7 Help or Assistance (*Adiutorium uel Auxilium*)

Among all races it is the custom to seek help from a more powerful lord. Wherefore, Wis. 13[:18], it is said concerning idolatry, “For help he calls upon that which is unprofitable.”

Thus, Boethius rehearses, 3, *De consolatione*, prose 9,[[1]](#endnote-1) that it was pleasing to Plato, even in the smallest of things, to invoke the divine protection, without whose aid, according to Boethius, no beginning can be properly made. For according to the Psalm [90:1]: “He that dwells in the aid of the Highest, shall abide under the protection of the God of Jacob.” This is evident particularly in the wars of the Maccabees against Lysias. [2 Macc.] 11[:10] prays where it is said, “So they went on courageously, having a helper,” and they prevailed. And the children of Israel pitched camp against the Philistines “by the Stone of help, [1 Kings 4:1].” On the other hand, Christ, about whom Zach. 3[:9] speaks, “Upon one stone there are seven eyes,” that is, seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, among which one is the gift of fortitude, Isaiah 11[:2].

Wherefore, Chrysostom, *Super Matthaeum*, homily 30,[[2]](#endnote-2) just as a ship, the rudder having been broken, is led thither where the tempest wishes, so also man, the help of divine grace having been lost through sin, does, not what he wants, but what the devil wants. Wherefore, Bernard, from the *Sermone de adventu*,[[3]](#endnote-3) we are easy to be seduced, crippled for working, frail for resisting. If we wish to discern between good and evil, we are deceived. If we try to do the good, we are found wanting. If we try to resist evil, we are thrown down and overcome. Therefore, we need every help. Wherefore in Eccli. 51[:10], it is said, “They compassed me on every side, and there was no one that would help me. I looked for the succor of men, and there was none.” Exod. 30[:11-13]: God commanded Moses that he should help the people, out of which they might give the sickle of God, so that God might be a help, and not be a plague upon them.

Again, blessed Augustine says, *Sermo* 44,[[4]](#endnote-4) our helper is greater than our assailant. Therefore, to whom God is the helper, the devil cannot be the conqueror. Therefore Eccle. 4[:2-12]: “It is better therefore that two should be together, than one. If one fall he shall be supported by the other.” And it follows, “If a man prevails against one, two shall withstand him.” Often “A brother that is helped by his brother, is like a strong city,” Prov. 18[:19]. A city cannot be strong unless any part, however small, helps another in necessity. Wherefore the Philosopher in *Politicis*,[[5]](#endnote-5) teaches that in the siege of a city, the women must be in common, and they can run to help any part, as to carry stones and other necessities to the men for fighting. And this is said in Eccli. 40[34]: “Brethren are a help in the time of trouble, but mercy shall deliver more than they.” For if a brother does not help a brother when he is in need, how can he himself hope for help from God?

1. Boethius, *De consolatione Philosophiae* 3 prosa 9 (PL 63.757-758): Sed cum, uti in Timaeo Platoni, inquit, nostro placet, in minimis quoque rebus divinum praesidium debeat implorari, quid nunc faciendum censes, ut illius summi boni sedem reperire mereamur? Invocandum, inquam, rerum omnium patrem, quo praetermisso, nullum rite fundatur exordium. Recte, inquit; ac simul ita modulata est. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum*, Homilia 37 ex. cap. 21:2 (PG 56:835): sicut navis fracto gubernaculo, illuc ducitur ubi tempestas voluerit: sic et homo, divinae graciae auxilio perdito per peccatum, agit non quod vult, sed quod diabolus vult. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo* 7.1 (PL 183.55): Nam et faciles sumus ad seducendum, et debiles ad operandum, et fragiles ad resistendum. Si discernere volumus inter bonum et malum, decipimur; si tentamus facere bonum, deficimus; si conamur resistere malo, dejicimur et superamur. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Augustine, *Sermo* 376.4.4 (PL 39.1671): Major est adjutor quam oppugnator. Ideo gemitis, ideo oratis, ideo dicitis, Ne nos inferas in tentationem. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Aristotle, *Politics* 2.6, 1264b29-1264b37 (Barnes 2:2007): In the Republic, Socrates has definitely settled in all a few questions only; such as the community of women and children, the community of property, and the constitution of the state. The population is divided into two classes- one of husbandmen, and the other of warriors; from this latter is taken a third class of counselors and rulers of the state. But Socrates has not determined whether the husbandmen and artisans are to have a share in the government, and whether they, too, are to carry arms and share in military service, or not. He certainly thinks that the women ought to share in the education of the guardians, and to fight by their side. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)