forth light, and it goes: and has called it, and it obeys him with trembling.” Alas as if shamefully reason is overwhelmed in man because he did not obey the highest, where the dog obeys the lowest rustic, Job 19[:16]: “I called my servant, and he gave me no answer,” etc. but it is to be feared concerning such ones lest it happen to them as it happens to the chick called by the hen to the protection of her wings. But so much it is delayed about the ear of corn that it is taken off by the fox, so those by the devil, Matt. 23[:37]: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets,” and it follows, “how often would I have gathered together, as the hen.”

Second, God is to be obeyed when he calls, because he is the highest wisdom, Prov. 9[:1, 3]: “Wisdom,” that is, the Son of God, “has built herself a house,” that is, the Church, and it follows, “She has sent her maids to invite to the tower, and to the walls of the city.” Absolutely man ought to obey him, but alas because God calls to the struggling and to the good, human concupiscence calls to the evil. And however, it has many followers, Matt. 20[:16]: “Many are called, but few chosen.”

¶ Third, God calling is to be obeyed because he is the highest good, 1 Thess. last chapter [5:23-24]: “And may the God of peace sanctify you in all things,” and it follows, “He is faithful who has called you, who also will do it.” If therefore the sheep follow the shepherds, John 10[:3]: “He calls his own sheep by name.” More meritoriously man, but alas because Isai. 50[:2] it is said, “I called,” namely, by preaching, “and there was none that would hear,” by obeying.

¶ Again, Christ calls in many ways.

Because first, to the confession of faith, as the wise man calls the erring as well as the righteous, 1 Pet. 2[:9]: “You are a chosen generation,” etc., and it follows, “that you may declare his virtues, who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” Just as the teacher who is unrewarded, who is called to a party does not come, so it is concerning the evil Christians who confess that they know God, however they deny his deeds, Isai. 65[:12]: “I called, and you did not answer: I spoke, and you did not hear.” There are many who because they do not see think they are not seen by God. Similar ones are in this peril who put their head in the weeds and believe they are not seen and thus are captured.

¶ Second, Christ calls us to the satisfaction of penance, just as the nurse calls the child for complimenting, Matt. 9[:13]: “I am not come,” into the world, “to call the just, but sinners.” So, the Lord called Adam after sin, Gen. 3[:9]: “Adam, where are you?” And Exod. 3[:18]: “The Lord God of the Hebrews has called us: we will go three days' journey into the wilderness, to sacrifice unto the Lord our God,” namely, works of penitence which are divided into three parts: fasting, alms giving, and prayer. Just as in the journey of three days, but there are many like the monkey who throws away the kernel of the nut on account of the bitterness of the rind. Just as the priest proposing to go to Rome does not want to go in the spring on account of the cultivation of the fields and vines, nor in the autumn on account of their harvesting, nor in summer on account of too much heat, nor in winter on account of cold and the burden of the ways, Isai. 22[:12]: “The Lord shall call to weeping,” contrition, “and to mourning,” conforming, “to baldness,” satisfaction, “and to girding,” continuation. And behold the joy against weeping and the happiness against mourning.

Third, he calls to the perfection of life. Just as the eagle provokes its chicks to flying, Eph. 4[:1]: “I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called,” etc. Thus, he called Paul, Gal. 1[:15]: “But when it pleased him, who separated me,” etc. But alas because the Lord lamented, Prov. 1[:24-26, 28]: “I called, and you refused,” namely, to obey me, “I stretched out my hand,” to work, “and there was none that regarded,” for imitating, “you have despised all my counsel,” namely, poverty, obedience, and conscience, “and have neglected my reprehensions,” as if saying, neither the goodness of the one calling, nor the wisdom of the one counseling, nor the power of the one rebuking to the one being quiet, and it follows, “I also will laugh in your destruction,” And after that, “Then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear,” because of their ingratitude, he made me, as if, deaf. But it is better to be quiet and listen to the apostle who was left what they had who followed him calling them from the sea, Matt. 4[:21].

¶ Again, it is to be noted that God calls us in three ways, which are hearing the words, seeing the signs, and being absent by his messengers.

First, therefore he calls by words of persuasion, just as men are called to the church by the bells. For the trumpets call to war, so God called by the prophets, by himself, by the apostles, and now by the apostolic men, Matt. 25[:14-15]: “For even as a man going into a far country,” that is, Christ carrying human nature to heaven, “called his servants, and delivered to them his goods. And to one he gave five talents,” for he gave to man the good of nature in working, the good of grace in comparison, the good of fortune in sustaining, the good of acquaintance in instructing, and the good of prudence in defense. But alas because many abuse these talents, just as the steward of iniquity who ruins his talents and by this receives a terrible abuse, Luke 16[:1]: “There was a certain rich man who had a steward,” etc. So, men who defile goods, if they do not defile the goods of knowledge, they neglect the goods of prudence.

¶ Second, God calls by signs of benefits, just as someone noble extends his hand with the act of recalling, Job 14[:15]: “You shall call me, and I will answer you: to the work of your hands you shall reach out your right hand.” By reaching out, namely, benefits of justification, resurrection, and blessings. If another holy man recalls someone to desertion of the members, men run to him much more than Adam who gave all, Isai. 42[:6]: “I the Lord have called you in justice.” But alas because there are many like the bird heavily satiated often called does not return to the hand of its lord, Jer. 8[:5]: “They have laid hold on lying,” that is, these temporal matters, “and have refused to return.”

¶ Third, God calls to the enemies of the flails, just as a lone cold one is called to the fire, and the mother threatening calls the child from the place of danger, 1 Pet. 2[:20-21]: “If doing well you suffer patiently, this is thankworthy before God. For unto this are you called. Because Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps.” But there are many as the weak vessel that cracks in the furnace, where the good vessel is made solid. These are like the evil one who the more he is struck the more he slides back, Jer. 35[:17]: “Behold I will bring upon Juda all the evil because I have spoken to them, and they have not heard: I have called to them, and they have not answered me.”

Again, God calls to those presently meriting their wages, Matt. 20[:8]: “Call the laborers and pay them their hire.” However, this hire consists in three things which men most desire, namely, distinction of honors, abundance of delights, and perpetuity of riches. Under a triple condition the Lord calls his elect to a heavenly reward where there is now a distinction of honors, the cleric is called to dignity, and the layman to power. Quickly he runs more to the heavenly kingdom for the giving of grace, 1 Pet. last chapter [5:10]: “The God of all grace, who has called us into his eternal glory, will himself perfect you, and confirm you, and establish you.” These two God gives in the mind and through himself, namely, grace and temporal glory. In truth he gives through intermediate agency, through the ministry of others, just as another prince gives a hereditary benefice through himself, but other alms he gives through the hands of others, Psal. [83:12]: “the Lord will give grace and glory.” Therefore, according to Gregory in a *Homilia*,[[5]](#endnote-5) if you seek true riches, hurry to that heavenly country as fast as possible.

Second, there is in the heavenly reward a surpassing of delights, the poor man is called to the battle of long lasting and freely given feasts, Apo. 19[:9]: “Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” But Luke 14[:16, 24]: “A certain man made a great supper and invited many.” But they did not come because either they were intent on worldly vanity which is designated by the farm, or the desire of the temporal which is designated by the yoke of oxen, or the carnal delights which is designated by the married wife. Therefore, it follows, “None of those men that were invited, shall taste of my supper.”

¶ Third, there is perpetuity of goods or riches, [1] Pet. 3[:9]: “Unto this are you called, that you may inherit a blessing.”

¶ Again the Lord calls sinners to the bewailing of penance, the perfect to the taste of wisdom.

Concerning the first, Matt. 9[:13]: “I am not come to call the just, but sinners.

Concerning the second, Isai. 41[:2]: “He has called him to follow him.”

Concerning the third, Philip. 3[:13-14]: “Forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark, to the prize.”

1. Cited as: Per promissa minas miracula verbera dona / instinctu vel doctrina vocat omnipotens nos. of Cod. **322**, 135r of Theologische Sammelhandschrift item 8.4 Memorial verse in zwei Hexametern

<https://www.austriaca.at/0xc1aa5576%200x000790ad.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Augustine, *De diversis in quaestionibus 83*, 68.5 (PL 40:73): Et quoniam nec velle quisquam potest, nisi admonitus et vocatus, sive intrinsecus, ubi nullus hominum videt, sive extrinsecus per sermonem sonantem, aut per aliqua signa visibilia; efficitur ut etiam ipsum velle Deus operetur in nobis (Philipp. II, 13). Ad illam enim coenam, quam Dominus dicit in Evangelio praeparatam, nec omnes qui vocati sunt, venire voluerunt; neque illi qui venerunt, venire possent, nisi vocarentur (Luc. XIV, 16-26). Itaque nec illi debent sibi tribuere qui venerunt; quia vocati venerunt: nec illi qui noluerunt venire, debent alteri tribuere, sed tantum sibi; quoniam ut venirent, vocati erant in libera voluntate. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* homilia 37 ex cap. 21.3 (PG 56:836): Nam puto in primis homines non sermone nudo vocavit apostolorum, sed per virtutem Spiritus sancti solvit pariter et adduxit. Postquam autem adduxit, iterum dimisit eos in arbitrio, ut labore suo comitante gratia justificentur. Nam quod vocati sumus, Dei est, quod autem digne post vocationem vivimus, nostrum pariter est et Dei. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 1.5.10 (PL 34:250): Principium quippe creaturae intellectualis est aeterna Sapientia; quod principium manens in se incommutabiliter, nullo modo cessat [2 1Kb] occulta inspiratione vocationis loqui ei creaturae cui principium est, ut convertatur ad id ex quo est, quod aliter formata ac perfecta esse non possit. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Gregory, *Liber Responsalis sive Antiphonarius,* In Evangelio (PL 78:749): Si vere, fratres, divites esse cupitis, veras divitias amate. Ant. Si culmen veri honoris quaeritis, ad illam coelestem patriam quantocius properate. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)