86 To Believe (*Credere*)

Man ought to believe God [exists],[[1]](#endnote-1) God [is true], and in God [for loving], according to the Master of the *Sentences*, book 3, dist. 23.[[2]](#endnote-2) Abraham did this. Therefore [1 Mach. 2:52]: “It was reputed to him unto justice,” but these things in a certain way differ. For to believe God (exists) is for every intellectual creature, because James 2[:19]: “The devils also believe and tremble.”

¶ To believe in God (for loving) is for all the faithful generally. Wherefore, in the creed any Christian says, I believe in God. To believe in God is singularly of the perfect, who not only carry out his commandments, but also his counsels, Eccli. 2[:8]: “You that fear the Lord, believe him: and your reward shall not be made void.” Wherefore, because Abraham thus believed, God was made for him a reward for the future and the land of promise for his race.

¶ However, it was said to Moses because he did not believe (the word of) God before the sons of Israel at the waters of contradiction, Num. 14[:16], that he himself would not lead the sons of Israel into the land of promise. Wherefore, not only ought man to believe God by the immeasurableness of the one speaking, but also the prophets and saints in whom God dwells. Wherefore, it is read in Luke 16[:29-31]: “They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them,” and it follows, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe, if one rise again from the dead.” Chrysostom, *Super Mattheum,[[3]](#endnote-3)* put the example of a sick man, who if he believes the doctor, he obeys him in these things which he prescribes, thus the man if he perfectly believes God, he obediently does what he prescribes. 3 Kings 22[:35], it is read that Achab, who wished to believe Micheas the true prophet, going to war was wounded and quickly afterwards died. Thus those who wish to believe holy men in whom God speaks fall into dangers. Wherefore, Augustine, *Super Psalmum,* 68,[[4]](#endnote-4) when Christ suffered the disciples despaired, but they were conquered by the thief who believed him who they themselves had abandoned. Gregory, book 4, *Dialogorum,* chapter 3,[[5]](#endnote-5) if men of their visible heart believe they were begotten by a certain father and a certain mother, because they see very little, why don’t they believe invisible things which they can see corporally? Christ, however, wishing to show what to believe, thus the act which he greatly wished to impress upon the disciples in his ascension. Finally, he said to them, Mark, the last chapter, [16:16]: “He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believes not shall be condemned.”

¶ However, of what kind this belief ought to be, Chrysostom teaches, *Homelia* 19,[[6]](#endnote-6) saying belief is in respect to confession and to the act. Who, therefore, thus confesses Christ just as he himself taught that one believes in Christ. Wherefore, note the gloss, *De consecracione,* Dist. 4.[[7]](#endnote-7)

¶ First, I believe God (is true), and I believe God (exists), more I believe to be strong because you believe in him (for loving), or him (as true), or him (as existing).

¶ Concerning belief by which a man ought to believe another man is spoken of in Seneca, book three, *De beneficiis,[[8]](#endnote-8)* would that no compact marked the obligation of buyer to seller, but that the keeping of them were left to good faith. O, what a shameful admission of the open frauds of the human race. We trust more in our seal-rings than in our consciences or friends.

¶ Again, [Seneca], *Epistula* 126,[[9]](#endnote-9) loyalty is the holiest good in the human heart; it is forced into betrayal by no constraint, nor is it bribed by any reward. In men it is rare just as Jerome says, *Epistula* 37.[[10]](#endnote-10) Again, Augustine, *Ad Bonefacium, Epistula* 107, chapter 3,[[11]](#endnote-11) when faith is promised, it is to be preserved even to an enemy, against whom war is waged, how much more to a friend.

1. Cf. (8:181): Hugh Ripelin of Strasburg, *Compendium theologicae veritatis* 5.21 (8:181b): Nota quod aliud est credere Deum aliud credere in Deum et aliud credere Deo credere Deum est credere ipsum esse credere autem in Deum est credendo amare et amando in Deum ire ac membris incorporari credere vero Deo est credere ejus [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* 3.23.4 (PL 192.805): Aliud est enim credere in Deum, aliud credere Deo, aliud credere Deum. Credere Deo, est credere vera esse quae loquitur, quod et mali faciunt, et nos credimus homini, sed non in hominem. Credere Deum, est credere quod ipse sit Deus, quod etiam mali faciunt. Credere in Deum, est credendo amare, credendo in eum ire, credendo ei adhaerere et ejus membris incorporari. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. John Chrysostom, *In Mattheum* Homilia 74.4 (PG 58:684): Animam curare negligentes redarguuntur, modumque curationis docentur. ...

Cf. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* homilia 32 ex cap. 19 (PG 56:804): Nam quemadmodum damnum est medico, si subtrahantur infirmi: sic damnum est Christo, non habere quos salvet. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Augustine, *Enarrationes* *in Psalmos,* in Psalmum 68:4, sermo 1.8 (PL 36.847): Quando passus est, quando mortuus est, omnes discipuli desperaverunt quod ipse esset Christus. A latrone Apostoli victi sunt, qui tunc credidit, quando illi defecerunt (Luc. XXIII, 42). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Gregory, *Dialogorum* 4.2 (PL 77.320-21): GREGORIUS Audenter dico, quia sine fide neque infidelis vivit. Nam si eumdem infidelem percunctari voluero, quem patrem vel quam matrem habuerit, protinus respondebit, illum atque illam. Quem si statim requiram utrumne noverit quando conceptus sit, vel viderit quando natus, nihil horum se vel nosse, vel vidisse fatebitur, et tamen quod non vidit, credit. Nam illum patrem illamque se habuisse matrem absque dubitatione testatur.

PETR. Fateor quia nunc usque nescivi quod infidelis haberet fidem.

GREGOR. Habent etiam infideles fidem, sed utinam in Deum. Quam si utique haberent, infideles non essent. Sed hinc in sua perfidia redarguendi sunt, hinc ad fidei gratiam provocandi, quia si de ipso suo visibili corpore credunt quod minime viderunt, cur invisibilia non credunt, quae corporaliter videri non possunt; [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum,* Homilia 19 in caput 7:21 (PG: 56:742): Credulitatis autem sermo et ad confessionem respicit, et ad actum. Quii ergo sic confitetur Christum sic ipse docuit, ille credit Christo. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Decretum, *De consec.*, Dist. 4, c.1. John Teutonicus, *Glossa ordinaria* cols. 2595-2586): ¶ Sine sacramento visibili, et fide inuisibili nemo salvatur. Casus: Quaerebatur hic quod sint necessaria illi, qui vult baptizari. Et respondet, quod duo sunt necessaria, scilicet, vt aqua exterior abluatur, et ut fides interius habeatur, ut sicut aqua visibili, ita de dpritu inuisibili baptizentur.

Cf. Decretum, *De poen.,* Dist. 2, c. 14 John Teutonicus, *Glossa ordianaria*, (col. 2265): *Credere:* Credo Deo, credasque Deum, plus credo valere, / Si credas in eum, quam quod ei, vel eum. Hoc ideoque, quia credere Deo est, credere verum esse, quod Deus dicit. Credere Deum est credere Deum esse, quod et daemones credunt. Sed credere in Deum est amando credere in ipsum. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Seneca, *De beneficiis* 3.15.1-3 (LCL 310:152-54): Utinam nulla stipulatio emptorem venditori obligaret nec pacta conventaque impressis signis custodirentur, fides potius illa servaret et aecum colens animus! Sed necessaria optimis praetulerunt et cogere fidem quam expectare malunt. Adhibentur ab utraque parte testes. Ille per tabulas plurium nomina interpositis parariis facit; ille non est interrogatione contentus, nisi reum manu sua tenuit. O turpem humani generis fraudis ac nequitiae publicae confessionem! Anulis nostris plus quam animis creditur. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Seneca, *Epistula* 88.29, (LCL 76:366): Fides sanctissimum humani pectoris bonum est, nulla necessitate ad fallendum cogitur, nullo corumpitur praemio. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Jerome, *Epistola* 58.6 (PL 22.583): Rara est in hominibus fides. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Augustine, *Epistola* 189.6 (PL 33.856): Fides enim quando promittitur, etiam hosti servanda est contra quem bellum geritur; quanto magis amico pro quo pugnatur! [↑](#endnote-ref-11)