

## CHAPTER

### 1

## Concerning the Punishment of Adam's Sin<sup>1</sup>

The magnitude of a sin is calculated according to the importance and stature of the sinner. One also examines the sin in regard to the stature of the offended party, so that its gravity and magnitude are according to his stature.<sup>2</sup> It is, therefore, proper that a sin will be calculated as greater and more marvelous when committed by a perfect man, not predisposed to sin, with no inclination toward transgressions,<sup>3</sup> especially if this man received favor and grace from the offended party.<sup>4</sup> Adam's sin and rebellion were made against God, may He be blessed, Who is infinite in His stature. The sin was perpetrated by a man predisposed to perfection, one who was the least naturally inclined to sin that one could possibly find. This is the case, since [Adam] was the work of [God's] hands and received from Him, may He be blessed, the most perfect grace and favor that human nature can receive, for he was created perfect in his species.<sup>5</sup> For all these reasons, the Christian says that his sin was enormous and infinite, since it potentially included the whole of mankind, which came after him and emerged from him.<sup>6</sup> As a result, they think it is proper and correct that the punish-

ment be infinite and include all of mankind and that this species properly deserves an infinite punishment. It is even more proper that grace, mercy, and favor, namely eternal life and pleasure, be removed from mankind,<sup>7</sup> since, in truth, justice demands that the pleasant eternal life cannot be achieved through commandments or forms of worship,<sup>8</sup> without the addition of divine grace and mercy, as is maintained by the theologians.<sup>9</sup> Since the matter is so, it is clear that the human species would not suffer a miscarriage of justice were it lacking this grace and favor. This matter is properly conceived thus according to the Christian intention in this first principle.<sup>10</sup>

Now it is proper to explain clearly the refutations and doubts which follow from this belief both with respect to speculation<sup>11</sup> and with respect to scriptures, with those of speculation first.

We say: There are four arguments against the propriety of this opinion.

I. First, we deny that premise which states that justice demands that paradise<sup>12</sup> and eternal life cannot be achieved by means of worship<sup>13</sup> without divine grace. Instead, we maintain that he who worships God can achieve [this reward] naturally by means of his speculative life, which causes pleasure to his holy soul, so that he inherits eternal life. It is proper to maintain this position.<sup>14</sup> Since the facts are as they have been posited, denying this pleasure from souls is not merely a denial of favor and grace, but, rather, it is an infinite punishment. But inflicting an infinite punishment on Noah's soul,<sup>15</sup> which has no connection with, or dependence on, Adam's soul, would be a great divine injustice, God forbid.

II. Even if we should posit the above premise, for the sake of argument, even though it is not true, I say that the removal of grace and favor from one who does not deserve to have them removed is not divine equity. The souls of the

righteous, such as Noah and the patriarchs, peace be upon them, have no connection with the sinning soul of Adam, especially since, according to the Christian belief, each person's soul is created by God, may He be blessed, for each particular body.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, they did not sin, and it is not proper that infinite grace and mercy be removed from them.<sup>17</sup>

III. I say further: If Adam, before he sinned, was worthy of grace and mercy and would have inherited eternal pleasure, [certainly] Abraham and the rest of the righteous men were more worthy of receiving this grace. This follows from what I say: If Adam, who was born perfect, not predisposed to sin, would have acquired this grace, then Abraham, who was born in sin and conceived in iniquity,<sup>18</sup> yet did not sin but instead lived an exemplary and blessed life, would be more worthy of pleasure since his stature is more apparent and praiseworthy. Therefore, it would be divine injustice for Adam to inherit pleasure if he had not sinned, despite his low stature, while Abraham, who did not sin, even though conceived in iniquity,<sup>19</sup> would lose his eternity despite his high stature as a man whose thoughts did not tempt him nor his ideas lead him astray from worshipping God out of love.<sup>20</sup>

IV. If divine equity seeks for mankind the greatest good and guides it to the most wondrous perfection which can be received, as was posited in the introduction to this treatise,<sup>21</sup> how can it follow that God would remove His grace and truth from him who has not sinned against Him and from whom it is not proper to remove it? Where is His former mercy<sup>22</sup> for mankind if this were true? Furthermore, the punishment of souls is not merely denying them the pleasure of paradise<sup>23</sup> but also causing them pain and suffering and sending them to perdition in Hell.<sup>24</sup> The soul may be naturally bereft of God's grace, but at least it is not in painful sorrow and blown by fire.<sup>25</sup> It can, by means of its intellection while still in its body, possibly acquire participation

with the separate intellects from which the soul is formed and which are of its nature.<sup>26</sup> How could God descend from His glorious throne to punish such a soul which naturally has this [reward] and put it in Hell? Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?<sup>27</sup> Far be it from God to do such injustice!

These are the doubts which follow from this presupposition with respect to speculation, not including those remaining from the second principle which will be dealt with there. [Those arguments] which follow from Scriptures [are dealt with] in the ninth principle, in which we shall explain clearly beyond any doubt that the Torah of Moses gives eternal life.

Now, however, we shall offer a proof whose truth is obvious, namely, that the theologians admitted that because of one simple easy commandment, i.e., circumcision, with which Abraham, peace be upon him, was commanded, much of the spiritual punishment was removed from him, because the punishment of Hell was removed from him,<sup>28</sup> even though he was not brought into the inner part of the sanctuary.<sup>29</sup> According to this proportion, the Torah of Moses, peace be upon him, which contains 613 perfect commandments,<sup>30</sup> should properly be able to remove even more of the spiritual punishment from souls and to give them some rest.<sup>31</sup> There is an even more reprehensible [consequence]: why should the souls of the prophets who beheld the glory of God while still in their bodies (especially Moses our Teacher, peace be upon him, about whom Scripture testifies: "The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one man speaks to another,"<sup>32</sup> and he beholds the likeness of the Lord"<sup>33</sup> whenever he wanted<sup>34</sup>) lack this pleasure and intellection after death once the bothers of the body and the company of the senses had been removed, so that these pure, separate, intellecting souls remained, clean of any dross or rust? It is not proper to ascribe this to divine equity. This is what we have to say in this first chapter.