A work in progress....

Good food for thought - Part 1

What follows here are much of the new base, Criminally Insane Jew censored classic studies in needed faith and reason, historically taught until now for some two thousand years or so. In large part being the fundamentals now denied and censored by the now global criminally ruling New Jew Order such as; the existence of God, of the human soul, of the after life, of the Metaphysic of Morals, the reality of Free Will as the only cause of all sin and or evils, of Right Reason, etc., now all lied about only for the evil sake of earthly Jew witchcraft wherein they have for the first time been allowed to replace everybody's education with godless base insane Jew lies. Jew lies and nonsense taught to poison the minds of everybody's Gentile children wherein, hypothetical monsters are foolishly taught to hypothetically substitute for the only possible necessary Divine First Cause; not to mention the full denial of Christ repeated over and over by the base Jews who do not even understand that it is the only historical fulfillment of the Old Testament Messianic Law, even when being their own Law, just as it all was. None the less the First Divine Cause of creation is theologically sound as it is the only Sufficient Cause, as traditionally taught. They however are also now religiously taught the baseless fictions of the Darwinian and Big Bang theories which, again are baseless as to any actual fact and have been fully refuted over and over by a unknown number of logicians and alike from the beginning. This however, is fully censored now in violation of all established Law and, all needed Logic, all logic now unlawfully outlawed itself. As I have taught before long ago; only to then be plagiarized by John Paul II and others; all such fictions as just mentioned would still theologically require a Sufficient Divine First Cause as it is impossible to get anything at all from nothing, even if true. As for all the evils of the day now complained about by all, even the instigating Jews; the traditionally taught universal truths of Natural and Moral Law is going to be made problematic when ever so fully censored as they are now by the godless Jews and Jew taught Pagans. Thus, the following selections on all such basics traditionally taught until today will at least serve as some good food for thought.

An Introduction to the Study of Logic and Metaphysics by,
THOMAS SQUIRE BARRETT
1875
OXFORD

PREFACE.

Although it is customary to publish Novels and other works coming within the class called "Light Literature," or Belles Lettres," without a Preface, it is the reverse with regard to books intending to impart information, such, for instance, as works of History, Philosophy, Theology, Science, &c. We have become so accustomed to see pre-faces in volumes of a deeper character, that a work of this description would look almost strange without an introductory chapter or paragraph.

There is, however, no need for me to say anything here, excepting by way almost of apology for publishing so fragmentary and incomplete a book. The fact is, that when it was begun, the intention was to go much more largely into the matter; but various circumstances have for some time delayed the completion of the work. It has therefore been decided to issue this instalment at once, rather than to wait longer for the remainder.

The greater part of the chapter on Causation has appeared in an earlier work.

T. S. BARRETT.

ON THE CONDITIONS

OF

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

How often it is the case that what are thought to be important disputes, are in reality nothing but disputes about the meaning of words! In Politics, for instance, a fierce dis-cussion may take place between a soi-disant Conservative and a soi-disant Liberal on the comparative merits of the two parties repre-sented, when perhaps if the disputants were unbiassed by party feeling they would per-ceive that they were very much of one mind, and that the reason of the apparent disagree-ment was in consequence of their attaching dif-ferent significations to the words Conserva-tive and Liberal. In Theology, again, how fi-e-quent are the disputes that arise fi-om the mi-sunderstanding of a word! whilst in topics called metaphysical the difficulty of one side understanding the other has become prover-bial. Indeed, so well is it known that the origin of disputes can generaUy be traced to
each side mistaking the meaning of the other, that the word misunderstanding has at length become one of the synonyms of the word quarrel. If any one, therefore, is desirous of distinguishing himself as a logician or philosopher, before all things it is necessary that he make the meanings of the words he uses, clear both to himself and to others.

Now we shall find that the same fatal ambiguity has constantly been attached to the word Logic. Some writers have expressed it as their opinion that the study of logic is barren and profitless: others have lauded logic up to the skies as par excellence the Science of the Sciences. How is this? It is simply because nine times out of ten they have all meant something different by the word. Thus, for example, Aristotle's Logic and Mill's Logic are two totally different things. Until very lately the term Logic was applied solely to what is now beginning to be distinguished as Formal Logic, Deductive Logic, and so forth. But modern writers, such as Professor Bain, or

the late John Stuart Mill, apply the word to a far more extensive field of inquiry.

The mediaeval schoolmen were, no doubt, honestly of opinion that the Analytics of Aristotle was the instrument or organon of truth. But from the time that Bacon brought out his new Organum the old logic began gradually to fall year by year more into disfavour. It was seen that no new truth could be gained by means of the old logic, the conclusion of every syllogism being in isct contained in the premisses, and therefore no advance could be made beyond those premisses. And although it has been many years before this was openly put into words and taught, yet the practical
effects resulting from a study of the Inductive Sciences were seen to be so much more than anything that could arise from the study of the old logic, that the latter became at length almost discontinued to give way to its rival.

But now there has been at last a partial reaction. It is now wished to retain the old word. Logic, but to extend its meaning so as to include many things that formerly would have been deemed foreign to the subject. As an example, take one of the latest modern manuals of logic — Professor Bain's — and it

4 on THE CONDITIONS OF

will be seen that two-thirds of the work are devoted to Induction, whilst only one-third is given to Deduction.

The difference, therefore, between the modern and the old logic is simply this: We accept the ancient definition of the science, but extend the subject-matter to accord therewith. We say to the old logicians, in effect: Yes, let it be granted that the term logic be applied to denote the instrument of all truth; if you will, even Kavovncfi (after the Epicureans) — the criterion to judge between truth and falsehood; but we must for this very reason extend the science. The object and its definition must of necessity coincide.

We can now define Logic and at the same time be in strict unison with the old writers on the subject. Logic is that branch of study to be pursued before entering the boundless realms of science, — a study of the limits of the human understanding, — a study of the laws of evidence, — a study for the right directing of
our reasoning, observing and other intellectual faculties. "The sole object of Logic," says Mr. Mill ("System of Logic," Introd., § 3) "is the guidance of one's own thoughts: the communication of those thoughts to others falls

under the consideration of Khetoric in the large sense in which that art was conceived by the ancients; or of the still more extensive art of Education. Logic takes cognizance of our intellectual operations, only as they conduce to our own knowledge, and to our command over that knowledge for our own uses. If there were but one rational being in the universe, that being might be a perfect logician; and the science and art of logic would be the same for that one person as for the whole human race." When this is generally understood, the study of logic no doubt I revived. Ibiza practical age will not fail to see the immense utility of a science which teaches the force of evidence and the way to sift fact from fiction. Indeed, since the appearance of Mr. Mill's work, this return to the study has already taken place to a very large extent. While it was believed that Logic was merely a useless disquisition on mood and figure, syllogism and enthymeme, barbara, cesare and darapti, the subject naturally fell into disrepute and neglect. Let us hope that Notes avons changé tout cela may be now said with truth.

The opinion of Dr. Mansel and others. — Dr. Mansel and others, it is true, have de-
SO many topics once deemed foreign to it. Dr. Mansel even went so far as to endorse Kant's assertion that a criterion of material truth is not possible. But if so, there can be no such science as Logic at all in the sense of an or- ganon; and the study, narrowed to the Ana- lytics of Aristotle, must come down from the pedestal its votaries have placed it on.

A criterion of trut\ what. — But perhaps if we were to examine thoroughly into this apparently very great difference of opinion, we should find that the dispute is entirely owing to a misunderstanding about the word criterion. If by criterion be meant a cut- and-dried rule by which we can measure and test the truth of a proposition, then, to be sure, there can be no such criterion; and it cannot be supposed that any one ever advo- cated the existence of such a thing. But when those who would include induction among the proper topics of logic, put forward their science as a criterion or organon for the discovery of truth, they are evidently using the expression or expressions (as most words are used in abstract studies) just a little figuratively. We may, in the same way, say

**HUMAN KNOWLEDGE. 7**

that the criterion or test of the truth of the 47th proposition of the 1st book of Euclid is to be found in the demonstration given and in the demonstration of all the previous propositions employed as premisses. So, when Logic is spoken of as a criterion of the truth of our various beliefs, it must be understood to mean that Logic furnishes the first prin- ciples or data on which the truth of all possible science must depend.

From all this it follows that the word Logic
(with the extended signification in which it is now used) may be defined as the Science of the Conditions of Human Knowledge.

But what is Knowledge? It is more than true belief. A person may happen to hit upon a truth by means that do not justify belief. A man may believe something on insufficient grounds, which may, nevertheless, turn out correct. But if the belief in such a fact is based on erroneous or insufficient premisses, we should not say that the man knew it to be true. Again, a child believes all that it is told; but it cannot be said to know the things taught in that way. At so early an age, it believes blindly and not rationally.

Dr. Whately defined knowledge agreeably to these considerations. "Knowledge," he says, "implies three things: 1st. Firm belief; 2nd. Of what is true; 3rd. On sufficient grounds. If any one, e.g., is in doubt respecting one of Euclid's demonstrations, he cannot be said to know the proposition proved by it; if, again, he is fully convinced of anything that is not true, he is mistaken in supposing himself to know it; lastly, if two persons are each fully confident, one that the moon is inhabited, and the other that it is not (though one of these opinions must be true), neither of them could properly be said to know the truth, since he cannot have sufficient proof of it." *

How far Logic has to take notice of Language. — Sometimes Logic has been treated in manuals merely as the art of arguing. Were this the proper province of the science, Language, it cannot be denied, would be a most vital consideration. But, as Mr. Mill has ob-
served, this branch of the subject belongs
more to Rhetoric than to Logic. Logic is in-
tended principally to guide one's own thoughts
in the search after knowledge, and would be

Elements of, Logic, Book iv., ch. 2, § 2, note.

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE. 9

useful to a man were there no other beings to
dispute with. May we then say that Logic
has not to take cognizance of language more
than other abstract sciences have to do so?
In all abstract subjects we have great need to
be careful of language in this respect; namely,
that they are studied by means of words; and
the more abstract a topic is, the more risk
there is of ambiguity creeping in, with, per-
haps, the single exception of mathematics.
There the abstract words are so few and so
clearly defined that the possibility of a mis-
understanding is reduced to a minimum. But
in mental and moral philosophy, politics, and
in some theologies, for example, confusion
and disputes are constantly arising through
the ambiguity of language used.

But in the study of the conditions of know-
ledge, language has especially to be consi-
dered. Language is not only a means of
communication between one man and another;
it is also an actual means of individual thought.
It is true, we do not always think in words in
the same way as we speak or "think aloud" in words. Images are often used in thought,
and so is the recollection of previous sensa-
tions. These often take the place of words.
when we think, — so that it may be said that we frequently "imagine out" a thought or an argument, and arrive at our conclusion much quicker than if we had to do it in words. But in spite of all this there is an inseparable association in our minds between words and the things we use them to represent — and often quite unconsciously on our parts. The simple common nouns, "man," "boy," "dog," &c., cannot be learnt and apprehended except by means of some of the most important and abstract of the mental operations — for instance, comparison and classification. Indeed, it may almost be questioned whether a man never taught a language could, by means of ideas alone, ascend to any sort of knowledge superior to that possessed by the brutes. So intimate is the connection between language and the simplest kind of thought. It would be an interesting question, but one apart from our present purpose, to inquire whether we could attain to all our present knowledge without the aid of language — whether we are rational beings apart from being speaking animals — or whether, on the other hand, it is the possession of the faculty and art of language that alone raises us above the brute creation.

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE. 11

A true proposition is one intended to communicate, or to stand for a true thought or belief. But when the truth of a proposition is under consideration, it is very important to know the exact meaning of it. The inquiry into the truth of a proposition is, consequently, two-fold: first, whether the words express the idea; and, secondly, whether the idea is in conformity with fact. When the meaning of a proposition is thoroughly mastered, its truth
may then be inquired into: but not until then. It is both futile and unphilosophical to debate the truth of a proposition, or to declare one's assent to it, or dissent from it, whilst the meaning is doubtful. For example: I am told it is my duty to believe the Athanasian Creed. I reply that it is simply impossible to have either belief or disbelief in it whilst it is not clearly comprehended by the understanding.

So with respect to all beliefs, whether true or false, when expressed in language. People often think they believe a proposition when, in reality, they are believing all the time quite a different one. For instance: they are under the impression that the Deity has imposed a certain proposition or dogma on them to believe; they do not understand the meaning of it; they say it is a mystery that they must believe without understanding. And they really think they believe it. But no man can really believe a proposition the sense of which he does not understand; for a proposition without sense is not a proposition at all. A proposition is the representation in language of an idea; and where there is no idea, there can be no proposition. 'The part is greater than the whole;' 'Twice two is five,' &c., are pseudo-propositions. They are propositions only in form. They are not the equivalent or representation of any idea, and cannot be thought, or conveyed to another. The * letter ' of language is there, but the * spirit ' is wanting.

When, therefore, a person is under the impression he is believing a proposition which conveys no idea to his mind, he is in reality believing nothing of the sort. If a man were to say that he believed that * twice two is five,'
or that ' abracadabra is humpty-dumpty; ' that he believed it in accordance with the commands of his Deity, but that he didn't pretend to understand the mystery — it is clear that he does not believe the dogma in question, but quite a different proposition, namely, that by the words of the dogma his Deity is intending a certain truth not revealed at present.

KEESSAAET TRUTHS, &c.

Necessity is not a thing that can be perceived amongst phenomena. Order or regularity may be seen, but that neither is nor proves necessity. Some savages seem scarcely to have any idea of necessity at all; everything appears to them to be the mere effect of chance. The exercise of thought probably introduces into the mind the idea of some sort of necessity, from observing the effects of one's own will on the muscles. This idea, probably, after a time induces a belief in supernatural agency - the interference of deities in mundane affairs. The more civilized a people, the greater does their idea of necessity prevail in their conception of things; but not until they have cultivated more or less of abstract thought, do they believe in the existence of necessary truths.

The term, 'necessary truth,' is used to denote a fact that, if true, one sees must be true.
14 NECESSARY TRUTHS.

For example: There cannot be hills without valleys; two straight lines cannot enclose a space; twice two is four; the past cannot be recalled — all mathematical truths — and so forth.

A necessary truth and a certainty are not convertible terms. Many things I am certain of, yet they are not necessary facts. For instance: I am quite certain that I exist, or that I am thinking, yet neither of these facts would be called necessary truths. It is true that I exist; but I do not perceive the necessity of my existence as I do that of space or that of time.

Then, again, it is important that the words 'if true' in the definition given above of a necessary truth, be borne in mind. A necessary truth is not one that we see must be true, but one that we see must be true, if true. A person may not see the necessity of the truth of the 47th proposition of the first book of Euclid immediately it is enunciated to him; but after he has been through the demonstration, and perceives it is true, he sees it also must be true. Again, we see that the square of 476 must be 226,576 if it is 226,576. We are not all gifted as Bidder and Colburn were, and therefore cannot see the truth of many mathematical propositions until we have worked them out; but when once they are demonstrated to our satisfaction we perceive they could not have been otherwise.

It may now be seen where Dr. Whewell
and many others have made a mistake. In his History of Scientific Ideas, Dr. Whewell speaks of Necessary and Experiential Truths as forming an antithesis. Dr. Whewell is here confounding Necessary with Intuitive. When we immediately perceive the truth of a proposition as soon as it is stated to us, such a proposition states what is an intuitive truth. Some intuitive truths are necessary; but some intuitive truths are not necessary truths, and some necessary truths are not intuitive. Thus, (taking the word 'contingent' to stand as the antithesis to 'necessary'; and 'experiential' or 'probable' as the opposite to 'intuitive') the truth that I exist, is intuitive and contingent; the truth that 13 times 19 is 247 is experiential and necessary.

Book Ly chap, i, sect. 2.

16

We have said that intuitive truths are truths that are seen immediately. Hence they are also called immediate knowledge. Now the antithesis to immediate knowledge is mediate knowledge; and that consists in knowledge obtained by experience, &c. We have therefore the follow-
ing synonyms and antitheses: —
Intuitive truths. Experiential truths.

Immediate knowledge. Mediate knowledge.
Certain truths. Probable truths.

There has always been more or less difference of opinion amongst men as to whether or not some propositions affirm necessary truths. For instance, some say the existence of a God is a necessary truth; others, on the other hand, say it is not. The reason of this is, that a necessary truth to a person is one that is seen by him to be necessary, and as we are more or less differently constituted, it sometimes happens that what is seen by one person is invisible to another.

INTUITIVE TRUTHS. 17

For similar reasons the differences among metaphysicians as to what truths are intuitive are even more numerous than those as to what truths are necessary.

And this is one great secret of the failure of most systems of philosophy. A deep thinker erects a mighty structure on the basis of his own consciousness or of his own intuitions, forgetting that perhaps his next door neighbour may have a different consciousness and a different set of intuitions. The system of such a philosopher consequently is true only so far as it goes. It may be a perfect system of his own philosophy: but he is greatly in error if he calls his work the Philosophy of the Human Mind. It is merely the philosophy of a human mind.

Supposing I am in pain, my knowledge or consciousness of the fact is immediate knowledge. No logic is necessary to convince me thereof. I feel the pain, and that is an ulti-
matum in evidence beyond which it is impos-
sible to go.

But although my dumb, unexpressed and silent suffering is immediate knowledge, can the same be said of the proposition 'I am in pain?' No; it is evident that the knowledge of the truth of the proposition is not immediate;

18 INTUITIVE TRUTHS.

for its truth depends on whether the words 'I am in pain' are the right ones to express my meaning.

From this it follows that the knowledge of the truth of no Proposition is certain. The knowledge of the truth of propositions depends, amongst other things, on whether the right words are used.

Is the knowledge of having the toothache, mediate or immediate? Certainly not immediate, for it is only by experience that we are able to localize pain. A new-born infant suffering from the toothache (supposing it to have teeth) would feel the pain, but would not know what part was affected. */ am in pain* however, expresses immediate knowledge.

Immediate knowledge can only relate to the present. '* I am in pain at this moment,' expresses immediate knowledge; but, '* I was in pain at twelve o'clock yesterday,' is not so, as its truth depends on the accuracy of my memory.

Knowledge of the future of course is never immediate. This class of knowledge is most important. It embraces the Sciences of As-
tronomy, Mechanics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Medicine, &c., &c. This species of

INTUITIVE TRUTHS. 19

knowledge is always conditional. ' There will be an eclipse of the sun to-morrow, if the solar system he still in existence^ and if the laws hitherto operating continue to act.^ And so on.

Knowledge of the past, also, cannot be immediate. It, too, is very important, embracing History, Geology, and all the recorded experiments or observations made in the sciences mentioned in the last paragraph. This knowledge is the basis of knowledge of the future. The predictions that are daily made in Astronomy, Mechanics, Chemistry, *S'c., are founded on the observation of the past.

From all this it may be seen that the bulk of our knowledge, if not absolutely all, depends more or less on probability. All past knowledge must so depend, and so must all future knowledge. Then, what is left ? The present is infinitesimal. It is a mere point, dividing the infinite line Eternity into the two infinite parts called The Past and The Future. But it must nevertheless be the foundation of all our knowledge. All our knowledge, then, must depend on our present perceptions, — sensations, intuitions (if we have any), memory and all our various faculties and powers, of whatever name or kind.

c2

20 INTUITIVE TRUTHS.

Have we then any intuitions at all ? If our
present perceptions or feelings be considered intuitions, then we have. Beyond these we get on debateable ground. It is the fashion now-a-days to decry Locke. But it would be well if some of our modern mystics and idealists would really study the sound common-sense of that grand old writer. It is true he had some errors — who has not? — and his style is somewhat dry and scholastic; but for all that, I think we need, in the present day, to come down more, as he did — or at least desired to do — to First Principles.

The same old dispute that was rife in the days of Locke is prevalent still. Have we In- nate Ideas or Intuitions? Locke held that no Belief is innate. It is true there is a slight difference in meaning between innate and intuitive: but practically they may generally be used as convertible terms.

If people assent to a proposition the moment it is enunciated, or act from their birth as if they believed it, without its ever having been taught them, this certainly is the same thing as its being innate as well as intuitive.

Many people who decry Locke think they can refute him in a sentence. They think it enough to point to the Instincts of an infant. But what have Instincts to do with Propositions — with Innate or Intuitive ideas of (or belief in) propositions? The point in dispute is not whether Instincts, Sensations, Feelings, &c., are innate, but whether Beliefs are.

INTUITIVE TRUTHS. 21

Then, again, taking the expression 'intuitive truths' to mean truths apprehended immediately, without the aid of experiment, experi-
ence, reasoning, calculation, or anything else, as contradistinguished from truths resting on probability, how is it possible, even supposing there are intuitive truths, to draw a hard and fast line between the two classes, and to say, These truths are intuitive and certain: those are experiential and probable? Probability is a thing of degrees. There is a low degree and there is a high degree of Probability. As Probability gets higher and higher it runs into certainty. How is it possible to distinguish between 'so-highly-probable-as-practically-to-be-certain' and * absolutely-certain *? 

To some this may seem an easy task: but that it is really a difficult one, witness the constant disputes amongst metaphysicians as to what truths are certain and intuitive and what not. Man is ever trying to classify and draw sharp lines of demarcation between this and that, but Nature laughs at his finite knowledge and is constantly frustrating his endeavour. It is the same in all departments of science; species merges into species; one class glides by imperceptible steps into another; so that perfect classification is almost always impossible. In Natural History who can draw the line between Animal and Plant? and what disputes there have been and still are concerning the difference between Man and Ape. And in Chemistry the difficulty is often great to know whether a substance should be called an acid or a base, and whether a body should be classed with metals or with chlorine.

So there are many propositions concerning which there will always be disputes among metaphysicians — propositions that will sometimes be placed among those intuitively true,
and sometimes among the probably true. One reason of this lies (as we have said) in the gradual running of propositions, very quickly apprehended as true, into those apprehended absolutely immediately. Another cause is to be found in the fact that many a proposition is seen to be true more quickly by one person than by another.

INTUITIVE TRUTHS. 23

Is the knowledge that I have a pen in my hand, intuitive or probable? Probable, for it is possible to dream of having a pen in one's hand. And even if dreams were never dreamt, that would make no difference, for the belief in material things is an inference from our sensations, and therefore not intuitive. It is said that when Gaspar Hauser, the unfortunate being kept in darkness and solitary confinement until his 18th year, looked from a window for the first time in his life, he thought the scenery was a painting hanging from the wall. An infant, too, does not begin to show signs of a belief in outward objects until some time after the first use of its eyes. The stare of a newborn babe is quite vacant.

Mathematical Truths. — There have been some extraordinary geniuses (such as Bidder and Colbum), who possessed the faculty of mathematical and arithmetical insight to so wonderful a degree, that many propositions requiring much reasoning and calculation on the part of ordinary persons were assented to by them, as it were, by immediate intuition. And, as it has been before observed, people differ so largely in their quickness of perception that it is impossible to decide whether
certain propositions should be ranked among the intuitively or the probably true. Especially is this the case in respect to mathematical propositions. A proposition seen by one man at once to be true without requiring any reasoning to establish it, cannot be taken in by another without some demonstration.

The Propositions of Euclid. — Some of the propositions of Euclid are instances of this. To those who can see the 4th proposition immediately it is enunciated, it is intuitively true; but to those who cannot believe it until they have gone through the demonstration, it is probably true; for all truth based on reasoning must be probable. There are such things as sophisms; and people sometimes think a proposition is demonstrated when it is not. And one man's intuitions cannot possibly be accepted by another who does not share them.

Arithmetical Truths. — * Twelve times twelve is 144 ' is not intuitively true, being based on experiment, and known by us by means of our memory. * Twice two is four ' is also a truth of probability. A child long after it can count is unable to tell what twice two is without taking two twice and then counting afresh. But although ' twice two is four ' is an experi-
its probability, if possible, even more.

To strangers in the paths of Logic and Metaphysics, it must seem that much time is wasted over fruitless disputation concerning the right terms to apply to certain propositions — whether they should be called intuitive or probable. To some extent this condemnation is just. But though to the uninitiated the discussions in question may seem objectless, they must cease to appear so as soon as the important issues dependent on them are seen. When it can be shown to which class any belief belongs, a great step is taken towards the investigation of the evidence for it.

We discuss the pros and cons now of many a proposition once thought beyond doubt. This is inevitable, and is an effect of the intellectual activity of the age. During the infancy and dark ages of a race, people are content to follow sluggishly in the beliefs of their ancestors. This is the theological stage. Then, for a season, comes the metaphysical period, when the old beliefs are pretty much retained, but are accounted for by the easy theory that they are innate or intuitive. Lastly, comes the age of scepticism and positive science, when the old beliefs are shaken to their foundations, and either refuted or re-established on a scientific basis.

'Tis clear the first step towards the settlement of the truth or falsity of a belief is to decide whether it is intuitive or otherwise. If intuitive, the investigation needs proceed no further. It would be folly to argue against what it is impossible not to believe. And so,
in the transition state between the old era and the new, when the battle is fierce over old beliefs and old deities, — there is ever heard the defence of intuitivity put forth by the one side and assailed by the other.

Pome years ago it was the fashion of metaphysicians to dub with the epithet of 'intuitive' every belief the origin of which they could not, or would not, trace. Nothing could have been more easy and convenient than this

**INTUITIVE TRUTHS**

method of procedure. It was a great saving of trouble, and afforded a way of answering in a few lines the arguments of obnoxious philosophers. It was as if chemists, in order to avoid analysis, were to reply that the substances given to them were all elements and therefore admitted of no analysis. At one time indeed the rapid increase in the number of so-called intuitive truths was perfectly alarming: but now, it must be confessed, in justice to the age, the number is gradually diminishing in consequence of the painstaking analysis of our present Psychological School of thinkers. The late John Stuart Mill, Professor Bain, and Mr. G. H. Lewes have done a great deal to bring about this re-action: but, after all, they are only the modern representatives and philosophical descendants of Locke, who answered the Intuitionists of his own time.

It must be borne in mind that if any one argues against the intuitivity, or against the necessity of a belief or truth, he is not therefore necessarily an unbeliever in respect to it. I maintain that the proposition 'There is a God' is neither a necessary truth nor an intuitive truth, it does not follow that I believe there is no God. If it did, the con-
28 INTUITIVE TRUTHS.

sequence would be that every truth is a necessary truth or an intuitive truth: or, that there is no such thing as a truth that is neither a necessary truth nor an intuitive truth: or, again, that there are no contingent truths and no experiential truths: which would be absurdly untrue.

29 CAUSATION.

It is scarcely necessary to mention the fact, so well known to students of logic and metaphysics, that ever since Hume published his Treatise of Human Nature^ Causation has been the subject of incessant controversy among philosophers. We might perhaps say, ever since Locke wrote his Essay concerning Human Understanding; for this work, no doubt, suggested a great deal to Hume.

Locke taught the theory that all our ideas have their origin in our sensations; that we have no innate notions or any other inlet for knowledge whatever.

Locke, I know, is often defended from this imputation. He says {Eseay^ Bk. ii., c. 1, § 2} that our ideas have two sources, sensation and reflection; but as two paragraphs further on he defines reflection to be "the perception of the operations of our own minds within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got" {i.e. by
means of sensation), that source seems to be made secondary; and sensation thus becomes the real primary source. There is, no doubt, much to be said on both sides of this question; but whether modern sensationalists are, or are not, the legitimate descendants of Locke, is a question we cannot discuss in this place.

The logical consequences flowing from this philosophy were little dreamt of by the great founder of modern sensationalism. Himself a religious man, and a firm believer in the existence of a God, his philosophy nevertheless is the source from which modern Atheism is chiefly drawn. If it can be proved that the whole of our knowledge comes to us solely through the medium of our five senses, all knowledge is rendered probable merely.

And if such a theory is true, all attempts to prove infallibly the existence of God are futile; for if all knowledge is probable only, it is evident we can at most merely attain to the knowledge that the existence of a Deity is probable.

Hume was the first to draw attention to this. Starting from the postulate that we have no grounds for believing anything the knowledge of which does not come to us through experience, he argued that, therefore, we have no grounds for believing in causation at all. For, said he, "we have no other experience of
cause and effect but that of certain objects, which have been always conjoined together." * 
We cannot see, and have not any experience of, any necessary connection or nexus between what is called a cause and what is called its effect.

Now the question remains. Are we right or wrong in thinking we can discern a necessary connection between some phenomena? In order to answer this we must inquire a little more particularly into the idea of necessity.

The primary idea of necessity is what is cued by meZphysicia^ - logil „ec«si.y.. It is a perception of what Professor Bain calls the *Law of Consistency.' It is seen that certain things must accompany certain other things; otherwise there would be involved an inconsistency or contradiction. There cannot be hills without valleys; if the premisses of a syllogism are true, the conclusion must also be true; two straight lines cannot enclose a space;

32 CAUSATION.

and so on. With the perception of the absoluteness and unconditionality of such truths, dawns on the mind the idea of necessity, the notion of a * must.' This once possessed, its transference to phenomena is easy.

The problem for us is to find what truth there is in the prevalent belief concerning causation: are we justified in transferring the attribute of necessity from axioms and demonstrated propositions to the relation between natural events?
If we divest ourselves of our acquired knowledge and beliefs, and imagine ourselves observing for the first time any succession or correlation of events, we shall see that there is nothing in them or their conjunction to tell us of power or necessity. It is only by witnessing the same combination of phenomena several times that we get the idea of invariability, and thence that of necessity.

For example: the phenomena of gravitation are so common and we are so used to them that we attribute a necessity to them. But if we had never before seen a body fall, there would be nothing in the descent of the first thing we saw fall pointing to any necessity. For all we could know to the contrary, the

CAUSATION. 33

objects might just as well have remained motionless or have gone in any other direction than downwards.

Take any other case at random amongst phenomena; and it will be the same. We do not know the efficient cause of anything. We only know secondary or conditional causes, which, properly speaking, are not efficient causes at all. Scientific men are aware of this, and speak now of the 'conditions' of phenomena rather than of their 'causes.' For example: The insertion of zinc and copper, connected together in a certain manner, in diluted sulphuric acid, is called one of the causes or conditions of the production of the electricity, &c. But what right have we to assert that there is any necessary connection between the one and the other? None. In short we only know conditions. We do not know the wherefore of anything. The 'expla-
nations' of phenomena, if made in order to assign the causes, are nothing but solemn scientific babble to cover our ignorance; but if made merely to inform us of the conditions or circumstances or uniformities which attend phenomena, they are useful so far, and serve to establish 'laws' or *rules.'

34 CAUSATION.

There is a wide-spread misconception concerning the 'laws' of nature. They are spoken of as if they possessed power or force. One often hears a child's question, 'Why do things fall?' answered by — 'Because of the law of gravitation;' as if the law of gravitation, instead of being a mere generalization from the facts to be explained, were a different thing altogether — a force of some kind. This is surely 'putting the cart before the horse.' It is equivalent to the following: 'Why did Mr. Smith die?' 'Because of the law of mortality.' The true answer to a child who asks why things fall to the ground, is this: 'No one knows. But it is an observed fact that, under certain circumstances, all bodies do fall.' Mr. Lewes has well exposed the meaninglessness of such explanations as 'Animals live because of their vitality,' 'Watches go because of their watch-force,' 'Things fall because of their falling force' (i.e. 'gravitation'). Mr. Mill, too, in his 'System of Logic' has explained the true nature of 'law.' Professor Bain and several other writers take the same position; and the Duke of Argyll gives an analysis of law which virtually amounts to the same view.
In short, 'law' is merely the name we give to generalizations — or, in logical language, to universal propositions that we believe to be true. 'This man is mortal' is a 'particular' proposition, and therefore no law; 'all men are mortal,' a universal proposition, is a law, a law of human nature. 'It is raining' is particular; 'it always rains on Sundays' is universal, and would, if true, be a law.

Thus, law, as law does not involve necessity, whatever the popular opinion on the point may be. Order or uniformity may be conceived happening by chance; and wherever there is uniformity there is that which may be expressed by a universal proposition — namely, law.

There is, however, the necessity of implication or consistency — the necessity that if a law is true every instance coming under or included in it must be in agreement with it. This is merely logical necessity — the necessity that connects the premisses and conclusion of a syllogism. Thus,

All men are mortal;
Dion is a man;
Dion is mortal;

is an example of the simplest possible syllogism. Alter the arrangement a little, but preserve the reasoning, —

All men are mortal; [Law]
Dion (being a man) is mortal, [Instance]
and the identity will be at once seen.

Or, the necessity might be called 'conditional necessity.' In explanations of phenomena, the law frequently is not known for certain, but is assumed as a supposition likely to be the right and proper one. If, for example, it is not known for certain that all men are mortal, —

If all men are mortal, [Hypothesis]

Dion (being a man) is mortal, [Fact explained]
shows that the necessity is conditional.

This logical or conditional necessity is the necessity by which Cause and Effect are connected in our minds. If a law is true, every instance under it is necessarily in accordance with it. If the law of human nature, that all men are mortal, is true, it necessarily follows that you, he, and I are all and each of us mortal. If the law of gravitation, that all bodies approach when there is nothing to prevent them from doing so, is true, it neces-

CAUSATION. 37

sarily follows that this stone will fall to the earth unless something prevent. And so with all other instances of causation. The necessity in every one of them is a logical or conditional necessity. We cannot imagine any other sort of necessity. We have never had experience of any other kind, and therefore can no more conceive of such than a man born blind can have ideas of colour.

It is important to remember that the neces-
sity is conditional. That is to say, it depends on the assumption of the truth that we attribute to the laws, principles or hypotheses that we lay down in order to explain phenomena. No one can tell absolutely that a law is true; but on the assumption of its truth, the occurrence of certain phenomena is explained by implication.

We cannot for certain (e.g.) tell that the law of gravitation is universal. We cannot absolutely know that all the bodies in the universe, without a single exception, are attracted towards each other. But assuming that it is so, by way of hypothesis, astronomical and terrestrial phenomena are explained or deduced, just as a conclusion is drawn from premisses. The necessity connecting the cause

38 CAUSATION.

and the effect is logical and at the same time conditional. When it is said that gravitation is the cause of the attraction between the earth and the moon, all that is meant is that one is a case or instance of the other; thus,

(If) all material bodies attract each other; [Law of gr'avitatio\textit{Ti}]
(Then) the earth and moon (being material bodies)

attract each other. [Phenomenon’]

The same thing may be seen in all other instances into which the idea of causality enters; and perhaps in a greater degree. The explaining of the fall of bodies by pointing to the law of gravitation is so extremely simple, that every one sees its nature directly. And for that reason it is, by itself\textsuperscript{a} scarcely an instance of the idea of causation. The more
complicated the combination of laws (or premisses) the more hidden is the true nature of the necessity; and, by a curious fallacy of the mind, the stronger the idea of an unconditional necessary connection becomes. When an effect is an instance merely of a single law, it is thought not so certain as when many laws form the premisses. That God should cause an event to happen contrary to one law, would be thought a slight miracle in com-

CAUSATION. 39

parison with the alteration of all event dependent on a combination of several laws.

Friction is said to cause heat.* In this case, we have simply one event (the rubbing together of two substances), followed by another (the evolution of heat); and the involved idea of necessity or causation is based merely on the observation of such sequence. The notion of necessity here is so far from being deeply rooted in our minds, that very little would be needed to dissipate it. One well-authenticated case of friction being followed by cold would be quite sufficient for that purpose.

A similar instance occurs in the proposition, * Heat causes expansion.* The notion of necessity here, is (among men of science, at least) even fainter than in the former example; for in the case of water between 32° and 40° Fahr. in temperature, heat is accompanied by contraction.

The truth is, that in such instances of reputed causation, physicists would guard
themselves by saying that the alleged cause

40 CAUSATION.

is not properly the cause, but only part thereof. That the real cause is the sum of all the necessary antecedents. Thus friction is only one of the necessary antecedents of the heat evolved and therefore merely a part of the cause. The same with heat being followed by expansion or contraction. The heat is only part of the cause. If we knew the other parts (i.e. the other necessary antecedents), we should understand why heat is accompanied by expansion at one time and by contraction at another.

Thus we do not know why material bodies should attract each other, or why friction should be accompanied by heat. And therefore we have little, if any, conviction of necessity in relation to these cases. If on the other hand they could be referred to wider laws, our notion of necessity would be greater; if these again could be referred to still wider, our impression of the necessity would be still stronger; and so on.

At first all observations are empirical. After a time, in the progress of discovery, a phenomenon is found to bear a similarity to other phenomena; and they are all classed together. This is the first step in 'explanation.' Further
on, and the whole species is found to agree with another species. This is considered a still more satisfactory explanation; and after a time perhaps the whole genus is found to accord with another genus; and so on. Every new discovery of similarity gives additional satisfaction to the mind in its search after uniformity.

Baden Powell gives a good illustration of this.* "When the suspension of water in the pump was first observed it was ascribed to a cause called suction and in the then state of knowledge, it was not only natural, but inductively correct, to ascribe so singular an effect to a peculiar cause. It was apparently a case sui generis. The effect was, perhaps, soon seen to be of the same kind as the suspension of a stone by contact with the under side of a wet leather; there was then one step taken in the process of generalization, by referring both to one common cause, still named suction. Further, the discovery of Torricelli referred the former case to the pressure of the atmosphere; and this was soon seen to include the explanation of the latter and all other analogous phenomena. And, finally, this was reduced under the still more comprehensive law of universal gravitation/"

Much confusion of thought is occasioned by the use of abstract nouns; and it would add greatly to scientific exactness were they all banished, and equivalent phrases used instead. Gravitation, suction, life, inherent principle, property, vitality, power, will, and countless
other things, have at one time been, or still are, regarded as causes. Such explanations of phenomena really explain nothing. They are merely cloaks to cover our ignorance. Just think of it. Gravitation the cause of things gravitating. Suction the cause of sucking. Will the cause of volition. Do not such explanations, when divested of sophistical padding, dwindle down to these barren and absurd propositions? Mr. Lewes has some excellent remarks on this head. We might as well, he says, attribute the cause of a watch going to its 'watch-force.'

Now, were all these abstract terms translated into their (so to speak) concrete equivalents, their nature would appear in its true light. It would be seen that we know nothing of these things except empirically. That we know nothing of gravitation except that, as a matter of fact, material bodies gravitate. That we know nothing of life, except that living beings live. Of anything else we are profoundly ignorant. The more we learn of nature, the more we see there is to be known, and the more we become acquainted with our own ignorance.

We may see the real nature of the 'explanation' of phenomena in the instance of the raising of water by a pump. In the first place that phenomenon was attributed to 'suction'; which was merely a way of saying that it was a case of a liquid being sucked up or raised. The rise of a liquid through a straw to the mouth was a phenomenon of the same species. Saying, therefore, that *suction* only explained the event by a logical necessity. Thus —

(If) Under certain circumstances liquids rise [Major
premiss)'
(Then,) the action of a pump involving such circumstances; and water being a liquid; [Minor premisses]

44 CAUSATION.

(It follows that) upon the action of a pump, the water rises. [Conclusion]

The explanation of the rise of the water by the maxim, 'Nature abhors a vacuum/' was similarly merely a logical deduction: —

(If) Nature always provides against the possibility of a vacuum; [Major]
(Then) the way of providing against the existence of a vacuum in a pump, being the rise of the water,

[Minor]
(It follows that) the water rises in a pump. [Conclusion]

An advance was made by the discovery that water could not be raised by a pump, as a rule, to a greater height than 32 or 33 feet, sometimes not higher than 31 feet, and very seldom above 34 feet. This showed the falsity of the hypothesis (or major premiss) that vacua do not exist in nature. The philosophers of the period had accordingly to search for another explanation (i.e. find another * middle term ').
Galileo’s solution of the difficulty, namely, that nature abhorred a vacuum only to the extent of 33 feet did not altogether sound satisfactory: and Torricelli set out checking and experimenting to find out a more likely middle term. This at length was found;

CAUSATION. 45

and the whole species suctiones was seen to belong to the genus equilibria. Phenomena of equilibrium, in their turn, are deducible from still wider laws or hypotheses in mechanics; — to speak logically, they are deducible from more general major-premises; — to speak the language of naturalists, they belong to still higher era.

And so with all other phenomena. Every so-called effect is explained by showing its inference from some law or hypothesis. And many hypotheses may, in their turn, be referred, in the same manner, to wider generalizations or genera. The further this process can go, the greater is the satisfaction to our minds — the firmer is our idea of the stability and invariableness of the phenomenon. This is the true necessary connection between cause and effect. It is logical necessity — the necessity of implication. Of any other kind of necessity we have no knowledge, and, indeed, not the slightest conception. We can only imagine what we have experienced; and the analysis of causality has shown that the necessity we attribute to events is altogether subjective — the development of logical consistency, and of nothing else.
46 CAUSATION.

To sum up. We have no warrant for believing in any causation except hypothetically. For, trace we back the explanation of phenomena ever so far, we must at last come to a stop. And where we stop there is the same ignorance, on our part, as to the truth or the necessity of the law we have arrived at. It is the old Fable of the Elephant and the Tortoise once more. The Karth rests on the Elephant: the Elephant on the Tortoise: the Tortoise on the Serpent. But on what does the Serpent rest? This being unknown, it follows the reason of the Earth's stability is unexplained. Similarly with regard to all supposed necessity in physical events. If the phenomenon A is explained as happening because of the law B, we have to ask. What is the reason of the law B? If it is replied, Because of the law C, — we have further to ask. What is the reason of C? And so on, until at length we come to a law, the reason of which we cannot give. Now the further we go back in this way from phenomena, the more hypothetical and uncertain are the laws or hypotheses at which we arrive; being more hypothetical and less certain than B,
Now, if the laws B, C, D, &c., are merely statements that certain phenomena take place under certain circumstances, they are not causes in the meaning of facts that compel or make or force or produce their effects,—any more than the law, All men die, is the cause of any particular person's death.

If, on the other hand, we could trace back laws until we came to one stating that certain phenomena must necessarily happen under certain circumstances, then we should be able to say we knew the reason of physical events; and then there would be the necessity for the occurrence of phenomena.

But it so happens that instead of being able to discover necessary laws, we can, in physical events, merely arrive at hypothetical and contingent laws that require explaining as much as any particular phenomenon.

We come to the belief or the assumption of physical laws by generalization; and, as none of us is omniscient, it follows that we never know absolutely the truth of a single law of the inductive sciences. The importance of knowing this little fact can scarcely be overrated. In these days of much superfluous cramming of scientific facts and theories, there is constantly a danger, unless the science be accompanied by philosophy, of our getting false ideas of what is possible or impossible—and a tendency to dogmatise when we have least reason for doing so. A deep feeling on our part that all our physical science is really nothing but a collection and classification of isolated but analogous facts—and that any-
thing beyond this is outside the limits of our knowledge (at least as those limits at present are) — ought to teach us how emphatically superficial even our deepest discoveries are, and how infinitesimal is our knowledge of the marvellous secrets and vast resources of nature.

St. Basil the Great's address to young men on the right use of Greek literature.

Saint Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, “belongs not to the Church of Caesarea alone, nor merely to his own time, nor was he of benefit only to his own kinsmen, but rather to all lands and cities worldwide, and to all people he brought and still brings benefit, and for Christians he always was and will be a most salvific teacher.” Thus spoke Saint Basil’s contemporary, Saint Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium.

Saint Basil was born in the year 330 at Caesarea, the administrative center of Cappadocia. He was of illustrious lineage, famed for its eminence and wealth, and zealous for the Christian Faith. The saint’s grandfather and grandmother on his father’s side had to hide in the forests of Pontus for seven years during the persecution under Diocletian.

Saint Basil’s mother Saint Emilia was the daughter of a martyr. On the Greek calendar, she is commemorated on May 30. Saint Basil’s father was also named Basil. He was a lawyer and renowned rhetorician, and lived at Caesarea.

Ten children were born to the elder Basil and Emilia: five sons and five daughters. Five of them were later numbered among the saints: Basil the Great; Macrina (July 19) was an exemplar of ascetic life, and exerted strong influence on the life and character of Saint Basil the Great; Gregory, afterwards Bishop of Nyssa (January 10); Peter, Bishop of Sebaste (January 9); and Theosebia, a deaconess (January 10).
Saint Basil spent the first years of his life on an estate belonging to his parents at the River Iris, where he was raised under the supervision of his mother Emilia and grandmother Macrina. They were women of great refinement, who remembered an earlier bishop of Cappadocia, Saint Gregory the Wonderworker (November 17). Basil received his initial education under the supervision of his father, and then he studied under the finest teachers in Caesarea of Cappadocia, and it was here that he made the acquaintance of Saint Gregory the Theologian (January 25 and January 30). Later, Basil transferred to a school at Constantinople, where he listened to eminent orators and philosophers. To complete his education Saint Basil went to Athens, the center of classical enlightenment.

After a four or five year stay at Athens, Basil had mastered all the available disciplines. “He studied everything thoroughly, more than others are wont to study a single subject. He studied each science in its very totality, as though he would study nothing else.” Philosopher, philologist, orator, jurist, naturalist, possessing profound knowledge in astronomy, mathematics and medicine, “he was a ship fully laden with learning, to the extent permitted by human nature.”

At Athens a close friendship developed between Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian (Nazianzus), which continued throughout their life. In fact, they regarded themselves as one soul in two bodies. Later on, in his eulogy for Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian speaks with delight about this period: “Various hopes guided us, and indeed inevitably, in learning... Two paths opened up before us: the one to our sacred temples and the teachers therein; the other towards preceptors of disciplines beyond.”

About the year 357, Saint Basil returned to Caesarea, where for a while he devoted himself to rhetoric. But soon, refusing offers from Caesarea’s citizens who wanted to entrust him with the education of their offspring, Saint Basil entered upon the path of ascetic life.

After the death of her husband, Basil’s mother, her eldest daughter Macrina, and several female servants withdrew to the family estate at Iris and there began to lead an ascetic life. Basil was baptized by Dianios, the Bishop of Caesarea, and was tonsured a Reader (On the Holy Spirit, 29). He first read the Holy Scriptures to the people, then explained them.

Later on, “wishing to acquire a guide to the knowledge of truth”, the saint undertook a journey into Egypt, Syria and Palestine, to meet the great Christian ascetics dwelling there. On returning to Cappadocia, he decided to do as they did. He distributed his wealth to the needy, then settled on the opposite side of the river not far from his mother Emilia and sister Macrina, gathering around him monks living a cenobitic life.

By his letters, Basil drew his good friend Gregory the Theologian to the monastery. Saints Basil and Gregory labored in strict abstinence in their dwelling place, which had no roof or fireplace, and the food was very humble. They themselves cleared away the stones, planted and watered the trees, and carried heavy loads. Their hands were constantly calloused from the hard work. For clothing Basil had only a tunic and monastic mantle. He wore a hairshirt, but only at night,
so that it would not be obvious.

In their solitude, Saints Basil and Gregory occupied themselves in an intense study of Holy Scripture. They were guided by the writings of the Fathers and commentators of the past, especially the good writings of Origen. From all these works they compiled an anthology called Philokalia. Also at this time, at the request of the monks, Saint Basil wrote down a collection of rules for virtuous life. By his preaching and by his example Saint Basil assisted in the spiritual perfection of Christians in Cappadocia and Pontus; and many indeed turned to him. Monasteries were organized for men and for women, in which places Basil sought to combine the cenobitic (koine bios, or common) lifestyle with that of the solitary hermit.

During the reign of Constantius (337-361) the heretical teachings of Arius were spreading, and the Church summoned both its saints into service. Saint Basil returned to Caesarea. In the year 362 he was ordained deacon by Bishop Meletius of Antioch. In 364 he was ordained to the holy priesthood by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea. “But seeing,” as Gregory the Theologian relates, “that everyone exceedingly praised and honored Basil for his wisdom and reverence, Eusebius, through human weakness, succumbed to jealousy of him, and began to show dislike for him.” The monks rose up in defense of Saint Basil. To avoid causing Church discord, Basil withdrew to his own monastery and concerned himself with the organization of monasteries.

With the coming to power of the emperor Valens (364-378), who was a resolute adherent of Arianism, a time of troubles began for Orthodoxy, the onset of a great struggle. Saint Basil hastily returned to Caesarea at the request of Bishop Eusebius. In the words of Gregory the Theologian, he was for Bishop Eusebius “a good advisor, a righteous representative, an expounder of the Word of God, a staff for the aged, a faithful support in internal matters, and an activist in external matters.”

From this time church governance passed over to Basil, though he was subordinate to the hierarch. He preached daily, and often twice, in the morning and in the evening. During this time Saint Basil composed his Liturgy. He wrote a work “On the Six Days of Creation” (Hexaemeron) and another on the Prophet Isaiah in sixteen chapters, yet another on the Psalms, and also a second compilation of monastic rules. Saint Basil wrote also three books “Against Eunomius,” an Arian teacher who, with the help of Aristotelian concepts, had presented the Arian dogma in philosophic form, converting Christian teaching into a logical scheme of rational concepts.

Saint Gregory the Theologian, speaking about the activity of Basil the Great during this period, points to “the caring for the destitute and the taking in of strangers, the supervision of virgins, written and unwritten monastic rules for monks, the arrangement of prayers [Liturgy], the felicitous arrangement of altars and other things.” Upon the death of Eusebius, the Bishop of Caesarea, Saint Basil was chosen to succeed him in the year 370. As Bishop of Caesarea, Saint Basil the Great was the newest of fifty bishops in eleven provinces. Saint Athanasius the Great (May 2), with joy and with thanks to God welcomed the appointment to Cappadocia of such a bishop as Basil, famed for his reverence, deep knowledge of Holy Scripture, great learning, and
his efforts for the welfare of Church peace and unity.

Under Valens, the external government belonged to the Arians, who held various opinions regarding the divinity of the Son of God, and were divided into several factions. These dogmatic disputes were concerned with questions about the Holy Spirit. In his books Against Eunomios, Saint Basil the Great taught the divinity of the Holy Spirit and His equality with the Father and the Son. Subsequently, in order to provide a full explanation of Orthodox teaching on this question, Saint Basil wrote his book On the Holy Spirit at the request of Saint Amphiloctius, the Bishop of Iconium.

Saint Basil’s difficulties were made worse by various circumstances: Cappadocia was divided in two under the rearrangement of provincial districts. Then at Antioch a schism occurred, occasioned by the consecration of a second bishop. There was the negative and haughty attitude of Western bishops to the attempts to draw them into the struggle with the Arians. And there was also the departure of Eustathius of Sebaste over to the Arian side. Basil had been connected to him by ties of close friendship. Amidst the constant perils Saint Basil gave encouragement to the Orthodox, confirmed them in the Faith, summoning them to bravery and endurance. The holy bishop wrote numerous letters to the churches, to bishops, to clergy and to individuals. Overcoming the heretics “by the weapon of his mouth, and by the arrows of his letters,” as an untiring champion of Orthodoxy, Saint Basil challenged the hostility and intrigues of the Arian heretics all his life. He has been compared to a bee, stinging the Church’s enemies, yet nourishing his flock with the sweet honey of his teaching.

The emperor Valens, mercilessly sending into exile any bishop who displeased him, and having implanted Arianism into other Asia Minor provinces, suddenly appeared in Cappadocia for this same purpose. He sent the prefect Modestus to Saint Basil. He began to threaten the saint with the confiscation of his property, banishment, beatings, and even death.

Saint Basil said, “If you take away my possessions, you will not enrich yourself, nor will you make me a pauper. You have no need of my old worn-out clothing, nor of my few books, of which the entirety of my wealth is comprised. Exile means nothing to me, since I am bound to no particular place. This place in which I now dwell is not mine, and any place you send me shall be mine. Better to say: every place is God’s. Where would I be neither a stranger and sojourner (Ps. 38/39:13)? Who can torture me? I am so weak, that the very first blow would render me insensible. Death would be a kindness to me, for it will bring me all the sooner to God, for Whom I live and labor, and to Whom I hasten.”

The official was stunned by his answer. “No one has ever spoken so audaciously to me,” he said.

“Perhaps,” the saint remarked, “that is because you’ve never spoken to a bishop before. In all else we are meek, the most humble of all. But when it concerns God, and people rise up against Him, then we, counting everything else as naught, look to Him alone. Then fire, sword, wild beasts and iron rods that rend the body, serve to fill us with joy, rather than fear.”
Reporting to Valens that Saint Basil was not to be intimidated, Modestus said, “Emperor, we stand defeated by a leader of the Church.” Basil the Great again showed firmness before the emperor and his retinue and made such a strong impression on Valens that the emperor dared not give in to the Arians demanding Basil’s exile. “On the day of Theophany, amidst an innumerable multitude of the people, Valens entered the church and mixed in with the throng, in order to give the appearance of being in unity with the Church. When the singing of Psalms began in the church, it was like thunder to his hearing. The emperor beheld a sea of people, and in the altar and all around was splendor; in front of all was Basil, who acknowledged neither by gesture nor by glance, that anything else was going on in church.” Everything was focused only on God and the altar-table, and the clergy serving there in awe and reverence.

Saint Basil celebrated the church services almost every day. He was particularly concerned about the strict fulfilling of the Canons of the Church, and took care that only worthy individuals should enter into the clergy. He incessantly made the rounds of his own church, lest anywhere there be an infraction of Church discipline, and setting aright any unseemliness. At Caesarea, Saint Basil built two monasteries, a men’s and a women’s, with a church in honor of the Forty Martyrs (March 9) whose relics were buried there. Following the example of monks, the saint’s clergy, even deacons and priests, lived in remarkable poverty, to toil and lead chaste and virtuous lives. For his clergy Saint Basil obtained an exemption from taxation. He used all his personal wealth and the income from his church for the benefit of the destitute; in every center of his diocese he built a poor-house; and at Caesarea, a home for wanderers and the homeless.

Sickly since youth, the toil of teaching, his life of abstinence, and the concerns and sorrows of pastoral service took their toll on him. Saint Basil died on January 1, 379 at age 49. Shortly before his death, the saint blessed Saint Gregory the Theologian to accept the See of Constantinople.

Upon the repose of Saint Basil, the Church immediately began to celebrate his memory. Saint Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium (November 23), in his eulogy to Saint Basil the Great, said: “It is neither without a reason nor by chance that holy Basil has taken leave from the body and had repose from the world unto God on the day of the Circumcision of Jesus, celebrated between the day of the Nativity and the day of the Baptism of Christ. Therefore, this most blessed one, preaching and praising the Nativity and Baptism of Christ, extolling spiritual circumcision, himself forsaking the flesh, now ascends to Christ on the sacred day of remembrance of the Circumcision of Christ. Therefore, let it also be established on this present day annually to honor the memory of Basil the Great festively and with solemnity.”

Saint Basil is also called “the revealer of heavenly mysteries” (Ouranophantor), a “renowned and bright star,” and “the glory and beauty of the Church.” His honorable head is in the Great Lavra on Mount Athos.

In some countries it is customary to sing special carols today in honor of Saint Basil. He is
believed to visit the homes of the faithful, and a place is set for him at the table. People visit the homes of friends and relatives, and the mistress of the house gives a small gift to the children. A special bread (Vasilopita) is blessed and distributed after the Liturgy. A silver coin is baked into the bread, and whoever receives the slice with the coin is said to receive the blessing of Saint Basil for the coming year.

ADDRESS TO YOUNG MEN ON THE RIGHT USE OF GREEK LITERATURE

OUTLINE

I. Introduction: Out of the abundance of his experience the author will advise young men as to the pagan literature, showing them what to accept, and what to reject.

II. To the Christian the life eternal is the supreme goal, and the guide to this life is the Holy Scriptures; but since young men cannot appreciate the deep thoughts contained therein, they are to study the profane writings, in which truth appears as in a mirror.

III. Profane learning should ornament the mind, as foliage graces the fruit-bearing tree.

IV. In studying pagan lore one must discriminate between the helpful and the injurious, accepting the one, but closing one's ears to the siren song of the other.

V. Since the life to come is to be attained through virtue, chief attention must be paid to those passages in which virtue is praised; such may be found, for example, in Hesiod, Homer, Solon, Theognis, and Prodicus.

VI. Indeed, almost all eminent philosophers have extolled virtue. The words of such men should meet with more than mere theoretical acceptance, for one must try to realize them in his life, remembering that to seem to be good when one is not so is the height of injustice.

VII. But in the pagan literature virtue is lauded in deeds as well as in words, wherefore one should study those acts of noble men which coincide with the teachings of the Scriptures.

VIII. To return to the original thought, young men must distinguish between helpful and injurious knowledge, keeping clearly in mind the Christian's purpose in life. So, like the athlete or the musician, they must bend every energy to one task, the winning of the heavenly crown.

IX. This end is to be compassed by holding the body under, by scorning riches and fame, and by subordinating all else to virtue.

X. While this ideal will be matured later by the study of the Scriptures, it is at present to be fostered by the study of the pagan writers; from them should be stored up knowledge for the future.

Conclusion: The above are some of the more important precepts; others the writer will
continue to explain from time to time, trusting that no young man will make the fatal error of disregarding them.

ADDRESS TO YOUNG MEN ON THE RIGHT USE OF GREEK LITERATURE

I. Many considerations, young men, prompt me to recommend to you the principles which I deem most desirable, and which I believe will be of use to you if you will adopt them. For my time of life, my many-sided training, yea, my adequate experience in those vicissitudes of life which teach their lessons at every turn,1 have so familiarized me with human affairs, that I am able to map out the safest course for those just starting upon their careers. By nature's common bond I stand in the same relationship to you as your parents, so that I am no whit behind them in my concern for you. Indeed, if I do not misinterpret your feelings, you no longer crave your parents when you come to me. Now if you should receive my words with gladness, you would be in the second class of those who, according to Hesiod, merit praise; if not, I should say nothing disparaging, but no doubt you yourselves would remember the passage in which that poet says: 'He is best who, of himself, recognizes what is his duty, and he also is good who follows the course marked out by others, but he who does neither of these things is of no use under the sun,' 2

Do not be surprised if to you, who go to school every day, and who, through their writings, associate with the learned men of old,3 I say that out of my own experience I have |102 evolved something more useful. Now this is my counsel, that you should not unqualifiedly give over your minds to these men, as a ship is surrendered to the rudder, to follow whither they list, but that, while receiving whatever of value they have to offer, you yet recognize what it is wise to ignore. Accordingly, from this point on I shall take up and discuss the pagan writings, and how we are to discriminate among them.

II. We Christians, young men, hold that this human life is not a supremely precious thing, nor do we recognize anything as unconditionally a blessing which benefits us in this life only.4 Neither pride of ancestry, nor bodily strength, nor beauty, nor greatness, nor the esteem of all men, nor kingly authority, nor, indeed, whatever of human affairs may be called great, do we consider worthy of desire, or the possessors of them as objects of envy; but we place our hopes upon the things which are beyond, and in preparation for the life eternal do all things that we do. Accordingly, whatever helps us towards this we say that we must love and follow after with all our might, but those things which have no bearing upon it should be held as naught. But to explain what this life is, and in what way and manner we shall live it, requires more time than is at our command, and more mature hearers than you.

And yet, in saying thus much, perhaps I have made it sufficiently clear to you that if one should estimate and gather together all earthly weal from the creation of the world, he would not find it comparable to the smallest part of the possessions of heaven; rather, that all the precious things in this life fall further short of the least good in the other than the shadow or the dream fails of the reality. Or rather, to avail myself of a still more natural comparison, by |103 as much as the soul is superior to the body in all things, by so much is one of these lives superior
to the other.5

Into the life eternal the Holy Scriptures lead us, which teach us through divine words. But so long as our immaturity forbids our understanding their deep thought, we exercise our spiritual perceptions upon profane writings, which are not altogether different, and in which we perceive the truth as it were in shadows and in mirrors. Thus we imitate those who perform the exercises of military practice, for they acquire skill in gymnastics and in dancing, and then in battle reap the reward of their training. We must needs believe that the greatest of all battles lies before us, in preparation for which we must do and suffer all things to gain power. Consequently we must be conversant with poets, with historians, with orators, indeed with all men who may further our soul's salvation. Just as dyers prepare the cloth before they apply the dye, be it purple or any other color, so indeed must we also, if we would preserve indelible the idea of the true virtue, become first initiated in the pagan lore, then at length give special heed to the sacred and divine teachings, even as we first accustom ourselves to the sun's reflection in the water, and then become able to turn our eyes upon the very sun itself.6

III. If, then, there is any affinity between the two literatures, a knowledge of them should be useful to us in our search for truth; if not, the comparison, by emphasizing the contrast, will be of no small service in strengthening our regard for the better one. With what now may we compare these two kinds of education to obtain a simile? Just as it is the chief mission of the tree to bear its fruit in its season, though at the same time it puts forth for ornament the leaves which quiver on its boughs, even so the real fruit of the soul is truth, yet it is not without advantage for it to embrace the pagan wisdom, as also leaves offer shelter to the fruit, and an appearance not untimely. That Moses, whose name is a synonym for wisdom, severely trained his mind in the learning of the Egyptians,7 and thus became able to appreciate their deity.8 Similarly, in later days, the wise Daniel is said to have studied the lore of the Chaldaeans while in Babylon,9 and after that to have taken up the sacred teachings.

IV. Perhaps it is sufficiently demonstrated that such heathen learning is not unprofitable for the soul; I shall then discuss next the extent to which one may pursue it. To begin with the poets, since their writings are of all degrees of excellence, you should not study all of their poems without omitting a single word. When they recount the words and deeds of good men, you should both love and imitate them, earnestly emulating such conduct. But when they portray base conduct, you must flee from them and stop up your ears, as Odysseus is said to have fled past the song of the sirens,10 for familiarity with evil writings paves the way for evil deeds. Therefore the soul must be guarded with great care, lest through our love for letters it receive some contamination unawares, as men drink in poison with honey. We shall not praise the poets when they scoff and rail, when they represent fornicators and winebibbers, when they define blissfulness by groaning tables and wanton songs. Least of all shall we listen to them when they tell us of their gods, and especially when they represent them as being many, and not at one among themselves.11 For, among these gods, at one time brother is at variance with brother, or the father with his children; at another, the children engage in truceless war against their parents. The adulteries of the gods and their amours, and especially those of the one whom they call Zeus, chief of all and most high, things of which one cannot speak,
even in connection with brutes, without blushing, we shall leave to the stage. I have the same
words for the historians, and especially when they make up stories for the amusement of their
hearers. And certainly we shall not follow the example of the rhetoricians in the art of lying.
For neither in the courts of justice nor in other business affairs will falsehood be of any help to
us Christians, who, having chosen the straight and true path of life, are forbidden by the gospel
to go to law. But on the other hand we shall receive gladly those passages in which they praise
virtue or condemn vice. For just as bees know how to extract honey from flowers, which to
men are agreeable only for their fragrance and color, even so here also those who look for
something more than pleasure and enjoyment in such writers may derive profit for their souls.
Now, then, altogether after the manner of bees must we use these writings, for the bees do
not visit all the flowers without discrimination, nor indeed do they seek to carry away entire
those upon which they light, but rather, having taken so much as is adapted to their needs,
they let the rest go. So we, if wise, shall take from heathen books whatever befits us and is
allied to the truth, and shall pass over the rest. And just as in culling roses we avoid the thorns,
from such writings as these we will gather everything useful, and guard against the noxious.12
So, from the very beginning, we must examine each of their teachings, to harmonize it with our
ultimate purpose, according to the Doric proverb, ‘testing each stone by the measuring-line.’

V. Since we must needs attain to the life to come through virtue, our attention is to be chiefly
fastened upon those many passages from the poets, from the historians, and especially from
the philosophers, in which virtue itself is praised. For it is of no small advantage that virtue
become a habit with a youth,14 for the lessons of youth make a deep impression, because the
soul is then plastic, and therefore they are likely to be indelible. If not to incite youth to virtue,
pray what meaning may we suppose that Hesiod had in those universally admired lines,15 of
which the sentiment is as follows: ‘Rough is the start and hard, and the way steep, and full of
labor and pain, that leads toward virtue. Wherefore, on account of the steepness, it is not
granted to every man to set out, nor, to the one having set out, easily to reach the summit. But
when he has reached the top, he sees that the way is smooth and fair, easy and light to the
foot, and more pleasing than the other, which leads to wickedness,’—of which the same poet
said that one may find it all around him in great abundance.16 Now it seems to me that he had
no other purpose in saying these things than so to exhort us to virtue, and so to incite us to
bravery, that we may not weaken our efforts before we reach the goal. And certainly if any
other man praises virtue in a like strain, we will receive his words with pleasure, since our aim
is a common one.

Now as I have heard from one skilful in interpreting the mind of a poet,17 all the poetry of
Homer is a praise of | 107 virtue, and with him all that is not merely accessory tends to this
end. There is a notable instance of this where Homer first made the princess reverence the
leader of the Cephallenians, though he appeared naked, shipwrecked, and alone, and then
made Odysseus as completely lack embarrassment, though seen naked and alone, since virtue
served him as a garment. And next he made Odysseus so much esteemed by the other
Phaeacians that, abandoning the luxury in which they lived, all admired and emulated him, and
there was not one of them who longed for anything else except to be Odysseus, even to the
enduring of shipwreck. The interpreter of the poetic mind argued that, in this episode, Homer very plainly says: 'Be virtue your concern, O men, which both swims to shore with the shipwrecked man, and makes him, when he comes naked to the strand, more honored than the prosperous Phaeacians.' And, indeed, this is the truth, for other possessions belong to the owner no more than to another, and, as when men are dicing, fall now to this one, now to that. But virtue is the only possession that is sure, and that remains with us whether living or dead. Wherefore it seems to me that Solon had the rich in mind when he said: 'We will not exchange our virtue for their gold, for virtue is an everlasting possession, while riches are ever changing owners.' Similarly Theognis said that the god, whatever he might mean by the god, inclines the balances for men, now this way, now that, giving to some riches, and to others poverty. Also Prodicus, the sophist of Ceos, whose opinion we must respect, for he is a man not to be slighted, somewhere in his writings expressed similar ideas about virtue and vice. I do not remember the exact words, but as far as I recollect the sentiment, in plain prose it ran somewhat as follows: While Hercules was yet a youth, being about your age, as he was debating which path he should choose, the one leading through toil to virtue, or its easier alternate, two women appeared before him, who proved to be Virtue and Vice. Though they said not a word, the difference between them was at once apparent from their mien. The one had arranged herself to please the eye, while she exhaled charms, and a multitude of delights swarmed in her train. With such a display, and promising still more, she sought to allure Hercules to her side. The other, wasted and squalid, looked fixedly at him, and bespoke quite another thing. For she promised nothing easy or engaging, but rather infinite toils and hardships, and perils in every land and on every sea. As a reward for these trials, he was to become a god, so our author has it. The latter, Hercules at length followed.

VI. Almost all who have written upon the subject of wisdom have more or less, in proportion to their several abilities, extolled virtue in their writings. Such men must one obey, and must try to realize their words in his life. For he, who by his works exemplifies the wisdom which with others is a matter of theory alone, 'breathes; all others flutter about like shadows.' I think it is as if a painter should represent some marvel of manly beauty, and the subject should actually be such a man as the artist pictures on the canvas. To praise virtue in public with brilliant words and with long drawn out speeches, while in private preferring pleasures to temperance, and self-interest to justice, finds an analogy on the stage, for the players frequently appear as kings and rulers, though they are neither, nor perhaps even genuinely free men. A musician would hardly put up with a lyre which was out of tune, nor a choregus with a chorus not singing in perfect harmony. But every man is divided against himself who does not make his life conform to his words, but who says with Euripides, 'The mouth indeed hath sworn, but the heart knows no oath.' Such a man will seek the appearance of virtue rather than the reality. But to seem to be good when one is not so, is, if we are to respect the opinion of Plato at all, the very height of injustice.

VII. After this wise, then, are we to receive those words from the pagan authors which contain suggestions of the virtues. But since also the renowned deeds of the men of old either are preserved for us by tradition, or are cherished in the pages of poet or historian, we must not fail to profit by them. A fellow of the street rabble once kept taunting Pericles, but he,
meanwhile, gave no heed; and they held out all day, the fellow deluging him with reproaches, but he, for his part, not caring. Then when it was evening and dusk, and the fellow still clung to him, Pericles escorted him with a light, in order that he might not fail in the practice of philosophy. Again, a man in a passion threatened and vowed death to Euclid of Megara, but he in turn vowed that the man should surely be appeased, and cease from his hostility to him.

How invaluable it is to have such examples in mind when a man is seized with anger! On the other hand, one must altogether ignore the tragedy which says in so many words: 'Anger arms the hand against the enemy;' for it is much better not to give way to anger at all. But if such restraint is not easy, we shall at least curb our anger by reflection, so as not to give it too much rein.

But let us bring our discussion back again to the examples of noble deeds. A certain man once kept striking Socrates, the son of Sophroniscus, in the face, yet he did not resent it, but allowed full play to the ruffian's anger, so that his face was swollen and bruised from the blows. Then when he stopped striking him, Socrates did nothing more than write on his forehead, as an artisan on a statue, who did it, and thus took out his revenge. Since these examples almost coincide with our teachings, I hold that such men are worthy of emulation. For this conduct of Socrates is akin to the precept that to him who smites you upon the one cheek, you shall turn the other also — thus much may you be avenged; the conduct of Pericles and of Euclid also conforms to the precept: 'Submit to those who persecute you, and endure their wrath with meekness;' and to the other: 'Pray for your enemies and curse them not.' One who has been instructed in the pagan examples will no longer hold the Christian precepts impracticable. But I will not overlook the conduct of Alexander, who, on taking captive the daughters of Darius, who were reputed to be of surpassing beauty, would not even look at them, for he deemed it unworthy of one who was a conqueror of men to be a slave to women. This is of a piece with the statement that he who looks upon a woman to lust after her, even though he does not commit the act of adultery, is not free from its guilt, since he has entertained impure thoughts. It is hard to believe that the action of Cleinias, one of the disciples of Pythagoras, was in accidental conformity to our teachings, and not designed imitation of them. What, then, was this act of his? By taking an oath he could have avoided a fine of three talents, yet rather than do so he paid the fine, though he could have sworn truthfully. I am inclined to think that he had heard of the precept which forbids us to swear.

VIII. But let us return to the same thought with which we started, namely, that we should not accept everything without discrimination, but only what is useful. For it would be shameful should we reject injurious foods, yet should take no thought about the studies which nourish our souls, but as a torrent should sweep along all that came near our path and appropriate it. If the helmsman does not blindly abandon his ship to the winds, but guides it toward the anchorage; if the archer shoots at his mark; if also the metal-worker or the carpenter seeks to produce the objects for which his craft exists, would there be rime or reason in our being outclassed by these men, mere artisans as they are, in quick appreciation of our interests? For is there not some end in the artisan’s work, is there not a goal in human life, which the one
who would not wholly resemble unreasoning animals must keep before him in all his words and deeds? If there were no intelligence sitting at the tiller of our souls, like boats without ballast we should be borne hither and thither through life, without plan or purpose,

An analogy may be found in the athletic contests, or, if you will, in the musical contests; for the contestants prepare themselves by a preliminary training for those events in which wreaths of victory are offered, and no one by training for wrestling or for the pancratium would get ready to play the lyre or the flute. At least Polydamas 37 would not, for before the Olympic games he was wont to bring the rushing chariot to a halt, and thus hardened himself. Then Milo 38 could not be thrust from his smeared shield, but, shoved as he was, clung to it as firmly as statues soldered by lead. In a word, by their training they prepared themselves for the contests. If they had meddled with the airs of Marsyas or of Olympus, the Phrygians, 39 abandoning dust and exercise, would they have won ready laurels or crowns, or would they have escaped being laughed at for their bodily incapacity? On the other hand, certainly Timotheus the musician 40 did not spend his time in the schools for wrestling, for then it would not have been his to excel all in music, he who was so skilled in his art that at his pleasure he could arouse the passions of men by his harsh and vehement strains, and then by gentle ones, quiet and soothe them. By this art, when once he played Phrygian airs on the flute to Alexander, he is said to have incited the general to arms in the midst of feasting, and then, by milder music, to have restored him to his carousing friends. 41 Such power to compass one's end, either in music or in athletic contests, is developed by practice.

I have called to mind the wreaths and the fighters. These men endure hardships beyond number, they use every means to increase their strength, they sweat ceaselessly at their training, they accept many blows from the master, they adopt the mode of life which he prescribes, though it is most unpleasant, and, in a word, they so rule all their conduct that their whole life before the contest is preparatory to it. Then they strip themselves for the arena, and endure all and risk all, to receive the crown of olive, or of parsley, or some other branch, and to be announced by the herald as victor.

Will it then be possible for us, to whom are held out rewards so wondrous in number and in splendor that tongue can not recount them, while we are fast asleep and leading care-free lives, to make these our own by half-hearted efforts? Surely, were an idle life a very commendable thing, Sardanapalus 38 would take the first prize, or Margites 39 if you will, whom Homer, if indeed the poem is by Homer, put down as neither a farmer, nor a vinedresser, nor anything else that is useful. Is there not rather truth in the maxim of Pittacus 40 which says, 'It is hard to be good?' 41 For after we have actually endured many hardships, we shall scarcely gain those blessings to which, as said above, nothing in human experience is comparable. Therefore we must not be light-minded, nor exchange our immortal hopes for momentary idleness, lest reproaches come upon us, and judgment befall us, not forsooth here among men, although judgment here is no easy thing for the man of sense to bear, but at the bar of justice, be that under the earth, or wherever else it may happen to be. While he who unintentionally violates his obligations perchance receives some pardon from God, he who designedly chooses a life of wickedness doubtless has a far greater punishment to endure.
IX. 'What then are we to do?' perchance some one may ask. What else than to care for the soul, never leaving an idle moment for other things? Accordingly, we ought not to serve the body any more than is absolutely necessary, but we ought to do our best for the soul, releasing it from the bondage of fellowship with the bodily appetites; at the same time we ought to make the body superior to passion. We must provide it with the necessary food, to be sure, but not with delicacies, as those do who seek everywhere for waiters and cooks, and scour both earth and sea, like those bringing tribute to some stern tyrant. This is a despicable business, in which are endured things as unbearable as the torments of hell, where wool is combed into the fire, or water is drawn in a sieve and poured into a perforated jar, and where work is never done.42 Then to spend more time than is necessary on one's hair and clothes is, in the words of Diogenes, the part of the unfortunate or of the sinful. For what difference does it make to a sensible man whether he is clad in a robe of state or in an inexpensive garment, |115 so long as he is protected from heat and cold? Likewise in other matters we must be governed by necessity, and only give so much care to the body as is beneficial to the soul. For to one who is really a man it is no less a disgrace to be a fop or a pamperer of the body than to be the victim of any other base passion. Indeed, to be very zealous in making the body appear very beautiful is not the mark of a man who knows himself, or who feels the force of the wise maxim: 'Not that which is seen is the man,' 43 for it requires a higher faculty for any one of us, whoever he may be, to know himself. Now it is harder for the man who is not pure in heart to gain this knowledge than for a blear-eyed person to look upon the sun.

To speak generally and so far as your needs demand, purity of soul embraces these things: to scorn sensual pleasures, to refuse to feast the eyes on the senseless antics of buffoons, or on bodies which goad one to passion, and to close one's ears to songs which corrupt the mind. For passions which are the offspring of servility and baseness are produced by this kind of music.44 On the other hand, we must employ that class of music which is better in itself and which leads to better things, which David, the sacred psalmist, is said to have used to assuage the madness of the king.45 Also tradition has it that when Pythagoras happened upon some drunken revelers, he commanded the flute-player, who led the merry-making, to change the tune and to play a Doric air, and that the chant so sobered them that they threw down their wreaths, and shamefacedly returned home.46 Others at the sound of the flute rave like Corybantes and Bacchantes. Even so great a difference does it make whether one lends his ear to healthy or to vicious music. Therefore you ought to have still less to do with the music of such influence than with other infamous things. Then I am ashamed to forbid you to load the air with all kinds of sweet-smelling perfumes, or to smear yourselves with ointment. Again, what further argument is needed against seeking the gratification of one's appetite than that it compels those who pursue it, like animals, to make of their bellies a god? 48

In a word, he who would not bury himself in the mire of sensuality must deem the whole body of little worth, or must, as Plato puts it, pay only so much heed to the body as is an aid to wisdom,49 or as Paul admonishes somewhere in a similar passage: 'Let no one make provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.' 50 Wherein is there any difference between those who take pains that the body shall be perfect, but ignore the soul, for the use of which it is
designed, and those who are scrupulous about their tools, but neglectful of their trade? On the contrary, one ought to discipline the flesh and hold it under, as a fierce animal is controlled, and to quiet, by the lash of reason, the unrest which it engenders in the soul, and not, by giving full rein to pleasure, to disregard the mind, as a charioteer is run away with by unmanageable and frenzied horses. So let us bear in mind the remark of Pythagoras, who, upon learning that one of his followers was growing very fleshy from gymnastics and hearty eating, said to him, 'Will you not stop making your imprisonment harder for yourself?' Then it is said that since Plato foresaw the dangerous influence of the body, he chose an unhealthy part of Athens for his Academy, in order to remove excessive bodily comfort, as one prunes the rank shoots of the vines. Indeed I have even heard physicians say that over-healthiness is dangerous. Since, then, this exaggerated care of the body is harmful to the body itself, and a hindrance to the soul, it is sheer madness to be a slave to the body, and serve it.

If we were minded to disregard attention to the body, we should be in little danger of prize anything else unduly. For of what use, now, are riches, if one scorns the pleasures of the flesh? I certainly see none, unless, as in the case of the mythological dragons, there is some satisfaction in guarding hidden treasure. Of a truth, one who had learned to be independent of this sort of thing would be loath to attempt anything mean or low, either in word or deed. For superfluity, be it Lydian gold-dust, or the work of the gold-gathering ants, he would disdain in proportion to its needlessness, and of course he would make the necessities of life, not its pleasures, the measure of need. Forsooth, those who exceed the bounds of necessity, like men who are sliding down an inclined plane, can nowhere gain a footing to check their precipitous flight, for the more they can scrape together, so much or even more do they need for the gratification of their desires. As Solon, the son of Execestides, puts it, 'No definite limit is set to a man's wealth.' Also, one should hear Theognis, the teacher, on this point: 'I do not long to be rich, nor do I pray for riches, but let it be given me to live with a little, suffering no ill.'

I also admire the wholesale contempt of all human possessions which Diogenes expressed, who showed himself richer than the great Persian king, since he needed less for living. But we are wont to be satisfied with nothing save with the talents of the Mysian Pythius, with limitless acres of land, and more herds of cattle than may be counted. Yet I believe that if riches fail us we should not mourn for them, and if we have them, we should not think more of possessing them than of using them rightly. For Socrates expressed an admirable thought when he said that a rich, purse-proud man was never an object of admiration with him until he learned that the man knew how to use his wealth. If Phidias and Polycletus had been very proud of the gold and ivory with which the one constructed the statue of the Jupiter of Elis, the other the Juno of Argos, they would have been laughed at, because priding themselves in treasure produced by no merit of theirs, and overlooking their art, from which the gold gained greater beauty and worth. Then shall we think that we are open to less reproach if we hold that virtue is not, in and of itself, a sufficient ornament? Again, shall we, while manifestly ignoring riches and scorning sensual pleasures, court adulation and fulsome praise, vying with the fox of Archilochus in cunning and craft? Of a truth there is nothing which the wise man must more guard against than the temptation to live for praise, and to study what pleases the
Rather truth should be made the guide of one’s life, so that if one must needs speak against all men, and be in ill-favor and in danger for virtue’s sake, he shall not swerve at all from that which he considers right; else how shall we say that he differs from the Egyptian sophist, who at pleasure turned himself into a tree, an animal, fire, water, or anything else? Such a man now praises justice to those who esteem it, and now expresses opposite sentiments when he sees that wrong is in good repute; this is the fawner’s trick. Just as the polypus is said to take the color of the ground upon which it lies, so he conforms his opinions to those of his associates.

X. To be sure, we shall become more intimately acquainted with these precepts in the sacred writings, but it is incumbent upon us, for the present, to trace, as it were, the silhouette of virtue in the pagan authors. For those who carefully gather the useful from each book are wont, like mighty rivers, to gain accessions on every hand. For the precept of the poet which bids us add little to little must be taken as applying not so much to the accumulation of riches, as of the various branches of learning. In line with this Bias said to his son, who, as he was about to set out for Egypt, was inquiring what course he could pursue to give his father the greatest satisfaction: ‘Store up means for the journey of old age.’ By means he meant virtue, but he placed too great restrictions upon it, since he limited its usefulness to the earthly life. For if any one mentions the old age of Tithonus, or of Arganthonius, or of that Methuselah who is said to have lacked but thirty years of being a millenarian, or even if he reckons the entire period since the creation, I will laugh as at the fancies of a child, since I look forward to that long, undying age, of the extent of which there is no limit for the mind of man to grasp, any more than there is of the life immortal. For the journey of this life eternal I would advise you to husband resources, leaving no stone unturned, as the proverb has it, whence you might derive any aid. From this task we shall not shrink because it is hard and laborious, but, remembering the precept that every man ought to choose the better life, and expecting that association will render it pleasant, we shall busy ourselves with those things that are best. For it is shameful to squander the present, and later to call back the past in anguish, when no more time is given.

In the above treatise I have explained to you some of the things which I deem the most to be desired; of others I shall continue to counsel you so long as life is allowed me. Now as the sick are of three classes, according to the degrees of their sickness, may you not seem to belong to the third, or incurable, class, nor show a spiritual malady like that of their bodies! For those who are slightly indisposed visit physicians in person, and those who are seized by violent sickness call physicians, but those who are suffering from a hopelessly incurable melancholy do not even admit the physicians if they come. May this now not be your plight, as would seem to be the case were you to shun these right counsels!

THE INSTRUCTOR
[PAEDAGOGUS], by
Saint Clement of Alexandria
BOOK 1
CHAPTER 1
THE OFFICE OF THE INSTRUCTOR
As there are these three things in the case of man, habits, actions, and passions; habits are the department appropriated by hortatory discourse the guide to piety, which, like the ship’s keel, is laid beneath for the building up of faith; in which, rejoicing exceedingly, and abjuring our old opinions, through salvation we renew our youth, singing with the hymning prophecy, “How good is God to Israel, to such as are upright in heart!” All actions, again, are the province of preceptive discourse; while persuasive discourse applies itself to heal the passions. It is, however, one and the self-same word which rescues man from the custom of this world in which he has been reared, and trains him up in the one salvation of faith in God.
When, then, the heavenly guide, the Word, was inviting men to salvation, the appellation of hortatory was properly applied to Him: his same word was called rousing (the whole from a part). For the whole of piety is hortatory, engendering in the kindred faculty of reason a yearning after true life now and to come. But now, being at once curative and preceptive, following in His own steps, He makes what had been prescribed the subject of persuasion, promising the cure of the passions within us. Let us then designate this Word appropriately by the one name Tutor (or Paedagogue, or Instructor).
401
The Instructor being practical, not theoretical, His aim is thus to improve the soul, not to teach, and to train it up to a virtuous, not to an intellectual life. Although this same word is didactic, but not in the present instance. For the word which, in matters of doctrine, explains and reveals, is that whose province it is to teach. But our Educator being practical, first exhorts to the attainment of right dispositions and character, and then persuades us to the energetic practice of our duties, enjoining on us pure commandments, and exhibiting to such as come after representations of those who formerly wandered in error. Both are of the highest utility, — that which assumes the form of counseling to obedience, and that which is
presented in the form of example; which latter is of two kinds, corresponding to the former duality, — the one having for its purpose that we should choose and imitate the good, and the other that we should reject and turn away from the opposite. Hence accordingly ensues the healing of our passions, in consequence of the assuagements of those examples; the Paedagogue strengthening our souls, and by His benign commands, as by gentle medicines, guiding the sick to the perfect knowledge of the truth. There is a wide difference between health and knowledge; for the latter is produced by learning, the former by healing. One, who is ill, will not therefore learn any branch of instruction till he is quite well. For neither to learners nor to the sick is each injunction invariably expressed similarly; but to the former in such a way as to lead to knowledge, and to the latter to health. As, then, for those of us who are diseased in body a physician is required, so also those who are diseased in soul require a paedagogue to cure our maladies; and then a teacher, to train and guide the soul to all requisite knowledge when it is made able to admit the revelation of the Word. Eagerly desiring, then, to perfect us by a gradation conducive to salvation, suited for efficacious discipline, a beautiful arrangement is observed by the all-benignant Word, who first exhorts, then trains, and finally teaches.

CHAPTER 2
OUR INSTRUCTOR’S TREATMENT OF OUR SINS

Now, O you, my children, our Instructor is like His Father God, whose son He is, sinless, blameless, and with a soul devoid of passion; God in the form of man, stainless, the minister of His Father’s will, the Word who is God, who is in the Father, who is at the Father’s right hand, and with the form of God is God. He is to us a spotless image; to Him we are to try with all our might to assimilate our souls. He is wholly free from human passions; wherefore also He alone is judge, because He alone is sinless. As far, however, as we can, let us try to sin as little as possible. For nothing is so urgent in the first place as deliverance from passions and disorders, and then the checking of our liability to fall into sins that have become habitual. It is best, therefore, not to sin at all in any way, which we assert to be the prerogative of God alone; next to keep clear of voluntary transgressions, which is characteristic of the wise man; thirdly, not to fall into many involuntary offenses, which is peculiar to those who have been excellently trained. Not to continue long in sins, let that be ranked last. But this also is salutary to those who are called back to repentance, to renew the contest. And the Instructor, as I think, very beautifully says, through Moses: “If any one die suddenly by him, straightway the head of his consecration shall be polluted, and shall be shaved,” designating involuntary sin as sudden death. And He says that it pollutes by defiling the soul: wherefore
He prescribe the cure with all speed, advising the head to be instantly shaven; that is, counseling the locks of ignorance which shade the reason to be shorn clean off, that reason (whose seat is in the brain), being left bare of the dense stuff of vice, may speed its way to repentance. Then after a few remarks He adds, “The days before are not reckoned irrational,” by which manifestly sins are meant which are contrary to reason. The involuntary act He calls “sudden,” the sin He calls “irrational.” Wherefore the Word, the Instructor, has taken the charge of us, in order to the prevention of sin, which is contrary to reason.

Hence consider the expression of Scripture, “Therefore these things saith the Lord;” the sin that had been committed before is held up to reprobation by the succeeding expression “therefore,” according to which the righteous judgment follows. This is shown conspicuously by the prophets, when they said, “Hadst thou not sinned, He would not have uttered these threatenings.” “Therefore thus saith the Lord; “Because thou hast not heard these words, therefore these things the Lord;” and, “Therefore, behold, the Lord saith.” For prophecy is given by reason both of obedience and disobedience: for obedience, that we may be saved; for disobedience, that we may be corrected.

Our Instructor, the Word, therefore cures the unnatural passions of the soul by means of exhortations. For with the highest propriety the help of bodily diseases is called the healing art — an art acquired by human skill. But the paternal Word is the only Paeonian physician of human infirmities, and the holy charmer of the sick soul. “Save,” it is said, “Thy servant, O my God, who trusteth in Thee. Pity me, O Lord; for I will cry to Thee all the day.” For a while the “physician’s art,” according to Democritus, “heals the diseases of the body; wisdom frees the soul from passion.” But the good Instructor, the Wisdom, the Word of the Father, who made man, cares for the whole nature of His creature; the all-sufficient Physician of humanity, the Savior, heals both body and soul. “Rise up,” He said to the paralytic, “take the bed on which thou liest, and go away home;” and straightway the infirm man received strength. And to the dead He said, “Lazarus, go forth;” and the dead man issued from his coffin such as he was ere he died, having undergone resurrection. Further, He heals the soul itself by precepts and gifts — by precepts indeed, in course of time, but being liberal in His gifts, He says to us sinners, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.”

We, however, as soon as He conceived the thought, became His children, having had assigned us the best and most secure rank by His orderly arrangement, which first circles about the world, the heavens, and the sun’s circuits, and occupies itself with the motions of the rest of the stars for man’s behoof, and then busies itself with man himself, on whom all its care is concentrated; and regarding him as its greatest work, regulated his soul
by wisdom and temperance, and tempered the body with beauty and proportion. And whatever in human actions is right and regular, is the result of the inspiration of its rectitude and order.

404
CHAPTER 3
THE PHILANTHROPY OF THE INSTRUCTOR
The Lord ministers all good and all help, both as man and as God: as God, forgiving our sins; and as man, training us not to sin. Man is therefore justly dear to God, since he is His workmanship. The other works of creation He made by the word of command alone, but man He framed by Himself, by His own hand, and breathed into him what was peculiar to Himself. What, then, was fashioned by Him, and after His likeness, either was created by God Himself as being desirable on its own account, or was formed as being desirable on account of something else. ‘If, then, man is an object desirable for itself, then He who is good loved what is good, and the love-charm is within even in man, and is that very thing which is called the inspiration [or breath] of God; but if man was a desirable object on account of something else, God had no other reason for creating him, than that unless he came into being, it was not possible for God to be a good Creator, or for man to arrive at the knowledge of God. For God would not have accomplished that on account of which man was created otherwise than by the creation of man; and what hidden power in willing God possessed, He carried fully out by the forth-putting of His might externally in the act of creating, receiving from man what He made man; and whom He had He saw, and what He wished that came to pass; and there is nothing which God cannot do. Man, then, whom God made, is desirable for himself, and that which is desirable on his account is allied to him to whom it is desirable on his account; and this, too, is acceptable and liked.

But what is lovable, and is not also loved by Him? And man has been proved to be lovable; consequently man is loved by God. For how shall he not be loved for whose sake the only-begotten Son is sent from the Father’s bosom, the Word of faith, the faith which is superabundant; the Lord Himself distinctly confessing and saying, “For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me;” and again, “And hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me?” What, then, the Master desires and declares, and how He is disposed in deed and word, how He commands what is to be done, and forbids the opposite, has already been shown.

405
Plainly, then, the other kind of discourse, the didactic, is powerful and spiritual, observing precision, occupied in the contemplation of mysteries. But let it stand over for the present. Now, it is incumbent on us to return His love, who lovingly guides us to that life which is best; and to live in accordance with the injunctions of His will, not only fulfilling what is
commanded, or guarding against what is forbidden, but turning away from some examples, and imitating others as much as we can, and thus to perform the works of the Master according to His similitude, and so fulfill what Scripture says as to our being made in His image and likeness. For, wandering in life as in deep darkness, we need a guide that cannot stumble or stray; and our guide is the best, not blind, as the Scripture says, “leading the blind into pits.” But the Word is keen-sighted, and scans the recesses of the heart. As, then, that is not light which enlightens not, nor motion that moves not, nor loving which loves not, so neither is that good which profits not, nor guides to salvation. Let us then aim at the fulfillment of the commandments by the works of the Lord; for the Word Himself also, having openly become flesh, exhibited the same virtue, both practical and contemplative. Wherefore let us regard the Word as law, and His commands and counsels as the short and straight paths to immortality; for His precepts are full of persuasion, not of fear.

CHAPTER 4
MEN AND WOMEN ALIKE UNDER THE INSTRUCTOR’S CHARGE
Let us, then, embracing more and more this good obedience, give ourselves to the Lord; clinging to what is surest, the cable of faith in Him, and understanding that the virtue of man and woman is the same. For if the God of both is one, the master of both is also one; one church, one temperance, one modesty; their food is common, marriage an equal yoke; respiration, sight, hearing, knowledge, hope, obedience, love all alike. And those whose life is common, have common graces and a common salvation; common to them are love and training. “For in this world,” he says, “they marry, and are given in marriage,” in which alone the female is distinguished from the male; “but in that world it is so no more.” There the rewards of this social and holy life, which is based on conjugal union, are laid up, not for male and female, but for man, the sexual desire which divides humanity being removed. Common therefore, too, to men and women, is the name of man. For this reason I think the Attics called, not boys only, but girls, paida>ron, using it as a word of common gender; if Menander the comic poet, in Rhapizomena, appears to any one a sufficient authority, who thus speaks: —
“My little daughter; for by nature
The child ( ) is most loving.”
Arnev, too, the word for lambs, is a common name of simplicity for the male and female animal.
Now the Lord Himself will feed us as His flock forever. Amen. But without a shepherd, neither can sheep nor any other animal live, nor children without a tutor, nor domestics without a master.
CHAPTER 5
ALL WHO WALK ACCORDING TO TRUTH ARE CHILDREN OF GOD

That, then, Paedagogy is the training of children (paidwn a > gwgh j ), is clear from the word itself. It remains for us to consider the children whom Scripture points to; then to give the paedagogue charge of them. We are the children. In many ways Scripture celebrates us, and describes us in manifold figures of speech, giving variety to the simplicity of the faith by diverse names Accordingly, in the Gospel, “the Lord, standing on the shore, says to the disciples” — they happened to be fishing — “and called aloud, Children, have ye any meat?” — addressing those that were already in the position of disciples as children. “And they brought to Him,” it is said, “children, that He might put His hands on them and bless them; and when His disciples hindered them, Jesus said, Suffer the children, and forbid them not to come to Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” What the expression means the Lord Himself shall declare, saying, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven; ” not in that place speaking figuratively of regeneration, but setting before us, for our imitation, the simplicity that is in children.

The prophetic spirit also distinguishes us as children. “Plucking,” it is said, “branches of olives or palms, the children went forth to meet the Lord, and cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord;” light, and glory, and praise, with supplication to the Lord: for this is the meaning of the expression Hosanna when rendered in Greek. And the Scripture appears to me, in allusion to the prophecy just mentioned, reproachfully to upbraid the thoughtless: “Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?” In this way the Lord in the Gospels spurs on His disciples, urging them to attend to Him, hastening as He was to the Father; rendering His hearers more eager by the intimation that after a little He was to depart, and showing them that it was requisite that they should take more unsparing advantage of the truth than ever before, as the Word was to ascend to heaven. Again, therefore, He calls them children; for He says, “Children, a little while I am with you.” And, again, He likens the kingdom of heaven to children sitting in the market-places and saying, “We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned, and ye have not lamented;” and whatever else He added agreeably thereto. And it is not alone the Gospel that holds these sentiments. Prophecy also agrees with it. David accordingly says, “Praise, O children, the LORD; praise the name of the LORD.” It says also by Esaias, “Here am I, and the children that God hath given me.” Are you amazed, then, to hear that men who belong to the nations are sons in the Lord’s sight? You do not in that case appear to give ear to the Attic dialect, from which you may learn that beautiful, comely,
and freeborn young maidens are still called paidiska, and servant-girls
paidiska; and that those last also are, on account of the bloom of
youth, called by the flattering name of young maidens.
And when He says, “Let my lambs stand on my right,” He alludes to the
simple children, as if they were sheep and lambs in nature, not men; and
the lambs He counts worthy of preference, from the superior regard He
has to that tenderness and simplicity of disposition in men which
constitutes innocence. Again, when He says, “as suckling calves,” He again
alludes figuratively to us; and “as an innocent and gentle dove,” the
reference is again to us. Again, by Moses, He commands “two young
pigeons or a pair of turtles to be offered for sin;” thus saying, that the
harmlessness and innocence and placable nature of these tender young
birds are acceptable to God, and explaining that like is an expiation for like.
Further, the timorousness of the turtle-doves typifies fear in reference to
sin.
And that He calls us chickens the Scripture testifies: “As a hen gathereth
her chickens under her wings.” Thus are we the Lord’s chickens; the Word
thus marvelously and mystically describing the simplicity of childhood.
For sometimes He calls us children, sometimes chickens, sometimes
infants, and at other times sons, and “a new people,” and “a recent
people.” “And my servants shall be called by a new name” (a new name,
He says, fresh and eternal, pure and simple, and childlike and true), which
shall be blessed on the earth. And again, He figuratively calls us colts
unyoked to vice, not broken in by wickedness; but simple, and bounding
joyously to the Father alone; not such horses “as neigh after their
neighbors’ wives, that are under the yoke, and are female-mad;” but free
and new-born, jubilant by means of faith, ready to run to the truth, swift
to speed to salvation, that tread and stamp under foot the things of the
world.
“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; tell aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem:
behold, thy King cometh, just, meek, and bringing salvation; meek truly is
He, and riding on a beast of burden, and a young colt.” It was not enough
to have said colt alone, but He added to it also young, to show the youth
of humanity in Christ, and the eternity of simplicity, which shall know no
old age. And we who are little ones being such colts, are reared up by our
divine colt-tamer. But if the new man in Scripture is represented by the
ass, this ass is also a colt. “And he bound,” it is said, “the colt to the vine,”
having bound this simple and childlike people to the word, whom He
figuratively represents as a vine. For the vine produces wine, as the Word
produces blood, and both drink for health to men — wine for the body,
blood for the spirit.
And that He also calls us lambs, the Spirit by the mouth of Isaiah is an
unimpeachable witness: “He will feed His flock like a shepherd, He will
gather the lambs with His arm,” — using the figurative appellation of lambs, which are still more tender than sheep, to express simplicity. And we also in truth, honoring the fairest and most perfect objects in life with an appellation derived from the word child, have named training paideia and discipline (paidagwgia). Discipline (paidagwgia) we declare to be right guiding from childhood to virtue. Accordingly, our Lord revealed more distinctly to us what is signified by the appellation of children. On the question arising among the apostles, “which of them should be the greater,” Jesus placed a little child in the midst, saying, “Whosoever, shall humble himself as this little child, the same shall be the greater in the kingdom of heaven.” He does not then use the appellation of children on account of their very limited amount of understanding from their age, as some have thought. Nor, if He says, “Except ye become as these children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God,” are His words to be understood as meaning “without learning.” We, then, who are infants, no longer roll on the ground, nor creep on the earth like serpents as before, crawling with the whole body about senseless lusts; but, stretching upwards in soul, loosed from the world and our sins, touching the earth on tiptoe so as to appear to be in the world, we pursue holy wisdom, although this seems folly to those whose wits are whetted for wickedness. Rightly, then, are those called children who know Him who is God alone as their Father, who are simple, and infants, and guileless, who are lovers of the horns of the unicorns.

To those, therefore, that have made progress in the word, He has proclaimed this utterance, bidding them dismiss anxious care of the things of this world, and exhorting them to adhere to the Father alone, in imitation of children. Wherefore also in what follows He says: “Take no anxious thought for the morrow; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Thus He enjoins them to lay aside the cares of this life, and depend on the Father alone. And he who fulfills this commandment is in reality a child and a son to God and to the world, — to the one as deceived, to the other as beloved. And if we have one Master in heaven, as the Scripture says, then by common consent those on the earth will be rightly called disciples. For so is the truth, that perfection is with the Lord, who is always teaching, and infancy and childishness with us, who are always learning. Thus prophecy hath honored perfection, by applying to it the appellation man. For instance, by David, He says of the devil: “The LORD abhors the man of blood;” he calls him man, as perfect in wickedness. And the Lord is called man, because He is perfect in righteousness. Directly in point is the instance of the apostle, who says, writing the Corinthians: “For I have espoused you to one man, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ,” whether as children or saints, but to the Lord alone. And writing
to the Ephesians, he has unfolded in the clearest manner the point in question, speaking to the following effect: “Till we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we be no longer children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by the craft of men, by their cunning in stratagems of deceit; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up to Him in all things,” — saying these things in order to the edification of the body of Christ, who is the head and man, the only one perfect in righteousness; and we who are children guarding against the blasts of heresies, which blow to our inflation; and not putting our trust in fathers who teach us otherwise, are then made perfect when we are the church, having received Christ the head. Then it is right to notice, with respect to the appellation of infant (νηπίος), that to νή < πιός > is not predicated of the silly: for the silly man is called νηπιοτιός: and νηπίος is νενήπιος (since he that is tender-hearted is called ἡπιός), as being one that has newly become gentle and meek in conduct. This the blessed Paul most clearly pointed out when he said, “When we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ, we were gentle (ἡπιός) among you, as a nurse cherisheth her children.” The child (νηπίος) is therefore gentle (ἡπιός), and therefore more tender, delicate, and simple, guileless, and destitute of hypocrisy, straightforward and upright in mind, which is the basis of simplicity and truth. For He says, “Upon whom shall I look, but upon him who is gentle and quiet?” For such is the virgin speech, tender, and free of fraud; whence also a virgin is wont to be called “a tender bride,” and a child “tenderhearted.” And we are tender who are pliant to the power of persuasion, and are easily drawn to goodness, and are mild, and free of the stain of malice and perverseness, for the ancient race was perverse and hardhearted; but the band of infants, the new people which we are, as delicate as a child. On account of the hearts of the innocent, the apostle, in the Epistle to the Romans, owns that he rejoices, and furnishes a kind of definition of children, so to speak, when he says, “I would have you wise toward good, but simple towards evil.” For the name of child, νηπίος, is not understood by us privatively, though the sons of the grammarians make the νή a privative particle. For if they call us who follow after childhood foolish, see how they utter blasphemy against the Lord, in regarding those as foolish who have betaken themselves to God. But if, which is rather the true sense, they themselves understand the designation children of simple ones, we glory in the name. For the new minds, which have newly become wise, which have sprung into being according to the new covenant, are infantile in the old folly. Of late, then, God was known by the coming of Christ: “For no man knoweth God but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him.” In contradistinction, therefore, to the older people, the new people are
called young, having learned the new blessings; and we have the exuberance of life’s morning prime in this youth which knows no old age, in which we are always growing to maturity in intelligence, are always young, always mild, always new: for those must necessarily be new, who have become partakers of the new Word. And that which participates in eternity is wont to be assimilated to the incorruptible: so that to us appertains the designation of the age of childhood, a lifelong spring-time, because the truth that is in us, and our habits saturated with the truth, cannot be touched by old age; but Wisdom is ever blooming, ever remains consistent and the same, and never changes. “Their children,” it is said, “shall be borne upon their shoulders, and fondled on their knees; as one whom his mother comforteth, so also shall I comfort you.” The mother draws the children to herself; and we seek our mother the Church. Whatever is feeble and tender, as needing help on account of its feebleness, is kindly looked on, and is sweet and pleasant, anger changing into help in the case of such: for thus horses’ colts, and the little calves of cows, and the lion’s whelp, and the stag’s fawn, and the child of man, are looked upon with pleasure by their fathers and mothers. Thus also the Father of the universe cherishes affection towards those who have fled to Him; and having begotten them again by His Spirit to the adoption of children, knows them as gentle, and loves those alone, and aids and fights for them; and therefore He bestows on them the name of child. The word Isaac I also connect with child. Isaac means laughter. He was seen sporting with his wife and helpmeet Rebecca by the prying king. The king, whose name was Abimelech, appears to me to represent a supramundane wisdom contemplating the mystery of sport. They interpret Rebecca to mean endurance. O wise sport, laughter also assisted by endurance, and the king as spectator! The spirit of those that are children in Christ, whose lives are ordered in endurance, rejoice. And this is the divine sport. “Such a sport, of his own, Jove sports,” says Heraclitus. For what other employment is seemly for a wise and perfect man, than to sport and be glad in the endurance of what is good — and, in the administration of what is good, holding festival with God? That which is signified by the prophet may be interpreted differently, namely, of our rejoicing for salvation, as Isaac. He also, delivered from death, laughed, sporting and rejoicing with his spouse, who was the type of the Helper of our salvation, the Church, to whom the stable name of endurance is given; for this cause surely, because she alone remains to all generations, rejoicing ever, subsisting as she does by the endurance of us believers, who are the members of Christ. And the witness of those that have endured to the end, and the rejoicing on their account, is the mystic sport, and the salvation accompanied with decorous solace which brings us aid.

The King, then, who is Christ, beholds from above our laughter, and
looking through the window, as the Scripture says, views the thanksgiving, and the blessing, and the rejoicing, and the gladness, and furthermore the endurance which works together with them and their embrace: views His Church, showing only His face, which was wanting to the Church, which is made perfect by her royal Head. And where, then, was the door by which the Lord showed Himself? The flesh by which He was manifested. He is Isaac (for the narrative may be interpreted otherwise), who is a type of the Lord, a child as a son; for he was the son of Abraham, as Christ the Son of God, and a sacrifice as the Lord, but he was not immolated as the Lord. Isaac only bore the wood of the sacrifice, as the Lord the wood of the cross. And he laughed mystically, prophesying that the Lord should fill us with joy, who have been redeemed from corruption by the blood of the Lord. Isaac did everything but suffer, as was right, yielding the precedence in suffering to the Word. Furthermore, there is an intimation of the divinity of the Lord in His not being slain. For Jesus rose again after His burial, having suffered no harm, like Isaac released from sacrifice. And in defense of the point to be established, I shall adduce another consideration of the greatest weight. The Spirit calls the Lord Himself a child, thus prophesying by Esaias: “Lo, to us a child has been born, to us a son has been given, on whose own shoulder the government shall be; and His name has been called the Angel of great Counsel.” Who, then, is this infant child? He according to whose image we are made little children. By the same prophet is declared His greatness: “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace; that He might fulfill His discipline: and of His peace there shall be no end.” O the great God! O the perfect child! The Son in the Father, and the Father in the Son. And how shall not the discipline of this child be perfect, which extends to all, leading as a schoolmaster us as children who are His little ones? He has stretched forth to us those hands of His that are conspicuously worthy of trust. To this child additional testimony is borne by John, “the greatest prophet among those born of women:” Behold the Lamb of God!” For since Scripture calls the infant children lambs, it has also called Him — God the Word — who became man for our sakes, and who wished in all points to be made like to us — “the Lamb of God” — Him, namely, that is the Son of God, the child of the Father.

CHAPTER 6
THE NAME CHILDREN DOES NOT IMPLY INSTRUCTION IN ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES
We have ample means of encountering those who are given to carping. For we are not termed children and infants with reference to the childish and contemptible character of our education, as those who are inflated on account of knowledge have calumnioulsly alleged. Straightway, on our regeneration, we attained that perfection after which we aspired. For we
were illuminated, which is to know God. He is not then imperfect who
knows what is perfect. And do not reprehend me when I profess to know
God; for so it was deemed right to speak to the Word, and He is free. For
at the moment of the Lord’s baptism there sounded a voice from heaven,
as a testimony to the Beloved, “Thou art My beloved Son, today have I
begotten Thee.” Let us then ask the wise, Is Christ, begotten today,
already perfect, or — what were most monstrous — imperfect? If the
latter, there is some addition He requires yet to make. But for Him to make
any addition to His knowledge is absurd, since He is God. For none can be
414
superior to the Word, or the teacher of the only Teacher. Will they not
then own, though reluctant, that the perfect Word born of the perfect
Father was begotten in perfection, according to economic fore-ordination?
And if He was perfect, why was He, the perfect one, baptized? It was
necessary, they say, to fulfill the profession that pertained to humanity.
Most excellent. Well, I assert, simultaneously with His baptism by John,
He becomes perfect? Manifestly. He did not then learn anything more
from him? Certainly not. But He is perfected by the washing — of
baptism — alone, and is sanctified by the descent of the Spirit? Such is the
case. The same also takes place in our case, whose exemplar Christ
became. Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons;
being made sons, we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are made
immortal. “I,” says He, “have said that ye are gods, and all sons of the
Highest.” This work is variously called grace, and illumination, and
perfection, and washing: washing, by which we cleanse away our sins;
grace, by which the penalties accruing to transgressions are remitted; and
illumination, by which that holy light of salvation is beheld, that is, by
which we see God clearly. Now we call that perfect which wants nothing.
For what is yet wanting to him who knows God? For it were truly
monstrous that that which is not complete should be called a gift (or act)
of God’s grace. Being perfect, He consequently bestows perfect gifts. As
at His command all things were made, so on His bare wishing to bestow
grace, ensues the perfecting of His grace. For the future of time is
anticipated by the power of His volition.
Further release from evils is the beginning of salvation. We then alone, who
first have touched the confines of life, are already perfect; and we already
live who are separated from death. Salvation, accordingly, is the following
of Christ: “For that which is in Him is life.” Verily, verily, I say unto you,
He that heareth My words, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath
eternal life, and cometh not into condemnation, but hath passed from death
to life.” Thus believing alone, and regeneration, is perfection in life; for
God is never weak. For as His will is work, and this is named the world; so
also His counsel is the salvation of men, and this has been called the
church. He knows, therefore, whom He has called, and whom He has
saved; and at one and the same time He called and saved them. “For ye are,” says the apostle, “taught of God.” It is not then allowable to think of what is taught by Him as imperfect; and what is learned from Him is the eternal salvation of the eternal Savior, to whom be thanks for ever and ever. Amen. And he who is only regenerated — as the name necessarily indicates — and is enlightened, is delivered forthwith from darkness, and on the instant receives the light.

As, then, those who have shaken off sleep forthwith become all awake within; or rather, as those who try to remove a film that is over the eyes, do not supply to them from without the light which they do not possess, but removing the obstacle from the eyes, leave the pupil free; thus also we who are baptized, having wiped off the sins which obscure the light of the Divine Spirit, have the eye of the spirit free, unimpeded, and full of light, by which alone we contemplate the Divine, the Holy Spirit flowing down to us from above. This is the eternal adjustment of the vision, which is able to see the eternal light, since like loves like; and that which is holy, loves that from which holiness proceeds, which has appropriately been termed light. “Once ye were darkness, now are ye light in the Lord.” Hence I am of opinion man was called by the ancients φως. But he has not yet received, say they, the perfect gift. I also assent to this; but he is in the light, and the darkness comprehendeth him not. There is nothing intermediate between light and darkness. But the end is reserved till the resurrection of those who believe; and it is not the reception of some other thing, but the obtaining of the promise previously made. For we do not say that both take place together at the same time — both the arrival at the end, and the anticipation of that arrival. For eternity and time are not the same, neither is the attempt and the final result; but both have reference to the same thing, and one and the same person is concerned in both. Faith, so to speak, is the attempt generated in time; the final result is the attainment of the promise, secured for eternity. Now the Lord Himself has most clearly revealed the equality of salvation, when He said: “For this is the will of my Father, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day.” As far as possible in this world, which is what he means by the last day, and which is preserved till the time that it shall end, we believe that we are made perfect. Wherefore He says, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” If, then, those who have believed have life, what remains beyond the possession of eternal life? Nothing is wanting to faith, as it is perfect and complete in itself. If aught is wanting to it, it is not wholly perfect. But faith is not lame in any respect; nor after our departure from this world does it make us who have believed, and received without distinction the earnest of future good, wait; but having in anticipation
grasped by faith that which is future, after the resurrection we receive it as present, in order that that may be fulfilled which was spoken, “Be it according to thy faith.” And where faith is, there is the promise; and the consummation of the promise is rest. So that in illumination what we receive is knowledge, and the end of knowledge is rest — the last thing conceived as the object of aspiration. As, then, inexperience comes to an end by experience, and perplexity by finding a clear outlet, so by illumination must darkness disappear. The darkness is ignorance, through which we fall into sins, purblind as to the truth. Knowledge, then, is the illumination we receive, which makes ignorance disappear, and endows us with clear vision. Further, the abandonment of what is bad is the adopting of what is better. For what ignorance has bound ill, is by knowledge loosed well; those bonds are with all speed slackened by human faith and divine grace, our transgressions being taken away by one Poeonian medicine, the baptism of the Word. We are washed from all our sins, and are no longer entangled in evil. This is the one grace of illumination, that our characters are not the same as before our washing. And since knowledge springs up with illumination, shedding its beams around the mind, the moment we hear, we who were untaught become disciples. Does this, I ask, take place on the advent of this instruction? You cannot tell the time. For instruction leads to faith, and faith with baptism is trained by the Holy Spirit. For that faith is the one universal salvation of humanity, and that there is the same equality before the righteous and loving God, and the same fellowship between Him and all, the apostle most clearly showed, speaking to the following effect: “Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed, so that the law became our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” Do you not hear that we are no longer under that law which was accompanied with fear, but under the Word, the master of free choice? Then he subjoined the utterance, clear of all partiality: “For ye are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, 417

there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” There are not, then, in the same Word some “illuminated (gnostics); and some animal (or natural) men;” but all who have abandoned the desires of the flesh are equal and spiritual before the Lord. And again he writes in another place: “For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and we have all drunk of one cup.” Nor were it absurd to employ the expressions of those who call the reminiscence of better things the filtration of the spirit, understanding by filtration the separation of what is baser, that results from the reminiscence of what is better. There follows
of necessity, in him who has come to the recollection of what is better, repentance for what is worse. Accordingly, they confess that the spirit in repentance retraces its steps. In the same way, therefore, we also, repenting of our sins, renouncing our iniquities, purified by baptism, speed back to the eternal light, children to the Father. Jesus therefore, rejoicing in the spirit, said: “I thank Thee, O Father, God of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; the Master and Teacher applying the name babes to us, who are readier to embrace salvation than the wise in the world, who, thinking themselves wise, are inflated with pride. And He exclaims in exultation and exceeding joy, as if lisping with the children, “Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” Wherefore those things which have been concealed from the wise and prudent of this present world have been revealed to babes. Truly, then, are we the children of God, who have put aside the old man, and stripped off the garment of wickedness, and put on the immortality of Christ; that we may become a new, holy people by regeneration, and may keep the man undefiled. And a babe, as God’s little one, is cleansed from fornication and wickedness. With the greatest clearness the blessed Paul has solved for us this question in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, writing thus: “Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be children, but in understanding be men.” And the expression, “When I was a child, I thought as a child, I spoke as a child,” points out his mode of life according to the law, according to which, thinking childish things, he persecuted, and speaking childish things he blasphemed the Word, not as having yet attained to the simplicity of childhood, but as being in its folly; for the word nhpion > has two meanings. “When I became a man,” again Paul says, “I put away childish things.” It is not incomplete size of stature, nor a definite measure of time, nor additional secret teachings in things that are manly and more perfect, that the apostle, who himself professes to be a preacher of childishness, alludes to when he sends it, as it were, into banishment; but he applies the name “children” to those who are under the law, who are terrified by fear as children are by bugbears; and “men” to us who are obedient to the Word and masters of ourselves, who have believed, and are saved by voluntary choice, and are rationally, not irrationally, frightened by terror. Of this the apostle himself shall testify, calling as he does the Jews heirs according to the first covenant, and us heirs according to promise: “Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all; but is under tutors and governors, till the time appointed by the father. So also we, when we were children, were in bondage under the rudiments of the world: but when the fullness of the time was came, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might
receive the adoption of sons” by Him. See how He has admitted those to be children who are under fear and sins; but has conferred manhood on those who are under faith, by calling them sons, in contradistinction from the children that are under the law: “For thou art no more a servant,” he says, “but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.” What, then, is lacking to the son after inheritance? Wherefore the expression, “When I was a child,” may be elegantly expounded thus: that is, when I was a Jew (for he was a Hebrew by extraction) I thought as a child, when I followed the law; but after becoming a man, I no longer entertain the sentiments of a child, that is, of the law, but of a man, that is, of Christ, whom alone the Scripture calls man, as we have said before. “I put away childish things.” But the childhood which is in Christ is maturity, as compared with the law. Having reached this point, we must defend our childhood. And we have still to explain what is said by the apostle: “I have fed you with milk (as children in Christ), not with meat; for ye were not able, neither yet are ye now able.” For it does not appear to me that the expression is to be taken in a Jewish sense; for I shall oppose to it also that Scripture, “I will bring you into that good land which flows with milk and honey.” A very great difficulty arises in reference to the comparison of these Scriptures, when we consider. For if the infancy which is characterized by the milk is the beginning of faith in Christ, then it is disparaged as childish and imperfect. How is the rest that comes after the meat, the rest of the man who is perfect and endowed with knowledge, again distinguished by infant milk? Does not this, as explaining a parable, mean something like this, and is not the expression to be read somewhat to the following effect: “I have fed you with milk in Christ;” and after a slight stop, let us add, “as children,” that by separating the words in reading we may make out some such sense as this: I have instructed you in Christ with simple, true, and natural nourishment, — namely, that which is spiritual: for such is the nourishing substance of milk swelling out from breasts of love. So that the whole matter may be conceived thus: As nurses nourish new-born children on milk, so do I also by the Word, the milk of Christ, instilling into you spiritual nutriment.

Thus, then, the milk which is perfect is perfect nourishment, and brings to that consummation which cannot cease. Wherefore also the same milk and honey were promised in the rest. Rightly, therefore, the Lord again promises milk to the righteous, that the Word may be clearly shown to be both, “the Alpha and Omega, beginning and end;” the Word being figuratively represented as milk. Something like this Homer oracularly declares against his will, when he calls righteous men milk-fed (galaktofagoi > ). So also may we take the Scripture: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ;” so that the carnal may be understood as those
recently instructed, and still babes in Christ. For he called those who had already believed on the Holy Spirit spiritual, and those newly instructed and not yet purified carnal; whom with justice he calls still carnal, as minding equally with the heathen the things of the flesh: “For whereas there is among you envy and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” Therefore also I have given you milk to drink,” he says; meaning, I have instilled into you the knowledge which, from instruction, nourishes up to life eternal. But the expression, “I have given you to drink” (ejpɔ>tisa), is the symbol of perfect appropriation. For those who are full-grown are said to drink, babes to suck. “For my blood,” says the Lord, “is true drink.” In saying, therefore, “I have given you milk to drink,” has he not indicated the knowledge of the truth, the perfect gladness in the Word, who is the milk? And what follows next, “not meat, for ye were not able,” may indicate the clear revelation in the future world, like food, face to face. “For now we see as through a glass,” the same apostle says, “but then face to face.” Wherefore also he has added, “neither yet are ye now able, for ye are still carnal,” minding the things of the flesh, — desiring, loving, feeling jealousy, wrath, envy. “For we are no more in the flesh,” as some suppose. For with it they say, having the face which is like an angel’s, we shall see the promise face to face. How then, if that is truly the promise after our departure hence, say they that they know “what eye hath not known, nor hath entered into the mind of man,” who have not perceived by the Spirit, but received from instruction “what ear hath not heard,” or that ear alone which “was rapt up into the third heaven?” But it even then was commanded to preserve it unspoken. But if human wisdom, as it remains to understand, is the glorying in knowledge, hear the law of Scripture: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, and let not the mighty man glory in his might; but let him that glorieth glory in the Lord.” But we are God-taught, and glory in the name of Christ. How then are we not to regard the apostle as attaching this sense to the milk of the babes? And if we who preside over the Churches are shepherds after the image of the good Shepherd, and you the sheep, are we not to regard the Lord as preserving consistency in the use of figurative speech, when He speaks also of the milk of the flock? And to this meaning we may secondly accommodate the expression, “I have given you milk to drink, and not given you food, for ye are not yet able,” regarding the meat not as something different from the milk, but the same in substance. For the very same Word is fluid and mild as milk, or solid and compact as meat. And entertaining this view, we may regard the proclamation of the Gospel, which is universally diffused, as milk; and as meat, faith, which from instruction is compacted into a foundation, which, being more substantial than hearing, is likened to meat, and assimilates to the soul itself nourishment of this kind. Elsewhere the Lord, in the Gospel
according to John, brought this out by symbols, when He said: “Eat ye my flesh, and drink my blood;” describing distinctly by metaphor the drinkable properties of faith and the promise, by means of which the Church, like a human being consisting of many members, is refreshed and grows, is welded together and compacted of both, — of faith, which is the body, and of hope, which is the soul; as also the Lord of flesh and blood. For in reality the blood of faith is hope, in which faith is held as by a vital principle. And when hope expires, it is as if blood flowed forth; and the vitality of faith is destroyed. If, then, some would oppose, saying that by milk is meant the first lessons — as it were, the first food — and that by meat is meant those spiritual cognitions to which they attain by raising themselves to knowledge, let them understand that, in saying that meat is solid food, and the flesh and blood of Jesus, they are brought by their own vainglorious wisdom to the true simplicity. For the blood is found to be an original product in man, and some have consequently ventured to call it the substance of the soul. And this blood, transmuted by a natural process of assimilation in the pregnancy of the mother, through the sympathy of parental affection, effloresces and grows old, in order that there may be no fear for the child. Blood, too, is the moister part of flesh, being a kind of liquid flesh; and milk is the sweeter and finer part of blood. For whether it be the blood supplied to the fetus, and sent through the navel of the mother, or whether it be the menses themselves shut out from their proper passage, and by a natural diffusion, bidden by the all-nourishing and creating God, proceed to the already swelling breasts, and by the heat of the spirits transmuted, [whether it be the one or the other] that is formed, into food desirable for the babe, that which is changed is the blood. For of all the members, the breasts have the most sympathy with the womb. When there is parturition, the vessel by which blood was conveyed to the fetus is cut off: there is an obstruction of the flow, and the blood receives an impulse towards the breasts; and on a considerable rush taking place, they are distended, and change the blood to milk in a manner analogous to the change of blood into pus in ulceration. Or if, on the other hand, the blood from the veins in the vicinity of the breasts, which have been opened in pregnancy, is poured into the natural hollows of the breasts; and the spirit discharged from the neighboring arteries being mixed with it, the substance of the blood, still remaining pure, it becomes white by being agitated like a wave; and by an interruption such as this is changed by frothing it, like what takes place with the sea, which at the assaults of the winds, the poets say, “spits forth briny foam.” Yet still the essence is supplied by the blood.

In this way also the rivers, borne on with rushing motion, and fretted by contact with the surrounding air, murmur forth foam. The moisture in our mouth, too, is whitened by the breath. What an absurdity is it, then, not to
acknowledge that the blood is converted into that very bright and white substance by the breath! The change it suffers is in quality, not in essence. You will certainly find nothing else more nourishing, or sweeter, or whiter than milk. In every respect, accordingly, it is like spiritual nourishment, which is sweet through grace, nourishing as life, bright as the day of Christ. The blood of the Word has been also exhibited as milk. Milk being thus provided in parturition, is supplied to the infant; and the breasts, which till then looked straight towards the husband, now bend down towards the child, being taught to furnish the substance elaborated by nature in a way easily received for salutary nourishment. For the breasts are not like fountains full of milk, flowing in ready prepared; but, by effecting a change in the nutriment, form the milk in themselves, and discharge it. And the nutriment suitable and wholesome for the new-formed and new-born babe is elaborated by God, the nourisher and the Father of all that are generated and regenerated, — as manna, the celestial food of angels, flowed down from heaven on the ancient Hebrews. Even now, in fact, nurses call the first-poured drink of milk by the same name as that food — manna. Further, pregnant women, on becoming mothers, discharge milk. But the Lord Christ, the fruit of the Virgin, did not pronounce the breasts of women blessed, nor selected them to give nourishment; but when the kind and loving Father had rained down the Word, Himself became spiritual nourishment to the good. O mystic marvel! The universal Father is one, and one the universal Word; and the Holy Spirit is one and the same everywhere, and one is the only virgin mother. I love to call her the Church. This mother, when alone, had not milk, because alone she was not a woman. But she is once virgin and mother — pure as a virgin, loving as a mother. And calling her children to her, she nurses them with holy milk, viz., with the Word for childhood. Therefore she had not milk; for the milk was this child fair and comely, the body of Christ, which nourishes by the Word the young brood, which the Lord Himself brought forth in throes of the flesh, which the Lord Himself swathed in His precious blood. O amazing birth! O holy swaddling bands! The Word is all to the child, both father and mother and tutor and nurse. “Eat ye my flesh,” He says, “and drink my blood.” Such is the suitable food which the Lord ministers, and He offers His flesh and pours forth His blood, and nothing is wanting for the children’s growth. O amazing mystery! We are enjoined to cast off the old and carnal corruption, as also the old nutriment, receiving in exchange another new regimen, that of Christ, receiving Him if we can, to hide Him within; and that, enshrining the Savior in our souls, we may correct the affections of our flesh. But you are not inclined to understand it thus, but perchance more generally. Hear it also in the following way. The flesh figuratively
represents to us the Holy Spirit; for the flesh was created by Him. The blood points out to us the Word, for as rich blood the Word has been infused into life; and the union of both is the Lord, the food of the babes — the Lord who is Spirit and Word. The food — that is, the Lord Jesus — that is, the Word of God, the Spirit made flesh, the heavenly flesh sanctified. The nutriment is the milk of the Father, by which alone we infants are nourished. The Word Himself, then, the beloved One, and our nourisher, hath shed His own blood for us, to save humanity; and by Him, we, believing on God, flee to the Word, “the care-soothing breast” of the Father. And He alone, as is befitting, supplies us children with the milk of love, and those only are truly blessed who suck this breast. Wherefore also Peter says: “Laying therefore aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisy, and envy, and evil speaking, as new-born babes, desire the milk of the word, that ye may grow by it to salvation; if ye have tasted that the Lord is Christ.” And were one to concede to them that the meat was something different from the milk, then how shall they avoid being transfixed on their own spit, through want of consideration of nature? For in winter, when the air is condensed, and prevents the escape of the heat enclosed within, the food, transmuted and digested and changed into blood, passes into the veins, and these, in the absence of exhalation, are greatly distended, and exhibit strong pulsations; consequently also nurses are then fullest of milk. And we have shown a little above, that on pregnancy blood passes into milk by a change which does not affect its substance, just as in old people yellow hair changes to gray. But again in summer, the body, having its pores more open, affords greater facility for diaphoretic action in the case of the food, and the milk is least abundant, since neither is the blood full, nor is the whole nutriment retained. If, then, the digestion of the food results in the production of blood, and the blood becomes milk, then blood is a preparation for milk, as blood is for a human being, and the grape for the vine. With milk, then, the Lord’s nutriment, we are nursed directly we are born; and as soon as we are regenerated, we are honored by receiving the good news of the hope of rest, even the Jerusalem above, in which it is written that milk and honey fall in showers, receiving through what is material the pledge of the sacred food. “For meats are done away with,” as the apostle himself says; but this nourishment on milk leads to the heavens, rearing up citizens of heaven, and members of the angelic choirs. And since the Word is the gushing fountain of life, and has been called a river of olive oil, Paul, using appropriate figurative language, and calling Him milk, adds: “I have given you to drink;” for we drink in the word, the nutriment of the truth. In truth, also liquid food is called drink; and the same thing may somehow be both meat and drink, according to the different aspects in which it is considered, just as cheese is the solidification of milk or milk solidified; for I am not concerned here to
make a nice selection of an expression, only to say that one substance supplies both articles of food. Besides, for children at the breast, milk alone suffices; it serves both for meat and drink. “I,” says the Lord, “have meat to eat that ye know not of. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.” You see another kind of food which, similarly with milk, represents figuratively the will of God. Besides, also, the completion of His own passion He called catachrestically “a cup,” when He alone had to drink and drain it. Thus to Christ the fulfilling of His Father’s will was food; and to us infants, who drink the milk of the word of the heavens, Christ Himself is food. Hence seeking is called sucking; for to those babes that seek the Word, the Father’s breasts of love supply milk.

Further, the Word declares Himself to be the bread of heaven. “For Moses,” He says, “gave you not that bread from heaven, but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world. And the bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” Here is to be noted the mystery of the bread, inasmuch as He speaks of it as flesh, and as flesh, consequently, that has risen through fire, as the wheat springs up from decay and germination; and, in truth, it has risen through fire for the joy of the Church, as bread baked. But this will be shown by and by more clearly in the chapter on the resurrection. But since He said, “And the bread which I will give is My flesh,” and since flesh is moistened with blood, and blood is figuratively termed wine, we are bidden to know that, as bread, crumbled into a mixture of wine and water, seizes on the wine and leaves the watery portion, so also the flesh of Christ, the bread of heaven absorbs the blood; that is, those among men who are heavenly, nourishing them up to immortality, and leaving only to destruction the lusts of the flesh.

Thus in many ways the Word is figuratively described, as meat, and flesh, and food, and bread, and blood, and milk. The Lord is all these, to give enjoyment to us who have believed on Him. Let no one then think it strange, when we say that the Lord’s blood is figuratively represented as milk. For is it not figuratively represented as wine? “Who washes,” it is said, “His garment in wine, His robe in the blood of the grape.” In His Own Spirit He says He will deck the body of the Word; as certainly by His own Spirit He will nourish those who hunger for the Word.

And that the blood is the Word, is testified by the blood of Abel, the righteous interceding with God. For the blood would never have uttered a voice, had it not been regarded as the Word: for the righteous man of old is the type of the new righteous one; and the blood of old that interceded, intercedes in the place of the new blood. And the blood that is the Word cries to God, since it intimated that the Word was to suffer.

Further, this flesh, and the blood in it, are by a mutual sympathy
moistened and increased by the milk. And the process of formation of the seed in conception ensues when it has mingled with the pure residue of the menses, which remains. For the force that is in the seed coagulating the substances of the blood, as the rennet curdles milk, effects the essential part of the formative process. For a suitable blending conduces to fruitfulness; but extremes are adverse, and tend to sterility. For when the earth itself is flooded by excessive rain, the seed is swept away, while in consequence of scarcity it is dried up; but when the sap is viscous, it retains the seed, and makes it germinate. Some also hold the hypothesis, that the seed of an animal is in substance the foam of the blood, which being by the natural heat of the male agitated and shaken out is turned into foam, and deposited in the seminal veins. For Diogenes Apollionates will have it, that hence is derived the word aphrodisia. From all this it is therefore evident, that the essential principle of the human body is blood. The contents of the stomach, too, at first are milky, a coagulation of fluid; then the same coagulated substance is changed into blood; but when it is formed into a compact consistency in the womb, by the natural and warm spirit by which the embryo is fashioned, it becomes a living creature. Further also, the child after birth is nourished by the same blood. For the flow of milk is the product of the blood; and the source of nourishment is the milk; by which a woman is shown to have brought forth a child, and to be truly a mother, by which also she receives a potent charm of affection. Wherefore the Holy Spirit in the apostle, using the voice of the Lord, says mystically, “I have given you milk to drink.” For if we have been regenerated unto Christ, He who has regenerated us nourishes us with His own milk, the Word; for it is proper that what has procreated should forthwith supply nourishment to that which has been procreated. And as the regeneration was conformably spiritual, so also was the nutriment of man spiritual. In all respects, therefore, and in all things, we are brought into union with Christ, into relationship through His blood, by which we are redeemed; and into sympathy, in consequence of the nourishment which flows from the Word; and into immortality, through His guidance: —

“Among men the bringing up of children
Often produces stronger impulses to love than the procreating of them.”

The same blood and milk of the Lord is therefore the symbol of the Lord’s passion and teaching. Wherefore each of us babes is permitted to make our boast in the Lord, while we proclaim: —

“Yet of a noble sire and noble blood I boast me sprung.”

And that milk is produced from blood by a change, is already clear; yet we may learn it from the flocks and herds. For these animals, in the time of the year which we call spring, when the air has more humidity, and the grass
and meadows are juicy and moist, are first filled with blood, as is shown by the distension of the veins of the swollen vessels; and from the blood the milk flows more copiously. But in summer again, the blood being burnt and dried up by the heat, prevents the change, and so they have less milk. Further, milk has a most natural affinity for water, as assuredly the spiritual washing has for the spiritual nutriment. Those, therefore, that swallow a little cold water, in addition to the above-mentioned milk, straightway feel benefit; for the milk is prevented from souring by its combination with water, not in consequence of any antipathy between them, but in consequence of the water taking kindly to the milk while it is undergoing digestion. And such as is the union of the Word with baptism, is the agreement of milk with water; for it receives it alone of all liquids, and admits of mixture with water, for the purpose of cleansing, as baptism for the remission of sins. And it is mixed naturally with honey also, and this for cleansing along with sweet nutriment. For the Word blended with love at once cures our passions and cleanses our sins; and the saying, “Sweeter than honey flowed the stream of speech,” seems to me to have been spoken of the Word, who is honey. And prophecy oft extols Him “above honey and the honeycomb.” Furthermore, milk is mixed with sweet wine; and the mixture is beneficial, as when suffering is mixed in the cup in order to immortality. For the milk is curdled by the wine, and separated, and whatever adulteration is in it is drained off. And in the same way, the spiritual communion of faith with suffering man, drawing off as serious matter the lusts of the flesh, commits man to eternity, along with those who are divine, immortalizing him. Further, many also use the fat of milk, called butter, for the lamp, plainly indicating by this enigma the abundant unction of the Word, since He alone it is who nourishes the infants, makes them grow, and enlightens them. Wherefore also the Scripture says respecting the Lord, “He fed them with the produce of the fields; they sucked honey from the rock, and oil from the solid rock, butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs;” and what follows He gave them. But he that prophesies the birth of the child says: “Butter and honey shall He eat.” And it occurs to me to wonder how some dare call themselves perfect and gnostics, with ideas of themselves above the apostle, inflated and boastful, when Paul even owned respecting himself, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forth to those that are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.” And yet he reckons himself perfect, because he has
been emancipated from his former life, and strives after the better life, not
as perfect in knowledge, but as aspiring after perfection. Wherefore also he
adds, “As many of us as are perfect, are thus minded,” manifestly
describing perfection as the renunciation of sin, and regeneration into the
faith of the only perfect One, and forgetting our former sins.
CHAPTER 7
WHO THE INSTRUCTOR IS,
AND RESPECTING HIS INSTRUCTION
Since, then, we have shown that all of us are by Scripture called children;
and not only so, but that we who have followed Christ are figuratively
called babes; and that the Father of all alone is perfect, for the Son is in
Him, and the Father is in the Son; it is time for us in due course to say who
our Instructor is.
He is called Jesus: Sometimes He calls Himself a shepherd, and says, “I am
the good Shepherd.” According to a metaphor drawn from shepherds, who
lead the sheep, is hereby understood the Instructor, who leads the children
— the Shepherd who tends the babes. For the babes are simple, being
figuratively described as sheep. “And they shall all,” it is said, “be one
flock, and one shepherd.” The Word, then, who leads the children to
salvation, is appropriately called the Instructor (Paedagogue).
With the greatest clearness, accordingly, the Word has spoken respecting
Himself by Hosea: “I am your Instructor.” Now piety is instruction, being
the learning of the service of God, and training in the knowledge of the
truth, and right guidance which leads to heaven. And the word
“instruction” is employed variously. For there is the instruction of him
who is led and learns, and that of him who leads and teaches; and there is,
thirdly, the guidance itself; and fourthly, what is taught, as the
commandments enjoined.
Now the instruction which is of God is the right direction of truth to the
contemplation of God, and the exhibition of holy deeds in everlasting
perseverance.
429
As therefore the general directs the phalanx, consulting the safety of his
soldiers, and the pilot steers the vessel, desiring to save the passengers; so
also the Instructor guides the children to a saving course of conduct,
through solicitude for us; and, in general, whatever we ask in accordance
with reason from God to be done for us, will happen to those who believe
in the Instructor. And just as the helmsman does not always yield to the
winds, but sometimes, turning the prow towards them, opposes the whole
force of the hurricanes; so the Instructor never yields to the blasts that
blow in this world, nor commits the child to them like a vessel to make
shipwreck on a wild and licentious course of life; but, wafted on by the
favoring breeze of the Spirit of truth, stoutly holds on to the child’s helm,
— his ears, I mean, — until He bring him safe to anchor in the haven of
heaven.
What is called by men an ancestral custom passes away in a moment, but the divine guidance is a possession which abides for ever.
They say that Phoenix was the instructor of Achilles, and Adrastus of the children of Croesus; and Leonides of Alexander, and Nausithous of Philip. But Phoenix was women-mad Adrastus was a fugitive. Leonides did not curtail the pride of Alexander, nor Nausithous reform the drunken Pellaean. No more was the Thracian Zopyrus able to check the fornication of Alcibiades; but Zopyrus was a bought slave, and Sicinnus, the tutor of the children of Themistocles, was a lazy domestic. They say also that he invented the Sicinnian dance. Those have not escaped our attention who are called royal instructors among the Persians; whom, in number four, the kings of the Persians select with the greatest care from all the Persians and set over their sons. But the children only learn the use of the bow, and on reaching maturity have sexual intercourse with sisters, and mothers, and women, wives and courtesans innumerable, practiced in intercourse like the wild boars.
But our Instructor is the holy God Jesus, the Word, who is the guide of all humanity. The loving God Himself is our Instructor. Somewhere in song the Holy Spirit says with regard to Him, “He provided sufficiently for the people in the wilderness. He led him about in the thirst of summer heat in a dry land, and instructed him, and kept him as the apple of His eye, as an eagle protects her nest, and shows her fond solicitude for her young, spreads abroad her wings, takes them, and bears them on her back. The Lord alone led them, and there was no strange god with them.” Clearly, I trow, has the Scripture exhibited the Instructor in the account it gives of His guidance.
Again, when He speaks in His own person, He confesses Himself to be the Instructor: “I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt.” Who, then, has the power of leading in and out? Is it not the Instructor? This was He who appeared to Abraham, and said to him, “I am thy God, be accepted before Me;” and in a way most befitting an instructor, forms him into a faithful child, saying, “And be blameless; and I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and thy seed.” There is the communication of the Instructor’s friendship. And He most manifestly appears as Jacob’s instructor. He says accordingly to him, “Lo, I am with thee, to keep thee in all the way in which thou shalt go; and I will bring thee back into this land: for I will not leave thee till I do what I have told thee.” He is said, too, to have wrestled with Him. “And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled with him a man (the Instructor) till the morning.” This was the man who led, and brought, and wrestled with, and anointed the athlete Jacob against evil. Now that the Word was at once Jacob’s trainer and the Instructor of humanity [appears from this] — “He asked,”
it is said, “His name, and said to him, Tell me what is Thy name.” And he said, “Why is it that thou askest My name?” For He reserved the new name for the new people — the babe; and was as yet unnamed, the Lord God not having yet become man. Yet Jacob called the name of the place, “Face of God.” “For I have seen,” he says, “God face to face; and my life is preserved.” The face of God is the Word by whom God is manifested and made known. Then also was he named Israel, because he saw God the Lord. It was God, the Word, the Instructor, who said to him again afterwards, “Fear not to go down into Egypt.” See how the Instructor follows the righteous man, and how He anoints the athlete, teaching him to trip up his antagonist.

It is He also who teaches Moses to act as instructor. For the Lord says, “If any one sin before Me, him will I blot out of My book; but now, go and lead this people into the place which I told thee.” Here He is the teacher of the art of instruction. For it was really the Lord that was the instructor of the ancient people by Moses; but He is the instructor of the new people by Himself, face to face. “For behold,” He says to Moses, “My angel shall go before thee,” representing the evangelical and commanding power of the Word, but guarding the Lord’s prerogative. “In the day on which I will visit them,” He says, “I will bring their sins on them; that is, on the day on which I will sit as judge I will render the recompense of their sins.” For the same who is Instructor is judge, and judges those who disobey Him; and the loving Word will not pass over their transgression in silence. He reproves, that they may repent. For “the Lord willeth the repentance of the sinner rather than his death.” And let us as babes, hearing of the sins of others, keep from similar transgressions, through dread of the threatening, that we may not have to undergo like sufferings. What, then, was the sin which they committed? “For in their wrath they slew men, and in their impetuosity they hamstrung bulls. Cursed be their anger.” Who, then, would train us more lovingly than He? Formerly the older people had an old covenant, and the law disciplined the people with fear, and the Word was an angel; but to the fresh and new people has also been given a new covenant, and the Word has appeared, and fear is turned to love, and that mystic angel is born — Jesus. For this same Instructor said then, “Thou shalt fear the Lord God;” but to us He has addressed the exhortation, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.” Wherefore also this is enjoined on us: “Cease from your own works, from your old sins;” “Learn to do well;” “Depart from evil, and do good;” “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.” This is my new covenant written in the old letter. The newness of the word must not, then, be made ground of reproach. But the Lord hath also said in Jeremiah: “Say not that I am a youth: before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before I brought thee out of the womb I sanctified thee.” Such
allusions prophecy can make to us, destined in the eye of God to faith
before the foundation of the world; but now babes, through the recent
fulfillment of the will of God, according to which we are born now to
calling and salvation. Wherefore also He adds, “I have set thee for a
prophet to the nations,” saying that he must prophesy, so that the
appellation of “youth” should not become a reproach to those who are
called babes.
Now the law is ancient grace given through Moses by the Word.
Wherefore also the Scripture says, “The law was given through Moses,”
432
not by Moses, but by the Word, and through Moses His servant.
Wherefore it was only temporary; but eternal grace and truth were by
Jesus Christ. Mark the expressions of Scripture: of the law only is it said
“was given;” but truth being the grace of the Father, is the eternal work of
the Word; and it is not said to be given, but to be by Jesus, without whom
nothing was. Presently, therefore, Moses prophetically, giving place to the
perfect Instructor the Word, predicts both the name and the office of
Instructor, and committing to the people the commands of obedience, sets
before them the Instructor. “A prophet,” says he, “like Me shall God raise
up to you of your brethren,” pointing out Jesus the Son of God, by an
allusion to Jesus the son of Nun; for the name of Jesus predicted in the law
was a shadow of Christ. He adds, therefore, consulting the advantage of
the people, “Him shall ye hear;” and, “The man who will not hear that
Prophet,” him He threatens. Such a name, then, he predicts as that of the
Instructor, who is the author of salvation. Wherefore prophecy invests
Him with a rod, a rod of discipline, of rule, of authority; that those whom
the persuasive word heals not, the threatening may heal; and whom the
threatening heals not, the rod may heal; and whom the rod heals not, the
fire may devour. “There shall come forth,” it is said, “a rod out of the root
of Jesse.”
See the care, and wisdom, and power of the Instructor: “He shall not judge
according to opinion, nor according to report; but He shall dispense
judgment to the humble, and reprove the sinners of the earth.” And by
David: “The Lord instructing, hath instructed me, and not given me over to
death.” For to be chastised of the Lord, and instructed, is deliverance from
death. And by the same prophet He says: “Thou shalt rule them with a
rod of iron.” Thus also the apostle, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, being
moved, says, “What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love,
in the spirit of meekness?” Also, “The Lord shall send the rod of strength
out of Sion,” He says by another prophet. And this same rod of
instruction, “Thy rod and staff have comforted me,” said some one else.
Such is the power of the Instructor — sacred, soothing, saving.
433
CHAPTER 8
AGAINST THOSE WHO THINK
THAT WHAT IS JUST IS NOT GOOD
At this stage some rise up, saying that the Lord, by reason of the rod, and
threatening, and fear, is not good; misapprehending, as appears, the
Scripture which says, “And he that feareth the Lord will turn to his heart;”
and most of all, oblivious of His love, in that for us He became man. For
more suitably to Him, the prophet prays in these words: “Remember us,
for we are dust;” that is, Sympathize with us; for Thou knowest from
personal experience of suffering the weakness of the flesh. In this respect,
therefore, the Lord the Instructor is most good and unimpeachable,
sympathizing as He does from the exceeding greatness of His love with the
nature of each man. “For there is nothing which the Lord hates.” For
assuredly He does not hate anything, and yet wish that which He hates to
exist. Nor does He wish anything not to exist, and yet become the cause
of existence to that which He wishes not to exist. Nor does He wish anything
not to exist which yet exists. If, then, the Word hates anything, He does
not wish it to exist. But nothing exists, the cause of whose existence is not
supplied by God. Nothing, then, is hated by God, nor yet by the Word.
For both are one — that is, God. For He has said, “In the beginning the
Word was in God, and the Word was God.” If then He hates none of the
things which He has made, it follows that He loves them. Much more than
the rest, and with reason, will He love man, the noblest of all objects
created by Him, and a God-loving being. Therefore God is loving;
consequently the Word is loving.
But he who loves anything wishes to do it good. And that which does
good must be every way better than that which does not good. But nothing
is better than the Good. The Good, then, does good. And God is admitted
to be good. God therefore does good. And the Good, in virtue of its being
good, does nothing else than do good. Consequently God does all good.
And He does no good to man without caring for him, and He does not care
far him without taking care of him. For that which does good purposely, is
better than what does not good purposely. But nothing is better than God.
And to do good purposely, is nothing else than to take care of man. God
434
therefore cares for man, and takes care of him. And He shows this
practically, in instructing him by the Word, who is the true coadjutor of
God’s love to man. But the good is not said to be good, on account of its
being possessed of virtue; as also righteousness is not said to be good on
account of its possessing virtue — for it is itself virtue. — but on account
of its being in itself and by itself good.
In another way the useful is called good, not on account of its pleasing, but
of its doing good. All which, therefore, is righteousness, being a good thing,
both as virtue and as desirable for its own sake, and not as giving pleasure;
for it does not judge in order to win favor, but dispenses to each according
to his merits. And the beneficial follows the useful. Righteousness, therefore, has characteristics corresponding to all the aspects in which goodness is examined, both possessing equal properties equally. And things which are characterized by equal properties are equal and similar to each other. Righteousness is therefore a good thing.

“How then,” say they, “if the Lord loves man, and is good, is He angry and punishes?” We must therefore treat of this point with all possible brevity; for this mode of treatment is advantageous to the right training of the children, occupying the place of a necessary help. For many of the passions are cured by punishment, and by the inculcation of the sterner precepts, as also by instruction in certain principles. For reproof is, as it were, the surgery of the passions of the soul; and the passions are, as it were, an abscess of the truth, which must be cut open by an incision of the lancet of reproof.

Reproach is like the application of medicines, dissolving the callosities of the passions, and purging the impurities of the lewdness of the life; and in addition, reducing the excrescences of pride, restoring the patient to the healthy and true state of humanity.

Admonition is, as it were, the regimen of the diseased soul, prescribing what it must take, and forbidding what it must not. And all these tend to salvation and eternal health.

Furthermore, the general of an army, by inflicting fines and corporeal punishments with chains and the extremist disgrace on offenders, and sometimes even by punishing individuals with death, aims at good, doing so for the admonition of the officers under him.

Thus also He who is our great General, the Word, the Commander-in-chief of the universe by admonishing those who throw off the restraints of His law, that He may effect their release from the slavery, error, and captivity of the adversary, brings them peacefully to the sacred concord of citizenship.

As, therefore in addition to persuasive discourse, there is the hortatory and the consolatory form; so also, in addition to the laudatory, there is the inculpatory and reproachful. And this latter constitutes the art of censure.

Now censure is a mark of good-will, not of ill-will. For both he who is a friend and he who is not, reproach; but the enemy does so in scorn, the friend in kindness. It is not, then, from hatred that the Lord chides men; for He Himself suffered for us, whom He might have destroyed for our faults. For the Instructor also, in virtue of His being good, with consummate art glides into censure by rebuke; rousing the sluggishness of the mind by His sharp words as by a scourge. Again in turn He endeavors to exhort the same persons. For those who are not induced by praise are spurred on by censure; and those whom censure calls not forth to salvation being as dead, are by denunciation roused to the truth. “For the stripes and correction of
wisdom are in all time.” “For teaching a fool is gluing a potsherd; and sharpening to sense a hopeless blockhead is bringing earth to sensation.”

Wherefore He adds plainly, “rousing the sleeper from deep sleep,” which of all things else is likest death.

Further, the Lord shows very clearly of Himself, when, describing figuratively His manifold and in many ways serviceable culture, — He says, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.” Then He adds, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit He pruneth, that it may bring forth more fruit.” For the vine that is not pruned grows to wood. So also man. The Word — the knife — clears away the wanton shoots; compelling the impulses of the soul to fructify, not to indulge in lust. Now, reproof addressed to sinners has their salvation for its aim, the word being harmoniously adjusted to each one’s conduct; now with tightened, now with relaxed cords. Accordingly it was very plainly said by Moses, “Be of good courage: God has drawn near to try you, that His fear may be among you, that ye sin not.” And Plato, who had learned from this source, says beautifully: “For all who suffer punishment are in reality treated well, for they are benefited; since the spirit of those who are justly punished is improved.” And if those who are corrected receive good at the hands of justice, and, according to Plato, what is just is acknowledged to be good, fear itself does good, and has been found to be for men’s good. “For the soul that feareth the Lord shall live, for their hope is in Him who saveth them.” And this same Word who inflicts punishment is judge; regarding whom Esaias also says, “The Lord has assigned Him to our sins,” plainly as a corrector and reformer of sins. Wherefore He alone is able to forgive our iniquities, who has been appointed by the Father, Instructor of us all; He alone it is who is able to distinguish between disobedience and obedience. And while He threatens, He manifestly is unwilling to inflict evil to execute His threatenings; but by inspiring men with fear, He cuts off the approach to sin, and shows His love to man, still delaying, and declaring what they shall suffer if they continue sinners, and is not as a serpent, which the moment it fastens on its prey devours it.

God, then, is good. And the Lord speaks many a time and oft before He proceeds to act. “For my arrows,” He says, “will make an end of them; they shall be consumed with hunger, and be eaten by birds; and there shall be incurable tetanic incurvature. I will send the teeth of wild beasts upon them, with the rage of serpents creeping on the earth. Without, the sword shall make them childless; and out of their chambers shall be fear.” For the Divine Being is not angry in the way that some think; but often restrains, and always exhorts humanity, and shows what ought to be done. And this is a good device, to terrify lest we sin. “For the fear of the Lord drives away sins, and he that is without fear cannot be justified,” says the
Scripture. And God does not inflict punishment from wrath, but for the 
437
and requite those who hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, 
and my sword shall devour flesh from the blood of the wounded." It is 
clear, then, that those who are not at enmity with the truth, and do not 
hate the Word, will not hate their own salvation, but will escape the 
punishment of enmity. “The crown of wisdom,” then as the book of 
Wisdom says, “is the fear of the Lord.” Very clearly, therefore, by the 
prophet Amos has the Lord unfolded His method of dealing, saying, “I 
have overthrown you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah; and ye 
shall be as a brand plucked from the fire: and yet ye have not returned unto 
me, saith the LORD.”

See how God, through His love of goodness, seeks repentance; and by 
means of the plan He pursues of threatening silently, shows His own love 
for man. “I will avert,” He says, “My face from them, and show what 
shall happen to them.” For where the face of the Lord looks, there is peace 
and rejoicing; but where it is averted, there is the introduction of evil. The 
Lord, accordingly, does not wish to look on evil things; for He is good. But 
on His looking away, evil arises spontaneously through human unbelief. 
“Behold, therefore,” says Paul, “the goodness and severity of God: on 
them that fell severity; but upon thee, goodness, if thou continue in His 
goodness,” that is, in faith in Christ.

Now hatred of evil attends the good man, in virtue of His being in nature 
good. Wherefore I will grant that He punishes the disobedient (for 
punishment is for the good and advantage of him who is punished, for it is 
the correction of a refractory subject); but I will not grant that He wishes 
to take vengeance. Revenge is retribution for evil, imposed for the 
advantage of him who takes the revenge. He will not desire us to take 
revenge, who teaches us “to pray for those that despitefully use us.” But 
that God is good, all willingly admit; and that the same God is just, I 
require not many more words to prove, after adducing the evangelical 
utterance of the Lord; He speaks of Him as one, “That they all may be 
one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one 
in Us: that the world also may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the 
glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them; that they may be one, 
as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect 
in one.” God is one, and beyond the one and above the Monad itself. 
Wherefore also the particle “Thou,” having a demonstrative emphasis, 
438
points out God, who alone truly is, “who was, and is, and is to come,” in 
which three divisions of time the one name (οJ wjn); “who is,” has its place. 
And that He who alone is God is also alone and truly righteous, our Lord 
in the Gospel itself shall testify, saying “Father, I will that they also 
whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold
My glory, which Thou hast given Me: For Thou lovest Me before the
foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known
Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent
Me. And I have declared to them Thy name, and will declare it.” This is
He “that visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to them that
hate Him, and shows mercy to those that love Him.” For He who placed
some “on the right hand, and others on the left,” conceived as Father, being
good, is called that which alone He is — “good;” but as He is the Son in
the Father, being his Word, from their mutual relation, the name of power
being measured by equality of love, He is called righteous. “He will judge,”
He says, “a man according to his works,” — a good balance, even God
having made known to us the face of righteousness in the person of Jesus,
by whom also, as by even scales, we know God. Of this also the book of
Wisdom plainly says, “For mercy and wrath are with Him, for He alone is
Lord of both,” Lord of propitiations, and pouring forth wrath according to
the abundance of His mercy. “So also is His reproof.” For the aim of
mercy and of reproof is the salvation of those who are reproved.
Now, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus is good, the Word
Himself will again avouch: “For He is kind to the unthankful and the evil;”
and further, when He says,” Be merciful, as your Father is merciful.” Still
further also He plainly says, “None is good, but My Father, who is in
heaven.” In addition to these, again He says, “My Father makes His sun to
shine on all.” Here it is to be noted that He proclaims His Father to be
good, and to be the Creator. And that the Creator is just, is not disputed:
And again he says,” My Father sends rain on the just, and on the unjust.”
In respect of His sending rain, He is the Creator of the waters, and of the
clouds. And in respect of His doing so on all, He holds an even balance
justly and rightly. And as being good, He does so on just and unjust alike.
Very clearly, then, we conclude Him to be one and the same God, thus.
For the Holy Spirit has sung, “I will look to the heavens, the works of
Thy hands;” and, “He who created the heavens dwells in the heavens;”
and, “Heaven is Thy throne.” And the Lord says in His prayer, “Our
Father, who art in heaven.” And the heavens belong to Him, who created
the world. It is indisputable, then, that the Lord is the Son of the Creator.
And if, the Creator above all is confessed to be just, and the Lord to be the
Son of the Creator; then the Lord is the Son of Him who is just. Wherefore
also Paul says, “But now the righteousness of God without the law is
manifested;” and again, that you may better conceive of God, “even the
righteousness of God by the faith of Jesus Christ upon all that believe; for
there is no difference.” And, witnessing further to the truth, he adds after a
little, “through the forbearance of God, in order to show that He is just,
and that Jesus is the justifier of him who is of faith.” And that he knows
that what is just is good, appears by his saying, “So that the law is holy,
and the commandment holy, and just, and good,” using both names to denote the same power. But “no one is good,” except His Father. It is this same Father of His, then who being one is manifested by many powers. And this was the import of the utterance, “No man knew the Father,” who was Himself everything before the coming of the Son. So that it is veritably clear that the God of all is only one good, just Creator, and the Son in the Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen. But it is not inconsistent with the saving Word, to administer rebuke dictated by solicitude. For this is the medicine of the divine love to man, by which the blush of modesty breaks forth, and shame at sin supervenes. For if one must censure, it is necessary also to rebuke; when it is the time to wound the apathetic soul not mortally, but salutarily, securing exemption from everlasting death by a little pain.

Great is the wisdom displayed in His instruction, and manifold the modes of His dealing in order to salvation. For the Instructor testifies to the good, and summons forth to better things those that are called; dissuades those that are hastening to do wrong from the attempt, and exhorts them to turn to a better life. For the one is not without testimony, when the other has been testified to; and the grace which proceeds from the testimony is very great. Besides, the feeling of anger (if it is proper to call His admonition anger) is full of love to man, God condescending to emotion on man’s account; for whose sake also the Word of God became man.

440
CHAPTER 9
THAT IT IS THE PREROGATIVE OF THE SAME POWER TO BE BENEFICENT AND TO PUNISH JUSTLY. ALSO THE MANNER OF THE INSTRUCTION OF THE LOGOS
With all His power, therefore, the Instructor of humanity, the Divine Word, using all the resources of wisdom, devotes Himself to the saving of the children, admonishing, upbraiding, blaming, chiding, reproving, threatening, healing, promising, favoring; and as it were, by many reins, curbing the irrational impulses of humanity. To speak briefly, therefore, the Lord acts towards us as we do towards our children. “Hast thou children? correct them,” is the exhortation of the book of Wisdom, “and bend them from their youth. Hast thou daughters? attend to their body, and let not thy face brighten towards them,” — although we love our children exceedingly, both sons and daughters, above aught else whatever. For those who speak with a man merely to please him, have little love for him, seeing they do not pain him; while those that speak for his good, though they inflict pain for the time, do him good for ever after. It is not immediate pleasure, but future enjoyment, that the Lord has in view.

Let us now proceed to consider the mode of His loving discipline, with the aid of the prophetic testimony.
Admonition, then, is the censure of loving care, and produces
understanding. Such is the Instructor in His admonitions, as when He says in the Gospel, “How often would I have gathered thy children, as a bird gathers her young ones under her wings, and ye would not!” And again, the Scripture admonishes, saying, “And they committed adultery with stock and stone, and burnt incense to Baal.” For it is a very great proof of His love, that, though knowing well the shamelessness of the people that had kicked and bounded away, He notwithstanding exhorts them to repentance, and says by Ezekiel, “Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of scorpions; nevertheless, speak to them, if peradventure they will hear.” Further, to Moses He says, “Go and tell Pharaoh to send My people forth; but I know that he will not send them forth.” For He shows both things: both His divinity in His foreknowledge of what would take place, and His love in affording an opportunity for repentance to the self-determination of the soul. He admonishes also by Esaias, in His care for the people, when He says, “This people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.” What follows is reproving censure: “In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Here His loving care, having shown their sin, shows salvation side by side. Upbraiding is censure on account of what is base, conciliating to what is noble. This is shown by Jeremiah: “They were female-mad horses; each one neighed after his neighbor’s wife. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” He everywhere interweaves fear, because “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of sense.” And again, by Hosea, He says, “Shall I not visit them? for they themselves were mingled with harlots, and sacrificed with the initiated; and the people that understood embraced a harlot.” He shows their offense to be clearer, by declaring that they understood, and thus sinned willfully. Understanding is the eye of the soul; wherefore also Israel means, “he that sees God” — that is, he that understands God. Complaint is censure of those who are regarded as despising or neglecting. He employs this form when He says by Esaias: “Hear, O heaven; and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have begotten and brought up children, but they have disregarded Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel hath not known Me.” For how shall we not regard it fearful, if he that knows God, shall not recognize the Lord; but while the ox and the ass, stupid and foolish animals, will know him who feeds them, Israel is found to be more irrational than these? And having, by Jeremiah, complained against the people on many grounds, He adds: “And they have forsaken Me, saith the LORD.” Invective is a reproachful upbraiding, or chiding censure. This mode of treatment the Instructor employs in Isaiah, when He says, “Woe to you, children revolters. Thus saith the LORD, Ye have taken counsel, but not by Me; and made compacts, but not by My Spirit.” He uses the very
bitter mordant of fear in each case repressing the people, and at the same
time turning them to salvation; as also wool that is undergoing the process
of dyeing is wont to be previously treated with mordants, in order to
prepare it for taking on a fast color.
442
Reproof is the bringing forward of sin, laying it before one. This form of
instruction He employs as in the highest degree necessary, by reason of
the feebleness of the faith of many. For He says by Esaias, “Ye have
forsaken the LORD, and have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger.”
And He says also by Jeremiah: “Heaven was astonished at this, and the
earth shuddered exceedingly. For My people have committed two evils;
they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn out
to themselves broken cisterns, which will not be able to hold water.” And
again, by the same: “Jerusalem hath sinned a sin; therefore it became
commotion. All that glorified her dishonored her, when they saw her
baseness.” And He uses the bitter and biting language of reproof in His
consolations by Solomon, tacitly alluding to the love for children that
characterizes His instruction: “My son, despise not thou the chastening of
the LORD; nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the LORD
loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth;” “For
a man who is a sinner escapes reproof.” Consequently, therefore, the
Scripture says, “Let the righteous reprove and correct me; but let not the
oil of the sinner anoint my head.”
Bringing one to his senses (frenswiv) is censure, which makes a man
think. Neither from this form of instruction does he abstain, but says by
Jeremiah, “How long shall I cry, and you not hear? So your ears are
uncircumcised.” O blessed forbearance! And again, by the same: “All the
heathen are uncircumcised, but this people is uncircumcised in heart:” “for
the people are disobedient; children,” says He, “in whom is not faith.”
Visitation is severe rebuke. He uses this species in the Gospel: “O
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are
sent unto thee!” The reduplication of the name gives strength to the
rebuke. For he that knows God, how does he persecute God’s servants?
Wherefore He says, “Your house is left desolate; for I say unto you,
Henceforth ye shall not see Me, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that
cometh in the name of the Lord.” For if you do not receive His love, ye
shall know His power.
Denunciation is vehement speech. And He employs denunciation as
medicine, by Isaiah, saying, “Ah, sinful nation, lawless sons, people full of
sins, wicked seed!” And in the Gospel by John He says, “Serpents, brood
443
of vipers.” Accusation is censure of wrong-doers. This mode of instruction
He employs by David, when He says: “The people whom I knew not
served me, and at the hearing of the ear obeyed me. Sons of strangers lied
to me, and halted from their ways.” And by Jeremiah: “And I gave her a writing of divorcement, and covenant-breaking Judah feared not.” And again: “And the house of Israel disregarded Me; and the house of Judah lied to the LORD.”

Bewailing one’s fate is latent censure, and by artful aid ministers salvation as under a veil. He made use of this by Jeremiah: “How did the city sit solitary that was full of people! She that ruled over territories became as a widow; she came under tribute; weeping, she wept in the night.”

Objurgation is objurgatory censure. Of this help the Divine Instructor made use by Jeremiah, saying, “Thou hadst a whore’s forehead; thou wast shameless towards all; and didst not call me to the house, who am thy father, and Lord of thy virginity.” “And a fair and graceful harlot skilled in enchanted potions.” With consummate art, after applying to the virgin the opprobrious name of whoredom, He thereupon calls her back to an honorable life by filling her with shame.

Indignation is a rightful upbraiding; or upbraiding on account of ways exalted above what is right. In this way He instructed by Moses, when He said, “Faulty children, a generation crooked and perverse, do ye thus requite the LORD? This people is foolish, and not wise. Is not this thy father who acquired thee?” He says also by Isaiah, “Thy princes are disobedient, companions of thieves, loving gifts, following after rewards, not judging the orphans.”

In fine, the system He pursues to inspire fear is the source of salvation. And it is the prerogative of goodness to save: “The mercy of the Lord is on all flesh, while He reproves, corrects, and teaches as a shepherd His flock. He pities those who receive His instruction, and those who eagerly seek union with Him.” And with such guidance He guarded the six hundred thousand footmen that were brought together in the hardness of heart in which they were found; scourging, pitying, striking, healing, in compassion and discipline: “For according to the greatness of His mercy, so is His rebuke.” For it is indeed noble not to sin; but it is good also for the sinner to repent; just as it is best to be always in good health, but well to recover from disease. So He commands by Solomon: “Strike thou thy son with the rod, that thou mayest deliver his soul from death.” And again: “Abstain not from chastising thy son, but correct him with the rod; for he will not die.”

For reproof and rebuke, as also the original term implies, are the stripes of the soul, chastising sins, preventing death, and leading to self-control those carried away to licentiousness. Thus also Plato, knowing reproof to be the greatest power for reformation, and the most sovereign purification, in accordance with what has been said, observes, “that he who is in the highest degree impure is uninstructed and base, by reason of his being unreproved in those respects in which he who is destined to be truly
happy ought to be purest and best.”
For if rulers are not a terror to a good work, how shall God, who is by nature good, be a terror to him who sins not? “If thou doest evil, be afraid,” says the apostle. Wherefore the apostle himself also in every case uses stringent language to the Churches, after the Lord’s example; and conscious of his own boldness, and of the weakness of his hearers, he says to the Galatians: “Am I your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” Thus also people in health do not require a physician, do not require him as long as they are strong; but those who are ill need his skill. Thus also we who in our lives are ill of shameful lusts and reprehensible excesses, and other inflammatory effects of the passions, need the Savior. And He administers not only mild, but also stringent medicines. The bitter roots of fear then arrest the eating sores of our sins. Wherefore also fear is salutary, if bitter. Sick, we truly stand in need of the Savior; having wandered, of one to guide us; blind, of one to lead us to the light; thirsty, “of the fountain of life, of which whosoever partakes, shall no longer thirst;” dead, we need life; sheep, we need a shepherd; we who are children need a tutor, while universal humanity stands in need of Jesus; so that we may not continue intractable and sinners to the end, and thus fall into condemnation, but may be separated from the chaff, and stored up in the paternal garner. “For the fan is in the Lord’s hand, by which the chaff due to the fire is separated from the wheat.” You may learn, if you will, the crowning wisdom of the all-holy Shepherd and Instructor, of the omnipotent and paternal Word, when He figuratively represents Himself as the Shepherd of the sheep. And He is the Tutor of the children. He says therefore by Ezekiel, directing His discourse to the elders, and setting before them a salutary description of His wise solicitude: “And that which is lame I will bind up, and that which is sick I will heal, and that which has wandered I will turn back; and I will feed them on my holy mountain.” Such are the promises of the good Shepherd.
Feed us, the children, as sheep. Yea, Master, fill us with righteousness, Thine own pasture; yea, O Instructor, feed us on Thy holy mountain the Church, which towers aloft, which is above the clouds, which touches heaven. “And I will be,” He says, “their Shepherd,” and will be near them, as the garment to their skin. He wishes to save my flesh by enveloping it in the robe of immortality, and He hath anointed my body. “They shall call Me,” He says, “and I will say, Here am I.” Thou didst hear sooner than I expected, Master. “And if they pass over, they shall not slip,” saith the Lord. For we who are passing over to immortality shall not fall into corruption, for He shall sustain us. For so He has said, and so He has willed. Such is our Instructor, righteously good. “I came not,” He says, “to be ministered unto, but to minister.” Wherefore He is introduced in the Gospel “weariest,” because toiling for us, and promising “to give His life a
ransom for many.” For him alone who does so He owns to be the good shepherd. Generous, therefore, is He who gives for us the greatest of all gifts, His own life; and beneficent exceedingly, and loving to men, in that, when He might have been Lord, He wished to be a brother man; and so good was He that He died for us.

Further, His righteousness cried, “If ye come straight to me, I also will come straight to you; but if ye walk crooked, I also will walk crooked saith the Lord of hosts;” meaning by the crooked ways the chastisements of sinners. For the straight and natural way which is indicated by the iota of the name of Jesus is His goodness, which is firm and sure towards those who have believed at hearing: “When I called, ye obeyed not, saith the Lord; but set at nought my counsels, and heeded not my reproofs.” Thus the Lord’s reproof is most beneficial. David also says of them, “A perverse and provoking race; a race which set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful with God: they kept not the covenant of God, and would not walk in His law.”

446

Such are the causes of provocation for which the Judge comes to inflict punishment on those that would not choose a life of goodness. Wherefore also afterwards He assailed them more roughly; in order, if possible, to drag them back from their impetuous rush towards death. He therefore tells by David the most manifest cause of the threatening: “They believed not in His wonderful works. When He slew them, they sought after Him, and turned and inquired early after God; and remembered that God was their Helper, and God the Most High their Redeemer.” Thus He knew that they turned for fear, while they despised His love: for, for the most part, that goodness which is always mild is despised; but He who admonishes by the loving fear of righteousness is reverenced.

There is a twofold species of fear, the one of which is accompanied with reverence, such as citizens show towards good rulers, and we towards God, as also right-minded children towards their fathers. “For an unbroken horse turns out unmanageable, and a son who is let take his own way turns out reckless.” The other species of fear is accompanied with hatred, which slaves feel towards hard masters, and the Hebrews felt, who made God a master, not a father. And as far as piety is concerned, that which is voluntary and spontaneous differs much, nay entirely, from what is forced. “For He,” it is said, “is merciful; He will heal their sins, and not destroy them, and fully turn away His anger, and not kindle all His wrath.” See how the justice of the Instructor, which deals in rebukes, is shown; and the goodness of God, which deals in compassions. Wherefore David — that is, the Spirit by him — embracing them both, sings of God Himself, “Justice and judgment are the preparation of His throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face.” He declares that it belongs to the same power both to judge and to do good. For there is power over both together, and
judgment separates that which is just from its opposite. And He who is truly God is just and good; who is Himself all, and all is He; for He is God, the only God.
For as the mirror is not evil to an ugly man because it shows him what like he is; and as the physician is not evil to the sick man because he tells him of his fever, — for the physician is not the cause of the fever, but only points out the fever; — so neither is He, that reproves, ill-disposed towards him who is diseased in soul. For He does not put the transgressions on him, but only shows the sins which are there; in order to turn him away from similar practices. So God is good on His own account, and just also on ours, and He is just because He is good. And His justice is shown to us by His own Word from there from above, whence the Father was. For before He became Creator He was God; He was good. And therefore He wished to be Creator and Father. And the nature of all that love was the source of righteousness — the cause, too, of His lighting up His sun, and sending down His own Son. And He first announced the good righteousness that is from heaven, when He said, “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; nor the Father, but the Son.” This mutual and reciprocal knowledge is the symbol of primeval justice. Then justice came down to men both in the letter and in the body, in the Word and in the law, constraining humanity to saving repentance; for it was good. But do you not obey God? Then blame yourself, who drag to yourself the judge.
CHAPTER 10
THAT THE SAME GOD, BY THE SAME WORD,
RESTRAINS FROM SIN BY THREATENING,
AND SAVES HUMANITY BY EXHORTING
If, then, we have shown that the plan of dealing stringently with humanity is good and salutary, and necessarily adopted by the Word, and conducive to repentance and the prevention of sins; we shall have now to look in order at the mildness of the Word. For He has been demonstrated to be just. He sets before us His own inclinations which invite to salvation; by which, in accordance with the Father’s will, He wishes to make known to us the good and the useful. Consider these. The good (to kalon) belongs to the panegyrical form of speech, the useful to the persuasive. For the hortatory and the de-hortatory are a form of the persuasive, and the laudatory and inculpatory of the panegyrical.
For the persuasive style of sentence in one form becomes hortatory, and in another dehortatory. So also the panegyrical in one form becomes inculpatory, and in another laudatory. And in these exercises the Instructor, the Just One, who has proposed our advantage as His aim, is chiefly occupied. But the inculpatory and dehortatory forms of speech have been already shown us; and we must now handle the persuasive and
the laudatory, and, as on a beam, balance the equal scales of justice. The
exhortation to what is useful, the Instructor employs by Solomon, to the
following effect: “I exhort you, O men; and I utter my voice to the sons of
men. Hear me; for I will speak of excellent things;” and so on. And He
counsels what is salutary: for counsel has for its end, choosing or refusing
a certain course; as He does by David, when He says, “Blessed is the man
who walketh not in the counsels of the ungodly, and standeth not in the
way of sinners, and sitteth not in the chair of pestilences; but his will is in
the law of the LORD.” And there are three departments of counsel: That
which takes examples from past times; as what the Hebrews suffered
when they worshipped the golden calf, and what they suffered when they
committed fornication, and the like. The second, whose meaning is
understood from the present times, as being apprehended by perception;
as it was said to those who asked the Lord, “If He was the Christ, or shall
we wait for another? Go and tell John, the blind receive their sight, the deaf
hear, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised up; and blessed is he who
shall not be offended in Me.” Such was that which David said when he
prophesied, “As we have heard, so have we seen.” And the third
department of counsel consists of what is future, by which we are bidden
guard against what is to happen; as also that was said, “They that fall into
sins shall be cast into outer darkness, where there shall be wailing and
gnashing of teeth,” and the like. So that from these things it is clear that the
Lord, going the round of all the methods of curative treatment, calls
humanity to salvation.

By encouragement He assuages sins, reducing lust, and at the same time
inspiring hope for salvation. For He says by Ezekiel, “If ye return with
your whole heart, and say, Father, I will hear you, as a holy people.” And
again He says, “Come all to Me, who labor, and are heavy laden, and I will
give you rest;” and that which is added the Lord speaks in His own
person. And very clearly He calls to goodness by Solomon, when He says,
“Blessed is the man who hath found wisdom, and the mortal who hath
found understanding.” “For the good is found by him who seeks it, and is
wont to be seen by him who has found it.” By Jeremiah, too, He sets forth
prudence, when he says, “Blessed are we, Israel; for what is pleasing to
God is known by us; — and it is known by the Word, by whom we are
blessed and wise. For wisdom and knowledge are mentioned by the same
prophet, when he says, “Hear, O Israel, the commandments of life, and
give ear to know understanding.” By Moses, too, by reason of the love He
has to man, He promises a gift to those who hasten to salvation. For He
says, “And I will bring you into the good land, which the Lord sware to
your fathers.” And further, “And I will bring you into the holy mountain,
and make you glad,” He says by Isaiah. And still another form of
instruction is benediction. “And blessed is he,” He saith by David, “who
has not sinned; and he shall be as the tree planted near the channels of the waters, which will yield its fruit in its season, and his leaf shall not wither “(by this He made an allusion to the resurrection); “and whatsoever he shall do shall prosper with him.” Such He wishes us to be, that we may be blessed. Again, showing the opposite scale of the balance of justice, He says, “But not so the ungodly — not so; but as the dust which the wind sweeps away from the face of the earth.” By showing the punishment of sinners, and their easy dispersion, and carrying off by the wind, the Instructor dissuades from crime by means of punishment; and by holding up the merited penalty, shows the benignity of His beneficence in the most skillful way, in order that we may possess and enjoy its blessings. He invites us to knowledge also, when He says by Jeremiah, “Hadst thou walked in the way of God, thou wouldst have dwelt for ever in peace; for, exhibiting there the reward of knowledge, He calls the wise to the love of it. And, granting pardon to him who has erred, He says, “Turn, turn, as a grape-gatherer to his basket.” Do you see the goodness of justice, in that it counsels to repentance? And still further, by Jeremiah, He enlightens in the truth those who have erred. “Thus saith the LORD, Stand in the ways, and look, and ask for the eternal paths of the Lord, what is the good path, and walk in it, and ye shall find purification for your souls.” And in order to promote our salvation, He leads us to repentance. Wherefore He says, “If thou repent, the LORD will purify thy heart, and the heart of thy seed.” We might have adduced, as supporters on this question, the philosophers who say that only the perfect man is worthy of praise, and the bad man of blame. But since some slander beatitude, as neither itself taking any trouble, nor giving any to any one else, thus not understanding its love to man; on their account, and on account of those who do not associate justice with goodness, the following remarks are added. For it were a legitimate inference to say, that rebuke and censure are suitable to men, since they say that all men are bad; but God alone is wise, from whom cometh wisdom, and alone perfect, and therefore alone worthy of praise. But I do not employ such language. I say, then, that praise or blame, or whatever resembles praise or blame, are medicines most essential of all to men. Some are ill to cure, and, like iron, are wrought into shape with fire, and hammer, and anvil, that is, with threatening, and reproof, and chastisement; while others, cleaving to faith itself, as self-taught, and as acting of their own free-will, grow by praise: — “For virtue that is praised Grows like a tree.” And comprehending this, as it seems to me, the Samian Pythagoras gives the injunction: — “When you have done base things, rebuke yourself; But when you have done good things, be glad.”
Chiding is also called admonishing; and the etymology of admonishing (nouqe>thsiv) is (nou~ ejnqematismo>v) putting of understanding into one; so that rebuking is bringing one to one’s senses.

But there are myriads of injunctions to be found, whose aim is the attainment of what is good, and the avoidance of what is evil. “For there is no peace to the wicked, saith the LORD.” Wherefore by Solomon He commands the children to beware: “My son, let not sinners deceive thee, and go not after their ways; and go not, if they entice thee, saying, Come with us, share with us in innocent blood, and let us hide unjustly the righteous man in the earth; let us put him out of sight, all alive as he is into Hades.” This is accordingly likewise a prediction concerning the Lord’s passion. And by Ezekiel, the life supplies commandments: “The soul that sinneth shall die; but he that doeth righteousness shall be righteous. He eateth not upon the mountains, and hath not set his eyes on the devices of the house of Israel, and will not defile his neighbor’s wife, and will not approach to a woman in her separation, and will not oppress a man, and will restore the debtor’s pledge, and will not take plunder: he will give his bread to the hungry, and clothe the naked. His money he will not give on usury, and will not take interest; and he will turn away his hand from wrong, and will execute righteous judgment between a man and his neighbor. He has walked in my statutes, and kept my judgments to do them. This is a righteous man. He shall surely live, saith the Lord.” These words contain a description of the conduct of Christians, a notable exhortation to the blessed life, which is the reward of a life of goodness — everlasting life.

CHAPTER 11

THAT THE WORD INSTRUCTED

BY THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

The mode of His love and His instruction we have shown as we could. Wherefore He Himself, declaring Himself very beautifully, likened Himself to a grain of mustard-seed; and pointed out the spirituality of the word that is sown, and the productiveness of its nature, and the magnificence and conspicuousness of the power of the word; and besides, intimated that the pungency and the purifying virtue of punishment are profitable on account of its sharpness. By the little grain, as it is figuratively called, He bestows salvation on all humanity abundantly. Honey, being very sweet, generates bile, as goodness begets contempt, which is the cause of sinning. But mustard lessens bile, that is, anger, and stops inflammation, that is, pride. From which Word springs the true health of the soul, and its eternal happy temperament (eujkrasi>a).

Accordingly, of old He instructed by Moses, and then by the prophets. Moses, too, was a prophet. For the law is the training of refractory children. “Having feasted to the full,” accordingly, it is said, “they rose up
to play; “senseless repletion with victuals being called cor~tasma (fodder), not brw~ma (food). And when, having senselessly filled themselves, they senselessly played; on that account the law was given them, and terror ensued for the prevention of transgressions and for the promotion of right actions, securing attention, and so winning to obedience to the true Instructor, being one and the same Word, and reducing to conformity with the urgent demands of the law. For Paul says that it was given to be a “schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.” So that from this it is clear, that one alone, true, good, just, in the image and likeness of the Father, His Son Jesus, the Word of God, is our Instructor; to whom God hath entrusted us, as an affectionate father commits his children to a worthy tutor, expressly charging us, “This is my beloved Son: hear Him.”

The divine Instructor is trustworthy, adorned as He is with three of the fairest ornaments — knowledge, benevolence, and authority of utterance; — with knowledge, for He is the paternal wisdom: “All Wisdom is from the Lord, and with Him for evermore;” — with authority of utterance, for He is God and Creator: “For all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made;” — and with benevolence, for He alone gave Himself a sacrifice for us: “For the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep; “ and He has so given it. Now, benevolence is nothing but wishing to do good to one’s neighbor for his sake.

CHAPTER 12
THE INSTRUCTOR CHARACTERIZED BY THE SEVERITY AND BENIGNITY OF PATERNAL AFFECTION
Having now accomplished those things, it were a fitting sequel that our instructor Jesus should draw for us the model of the true life, and train humanity in Christ.

Nor is the cast and character of the life He enjoins very formidable; nor is it made altogether easy by reason of His benignity. He enjoins His commands, and at the same time gives them such a character that they may be accomplished.

The view I take is, that He Himself formed man of the dust, and regenerated him by water; and made him grow by his Spirit; and trained him by His word to adoption and salvation, directing him by sacred precepts; in order that, transforming earth-born man into a holy and heavenly being by His advent, He might fulfill to the utmost that divine utterance, “Let Us make man in Our own image and likeness.” And, in truth, Christ became the perfect realization of what God spake; and the rest of humanity is conceived as being created merely in His image. But let us, O children of the good Father — nurslings of the good Instructor — fulfill the Father’s will, listen to the Word, and take on the impress of the truly saving life of our Savior; and meditating on the heavenly mode of life according to which we have been deified, let us
anoint ourselves with the perennial immortal bloom of gladness — that ointment of sweet fragrance — having a clear example of immortality in the walk and conversation of the Lord; and following the footsteps of God, to whom alone it belongs to consider, and whose care it is to see to, the way and manner in which the life of men may be made more healthy. Besides, He makes preparation for a self-sufficing mode of life, for simplicity, and for girding up our loins, and for free and unimpeded readiness of our journey; in order to the attainment of an eternity of beatitude, teaching each one of us to be his own storehouse. For He says, "Take no anxious thought for tomorrow," meaning that the man who has devoted himself to Christ ought to be sufficient to himself, and servant to himself, and moreover lead a life which provides for each day by itself. For it is not in war, but in peace, that we are trained. War needs great preparation, and luxury craves profusion; but peace and love, simple and quiet sisters, require no arms nor excessive preparation. The Word is their sustenance. Our superintendence in instruction and discipline is the office of the Word, from whom we learn frugality and humility, and all that pertains to love of truth, love of man, and love of excellence. And so, in a word, being assimilated to God by a participation in moral excellence, we must not retrograde into carelessness and sloth. But labor, and faint not. Thou shalt be what thou dost not hope, and canst not conjecture. And as there is one mode of training for philosophers, another for orators, and another for athletes; so is there a generous disposition, suitable to the choice that is set upon moral loveliness, resulting from the training of Christ. And in the case of those who have been trained according to this influence, their gait in walking, their sitting at table, their food, their sleep, their going to bed, their regimen, and the rest of their mode of life, acquire a superior dignity. For such a training as is pursued by the Word is not overstrained, but is of the right tension. Thus, therefore, the Word has been called also the Savior, seeing He has found out for men those rational medicines which produce vigor of the senses and salvation; and devotes Himself to watching for the favorable moment, reproving evil, exposing the causes of evil affections, and striking at the roots of irrational lusts, pointing out what we ought to abstain from, and supplying all the antidotes of salvation to those who are diseased. For the greatest and most regal work of God is the salvation of humanity. The sick are vexed at a physician, who gives no advice bearing on their restoration to health. But how shall we not acknowledge the highest gratitude to the divine Instructor, who is not silent, who omits not those threatenings that point towards destruction, but discloses them, and cuts off the impulses that tend to them; and who indoctrinates in those counsels which result in the true way of living? We must confess, therefore, the deepest obligations to Him. For what else do we say is
incumbent on the rational creature — I mean man — than the contemplation of the Divine? I say, too, that it is requisite to contemplate human nature, and to live as the truth directs, and to admire the Instructor and His injunctions, as suitable and harmonious to each other. According to which image also we ought, conforming ourselves to the Instructor, and making the word and our deeds agree, to live a real life.

CHAPTER 13
VIRTUE RATIONAL, SIN IRRATIONAL

Everything that is contrary to right reason is sin. Accordingly, therefore, the philosophers think fit to define the most generic passions thus: lust, as desire disobedient to reason; fear, as weakness disobedient to reason; pleasure, as an elation of the spirit disobedient to reason. If, then, disobedience in reference to reason is the generating cause of sin, how shall we escape the conclusion, that obedience to reason — the Word — which we call faith, will of necessity be the efficacious cause of duty? For virtue itself is a state of the soul rendered harmonious by reason in respect to the whole life. Nay, to crown all, philosophy itself is pronounced to be the cultivation of right reason; so that, necessarily, whatever is done through error of reason is transgression, and is rightly called, (aJma>rthma) sin.

Since, then, the first man sinned and disobeyed God, it is said, “And man became like to the beasts:” being rightly regarded as irrational, he is likened to the beasts. Whence Wisdom says: “The horse for covering; the libidinous and the adulterer is become like to an irrational beast.” Wherefore also it is added: “He neighs, whoever may be sitting on him.” The man, it is meant, no longer speaks; for he who transgresses against reason is no longer rational, but an irrational animal, given up to lusts by which he is ridden (as a horse by his rider).

455

But that which is done right, in obedience to reason, the followers of the Stoics call prosh~kon and kaqh~kon, that is, incumbent and fitting. What is fitting is incumbent. And obedience is founded on commands. And these being, as they are, the same as counsels — having truth for their aim, train up to the ultimate goal of aspiration, which is conceived of as the end (to>lov). And the end of piety is eternal rest in God. And the beginning of eternity is our end. The right operation of piety perfects duty by works; whence, according to just reasoning, duties consist in actions, not in sayings. And Christian conduct is the operation of the rational soul in accordance with a correct judgment and aspiration after the truth, which attains its destined end through the body, the soul’s consort and ally. Virtue is a will in conformity to God and Christ in life, rightly adjusted to life everlasting. For the life of Christians, in which we are now trained, is a system of reasonable actions — that is, of those things taught by the Word — an unfailing energy which we have called faith. The system is the commandments of the Lord, which, being divine statues and spiritual
counsels, have been written for ourselves, being adapted for ourselves and our neighbors. Moreover, they turn back on us, as the ball rebounds on him that throws it by the repercussion. Whence also duties are essential for divine discipline, as being enjoined by God, and furnished for our salvation. And since, of those things which are necessary, some relate only to life here, and others, which relate to the blessed life yonder, wing us for flight hence; so, in an analogous manner, of duties, some are ordained with reference to life, others for the blessed life. The commandments issued with respect to natural life are published to the multitude; but those that are suited for living well, and from which eternal life springs, we have to consider, as in a sketch, as we read them out of the Scriptures.

BOOK 2
CHAPTER 1
ON EATING
KEEPING, then, to our aim, and selecting the Scriptures which bear on the usefulness of training for life, we must now compendiously describe what the man who is called a Christian ought to be during the whole of his life. We must accordingly begin with ourselves, and how we ought to regulate ourselves. We have therefore, preserving a due regard to the symmetry of this work, to say how each of us ought to conduct himself in respect to his body, or rather how to regulate the body itself. For whenever any one, who has been brought away by the Word from external things, and from attention to the body itself to the mind, acquires a clear view of what happens according to nature in man, he will know that he is not to be earnestly occupied about external things, but about what is proper and peculiar to man — to purge the eye of the soul, and to sanctify also his flesh. For he that is clean rid of those things which constitute him still dust, what else has he more serviceable than himself for walking in the way which leads to the comprehension of God.

Some men, in truth, live that they may eat, as the irrational creatures, “whose life is their belly, and nothing else.” But the Instructor enjoins us to eat that we may live. For neither is food our business, nor is pleasure our aim; but both are on account of our life here, which the Word is training up to immortality. Wherefore also there is discrimination to be employed in reference to food. And it is to be simple, truly plain, suitting precisely simple and artless children — as ministering to life, not to luxury. And the life to which it conduces consists of two things — health and strength; to which plainness of fare is most suitable, being conducive both to digestion and lightness of body, from which come growth, and health, and right strength, not strength that is wrong or dangerous and wretched, as is that of athletes produced by compulsory feeding.

We must therefore reject different varieties, which engender various
mischiefs, such as a depraved habit of body and disorders of the stomach, the taste being vitiated by an unhappy art — that of cookery, and the useless art of making pastry. For people dare to call by the name of food their dabbling in luxuries, which glides into mischievous pleasures. Antiphanes, the Delian physician, said that this variety of viands was the one cause of disease; there being people who dislike the truth, and through various absurd notions abjure moderation of diet, and put themselves to a world of trouble to procure dainties from beyond seas. For my part, I am sorry for this disease, while they are not ashamed to sing the praises of their delicacies, giving themselves great trouble to get lampreys in the Straits of Sicily, the eels of the Maeander, and the kids found in Melos, and the mullets in Sciathus, and the mussels of Pelorus, the oysters of Abydos, not omitting the sprats found in Lipara, and the Mantinican turnip; and furthermore, the beetroot that grows among the Ascreans: they seek out the cockles of Methymna, the turbots of Attica, and the thrushes of Daphnis, and the reddish-brown dried figs, on account of which the ill-starred Persian marched into Greece with five hundred thousand men. Besides these, they purchase birds from Phasis, the Egyptian snipes, and the Median peafowl. Altering these by means of condiments, the gluttons gape for the sauces. “Whatever earth and the depths of the sea, and the unmeasured space of the air produce,” they cater for their gluttony. In their greed and solicitude, the gluttons seem absolutely to sweep the world with a drag-net to gratify their luxurious tastes. These gluttons, surrounded with the sound of hissing frying-pans, and wearing their whole life away at the pestle and mortar, cling to matter like fire. More than that, they emasculate plain food, namely bread, by straining off the nourishing part of the grain, so that the necessary part of food becomes matter of reproach to luxury. There is no limit to epicurism among men. For it has driven them to sweetmeats, and honey-cakes, and sugar-plums; inventing a multitude of desserts, hunting after all manner of dishes. A man like this seems to me to be all jaw, and nothing else. “Desire not,” says the Scripture, “rich men’s dainties;” for they belong to a false and base life. They partake of luxurious dishes, which a little after go to the dunghill. But we who seek the heavenly bread must rule the belly, which is beneath heaven, and much more the things which are agreeable to it, which “God shall destroy,” says the apostle, justly execrating gluttonous desires. For “meats are for the belly,” for on them depends this truly carnal and destructive life; whence some, speaking with unbridled tongue, dare to apply the name agape, to pitiful suppers, redolent of savor and sauces. Dishonoring the good and saving work of the Word, the consecrated agape, with pots and pouring of sauce; and by drink and delicacies and smoke desecrating that name, they are deceived in their idea, having expected that the promise of God might be bought with suppers.
Gatherings for the sake of mirth, and such entertainments as are called by ourselves, we name rightly suppers, dinners, and banquets, after the example of the Lord. But such entertainments the Lord has not called agape. He says accordingly somewhere, “When thou art called to a wedding, recline not on the highest couch; but when thou art called, fall into the lowest place;” and elsewhere, “When thou makest a dinner or a supper;” and again, “But when thou makest an entertainment, call the poor,” for whose sake chiefly a supper ought to be made. And further, “A certain man made a great supper, and called many.” But I perceive whence the specious appellation of suppers flowed: “from the gullets and furious love for suppers” — according to the comic poet. For, in truth, “to many, many things are on account of the supper.” For they have not yet learned that God has provided for His creature (man I mean) food and drink, for sustenance, not for pleasure; since the body derives no advantage from extravagance in viands. For, quite the contrary, those who use the most frugal fare are the strongest and the healthiest, and the noblest; as domestics are healthier and stronger than their masters, and husbandmen than the proprietors; and not only more robust, but wiser, as philosophers are wiser than rich men. For they have not buried the mind beneath food, nor deceived it with pleasures. But love (agape) is in truth celestial food, the banquet of reason. “It beareth all things, endureth all things, hopeth all things. Love never faileth.” “Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” But the hardest of all cases is for charity, which faileth not, to be cast from heaven above to the ground into the midst of sauces. And do you imagine that I am thinking of a supper that is to be done away with? “For if,” it is said, “I bestow all my goods, and have not love, I am nothing.” On this love alone depend the law and the Word; and if “thou shalt love the Lord thy God and thy neighbor,” this is the celestial festival in the heavens. But the earthly is called a supper, as has been shown from Scripture. For the supper is made for love, but the supper is not love (agape); only a proof of mutual and reciprocal kindly feeling. “Let not, then, your good be evil spoken of; for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,” says the apostle, in order that the meal spoken of may not be conceived as ephemeral, “but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” He who eats of this meal, the best of all, shall possess the kingdom of God, fixing his regards here on the holy assembly of love, the heavenly Church. Love, then, is something pure and worthy of God, and its work is communication. “And the care of discipline is love,” as Wisdom says; “and love is the keeping of the law.” And these joys have an inspiration of love from the public nutriment, which accustoms to everlasting dainties. Love (agape), then, is not a supper. But let the entertainment depend on love. For it is said, “Let the children whom Thou hast loved, O Lord, learn that it is not the products of fruits that nourish
man; but it is Thy word which preserves those who believe on Thee.”
“For the righteous shall not live by bread.” But let our diet be light and
digestible, and suitable for keeping awake, unmixed with diverse varieties.
Nor is this a point which is beyond the sphere of discipline. For love is a
good nurse for communication; having as its rich provision sufficiency,
which, presiding over diet measured in due quantity, and treating the body
in a healthful way, distributes something from its resources to those near
us, But the diet which exceeds sufficiency injures a man, deteriorates his
spirit, and renders his body prone to disease. Besides, those dainty tastes,
which trouble themselves about rich dishes drive to practices of ill-repute,
daintiness, gluttony, greed, voracity, insatiability. Appropriate
designations of such people as so indulge are flies, weasels, flatterers,
gladiators, and the monstrous tribes of parasites — the one class
surrendering reason, the other friendship, and the other life, for the
gratification of the belly; crawling on their bellies, beasts in human shape
after the image of their father, the voracious beast. People first called the
abandoned ajsw>stouv, and so appear to me to indicate their end,
understanding them as those who are (ajsw>stouv) unsaved, excluding the
s. For those that are absorbed in pots, and exquisitely prepared niceties of
condiments, are they not plainly abject, earth-born, leading an ephemeral
kind of life, as if they were not to live [hereafter]? Those the Holy Spirit,
by Isaiah, denounces as wretched, depriving them tacitly of the name of
love (agape), since their feasting was not in accordance with the word.
460
“But they made mirth, killing calves, and sacrificing sheep, saying, Let us
eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” And that He reckons such luxury to
be sin, is shown by what He adds, “And your sin shall not be forgiven you
till you die,” — not conveying the idea that death, which deprives of
sensation, is the forgiveness of sin, but meaning that death of salvation
which is the recompense of sin. “Take no pleasure in abominable
delicacies,” says Wisdom. At this point, too, we have to advert to what are
called things sacrificed to idols, in order to show how we are enjoined to
abstain from them. Polluted and abominable those things seem to me, to
the blood of which, fly
“Souls from Erebus of inanimate corpses.”
“For I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons,” says the
apostle; since the food of those who are saved and those who perish is
separate. We must therefore abstain from these viands not for fear
(because there is no power in them); but on account of our conscience,
which is holy, and out of detestation of the demons to which they are
dedicated, are we to loathe them; and further, on account of the instability
of those who regard many things in a way that makes them prone to fall,
“whose conscience, being weak, is defiled: for meat commendeth us not to
God.” “For it is not that which entereth in that defileth a man, but that
which goeth out of his mouth.” The natural use of food is then indifferent. “For neither if we eat are we the better,” it is said, “nor if we eat not are we the worse.” But it is inconsistent with reason, for those that have been made worthy to share divine and spiritual food, to partake of the tables of demons. “Have we not power to eat and to drink,” says the apostle, “and to lead about wives”? But by keeping pleasures under command we prevent lusts. See, then, that this power of yours never “become a stumbling-block to the weak.”

For it were not seemly that we, after the fashion of the rich man’s son in the Gospel, should, as prodigals, abuse the Father’s gifts; but we should use them, without undue attachment to them, as having command over ourselves. For we are enjoined to reign and rule over meats, not to be slaves to them. It is an admirable thing, therefore, to raise our eyes aloft to what is true, to depend on that divine food above, and to satiate ourselves with the exhaustless contemplation of that which truly exists, and so taste of the only sure and pure delight. For such is the agape, which, the food that comes from Christ shows that we ought to partake of. But totally irrational, futile, and not human is it for those that are of the earth, fattening themselves like cattle, to feed themselves up for death; looking downwards on the earth, and bending ever over tables; leading a life of gluttony; burying all the good of existence here in a life that by and by will end; courting voracity alone, in respect to which cooks are held in higher esteem than husbandmen. For we do not abolish social intercourse, but look with suspicion on the snares of custom, and regard them as a calamity. Wherefore daintiness is to be shunned, and we are to partake of few and necessary things. “And if one of the unbelievers call us to a feast, and we determine to go” (for it is a good thing not to mix with the dissolute), the apostle bids us “eat what is set before us, asking no questions for conscience sake.” Similarly he has enjoined to purchase “what is sold in the shambles,” without curious questioning.

We are not, then, to abstain wholly from various kinds of food, but only are not to be taken up about them. We are to partake of what is set before us, as becomes a Christian, out of respect to him who has invited us, by a harmless and moderate participation in the social meeting; regarding the sumptuousness of what is put on the table as a matter of indifference, despising the dainties, as after a little destined to perish. “Let him who eateth, not despise him who eateth not; and let him who eateth not, not judge him who eateth.” And a little way on he explains the reason of the command, when he says, “He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, and giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.” So that the right food is thanksgiving. And he who gives thanks does not occupy his time in pleasures. And if we would persuade any of our fellow-guests to virtue, we are all the more on this account to
abstain from those dainty dishes; and so exhibit ourselves as a bright pattern of virtue, such as we ourselves have in Christ. "For if any of such meats make a brother to stumble, I shall not eat it as long as the world lasts," says he, "that I may not make my brother stumble." I gain the man by a little self-restraint. "Have we not power to eat and to drink?" And "we know" — he says the truth — "that an idol is nothing in the world; but we have only one true God, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus. But," he says, "through thy knowledge thy weak brother perishes,

462

for whom Christ died; and they that wound the conscience of the weak brethren sin against Christ." Thus the apostle, in his solicitude for us, discriminates in the case of entertainments, saying, that "if any one called a brother be found a fornicator, or an adulterer, or an idolater, with such an one not to eat;" neither in discourse or food are we to join, looking with suspicion on the pollution thence proceeding, as on the tables of the demons. "It is good, then, neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine," as both he and the Pythagoreans acknowledge. For this is rather characteristic of a beast; and the fumes arising from them being dense, darken the soul. If one partakes of them, he does not sin. Only let him partake temperately, not dependent on them, nor gaping after fine fare. For a voice will whisper to him, saying, "Destroy not the work of God for the sake of food." For it is the mark of a silly mind to be amazed and stupefied at what is presented at vulgar banquets, after the rich fare which is in the Word; and much siller to make one’s eyes the slaves of the delicacies, so that one’s greed is, so to speak, carried round by the servants. And how foolish for people to raise themselves on the couches, all but pitching their faces into the dishes, stretching out from the couch as from a nest, according to the common saying, "that they may catch the wandering steam by breathing it in!" And how senseless, to besmear their hands with the condiments, and to be constantly reaching to the sauce, cramming themselves immoderately and shamelessly, not like people tasting, but ravenously seizing! For you may see such people, liker swine or dogs for gluttony than men, in such a hurry to feed themselves full, that both jaws are stuffed out at once, the veins about the face raised, and besides, the perspiration running all over, as they are tightened with their insatiable greed, and panting with their excess; the food pushed with unsocial eagerness into their stomach, as if they were stowing away their victuals for provision for a journey, not for digestion. Excess, which in all things is an evil, is very highly reprehensible in the matter of food. Gluttony, called ooyofagi j a, > is nothing but excess in the use of relishes (o|you); and laimargi>a is insanity with respect to the gullet; and gastrimargi>a is excess with respect to food — insanity in reference to the belly, as the name implies; for ma>rgov is a madman. The apostle, checking those that transgress in their conduct at entertainments, says: "For every one taketh beforehand in eating his own supper; and one
is hungry, and another drunken. Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God, and shame those who have not?” And among those who have, they, who eat shamelessly and are insatiable, shame themselves. And both act badly; the one by paining those who have not, the other by exposing their own greed in the presence of those who have. Necessarily, therefore, against those who have cast off shame and unsparingly abuse meals, the insatiable to whom nothing is sufficient, the apostle, in continuation, again breaks forth in a voice of displeasure: “So that, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait for one another. And if any one is hungry, let him eat at home, that ye come not together to condemnation.”

From all slavish habits and excess we must abstain, and touch what is set before us in a decorous way; keeping the hand and couch and chin free of stains; preserving the grace of the countenance undisturbed, and committing no indecorum in the act of swallowing; but stretching out the hand at intervals in an orderly manner. We must guard against speaking anything while eating: for the voice becomes disagreeable and inarticulate when it is confined by full jaws; and the tongue, pressed by the food and impeded in its natural energy, gives forth a compressed utterance. Nor is it suitable to eat and to drink simultaneously. For it is the very extreme of intemperance to confound the times whose uses are discordant. And “whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God,” aiming after true frugality, which the Lord also seems to me to have hinted at when He blessed the loaves and the cooked fishes with which He feasted the disciples, introducing a beautiful example of simple food. That fish then which, at the command of the Lord, Peter caught, points to digestible and God-given and moderate food. And by those who rise from the water to the bait of righteousness, He admonishes us to take away luxury and avarice, as the coin from the fish; in order that He might displace vainglory; and by giving the stater to the tax-gatherers, and “rendering to Caesar the things which are Caesar’s,” might preserve “to God the things which are God’s.” The stater is capable of other explanations not unknown to us, but the present is not a suitable occasion for their treatment. Let the mention we make for our present purpose suffice, as it is not unsuitable to the flowers of the Word; and we have often done this, drawing to the urgent point of the question the most beneficial fountain, in order to water those who have been planted by the Word. “For if it is lawful for me to partake of all things, yet all things are not expedient.” For those that do all that is lawful, quickly fall into doing what is unlawful. And just as righteousness is not attained by avarice, nor temperance by excess; so neither is the regimen of a Christian formed by indulgence; for the table of truth is far from lascivious dainties. For though it was chiefly for men’s sake that all
things were made, yet it is not good to use all things, nor at all times. For the occasion, and the time, and the mode, and the intention, materially turn the balance with reference to what is useful, in the view of one who is rightly instructed; and this is suitable, and has influence in putting a stop to a life of gluttony, which wealth is prone to choose, not that wealth which sees clearly, but that abundance which makes a man blind with reference to gluttony. No one is poor as regards necessaries, and a man is never overlooked. For there is one God who feeds the fowls and the fishes, and, in a word, the irrational creatures; and not one thing whatever is wanting to them, though “they take no thought for their food.” And we are better than they, being their lords, and more closely allied to God, as being wiser; and we were made, not that we might eat and drink, but that we might devote ourselves to the knowledge of God. “For the just man who eats is satisfied in his soul, but the belly of the wicked shall want,” filled with the appetites of insatiable gluttony. Now lavish expense is adapted not for enjoyment alone, but also for social communication. Wherefore we must guard against those articles of food which persuade us to eat when we are not hungry, bewitching the appetite. For is there not within a temperate simplicity a wholesome variety of eatables? Bulbs, olives, certain herbs, milk, cheese, fruits, all kinds of cooked food without sauces; and if flesh is wanted, let roast rather than boiled be set down. Have you anything to eat here? said the Lord to the disciples after the resurrection; and they, as taught by Him to practice frugality, “gave Him a piece of broiled fish;” and having eaten before them, says Luke, He spoke to them what He spoke. And in addition to these, it is not to be overlooked that those who feed according to the Word are not debarred from dainties in the shape of honey-combs. For of articles of food, those are the most suitable which are fit for immediate use without fire, since they are readiest; and second to these are those which are simplest, as we said before. But those who bend around inflammatory tables, nourishing their own diseases, are ruled by a most lickerish demon, whom I shall not blush to call the Belly-demon, and the worst and most abandoned of demons. He is therefore exactly like the one who is called the Ventriloquist-demon. It is far better to be happy than to have a demon dwelling with us. And happiness is found in the practice of virtue. Accordingly, the apostle Matthew partook of seeds, and nuts, and vegetables, without flesh. And John, who carried temperance to the extreme, “ate locusts and wild honey.” Peter abstained from swine; “but a trance fell on him,” as is written in the Acts of the Apostles, “and he saw heaven opened, and a vessel let down on the earth by the four corners, and all the four-footed beasts and creeping things of the earth and the fowls of heaven in it; and there came a voice to him, Rise, and slay, and eat. And Peter said, Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten what is common or unclean. And the voice came again to him the second
time, What God hath cleansed, call not thou common.” The use of them is accordingly indifferent to us. “For not what entereth into the mouth defileth the man,” but the vain opinion respecting uncleanness. For God, when He created man, said, “All things shall be to you for meat.” “And herbs, with love, are better than a calf with fraud.” This well reminds us of what was said above, that herbs are not love, but that our meals are to be taken with love; and in these the medium state is good. In all things, indeed, this is the case, and not least in the preparation made for feasting, since the extremes are dangerous, and middle courses good. And to be in no want of necessaries is the medium. For the desires which are in accordance with nature are bounded by sufficiency. The Jews had frugality enjoined on them by the law in the most systematic manner. For the Instructor, by Moses, deprived them of the use of innumerable things, adding reasons — the spiritual ones hidden; the carnal ones apparent, to which indeed they have trusted; in the case of some animals, because they did not part the hoof, and others because they did not ruminate their food, and others because alone of aquatic animals they were devoid of scales; so that altogether but a few were left appropriate for their food. And of those that he permitted them to touch, he prohibited such as had died, or were offered to idols, or had been strangled; for to touch these was unlawful. For since it is impossible for those who use dainties to abstain from partaking of them, he appointed the opposite mode of life, till he should break down the propensity to indulgence arising from habit. Pleasure has often produced in men harm and pain; and full feeding begets in the soul uneasiness, and forgetfulness, and foolishness. And they say that the bodies of children, when shooting up to their height, are made to grow right by deficiency in nourishment. For then the spirit, which pervades the body in order to its growth, is not checked by abundance of food obstructing the freedom of its course. Whence that truth-seeking philosopher Plato, fanning the spark of the Hebrew philosophy when condemning a life of luxury, says: “On my coming hither, the life which is here called happy, full of Italian and Syracusan tables, pleased me not by any means, [consisting as it did] in being filled twice a day, and never sleeping by night alone, and whatever other accessories attend the mode of life. For not one man under heaven, if brought up from his youth in such practices, will ever turn out a wise man, with however admirable a natural genius he may be endowed.” For Plato was not unacquainted with David, who “placed the sacred ark in his city in the midst of the tabernacle;” and bidding all his subjects rejoice “before the Lord, divided to the whole host of Israel, man and woman, to each a loaf of bread, and baked bread, and a cake from the frying-pan.” This was the sufficient sustenance of the Israelites. But that of the Gentiles was over-abundant. No one who uses it will ever study to become
temperate, burying as he does his mind in his belly, very like the fish called ass, which, Aristotle says, alone of all creatures has its heart in its stomach. This fish Epicharmus the comic poet calls “monster-paunch.” Such are the men who believe in their belly, “whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” To them the apostle predicted no good when he said, “whose end is destruction.”

CHAPTER 2
ON DRINKING
“Use a little wine,” says the apostle to Timothy, who drank water, “for thy stomach’s sake;” most properly applying its aid as a strengthening tonic suitable to a sickly body enfeebled with watery humors; and specifying “a little,” lest the remedy should, on account of its quantity, unobserved, create the necessity of other treatment.
The natural, temperate, and necessary beverage, therefore, for the thirsty is water. This was the simple drink of sobriety, which, flowing from the smitten rock, was supplied by the Lord to the ancient Hebrews. It was most requisite that in their wanderings they should be temperate.
Afterwards the sacred vine produced the prophetic cluster. This was a sign to them, when trained from wandering to their rest; representing the great cluster the Word, bruised for us. For the blood of the grape — that is, the Word — desired to be mixed with water, as His blood is mingled with salvation.
And the blood of the Lord is twofold. For there is the blood of His flesh, by which we are redeemed from corruption; and the spiritual, that by which we are anointed. And to drink the blood of Jesus, is to become partaker of the Lord’s immortality; the Spirit being the energetic principle of the Word, as blood is of flesh.
Accordingly, as wine is blended with water, so is the Spirit with man. And the one, the mixture of wine and water, nourishes to faith; while the other, the Spirit, conducts to immortality.
And the mixture of both — of the water and of the Word — is called Eucharist, renowned and glorious grace; and they who by faith partake of it are sanctified both in body and soul. For the divine mixture, man, the Father’s will has mystically compounded by the Spirit and the Word. For, in truth, the spirit is joined to the soul, which is inspired by it; and the flesh, by reason of which the Word became flesh, to the Word.
I therefore admire those who have adopted an austere life, and who are fond of water, the medicine of temperance, and flee as far as possible from wine, shunning it as they would the danger of fire. It is proper, therefore, that boys and girls should keep as much as possible away from this medicine. For it is not right to pour into the burning season of life the hottest of all liquids — wine — adding, as it were, fire to fire. For hence wild impulses and burning lusts and fiery habits are kindled; and young
men inflamed from within become prone to the indulgence of vicious propensities; so that signs of injury appear in their body, the members of lust coming to maturity sooner than they ought. The breasts and organs of generation, inflamed with wine, expand and swell in a shameful way, already exhibiting beforehand the image of fornication; and the body compels the wound of the soul to inflame, and shameless pulsations follow abundance, inciting the man of correct behavior to transgression; and hence the voluptuousness of youth overpasses the bounds of modesty. And we must, as far as possible, try to quench the impulses of youth by removing the Bacchic fuel of the threatened danger; and by pouring the antidote to the inflammation, so keep down the burning soul, and keep in the swelling members, and allay the agitation of lust when it is already in commotion. And in the case of grown-up people, let those with whom it agrees sometimes partake of dinner, tasting bread only, and let them abstain wholly from drink; in order that their superfluous moisture may be absorbed and drunk up by the eating of dry food. For constant spitting and wiping off perspiration, and hastening to evacuations, is the sign of excess, from the immoderate use of liquids supplied in excessive quantity to the body. And if thirst come on, let the appetite be satisfied with a little water. For it is not proper that water should be supplied in too great profusion; in order that the food may not be drowned, but ground down in order to digestion; and this takes place when the victuals are collected into a mass, and only a small portion is evacuated. And, besides, it suits divine studies not to be heavy with wine. “For unmixed wine is far from compelling a man to be wise, much less temperate,” according to the comic poet. But towards evening, about supper-time, wine may be used, when we are no longer engaged in more serious readings. Then also the air becomes colder than it is during the day; so that the failing natural warmth requires to be nourished by the introduction of heat. But even then it must only be a little wine that is to be used; for we must not go on to intemperate potations. Those who are already advanced in life may partake more cheerfully of the draught, to warm by the harmless medicine of the vine the chill of age, which the decay of time has produced. For old men’s passions are not, for the most part, stirred to such agitation as to drive them to the shipwreck of drunkenness. For being moored by reason and time, as by anchors, they stand with greater ease the storm of passions which rushes down from intemperance. They also may be permitted to indulge in pleasantry at feasts. But to them also let the limit of their potations be the point up to which they keep their reason unwavering, their memory active, and their body unmoved and unshaken by wine. People in such a state are called by those who are skillful in these matters, acrothorakes. It is well, therefore,
to leave off betimes, for fear of tripping.
One Artorius, in his book On Long Life (for so I remember), thinks that
drink should be taken only till the food be moistened, that we may attain
to a longer life. It is fitting, then, that some apply wine by way of physic,
for the sake of health alone, and others for purposes of relaxation and
enjoyment. For first wine makes the man who has drunk it more benignant
than before, more agreeable to his boon companions, kinder to his
domestics, and more pleasant to his friends. But when intoxicated, he
becomes violent instead. For wine being warm, and having sweet juices
when duly mixed, dissolves the foul excrementitious matters by its
warmth, and mixes the acrid and base humors with the agreeable scents.
It has therefore been well said, “A joy of the soul and heart was wine
created from the beginning, when drunk in moderate sufficiency.” And it is
best to mix the wine with as much water as possible, and not to have
recourse to it as to water, and so get enervated to drunkenness, and not
pour it in as water from love of wine. For both are works of God; and so
the mixture of both, of water and of wine, conduces together to health,
because life consists of what is necessary and of what is useful. With
water, then, which is the necessary of life, and to be used in abundance,
there is also to be mixed the useful.
By an immoderate quantity of wine the tongue is impeded; the lips are
relaxed; the eyes roll wildly, the sight, as it were, swimming through the
quantity of moisture; and compelled to deceive, they think that everything
is revolving round them, and cannot count distant objects as single. “And,
in truth, methinks I see two suns,” said the Theban old man in his cups.
For the sight, being disturbed by the heat of the wine, frequently fancies
the substance of one object to be manifold. And there is no difference
between moving the eye or the object seen. For both have the same effect
on the sight, which, on account of the fluctuation, cannot accurately obtain
a perception of the object. And the feet are carried from beneath the man
as by a flood, and hiccuping and vomiting and maudlin nonsense follow;
“for every intoxicated man,” according to the tragedy, —
470
“Is conquered by anger, and empty of sense,
And likes to pour forth much silly speech;
And is wont to hear unwillingly,
What evil words he with his will hath said.”
And before tragedy, Wisdom cried, “Much wine drunk abounds in
irritation and all manner of mistakes.” Wherefore most people say that you
ought to relax over your cups, and postpone serious business till morning.
I however think that then especially ought reason to be introduced to mix
in the feast, to act the part of director (paedagogue) to wine-drinking, lest
conviviality imperceptibly degenerate to drunkenness. For as no sensible
man ever thinks it requisite to shut his eyes before going to sleep, so
neither can any one rightly wish reason to be absent from the festive board, or can well study to lull it asleep till business is begun. But the Word can never quit those who belong to Him, not even if we are asleep; for He ought to be invited even to our sleep. For perfect wisdom, which is knowledge of things divine and human, which comprehends all that relates to the oversight of the flock of men, becomes, in reference to life, art; and so, while we live, is constantly, with us, always accomplishing its own proper work, the product of which is a good life.

But the miserable wretches who expel temperance from conviviality, think excess in drinking to be the happiest life; and their life is nothing but revel, debauchery, baths, excess, urinals, idleness, drink. You may see some of them, half-drunk, staggering, with crowns round their necks like wine jars, vomiting drink on one another in the name of good fellowship; and others, full of the effects of their debauch, dirty, pale in the face, livid, and still above yesterday’s bout pouring another bout to last till next morning. It is well, my friends, it is well to make our acquaintance with this picture at the greatest possible distance from it, and to frame ourselves to what is better, dreading lest we also become a like spectacle and laughing-stock to others.

It has been appropriately said, “As the furnace proveth the steel blade in the process of dipping, so wine proveth the heart of the haughty.” A debauch is the immoderate use of wine, intoxication the disorder that results from such use; crapulousness (kraipa>lh) is the discomfort and nausea that follow a debauch; so called from the head shaking (ka>ra pa>llein).

Such a life as this (if life it must be called, which is spent in idleness, in agitation about voluptuous indulgences, and in the hallucinations of debauchery) the divine Wisdom looks on with contempt, and commands her children, “Be not a wine-bibber, nor spend your money in the purchase of flesh; for every drunkard and fornicator shall come to beggary, and every sluggard shall be clothed in tatters and rags.” For every one that is not awake to wisdom, but is steeped in wine, is a sluggard. “And the drunkard,” he says, “shall be clothed in rags, and be ashamed of his drunkenness in the presence of onlookers.” For the wounds of the sinner are the rents of the garment of the flesh, the holes made by lusts, through which the shame of the soul within is seen — namely sin, by reason of which it will not be easy to save the garment, that has been torn away all round, that has rotted away in many lusts, and has been rent asunder from salvation.

So he adds these most monitory words. “Who has woes, who has clamor, who has contentions, who has disgusting babblings, who has unavailing remorse?” You see, in all his raggedness, the lover of wine, who despises the Word Himself, and has abandoned and given himself to drunkenness.
You see what threatening Scripture has pronounced against him. And to its threatening it adds again: “Whose are red eyes? Those, is it not, who tarry long at their wine, and hunt out the places where drinking goes on?” Here he shows the lover of drink to be already dead to the Word, by the mention of the bloodshot eyes, — a mark which appears on corpses, announcing to him death in the Lord. For forgetfulness of the things which tend to true life turns the scale towards destruction. With reason therefore, the Instructor, in His solicitude for our salvation, forbids us, “Drink not wine to drunkenness.” Wherefore? you will ask. Because, says He, “thy mouth will then speak perverse things, and thou liest down as in the heart of the sea, and as the steersman of a ship in the midst of huge billows.” Hence, too, poetry comes to our help, and says: —

“Let wine which has strength equal to fire come to men. Then will it agitate them, as the north or south wind agitates the Libyan waves.”

And further: —

“Wine wandering in speech shows all secrets. Soul-deceiving wine is the ruin of those who drink it.”

472

And so on.

You see the danger of shipwreck. The heart is drowned in much drink. The excess of drunkenness is compared to the danger of the sea, in which when the body has once been sunken like a ship, it descends to the depths of turpitude, overwhelmed in the mighty billows of wine; and the helmsman, the human mind, is tossed about on the surge of drunkenness, which swells aloft; and buried in the trough of the sea, is blinded by the darkness of the tempest, having drifted away from the haven of truth, till, dashing on the rocks beneath the sea, it perishes, driven by itself into voluptuous indulgences.

With reason, therefore, the apostle enjoins, “Be not drunk with wine, in which there is much excess;” by the term excess (aswti j a>) intimating the inconsistence of drunkenness with salvation (to a< swston ). For if He made water wine at the marriage, He did not give permission to get drunk. He gave life to the watery element of the meaning of the law, filling with His blood the doer of it who is of Adam, that is, the whole world; supplying piety with drink from the vine of truth, the mixture of the old law and of the new word, in order to the fulfillment of the predestined time. The Scripture, accordingly, has named wine the symbol of the sacred blood; but reproving the base tippling with the dregs of wine, it says: “Intemperate is wine, and insolent is drunkenness.” It is agreeable, therefore, to right reason, to drink on account of the cold of winter, till the numbness is dispelled from those who are subject to feel it; and on other occasions as a medicine for the intestines. For, as we are to use food to satisfy hunger, so also are we to use drink to satisfy thirst, taking the most careful precautions against a slip: “for the introduction of wine is
perilous.” And thus shall our soul be pure, and dry, and luminous; and the soul itself is wisest and best when dry. And thus, too, is it fit for contemplation, and is not humid with the exhalations, that rise from wine, forming a mass like a cloud. We must not therefore trouble ourselves to procure Chian wine if it is absent, or Ariousian when it is not at hand. For thirst is a sensation of want, and craves means suitable for supplying the want, and not sumptuous liquor. Importations of wines from beyond seas are for an appetite enfeebled by excess, where the soul even before drunkenness is insane in its desires. For there are the fragrant Thasian wine, and the pleasant-breathing Lesbian, and a sweet Cretan wine, and sweet Syracusan wine, and Mendusian, an Egyptian wine, and the insular Naxian, the “highly perfumed and flavored,” another wine of the land of Italy. These are many names. For the temperate drinker, one wine suffices, the product of the cultivation of the one God. For why should not the wine of their own country satisfy men’s desires, unless they were to import water also, like the foolish Persian kings? The Choaspes, a river of India so called, was that from which the best water for drinking — the Choaspian — was got. As wine, when taken, makes people lovers of it, so does water too. The Holy Spirit, uttering His voice by Amos, pronounces the rich to be wretched on account of their luxury: “Those that drink strained wine, and recline on an ivory couch,” he says; and what else similar he adds by way of reproach.

Especial regard is to be paid to decency (as the myth represents Athene, whoever she was, out of regard to it, giving up the pleasure of the flute because of the unseemliness of the sight): so that we are to drink without contortions of the face, not greedily grasping the cup, nor before drinking making the eyes roll with unseemly motion; nor from intemperance are we to drain the cup at a draught; nor besprinkle the chin, nor splash the garments while gulping down all the liquor at once, — our face all but filling the bowl, and drowned in it. For the gurgling occasioned by the drink rushing with violence, and by its being drawn in with a great deal of breath, as if it were being poured into an earthenware vessel, while the throat makes a noise through the rapidity of ingurgitation, is a shameful and unseemly spectacle of intemperance. In addition to this, eagerness in drinking is a practice injurious to the partaker. Do not haste to mischief, my friend. Your drink is not being taken from you. It is given you, and waits you. Be not eager to burst, by draining it down with gaping throat. Your thirst is satiated, even if you drink slower, observing decorum, by taking the beverage in small portions, in an orderly way. For that which intemperance greedily seizes, is not taken away by taking time.

“Be not mighty,” he says, “at wine; for wine has overcome many.” The Scythians, the Celts, the Iberians, and the Thracians, all of them warlike races, are greatly addicted to intoxication, and think that it is an honorable,
happy pursuit to engage in. But we, the people of peace, feasting for lawful enjoyment, not to wantonness, drink sober cups of friendship, that our friendships may be shown in a way truly appropriate to the name.

In what manner do you think the Lord drank when He became man for our sakes? As shamelessly as we? Was it not with decorum and propriety? Was it not deliberately? For rest assured, He Himself also partook of wine; for He, too, was man. And He blessed the wine, saying, “Take, drink: this is my blood” — the blood of the vine. He figuratively calls the Word “shed for many, for the remission of sins” — the holy stream of gladness. And that he who drinks ought to observe moderation, He clearly showed by what He taught at feasts. For He did not teach affected by wine. And that it was wine which was the thing blessed, He showed again, when He said to His disciples, “I will not drink of the fruit of this vine, till I drink it with you in the kingdom of my Father.” But that it was wine which was drunk by the Lord, He tells us again, when He spake concerning Himself, reproaching the Jews for their hardness of heart: “For the Son of man,” He says, “came, and they say, Behold a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans.” Let this be held fast by us against those that are called Encratites.

But women, making a profession, forsooth, of aiming at the graceful, that their lips may not be rent apart by stretching them on broad drinking cups, and so widening the mouth, drinking in an unseemly way out of alabastra quite too narrow: in the mouth, throw back their heads and bare their necks indecently, as I think; and distending the throat in swallowing, gulp down the liquor as if to make bare all they can to their boon companions; and drawing hiccups like men, or rather like slaves, revel in luxurious riot. For nothing disgraceful is proper for man, who is endowed with reason; much less for woman to whom it brings modesty even to reflect of what nature she is.

“An intoxicated woman is great wrath,” it is said, as if a drunken woman were the wrath of God. Why? “Because she will not conceal her shame.” For a woman is quickly drawn down to licentiousness, if she only set her choice on pleasures. And we have not prohibited drinking from alabastra; but we forbid studying to drink from them alone, as arrogant; counseling women to use with indifference what comes in the way, and cutting up by the roots the dangerous appetites that are in them. Let the rush of air, then, which regurgitates so as to produce hiccups, be emitted silently.

But by no manner of means are women to be allotted to uncover and exhibit any part of their person, lest both fall, — the men by being excited to look, they by drawing on themselves the eyes of the men.

But always must we conduct ourselves as in the Lord’s presence, lest He say to us, as the apostle in indignation said to the Corinthians, “When ye
come together, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper.”
To me, the star called by the mathematicians Acephalus (headless), which is numbered before the wandering star, his head resting on his breast, seems to be a type of the gluttonous, the voluptuous, and those that are prone to drunkenness. For in such the faculty of reasoning is not situated in the head, but among the intestinal appetites, enslaved to lust and anger. For just as Elpenor broke his neck through intoxication, so the brain, dizzied by drunkenness, falls down from above, with a great fall to the liver and the heart, that is, to voluptuousness and anger: as the sons of the poets say Hephaestus was hurled by Zeus from heaven to earth. “The trouble of sleeplessness, and bile, and cholic, are with an insatiable man,” it is said.
Wherefore also Noah’s intoxication was recorded in writing, that, with the clear and written description of his transgression before us, we might guard with all our might against drunkenness. For which cause they who covered the shame of his drunkenness are blessed by the Lord. The Scripture accordingly, giving a most comprehensive compend, has expressed all in one word: “To an instructed man sufficiency is wine, and he will rest in his bed.”
CHAPTER 3
ON COSTLY VESSELS
And so the use of cups made of silver and gold, and of others inlaid with precious stones, is out of place, being only a deception of the vision. For if you pour any warm liquid into them, the vessels becoming hot, to touch them is painful. On the other hand, if you pour in what is cold, the material changes its quality, injuring the mixture, and the rich potion is hurtful. Away, then, with Thericleian cups and Antigonides, and Canthari, and goblets, and Lepastae, and the endless shapes of drinking vessels, and wine-coolers, and wine-pourers also. For, on the whole, gold and silver, both publicly and privately, are an invidious possession when they exceed what is necessary, seldom to be acquired, difficult to keep, and not adapted for use. The elaborate vanity, too, of vessels in glass chased, more apt to break on account of the art, teaching us to fear while we drink, is to be banished from our well-ordered constitution. And silver couches, and pans and vinegar-saucers, and trenchers and bowls; and besides these, vessels of silver and gold, some for serving food, and others for other uses which I am ashamed to name, of easily cleft cedar and thyme wood, and ebony, and tripods fashioned of ivory, and couches with silver feet and inlaid with ivory, and folding-doors of beds studded with gold and variegated with tortoise-shell, and bed-clothes of purple and other colors difficult to produce, proofs of tasteless luxury, cunning devices of envy and effeminacy, — are all to be relinquished, as having nothing whatever worth our pains. “For the time is short,” as says the apostle. This then
remains that we do not make a ridiculous figure, as some are seen in the
public spectacles outwardly anointed strikingly for imposing effect, but
wretched within. Explaining this more clearly, he adds,” It remains that
they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that buy as
though they possessed not.” And if he speaks thus of marriage, in
reference to which God says, “Multiply,” how do you not think that
senseless display is by the Lord’s authority to be banished? Wherefore
also the Lord says, “Sell what thou hast, and give to the poor; and come,
follow me.”

Follow God, stripped of arrogance, stripped of fading display, possessed
of that which is thine, which is good, what alone cannot be taken away —
faith towards God, confession towards Him who suffered, beneficence
towards men, which is the most precious of possessions. For my part, I
approve of Plato, who plainly lays it down as a law, that a man is not to
labor for wealth of gold or silver, nor to possess a useless vessel which is
not for some necessary purpose, and moderate; so that the same thing may
serve for many purposes, and the possession of a variety of things may be
done away with. Excellently, therefore, the Divine Scripture, addressing
boasters and lovers of their own selves, says, “Where are the rulers of the
nations, and the lords of the wild beasts of the earth, who sport among the
477
birds of heaven, who treasured up silver and gold, in whom men trusted,
and there was no end of their substance, who fashioned silver and gold, and
were full of care? There is no finding of their works. They have vanished,
and gone down to Hades.” Such is the reward of display. For though such
of us as cultivate the soil need a mattock and plow, none of us will make a
pickaxe of silver or a sickle of gold, but we employ the material which is
serviceable for agriculture, not what is costly. What prevents those who
are capable of considering what is similar from entertaining the same
sentiments with respect to household utensils, of which let use, not
expense, be the measure? For tell me, does the table-knife not cut unlest it
be studded with silver, and have its handle made of ivory? Or must we
forge Indian steel in order to divide meat, as when we call for a weapon for
the fight? What if the basin be of earthenware? will it not receive the dirt of
the hands? or the footpan the dirt of the foot? Will the table that is
fashioned with ivory feet be indignant at bearing a three-halfpenny loaf?
Will the lamp not dispense light because it is the work of the potter, not of
the goldsmith? I affirm that truckle-beds afford no worse repose than the
ivory couch; and the goatskin coverlet being amply sufficient to spread on
the bed, there is no need, of purple or scarlet coverings. Yet to condemn,
notwithstanding, frugality, through the stupidity of luxury, the author of
mischief, what a prodigious error, what senseless conceit! See. The Lord
ate from a common bowl, and made the disciples recline on the grass on the
ground, and washed their feet, girded with a linen towel — He, the lowlyminded God, and Lord
of the universe. He did not bring down a silver footbath from heaven. He asked to drink of the Samaritan woman, who drew the water from the well in an earthenware vessel, not seeking regal gold, but teaching us how to quench thirst easily. For He made use, not extravagance His aim. And He ate and drank at feasts, not digging metals from the earth, nor using vessels of gold and silver, that is, vessels exhaling the odor of rust — such fumes as the rust of smoking metal gives off. For in fine, in food, and clothes, and vessels, and everything else belonging to the house, I say comprehensively, that one must follow the institutions of the Christian man, as is serviceable and suitable to one’s person, age, pursuits, time of life. For it becomes those that are servants of one God, that their possessions and furniture should exhibit the tokens of one beautiful life; and that each individually should be seen in faith, which shows no difference, practicing all other things which are conformable to this uniform mode of life, and harmonious with this one scheme.

What we acquire without difficulty, and use with ease, we praise, keep easily, and communicate freely. The things which are useful are preferable, and consequently cheap things are better than dear. In fine, wealth, when not properly governed, is a stronghold of evil, about which many casting their eyes, they will never reach the kingdom of heaven, sick for the things of the world, and living proudly through luxury. But those who are in earnest about salvation must settle this beforehand in their mind, “that all that we possess is given to us for use, and use for sufficiency, which one may attain to by a few things.” For silly are they who, from greed, take delight in what they have hoarded up. “He that gathereth wages,” it is said, “gathereth into a bag with holes.” Such is he who gathers corn and shuts it up; and he who giveth to no one, becomes poorer.

It is a farce, and a thing to make one laugh outright, for men to bring in silver urinals and crystal vases de nuit, as they usher in their counselors, and for silly rich women to get gold receptacles for excrements made; so that being rich, they cannot even ease themselves except in superb way. I would that in their whole life they deemed gold fit for dung.

But now love of money is found to be the stronghold of evil, which the apostle says “is the root of all evils, which, while some coveted, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” But the best riches is poverty of desires; and the true magnanimity is not to be proud of wealth, but to despise it. Boasting about one’s plate is utterly base. For it is plainly wrong to care much about what any one who likes may buy from the market. But wisdom is not bought with coin of earth, nor is it sold in the market-place, but in heaven. And it is sold for true coin, the immortal Word, the regal gold.

479
CHAPTER 4
HOW TO CONDUCT OURSELVES AT FEASTS
Let revelry keep away from our rational entertainments, and foolish vigils, too, that revel in intemperance. For revelry is an inebriating pipe, the chain of an amatory bridge, that is, of sorrow. And let love, and intoxication, and senseless passions, be removed from our choir. Burlesque singing is the boon companion of drunkenness. A night spent over drink invites drunkenness, rouses lust, and is audacious in deeds of shame. For if people occupy their time with pipes, and psalteries, and choirs, and dances, and Egyptian clapping of hands, and such disorderly frivolities, they become quite immodest and intractable, beat on cymbals and drums, and make a noise on instruments of delusion; for plainly such a banquet, as seems to me, is a theater of drunkenness. For the apostle decrees that, “putting off the works of darkness, we should put on the armor of light, walking honestly as in the day, not spending our time in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness.” Let the pipe be resigned to the shepherds, and the flute to the superstitious who are engrossed in idolatry. For, in truth, such instruments are to be banished from the temperate banquet, being more suitable to beasts than men, and the more irrational portion of mankind. For we have heard of stags being charmed by the pipe, and seduced by music into the toils, when hunted by the huntsmen. And when mares are being covered, a tune is played on the flute — a nuptial song, as it were. And every improper sight and sound, to speak in a word, and every shameful sensation of licentiousness — which, in truth, is privation of sensation — must by all means be excluded; and we must be on our guard against whatever pleasure titillates eye and ear, and effeminates. For the various spells of the broken strains and plaintive numbers of the Carian muse corrupt men’s morals, drawing to perturbation of mind, by the licentious and mischievous art of music. The Spirit, distinguishing from such revelry the divine service, sings, “Praise Him with the sound of trumpet;” for with sound of trumpet He shall raise the dead. “Praise Him on the psaltery;” for the tongue is the psaltery of the Lord. “And praise Him on the lyre.” By the lyre is meant the mouth struck by the Spirit, as it were by a plectrum. “Praise Him on the clashing cymbals.” He calls the tongue the cymbal of the mouth, which resounds with the pulsation of the lips. Therefore He cried to humanity, “Let every breath praise the Loan,” because He cares for every breathing thing which He hath made. For man is truly a pacific instrument; while other instruments, if you investigate, you will find to be warlike, inflaming to lusts, or kindling up amours, or rousing
wrath.

In their wars, therefore, the Etruscans use the trumpet, the Arcadians the pipe, the Sicilians the pectides, the Cretans the lyre, the Lacedaemonians the flute, the Thracians the horn, the Egyptians the drum, and the Arabians the cymbal. The one instrument of peace, the Word alone by which we honor God, is what we employ. We no longer employ the ancient psaltery, and trumpet, and timbrel, and flute, which those expert in war and contemners of the fear of God were wont to make use of also in the choruses at their festive assemblies; that by such strains they might raise their dejected minds. But let our genial feeling in drinking be twofold, in accordance with the law. For “if thou shalt love the Lord thy God,” and then “thy neighbor,” let its first manifestation be towards God in thanksgiving and psalmody, and the second toward our neighbor in decorous fellowship. For says the apostle, “Let the Word of the Lord dwell in you richly.” And this Word suits and conforms Himself to seasons, to persons, to places.

In the present instance He is a guest with us. For the apostle adds again, “Teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to God.” And again, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and His Father.” This is our thankful revelry. And even if you wish to sing and play to the harp or lyre, there is no blame. Thou shalt imitate the righteous Hebrew king in his thanksgiving to God. “Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; praise is comely to the upright,” says the prophecy. “Confess to the Lord on the harp; play to Him on the psaltery of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song.” And does not the ten-stringed psaltery indicate the Word Jesus, who is manifested by the element of the decad? And as it is befitting, before partaking of food, that we should bless the Creator of all; so also in drinking it is suitable to praise Him on partaking of His creatures. For the psalm is a melodious and sober blessing. The apostle calls the psalm “a spiritual song.”

Finally, before partaking of sleep, it is a sacred duty to give thanks to God, having enjoyed His grace and love, and so go straight to sleep. “And confess to Him in songs of the lips,” he says, “because in His command all His good pleasure is done, and there is no deficiency in His salvation.” Further, among the ancient Greeks, in their banquets over the brimming cups, a song was sung called a skolion, after the manner of the Hebrew psalms, all together raising the paean with the voice, and sometimes also taking turns in the song while they drank healths round; while those that were more musical than the rest sang to the lyre. But let amatory songs be banished far away, and let our songs be hymns to God. “Let them praise,” it is said, “His name in the dance, and let them play to Him on the timbrel and psaltery.” And what is the choir which plays? The Spirit will show
thee: “Let His praise be in the congregation (church) of the saints; let them be joyful in their King.” And again he adds, “The LORD will take pleasure in His people.” For temperate harmonies are to be admitted; but we are to banish as far as possible from our robust mind those liquid harmonies, which, through pernicious arts in the modulations of tones, train to effeminacy and scurrility. But grave and modest strains say farewell to the turbulence of drunkenness. Chromatic harmonies are therefore to be abandoned to immodest revels, and to florid and meretricious music.

CHAPTER 5
ON LAUGHTER
People who are imitators of ludicrous sensations, or rather of such as deserve derision, are to be driven from our polity. For since all forms of speech flow from mind and manners, ludicrous expressions could not be uttered, did they not proceed from ludicrous practices. For the saying, “It is not a good tree which produces corrupt fruit, nor a corrupt tree which produces good fruit,” is to be applied in this case. For speech is the fruit of the mind. If, then, wags are to be ejected from our society, we ourselves must by no manner of means be allowed to stir up laughter. For it were absurd to be found imitators of things of which we are prohibited to be listeners; and still more absurd for a man to set about making himself a laughing-stock, that is, the butt of insult and derision. For if we could not endure to make a ridiculous figure, such as we see some do in processions, how could we with any propriety bear to have the inner man made a ridiculous figure of, and that to one’s face? Wherefore we ought never of our own accord to assume a ludicrous character. And how, then, can we devote ourselves to being and appearing ridiculous in our conversation, thereby travestying speech, which is the most precious of all human endowments? It is therefore disgraceful to set one’s self to do this; since the conversation of wags of this description is not fit for our ears, inasmuch as by the very expressions used it familiarizes us with shameful actions.

Pleasantry is allowable, not waggery. Besides, even laughter must be kept in check; for when given vent to in the right manner it indicates orderliness, but when it issues differently it shows a want of restraint. For, in a word, whatever things are natural to men we must not eradicate from them, but rather impose on them limits and suitable times. For man is not to laugh on all occasions because he is a laughing animal, any more than the horse neighs on all occasions because he is a neighing animal. But as rational beings, we are to regulate ourselves suitably, harmoniously relaxing the austerity and over-tension of our serious pursuits, not inharmoniously breaking them up altogether.

For the seemly relaxation of the countenance in a harmonious manner — as of a musical instrument — is called a smile. So also is laughter on the face
of well-regulated men termed. But the discordant relaxation of countenance in the case of women is called a giggle, and is meretricious laughter; in the case of men, a guffaw, and is savage and insulting laughter. “A fool raises his voice in laughter,” says the Scripture; but a clever man smiles almost imperceptibly. The clever man in this case he calls wise, inasmuch as he is differently affected from the fool. But, on the other hand, one needs not be gloomy, only grave. For I certainly prefer a man to smile who has a stern countenance than the reverse; for so his laughter will be less apt to become the object of ridicule.

Smiling even requires to be made the subject of discipline. If it is at what is disgraceful, we ought to blush rather than smile, lest we seem to take pleasure in it by sympathy; if at what is painful, it is fitting to look sad rather than to seem pleased. For to do the former is a sign of rational human thought; the other infers suspicion of cruelty. We are not to laugh perpetually, for that is going beyond bounds; nor in the presence of elderly persons, or others worthy of respect, unless they indulge in pleasantry for our amusement. Nor are we to laugh before all and sundry, nor in every place, nor to every one, nor about everything. For to children and women especially laughter is the cause of slipping into scandal. And even to appear stern serves to keep those about us at their distance. For gravity can ward off the approaches of licentiousness by a mere look. All senseless people, to speak in a word, wine “Commands both to laugh luxuriously and to dance,” changing effeminate manners to softness. We must consider, too, how consequently freedom of speech leads impropriety on to filthy speaking. “And he uttered a word which had been better unsaid.”

Especially, therefore, in liquor crafty men’s characters are wont to be seen through, stripped as they are of their mask through the caitiff license of intoxication, through which reason, weighed down in the soul itself by drunkenness, is lulled to sleep, and unruly passions are roused, which overmaster the feebleness of the mind.

CHAPTER 6
ON FILTHY SPEAKING
From filthy speaking we ourselves must entirely abstain, and stop the mouths of those who practice it by stern looks and averting the face, and by what we call making a mock of one: often also by a harsher mode of speech. “For what proceedeth out of the mouth,” He says, “defileth a man,” — shows him to be unclean, and heathenish, and untrained, and licentious, and not select, and proper, and honorable, and temperate. And as a similar rule holds with regard to hearing and seeing in the case of what is obscene, the divine Instructor, following the same course with both, arrays those children who are engaged in the struggle in words of
modesty, as ear-guards, so that the pulsation of fornication may not penetrate to the bruising of the soul; and He directs the eyes to the sight of what is honorable, saying that it is better to make a slip with the feet than with the eyes. This filthy speaking the apostle beats off, saying, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good.” And again, “As becometh saints, let not filthiness be named among you, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which things are not seemly, but rather giving of thanks.” And if “he that calls his brother a fool be in danger of the judgment,” what shall we pronounce regarding him who speaks what is foolish? Is it not written respecting such: “Whosoever shall speak an idle word, shall give an account to the Lord in the day of judgment?” And again, “By thy speech thou shalt be justified,” He says, “and by thy speech thou shalt be condemned.” What, then, are the salutary ear-guards, and what the regulations for slippery eyes? Conversations with the righteous, preoccupying and forearming the ears against those that would lead away from the truth.

“Evil communications corrupt good manners,” says Poetry. More nobly the apostle says, “Be haters of the evil; cleave to the good.” For he who associates with the saints shall be sanctified. From shameful things addressed to the ears, and words and sights, we must entirely abstain. And much more must we keep pure from shameful deeds: on the one hand, from exhibiting and exposing parts of the body which we ought not; and on the other, from beholding what is forbidden. For the modest son could not bear to look on the shameful exposure of the righteous man; and modesty covered what intoxication exposed — the spectacle of the transgression of ignorance. No less ought we to keep pure from calumnious reports, to which the ears of those who have believed in Christ ought to be inaccessible.

It is on this account, as appears to me, that the Instructor does not permit us to give utterance to aught unseemly, fortifying us at an early stage against licentiousness. For He is admirable always at cutting out the roots of sins, such as, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” by “Thou shalt not lust.” For adultery is the fruit of lust, which is the evil root. And so likewise also in this instance the Instructor censures license in names, and thus cuts off the licentious intercourse of excess. For license in names produces the desire of being indecorous in conduct; and the observance of modesty in names is a training in resistance to lasciviousness. We have shown in a more exhaustive treatise, that neither in the names nor in the members to which appellations not in common use are applied, is there the designation of what is really obscene.

For neither are knee and leg, and such other members, nor are the names applied to them, and the activity put forth by them, obscene. And even the pudenda are to be regarded as objects suggestive of modesty, not
shame. It is their unlawful activity that is shameful, and deserving ignominy, and reproach, and punishment. For the only thing that is in reality shameful is wickedness, and what is done through it. In accordance with these remarks, conversation about deeds of wickedness is appropriately termed filthy [shameful] speaking, as talk about adultery and pederasty and the like. Frivolous prating, too, is to be put to silence. “For,” it is said, “in much speaking thou shalt not escape sin.” “Sins of the tongue, therefore, shall be punished.” “There is he who is silent, and is found wise; and there is that is hated for much speech.” But still more, the prater makes himself the object of disgust. “For he that multiplieth speech abominates his own soul.”

CHAPTER 7
DIRECTIONS FOR THOSE WHO LIVE TOGETHER

Let us keep away from us jibing, the originator of insult, from which strifes and contentions and enmities burst forth. Insult, we have said, is the servant of drunkenness. A man is judged, not from his deeds alone, but from his words. “In a banquet,” it is said, “reprove not thy neighbor, nor say to him a word of reproach.” For if we are enjoined especially to associate with saints, it is a sin to jibe at a saint: “For from the mouth of the foolish,” says the Scripture, “is a staff of insult,” — meaning by staff the prop of insult, on which insult leans and rests. Whence I admire the apostle, who, in reference to this, exhorts us not to utter “scurrilous nor unsuitable words.” For if the assemblies at festivals take place on account of affection, and the end of a banquet is friendliness towards those who meet, and meat and drink accompany affection, how should not conversation be conducted in a rational manner, and puzzling people with questions be avoided from affection? For if we meet together for the purpose of increasing our good-will to each other, why should we stir up enmity by jibing? It is better to be silent than to contradict, and thereby add sin to ignorance. “Blessed,” in truth, “is the man who has not made a slip with his mouth, and has not been pierced by the pain of sin;” or has repented of what he has said amiss, or has spoken so as to wound no one. On the whole, let young men and young women altogether keep away from such festivals, that they may not make a slip in respect to what is unsuitable. For things to which their ears are unaccustomed, and unseemly sights, inflame the mind, while faith within them is still wavering; and the instability of their age conspires to make them easily carried away by lust. Sometimes also they are the cause of others stumbling, by displaying the dangerous charms of their time of life. For Wisdom appears to enjoin well: “Sit not at all with a married woman, and recline not on the elbow with her;” that is, do not sup nor eat with her frequently. Wherefore he adds, “And do not join company with her in wine, lest thy heart incline to her, and by thy blood slide to ruin.” For the license of intoxication is
dangerous, and prone to deflower. And he names “a married woman,”
because the danger is greater to him who attempts to break the connubial
bond.
But if any necessity arises, commanding the presence of married women,
let them be well clothed — without by raiment, within by modesty. But as
for such as are unmarried, it is the extremest scandal for them to be present
at a banquet of men, especially men under the influence of wine. And let
the men, fixing their eyes on the couch, and leaning without moving on
their elbows, be present with their ears alone; and if they sit, let them not
have their feet crossed, nor place one thigh on another, nor apply the hand
to the chin. For it is vulgar not to bear one’s self without support, and
consequently a fault in a young man. And perpetually moving and
changing one’s position is a sign of frivolousness. It is the part of a

487
temperate man also, in eating and drinking, to take a small portion, and
deliberately, not eagerly, both at the beginning and during the courses and
to leave off betimes, and so show his indifference. “Eat,” it is said, “like a
man what is set before you. Be the first to stop for the sake of regimen;
and, if seated in the midst of several people, do not stretch out your hand
before them.” You must never rush forward under the influence of
gluttony; nor must you, though desirous, reach out your hand till some
time, inasmuch as by greed one shows an uncontrolled appetite. Nor are
you, in the midst of the repast, to exhibit yourselves hugging your food
like wild beasts; nor helping yourselves to too much sauce, for man is not
by nature a sauce-consumer, but a bread-eater. A temperate man, too, must
rise before the general company, and retire quietly from the banquet. “For
at the time for rising,” it is said, “be not the last; haste home.” The twelve,
having called together the multitude of the disciples, said, “It is not meet
for us to leave the word of God and serve tables.” If they avoided this,
much more did they shun gluttony. And the apostles themselves, writing
to the brethren at Antioch, and in Syria and Cilicia, said: “It seemed good
to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no other burden than these
necessary things, to abstain from things offered to idols, and from blood,
and from things strangled, and from fornication, from which, if you keep
yourselves, ye shall do well.” But we must guard against drunkenness as
against hemlock; for both drag down to death. We must also check
excessive laughter and immoderate tears. For often people under the
influence of wine, after laughing immoderately, then are, I know not how,
by some impulse of intoxication moved to tears; for both effeminacy and
violence are discordant with the word. And elderly people, looking on the
young as children, may, though but very rarely, be playful with them,
joking with them to train them in good behavior. For example, before a
bashful and silent youth, one might by way of pleasantry speak thus:
“This son of mine (I mean one who is silent) is perpetually talking.” For a
joke such as this enhances the youth’s modesty, by showing the good qualities that belong to him playfully, by censure of the bad qualities, which do not. For this device is instructive, confirming as it does what is present by what is not present. Such, certainly, is the intention of him who says that a water-drinker and a sober man gets intoxicated and drunk. But if there are those who like to jest at people, we must be silent, and dispense with superfluous words like full cups. For such sport is dangerous. “The mouth of the impetuous approaches to contrition.” “Thou shalt not receive a foolish report, nor shalt thou agree with an unjust person to be an unjust witness,” neither in calumnies nor in injurious speeches, much less evil practices. I also should think it right to impose a limit on the speech of rightly regulated persons, who are impelled to speak to one who maintains a conversation with them. “For silence is the excellence of women, and the safe prize of the young; but good speech is characteristic of experienced, mature age. Speak, old man, at a banquet, for it is becoming to you. But speak without embarrassment, and with accuracy of knowledge. Youth, Wisdom also commands thee. Speak, if you must, with hesitation, on being twice asked; sum up your discourse in a few words.” But let both speakers regulate their discourse according to just proportion. For loudness of utterance is most insane; while an inaudible utterance is characteristic of a senseless man, for people will not hear: the one is the mark of pusillanimity, the other of arrogance. Let contentiousness in words, for the sake of a useless triumph, be banished; for our aim is to be free from perturbation. Such is the meaning of the phrase, “Peace to thee.” Answer not a word before you hear. An enervated voice is the sign of effeminacy. But modulation in the voice is characteristic of a wise man, who keeps his utterance from loudness, from drawling, from rapidity, from prolixity. For we ought not to speak long or much, nor ought we to speak frivolously. Nor must we converse rapidly and rashly. For the voice itself, so to speak, ought to receive its just dues; and those who are vociferous and clamorous ought to be silenced. For this reason, the wise Ulysses chastised Thersites with stripes: — “Only Thersites, with unmeasured words, Of which he had good store, to rate the chiefs, Not over-seemly, but wherewith he thought To move the crowd to laughter, bawled aloud.” “For dreadful in his destruction is a loquacious man.” And it is with triflers as with old shoes: all the rest is worn away by evil; the tongue only is left for destruction. Wherefore Wisdom gives these most useful exhortations: “Do not talk trifles in the multitude of the elders.” Further, eradicating frivolousness, beginning with God, it lays down the law for our regulation somewhat thus: “Do not repeat your words in your prayer.” Chirruping and whistling, and sounds made through the fingers, by which domestics
are called, being irrational signs, are to be given up by rational men.

489

Frequent spitting, too, and violent clearing of the throat, and wiping one’s nose at an entertainment, are to be shunned. For respect is assuredly to be had to the guests, lest they turn in disgust from such filthiness, which argues want of restraint. For we are not to copy oxen and asses, whose manger and dunghill are together. For many wipe their noses and spit even whilst supping.

If any one is attacked with sneezing, just as in the case of hiccup, he must not startle those near him with the explosion, and so give proof of his bad breeding; but the hiccup is to be quietly transmitted with the expiration of the breath, the mouth being composed becomingly, and not gaping and yawning like the tragic masks. So the disturbance of hiccup may be avoided by making the respirations gently; for thus the threatening symptoms of the ball of wind will be dissipated in the most seemly way, by managing its egress so as also to conceal anything which the air forcibly expelled may bring up with it. To wish to add to the noises, instead of diminishing them, is the sign of arrogance and disorderliness. Those, too, who scrape their teeth, bleeding the wounds, are disagreeable to themselves and detestable to their neighbors. Scratching the ears and the irritation of sneezing are swinish itchings, and attend unbridled fornication. Both shameful sights and shameful conversation about them are to be shunned. Let the look be steady, and the turning and movement of the neck, and the motions of the hands in conversation, be decorous. In a word, the Christian is characterized by composure, tranquillity, calmness, and peace.

CHAPTER 8
ON THE USE OF OINTMENTS AND CROWNS

The use of crowns and ointments is not necessary for us; for it impels to pleasures and indulgences, especially on the approach of night. I know that the woman brought to the sacred supper “an alabaster box of ointment,” and anointed the feet of the Lord, and refreshed Him; and I know that the ancient kings of the Hebrews were crowned with gold and precious stones. But the woman not having yet received the Word (for she was still a sinner), honored the Lord with what she thought the most precious thing in her possession — the ointment; and with the ornament of her person, with her hair, she wiped off the superfluous ointment, while she expended on the Lord tears of repentance: “wherefore her sins are forgiven.” This may be a symbol of the Lord’s teaching, and of His suffering. For the feet anointed with fragrant ointment mean divine instruction traveling with renown to the ends of the earth. “For their sound hath gone forth to the ends of the earth.” And if I seem not to insist too much, the feet of the Lord which were anointed are the apostles, having, according to prophecy, received the fragrant unction of the Holy Ghost. Those, therefore, who
traveled over the world and preached the Gospel, are figuratively called the feet of the Lord, of whom also the Holy Spirit foretells in the psalm, “Let us adore at the place where His feet stood,” that is, where the apostles, His feet, arrived; since, preached by them, He came to the ends of the earth. And tears are repentance; and the loosened hair proclaimed deliverance from the love of finery, and the affliction in patience which, on account of the Lord, attends preaching, the old vainglory being done away with by reason of the new faith.

Besides, it shows the Lord’s passion, if you understand it mystically thus: the oil (elaion) is the Lord Himself, from whom comes the mercy (eleov) which reaches us. But the ointment, which is adulterated oil, is the traitor Judas, by whom the Lord was anointed on the feet, being released from His sojourn in the world. For the dead are anointed. And the tears are we repentant sinners, who have believed in Him, and to whom He has forgiven our sins. And the disheveled hair is mourning Jerusalem, the deserted, for whom the prophetic lamentations were uttered. The Lord Himself shall teach us that Judas the deceitful is meant: “He that dippeth with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me.” You see the treacherous guest, and this same Judas betrayed the Master with a kiss. For he was a hypocrite, giving a treacherous kiss, in imitation of another hypocrite of old. And He reproves that people respecting whom it was said, “This people honor Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me.” It is not improbable, therefore, that by the oil He means that disciple to whom was shown mercy, and by the tainted and poisoned oil the traitor.

This was, then, what the anointed feet prophesied — the treason of Judas, when the Lord went to His passion. And the Savior Himself washing the feet of the disciples, and dispatching them to do good deeds, pointed out their pilgrimage for the benefit of the nations, making them beforehand fair and pure by His power. Then the ointment breathed on them its fragrance, and the work of sweet savor reaching to all was proclaimed; for the passion of the Lord has filled us with sweet fragrance, and the Hebrews with guilt. This the apostle most clearly showed, when he said, “thanks be to God, who always makes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are to God a sweet savor of the Lord, in them that are saved, and them that are lost; to one a savor of death unto death, to the other a savor of life unto life.” And the kings of the Jews using gold and precious stones and a variegated crown, the anointed ones wearing Christ symbolically on the head, were unconsciously adorned with the head of the Lord. The precious stone, or pearl, or emerald, points out the Word Himself. The gold, again, is the incorruptible Word, who admits not the poison of corruption. The Magi, accordingly, brought to Him on His birth, gold, the symbol of royalty. And this crown, after the image of the Lord, fades not as a flower.
I know, too, the words of Aristippus the Cyrenian. Aristippus was a luxurious man. He asked an answer to a sophistical proposition in the following terms: “A horse anointed with ointment is not injured in his excellence as a horse, nor is a dog which has been anointed, in his excellence as a dog; no more is a man,” he added, and so finished. But the dog and horse take no account of the ointment, whilst in the case of those whose perceptions are more rational, applying girlish scents to their persons, its use is more censurable. Of these ointments there are endless varieties, such as the Brenthian, the Metallian, and the royal; the Plangonian and the Psagdian of Egypt. Simonides is not ashamed in iambic lines to say, — “I was anointed with ointments and perfumes, And with nard.”

For a merchant was present. They use, too, the unguent made from lilies, and that from the cypress. Nard is in high estimation with them, and the ointment prepared from roses and the others which women use besides, both moist and dry, scents for rubbing and for fumigating; for day by day their thoughts are directed to the gratification of insatiable desire, to the exhaustless variety of fragrance. Wherefore also they are redolent of an excessive luxuriousness. And they fumigate and sprinkle their clothes, their bed-clothes, and their houses. Luxury all but compels vessels for the meanest uses to smell of perfume.

There are some who, annoyed at the attention bestowed on this, appear to me to be rightly so averse to perfumes on account of their rendering manhood effeminate, as to banish their compounders and vendors from well-regulated states, and banish, too, the dyers of flower-colored wools. For it is not right that ensnaring garments and unguents should be admitted into the city of truth; but it is highly requisite for the men who belong to us to give forth the odor not of ointments, but of nobleness and goodness. And let woman breathe the odor of the true royal ointment, that of Christ, not of unguents and scented powders; and let her always be anointed with the ambrosial chrism of modesty, and find delight in the holy unguent, the Spirit. This ointment of pleasant fragrance Christ prepares for His disciples, compounding the ointment of celestial aromatic ingredients. Wherefore also the Lord Himself is anointed with an ointment, as is mentioned by David: “Wherefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows; myrrh, and stacte, and cassia from thy garments.” But let us not unconsciously abominate unguents, like vultures or like beetles (for these, they say, when smeared with ointment, die); and let a few unguents be selected by women, such as will not be overpowering to a husband. For excessive anointings with unguents savor of a funeral and not of connubial life. Yet oil itself is inimical to bees and insects; and some men it benefits, and some it summons to the fight; and those who were formerly friends, when anointed with it, it turns out to
deadly combat.

Ointment being smooth oil, do you not think that it is calculated to render noble manners effeminate? Certainly. And as we have abandoned luxury in taste, so certainly do we renounce voluptuousness in sights and odors; lest through the senses, as through unwatched doors, we unconsciously give access into the soul to that excess which we have driven away. If, then, we say that the Lord the great High Priest offers to God the incense of sweet fragrance, let us not imagine that this is a sacrifice and sweet fragrance of incense; but let us understand it to mean, that the Lord lays the acceptable offering of love, the spiritual fragrance, on the altar.

To resume: oil itself suffices to lubricate the skin, and relax the nerves, and remove any heavy smell from the body, if we require oil for this purpose. But attention to sweet scents is a bait which draws us in to sensual lust. For the licentious man is led on every hand, both by his food, his bed, his conversation, by his eyes, his ears, his jaws, and by his nostrils too. As oxen are pulled by rings and ropes, so is the voluptuary by fumigations and unguents, and the sweet scents of crowns. But since we assign no place to pleasure which is linked to no use serviceable to life, come let us also distinguish here too, selecting what is useful. For there are sweet scents which neither make the head heavy nor provoke love, and are not redolent of embraces and licentious companionship, but, along with moderation, are salutary, nourishing the brain when laboring under indisposition, and strengthening the stomach. One must not therefore refrigerate himself with flowers when he wishes to supple his nerves. For their use is not wholly to be laid aside, but ointment is to be employed as a medicine and help in order to bring up the strength when enfeebled, and against catarrhs, and colds, and ennui, as the comic poet says: —

“The nostrils are anointed; it being
A most essential thing for health to fill the brain with good odors.”

The rubbing of the feet also with the fatness of warming or cooling unguents is practiced on account of its beneficial effects; so consequently, in the case of those who are thus saturated, an attraction and flow take place from the head to the inferior members. But pleasure to which no utility attaches, induces the suspicion of meretricious habits, and is a drug provocative of the passions. Rubbing one’s self with ointment is entirely different from anointing one’s self with ointment. The former is effeminate, while anointing with ointment is in some cases beneficial. Aristippus the philosopher, accordingly, when anointed with ointment, said “that the wretched Cinoedi deserved to perish miserably for bringing the utility of ointment into bad repute.” “Honor the physician for his usefulness,” says the Scripture, “for the Most High made him; and the art of healing is of the Lord.” Then he adds, “And the compounder of unguents will make the mixture,” since unguents have been given
manifestly for use, not for voluptuousness. For we are by no means to care for the exciting properties of unguents, but to choose what is useful in them, since God hath permitted the production of oil for the mitigation of men’s pains.

And silly women, who dye their gray hair and anoint their locks, grow speedily grayer by the perfumes they use, which are of a drying nature. Wherefore also those that anoint themselves become drier, and the dryness makes them grayer. For if grayness is an exsiccation of the hair, or defect of heat, the dryness drinking up the moisture which is the natural nutriment of the hair, and making it gray, how can we any longer retain a liking for unguents, through which ladies, in trying to escape gray hair, become gray? And as dogs with fine sense of smell track the wild beasts by the scent, so also the temperate scent the licentious by the superfluous perfume of unguents.

Such a use of crowns, also, has degenerated to scenes of revelry and intoxication. Do not encircle my head with a crown, for in the springtime it is delightful to while away the time on the dewy meads, while soft and many-colored flowers are in bloom, and, like the bees, enjoy a natural and pure fragrance. But to adorn one’s self with “a crown woven from the fresh mead,” and wear it at home, were unfit for a man of temperance. For it is not suitable to fill the wanton hair with rose-leaves, or violets, or lilies, or other such flowers, stripping the sward of its flowers. For a crown encircling the head cools the hair, both on account of its moisture and its coolness. Accordingly, physicians, determining by physiology that the brain is cold, approve of anointing the breast and the points of the nostrils, so that the warm exhalation passing gently through, may salutarily warm the chill. A man ought not therefore to cool himself with flowers. Besides, those who crown themselves destroy the pleasure there is in flowers: for they enjoy neither the sight of them, since they wear the crown above their eyes; nor their fragrance, since they put the flowers away above the organs of respiration. For the fragrance ascending and exhaling naturally, the organ of respiration is left destitute of enjoyment, the fragrance being carried away. As beauty, so also the flower delights when looked at; and it is meet to glorify the Creator by the enjoyment of the sight of beautiful objects. The use of them is injurious, and passes swiftly away, avenged by remorse. Very soon their evanescence is proved; for both fade, both the flower and beauty. Further, whoever touches them is cooled by the former, inflamed by the latter. In one word, the enjoyment of them except by sight is a crime, and not luxury. It becomes us who truly follow the Scripture to enjoy ourselves temperately, as in Paradise. We must regard the woman’s crown to be her husband, and the husband’s crown to be marriage; and the flowers of marriage the children of both, which the divine husbandman
plucks from meadows of flesh. “Children’s children are the crown of old men.” And the glory of children is their fathers, it is said; and our glory is the Father of all; and the crown of the whole church is Christ. As roots and plants, so also have flowers their individual properties, some beneficial, some injurious, some also dangerous. The ivy is cooling; nux emits a stupefying effluvium, as the etymology shows. The narcissus is a flower with a heavy odor; the name evinces this, and it induces a torpor (narkhn) in the nerves. And the effluvia of roses and violets being mildly cool, relieve and prevent headaches. But we who are not only not permitted to drink with others to intoxication, but not even to indulge in much wine, do not need the crocus or the flower of the cypress to lead us to an easy sleep. Many of them also, by their odors, warm the brain, which is naturally cold, volatilizing the effusions of the head. The rose is hence said to have received its name (rjodon) because it emits a copious stream (rjou'ma) of odor (ojdwdh). Wherefore also it quickly fades. But the use of crowns did not exist at all among the ancient Greeks; for neither the suitors nor the luxurious Phaeacians used them. But at the games there was at first the gift to the athletes; second, the rising up to applaud; third, the strewing with leaves; lastly, the crown, Greece after the Median war having given herself up to luxury. Those, then, who are trained by the Word are restrained from the use of crowns; and do not think that this Word, which has its seat in the brain, ought to be bound about, not because the crown is the symbol of the recklessness of revelry, but because it has been dedicated to idols. Sophocles accordingly called the narcissus “the ancient coronet of the great gods,” speaking of the earth-born divinities; and Sappho crowns the Muses with the rose: —

“For thou dost not share in roses from Pieria.”

They say, too, that Here delights in the lily, and Artemis in the myrtle. For if the flowers were made especially for man, and senseless people have taken them not for their own proper and grateful use, but have abused them to the thankless service of demons, we must keep from them for conscience sake. The crown is the symbol of untroubled tranquillity. For this reason they crown the dead, and idols, too, on the same account, by this fact giving testimony to their being dead. For revelers do not without crowns celebrate their orgies; and when once they are encircled with flowers, at last they are inflamed excessively. We must have no communion with demons. Nor must we crown the living image of God after the manner of dead idols. For the fair crown of amaranth is laid up for those who have lived well. This flower the earth is not able to bear; heaven alone is competent to produce it. Further, it were irrational in us, who have heard that the Lord was crowned with thorns, to crown ourselves with flowers, insulting thus the sacred passion of the Lord. For the Lord’s
crown prophetically pointed to us, who once were barren, but are placed around Him through the Church of which He is the Head. But it is also a type of faith, of life in respect of the substance of the wood, of joy in respect of the appellation of crown, of danger in respect of the thorn, for there is no approaching to the Word without blood. But this platted crown fades, and the plait of perversity is untied, and the flower withers. For the glory of those who have not believed on the Lord fades. And they crowned Jesus raised aloft, testifying to their own ignorance. For being hard of heart, they understood not that this very thing, which they called the disgrace of the Lord, was a prophecy wisely uttered: “The Lord was not known by the people “ which erred, which was not circumcised in understanding, whose darkness was not enlightened, which knew not God, denied the Lord, forfeited the place of the true Israel, persecuted God, hoped to reduce the Word to disgrace; and Him whom they crucified as a malefactor they crowned as a king. Wherefore the Man on whom they believed not, they shall know to be the loving God the Lord, the Just. Whom they provoked to show Himself to be the Lord, to Him when lifted up they bore witness, by encircling Him, who is exalted above every name, with the diadem of righteousness by the ever-blooming thorn. This diadem, being hostile to those who plot against Him, coerces them; and friendly to those who form the Church, defends them. This crown is the flower of those who have believed on the glorified One but covers with blood and chastises those who have not believed. It is a symbol, too, of the Lord’s successful work, He having borne on His head, the princely part of His body, all our iniquities by which we were pierced. For He by His own passion rescued us from offenses, and sins, and such like thorns; and having destroyed the devil, deservedly said in triumph, “O Death, where is thy sting?” And we eat grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles; while those to whom He stretched forth His hands — the disobedient and unfruitful people — He lacerates into wounds. I can also show you another mystic meaning in it. For when the Almighty Lord of the universe began to legislate by the Word, and wished His power to be manifested to Moses, a godlike vision of light that had assumed a shape was shown him in the burning bush (the bush is a thorny plant); but when the Word ended the giving of the law and His stay with men, the Lord was again mystically crowned with thorn. On His departure from this world to the place whence He came, He repeated the beginning of His old descent, in order that the Word beheld at first in the bush, and afterwards taken up crowned by the thorn, might show the whole to be the work of one power, He Himself being one, the Son of the Father, who is truly one, the beginning and the end of time.

But I have made a digression from the paedagogic style of speech, and introduced the didactic. I return accordingly to my subject.
To resume, then: we have showed that in the department of medicine, for
healing, and sometimes also for moderate recreation, the delight derived
from flowers, and the benefit derived from unguents and perfumes, are not
to be overlooked. And if some say, What pleasure, then, is there in flowers
to those that do not use them? let them know, then, that unguents are
prepared from them, and are most useful. The Susinian ointment is made
from various kinds of lilies; and it is warming, aperient, drawing,
moistening, abistergent, subtle, antibilious, emollient. The Narcissinian is
made from the narcissus, and is equally beneficial with the Susinian. The
Myrsinian, made of myrtle and myrtle berries, is a styptic, stopping
effusions from the body; and that from roses is refrigerating. For, in a
word, these also were created for our use. “Hear me,” it is said, “and grow
as a rose planted by the streams of waters, and give forth a sweet fragrance
like frankincense, and bless the Lord for His works.” We should have much
to say respecting them, were we to speak of flowers and odors as made for
necessary purposes, and not for the excesses of luxury. And if a
concession must be made, it is enough for people to enjoy the fragrance of
flowers; but let them not crown themselves with them. For the Father
takes great care of man, and gives to him alone His own art. The Scripture
therefore says, “Water, and fire, and iron, and milk, and fine flour of
wheat, and honey, the blood of the grape, and oil, and clothing, — all these
things are for the good of the godly.”
CHAPTER 9
ON SLEEP
How, in due course, we are to go to sleep, in remembrance of the precepts
of temperance, we must now say. For after the repast, having given thanks
to God for our participation in our enjoyments, and for the [happy]
passing of the day, our talk must be turned to sleep. Magnificence of bedclothes, gold-
embroidered carpets, and smooth carpets worked with gold,
and long fine robes of purple, and costly fleecy cloaks, and manufactured
rugs of purple, and mantles of thick pile, and couches softer than sleep, are
to be banished.
For, besides the reproach of voluptuousness, sleeping on downy feathers
is injurious, when our bodies fall down as into a yawning hollow, on
account of the softness of the bedding.
For they are not convenient for sleepers turning in them, on account of the
bed rising into a hill on either side of the body. Nor are they suitable for
the digestion of the food, but rather for burning it up, and so destroying
the nutriment. But stretching one’s self on even couches, affording a kind
of natural gymnasiun for sleep, contributes to the digestion of the food.
And those that can roll on other beds, having this, as it were, for a natural
gymnasiun for sleep, digest food more easily, and render themselves fitter
for emergencies. Moreover, silver-footed couches argue great ostentation;
and the ivory on beds, the body having left the soul, is not permissible for holy men, being a lazy contrivance for rest. We must not occupy our thoughts about these things, for the use of them is not forbidden to those who possess them; but solicitude about them is prohibited, for happiness is not to be found in them. On the other hand, it savors of cynic vanity for a man to act as Diomede, —

“And he stretched himself under a wild bull’s hide,” —

unless circumstances compel.

Ulysses rectified the unevenness of the nuptial couch with a stone. Such frugality and self-help was practiced not by private individuals alone, but by the chiefs of the ancient Greeks. But why speak of these? Jacob slept on the ground, and a stone served him for a pillow; and then was he counted worthy to behold the vision — that was above man. And in conformity with reason, the bed which we use must be simple and frugal, and so constructed that, by avoiding the extremes [of too much indulgence and too much endurance], it may be comfortable: if it is warm, to protect us; if cold, to warm us. But let not the couch be elaborate, and let it have smooth feet; for elaborate turnings form occasionally paths for creeping things which twine themselves about the incisions of the work, and do not slip off.

Especially is a moderate softness in the bed suitable for manhood; for sleep ought not to be for the total enervation of the body, but for its relaxation. Wherefore I say that it ought not to be allowed to come on us for the sake of indulgence, but in order to rest from action. We must therefore sleep so as to be easily awaked. For it is said, “Let your loins be girt about, and your lamps burning; and ye yourselves like to men that watch for their Lord, that when he returns from the marriage, and comes and knocks, they may straightway open to him. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching.” For there is no use of a sleeping man, as there is not of a dead man. Wherefore we ought often to rise by night and bless God. For blessed are they who watch for Him, and so make themselves like the angels, whom we call “watchers.” But a man asleep is worth nothing, any more than if he were not alive. But he who has the light watches, “and darkness seizes not on him,” nor sleep, since darkness does not. He that is illuminated is therefore awake towards God; and such an one lives. “For what was made in Him was life.” “Blessed is the man,” says Wisdom, “who shall hear me, and the man who shall keep my ways, watching at my doors, daily observing the posts of my entrances.” “Let us not then sleep, as do others, but let us watch,” says the Scripture, “and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night,” that is, in the darkness of ignorance. “But let us who are of the day be sober. For ye are all
children of the light, and children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of
the darkness.” But whoever of us is most solicitous for living the true life,
and for entertaining noble sentiments, will keep awake for as long time as
possible, reserving to himself only what in this respect is conducive to his
own health; and that is not very usual.
But devotion to activity begets an everlasting vigil after toils. Let not food
weigh us down, but lighten us; that we may be injured as little as possible
by sleep, as those that swim with weights hanging to them are weighed
down. But, on the other hand, let temperance raise us as from the abyss
beneath to the enterprises of wakefulness. For the oppression of sleep is
like death, which forces us into insensibility, cutting off the light by the
closing of the eyelids. Let not us, then, who are sons of the true light, close
the door against this light; but turning in on ourselves, illuminating the eyes
of the hidden man, and gazing on the truth itself, and receiving its streams,
let us clearly and intelligibly reveal such dreams as are true.
But the hiccuping of those who are loaded with wine, and the snortings of
those who are stuffed with food, and the snoring rolled in the bed-clothes,
and the rumblings of pained stomachs, cover over the clear-seeing eye of
the soul, by filling the mind with ten thousand fantasies. And the cause is
too much food, which drags the rational part of man down to a condition
of stupidity. For much sleep brings advantage neither to our bodies nor our
souls; nor is it suitable at all to those processes which have truth for their
object, although agreeable to nature.
Now, just Lot (for I pass over at present the account of the economy of
regeneration) would not have been drawn into that unhallowed intercourse,
had he not been intoxicated by his daughters, and overpowered by sleep.
If, therefore, we cut off the causes of great tendency to sleep, we shall
sleep the more soberly. For those who have the sleepless Word dwelling in
them, ought not to sleep the livelong night; but they ought to rise by night,
especially when the days are coming to an end, and one devote himself to
literature, another begin his art, the women handle the distaff, and all of us
should, so to speak, fight against sleep, accustoming ourselves to this
gently and gradually, so that through wakefulness we may partake of life
for a longer period.
501
We, then, who assign the best part of the night to wakefulness, must by no
manner of means sleep by day; and fits of uselessness, and napping and
stretching one’s self, and yawning, are manifestations of frivolous
uneasiness of soul. And in addition to all, we must know this, that the
need of sleep is not in the soul. For it is ceaselessly active. But the body is
relieved by being resigned to rest, the soul whilst not acting through the
body, but exercising intelligence within itself. Thus also, such dreams as
are true, in the view of him who reflects rightly, are the thoughts of a sober
soul, undistracted for the time by the affections of the body, and
counseling with itself in the best manner. For the soul to cease from activity within itself, were destruction to it. Wherefore always contemplating God, and by perpetual converse with Him inoculating the body with wakefulness, it raises man to equality with angelic grace, and from the practice of wakefulness it grasps the eternity of life.

CHAPTER 10
QUAENAM DE PROCREATIONE
LIBERORUM TRACTANDA SINT

Tempus autem opportunum conjunctionis solis iis relinquitur considerandum, qui iuncti sunt matrimonio; qui autem matrimonio juncti sunt, iis scopus est et institutum, liberorum suscectio finis autem, ut boni sint liberi: quemadmodum agricolae seminis quidem dejectionis causa est, quod nutrimenti habendi curam gerat; agriculturae autem finis est, fructuum perceptio. Multo autem melior est agricultura, qui terram colit animatam: ille enim ed tempus alimentum expetens, hic vero ut universum permanent, curam gerens, agricolae officio fungitur: et ille quidem propter se, hic vero propter Deum plantat ac seminat. Dixit enim: “Multiplicemini;” ubi hoc subaudiendum est: “Et ea ratione fit homo Dei imago, quatenus homo co-operatur ad generationem hominis.” Non est quaelibet terra apta ad suscipienda semina: quod si etiam sit quaelibet, non tamen eidem agricolae. Neque vero seminandum est supra petram, neque semen est contumlia afficiendum, quod quidem dux est et princeps generationis, estque substantia, quae simul habet insitas nature rationes. Quae sunt autem secundum naturam rationes, absque ratione praeternaturalibus mandando 502 meatibus, ignominia afficere, valde est impium. Videte itaque quomodo sapientissimus Moyses infrugiferam aliquando sationem symbolice repulerit: “Non comedes, inquiens, leporem, nec hyaenam.” Non vult homines esse qualitatis eorum participes, neque eis aequalem gustare libidinem: haec enim animalia ad explendum coitum venereum feruntur insano quodam furore. Ac leporem quidem dicunt quotannis multiplicare anum, pro numero annorum, quos vixit, habentem foramina: et ea ratione dum leporis esum prohibet, significat se dehortari puerorum amorem. Hyaenam autem vicissim singulis annis masculinum sexum mutare in femininum: significare autem non esse illi ad adulteria prorumpendum, qui ab hyaena abstinet.

Well, I also agree that the consummately wise Moses confessedly indicates by the prohibition before us, that we must not resemble these animals; but I do not assent to the explanation of what has been symbolically spoken. For nature never can be forced to change. What once has been impressed on it, may not be transformed into the opposite by passion. For passion is not nature, and passion is wont to deface the form, not to cast it into a new shape. Though many birds are said to change with the seasons, both in color and voice, as the blackbird (ko>ssufov), which becomes yellow
from black, and a chatterer from a singing-bird. Similarly also the nightingale changes by turns both its color and note. But they do not alter their nature itself, so as in the transformation to become female from male. But the new crop of feathers, like new clothes, produces a kind of coloring of the feathers, and a little after it evaporates in the rigor of winter, as a flower when its color fades. And in like manner the voice itself, injured by the cold, is enfeebled. For, in consequence of the outer skin being thickened by the surrounding air, the arteries about the neck being compressed and filled, press hard on the breath; which being very much confined, emits a stifled sound. When, again, the breath is assimilated to the surrounding air and relaxed in spring, it is freed from its confined condition, and is carried through the dilated, though till then obstructed arteries, it warbles no longer a dying melody, but now gives forth a shrill note; and the voice flows wide, and spring now becomes the song of the voice of birds.

Nequaquam ergo credendum est, hyaenam unquam mutare naturam: idem enim animal non habet simul ambo pudenda maris et feminae, sicutnonnulli existimarunt, qui prodigiose hermaphroditos finxerunt, et inter marem et feminam, hanc masculo-feminam naturam innovarunt. Valde autem falluntur, ut qui non animadverterint, quam sit filiorum amans omnium mater et genetrix Natura: quoniam enim hoc animal, hyaena inquam, est salacissimum, sub cauda ante excrementi meatum, adnatum est ei quoddam carneum tuberculum, feminino pudendo figura persimile. Nullum autem meatum habet haec figura carnis, qui in utilem aliquam desinat partem, vel in matricem inquam, vel in rectum intestinum: tantum habet magnam concavitatem, quae inanem excitat libidinem, quando aversi fuerint meatus, qui in concipiendo fetu occupati sunt. Hoc ipsum autem et masculo et feminae hyaenae adnatum est, quod sit insigniter pathica: masculus enim vicissim et agit, et patitur: unde etiam rarissime inveniri potest hyaena femina: non enim frequenter concipit hoc animal, cum in eis largiter redundet ea, quae praeter naturam est, satio. Hac etiam ratione mihi videtur Plato in Phaedro, amorem puerorum repellens, eum appellate bestiam, quod frenum mordentes, qui se voluptatibus dedunt, libidinosi, quadrupedum coeunt more, et filios seminare conantur. Impios “autem tradidit Deus,” ut air Apostolus, “in perturbationes ignominiae: nam et feminae eorum mutaverunt naturalem usum in eum, qui est propter naturam: similiter autem et masculi eorum, relicto usu naturali, exarserunt in desiderio sui inter se invicem, masculi in masculos turpitudinem operantes, et mercedem, quam oportuit, erroris sui in se recipientes.” At vero ne libidinosissimis quidem animantibus concessit natura in excrementi meatum semen immittere: urina enim in vesicam excernitur, humefactum alimentum in ventrum, lacryma vero in oculum, sanguis in venas, sordes in aures, mucus in hares defertur: fini autem recti intestini, sedes cohaeret, per quam excrementa exponuntur. Sola ergo varia in hyaenis natura, superfluo
coitui superfluam hanc partem excogitavit, et ideo est etiam aliquantisper concaum, ut prurientibus partibus inserviat, exinde autem excaecatur concavitas: non fuit emm res fabricata ad generationem. Hinc nobis manifestum atque adeo in confessio est, vitandos esse cum masculis concubitus, et infrugiferas sationes, et Venerem praeposteram, et quae natura coalescere non possunt, androgynorum conjunctiones, ipsam naturam sequentibus, quae id per partium prohibit constitutionem, ut quae masculum non ad semen suscipiendum, sed ad id effundendum fecerit. Jeremias autem, hoc est, per ipsum loquens Spiritus, quando dicit: “Spelunca hyaenae facta est domus mea,” id quod ex mortuis constabat corporibus detestans alimentum, sapienti allegoria reprehendit cultum simulacrorum: vere enim oportet ab idolis esse puram domum Dei viventis. Rursus Moides lepore quoque vesci prohibit. Omni enim tempore coit lepus, et salit, assidente femina, earn a tergo aggrediens: est enim ex iis, quae retro insiliunt. Concipit autem singulis mensibus, et superfetat; init autem, et parit; postquam autem peperit, statim a quovis initur lepore (neque enim uno contenta est matrimonio) et rursus concipit, adhuc lactans: habet enim matricem, cui sunt duo sinus, et non unus solus matricis vacuus sinus, est ei sufficiens sedes ad receptaculure coitus (quidquid enim est vacuum, desiderat repleri); verum accidit, ut cure uterum gerunt, altera pars matricis desiderio teneatur et libidine furiat; quocirca fiunt eis superfetationes. A vehementibus ergo appetitionibus, mutuisque congressionibus, et cure praegnantibus feminis conjunctionibus, alternisque initibus, puerorumque stupris, adulteriis et libidine abstinere, hujus nos aenigmatibus adhortata est prohibitio. Idcirco aperte, et non per renigmata Moyses prohibuit, “Non fornicaberis; non moechaberis; pueris stuprum non inferes,” inquiens. Logi itaque praescriptum totis viribus observandum, neque quidquam contra leges ullo modo faciendum est, neque mandata sunt infirmanda. Malae enim. cupiditati nomen est u[briv, “petulantia;” et equum cupiditatis, “petulantem” vocavit Plato, cure legissit, “Facti estis mihi equi furentes in feminas.” Libidines autem supplicium notum nobis facient illi, qui Sodomam accesserunt, angeli. Li eos, qui probro illos afficere voluerunt, una cum ipsa civitate combusserunt, evidenti hoc indicio ignem, qui est fructus libidinis, descriptentes. Quae enim veteribus acciderunt, sicut ante diximus, ad nos admonendos scripta sunt, ne eisdem teneamur vitii, et caveamus, ne in poenas similes incidamus. Oportet autem filios existimare, pueros; uxorres autem alienas intueri tanquam proprias filias: voluptates quippe continere, ventrique et iis quae sunt infra ventrem, dominari, est maximi imperii. Si enim ne digitum quidem temere movere permittit sapienti ratio, ut confitentur Stoici, quomodo non multo magis iis, qui sapientiam persequuntur, in eam, qua coitur, particular dominitus est obtinendus? Atque hac quidem de causa videtur esse nominatum pudendum, quod hac
corporis parte magis, quam qualibet alia, cum pudore utendum sit; natura
enim sicut alimentis, ita etiam legitimis nuptiis, quantum convenit, utile
est, et decet, nobis uti permisit: permisit autem appetere liberorum
procreationem. Quicumque autem, quod modum excedit, persequuntur,
labuntur in eo quod est secundum naturam, per congressus, qui sunt
praeter leges, seipsos laedentes. Ante omnia enim recte habet, ut nunquam
cure adolescentibus perinde ac cum feminis, Veneris utamur consuetudine.
Et ideo “non esse in petris et lapidibus seminandum” dicit, qui a Moyse
factus est philosophus, “quoniam nunquam actis radicibus gentalem sit
senem naturam susceputur.” Logos itaque per Moysen appertissime
praecipit: “Et cure masculo non dormies feminino concubitu: est enim
abominatio.” Accedit his, quod “ab omni quoque arvo feminino esse
abstinendum” praeterquam a proprio, ex divinis Scripturis colligens
praecessus Plato consueltut lege illinc accepta: “Et uxori proximi tui non
dabis concubitum seminis, ut polluaris apud ipsam. Irrita autem sunt et
adulterina concubinarum semina. Ne semina, ubi non vis tibi nasci quod
seminatum est. Neque ullam omnino tange mulierem, praeterquam tuam
ipsius uxorem,” ex qua sola tibi licet carnis voluptates percipere ad
suscipiam legitamam successionem. Haec enim Logo sola sunt legitima.
Eis quidem certe, qui divini munus in producendo opificio sunt
participes, semen non est abjicendum, neque injuria afficiendum, neque
Tanquam si cornibus semen mandes seminandum est. Hic ipse ergo Moyses
cum ipsis quoque prohibet uxoribus congradi, si forte eas detineant
purgationes menstruæ. Non enim purgamento corporis genitale semen, et
quod max homo futurum est, polluere est aequum, nec sordido materiae
profluvio, et, quae expurgantur, inquinamentis inundare ac obruere; semen
autem generationis degenerat, ineptumque reddetur, si matricis sulcis
privetur. Neque vero ullum unquam induxit veterum Hebraorum coeuntem
cum sua uxore praegrante. Sola enim voluptas, si quis ea etiam utatur in
conjubio, est praeter leges, et injusta, eta ratione aliena. Rursus autem
Moyses abducit viros a praegrantibus, quousque pepererint. Revera enim
matrix sub vesica quidem collocata, super intestinum autem, quod rectum
appellatur, posta, extendit collum inter humeros in vesica; et os collis, in
quod venit semen, impletum occluditur, illa autem rursus inanis reddetur,
cum partu purgata fuerit: fructu autem deposito, deinde semen suspicit.
Neque vero nobis turpe est ad auditorum utilitatem nominare partes, in
quibus fit fetus conceptio, quae quidem Deum fabricari non puduit. Matrix
itaque sienes filiorum procreationem, semen suspicit, probosumque et
vituperandum negat coitum, post sationem ore clauso omnino jam
libidinem excludens. Eju autem appetitiones, quae prius in amicis
versatantur complexibus, intro conversæ, in procreatione sobolis
occupatae, operantur una cum Opifice. Nefas est ergo operantem jam
voluptati. Pudore autem nos afficiat Paedagogus, clamans per Ezechielem: “Circumcidamini fornicationem vestram.” Aliquod tempus ad seminandum opportunum habent quoque rationis expertia animantia. Aliter autem coire, quam ad liberorum procreationem, est facere injuriam naturae; qua quidem oportet magistra, quas prudenter introducit temporis commoditates, diligenter observare, senectutem, inquam, et puerilem aetatem. His enim nondum concessit, illos autem non vult amplius uxores ducere. Seal non vult homines semper dare operam matrimonio. Matrimonium autem est filiorum procreationis appetitio, non inordinata seminis excretio, quae est et praeter leges et ratione aliena. Secundum naturam autem nobis vita universa processerit, si et ab initio cupiditates contineamus, et hominum genus, quod ex divina providentia nascitur, improbis et malitiosis non tollamus artibus: eae enim, ut fornicatiohem celent, exitialia medicamenta adhibentes, quae prorsus in perniciem ducunt, simul cum fetu omnem humanitatem perdunt. Caeterum, quibus uxores ducere concessum est, iis Paedagogo opus fuerit, ut non interdiu mystica naturae celebrentur orgia, nec ut aliquis ex ecclesia, verbi gratia, aut ex foro mane rediens, galli more coeat, quando orationis, et lectionis, et eorum quae interdiu facere convenit, operum tempus est. Vespere autem oportet post convivium quiescere, et post gratiarum actionem, quae fit Deo pro bonis quae percepiamus. Non semper autem concedit tempus natura, ut peragatur congressus matrimonii; est enim eo desiderabilior conjunctio, quo diuturnior. Neque vero noctu, tanquam in tenebris, immodeste sese ac intemperanter gerere oportet, sed verecundia, ut quae sit lux rationis, in animo est includenda. Nihil enim a Penelope telam texente differemus, si interdiu quidem texamus dogmata temperantiae; noctu autem ea resolvamus, cum in cubile venerimus. Si enim honestatem exercere oportet, multo magis tuae uxori honestas est ostendenda, inhonestas vitando conjunctiones: et quod caste cum proximis verseris, fide dignum e domo adsit testimonium. Non enim potest aliquid honestum ab ea existimari, apud quam honestas in acribus illis non 508 probatur certo quasi testimonio voluptatibus. Benevolentia autem quae praeeeps fertur ad congressionem, exiguo tempore floret, et cum corpore consenescit; nonnunquam autem etiam praesenescit, flaccescente jam libidine, quando matrimonialem temperamentiam meretriciae vitiaverint libidines. Amantium enim corda sunt volucria, amorisque irritamenta exstinguuntur saepe poenitentia; amorque saepe vertitur in odium, quando reprehensionera sensorit satietas. Impudicorum vero verborum, et turpium figurarum, meretriciorumque osculomm, et hujusmodi lasciviarum nomina ne sunt quidem memoranda, beatum sequentibus Apostolum, qui aperte dicit: “Fornicatio autem et omnis immunditia, vel plura habendi cupiditas, ne nominetur quidem in vobis, sicut decet saneros.” Recte ergo videtur dixisse quispiam: “Nulli quidem profuit coitus, recte autem cum eo agitur, quem non laeserit.” Nam et qui legitimus, est periculosus, nisi quatenus in
liberorum procreatione versatur. De eo autem, qui est praeter leges, dicit
Scriptura: “Mulier meretrix apro similis reputabitur. Quae autem viro
subjecta est, turris est mortis iis, qui ea utuntur.” Capro, vel apro,
meretricis comparavit affectionem. “Mortem” autem dixit “quaesitam,”
adulterium, quod committitur in meretrice, quae custoditur. “Domum”
autem, et “urbem,” in qua suam exercent intemperantiam. Quin etiam quae
est apud vos poetica, quodammodo ea exprobrans, scribit: —
Tecum et adulterium est, tecum coitusque nefandus,
Foedus, femineusque, urbs pessima, plane impura.
Econtra autem pudicos admiratur: —
Quos desiderium tenuit nec turpe cubilis
Alterius, nec tetra invisaque stupra tulerunt
Ulla unquam maribus.
For many think such things to be pleasures only which are against nature,
such as these sins of theirs. And those who are better than they, know
them to be sins, but are overcome by pleasures, and darkness is the veil of
their vicious practices. For he violates his marriage adulterously who uses
it in a meretricious way, and hears not the voice of the Instructor, crying,
“The man who ascends his bed, who says in his soul, Who seeth me?
darkness is around me, and the walls are my covering, and no one sees my
sins. Why do I fear lest the Highest will remember?” Most wretched is
such a man, dreading men’s eyes alone, and thinking that he will escape the
observation of God. “For he knoweth not,” says the Scripture, “that
brighter ten thousand times than the sun are the eyes of the Most High,
which look on all the ways of men, and cast their glance into hidden parts.”
Thus again the Instructor threatens them, speaking by Isaiah: “Woe be to
those who take counsel in secret, and say, Who seeth us?” For one may
escape the light of sense, but that of the mind it is impossible to escape.
For how, says Heraclitus, can one escape the notice of that which never
sets? Let us by no means, then, veil our selves with the darkness; for the
light dwells in us. “For the darkness,” it is said, “comprehendeth it not.”
And the very night itself is illuminated by temperate reason. The thoughts
of good men Scripture has named “sleepless lamps;” although for one to
attempt even to practice concealment, with reference to what he does, is
confessedly to sin. And every one who sins, directly wrongs not so much
his neighbor if he commits adultery, as himself, because he has committed
adultery, besides making himself worse and less thought of. For he who
sins, in the degree in which he sins, becomes worse and is of less
estimation than before; and he who has been overcome by base pleasures,
has now licentiousness wholly attached to him. Wherefore he who
commits fornication is wholly dead to God, and is abandoned by the Word
as a dead body by the spirit. For what is holy, as is right, abhors to be
polluted. But it is always lawful for the pure to touch the pure. Do not, I
pray, put off modesty at the same time that you put off your clothes; because it is never right for the just man to divest himself of continence. For, lo, this mortal shall put on immortality; when the insatiableness of desire, which rushes into licentiousness, being trained to self-restraint, and made free from the love of corruption, shall consign the man to everlasting chastity. “For in this world they marry and are given in marriage.” But having done with the works of the flesh, and having been clothed with immortality, the flesh itself being pure, we pursue after that which is according to the measure of the angels. Thus in the Philebus, Plato, who had been the disciple of the barbarian philosophy, mystically called those Atheists who destroy and pollute, as far as in them lies, the Deity dwelling in them — that is, the Logos — by association with their vices. Those, therefore, who are consecrated to God must never live mortally (πνευματικα δειν ζησεί). “Nor,” as Paul says, “is it meet to make the members of Christ the members of an harlot; nor must the temple of God be made the temple of base affections.” Remember the four and twenty thousand that were rejected for fornication. But the experiences of those who have committed fornication, as I have already said, are types which correct our lusts. Moreover, the Paedagogue warns us most distinctly: “Go not after thy lusts, and abstain from thine appetites; for wine and women will remove the wise; and he that cleaves to harlots will become more daring. Corruption and the worm shall inherit him, and he shall be held up as public example to greater shame.” And again — for he wearies not of doing good “He who averts his eyes from pleasure crowns his life.”

Non est ergo justum vinci a rebus venereis, nec libidinibus stolide inhiare, nec a ratione alienis appointmentibus moveri, nec desiderare pollui. Ei autem soli, qui uxor duxit, ut qui tunc sit agricola, serere permissum est; quando tempus sementem admittit. Adversus aliam autem intemperantiam, optimum quidem est medicamentum, ratio. Fert etiam auxilium penuria satietatis, per quam accensae libidines prosiliunt ad voluptates.

CHAPTER 11
ON CLOTHES
Wherefore neither are we to provide for ourselves costly clothing any more than variety of food. The Lord Himself, therefore, dividing His precepts into what relates to the body, the soul, and thirdly, external things, counsels us to provide external things on account of the body; and manages the body by the soul (πνευματικα δειν ζησεί), and disciplines the soul, saying, “Take no thought for your life (πνευματικα δειν ζησεί) what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on; for the life is more than meat, and the body more than raiment.” And He adds a plain example of instruction: “Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them.” “Are ye not better than the fowls?” Thus far
as to food. Similarly He enjoins with respect to clothing, which belongs to the third division, that of things external, saying, “Consider the lilies, how they spin not, nor weave. But I say unto you, that not even Solomon was arrayed as one of these.” And Solomon the king plumed himself exceedingly on his riches.

What, I ask, more graceful, more gay-colored, than flowers? What, I say, more delightful than lilies or roses? “And if God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith!” Here the particle what (τι) banishes variety in food. For this is shown from the Scripture, “Take no thought what things ye shall eat, or what things ye shall drink.” For to take thought of these things argues greed and luxury. Now eating, considered merely by itself, is the sign of necessity; repletion, as we have said, of want. Whatever is beyond that, is the sign of superfluity. And what is superfluous, Scripture declares to be of the devil. The subjoined expression makes the meaning plain. For having said, “Seek not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink,” He added, “Neither be ye of doubtful (or lofty) mind.” Now pride and luxury make men waverers (or raise them aloft) from the truth; and the voluptuousness, which indulges in superfluities, leads away from the truth. Wherefore He says very beautifully, “And all these things do the nations of the world seek after.” The nations are the dissolute and the foolish. And what are these things which He specifies? Luxury, voluptuousness, rich cooking, dainty feeding, gluttony. These are the “What?” And of bare sustenance, dry and moist, as being necessaries He says, “Your Father knoweth that ye need these.” And if, in a word, we are naturally given to seeking, let us not destroy the faculty of seeking by directing it to luxury, but let us excite it to the discovery of truth. For He says, “Seek ye the kingdom of God, and the materials of sustenance shall be added to you.”

If, then, He takes away anxious care for clothes and food, and superfluities in general, as unnecessary; what are we to imagine ought to be said of love of ornament, and dyeing of wool, and variety of colors, and fastidiousness about gems, and exquisite working of gold, and still more, of artificial hair and wreathed curls; and furthermore, of staining the eyes, and plucking out hairs, and painting with rouge and white lead, and dyeing of the hair, and the wicked arts that are employed in such deceptions? May we not very well suspect, that what was quoted a little above respecting the grass, has been said of those unornamental lovers of ornaments? For the field is the world, and we who are bedewed by the grace of God are the grass; and though cut down, we spring up again, as will be shown at greater length in the book On the Resurrection. But hay figuratively designates the vulgar rabble, attached to ephemeral pleasure, flourishing for a little, loving
ornament, loving praise, and being everything but truth-loving, good for nothing but to be burned with fire. “There was a certain man,” said the Lord, narrating, “very rich, who was clothed in purple and scarlet, enjoying himself splendidly every day.” This was the hay. “And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at the rich man’s gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table.” This is the grass. Well, the rich man was punished in Hades, being made partaker of the fire; while the other flourished again in the Father’s bosom. I admire that ancient city of the Lacedaemonians which permitted harlots alone to wear flowered clothes, and ornaments of gold, interdicting respectable women from love of ornament, and allowing courtesans alone to deck themselves. On the other hand, the archons of the Athenians, who affected a polished mode of life, forgetting their manhood, wore tunics reaching to the feet, and had on the crobulus — a kind of knot of the hair — adorned with a fastening of gold grasshoppers, to show their origin from the soil, forsooth, in the ostentation of licentiousness. Now rivalry of these archons extended also to the other Ionians, whom Homer, to show their effeminancy, calls “Long-robed.” Those, therefore, who are devoted to the image of the beautiful, that is, love of finery, not the beautiful itself, and who under a fair name again practice idolatry, are to be banished far from the truth, as those who by opinion, not knowledge, dream of the nature of the beautiful; and so life here is to them only a deep sleep of ignorance; from which it becomes us to rouse ourselves and haste to that which is truly beautiful and comely, and desire to grasp this alone, leaving the ornaments of earth to the world, and bidding them farewell before we fall quite asleep. I say, then, that man requires clothes for nothing else than the covering of the body, for defense against excess of cold and intensity of heat, lest the inclemency of the air injure us. And if this is the object of clothing, see that one kind be not assigned to men and another to women. For it is common to both to be covered, as it is to eat and drink. The necessity, then, being common, we judge that the provision ought to be similar. For as it is common to both to require things to cover them, so also their coverings ought to be similar; although such a covering ought to be assumed as is requisite for covering the eyes of women. For if the female sex, on account of their weakness, desire more, we ought to blame the habit of that evil training, by which often men reared up in bad habits become more effeminate than women. But this must not be yielded to. And if some accommodation is to be made, they may be permitted to use softer clothes, provided they put out of the way fabrics foolishly thin, and of curious texture in weaving; bidding farewell to embroidery of gold and Indian silks and elaborate Bombyces (silks), which is at first a worm, then from it is produced a hairy caterpillar; after which the creature suffers a new transformation into a third form which they call larva, from which a long
filament is produced, as the spider’s thread from the spider. For these superfluous and diaphanous materials are the proof of a weak mind, covering as they do the shame of the body with a slender veil. For luxurious clothing, which cannot conceal the shape of the body, is no more a covering. For such clothing, falling close to the body, takes its form more easily, and adhering as it were to the flesh, receives its shape, and marks out the woman’s figure, so that the whole make of the body is visible to spectators, though not seeing the body itself.

Dyeing of clothes is also to be rejected. For it is remote both from necessity and truth, in addition to the fact that reproach in manners spring from it. For the use of colors is not beneficial, for they are of no service against cold; nor has it anything for covering more than other clothing, except the opprobrium alone. And the agreeableness of the color afflicts greedy eyes, inflaming them to senseless blindness. But for those who are white and unstained within, it is most suitable to use white and simple garments. Clearly and plainly, therefore, Daniel the prophet says, “Thrones were set, and upon them sat one like the Ancient of days, and His vesture was white as snow.” The Apocalypse says also that the Lord Himself appeared wearing such a robe. It says also, “I saw the souls of those that had witnessed, beneath the altar, and there was given to each a white robe.” And if it were necessary to seek for any other color, the natural color of truth should suffice. But garments which are like flowers are to be abandoned to Bacchic fooleries, and to those of the rites of initiation, along with purple and silver plate, as the comic poet says: — “Useful for tragedians, not for life.”

And our life ought to be anything rather than a pageant. Therefore the dye of Sardis, and another of olive, and another green, a rose-colored, and scarlet, and ten thousand other dyes, have been invented with much trouble for mischievous voluptuousness. Such clothing is for looking at, not for covering. Garments, too, variegated with gold, and those that are purple, and that piece of luxury which has its name from beasts (figured on it), and that saffron-colored ointment-dipped robe, and those costly and many-colored garments of flaring membranes, we are to bid farewell to, with the art itself. “For what prudent thing can these women have done,” says the comedy, “who sit covered with flowers, wearing a saffron-colored dress, painted?”

The Instructor expressly admonishes, “Boast not of the clothing of your garment, and be not elated on account of any glory, as it is unlawful.” Accordingly, deriding those who are clothed in luxurious garments, He says in the Gospel: “Lo, they who live in gorgeous apparel and luxury are in earthly palaces.” He says in perishable palaces, where are love of display, love of popularity, and flattery and deceit. But those that wait at the court of heaven around the King of all, are sanctified in the immortal
vesture of the Spirit, that is, the flesh, and so put on incorruptibility. As therefore she who is unmarried devotes herself to God alone, and her care is not divided, but the chaste married woman divides her life between God and her husband, while she who is otherwise disposed is devoted entirely to marriage, that is, to passion: in the same way I think the chaste wife, when she devotes herself to her husband, sincerely serves God; but when she becomes fond of finery, she falls away from God and from chaste wedlock, exchanging her husband for the world, after the fashion of that Argive courtesan, I mean Eriphyle, —

“Who received gold prized above her dear husband.”

Wherefore I admire the Ceian sophist, who delineated like and suitable images of Virtue and Vice, representing the former of these, viz. Virtue, standing simply, white-robed and pure, adorned with modesty alone (for such ought to be the true wife, dowered with modesty). But the other, viz. Vice, on the contrary, he introduces dressed in superfluous attire, brightened up with color not her own; and her gait and mien are depicted as studiously framed to give pleasure, forming a sketch of wanton women. But he who follows the Word will not addict himself to any base pleasure; wherefore also what is useful in the article of dress is to be preferred. And

if the Word, speaking of the Lord by David, sings, “The daughters of kings made Thee glad by honor; the queen stood at Thy right hand, clad in cloth of gold, girt with golden fringes,” it is not luxurious raiment that he indicates; but he shows the immortal adornment, woven of faith, of those that have found mercy, that is, the Church; in which the guileless Jesus shines conspicuous as gold, and the elect are the golden tassels. And if such must be woven for the women, let us weave apparel pleasant and soft to the touch, not flowered, like pictures, to delight the eye. For the picture fades in course of time, and the washing and steeping in the medicated juices of the dye wear away the wool, and render the fabrics of the garments weak; and this is not favorable to economy. It is the height of foolish ostentation to be in a flutter about peploi, and xystides, and ephaptides, and “cloaks,” and tunics, and “what covers shame,” says Homer. For, in truth, I am ashamed when I see so much wealth lavished on the covering of the nakedness. For primeval man in Paradise provided a covering for his shame of branches and leaves; and now, since sheep have been created for us, let us not be as silly as sheep, but trained by the Word, let us condemn sumptuousness of clothing, saying, “Ye are sheep’s wool.” Though Miletus boast, and Italy be praised, and the wool, about which many rave, be protected beneath skins, yet are we not to set our hearts on it.

The blessed John, despising the locks of sheep as savoring of luxury, chose “camel’s hair,” and was clad in it, making himself an example of frugality and simplicity of life. For he also “ate locusts and wild honey,” sweet and
For as well-nurtured bodies, when stripped, show their vigor more manifestly, so also beauty of character shows its magnanimity, when not involved in ostentatious fooleries. But to drag one’s clothes, letting them down to the soles of his feet, is a piece of consummate foppery, impeding activity in walking, the garment sweeping the surface dirt of the ground like a broom; since even those emasculated creatures the dancers, who transfer their dumb shameless profligacy to the stage, do not despise the dress which flows away to such indignity; whose curious vestments, and appendages of fringes, and elaborate motions of figures, show the trailing of sordid effeminacy.

If one should adduce the garment of the Lord reaching down to the foot, that many-flowered coat shows the flowers of wisdom, the varied and unfading Scriptures, the oracles of the Lord, resplendent with the rays of truth. In such another robe the Spirit arrayed the Lord through David, when he sang thus: “Thou wert clothed with confession and comeliness, putting on light as a garment.”

As, then, in the fashioning of our clothes, we must keep clear of all strangeness, so in the use of them we must beware of extravagance. For neither is it seemly for the clothes to be above the knee, as they say was the case with the Lacedaemonian virgins; nor is it becoming for any part of a woman to be exposed. Though you may with great propriety use the language addressed to him who said, “Your arm is beautiful; yes, but it is not for the public gaze. Your thighs are beautiful; but, was the reply, for my husband alone. And your face is comely. Yes; but only for him who has married me.” But I do not wish chaste women to afford cause for such praises to those who, by praises, hunt after grounds of censure; and not only because it is prohibited to expose the ankle, but because it has also been enjoined that the head should be veiled and the face covered; for it is a wicked thing for beauty to be a snare to men. Nor is it seemly for a woman to wish to make herself conspicuous, by using a purple veil. Would it were possible to abolish purple in dress, so as not to turn the eyes of spectators on the face of those that wear it! But the women, in the manufacture of all the rest of their dress, have made everything of purple, thus inflaming the lusts. And, in truth, those women who are crazy about these stupid and luxurious purples, “purple (dark) death has seized,” according to the
poetic saying. On account of this purple, then, Tyre and Sidon, and the vicinity of the Lacedaemonian Sea, are very much desired; and their dyers and purple-fishers, and the purple fishes themselves, because their blood produces purple, are held in high esteem. But crafty women and effeminate men, who blend these deceptive dyes with dainty fabrics, carry their insane desires beyond all bounds, and export their fine linens no longer from Egypt, but some other kinds from the land of the Hebrews and the Cilicians. I say nothing of the linens made of Amorgos and Byssus. Luxury has outstripped nomenclature.

The covering ought, in my judgment, to show that which is covered to be better than itself, as the image is superior to the temple, the soul to the body, and the body to the clothes. But now, quite the contrary, the body of these ladies, if sold, would never fetch a thousand Attic drachms. Buying, as they do, a single dress at the price of ten thousand talents, they prove themselves to be of less use and less value than cloth. Why in the world do you seek after what is rare and costly, in preference to what is at hand and cheap? It is because you know not what is really beautiful, what is really good, and seek with eagerness shows instead of realities from fools who, like people out of their wits, imagine black to be white.

CHAPTER 12
ON SHOES

Women fond of display act in the same manner with regard to shoes, showing also in this matter great luxuriousness. Base, in truth, are those sandals on which golden ornaments are fastened; but they are thought worth having nails driven into the soles in winding rows. Many, too, carve on them amorous embraces, as if they would by their walk communicate to the earth harmonious movement, and impress on it the wantonness of their spirit. Farewell, therefore, must be bidden to gold-plated and jeweled mischievous devices of sandals, and Attic and Sicyonian half-boots, and Persian and Tyrrenian buskins; and setting before us the right aim, as is the habit with our truth, we are bound to select what is in accordance with nature.

For the use of shoes is partly for covering, partly for defense in case of stumbling against objects, and for saving the sole of the foot from the roughness of hilly paths.

Women, are to be allowed a white shoe, except when on a journey, and then a greased shoe must be used. When on a journey, they require nailed shoes. Further, they ought for the most part to wear shoes; for it is not suitable for the foot to be shown naked: besides, woman is a tender thing, easily hurt. But for a man bare feet are quite in keeping, except when he is on military service. “For being shod is near neighbor to being bound.”

To go with bare feet is most suitable for exercise, and best adapted for
health and ease, unless where necessity prevents. But if we are not on a journey, and cannot endure bare feet, we may use slippers or white shoes; dusty-foots the Attics called them, on account of their bringing the feet near the dust, as I think. As a witness for simplicity in shoes let John suffice, who avowed that “he was not worthy to unloose the latchet of the Lord’s shoes.” For he who exhibited to the Hebrews the type of the true philosophy wore no elaborate shoes. What else this may imply, will be shown elsewhere.

CHAPTER 13
AGAINST EXCESSIVE FONDNESS
FOR JEWELS AND GOLD ORNAMENTS
It is childish to admire excessively dark or green stones, and things cast out by the sea on foreign shores, particles of the earth. For to rush after stones that are pellucid and of peculiar colors, and stained glass, is only characteristic of silly people, who are attracted by things that have a striking show. Thus children, on seeing the fire, rush to it, attracted by its brightness; not understanding through senselessness the danger of touching it. Such is the case with the stones which silly women wear fastened to chains and set in necklaces, amethysts, ceraunites, jaspers, topaz, and the Milesian “Emerald, most precious ware.”
And the highly prized pearl has invaded the woman’s apartments to an extravagant extent. This is produced in a kind of oyster like mussels, and is about the bigness of a fish’s eye of large size. And the wretched creatures are not ashamed at having bestowed the greatest pains about this little oyster, when they might adorn themselves with the sacred jewel, the Word of God, whom the Scripture has somewhere called a pearl, the pure and pellucid Jesus, the eye that watches in the flesh, — the transparent Word, by whom the flesh, regenerated by water, becomes precious. For that oyster that is in the water covers the flesh all round, and out of it is produced the pearl.
We have heard, too, that the Jerusalem above is walled with sacred stones; and we allow that the twelve gates of the celestial city, by being made like precious stones, indicate the transcendent grace of the apostolic voice. For the colors are laid on in precious stones, and these colors are precious; while the other parts remain of earthy material. With these symbolically, as is meet, the city of the saints, which is spiritually built, is walled. By that brilliancy of stones, therefore, is meant the inimitable brilliancy of the spirit, the immortality and sanctity of being. But these women, who comprehend not the symbolism of Scripture, gape all they can for jewels, adducing the astounding apology, “Why may I not use what God hath exhibited?” and, “I have it by me, why may I not enjoy it?” and., “For whom were these things made, then, if not for us?” Such are the utterances
of those who are totally ignorant of the will of God. For first necessaries, such as water and air, He supplies free to all; and what is not necessary He has hid in the earth and water. Wherefore ants dig, and griffins guard gold, and the sea hides the pearl-stone. But ye busy yourselves about what you need not. Behold, the whole heaven is lighted up, and ye seek not God; but gold which is hidden, and jewels, are dug up by those among us who are condemned to death.

But you also oppose Scripture, seeing it expressly cries “Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you.” But if all things have been conferred on you, and all things allowed you, and “if all things are lawful, yet all things are not expedient,” says the apostle. God brought our race into communion by first imparting what was His own, when He gave His own Word, common to all, and made all things for all. All things therefore are common, and not for the rich to appropriate an undue share. That expression, therefore, “I possess, and possess in abundance: why then should I not enjoy?” is suitable neither to the man, nor to society. But more worthy of love is that: “I have: why should I not give to those who need?” For such an one — one who fulfills the command, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” — is perfect. For this is the true luxury — the treasured wealth. But that which is squandered on foolish lusts is to be reckoned waste, not expenditure. For God has given to us, I know well, the liberty of use, but only so far as necessary; and He has determined that the use should be common. And it is monstrous for one to live in luxury, while many are in want. How much more glorious is it to do good to many, than to live sumptuously! How much wiser to spend money on human being, than on jewels and gold! How much more useful to acquire decorous friends, than lifeless ornaments! Whom have lands ever benefited so much as conferring favors has? It remains for us, therefore, to do away with this allegation: Who, then, will have the more sumptuous things, if all select the simpler? Men, I would say, if they make use of them impartially and indifferently. But if it be impossible for all to exercise self-restraint, yet, with a view to the use of what is necessary, we must seek after what can be most readily procured, bidding a long farewell to these superfluities.

In fine, they must accordingly utterly cast off ornaments as girls’ gewgaws, rejecting adornment itself entirely. For they ought to be adorned within, and show the inner woman beautiful. For in the soul alone are beauty and deformity shown. Wherefore also only the virtuous man is really beautiful and good. And it is laid down as a dogma, that only the beautiful is good. And excellence alone appears through the beautiful body, and blossoms out in the flesh, exhibiting the amiable comeliness of selfcontrol, whenever the character like a beam of light gleams in the form. For the beauty of each plant and animal consists in its individual excellence.
And the excellence of man is righteousness, and temperance, and manliness, and godliness. The beautiful man is, then, he who is just, temperate, and in a word, good, not he who is rich. But now even the soldiers wish to be decked with gold, not having read that poetical saying:

“With childish folly to the war he came,
Laden with store of gold.”

But the love of ornament, which is far from caring for virtue, but claims the body for itself, when the love of the beautiful has changed to empty show, is to be utterly expelled. For applying things unsuitable to the body, as if they were suitable, begets a practice of lying and a habit of falsehood; and shows not what is decorous, simple, and truly childlike, but what is pompous, luxurious, and effeminate. But these women obscure true beauty, shading it with gold. And they know not how great is their transgression, in fastening around themselves ten thousand rich chains; as they say that among the barbarians malefactors are bound with gold. The women seem to me to emulate these rich prisoners. For is not the golden necklace a collar, and do not the necklets which they call catheters occupy the place of chains? and indeed among the Attics they are called by this very name. The ungraceful things round the feet of women, Philemon in the Synephebus called ankle-fetters: —

“Conspicuous garments, and a kind of a golden fetter.”

What else, then, is this coveted adorning of yourselves, O ladies, but the exhibiting of yourselves fettered? For if the material does away with the reproach, the endurance [of your fetters] is a thing indifferent. To me, then, those who voluntarily put themselves into bonds seem to glory in rich calamities. Perchance also it is such chains that the poetic fable says were thrown around Aphrodite when committing adultery, referring to ornaments as nothing but the badge of adultery. For Homer called those, too, golden chains. But now women are not ashamed to wear the most manifest badges of the evil one. For as the serpent deceived Eve, so also has ornament of gold maddened other women to vicious practices, using as a bait the form of the serpent, and by fashioning lampreys and serpents for decoration. Accordingly the comic poet Nicostratus says, “Chains, collars; rings, bracelets, serpents, anklets, earrings.”

In terms of strongest censure, therefore, Aristophanes in the Thesmophoriazousae exhibits the whole array of female ornament in a catalogue: —

“Snoods, fillets, natron, and steel;
Pumice-stone, band, back-band,
Back-veil, paint, necklaces,
Paints for the eyes, soft garment, hair-net,
Girdle, shawl, fine purple border,  
Long robe, tunic, Barathrum, round tunic.”  
But I have not yet mentioned the principal of them. Then what?  
522  
“Ear-pendants, jewelry, ear-rings;  
Mallow-colored cluster-shaped anklets;  
Buckles, clasps, necklets,  
Fetters, seals, chains, rings, powders,  
Bosses, bands, olisbi, Sardian stones,  
Fans, helicters.”  
I am weary and vexed at enumerating the multitude of ornaments; and I am compelled to wonder how those who bear such a burden are not worried to death. O foolish trouble! O silly craze for display! They squander meretriciously wealth on what is disgraceful; and in their love for ostentation disfigure God’s gifts, emulating the art of the evil one. The rich man hoarding up in his barns, and saying to himself, “Thou hast much goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, be merry,” the Lord in the Gospel plainly called “fool.” “For this night they shall take of thee thy soul; whose then shall those things which thou hast prepared be? “  
Apelles, the painter, seeing one of his pupils painting a figure loaded with gold color to represent Helen, said to him, “Boy, being incapable of painting her beautiful, you have made her rich.”  
Such Helens are the ladies of the present day, not truly beautiful, but richly got up. To these the Spirit prophesies by Zephaniah: “And their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD’s anger.”  
But for those women who have been trained under Christ, it is suitable to adorn themselves not with gold, but with the Word, through whom alone the gold comes to light.  
Happy, then, would have been the ancient Hebrews, had they cast away their women’s ornaments, or only melted them; but having cast their gold into the form of an ox, and paid it idolatrous worship, they consequently reap no advantage either from their art or their attempt. But they taught our women most expressively to keep clear of ornaments. The lust which commits fornication with gold becomes an idol, and is tested by fire; for which alone luxury is reserved, as being an idol, not a reality. Hence the Word, upbraiding the Hebrews by the prophet, says, “They made to Baal things of silver and gold,” that is, ornaments. And most distinctly threatening, He says, “I will punish her for the days of Baalim, in which 523 they offered sacrifice for her, and she put on her earrings and her necklaces.” And He subjoined the cause of the adornment, when He said, “And she went after her lovers, but forgot Me, saith the LORD.  
Resigning, therefore, these baubles to the wicked master of cunning
himself, let us not take part in this meretricious adornment, nor commit idolatry through a specious pretext. Most admirably, therefore, the blessed Peter says, “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves not with braids, or gold, or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.” For it is with reason that he bids decking of themselves to be kept far from them. For, granting that they are beautiful, nature suffices. Let not art contend against nature; that is, let not falsehood strive with truth. And if they are by nature ugly, they are convicted, by the things they apply to themselves, of what they do not possess [i.e., of the want of beauty]. It is suitable, therefore, for women who serve Christ to adopt simplicity. For in reality simplicity provides for sanctity, by reducing redundancies to equality, and by furnishing from whatever is at hand the enjoyment sought from superfluities. For simplicity, as the name shows, is not conspicuous, is not inflated or puffed up in aught, but is altogether even, and gentle, and equal, and free of excess and so is sufficient. And sufficiency is a condition which reaches its proper end without excess. or defect. The mother of these is Justice, and their nurse “Independence;” and this is a condition which is satisfied with what is necessary, and by itself furnishes what contributes to the blessed life. Let there, then, be in the fruits of thy hands, sacred order, liberal communication, and acts of economy. “For he that giveth to the poor, lendeth to God.” “And the hands of the manly shall be enriched.” Manly He calls those who despise wealth, and are free in bestowing it. And on your feet let active readiness to well-doing appear, and a journeying to righteousness. Modesty and chastity are collars and necklaces; such are the chains which God forges. “Happy is the man who hath found wisdom, and the mortal who knows understanding,” says the Spirit by Solomon: “for it is better to buy her than treasures of gold and silver; and she is more valuable than precious stones.” For she is the true decoration. And let not their ears be pierced, contrary to nature, in order to attach to them ear-rings and ear-drops. For it is not right to force nature against her wishes. Nor could there be any better ornament for the ears than true instruction, which finds its way naturally into the passages of hearing. And eyes anointed by the Word, and ears pierced for perception, make a man a hearer and contemplator of divine and sacred things, the Word truly exhibiting the true beauty “which eye hath not seen nor ear heard before.”

BOOK 3
CHAPTER 1
ON THE TRUE BEAUTY
It is then, as appears, the greatest of all lessons to know one’s self. For if one knows himself, he will know God; and knowing God, he will be made like God, not by wearing gold or long robes, but by well-doing, and by
requiring as few things as possible.
Now, God alone is in need of nothing, and rejoices most when He sees us bright with the ornament of intelligence; and then, too, rejoices in him who is arrayed in chastity, the sacred stole of the body. Since then the soul consists of three divisions; the intellect, which is called the reasoning faculty, is the inner man, which is the ruler of this man that is seen. And that one, in another respect, God guides. But the irascible part, being brutal, dwells near to insanity. And appetite, which is the third department, is many-shaped above Proteus, the varying sea-God, who changed himself now into one shape, now into another; and it allures to adulteries, to licentiousness, to seductions.

“At first he was a lion with ample beard.”
While he yet retained the ornament, the hair of the chin showed him to be a man.

“But after that a serpent, a pard, or a big sow.”
Love of ornament has degenerated to wantonness. A man no longer appears like a strong wild beast,

“But he became moist water, and a tree of lofty branches.”
Passions break out, pleasures overflow; beauty fades, and falls quicker than the leaf on the ground, when the amorous storms of lust blow on it before the coming of autumn, and is withered by destruction. For lust becomes and fabricates all things, and wishes to cheat, so as to conceal the

man. But that man with whom the Word dwells does not alter himself, does not get himself up: he has the form which is of the Word; he is made like to God; he is beautiful; he does not ornament himself: his is beauty, the true beauty, for it is God; and that man becomes God, since God so wills. Heraclitus, then, rightly said, “Men are gods, and gods are men.” For the Word Himself is the manifest mystery: God in man, and man God.

And the Mediator executes the Father’s will; for the Mediator is the Word, who is common to both — the Son of God, the Savior of men; His Servant, our Teacher. And the flesh being a slave, as Paul testifies, how can one with any reason adorn the handmaid like a pimp? For that which is of flesh has the form of a servant. Paul says, speaking of the Lord, “Because He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant,” calling the outward man servant, previous to the Lord becoming a servant and wearing flesh. But the compassionate God Himself set the flesh free, and releasing it from destruction, and from bitter and deadly bondage, endowed it with incorruptibility, arraying the flesh in this, the holy embellishment of eternity — immortality.

There is, too, another beauty of men — love. “And love,” according to the apostle, “suffers long, and is kind; envieth not; vaunteth not, is not puffed up.” For the decking of one’s self out — carrying, as it does, the look of superfluity and uselessness — is vaunting one’s self. Wherefore he
adds, “doth not behave itself unseemly:” for a figure which is not one’s own, and is against nature, is unseemly; but what is artificial is not one’s own, as is clearly explained: “seeketh not,” it is said, “what is not her own.” For truth calls that its own which belongs to it; but the love of finery seeks what is not its own, being apart from God, and the Word, from love. And that the Lord Himself was uncomely in aspect, the Spirit testifies by Esaias: “And we saw Him, and He had no form nor comeliness but His form was mean, inferior to men.” Yet who was more admirable than the Lord? But it was not the beauty of the flesh visible to the eye, but the true beauty of both soul and body, which He exhibited, which in the former is beneficence; in the latter — that is, the flesh — immortality.

527

CHAPTER 2
AGAINST EMBELLISHING THE BODY

It is not, then, the aspect of the outward man, but the soul that is to be decorated with the ornament of goodness; we may say also the flesh with the adornment of temperance. But those women who beautify the outside, are unawares all waste in the inner depths, as is the case with the ornaments of the Egyptians; among whom temples with their porticos and vestibules are carefully constructed, and groves and sacred fields adjoining; the halls are surrounded with many pillars; and the walls gleam with foreign stones, and there is no want of artistic painting; and the temples gleam with gold, and silver, and amber, and glitter with parti-colored gems from India and Ethiopia; and the shrines are veiled with gold-embroidered hangings.

But if you enter the penetralia of the enclosure, and, in haste to behold something better, seek the image that is the inhabitant of the temple, and if any priest of those that offer sacrifice there, looking gave, and singing a paean in the Egyptian tongue, remove a little of the veil to show the god, he will give you a heartily laugh at the object of worship. For the deity that is sought, to whom you have rushed, will not be found within, but a cat, or a crocodile, or a serpent of the country, or some such beast unworthy of the temple, but quite worthy of a den, a hole, or the dirt. The god of the Egyptians appears a beast rolling on a purple couch.

So those women who wear gold, occupying themselves in curling at their locks, and engaged in anointing their cheeks, painting their eyes, and dyeing their hair, and practicing the other pernicious arts of luxury, decking the covering of flesh, — in truth, imitate the Egyptians, in order to attract their infatuated lovers.

But if one withdraw the veil of the temple, I mean the head-dress, the dye, the clothes, the gold, the paint, the cosmetics, — that is, the web consisting of them, the veil, with the view of finding Within the true beauty, he will be disgusted, I know well. For he will not find the image of God dwelling within, as is meet; but instead of it a fornicator and
adulteress has occupied the shrine of the soul. And the true beast will thus be detected — an ape smeared with white paint. And that deceitful serpent, devouring the understanding part of man through vanity, has the soul as its hole, filling all with deadly poisons; and injecting his own venom of deception, this pander of a dragon has changed women into harlots. For love of display is not for a lady, but a courtesan. Such women care little for keeping at home with their husbands; but loosing their husbands’ purse-strings, they spend its supplies on their lusts, that they may have many witnesses of their seemingly fair appearance; and, devoting the whole day to their toilet, they spend their time with their bought slaves. Accordingly they season the flesh like a pernicious sauce; and the day they bestow on the toilet shut up in their rooms, so as not to be caught decking themselves. But in the evening this spurious beauty creeps out to candle-light as out of a hole; for drunkenness and the dimness of the light aid what they have put on. The woman who dyes her hair yellow, Menander the comic poet expels from the house: — “Now get out of this house, for no chaste Woman ought to make her hair yellow,” nor, I would add, stain her cheeks, nor paint her eyes. Unawares the poor wretches destroy their own beauty, by the introduction of what is spurious. At the dawn of day, mangling, racking, and plastering themselves over with certain compositions, they chill the skin, furrow the flesh with poisons, and with curiously prepared washes, thus blighting their own beauty. Wherefore they are seen to be yellow from the use of cosmetics, and susceptible to disease, their flesh, which has been shaded with poisons, being now in a melting state. So they dishonor the Creator of men, as if the beauty given by Him were nothing worth. As you might expect, they become lazy in housekeeping, sitting like painted things to be looked at, not as if made for domestic economy. Wherefore in the comic poet the sensible woman says, “What can we women do wise or brilliant, who sit with hair dyed yellow, outraging the character of gentlewomen; causing the overthrow of houses, the ruin of nuptials, and accusations on the part of children?” In the same way, Antiphanes the comic poet, in Malthaca, ridicules the meretriciousness of women in words that apply to them all, and are framed against the rubbing of themselves with cosmetics, saying: —

“\text{\textit{She comes,}}
\text{\textit{She goes back, she approaches, she goes back.}}
\text{\textit{She has come, she is here, she washes herself, she advances,}}
\text{\textit{She is soaped, she is combed, she goes out, is rubbed,}}
\text{\textit{She washes herself, looks in the glass, robes herself,}}
\text{\textit{Anoints herself, decks herself, besmears herself;}}
And if aught is wrong, chokes [with vexation].”
Thrice, I say, not once, do they deserve to perish, who use crocodiles’ excrement, and anoint themselves with the froth of putrid humors, and stain their eyebrows with soot, and rub their cheeks with white lead. These, then, who are disgusting even to the heathen poets for their fashions, how shall they not be rejected by the truth? Accordingly another comic poet, Alexis, reproves them. For I shall adduce his words, which with extravagance of statement shame the obstinacy of their impudence. For he was not very far beyond the mark. And I cannot for shame come to the assistance of women held up to such ridicule in comedy. Then she ruins her husband.
“For first, in comparison with gain and the spoiling of neighbors, 
All else is in their eyes superfluous.”
“Is one of them little? She stitches cork into her shoesole. 
Is one tall? She wears a thin sole, 
And goes out keeping her head down on her shoulder: 
This takes away from her height. Has one no flanks? 
She has something sewed on to her, so that the spectators 
May exclaim on her fine shape behind. Has she a prominent stomach? 
By making additions, to render it straight, 
such as the nurses we see in the comic poets, 
She draws back, as it were, by these poles, 
the protuberance of the stomach in front. 
Has one yellow eyebrows? She stains them with soot. 
Do they happen to be black? She smears them with ceruse. 
Is one very white-skinned? She rouges. 
Has one any part of the body beautiful? She shows it bare. 
Has she beautiful teeth? She must needs laugh, 
That those present may see what a pretty mouth she has; 
But if not in the humor for laughing, she passes the day within, 
With a slender sprig of myrtle between her lips, 
Like what cooks have always at hand when they have goats’ heads to sell, 
So that she must keep them apart the whilst, whether she will or not.”
530
I set these quotations from the comic poets before you, since the Word most strenuously wishes to save us. And by and by I will fortify them with the divine Scriptures. For he who does not escape notice is wont to abstain from sins, on account of the shame of reproof. Just as the plastered hand and the anointed eye exhibit from their very look the suspicion of a person in illness, so also cosmetics and dyes indicate that the soul is deeply diseased.
The divine Instructor enjoins us not to approach to another’s river, meaning by the figurative expression “another’s river,” “another’s wife;” the wanton that flows to all, and out of licentiousness gives herself up to
meretricious enjoyment with all. “Abstain from water that is another’s,” He says, “and drink not of another’s well,” admonishing us to shun the stream of “voluptuousness,” that we may live long, and that years of life may be added to us; both by not hunting after pleasure that belongs to another, and by diverting our inclinations.

Love of dainties and love of wine, though great vices, are not of such magnitude as fondness for finery. “A full table and repeated cups” are enough to satisfy greed. But to those who are fond of gold, and purple, and jewels, neither the gold that is above the earth and below it is sufficient, nor the Tyrian Sea, nor the freight that comes from India and Ethiopia, nor yet Pactolus flowing with gold; not even were a man to become a Midas would he be satisfied, but would be still poor, craving other wealth. Such people are ready to die with their gold.

And if Plutus is blind, are not those women that are crazy about him, and have a fellow-feeling with him, blind too? Having, then, no limit to their lust, they push on to shamelessness. For the theater, and pageants, and many spectators, and strolling in the temples, and loitering in the streets, that they may be seen conspicuously by all, are necessary to them. For those that glory in their looks, not in heart, dress to please others. For as the brand shows the slave, so do gaudy colors the adulteress. “For though thou clothe thyself in scarlet, and deck thyself with ornaments of gold, and anoint thine eyes with stibium, in vain is thy beauty,” says the Word by Jeremiah. Is it not monstrous, that while horses, birds, and the rest of the animals, spring and bound from the grass and meadows, rejoicing in ornament that is their own, in mane, and natural color, and varied plumage; woman, as if inferior to the brute creation, should think herself so unlovely as to need foreign, and bought, and painted beauty?

Head-dresses and varieties of head-dresses, and elaborate braiding, and infinite modes of dressing the hair, and costly specimens of mirrors, in which they arrange their costume,—hunting after those that, like silly children, are crazy about their figures,—are characteristic of women who have lost all sense of shame. If any one were to call these courtesans, he would make no mistake, for they turn their faces into masks. But us the Word enjoins “to look not on the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.”

But what passes beyond the bounds of absurdity, is that they have invented mirrors for this artificial shape of theirs, as if it were some excellent work or masterpiece. The deception rather requires a veil thrown over it. For as the Greek fable has it, it was not a fortunate thing for the beautiful Narcissus to have been the beholder of his own image. And if Moses commanded men to make not an image to represent God by art, how can these women be right, who by their own reflection produce an
imitation of their own likeness, in order to the falsifying of their faces? Likewise also, when Samuel the prophet was sent to anoint one of the sons of Jesse for king, and on seeing the eldest of his sons to be fair and tall, produced the anointing oil, being delighted with him, the Lord said to him, “Look not to his appearance, nor the height of his stature: for I have rejected him For man looketh on the eyes, but the LORD into the heart.” And he anointed not him that was comely in person, but him that was comely in soul. If, then, the Lord counts the natural beauty of the body inferior to that of the soul, what thinks He of spurious beauty, rejecting utterly as He does all falsehood? “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” Very clearly the Lord accordingly teaches by Abraham, that he who follows God must despise country, and relations, and possessions, and all wealth, by making him a stranger. And therefore also He called him His friend who had despised the substance which he had possessed at home. For he was of good parentage, and very opulent; and so with three hundred and eighteen servants of his own he subdued the four kings who had taken Lot captive.

Esther alone we find justly adorned. The spouse adorned herself mystically for her royal husband; but her beauty turns out the redemption price of a people that were about to be massacred. And that decoration makes women courtesans, and men effeminate and adulterers, the tragic poet is a witness; thus discoursing: — “He that judged the goddesses, As the myth of the Argives has it, having come from Phrygia To Lacedaemon, arrayed in flowery vestments, Glittering with gold and barbaric luxury, Loving, departed, carrying away her he loved, Helen, to the folds of Ida, having found that Menelaus was away from home.”

O adulterous beauty! Barbarian finery and effeminate luxury overthrew Greece; Lacedaemonian chastity was corrupted by clothes, and luxury, and graceful beauty; barbaric display proved Jove’s daughter a courtesan. They had no instructor to restrain their lusts, nor one to say, “Do not commit adultery;” nor, “Lust not;” or, “Travel not by lust into adultery;” or further, “Influence not thy passions by desire of adornment.” What an end was it that ensued to them, and what woes they endured, who would not restrain their self-will! Two continents were convulsed by unrestrained pleasures, and all was thrown into confusion by a barbarian boy. The whole of Hellas puts to sea; the ocean is burdened with the weight of continents; a protracted war breaks out, and fierce battles are waged, and the plains are crowdéd with dead: the barbarian assails the fleet with outrage; wickedness prevails, and the eye of that poetic Jove looks on the Thracians: —
“The barbarian plains drink noble blood,
And the streams of the rivers are choked with dead bodies.”
Breasts are beaten in lamentations, and grief desolates the land; and all the feet, and the summits of many-fountained Ida, and the cities of the Trojans, and the ships of the Achaeans, shake.
Where, O Homer, shall we flee and stand? Show us a spot of ground that is not shaken! —
“Touch not the reins, inexperienced boy,
Nor mount the seat, not having learned to drive.”

533

Heaven delights in two charioteers, by whom alone the chariot of fire is guided. For the mind is carried away by pleasure; and the unsullied principle of reason, when not instructed by the Word, slides down into licentiousness, and gets a fall as the due reward of its transgression. An example of this are the angels, who renounced the beauty of God for a beauty which fades, and so fell from heaven to earth.
The Shechemites, too, were punished by an overthrow for dishonoring the holy virgin. The grave was their punishment, and the monument of their ignominy leads to salvation.

CHAPTER 3
AGAINST MEN WHO EMBELLISH THEMSELVES
To such an extent, then, has luxury advanced, that not only are the female sex deranged about this frivolous pursuit, but men also are infected with the disease. For not being free of the love of finery, they are not in health; but inclining to voluptuousness, they become effeminate, cutting their hair in an ungentlemanlike and meretricious way, clothed in fine and transparent garments, chewing mastich, smelling of perfume. What can one say on seeing them? Like one who judges people by their foreheads, he will divine them to be adulterers and effeminate, addicted to both kinds of venery, haters of hair, destitute of hair, detesting the bloom of manliness, and adorning their locks like women. “Living for unholy acts of audacity, these fickle wretches do reckless and nefarious deeds,” says the Sibyl. For their service the towns are full of those who take out hair by pitchplasters, shave, and pluck out hairs from these womanish creatures. And shops are erected and opened everywhere; and adepts at this meretricious fornication make a deal of money openly by those who plaster themselves, and give their hair to be pulled out in all ways by those who make it their trade, feeling no shame before the onlookers or those who approach, nor before themselves, being men. Such are those addicted to base passions, whose whole body is made smooth by the violent tuggings of pitchplasters. It is utterly impossible to get beyond such effrontery. If nothing is left undone by them, neither shall anything be left unspoken by me.
Diogenes, when he was being sold, chiding like a teacher one of these
degenerate creatures, said very manfully, “Come, youngster, buy for yourself a man,” chastising his meretriciousness by an ambiguous speech. But for those who are men to shave and smooth themselves, how ignoble! As for dyeing of hair, and anointing of gray locks, and dyeing them yellow, these are practices of abandoned effeminates; and their feminine combing of themselves is a thing to be let alone. For they think, that like serpents they divest themselves of the old age of their head by painting and renovating themselves. But though they do doctor the hair cleverly, they will not escape wrinkles, nor will they elude death by tricking time. For it is not dreadful, it is not dreadful to appear old, when you are not able to shut your eyes to the fact that you are so.

The more, then, a man hastens to the end, the more truly venerable is he, having God alone as his senior, since He is the eternal aged One, He who is older than all things. Prophecy has called him the “Ancient of days; and the hair of His head was as pure wool,” says the prophet. “And none other,” says the Lord, “can make the hair white or black.” How, then, do these godless ones work in rivalry with God, or rather violently oppose Him, when they transmute the hair made white by Him? “The crown of old men is great experience,” says Scripture; and the hoary hair of their countenance is the blossom of large experience. But these dishonor the reverence of age, the head covered with gray hairs. It is not, it is not possible for him to show the head true who has a fraudulent head. “But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man (not the hoary man, but him that is) corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and be renewed (not by dyeings and ornaments), but in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

But for one who is a man to comb himself and shave himself with a razor, for the sake of fine effect, to arrange his hair at the looking-glass, to shave his cheeks, pluck hairs out of them, and smooth them, how womanly! And, in truth, unless you saw them naked, you would suppose them to be women. For although not allowed to wear gold, yet out of effeminate desire they enwreath their latches and fringes with leaves of gold; or, getting certain spherical figures of the same metal made, they fasten them to their ankles, and hang them from their necks. This is a device of enervated men, who are dragged to the women’s apartments, amphibious and lecherous beasts. For this is a meretricious and impious form of snare. For God wished women to be smooth, and rejoice in their locks alone growing spontaneously, as a horse in his mane; but has adorned man, like the lions, with a beard, and endowed him, as an attribute of manhood, with shaggy breasts, — a sign this of strength and rule. So also cocks, which fight in defense of the hens, he has decked with combs, as it were helmets;
and so high a value does God set on these locks, that He orders them to make their appearance on men simultaneously with discretion, and delighted with a venerable look, has honored gravity of countenance with gray hairs. But wisdom, and discriminating judgments that are hoary with wisdom, attain maturity with time, and by the vigor of long experience give strength to old age, producing gray hairs, the admirable flower of venerable wisdom, conciliating confidence. This, then, the mark of the man, the beard, by which he is seen to be a man, is older than Eve, and is the token of the superior nature. In this God deemed it right that he should excel, and dispersed hair over man’s whole body. Whatever smoothness and softness was in him He abstracted from his side when He formed the woman Eve, physically receptive, his partner in parentage, his help in household management, while he (for he had parted with all smoothness) remained a man, and shows himself man. And to him has been assigned action, as to her suffering; for what is shaggy is drier and warmer than what is smooth. Wherefore males have both more hair and more heat than females, animals that are entire than the emasculated, perfect than imperfect. It is therefore impious to desecrate the symbol of manhood, hairiness. But the embellishment of smoothing (for I am warned by the Word), if it is to attract men, is the act of an effeminate person, — if to attract women, is the act of an adulterer; and both must be driven as far as possible from our society. “But the very hairs of your head are all numbered,” says the Lord; those on the chin, too, are numbered, and those on the whole body. There must be therefore no plucking out, contrary to God’s appointment, which has counted them in according to His will. “Know ye not yourselves,” says the apostle, “that Christ Jesus is in you?” Whom, had we known as dwelling in us, I know not how we could have dared to dishonor. But the using of pitch to pluck out hair (I shrink from even mentioning the shamelessness connected with this process), and in the act of bending back and bending down, the violence done to nature’s modesty by stepping out and bending backwards in shameful postures, yet the doers not ashamed of themselves, but conducting themselves without shame in the midst of the youth, and in the gymnasium, where the prowess of man is tried; the following of this unnatural practice, is it not the extreme of licentiousness? For those who engage in such practices in public will scarcely behave with modesty to any at home. Their want of shame in public attests their unbridled licentiousness in private. For he who in the light of day denies his manhood, will prove himself manifestly a woman by night. “There shall not be,” said the Word by Moses, “a harlot of the daughters of Israel; there shall not be a fornicator of the sons of Israel.” But the pitch does good, it is said. Nay, it defames, say I. No one who entertains right sentiments would wish to appear a fornicator, were he not
the victim of that vice, and study to defame the beauty of his form. No one
would, I say, voluntarily choose to do this. “For if God foreknew those
who are called, according to His purpose, to be conformed to the image of
His Son,” for whose sake, according to the blessed apostle, He has
appointed “Him to be the first-born among many brethren,” are they not
godless who treat with indignity the body which is of like form with the
Lord?
The man, who would be beautiful, must adorn that which is the most
beautiful thing in man, his mind, which every day he ought to exhibit in
greater comeliness; and should pluck out not hairs, but lusts. I pity the
boys possessed by the slave-dealers, that are decked for dishonor. But
they are not treated with ignominy by themselves, but by command the
wretches are adorned for base gain. But how disgusting are those who
willingly practice the things to which, if compelled, they would, if they
were men, die rather than do?
But life has reached this pitch of licentiousness through the wantonness of
wickedness, and lasciviousness is diffused over the cities, having become
law. Beside them women stand in the stews, offering their own flesh for
hire for lewd pleasure, and boys, taught to deny their sex, act the part of
women.
537
Luxury has deranged all things; it has disgraced man. A luxurious niceness
seeks everything, attempts everything, forces everything, coerces nature.
Men play the part of women, and women that of men, contrary to nature;
women are at once wives and husbands: no passage is closed against
libidinousness; and their promiscuous lechery is a public institution, and
luxury is domesticated. O miserable spectacle! horrible conduct! Such are
the trophies of your social licentiousness which are exhibited: the evidence
of these deeds are the prostitutes. Alas for such wickedness! Besides, the
wretches know not how many tragedies the uncertainty of intercourse
produces. For fathers, unmindful of children of theirs that have been
exposed, often without their knowledge, have intercourse with a son that
has debauched himself, and daughters that are prostitutes; and license in
lust shows them to be the men that have begotten them. These things your
wise laws allow: people may sin legally; and the execrable indulgence in
pleasure they call a thing indifferent. They who commit adultery against
nature think themselves free from adultery. Avenging justice follows their
audacious deeds, and, dragging on themselves inevitable calamity, they
purchase death for a small sum of money. The miserable dealers in these
wares sail, bringing a cargo of fornication, like wine or oil; and others, far
more wretched, traffic in pleasures as they do in bread and sauce, not
heeding the words of Moses, “Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her
to be a whore, lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of
wickedness.”
Such was predicted of old, and the result is notorious: the whole earth has now become full of fornication and wickedness. I admire the ancient legislators of the Romans: these detested effeminacy of conduct; and the giving of the body to feminine purposes, contrary to the law of nature, they judged worthy of the extremest penalty, according to the righteousness of the law. For it is not lawful to pluck out the beard, man’s natural and noble ornament.

“A youth with his first beard: for with this, youth is most graceful.”

By and by he is anointed, delighting in the beard “on which descended” the prophetic, “ointment” with which Aaron was honored. And it becomes him who is rightly trained, on whom peace has pitched its tent, to preserve peace also with his hair.

What, then, will not women with strong propensities to lust practice, when they look on men perpetrating such enormities? Rather we ought not to call such as these men, but lewd wretches (bataloi > ), and effeminate (gu>nidev), whose voices are feeble, and whose clothes are womanish both in feel and dye. And such creatures are manifestly shown to be what they are from their external appearance, their clothes, shoes, form, walk, cut of their hair, look. “For from his look shall a man be known,” says the Scripture, “and from meeting a man the man is known: the dress of a man, the step of his foot, the laugh of his teeth, tell tales of him.”

For these, for the most part, plucking out the rest of their hair, only dress that on the head, all but binding their locks with fillets like women. Lions glory in their shaggy hair, but are armed by their hair in the fight; and boars even are made imposing by their mane; the hunters are afraid of them when they see them bristling their hair.

“The fleecy sheep are loaded with their wool.”

And their wool the loving Father has made abundant for thy use, O man, having taught thee to shear their fleeces. Of the nations, the Celts and Scythians wear their hair long, but do not deck themselves. The bushy hair of the barbarian has something fearful in it; and its auburn (xanqon> ) color threatens war, the hue being somewhat akin to blood. Both these barbarian races hate luxury. As clear witnesses will be produced by the German, the Rhine; and by the Scythian, the wagon. Sometimes the Scythian despises even the wagon: its size seems sumptuousness to the barbarian; and leaving its luxurious ease, the Scythian man leads a frugal life. For a house sufficient, and less encumbered than the wagon, he takes his horse, and mounting it, is borne where he wishes. And when faint with hunger, he asks his horse for sustenance; and he offers his veins, and supplies his master with all he possesses — his blood. To the nomad the horse is at once conveyance and sustenance; and the warlike youth of the Arabians (these are other nomads) are mounted on camels. They sit on breeding
camels; and these feed and run at the same time, carrying their masters the whilst, and bear the house with them. And if drink fail the barbarians, they milk them; and after that their food is spent, they do not spare even their blood, as is reported of furious wolves. And these, gentler than the barbarians, when injured, bear no remembrance of the wrong, but sweep bravely over the desert, carrying and nourishing their masters at the same time.

Perish, then, the savage beasts whose food is blood! For it is unlawful for men, whose body is nothing but flesh elaborated of blood, to touch blood. For human blood has become a partaker of the Word: it is a participant of grace by the Spirit; and if any one injure him, he will not escape unnoticed. Man may, though naked in body, address the Lord. But I approve the simplicity of the barbarians: loving an unencumbered life, the barbarians have abandoned luxury. Such the Lord calls us to be — naked of finery, naked of vanity, wrenched from our sins, bearing only the wood of life, aiming only at salvation.

CHAPTER 4
WITH WHOM WE ARE TO ASSOCIATE
But really I have unwittingly deviated in spirit from the order, to which I must now revert, and must find fault with having large numbers of domestics. For, avoiding working with their own hands and serving themselves, men have recourse to servants, purchasing a great crowd of fine cooks, and of people to lay out the table, and of others to divide the meat skillfully into pieces. And the staff of servants is separated into many divisions; some labor for their gluttony, carvers and seasoners, and the compounders and makers of sweetmeats, and honey-cakes, and custards others are occupied with their too numerous clothes; others guard the gold, like griffins; others keep the silver, and wipe the cups, and make ready what is needed to furnish the festive table; others rub down the horses; and a crowd of cup-bearers exert themselves in their service, and herds of beautiful boys, like cattle, from whom they milk away their beauty. And male and female assistants at the toilet are employed about the ladies — some for the mirrors, some for the head-dresses, others for the combs. Many are eunuchs; and these panders serve without suspicion those that wish to be free to enjoy their pleasures, because of the belief that they are unable to indulge in lust. But a true eunuch is not one who is unable, but one who is unwilling, to indulge in pleasure. The Word, testifying by the prophet Samuel to the Jews, who had transgressed when the people asked for a king, promised not a loving Lord, but threatened to give them a self-willed and voluptuous tyrant, “who shall,” He says, “take your daughters to be perfumers, and cooks, and bakers,” ruling by the law of war, not desiring a peaceful administration. And there are many Celts,
who bear aloft on their shoulders women’s litters. But workers in wool,
and spinners, and weavers, and female work and housekeeping, are
nowhere.
But those who impose on the women, spend the day with them, telling
them silly amatory stories, and wearing out body and soul with their false
acts and words. “Thou shalt not be with many,” it is said, “for evil, nor
give thyself to a multitude;” for wisdom shows itself among few, but
disorder in a multitude. But it is not for grounds of propriety, on account
of not wishing to be seen, that they purchase bearers, for it were
commendable if out of such feelings they put themselves under a covering;
but it is out of luxuriousness that they are carried on their domestics’
shoulders, and desire to make a show.
So, opening the curtain, and looking keenly round on all that direct their
eyes towards them, they show their manners; and often bending forth from
within, disgrace this superficial propriety by their dangerous restlessness.
“Look not round,” it is said, “in the streets of the city, and wander not in
its lonely places.” For that is, in truth, a lonely place, though there be a
crowd of the licentious in it, where no wise man is present.
And these women are carried about over the temples, sacrificing and
practicing divination day by day, spending their time with fortune-tellers,
and begging priests, and disreputable old women; and they keep up old
wives’ whisperings over their cups, learning charms and incantations from
soothsayers, to the ruin of the nuptial bonds. And some men they keep;
by others they are kept; and others are promised them by the diviners.
They know not that they are cheating themselves, and giving up
themselves as a vessel of pleasure to those that wish to indulge in
wantonness; and exchanging their purity for the foulest outrage, they think
what is the most shameful ruin a great stroke of business. And there are
many ministers to this meretricious licentiousness, insinuating themselves,
one from one quarter, another from another. For the licentious rush readily
into uncleanness, like swine rushing to that part of the hold of the ship
which is depressed. Whence the Scripture most strenuously exhorts,
“Introduce not every one into thy house, for the snares of the crafty are
many.” And in another place, “Let just men be thy guests, and in the fear
of the Lord let thy boast remain.” Away with fornication. “For know this
well,” says the apostle, “that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous
man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and
of God.”
But these women delight in intercourse with the effeminate. And crowds
of abominable creatures (κίναιον) flow in, of unbridled tongue, filthy in
body, filthy in language; men enough for lewd offices, ministers of adultery, giggling and whispering, and shamelessly making through their
noses sounds of lewdness and fornication to provoke lust, endeavoring to
please by lewd words and attitudes, inciting to laughter, the precursor of fornication. And sometimes, when inflamed by any provocation, either these fornicators, or those that follow the rabble of abominable creatures to destruction, make a sound in their nose like a frog, as if they had got anger dwelling in their nostrils. But those who are more refined than these keep Indian birds and Median pea-fowls, and recline with peak-headed creatures; playing with satyrs, delighting in monsters. They laugh when they hear Thersites; and these women, purchasing Thersiteses highly valued, pride themselves not in their husbands, but in those wretches which are a burden on the earth, and overlook the chaste widow, who is of far higher value than a Melitaean pup, and look askance at a just old man, who is lovelier in my estimation than a monster purchased for money. And though maintaining parrots and curlews, they do not receive the orphan child; but they expose children that are born at home, and take up the young of birds, and prefer irrational to rational creatures; although they ought to undertake the maintenance of old people with a character for sobriety, who are fairer in my mind than apes, and capable of uttering something better than nightingales; and to set before them that saying, “He that pitieth the poor lendeth to the LORD;” and this, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it to Me.” But these, on the other hand, prefer ignorance to wisdom, turning their wealth into stone, that is, into pearls and Indian emeralds. And they squander and throw away their wealth on fading dyes, and bought slaves; like crammed fowls scraping the dung of life. “Poverty,” it is said, “humbles a man.” By poverty is meant that niggardliness by which the rich are poor, having nothing to give away.

CHAPTER 5
BEHAVIOR IN THE BATHS
And of what sort are their baths? Houses skillfully constructed, compact, portable, transparent, covered with fine linen. And gold-plated chairs, and silver ones, too, and ten thousand vessels of gold and silver, some for drinking, some for eating, some for bathing, are carried about with them. Besides these, there are even braziers of coals; for they have arrived at such a pitch of self-indulgence, that they sup and get drunk while bathing. And articles of silver with which they make a show, they ostentatiously set out in the baths, and thus display perchance their wealth out of excessive pride, but chiefly the capricious ignorance, through which they brand effeminate men, who have been vanquished by women; proving at least that they themselves cannot meet and cannot sweat without a multitude of vessels, although poor women who have no display equally enjoy their baths. The dirt of wealth, then, has an abundant covering of censure. With this, as with a bait, they hook the miserable creatures that gape at the glitter of gold. For dazzling thus those fond of display, they
artfully try to win the admiration of their lovers, who after a little insult
them naked. They will scarce strip before their own husbands affecting a
plausible pretense of modesty; but any others who wish, may see them at
home shut up naked in their baths. For there they are not ashamed to strip
before spectators, as if exposing their persons for sale. But Hesiod advises
“Not to wash the skin in the women’s bath.”
The baths are opened promiscuously to men and women; and there they
strip for licentious indulgence (for from looking, men get to loving), as if
their modesty had been washed away in the bath. Those who have not
become utterly destitute of modesty shut out strangers; but bathe with
their own servants, and strip naked before their slaves, and are rubbed by
them; giving to the crouching menial liberty to lust, by permitting fearless
handling. For those who are introduced before their naked mistresses while
in the bath, study to strip themselves in order to audacity in lust, casting
off fear in consequence of the wicked custom. The ancient athletes,
ashamed to exhibit a man naked, preserved their modesty by going through
the contest in drawers; but these women, divesting themselves of their
modesty along with their tunic, wish to appear beautiful, but contrary to
their wish are simply proved to be wicked. For through the body itself the
wantonness of lust shines clearly; as in the case of dropsical people, the
water covered by the skin. Disease in both is known from the look. Men,
therefore, affording to women a noble example of truth, ought to be
ashamed at their stripping before them, and guard against these dangerous
sights; “for he who has looked curiously,” it is said, “hath sinned
already.” At home, therefore, they ought to regard with modesty parents
and domestics; in the ways, those they meet; in the baths, women; in
solitude, themselves; and everywhere the Word, who is everywhere, “and
without Him was not anything.” For so only shall one remain without
failing, if he regard God as ever present with him.

CHAPTER 6
THE CHRISTIAN ALONE RICH
Riches are then to be partaken of rationally, bestowed lovingly, not
sordidly, or pompously; nor is the love of the beautiful to be turned into
self-love and ostentation; lest perchance some one say to us, “His horse,
or land, or domestic, or gold, is worth fifteen talents; but the man himself
is dear at three coppers.”
Take away, then, directly the ornaments from women, and domestics from
masters, and you will find masters in no respect different from bought
slaves in step, or look, or voice, so like are they to their slaves. But they
differ in that they are feeble than their slaves, and have a more sickly
upbringing.
This best of maxims, then, ought to be perpetually repeated, “That the
good man, being temperate and just,” treasures up his wealth in heaven. He
who has sold his worldly goods, and given them to the poor, finds the
imperishable treasure, “where is neither moth nor robber.” Blessed truly is
he, “though he be insignificant, and feeble, and obscure;” and he is truly
rich with the greatest of all riches. “Though a man, then, be richer than
Cinyras and Midas and is wicked,” and haughty as he who was luxuriously
clothed in purple and fine linen, and despised Lazarus, “he is miserable,
and lives in trouble,” and shall not live. Wealth seems to me to be like a
serpent, which will twist round the hand and bite; unless one knows how
to lay hold of it without danger by the point of the tail. And riches,
wriggling either in an experienced or inexperienced grasp, are dexterous at
adhering and biting; unless one, despising them, use them skillfully, so as
to crush the creature by the charm of the Word, and himself escape
unscathed.
But, as is reasonable, he alone, who possesses what is worth most, turns
out truly rich, though not recognized as such. And it is not jewels, or gold,
or clothing, or beauty of person, that are of high value, but virtue; which is
the Word given by the Instructor to be put in practice. This is the Word,
who abjures luxury, but calls self-help as a servant, and praises frugality,
the progeny of temperance. “Receive,” he says, “instruction, and not
silver, and knowledge rather than tested gold; for Wisdom is better than
precious stones, nor is anything that is valuable equal in worth to her.”
And again: “Acquire me rather than gold, and precious stones, and silver;
for my produce is better than choice silver.”
But if we must distinguish, let it be granted that he is rich who has many
possessions, loaded with gold like a dirty purse; but the righteous alone is
graceful, because grace is order, observing a due and decorous measure in
managing and distributing. “For there are those who sow and reap more,”
of whom it is written, “He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his
righteousness endureth for ever.” So that it is not he who has and keeps,
but he who gives away, that is rich; and it is giving away, not possession,
which renders a man happy; and the fruit of the Spirit is generosity. It is in
the soul, then, that riches are. Let it, then, be granted that good things are
the property only of good men; and Christians are good. Now, a fool or a
libertine can neither have any perception of what is good, nor obtain
possession of it. Accordingly, good things are possessed by Christians
alone. And nothing is richer than these good things; therefore these alone
are rich. For righteousness is true riches; and the Word is more valuable
than all treasure, not accruing from cattle and fields, but given by God —
riches which cannot be taken away. The soul alone is its treasure. It is the
best possession to its possessor, rendering man truly blessed. For he
whose it is to desire nothing that is not in our power, and to obtain by
asking from God what he piously desires, does he not possess much, nay
all, having God as his everlasting treasure? “To him that asks,” it is said, “shall be given, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” If God denies nothing, all things belong to the godly.

CHAPTER 7
FRUGALITY A GOOD PROVISION FOR THE CHRISTIAN
Delicacies spent on pleasures become a dangerous shipwreck to men; for this voluptuous and ignoble life of the many is alien to true love for the beautiful and to refined pleasures. For man is by nature an erect and majestic being, aspiring after the good as becomes the creature of the One. But the life which crawls on its belly is destitute of dignity, is scandalous, hateful, ridiculous. And to the divine nature voluptuousness is a thing most alien; for this is for a man to be like sparrows in feeding, and swine and goats in lechery. For to regard pleasure as a good thing, is the sign of utter ignorance of what is excellent. Love of wealth displaces a man from the right mode of life, and induces him to cease from feeling shame at what is shameful; if only, like a beast, he has power to eat all sorts of things, and to drink in like manner, and to satiate in every way his lewd desires. And so very rarely does he inherit the kingdom of God. For what end, then, are such dainty dishes prepared, but to fill one belly? The filthiness of gluttony is proved by the sewers into which our bellies discharge the refuse of our food. For what end do they collect so many cupbearers, when they might satisfy themselves with one cup? For what the chests of clothes? and the gold ornaments for what? Those things are prepared for clothes-stealers, and scoundrels, and for greedy eyes. “But let alms and faith not fail thee,” says the Scripture. Look, for instance, to Elias the Thesbite, in whom we have a beautiful example of frugality, when he sat down beneath the thorn, and the angel brought him food. “It was a cake of barley and a jar of water.” Such the Lord sent as best for him. We, then, on our journey to the truth, must be unencumbered. “Carry not,” said the Lord, “purse, norscrip, nor shoes;” that is, possess not wealth, which is only treasured up in a purse; fill not your own stores, as if laying up produce in a bag, but communicate to those who have need. Do not trouble yourselves about horses and servants, who, as bearing burdens when the rich are traveling, are allegorically called shoes.
We must, then, cast away the multitude of vessels, silver and gold drinking cups, and the crowd of domestics, receiving as we have done from the Instructor the fair and grave attendants, Self-help and Simplicity. And we must walk suitably to the Word; and if there be a wife and children, the house is not a burden, having learned to change its place along with the sound-minded traveler. The wife who loves her husband must be furnished for travel similarly to her husband. A fair provision for the journey to heaven is theirs who bear frugality with chaste gravity. And as the foot is the measure of the shoe, so also is the body of what each individual
possesses. But that which is superfluous, what they call ornaments and the furniture of the rich, is a burden, not an ornament to the body. He who climbs to the heavens by force, must carry with him the fair staff of beneficence, and attain to the true rest by communicating to those who are in distress. For the Scripture avouches, “that the true riches of the soul are a man’s ransom,” that is, if he is rich, he will be saved by distributing it. For as gushing wells, when pumped out, rise again to their former measure, so giving away, being the benignant spring of love, by communicating of its drink to the thirsty, again increases and is replenished, just as the milk is wont to flow into the breasts that are sucked or milked. For he who has the almighty God, the Word, is in want of nothing, and never is in straits for what he needs. For the Word is a possession that wants nothing, and is the cause of all abundance. If one say that he has often seen the righteous man in need of food, this is rare, and happens only where there is not another righteous man. Notwithstanding let him read what follows: “For the righteous man shall not live by bread alone, but by the word of the Lord,” who is the true bread, the bread of the heavens. The good man, then, can never be in difficulties so long as he keeps intact his confession towards God. For it appertains to him to ask and to receive whatever he requires from the Father of all; and to enjoy what is his own, if he keep the Son. And this also appertains to him, to feel no want. This Word, who trains us, confers on us the true riches. Nor is the growing rich an object of envy to those who possess through Him the privilege of wanting nothing. He that has this wealth shall inherit the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER 8
SIMILITUDES AND EXAMPLES A MOST IMPORTANT PART OF RIGHT INSTRUCTION
And if any one of you shall entirely avoid luxury, he will, by a frugal upbringing, train himself to the endurance of involuntary labors, by employing constantly voluntary afflictions as training exercises for persecutions; so that when he comes to compulsory labors, and fears, and griefs, he will not be unpracticed in endurance.
Wherefore we have no country on earth, that we may despise earthly possessions. And frugality is in the highest degree rich, being equal to unfailing expenditure, bestowed on what is requisite, and to the degree requisite. For has the meaning of expenses.
How a husband is to live with his wife, and respecting self-help, and housekeeping, and the employment of domestics; and further, with respect to the time of marriage, and what is suitable for wives, we have treated in the discourse concerning marriage. What pertains to discipline alone is reserved now for description, as we delineate the life of Christians. The most indeed has been already said, and laid down in the form of disciplinary rules. What still remains we shall subjoin; for examples are of
no small moment in determining to salvation.
See, says the tragedy,
“The consort of Ulysses was not killed
By Telemachus; for she did not take a husband in addition to a husband,
But in the house the marriage-bed remains unpolluted.”
Reproaching foul adultery, he showed the fair image of chastity in
affection to her husband.

The Lacedaemonians compelling the Helots, their servants (Helots is the
name of their servants), to get drunk, exhibited their drunken pranks before
themselves, who were temperate, for cure and correction.
Observing, accordingly, their unseemly behavior, in order that they
themselves might not fall into like censurable conduct, they trained
themselves, turning the reproach of the drunkards to the advantage of
keeping themselves free from fault.
For some men being instructed are saved; and others, self-taught, either
aspire after or seek virtue.
“He truly is the best of all who himself perceives all things.”
Such is Abraham, who sought God.
“And good, again, is he who obeys him who advises well.”
Such are those disciples who obeyed the Word. Wherefore the former was
called “friend,” the latter “apostles;” the one diligently seeking, and the
other preaching one and the same God. And both are peoples, and both
these have hearers, the one who is profited through seeking, the other who
is saved through finding.
“But whoever neither himself perceives, nor, hearing another,
Lays to heart — he is a worthless man.”
The other people is the Gentile — useless; this is the people that
followeth not Christ. Nevertheless the Instructor, lover of man, helping in
many ways, partly exhorts, partly upbraids. Others having sinned, He
shows us their baseness, and exhibits the punishment consequent upon it,
alluring while admonishing, planning to dissuade us in love from evil, by
the exhibition of those who have suffered from it before. By which
examples He very manifestly checked those who had been evil-disposed,
and hindered those who were daring like deeds; and others He brought to a
foundation of patience; others He stopped from wickedness; and others
He cured by the contemplation of what is like, bringing them over to what
is better.
For who, when following one in the way, and then on the former falling
into a pit, would not guard against incurring equal danger, by taking care
not to follow him in his slip? What athlete, again, who has learned the way

to glory, and has seen the combatant who had preceded him receiving the
prize, does not exert himself for the crown, imitating the elder one?
Such images of divine wisdom are many; but I shall mention one instance, and expound it in a few words. The fate of the Sodomites was judgment to those who had done wrong, instruction to those who hear. The Sodomites having, through much luxury, fallen into uncleanness, practicing adultery shamelessly, and burning with insane love for boys; the All-seeing Word, whose notice those who commit impieties cannot escape, cast His eye on them. Nor did the sleepless guard of humanity observe their licentiousness in silence; but dissuading us from the imitation of them, and training us up to His own temperance, and falling on some sinners, lest lust being unavenged, should break loose from all the restraints of fear, ordered Sodom to be burned, pouting forth a little of the sagacious fire on licentiousness; lest lust, through want of punishment, should throw wide the gates to those that were rushing into voluptuousness. Accordingly, the just punishment of the Sodomites became to men an image of the salvation which is well calculated for men. For those who have not committed like sins with those who are punished, will never receive a like punishment. By guarding against sinning, we guard against suffering. “For I would have you know,” says Jude, “that God, having once saved His people from the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not; and the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved to the judgment of the great day, in everlasting chains under darkness of the savage angels.” And a little after he sets forth, in a most instructive manner, representations of those that are judged: “Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, and run greedily after the error of Balaam, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.” For those, who cannot attain the privilege of adoption, fear keeps from growing insolent. For punishments and threats are for this end, that fearing the penalty we may abstain from sinning. I might relate to you punishments for ostentation, and punishments for vainglory, not only for licentiousness; and adduce the censures pronounced on those whose hearts are bad through wealth, in which censures the Word through fear restrains from evil acts. But sparing prolixity in my treatise, I shall bring forward the following precepts of the Instructor, that you may guard against His threatenings.

CHAPTER 9
WHY WE ARE TO USE THE BATH
There are, then, four reasons for the bath (for from that point I digressed in my oration), for which we frequent it: for cleanliness, or heat, or health, or lastly, for pleasure. Bathing for pleasure is to be omitted. For unblushing pleasure must be cut out by the roots; and the bath is to be taken by women for cleanliness and health, by men for health alone. To bathe for the sake of heat is a superfluous, since one may restore what is frozen by the cold in other ways. Constant use of the bath, too, impairs strength and
relaxes the physical energies, and often induces debility and fainting. For in a way the body drinks, like trees, not only by the mouth, but also over the whole body in bathing, by what they call the pores. In proof of this often people, when thirsty, by going afterwards into the water, have assuaged their thirst. Unless, then, the bath is for some use, we ought not to indulge in it. The ancients called them places for fulling men, since they wrinkle men’s bodies sooner than they ought, and by cooking them, as it were, compel them to become prematurely old. The flesh, like iron, being softened by the heat, hence we require cold, as it were, to temper and give an edge. Nor must we bathe always; but if one is a little exhausted, or, on the other hand, filled to repletion, the bath is to be forbidden, regard being had to the age of the body and the season of the year. For the bath is not beneficial to all, or always, as those who are skilled in these things own. But due proportion, which on all occasions we call as our helper in life, suffices for us. For we must not so use the bath as to require an assistant, nor are we to bathe constantly and often in the day as we frequent the market-place. But to have the water poured over us by several people is an outrage on our neighbors, through fondness for luxuriousness, and is done by those who will not understand that the bath is common to all the bathers equally. But most of all is it necessary to wash the soul in the cleansing Word (sometimes the body too, on account of the dirt which gathers and grows to it, sometimes also to relieve fatigue). “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” saith the Lord, “for ye are like to whited sepulchers. Without, the sepulcher appears beautiful, but within it is full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.” And again He says to the same people, “Woe unto you! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and platter, but within are full of uncleanness. Cleanse first the inside of the cup, that the outside may be clean also.” The best bath, then, is what rubs off the pollution of the soul, and is spiritual. Of which prophecy speaks expressly: “The Lord will wash away the filth of the sons and daughters of Israel, and will purge the blood from the midst of them” — the blood of crime and the murders of the prophets. And the mode of cleansing, the Word subjoined, saying, “by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning.” The bathing which is carnal, that is to say, of the body, is accomplished by water alone, as often in the country where there is not a bath.  

CHAPTER 10
THE EXERCISES SUITED TO A GOOD LIFE
The gymnasium is sufficient for boys, even if a bath is within reach. And even for men to prefer gymnastic exercises by far to the baths, is perchance not bad, since they are in some respects conducive to the health of young men, and produce exertion — emulation to aim at not only a
healthy habit of body, but courageousness of soul. When this is done
without dragging a man away from better employments, it is pleasant, and
not unprofitable. Nor are women to be deprived of bodily exercise. But
they are not to be encouraged to engage in wrestling or running, but are to
exercise themselves in spinning, and weaving, and superintending the
cooking if necessary. And they are, with their own hand, to fetch from the
store what we require. And it is no disgrace for them to apply themselves
to the mill. Nor is it a reproach to a wife — housekeeper and helpmeet —
to occupy herself in cooking, so that it may be palatable to her husband.
And if she shake up the couch, reach drink to her husband when thirsty,
set food on the table as neatly as possible, and so give herself exercise
tending to sound health, the Instructor will approve of a woman like this,
who “stretches forth her arms to useful tasks, rests her hands on the
distaff, opens her hand to the poor, and extends her wrist to the beggar.”

552

She who emulates Sarah is not ashamed of that highest of ministries,
helping wayfarers. For Abraham said to her, “Haste, and knead three
measures of meal, and make cakes.” “And Rachel, the daughter of Laban,
came,” it is said, “with her father’s sheep.” Nor was this enough; but to
teach humility it is added, “for she fed her father’s sheep.” And
innumerable such examples of frugality and self-help, and also of exercises,
are furnished by the Scriptures, In the case of men, let some strip and
engage in wrestling; let some play at the small ball, especially the game
they call Pheninda, in the sun. To others who walk into the country, or go
down into the town, the walk is sufficient exercise. And were they to
handle the hoe, this stroke of economy in agricultural labor would not be
ungentlemanlike.

I had almost forgot to say that the well-known Pittacus, king of Miletus,
practiced the laborious exercise of turning the mill. It is respectable for a
man to draw water for himself, and to cut billets of wood which he is to
use himself. Jacob fed the sheep of Laban that were left in his charge,
having as a royal badge “a rod of storax,” which aimed by its wood to
change and improve nature. And reading aloud is often an exercise to many.
But let not such athletic contests, as we have allowed, be undertaken for
the sake of vainglory, but for the exuding of manly sweat. Nor are we to
struggle with cunning and showiness, but in a stand-up wrestling bout, by
disentangling of neck, hands, and sides. For such a struggle with graceful
strength is more becoming and manly, being undertaken for the sake of
serviceable and profitable health. But let those others, who profess the
practice of illiberal postures in gymnastics, be dismissed. We must always
aim at moderation. For as it is best that labor should precede food, so to
labor above measure is both very bad, very exhausting, and apt to make us
ill. Neither, then, should we be idle altogether, nor completely fatigued. For
similarly to what we have laid down with respect to food, are we to do
everywhere and with everything. Our mode of life is not to accustom us to voluptuousness and licentiousness, nor to the opposite extreme, but to the medium between these, that which is harmonious and temperate, and free of either evil, luxury and parsimony. And now, as we have also previously remarked, attending to one’s own wants is an exercise free of pride, — as, for example, putting on one’s own shoes, washing one’s own feet, and also rubbing one’s self when anointed with oil. To render one who has rubbed you the same service in return, is an exercise of reciprocal justice; and to sleep beside a sick friend, help the infirm, and supply him who is in want, are proper exercises. “And Abraham,” it is said, “served up for three, dinner under a tree, and waited on them as they ate.” The same with fishing, as in the case of Peter, if we have leisure from necessary instructions in the Word. But that is the better enjoyment which the Lord assigned to the disciple, when He taught him to “catch men” as fishes in the water.

CHAPTER 11
A COMPENDIOUS VIEW OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
Wherefore the wearing of gold and the use of softer clothing is not to be entirely prohibited. But irrational impulses must be curbed, lest, carrying us away through excessive relaxation, they impel us to voluptuousness. For luxury, that has dashed on to surfeit, is prone to kick up its heels and toss its mane, and shake off the charioteer, the Instructor; who, pulling back the reins from far, leads and drives to salvation the human horse — that is, the irrational part of the soul — which is wildly bent on pleasures, and vicious appetites, and precious stones, and gold, and variety of dress, and other luxuries.

Above all, we are to keep in mind what was spoken sacredly: “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by the good works which they behold, glorify God.”

CLOTHES.
The Instructor permits us, then, to use simple clothing, and of a white color, as we said before. So that, accommodating ourselves not to variegated art, but to nature as it is produced, and pushing away whatever is deceptive and belies the truth, we may embrace the uniformity and simplicity of the truth.

Sophocles, reproaching a youth, says: —

“Decked in women’s clothes.”

For, as in the case of the soldier, the sailor, and the ruler, so also the proper dress of the temperate man is what is plain, becoming, and clean. Whence also in the law, the law enacted by Moses about leprosy rejects what has many colors and spots, like the various scales of the snake. He
therefore wishes man, no longer decking himself gaudily in a variety of colors, but white all over from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, to be clean; so that, by a transition from the body, we may lay aside the varied and versatile passions of the man, and love the unvaried, and unambiguous, and simple color of truth. And he who also in this emulates Moses — Plato best of all — approves of that texture on which not more than a chaste woman’s work has been employed. And white colors well become gravity. And elsewhere he says, “Nor apply dyes or weaving, except for warlike decorations.”

To men of peace and of light, therefore, white is appropriate. As, then, signs, which are very closely allied to causes, by their presence indicate, or rather demonstrate, the existence of the result; as smoke is the sign of fire, and a good complexion and a regular pulse of health; so also clothing of this description shows the character of our habits. Temperance is pure and simple; since purity is a habit which ensures pure conduct unmixed with what is base. Simplicity is a habit which does away with superfluities. Substantial clothing also, and chiefly what is unfulled, protects the heat which is in the body; not that the clothing has heat in itself, but that it turns back the heat issuing from the body, and refuses it a passage. And whatever heat falls upon it, it absorbs and retains, and being warmed by it, warms in turn the body. And for this reason it is chiefly to be worn in winter.

It also (temperance) is contented. And contentment is a habit which dispenses with superfluities, and, that there may be no failure, is receptive of what suffices for the healthful and blessed life according to the Word. Let the women wear a plain and becoming dress, but softer than what is suitable for a man, yet not quite immodest or entirely gone in luxury. And let the garments be suited to age, person, figure, nature, pursuits. For the divine apostle most beautifully counsels us “to put on Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the lusts of the flesh.”

555

EARRINGS.
The Word prohibits us from doing violence to nature by boring the lobes of the ears. For why not the nose too? — so that, what was spoken, may be fulfilled: “As an earring in a swine’s nose, so is beauty to a woman without discretion.” For, in a word, if one thinks himself made beautiful by gold, he is inferior to gold; and he that is inferior to gold is not Lord of it. But to confess one’s self less ornamental than the Lydian ore, how monstrous! As, then, the gold is polluted by the dirtiness of the sow, which stirs up the mire with her snout, so those women, that are luxurious to excess in their wantonness, elated by wealth, dishonor by the stains of amatory indulgences what is the true beauty.

FINGER RINGS.
The Word, then, permits them a finger ring of gold. Nor is this for
ornament, but for sealing things which are worth keeping safe in the house in the exercise of their charge of housekeeping. For if all were well trained, there would be no need of seals, if servants and masters were equally honest. But since want of training produces an inclination to dishonesty, we require seals. But there are circumstances in which this strictness may relaxed. For allowance must sometimes be made in favor of those women who have not been fortunate in falling in with chaste husbands, and adorn themselves in order to please their husbands. But let desire for the admiration of their husbands alone be proposed as their aim. I would not have them to devote themselves to personal display, but to attract their husbands by chaste love for them — a powerful and legitimate charm. But since they wish their wives to be unhappy in mind, let the latter, if they would be chaste, make it their aim to allay by degrees the irrational impulses and passions of their husbands. And they are to be gently drawn to simplicity, by gradually accustoming them to sobriety. For decency is not produced by the imposition of what is burdensome, but by the abstraction of excess. For women’s articles of luxury are to be prohibited, as things of swift wing producing unstable follies and empty delights; by which, elated and furnished with wings, they often fly away from the marriage bonds. Wherefore also women ought to dress neatly, and bind themselves around with the band of chaste modesty, lest through giddiness they slip away from the truth. It is right, then, for men to repose confidence in their wives, and commit the charge of the household to them, as they are given to be their helpers in this. And if it is necessary for us, while engaged in public business, or discharging other avocations in the country, and often away from our wives, to seal anything for the sake of safety, He (the Word) allows us a signet for this purpose only. Other finger-rings are to be cast off, since, according to the Scripture, “instruction is a golden ornament for a wise man.” But women who wear gold seem to me to be afraid, lest, if one strip them of their jewelry, they should be taken for servants, without their ornaments. But the nobility of truth, discovered in the native beauty which has its seat in the soul, judges the slave not by buying and selling, but by a servile disposition. And it is incumbent on us not to seem, but to be free, trained by God, adopted by God. Wherefore we must adopt a mode of standing and motion, and a step, and dress, and in a word, a mode of life, in all respects as worthy as possible of freemen. But men are not to wear the ring on the joint; for this is feminine; but to place it on the little finger at its root. For so the hand will be freest for work, in whatever we need it; and the signet will not very easily fall off, being guarded by the large knot of the joint.
And let our seals be either a dove, or a fish, or a ship scudding before the wind, or a musical lyre, which Polycrates used, or a ship’s anchor, which Seleucus got engraved as a device; and if there be one fishing, he will remember the apostle, and the children drawn out of the water. For we are not to delineate the faces of idols, we who are prohibited to cleave to them; nor a sword, nor a bow, following as we do, peace; nor drinking-cups, being temperate.

Many of the licentious have their lovers engraved, or their mistresses, as if they wished to make it impossible ever to forget their amatory indulgences, by being perpetually put in mind of their licentiousness.

557

THE HAIR.

About the hair, the following seems right. Let the head of men be shaven, unless it has curly hair. But let the chin have the hair. But let not twisted locks hang far down from the head, gliding into womanish ringlets. For an ample beard suffices for men. And if one, too, shave a part of his beard, it must not be made entirely bare, for this is a disgraceful sight. The shaving of the chin to the skin is reprehensible, approaching to plucking out the hair and smoothing. For instance, thus the Psalmist, delighted with the hair of the beard, says, “As the ointment that descends on the beard, the beard of Aaron.”

Having celebrated the beauty of the beard by a repetition, he made the face to shine with the ointment of the Lord.

Since cropping is to be adopted not for the sake of elegance, but on account of the necessity of the case; the hair of the head, that it may not grow so long as to come down and interfere with the eyes, and that of the moustache similarly, which is dirtied in eating, is to be cut round, not by the razor, for that were not well-bred, but by a pair of cropping scissors. But the hair on the chin is not to be disturbed, as it gives no trouble, and lends to the face dignity and paternal terror.

Moreover, the shape instructs many not to sin, because it renders detection easy. To those who do [not] wish to sin openly, a habit that will escape observation and is not conspicuous is most agreeable, which, when assumed, will allow them to transgress without detection; so that, being undistinguishable from others, they may fearlessly go their length in sinning. A cropped head not only shows a man to be grave, but renders the cranium less liable to injury, by accustoming it to the presence of both cold and heat; and it averts the mischiefs arising from these, which the hair absorbs into itself like a sponge, and so inflicts on the brain constant mischief from the moisture.

It is enough for women to protect their locks, and bind up their hair simply along the neck with a plain hair-pin, nourishing chaste locks with simple care to true beauty. For meretricious plaiting of the hair, and putting it up in tresses, contribute to make them look ugly, cutting the hair
and plucking off it those treacherous braidings; on account of which they do not touch their head, being afraid of disordering their hair. Sleep, too, comes on, not without fear lest they pull down without knowing the shape of the braid. But additions of other people’s hair are entirely to be rejected, and it is a most sacrilegious thing for spurious hair to shade the head, covering the skull with dead locks. For on whom does the presbyter lay his hand? Whom does he bless? Not the woman decked out, but another’s hair, and through them another head. And if “the man is head of the woman, and God of the man,” how is it not impious that they should fall into double sins? For they deceive the men by the excessive quantity of their hair; and shame the Lord as far as in them lies, by adorning themselves meretriciously, in order to dissemble the truth. And they defame the head, which is truly beautiful. Consequently neither is the hair to be dyed, nor gray hair to have its color changed. For neither are we allowed to diversify our dress. And above all, old age, which conciliates trust, is not to be concealed. But God’s mark of honor is to be shown in the light of day, to win the reverence of the young. For sometimes, when they have been behaving shamefully, the appearance of hoary hairs, arriving like an instructor, has changed them to sobriety, and paralyzed juvenile lust with the splendor of the sight.

PAINTING THE FACE.

Nor are the women to smear their faces with the ensnaring devices of wily cunning. But let us show to them the decoration of sobriety. For, in the first place, the best beauty is that which is spiritual, as we have often pointed out. For when the soul is adorned by the Holy Spirit, and inspired with the radiant charms which proceed from Him, — righteousness, wisdom, fortitude, temperance, love of the good, modesty, than which no more blooming color was ever seen, — then let corporeal beauty be cultivated too, symmetry of limbs and members, with a fair complexion. The adornment of health is here in place, through which the transition of the artificial image to the truth, in accordance with the form which has been given by God, is effected. But temperance in drinks, and moderation in articles of food, are effectual in producing beauty according to nature; for not only does the body maintain its health from these, but they also make beauty to appear. For from what is fiery arises a gleam and sparkle; and from moisture, brightness and grace; and from dryness, strength and firmness; and from what is aerial, free-breathing and equipoise; from which this well-proportioned and beautiful image of the Word is adorned. Beauty is the free flower of health for the latter is produced within the body; while the former, blossoming out from the body, exhibits manifest beauty of complexion. Accordingly, these most decorous and healthful practices, by
exercising the body, produce true and lasting beauty, the heat attracting to itself all the moisture and cold spirit. Heat, when agitated by moving causes, is a thing which attracts to itself; and when it does attract, it gently exhales through the flesh itself, when warmed, the abundance of food, with some moisture, but with excess of heat. Wherefore also the first food is carried off. But when the body is not moved, the food consumed does not adhere, but falls away, as the loaf from a cold oven, either entire, or leaving only the lower part. Accordingly, the faeces are in excess in the case of those who do not throw off the excrementitious matters by the rubbings necessitated by exercise. And other superfluous matters abound in their case too, and also perspiration, as the food is not assimilated by the body, but is flowing out to waste. Thence also lusts are excited, the redundance flowing to the pudenda by commensurate motions. Wherefore this redundance ought to be liquefied and dispersed for digestion, by which beauty acquires its ruddy hue. But it is monstrous for those who are made in “the image and likeness of God,” to dishonor the archetype by assuming a foreign ornament, preferring the mischievous contrivance of man to the divine creation.

The Instructor orders them to go forth “in becoming apparel, and adorn themselves with shamefacedness and sobriety,” “subject to their own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold,” he says, “your chaste conversation. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plairting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

For the labor of their own hands, above all, adds genuine beauty to women, exercising their bodies and adorning themselves by their own exertions; not bringing unornamental ornament wrought by others, which is vulgar and meretricious, but that of every good woman, supplied and woven by her own hands whenever she most requires. For it is never suitable for women whose lives are framed according to God, to appear arrayed in things bought from the market, but in their own home-made work. For a most beautiful thing is it thrifty wife, who clothes both herself and her husband with fair array of her own working; in which all are glad — the children on account of their mother, the husband on account of his wife, she on their account, and all in God.

In brief, “A store of excellence is a woman of worth, who eateth not the bread of idleness; and the laws of mercy are on her tongue; who openeth her mouth wisely and rightly; whose children rise up and call her blessed,” as the sacred Word says by Solomon: “Her husband also, and he praiseth her. For a pious woman is blessed; and let her praise the fear of the
LORD.

And again, “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband.” They must, as far as possible, correct their gestures, looks, steps, and speech. For they must not do as some, who, imitating the acting of comedy, and practicing the mincing motions of dancers, conduct themselves in society as if on the stage, with voluptuous movements, and gliding steps, and affected voices, casting languishing glances round, tricked out with the bait of pleasure.

“For honey drops from the lips of a woman who is an harlot; who, speaking to please, lubricates thy throat. But at last thou wilt find it bitterer than bile, and sharper than a two-edged sword. For the feet of folly lead those who practice it to hell after death.”

The noble Samson was overcome by the harlot, and by another woman was shorn of his man hood. But Joseph was not thus beguiled by another woman. The Egyptian harlot was conquered. And chastity, assuming to itself bonds, appears superior to dissolute license. Most excellent is what has been said: —

“In fine, I know not how
To whisper, nor effeminately,
To walk about with my neck awry,
As I see others — lechers there
In numbers in the city, with hair plucked out.”

But feminine motions, dissoluteness, and luxury, are to be entirely prohibited. For voluptuousness of motion in walking, “and a mincing gait,” as Anacreon says, are altogether meretricious.

“As seems to me,” says the comedy, “it is time to abandon meretricious steps and luxury.” And the steps of harlotry lean not to the truth; for they approach not the paths of life. Her tracks are dangerous, and not easily known. The eyes especially are to be sparingly used, since it is better to slip with the feet than with the eyes. Accordingly, the Lord very summarily cures this malady: “If thine eye offend thee, cut it out,” He says, dragging lust up from the foundation. But languishing looks, and ogling, which is to wink with the eyes, is nothing else than to commit adultery with the eyes, lust skirmishing through them. For of the whole body, the eyes are first destroyed. “The eye contemplating beautiful objects (kala), gladdens the heart;” that is, the eye which has learned > rightly (kalw~v) to see, gladdens. “Winking with the eye, with guile, heaps woes on men.” Such they introduce the effeminate Sardanapalus, king of the Assyrians, sitting on a couch with his legs up, fumbling at his purple robe, and casting up the whites of his eyes. Women that follow such practices, by their looks offer themselves for prostitution. “For the light of the body is the eye,” says the Scripture, by which the interior illuminated by the shining light appears. Fornication in a woman is in the raising of the eyes.
“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, and concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things’ sake cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience,” cries the apostle. But we enkindle the passions, and are not ashamed. Some of these women eating mastich, going about, show their teeth to those that come near. And others, as if they had not fingers, give themselves airs, scratching their heads with pins; and these made either of tortoise or ivory, or some other dead creature they procure at much pains. And others, as if they had certain efflorescences, in order to appear comely in the eyes of spectators, stain their faces by adorning them with gaycolored unguents. Such a one is called by Solomon “a foolish and bold woman,” who “knows not shame. She sits at the door of her house, conspicuously in a seat, calling to all that pass by the way, who go right on their ways;” by her style and whole life manifestly saying, “Who among you is very silly? let him turn to me.” And those devoid of wisdom she exHORTs, saying, “Touch sweetly secret bread, and sweet stolen water;” meaning by this, clandestine love (from this point the Boeotian Pindar, coming to our help, says, “The clandestine pursuit of love is something sweet”). But the miserable man “knoweth not that the sons of earth perish beside her, and that she tends to the level of hell.” But says the Instructor: “Hie away, and tarry not in the place; nor fix thine eye on her: for thus shalt thou pass over a strange water, and cross to Acheron.” Wherefore thus saith the Lord by Isaiah, “Because the daughters of Sion walk with lofty neck, and with winkings of the eyes, and sweeping their garments as they walk, and playing with their feet; the Lord shall humble the daughters of Sion, and will uncover their form” — their deformed form. I, deem it wrong that servant girls, who follow women of high rank, should either speak or act unbecomingly to them. But I think it right that they should be corrected by their mistresses. With very sharp censure, accordingly, the comic poet Philemon says: “You may follow at the back of a pretty servant girl, seen behind a gentlewoman; and any one from the Plataecium may follow close, and ogle her.” For the wantonness of the servant recoils on the mistress; allowing those who attempt to take lesser liberties not to be afraid to advance to greater; since the mistress, by allowing improprieties, shows that she does not disapprove of them. And not to be angry at those who act wantonly, is a clear proof of a disposition inclining to the like. “For like mistress like wenCh,” as they say in the proverb. WALKING. Also we must abandon a furious mode of walking, and choose a grave and leisurely, but not a lingering step. Nor is one to swagger in the ways, nor throw back his head to look at those he meets, if they look at him, as if he were strutting on the stage, and
pointed at with the finger. Nor, when pushing up hill, are they to be shoved up by their domestics, as we see those that are more luxurious, who appear strong, but are enfeebled by effeminacy of soul.

A true gentleman must have no mark of effeminacy visible on his face, or any other part of his body. Let no blot on his manliness, then, be ever found either in his movements or habits. Nor is a man in health to use his servants as horses to bear him. For as it is enjoined on them, “to be subject to their masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward,” as Peter says; so fairness, and forbearance, and kindness, are what well becomes the masters. For he says: “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be humble,” and so forth, “that ye may inherit a blessing,” excellent and desirable.

THE MODEL MAIDEN.
Zeno the Cittiaeae thought fit to represent the image of a young maid, and executed the statue thus: “Let her face be clean, her eyebrows not let down, nor her eyelids open nor turned back. Let her neck not be stretched back, nor the members of her body be loose. But let the parts that hang from the body look as if they were well strung; let there be the keenness of a well-regulated mind for discourse, and retention of what has been rightly spoken; and let her attitudes and movements give no ground of hope to the licentious; but let there be the bloom of modesty, and an expression of firmness. But far from her be the wearisome trouble that comes from the shops of perfumers, and goldsmiths, and dealers in wool, and that which comes from the other shops where women, meretriciously dressed, pass whole days as if sitting in the stews.”

AMUSEMENTS AND ASSOCIATES.
And let not men, therefore, spend their time in barbers’ shops and taverns, babbling nonsense; and let them give up hunting for the women who sit near, and ceaselessly talking slander against many to raise a laugh. The game of dice is to be prohibited, and the pursuit of gain, especially by dicing, which many keenly follow. Such things the prodigality of luxury invents for the idle. For the cause is idleness, and a love for frivolities apart from the truth. For it is not possible otherwise to obtain enjoyment without injury; and each man’s preference of a mode of life is a counterpart of his disposition.

But, as appears, only intercourse with good men benefits; on the other hand, the all-wise Instructor, by the mouth of Moses, recognizing companionship with bad men as swinish, forbade the ancient people to partake of swine; to point out that those who call on God ought not to mingle with unclean men, who, like swine, delight in corporeal pleasures, in impure food, and in itching with filthy pruriency after the mischievous
delights of lewdness. Further, He says: “Thou art not to eat a kite or swift-winged ravenous bird, or an eagle,” meaning: Thou shalt not come near men who gain their living by rapine. And other things also are exhibited figuratively. With whom, then, are we to associate? With the righteous, He says again, speaking figuratively; for everything “which parts the hoof and chews the cud is clean.” For the parting of the hoof indicates the equilibrium of righteousness, and ruminating points to the proper food of righteousness, the word, which enters from without, like food, by instruction, but is recalled from the mind, as from the stomach, to rational recollection. And the spiritual man, having the word in his mouth, ruminates the spiritual food; and righteousness parts the hoof rightly, because it sanctifies us in this life, and sends us on our way to the world to come.

PUBLIC SPECTACLES.
The Instructor will not then bring us to public spectacles; nor inappropriately might one call the racecourse and the theater “the seat of plagues;” for there is evil counsel as against the Just One, and therefore the assembly against Him is execrated. These assemblies, indeed, are full of confusion and iniquity; and these pretexts for assembling are the cause of disorder — men and women assembling promiscuously for the sight of one another. In this respect the assembly has already shown itself bad: for when the eye is lascivious, the desires grow warm; and the eyes that are accustomed to look impudently at one’s neighbors during the leisure granted to them, inflame the amatory desires. Let spectacles, therefore, and plays that are full of scurrility and of abundant gossip, be forbidden. For what base action is it that is not exhibited in the theaters? And what shameless saying is it that is not brought forward by the buffoons? And those who enjoy the evil that is in them, stamp the clear images of it at home. And, on the other hand, those that are proof against these things, and unimpressible, will never make a stumble in regard to luxurious pleasures. For if people shall say that they betake themselves to the spectacles as a pastime for recreation, I should say that the cities which make a serious business of pastime are not wise; for cruel contests for glory which have been so fatal are not sport. No more is senseless expenditure of money, nor are the riots that are occasioned by them sport. And ease of mind is not to be purchased by zealous pursuit of frivolities, for no one who has his senses will ever prefer what is pleasant to what is good.

RELIGION IN ORDINARY LIFE.
But it is said we do not all philosophize. Do we not all, then, follow after life? What sayest thou? How hast thou believed? How, pray, dost thou love God and thy neighbor, if thou dost not philosophize? And how dost thou love thyself, if thou dost not love life? It is said, I have not learned
letters; but if thou hast not learned to read, thou canst not excuse thyself in the case of hearing, for it is not taught. And faith is the possession not of the wise according to the world, but of those according to God; and it is taught without letters; and its handbook, at once rude and divine, is called love — a spiritual book. It is in your power to listen to divine wisdom, ay, and to frame your life in accordance with it. Nay, you are not prohibited from conducting affairs in the world decorously according to God. Let not him who sells or buys aught name two prices for what he buys or sells; but stating the net price, and studying to speak the truth, if he get not his price, he gets the truth, and is rich in the possession of rectitude. But, above all, let an oath on account of what is sold be far from you; and let swearing, too, on account of other things be banished.

And in this way those who frequent the market-place and the shop philosophize. “For thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.”

But those who act contrary to these things — the avaricious, the liars, the hypocrites, those who make merchandise of the truth — the Lord cast out of His Father’s court, not willing that the holy house of God should be the house of unrighteous traffic either in words or in material things.

GOING TO CHURCH.

Woman and man are to go to church decently attired, with natural step, embracing silence, possessing unfeigned love, pure in body, pure in heart, fit to pray to God. Let the woman observe this, further. Let her be entirely covered, unless she happen to be at home. For that style of dress is grave, and protects from being gazed at. And she will never fall, who puts before her eyes modesty, and her shawl; nor will she invite another to fall into sin by uncovering her face. For this is the wish of the Word, since it is becoming for her to pray veiled.

They say that the wife of Aeneas, through excess of propriety, did not, even in her terror at the capture of Troy, uncover herself; but, though fleeing from the conflagration, remained veiled.

OUT OF CHURCH.

Such ought those who are consecrated to Christ appear, and frame themselves in their whole life, as they fashion themselves in the church for the sake of gravity; and to be, not to seem such — so meek, so pious, so loving. But now I know not how people change their fashions and manners with the place. As they say that polypi, assimilated to the rocks to which they adhere, are in color such as they; so, laying aside the inspiration of the assembly, after their departure from it, they become like others with whom they associate. Nay, in laying aside the artificial mask of solemnity, they are proved to be what they secretly were. After having paid reverence to the discourse about God, they leave within [the church] what they have
heard. And outside they foolishly amuse themselves with impious playing, and amatory quavering, occupied with flute-playing, and dancing, and intoxication, and all kinds of trash. They who sing thus, and sing in response, are those who before hymned immortality, — found at last wicked and wickedly singing this most pernicious palinode, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” But not tomorrow in truth, but already, are these dead to God; burying their dead, that is, sinking themselves down to death. The apostle very firmly assails them. “Be not deceived; neither adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers,” and whatever else he adds to these, “shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

LOVE AND THE KISS OF CHARITY.

And if we are called to the kingdom of God, let us walk worthy of the kingdom, loving God and our neighbor. But love is not proved by a kiss, but by kindly feeling. But there are those, that do nothing but make the churches resound with a kiss, not having love itself within. For this very thing, the shameless use of a kiss, which ought to be mystic, occasions foul suspicions and evil reports. The apostle calls the kiss holy.

When the kingdom is worthily tested, we dispense the affection of the soul by a chaste and closed mouth, by which chiefly gentle manners are expressed.

But there is another unholy kiss, full of poison, counterfeiting sanctity. Do you not know that spiders, merely by touching the mouth, afflict men with pain? And often kisses inject the poison of licentiousness. It is then very manifest to us, that a kiss is not love. For the love meant is the love of God. “And this is the love of God,” says John, “that we keep His commandments;” not that we stroke each other on the mouth. “And His commandments are not grievous.” But salutations of beloved ones in the ways, full as they are of foolish boldness, are characteristic of those who wish to be conspicuous to those without, and have not the least particle of grace. For if it is proper mystically “in the closet” to pray to God, it will follow that we are also to greet mystically our neighbor, whom we are commanded to love second similarly to God, within doors, “redeeming the time.” “For we are the salt of the earth.” “Whosoever shall bless his friend early in the, morning with a loud voice, shall be regarded not to differ from cursing.”

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE EYES.

But, above all, it seems right that we turn away from the sight of women. For it is sin not only to touch, but to look; and he who is rightly trained must especially avoid them. “Let thine eyes look straight, and thine eyelids wink right.” For while it is possible for one who looks to remain steadfast; yet care must be taken against falling. For it is possible for one
who looks to slip; but it is impossible for one, who looks not, to lust. For it is not enough for the chaste to be pure; but they must give all diligence, to be beyond the range of censure, shutting out all ground of suspicion, in order to the consummation of chastity; so that we may not only be faithful, but appear worthy of trust. For this is also consequently to be guarded against, as the apostle says, “that no man should blame us; providing things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”

“But turn away thine eyes from a graceful woman, and contemplate not another’s beauty,” says the Scripture. And if you require the reason, it will further tell you, For by the beauty of woman many have gone astray, and at it affection blazes up like fire;” the affection which arises from the fire which we call love, leading to the fire which will never cease in consequence of sin.

CHAPTER 12
CONTINUATION: WITH TEXTS FROM SCRIPTURE
I would counsel the married never to kiss their wives in the presence of their domestics. For Aristotle does not allow people to laugh to their slaves. And by no means must a wife be seen saluted in their presence. It is moreover better that, beginning at home with marriage, we should exhibit propriety in it. For it is the greatest bond of chastity, breathing forth pure pleasure. Very admirably the tragedy says: —

“Well! well! ladies, how is it, then, that among men,
Not gold, not empire, or luxury of wealth,
Conferred to such an extent signal delights,
As the right and virtuous disposition
Of a man of worth and a dutiful wife?”

Such injunctions of righteousness uttered by those who are conversant with worldly wisdom are not to be refused. Knowing, then, the duty of each, “pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver or gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” “For,” says Peter, “the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.” We have as a limit the cross of the Lord, by which we are fenced and hedged about from our former sins. Therefore, being regenerated, let us fix ourselves to it in truth, and return to sobriety, and sanctify ourselves; “for the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayer; but the face of the LORD is against them that do evil.” And who is he that will harm us, if we be followers of that which is good?” — “us” for “you.” But the best training is good order,
which is perfect decorum, and stable and orderly power, which in action maintains consistence in what it does. If these things have been adduced by me with too great asperity, in order to effect the salvation which follows from your correction; they have been spoken also, says the Instructor, by me: “Since he who reproves with boldness is a peacemaker.” And if ye hear me, ye shall be saved. And if ye attend not to what is spoken, it is not my concern. And yet it is my concern thus: “For he desires the repentance rather than the death of a sinner.” “If ye shall hear me, ye shall eat the good of the land,” the Instructor again says, calling by the appellation “the good of the land,” beauty, wealth, health, strength, sustenance. For those things which are really good, are what “neither ear hath heard, not hath ever entered into the heart” respecting Him who is really King, and the realities truly good which await us. For He is the giver and the guard of good things. And with respect to their participation, He applies the same names of things in this world, the Word thus training in God the feebleness of men from sensible things to understanding.

What has to be observed at home, and how our life is to be regulated, the Instructor has abundantly declared. And the things which He is wont to say to children by the way, while He conducts them to the Master, these He suggests, and adduces the Scriptures themselves in a compendious form, setting forth bare injunctions, accommodating them to the period of guidance, and assigning the interpretation of them to the Master. For the intention of His law is to dissipate fear, emancipating free-will in order to faith. “Hear,” He says, “O child,” who art rightly instructed, the principal points of salvation. For I will disclose my ways, and lay before thee good commandments; by which thou wilt reach salvation. And I lead thee by the way of salvation. Depart from the paths of deceit.

“For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous, and the way of the ungodly shall perish.” “Follow, therefore, O son, the good way which I shall describe, lending to me attentive ears.” “And I will give to thee the treasures of darkness, hidden and unseen” by the nations, but seen by us. And the treasures of wisdom are unfailing, in admiration of which the apostle says, “O the depth of the riches and the wisdom!” And by one God are many treasures dispensed; some disclosed by the law, others by the prophets; some to the divine mouth, and others to the heptad of the spirit singing accordant. And the Lord being one, is the same Instructor by all these. Here is then a comprehensive precept, and an exhortation of life, all-embracing: “As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye likewise to them.” We may comprehend the commandments in two, as the Lord says, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbor as thyself.” Then from these He infers, “on this hang the law and the prophets.” Further, to him that asked, “What good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?” He
answered, “Thou knowest the commandments?” And on him replying Yea, He said, “This do, and thou shalt be saved.” Especially conspicuous is the love of the Instructor set forth in various salutary commandments, in order that the discovery may be readier, from the abundance and arrangement of the Scriptures. We have the Decalogue given by Moses, which, indicating by an elementary principle, simple and of one kind, defines the designation of sins in a way conducive to salvation: “Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not worship idols. Thou shalt not corrupt boys. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honor thy father and thy mother.”

And so forth. These things are to be observed, and whatever else is commanded in reading the Bible. And He enjoins on us by Isaiah: “Wash you, and make you clean. Put away iniquities from your souls before mine eyes. Learn to do well. Seek judgment. Deliver the wronged. Judge for the orphan, and justify the widow. And come, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.” And we shall find many examples also in other places, — as, for instance, respecting prayer: “Good works are an acceptable prayer to the Lord,” says the Scripture. And the manner of prayer is described. “If thou seest,” it is said, “the naked, cover him; and thou shalt not overlook those who belong to thy seed. Then shall thy light spring forth early, and thy healing shall spring up quickly; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of God shall encompass thee.” What, then, is the fruit of such prayer? “Then shalt thou call, and God will hear thee; whilst thou art yet speaking, He will say, I am here.”

In regard to fasting it is said, “Wherefore do ye fast to me? saith the Lord. Is it such a fast that I have chosen, even a day for a man to humble his soul? Thou shalt not bend thy neck like a circle, and spread sackcloth and ashes under thee. Not thus shall ye call it an acceptable fast.” What means a fast, then? “Lo, this is the fast which I have chosen, saith the Lord. Loose every band of wickedness. Dissolve the knots of oppressive contracts. Let the oppressed go free, and tear every unjust bond. Break thy bread to the hungry; and lead the houseless poor into thy house. If thou see the naked cover him.” About sacrifices too: “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? saith the Lord. I am full of burnt-offerings and of rams; and the fat of lambs, and the blood of bulls and kids I do not wish; nor that ye should come to appear before me. Who hath required this at your hands? You shall no more tread my court. If ye bring fine flour, the vain oblation is an abomination to me. Your new moons and your sabbaths I cannot away with.” How, then, shall I sacrifice to the Lord? “The sacrifice of the Lord is,” He says, “a broken heart.” How, then, shall I crown myself, or anoint with ointment, or offer incense to the Lord? “An odor of a sweet fragrance,” it is said, “is the heart that glorifies Him who made it.” These are the crowns and sacrifices, aromatic odors, and flowers of God.
Further, in respect to forbearance. “If thy brother,” it is said, “sin against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. If he sin against thee seven times in a day, and turn to thee the seventh time, and say, I repent, forgive him.” Also to the soldiers, by John, He commands, “to be content with their wages only;” and to the publicans, “to exact no more than is appointed.” To the judges He says, “Thou shalt not show partiality in judgment. For gifts blind the eyes of those who see, and corrupt just words. Rescue the wronged.”

And to householders: “A possession which is acquired with iniquity becomes less.”

Also of “love.” “Love,” He says, “covers a multitude of sins.”

And of civil government: “Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things which are God’s.”

Of swearing and the remembrance of injuries: “Did I command your fathers, when they went out of Egypt, to offer burnt-offerings and sacrifices? But I commanded them, Let none of you bear malice in his heart against his neighbor, or love a false oath.”

The liars and the proud, too, He threatens; the former thus: “Woe to them that call bitter sweet, and sweet bitter;” and the latter: “Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.” “For he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be humbled.”

And “the merciful” He blesses, “for they shall obtain mercy.”

Wisdom pronounces anger a wretched thing, because “it will destroy the wise.” And now He bids us “love our enemies, bless them that curse us, and pray for them that despitefully use us.” And He says: “If any one strike thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any one take away thy coat, hinder him not from taking thy cloak also.”

Of faith He says: “Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” “To the unbelieving nothing is trustworthy,” according to Pindar.

Domestics, too, are to be treated like ourselves; for they are human beings, as we are. For God is the same to free and bond, if you consider.

Such of our brethren as transgress, we must not punish, but rebuke. “For he that spareth the rod hateth his son.”

Further, He banishes utterly love of glory, saying, “Woe to you, Pharisees! for ye love the chief seat in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.” But He welcomes the repentance of the sinner — loving repentance — which follows sins. For this Word of whom we speak alone is sinless. For to sin is natural and common to all. But to return [to God] after sinning is characteristic not of any man, but only of a man of worth.

Respecting liberality He said: “Come to me, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an
hungry, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; sick, and ye visited Me; in prison, and ye came unto Me.” And when have we done any of these things to the Lord?
The Instructor Himself will say again, loving to refer to Himself the kindness of the brethren, “Inasmuch as ye have done it to these least, ye have done it to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting life.” Such are the laws of the Word, the consolatory words not on tables of stone which were written by the finger of the Lord, but inscribed on men’s hearts, on which alone they can remain imperishable. Wherefore the tablets of those who had theirs of stone are broken, that the faith of the children may be impressed on softened hearts.
However, both the laws served the Word for the instruction of humanity, both that given by Moses and that by the apostles. What, therefore, is the nature of the training by the apostles, appears to me to require to be treated of. Under this head, I, or rather the Instructor by me, will recount; and I shall again set before you the precepts themselves, as it were in the germ.
“Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ hath forgiven you. Be therefore wise, followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us. Let wives be subject to their own husbands, as to the Lord. And let husbands love their wives as Christ also hath loved the Church.” Let those who are yoked together love one another “as their own bodies.” “Children, be obedient to your parents. Parents, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Servants, be obedient to those that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the singleness of your hearts, as unto Christ; with good-will from the soul doing service. And ye masters, treat your servants well, forbearing threatening: knowing that both their and your Lord is in heaven; and there is no respect of persons with Him.”
“If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Be not deceived; God is not mocked. Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not.”
“Be at peace among yourselves. Now we admonish you, brethren, warn
them who are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil to any man. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil."

“Continue in prayer, watching thereunto with thanksgiving. Walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

“Nourish yourselves up in the words of faith. Exercise yourselves unto godliness: for bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and that which is to come.”

“Let those who have faithful masters not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful.”

“He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer. Given to hospitality; communicating to the necessities of the saints.”

Such are a few injunctions out of many, for the sake of example, which the Instructor, running over the divine Scriptures, sets before His children; by which, so to speak, vice is cut up by the roots, and iniquity is circumscribed.

Innumerable commands such as these are written in the holy Bible appertaining to chosen persons, some to presbyters, some to bishops, some to deacons, others to widows, of whom we shall have another opportunity of speaking. Many things spoken in enigmas, many in parables, may benefit such as fall in with them. But it is not my province, says the Instructor, to teach these any longer. But we need a Teacher of the exposition of those sacred words, to whom we must direct our steps. And now, in truth, it is time for me to cease from my instruction, and for you to listen to the Teacher. And He, receiving you who have been trained up in excellent discipline, will teach you the oracles. To noble purpose has the Church sung, and the Bridegroom also, the only Teacher, the good Counsel, of the good Father, the true Wisdom, the Sanctuary of knowledge. “And He is the propitiation for our sins,” as John says; Jesus, who heals both our body and soul — which are the proper man. “And not for our sins only, but also for the whole world. And by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar; and the truth is not in Him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.
Hereby know we that we are in Him. He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself to walk even as He also walked.” O nurslings of His blessed training! let us complete the fair face of the church; and let us run as children to our good mother. And if we become listeners to the Word, let us glorify the blessed dispensation by which man is trained and sanctified as a child of God, and has his conversation in heaven, being trained from earth, and there receives the Father, whom he learns to know on earth. The Word both does and teaches all things, and trains in all things. A horse is guided by a bit, and a bull is guided by a yoke, and a wild beast is caught in a noose. But man is transformed by the Word, by whom wild beasts are tamed, and fishes caught, and birds drawn down. He it is, in truth, who fashions the bit for the horse, the yoke for the bull, the noose for the wild beast, the rod for the fish, the snare for the bird. He both manages the state and tills the ground; commands, and helps, and creates the universe.

“There were figured earth, and sky, and sea,
The ever-circling sun, and full-orbed moon,
And all the signs that crown the vault of heaven.”

O divine works! O divine commands! “Let this water undulate within itself; let this fire restrain its wrath; let this air wander into ether; and this earth be consolidated, and acquire motion! When I want to form man, I want matter, and have matter in the elements. I dwell with what I have formed. If you know me, the fire will be your slave.”

Such is the Word, such is the Instructor, the Creator of the world and of man: and of Himself, now the world’s Instructor, by whose command we and the universe subsist, and await judgment. “For it is not he who brings a stealthy vocal word to men,” as Bacchylidis says, “who shall be the Word of Wisdom;” but “the blameless, the pure, and faultless sons of God,” according to Paul, “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, to shine as lights in the world.”

All that remains therefore now, in such a celebration of the Word as this, is that we address to the Word our prayer.

PRAYER TO THE PAEDAGOGUS

Be gracious, O Instructor, to us Thy children, Father, Charioteer of Israel, Son and Father, both in One, O Lord. Grant to us who obey Thy precepts, that we may perfect the likeness of the image, and with all our power know Him who is the good God and not a harsh judge. And do Thou Thyself cause that all of us who have our conversation in Thy peace, who have been translated into Thy commonwealth, having sailed tranquilly over the billows of sin, may be wafted in calm by Thy Holy Spirit, by the ineffable wisdom, by night and day to the perfect day; and giving thanks may praise, and praising thank the Alone Father and Son, Son and Father, the Son, Instructor and Teacher, with the Holy Spirit, all in One, in whom
is all, for whom all is One, for whom is eternity, whose members we all are, whose glory the aeons are; for the All-good, All-lovely, All-wise, Alljust One. To whom be glory both now and for ever. Amen.
And since the Instructor, by translating us into His Church, has united us to Himself, the teaching and all-surveying Word, it were right that, having got to this point, we should offer to the Lord the reward of due thanksgiving — praise suitable to His fair instruction.

577
A HYMN TO CHRIST THE SAVIOR.
COMPOSED BY ST. CLEMENT.

1
Bridle of colts untamed,
Over our wills presiding;
Wing of unwandering birds,
Our flight securely guiding.
Rudder of youth unbending,
Firm against adverse shock;
Shepherd, with wisdom tending
Lambs of the royal flock:
Thy simple children bring
In one, that they may sing
In solemn lays
Their hymns of praise
With guileless lips to Christ their King.

578
2
King of saints, almighty Word
Of the Father highest Lord;
Wisdom’s head and chief;
Assuagement of all grief;
Lord of all time and space,
Jesus, Savior of our race;
Shepherd, who dost us keep;
Husbandman, who tillest,
Bit to restrain us, Rudder
To guide us as Thou willest;
Of the all-holy flock celestial wing;
Fisher of men, whom Thou to life dost bring;
From evil sea of sin,
And from the billowy strife,
Gathering pure fishes in
Caught with sweet bait of life:
Lead us, Shepherd of the sheep,
Reason-gifted, holy One;
King of youths, whom Thou dost keep,
So that they pollution shun:
Steps of Christ, celestial Way;
Word eternal, Age unending;
Life that never can decay;
Fount of mercy, virtue-sending;
Life august of those who raise
Unto God their hymn of praise,
Jesus Christ!

579

3

Nourished by the milk of heaven,
To our tender palates given;
Milk of wisdom from the breast
Of that bride of grace exprest;
By a dewy spirit filled
From fair Reason’s breast distilled;
Let us sucklings join to raise
With pure lips our hymns of praise
As our grateful offering,
Clean and pure, to Christ our King.
Let us, with hearts undefiled,
Celebrate the mighty Child.
We, Christ-born, the choir of peace;
We, the people of His love,
Let us sing, nor ever cease,
To the God of peace above.
We subjoin the following literal translation of the foregoing hymn: —
Bridle of untamed colts, Wing of unwandering birds, sure Helm of babes,
Shepherd of royal lambs, assemble Thy simple children to praise holily, to
hymn guilelessly with innocent mouths, Christ the guide of children. O
King of saints, all-subduing Word of the most high Father, Ruler of
wisdom, Support of sorrows, that rejoicest in the ages, Jesus, Savior of the
human race, Shepherd, Husbandman, Helm, Bridle, Heavenly Wing of the
all-holy flock, Fisher of men who are saved, catching the chaste fishes with
sweet life from the hateful wave of a sea of vices, — Guide [us], Shepherd
of rational sheep; guide unharmed children, O holy King, O footsteps of
Christ, O heavenly way, perennial Word, immeasurable Age, Eternal Light,
Fount of mercy, performer of virtue; noble [is the] life of those who hymn
God, O Christ Jesus, heavenly milk of the sweet breasts of the graces of
the Bride, pressed out of Thy wisdom. Babes nourished with tender
mouths, filled with the dewy spirit of the rational pap, let us sing together
simple praises, true hymns to Christ [our] King, holy fee for the teaching
of life; let us sing in simplicity the powerful Child. O choir of peace, the
Christ-begotten, O chaste people, let us sing together the God of peace.

TO THE PAEDAGOGUS
Teacher, to Thee a chaplet I present,
Woven of words culled from the spotless mead,
Where Thou dost feed Thy flocks; like to the bee,
That skillful worker, which from many a flower
Gathers its treasures, that she may convey
A luscious offering to the master’s hand.
Though but the least, I am Thy servant still,
(Seemly is praise to Thee for Thy behests).
O King, great Giver of good gifts to men,
Lord of the good, Father, of all the Maker,
Who heaven and heaven’s adornment, by Thy word
Divine fitly disposed, alone didst make;
Who broughtest forth the sunshine and the day;
Who didst appoint their courses to the stars,
And how the earth and sea their place should keep;
And when the seasons, in their circling course,
Winter and summer, spring and autumn, each
Should come, according to well-ordered plan;
Out of a confused heap who didst create
This ordered sphere, and from the shapeless mass
Of matter didst the universe adorn; —
Grant to me life, and be that life well spent,
Thy grace enjoying; let me act and speak
In all things as Thy Holy Scriptures teach;
Thee and Thy co-eternal Word, All-wise,
From Thee proceeding, ever may I praise;
Give me nor poverty nor wealth, but what is meet,
Father, in life, and then life’s happy close.

Select Orations of Saint Gregory Nazianzen
Introduction to the “Theological” Orations.

“It has been said with truth,” says the writer of the Article on Gregory of Nazianzus in the Dictionary of Christian Biography, “that these discourses would lose their chief charm in a translation....Critics have rivalled each other in the praises they have heaped upon them, but no praise is so high as that of the many Theologians who have found in them their own best thoughts. A Critic who cannot be accused of partiality towards Gregory has given in a few words perhaps the truest estimate of them: ‘A solidity of thought, the concentration of all that is spread through the writings of Hilary, Basil, and Athanasius, a flow of softened eloquence which does not halt or lose itself for a moment, an argument nervous without dryness on the one hand, and without useless ornament on the other, give these five Discourses a place to themselves among the monuments of this fine Genius, who was not always in the same degree free from grandiloquence and affectation. In a few pages, and in a few hours, Gregory has summed up and closed the controversy of a whole Century.’”

They were preached in the Church called Anastasia, at Constantinople, between 379 and 381, and have gained for their author the title of The Theologian, which he shares with S. John the Evangelist alone. It should perhaps, however, be noted that the word is not here used in the wide and general sense in which we employ it, but in a narrower and more specific way, denoting emphatically the Defender of the Deity of the Logos. His principal opponents were the followers of Eunomius and Macedonius, and it is almost entirely against them that these Orations on Theology, or the Godhead of the Word and the Holy Ghost, are directed. The chief object of the Preacher in these and most other of his public utterances, is to maintain the Nicene Faith of the Trinity or Trinity of God; that is, the Doctrine that while there is but One Substance or Essence in the Godhead, and by consequence God is in the most absolute sense One, yet God is not Unipersonal, but within this Undivided Unity there are three Self-determining Subjects or Persons, distinguished from one another by special characteristics or personal properties—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. With this object he entered into conflict with the heretics named above, who denied either the
Consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, or the perfect Godhead and Personality of the Holy Ghost.

Eunomius, whom Ullmann calls one of the most interesting heretics of the Fourth Century, was by birth a Cappadocian, and slightly older than Gregory. As a young man he was a pupil and amanuensis of Aëtius, by whom the Arian heresy was developed to its extreme results. The disciple never shrank from drawing the furthest logical conclusions from his master’s premises, or from stating them with a frankness, which to those who regarded the premises themselves from which he reasoned as horrible blasphemies, seemed nothing less than diabolical in its impiety. So precisely did he complete and formulate his teacher’s heretical tenets, that the Anomœan Arians were ever afterwards called Eunomians, rather than Aëtians. They asserted the absolute Unlikeness of the Being of the Father and of the Son. Starting with the conception of God as Absolute Being, of Whom no Generation can be predicated, Unbegotten and incapable of Begetting, they went on to say that an Eternal Generation is inconceivable, and that the Generation of the Son of God must have had a beginning. Of course, therefore, the Arian conclusion followed, namely, that there was a time when the Son did not exist (?? p? t? ?te ??? ??), and His Essence is altogether unlike that of the Unbegotten Father. Equality of essence and Similarity of essence, are alike untenable, from the mere fact that the one Essence is Unbegotten, and the other is Begotten. The Son, they said, is the First Creation of the Divine Energy, and is the Instrument by whom God created the world, and in this sense, as the Organ of creative power, may be said to be the Express Image and Likeness of the Energy of the Father.3380

As they viewed the Holy Ghost as sharing the Divine Nature in an even remoter degree, as being only the noblest production of the Only-begotten Son, Eunomius was the first person heretically to discontinue the practice of threefold immersion in Holy Baptism. He also corrupted the Form of that Sacrament, by setting aside the use of the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and baptizing people “in the name of the Creator, and into the death of Christ.” Therefore the Council of Constantinople ordered that converts from Eunomianism should be baptized, although those from other forms of Arianism were admitted into the Catholic Church by simple imposition of hands. Through the influence of the followers of Aëtius, Eunomius became, in 360, Bishop of Cyzicus in Mysia, but he does not appear to have occupied the See very long. At any rate when Gregory came, in 379, to Constantinople, he was living in retirement near Chalcedon. All parties concur in representing him as a consummate Dialectician, but the Orthodox declared that he had turned Theology into a mere Technology. Readiness of Dialectic was the great characteristic of his Sect, and it was they who introduced into the Capital that bad spirit of theological disputatiousness which Gregory deplores in the first of these famous Orations. He also differed entirely from Gregory, not merely in the conclusions at which he arrived, but in the method by which he reached them; following the system of Aristotle, rather than of Plato, and using an exclusively intellectual method, while Gregory treated Religion as belonging to the entire man. The point at issue between them, besides this of the Interior relations of the Three Blessed Persons within the Godhead, was mainly the question as to the complete comprehensibility of the Divine Nature, which the Eunomians maintained, and Gregory denied. The latter argued that, while we have a sure conviction that God is, we have not a full understanding of What He is. He would not,
however, exclude us from all knowledge of God’s Nature, only he limits our capacity to so much as God has been pleased to reveal to us of Himself. “In my opinion,” he says (Or. xxiv. 4), “it is impossible to express God, and yet more impossible to conceive Him—seeing that the thick covering of the flesh is an obstacle to the understanding of the truth.” Similarly in the Fourth of these Orations (Or. xxx. 17) he says, “The Deity cannot be expressed in words. And this is proved to us, not only by arguments, but by the wisest and most ancient of the Hebrews, so far as they have given us reason for conjecture. For they appropriated certain characters to the honour of the Deity,

and would not even allow the name of anything inferior to God to be written with the same letters as that of God, because to their mind it was improper that the Deity should even to that extent admit any of His creatures to a share with Himself. How then could they have admitted that the indivisible and separate Nature can be explained by divisible words?”

In the mind of Gregory, the Orthodox doctrine of the Blessed Trinity is the fundamental dogma of Christianity, in contrast with all other religions, and with all heretical systems. “Remember your confession,” he says to his hearers in an Oration against the Arians; “Into what were you baptized? The Father? Good, but still Jewish. The Son? Good; no longer Jewish, but not yet perfect. The Holy Ghost? Very good; this is perfect. Was it then simply into these, or was there some one common Name of these? Yes, there was, and it is God.” And in the same oration he calls Arianism a new Judaism, because it ascribes full Deity only to the Father; and he speaks of One Nature in Three Individualities, intelligent, perfect, self-existent, distinct numerically, but one in Godhead. “In created things,” says Ullmann, “the several individuals are embraced in a common conception, though in themselves only connected together in thought, while in fact they are not one. Manhood is only an intellectual conception; in fact there exist only Men. But in the Godhead the Three Persons are not only in conception, but in fact, One; and this Unity is not only a relative but an absolute Unity, because the Divine Being is perfect in all Three Persons, and in all in a perfect equality. In this sense therefore Gregory and all orthodox Trinitarians maintain the Unity of God. But within this Unity there is a true Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, a Trinity of Persons in a Unity of Nature.” We worship, he says (Or. xxxiii. 16), the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, One Nature in Three Individualities. So that, as he says elsewhere (Or. in laud. Athanasii, xxi. 10), the Trinity is a true Trinity; not a numbering of unlike things, but a binding together of equals. Each of the Persons is God in the fullest sense. The Son and the Holy Ghost have their Source of Being in the Father, but in such sense that They are fully consubstantial with Him, and that neither of Them differs from Him in any particular of Essence. The points of difference lie in the Personal Attributes; the Father Unoriginate, and Source of Deity; the Son deriving His Being eternally from the Father, and Himself the Source of all created existence; the Holy Ghost proceeding eternally from God, and sent into the world.

In the first of these five discourses the Preacher sets himself to clear the ground for the fitting presentation of his great theme. He endeavours to lay down the principles on which Theologians should proceed in such discussions, and very earnestly deprecates the habit of promiscuous argument in all sorts of places, upon all sorts of occasions, and before all sorts of
hearers, of the deepest and most sacred truths and mysteries of the Faith. They only should be allowed to engage in such conversation who are fitted for it by the practice of Christian virtue. For others there are many other subjects upon which they can exercise their dialectical attainments, without doing or incurring any injury.

In the second oration Gregory lays down the position referred to above, that it is impossible for even the most exalted human reason fully to grasp the Nature of God, though His Existence is patent to all. We can only, he says, predicate negatives concerning Him. He gives three reasons for this incapacity. First to enhance our estimation of this knowledge, when attained hereafter; secondly to save us from the danger of falling through pride, like Lucifer, if we attained it prematurely; and thirdly, to support and sustain us in the trials and conflicts of this life, by the certainty that its attainment hereafter will be the reward of faithful service in them. The cause of our present inability is the body with which our soul is united, the grossness of whose present condition hinders us from rising to the complete apprehension of the invisible and immaterial. God, out of compassion for our weakness, has been pleased to designate Himself in Holy Scripture by various names taken from material objects, or from moral virtues; but these are only stepping-stones to the truth, and have indeed been sometimes perverted, and made a basis for polytheism. It is, however, only natural that the Divine Essence should be shrouded in Mystery, for the same is the case with the created essences also.

In the Third and Fourth he deals with the question of the Son. His position may be summed up as follows: The Son is absolutely of One Substance with the Father, and shares with Him all the Attributes of Godhead. Yet He is a distinct Person, marked off by the fact that He is begotten of the Father. But we must be careful not to allow this term “Begotten” to suggest to us any analogy with created things. It is wholly independent of time and space and sense.

This position he had to defend against many assailants, and especially against the Eunomians. These heretics maintained that the use of this term necessarily implied a beginning of the Essence of the Son, and they asked the orthodox to tell them when that beginning took place. Gregory replies that the Generation of God the Son is beyond all time; pointing out that Paternity is an Essential attribute of God the Father, and therefore is as eternal as His Essence, so that there never was a time when He was not the Father, and consequently never a time when the Generation of the Son began. He admits that there is a sense in which it is possible to say that the Son and the Spirit are not unoriginate, but then you must be careful not to use the word Origin in the sense of Beginning, but in that of Cause. They derive Their Being eternally from the Father, and all Three Persons are coeternal together. In respect of cause they are not unoriginate, but the cause is not necessarily prior in time to its effect, just as the Sun is not prior to its own light. In respect of time, then, They may be said to be unoriginate, for the Sources of time cannot be subject to time. “If the Father has not ceased to beget, His Generation is an imperfect one; and if He has ceased, He must have begun, for an end implies a beginning.” “Not so,” says Gregory, “unless you are prepared to admit that what has no end has necessarily no beginning; and in that case what will you say about the Angels, or the
human soul? These will have no end; had either of them therefore no beginning?” By a similar process of Reductio ad absurdum he dissipates all the quibbles of Eunomian sophistry, and lays down the orthodox Faith of the Church. Then in the remainder of the Third and Fourth Orations he goes on to examine the Scriptural testimony adduced by his opponents, and to shew by a similar catena on the other side that the overwhelming preponderance of the authority of the Bible is clearly against them. In connection with this point he lays down the canon that in the interpretation of Scripture in regard to our Lord, all expressions savouring of humility or weakness are to be referred to that pure Humanity which He assumed for our sake; while all that speaks of Majesty and Power belongs to His Godhead.

In the Fifth he deals with the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. The heresy of Arius was at first directly concerned only with the Person of our Lord, though not without a side-glance at that also of the Holy Ghost. The Council of Nicæa had confined itself to the first question, and its Creed ended with, “We believe in the Holy Ghost.” This, it was afterwards argued, was enough to proclaim His Divinity, and so Gregory argues in this Oration, “If He be only a creature, how do we believe on Him, how are we made perfect in Him, for the first of these belongs to Deity, the second may be said of anything” (c. vi.). The reason, however, that the Great Synod made no express definition on the point seems to have been that the controversy had not yet been carried so far in direct terms (cf. S. Basil, Epp. lxxviii. cccxxxvii.). But fifty years later the growth of the heresy rendered a definition of the Church’s faith on this point needful; and in 363, on his return from his fourth period of exile, S. Athanasius held a provincial Synod at Alexandria, in whose Synodical Letter to the Emperor Jovian the Godhead of the Holy Ghost is maintained in terms which, as Canon Bright says, partly anticipate the language of the Creed of Constantinople (Dict. Biog. Art. Athanasius). The new development of the heresy had begun to appear at Constantinople as well as in Thrace and Asia Minor. Macedonius, a Semi-Arian, had been elected Bishop of Constantinople in 341, and in spite of violent opposition, which he met by still more violent measures, had maintained his position till 360, when he was deposed and driven out by the Anomœan Arians. He then in his retirement became the leader of the Semi-Arian party. Accepting the statement that the Son was Like in Essence to the Father, he would not concede even this to the Holy Ghost, but declared Him to be a mere creature (Thdt. Hist. Eccl. ii. 6), and the servant or minister of the Son; applying to Him terms which without error could only be used of the Angels (Sozomen. H. E. iv. 27). His followers were known as Macedonians, or sometimes Marathonians, from a certain Marathonius, formerly a Paymaster of the Praetorian Guards, who had become a Deacon of Constantinople, and, having done much in the way of founding and maintaining Monastic Houses and Houses of Charity in the City, was consecrated by Macedonius as Bishop of Nicomedia. They were also known as Pneumatomachi, from the nature of their Heresy. A controversy had now begun to arise as to the precise position which the true faith was to assign to the Holy Spirit. There were those who left it doubtful whether He had indeed a separate Personality, or whether He were not rather a mere Influence or Activity of the Father and the Son. Gregory tells us how, when he came to the Metropolis, he found the wildest confusion prevalent. Some, he says, conceived of the Holy Ghost as a mere Energy of God, others thought Him a Creature, others believed Him to be
God; while many out of an alleged reverence for Holy Scripture, hesitated to give Him the Name of God. To this last class belonged, according to Socrates (H. E. ii. 45), Eustathius, who had been ejected from the Bishopric of Sebasteia in Pontus. He refused to admit that the Holy Spirit is God, while yet He did not dare to affirm that He is a mere creature. When Gregory proceeded to preach the Deity of the Spirit, he was accused of introducing a strange and unscriptural god, because, as he acknowledges, the letter of the Bible is not so clear on the doctrine of the Spirit as it is on that of the Son. But he points out that it is possible to be superstitious in one’s reverence for the letter of the Bible, and that such superstition leads directly to heresy. He explains the reticence of the New Testament on this point by shewing (in this Oration, cc. 26, 27) how God’s Self-Revelation to man has always been a gradual one; how the Old Testament revealed the Father clearly, with obscure hints about the Son; and the New Testament manifested the Son, but only hinted at the Godhead of the Spirit; but now, he says, the Spirit dwells among us, and allows us to recognize Him more clearly. For it would not have been advisable, as long as the Godhead of the Father was not acknowledged, to proclaim that of the Son; and while the Deity of the Son was not yet accepted, to add another burden in that of the Holy Spirit. Recognizing thus a Divine economy in the Self-Revelations of God, he was not averse to using a similar caution in his own dealings with weak or ill-instructed minds.3381

But yet when real necessity arose, he could speak out with perfect plainness on this subject; and he even incurred danger to life and limb from the violence of the opposing party. He met their opposition by the clearest statements of the Catholic Dogma. “Is the Spirit God?” he asks. “Yes.” “But is He consubstantial?” “Yes, if He is God.” (Orat. xxxi. 10.) He appeals both to the Bible, and to the experience of the Christian life. If the Spirit is not to be adored, how can He deify me in Baptism? From the Spirit comes our new Birth; from the new Birth our new Life; and from the new Life our knowledge of the Dignity of Him from Whom it is derived (Ibid. C. 29). He is, however, milder in his treatment of these heretics than of the strict Arians, both, as he says, because they approached more nearly to the Orthodox belief on the subject of the Son, and because their conspicuous piety of life shewed that their error was not altogether wilful. In this Oration he shows that though the Name of God may not actually be given in the New Testament to the Holy Ghost, yet all the attributes of God are ascribed to Him, and that therefore the use of the Name is a matter of legitimate inference. He carries on the argument in the Oration on Pentecost (No. XLI. See the Introduction to that Oration in the present Volume).

With regard to the doctrine of the Procession, Gregory gives us no clear information. He is silent as to the Procession from the Son. It is enough for him that the Spirit is not Begotten but Proceeding (in SS. Lumina, c. 12), and that Procession is His distinctive Property, which involves at once His Personality and His Essential Deity.

At length in 381 the work of local Synods and episcopal conferences was completed and clinched by the Ruling of a Second Ecumenical Council. It is true that the Council which Theodosius summoned to meet at Constantinople could scarcely have regarded itself as possessing Ecumenical authority; whilst in the West it certainly was not regarded in this light before the Sixth Century. Nevertheless the honours of Ecumenicity were ultimately awarded to it by the whole Church, because it completes the series of Great Councils by which the
Doctrine of the Deity of the Holy Spirit was affirmed; and in fact it expressed the final judgment of the Catholic Church upon the Macedonian controversy. Its first Canon anathematises the Semiarians or Pneumatomachi by name as well as the Eunomians or Anomoean Arians (cf. Dict. Biog. Art. Gregory of Nazianzus, by Dr. H. B. Swete).

Oration XXVII.

The First Theological Oration.

A Preliminary Discourse Against the Eunomians.

I. I am to speak against persons who pride themselves on their eloquence; so, to begin with a text of Scripture, “Behold, I am against thee, O thou proud one,”3382 not only in thy system of teaching, but also in thy hearing, and in thy tone of mind. For there are certain persons who have not only their ears3383 and their tongues, but even, as I now perceive, their hands too, itching for our words; who delight in profane babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called,3384 and strifes about words, which tend to no profit; for so Paul, the Preacher and Establisher of the “Word cut short,”3385 the disciple and teacher of the Fishermen,3386 calls all that is excessive or superfluous in discourse. But as to those to whom we refer, would that they, whose tongue is so voluble and clever in applying itself to noble and approved language, would likewise pay some attention to actions. For then perhaps in a little while they would become less sophistical, and less absurd and strange acrobats of words, if I may use a ridiculous expression about a ridiculous subject.

II. But since they neglect every path of righteousness, and look only to this one point, namely, which of the propositions submitted to them they shall bind or loose, (like those persons who in the theatres perform wrestling matches in public, but not that kind of wrestling in which the victory is won according to the rules of the sport, but a kind to deceive the eyes of those who are ignorant in such matters, and to catch applause), and every marketplace must buzz with their talking; and every dinner party be worried to death with silly talk and boredom; and every festival be made unfestive and full of dejection, and every occasion of mourning be consoled by a greater calamity3387—their questions—and all the women’s apartments accustomed to simplicity be thrown into confusion and be robbed of its flower of modesty by the torrent of their words...since, I say this is so, the evil is intolerable and not to be borne, and our Great Mystery is in danger of being made a thing of little moment. Well then, let these spies3388 bear with us, moved as we are with fatherly compassion, and as holy Jeremiah says, torn in our hearts;3389 let them bear with us so far as not to give a savage reception to our discourse upon this subject; and let them, if indeed they can, restrain their tongues for a short while and lend us their ears. However that may be, you shall at any rate suffer no loss. For either we shall have spoken in the ears of them that will hear,3390 and our words will bear some fruit, namely an advantage to you (since the Sower soweth the Word3391 upon every kind of mind; and the good and fertile bears fruit), or else you will depart despising this discourse of ours as you have despised others, and having drawn from it further material for gainsaying and railing
at us, upon which to feast yourselves yet more.

And you must not be astonished if I speak a language which is strange to you and contrary to your custom, who profess to know everything and to teach everything in a too impetuous and generous manner...not to pain you by saying ignorant and rash.

III. Not to every one, my friends, does it belong to philosophize about God; not to every one; the Subject is not so cheap and low; and I will add, not before every audience, nor at all times, nor on all points; but on certain occasions, and before certain persons, and within certain limits.

Not to all men, because it is permitted only to those who have been examined, and are passed masters in meditation, and who have been previously purified in soul and body, or at the very least are being purified. For the impure to touch the pure is, we may safely say, not safe, just as it is unsafe to fix weak eyes upon the sun's rays. And what is the permitted occasion? It is when we are free from all external defilement or disturbance, and when that which rules within us is not confused with vexatious or erring images; like persons mixing up good writing with bad, or filth with the sweet odours of unguents. For it is necessary to be truly at leisure to know God; and when we can get a convenient season, to discern the straight road of the things divine. And who are the permitted persons? They to whom the subject is of real concern, and not they who make it a matter of pleasant gossip, like any other thing, after the races, or the theatre, or a concert, or a dinner, or still lower employments. To such men as these, idle jests and pretty contradictions about these subjects are a part of their amusement.

IV. Next, on what subjects and to what extent may we philosophize? On matters within our reach, and to such an extent as the mental power and grasp of our audience may extend. No further, lest, as excessively loud sounds injure the hearing, or excess of food the body, or, if you will, as excessive burdens beyond the strength injure those who bear them, or excessive rains the earth; so these too, being pressed down and overweighted by the stiffness, if I may use the expression, of the arguments should suffer loss even in respect of the strength they originally possessed.

V. Now, I am not saying that it is not needful to remember God at all times;...I must not be misunderstood, or I shall be having these nimble and quick people down upon me again. For we ought to think of God even more often than we draw our breath; and if the expression is permissible, we ought to do nothing else. Yea, I am one of those who entirely approve that Word which bids us meditate day and night, and tell at eventide and morning and noon day, and praise the Lord at every time; or, to use Moses' words, whether a man lie down, or rise up, or walk by the way, or whatever else he be doing—and by this recollection we are to be moulded to purity. So that it is not the continual remembrance of God that I would hinder, but only the talking about God; nor even that as in itself wrong, but only when unseasonable; nor all teaching, but only want of moderation. As of even honey repletion and satiety, though it be of honey, produce vomiting; and, as Solomon says and I think, there is a time for every thing, and that which is good ceases to be good if it be not
done in a good way; just as a flower is quite out of season in winter, and just as a man’s dress
does not become a woman, nor a woman’s a man; and as geometry is out of place in
mourning, or tears at a carousal; shall we in this instance alone disregard the proper time, in a
matter in which most of all due season should be respected? Surely not, my friends and
brethren (for I will still call you Brethren, though you do not behave like brothers). Let us not
think so nor yet, like hot tempered and hard mouthed horses, throwing off our rider Reason,
and casting away Reverence, that keeps us within due limits, run far away from the turning
point, but let us philosophize within our proper bounds, and not be carried away into
Egypt, nor be swept down into Assyria, nor sing the Lord’s song in a strange land, by which
I mean before any kind of audience, strangers or kindred, hostile or friendly, kindly or the
reverse, who watch what we do with over great care, and would like the spark of what is wrong
in us to become a flame, and secretly kindle and fan it and raise it to heaven with their breath
and make it higher than the Babylonian flame which burnt up every thing around it. For since
their strength lies not in their own dogmas, they hunt for it in our weak points. And therefore
they apply themselves to our—shall I say “misfortunes” or “failings”?—like flies to wounds.
But let us at least be no longer ignorant of ourselves, or pay too little attention to the due
order in these matters. And if it be impossible to put an end to the existing hostility, let us at
least agree upon this, that we will utter Mysteries under our breath, and holy things in a holy
manner, and we will not cast to ears profane that which may not be uttered, nor give evidence
that we possess less gravity than those who worship demons, and serve shameful fables and
deeds; for they would sooner give their blood to the uninitiated than certain words. But let us
recognize that as in dress and diet and laughter and demeanour there is a certain decorum, so
there is also in speech and silence; since among so many titles and powers of God, we pay the
highest honour to The Word. Let even our disputings then be kept within bounds.

VI. Why should a man who is a hostile listener to such words be allowed to hear about the
Generation of God, or his creation, or how God was made out of things which had no
existence, or of section and analysis and division? Why do we make our accusers judges?
Why do we put swords into the hands of our enemies? How, thinkest thou, or with what
temper, will the arguments about such subjects be received by one who approves of
adulteries, and corruption of children, and who worships the passions and cannot conceive of
ought higher than the body...who till very lately set up gods for himself, and gods too who were
noted for the vilest deeds? Will it not first be from a material standpoint, shamefully and
ignorantly, and in the sense to which he has been accustomed? Will he not make thy Theology
a defence for his own gods and pas

sions? For if we ourselves wantonly misuse these words, it will be a long time before we
shall persuade them to accept our philosophy. And if they are in their own persons inventors
of evil things, how should they refrain from grasping at such things when offered to them?
Such results come to us from mutual contest. Such results follow to those who fight for the
Word beyond what the Word approves; they are behaving like mad people, who set their own
house on fire, or tear their own children, or disavow their own parents, taking them for
strangers.
VII. But when we have put away from the conversation those who are strangers to it, and sent
the great legion on its way to the abyss into the herd of swine, the next thing is to look to
ourselves, and polish our theological self to beauty like a statue. The first point to be
considered is—What is this great rivalry of speech and endless talking? What is this new
disease of insatiability? Why have we tied our hands and armed our tongues? We do not
praise either hospitality, or brotherly love, or conjugal affection, or virginity; nor do we admire
liberality to the poor, or the chanting of Psalms, or nightlong vigils, tears. We do not
keep under the body by fasting, or go forth to God by prayer; nor do we subject the worse to
the better—I mean the dust to the spirit—as they would do who form a just judgment of our
composite nature; we do not make our life a preparation for death; nor do we make ourselves
masters of our passions, mindful of our heavenly nobility; nor tame our anger when it swells
and rages, nor our pride that bringeth to a fall, nor unreasonable grief, nor unchastened
pleasure, nor meretricious laughter, nor undisciplined eyes, nor insatiable ears, nor excessive
talk, nor absurd thoughts, nor aught of the occasions which the Evil One gets against us from
sources within ourselves; bringing upon us the death that comes through the windows as
Holy Scripture saith; that is, through the senses. Nay we do the very opposite, and have given
liberty to the passions of others, as kings give releases from service in honour of a victory, only
on condition that they incline to our side, and make their assault upon God more boldly, or
more impiously. And we give them an evil reward for a thing which is not good, license of
tongue for their impiety.

VIII. And yet, O talkative Dialectician, I will ask thee one small question, and answer thou
me, as He saith to Job, Who through whirlwind and cloud giveth Divine admonitions. Are
there many mansions in God’s House, as thou hast heard, or only one? Of course you will
admit that there are many, and not only one. Now, are they all to be filled, or only some, and
others not; so that some will be left empty, and will have been prepared to no purpose? Of
course all will be filled, for nothing can be in vain which has been done by God. And can you
tell me what you will consider this Mansion to be? Is it the rest and glory which is in store
There for the Blessed, or something else?—No, not anything else. Since then we are agreed
upon this point, let us further examine another also. Is there any thing that procuresthe
Mansions, as I think there is; or is there nothing?—Certainly there is—What is it? Is it not that
there are various modes of conduct, and various purposes, one leading one way, another
another way, according to the proportion of faith, and these we call Ways? Must we, then,
travel all, or some of these Ways...the same individual along them all, if that be possible; or, if
not, along as many as may be; or else along some of them? And even if this may not be, it
would still be a great thing, at least as it appears to me, to travel excellently along even one.—
“You are right in your conception.”—What then when you hear there is but One way, and that
a narrow one, does the word seem to you to shew? That there is but one on account of
its excellence. For it is but one, even though it be split into many parts. And narrow because
of its difficulties, and because it is trodden by few in comparison with the multitude of the
adversaries, and of those who travel along the road of wickedness. “So I think too.” Well,
then, my good friend, since this is so, why do you, as though condemning our doctrine for a
certain poverty, rush headlong down that one which leads through what you call arguments
and speculations, but I frivolities and quackeries? Let Paul reprove you with those bitter
reproaches, in which, after his list of the Gifts of Grace, he says, Are all Apostles? Are all 
Prophets? etc.3409
IX. But, be it so. Lofty thou art, even beyond the lofty, even above the clouds, if thou wilt, a 
spectator of things invisible, a hearer
288
of things unspeakable; one who hast ascended after Elias, and who after Moses hast been 
deemed worthy of the Vision of God, and after Paul hast been taken up into heaven; why dost 
thyself mould the rest of thy fellows in one day into Saints, and ordain them Theologians, and as 
it was breathe into them instruction, and make them many counsels of ignorant oracles? Why 
dost thou entangle those who are weaker in thy spider’s web, if it were something great and 
wise? Why dost thou stir up wasps’ nests against the Faith? Why dost thou suddenly spring a 
flood of dialectics upon us, as the fables of old did the Giants? Why hast thou collected all that 
is frivolous and unmanly among men, like a rabble, into one torrent, and having made them 
more effeminate by flattery, fashioned a new workshop, cleverly making a harvest for thyself 
out of their want of understanding? Dost thou deny that this is so, and are the other matters 
of no account to thee? Must thy tongue rule at any cost, and canst thou not restrain the 
birthpang of thy speech? Thou mayest find many other honourable subjects for discussion. To 
these turn this disease of thine with some advantage. Attack the silence of Pythagoras,3410 
and the Orphic beans, and the novel brag about “The Master said.” Attack the ideas of 
Plato,3411 and the transmigrations and courses of our souls, and the reminiscences, and the 
unlovely loves of the soul for lovely bodies. Attack the atheism of Epicurus,3412 and his atoms, 
and his unphilosophic pleasure; or Aristotle’s petty Providence, and his artificial system, and his 
discourses about the mortality of the soul, and the humanitarianism of his doctrine. Attack the 
superciliousness of the Stoa,3413 or the greed and vulgarity of the Cynic.3414 Attack the 
“Void and Full” (what nonsense), and all the details about the gods and the sacrifices and the 
idols and demons, whether beneficent or malignant, and all the tricks that people play with 
divination, evoking of gods, or of souls, and the power of the stars. And if these things seem to 
thee unworthy of discussion as petty and already often confuted, and thou wilt keep to thy 
line, and seek the satisfaction of thy ambition in it; then here too I will provide thee with broad 
paths. Philosophize about the world or worlds; about matter; about soul; about natures 
edowed with reason, good or bad; about resurrection, about judgment, about reward, or the 
Sufferings of Christ. For in these subjects to hit the mark is not useless, and to miss it is not 
dangerous. But with God we shall have converse, in this life only in a small degree; but a little 
later, it may be, more perfectly, in the Same, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory for ever. 
Amen.

Oration XXVIII.

The Second Theological Oration.

I. In the former Discourse we laid down clearly with respect to the Theologian, both what sort 
of character he ought to bear, and on what kind of subject he may philosophize, and when, and 
to what extent. We saw that he ought to be, as far as may be, pure, in order that light may be 
apprehended by light; and that he ought to consort with serious men, in order that his word be
not fruitless through falling on an unfruitful soil; and that the suitable season is when we have a calm within from the whirl of outward things; so as not like madmen3415 to lose our breath; and that the extent to which we may go is that to which we have ourselves advanced, or to which we are advancing. Since then these things are so, and we have broken up for ourselves the fallows of Divinity3416, so as not to sow upon thorns,3417 and have made plain the face of the ground,3418 being moulded and moulding others by Holy Scripture...let us now enter upon Theological questions, setting at the head thereof the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, of Whom we are to treat; that the Father may be well pleased, and the Son may help us, and the Holy Ghost may inspire us; or rather that one illumination may come upon us from the One God, One in diversity, diverse in Unity, wherein is a marvel.

289

II. Now when I go up eagerly into the Mount3419—or, to use a truer expression, when I both eagerly long, and at the same time am afraid (the one through my hope and the other through my weakness) to enter within the Cloud, and hold converse with God, for so God commands; if any be an Aaron, let him go up with me, and let him stand near, being ready, if it must be so, to remain outside the Cloud. But if any be a Nadad or an Abihu, or of the Order of the Elders, let him go up indeed, but let him stand afar off, according to the value of his purification. But if any be of the multitude, who are unworthy of this height of contemplation, if he be altogether impure let him not approach at all,3420 for it would be dangerous to him; but if he be at least temporarily purified, let him remain below and listen to the Voice alone, and the trumpet,3421 the bare words of piety, and let him see the Mountain smoking and lightening, a terror at once and a marvel to those who cannot get up. But if any is an evil and savage beast, and altogether incapable of taking in the subject matter of Contemplation and Theology, let him not hurtfully and malignantly lurk in his den among the woods, to catch hold of some dogma or saying by a sudden spring, and to tear sound doctrine to pieces by his misrepresentations, but let him stand yet afar off and withdraw from the Mount, or he shall be stoned and crushed, and shall perish miserably in his wickedness. For to those who are like wild beasts true and sound discourses are stones. If he be a leopard let him die with his spots.3422 If a ravening and roaring lion, seeking what he may devour3423 of our souls or of our words; or a wild boar, trampling under foot the precious and translucent pearls of the Truth;3424 or an Arabian3425 and alien wolf, or one keener even than these in tricks of argument; or a fox, that is a treacherous and faithless soul, changing its shape according to circumstances or necessities, feeding on dead or putrid bodies, or on little vineyards3426 when the large ones have escaped them; or any other carnivorous beast, rejected by the Law as unclean for food or enjoyment; our discourse must withdraw from such and be engraved on solid tables of stone, and that on both sides because the Law is partly visible, and partly hidden; the one part belonging to the mass who remain below, the other to the few who press upward into the Mount.

III. What is this that has happened to me, O friends, and initiates, and fellow-lovers of the truth? I was running to lay hold on God, and thus I went up into the Mount, and drew aside the curtain of the Cloud, and entered away from matter and material things, and as far as I could I withdrew within myself. And then when I looked up, I scarce saw the back parts of God;3427 although I was sheltered by the Rock, the Word that was made flesh for us. And
when I looked a little closer, I saw, not the First and unmingled Nature, known to Itself—to the Trinity, I mean; not That which abideth within the first veil, and is hidden by the Cherubim; but only that Nature, which at last even reaches to us. And that is, as far as I can learn, the Majesty, or as holy David calls it, the Glory which is manifested among the creatures, which It has produced and governs. For these are the Back Parts of God, which He leaves behind Him, as tokens of Himself like the shadows and reflection of the sun in the water, which shew the sun to our weak eyes, because we cannot look at the sun himself, for by his unmixed light he is too strong for our power of perception. In this way then shalt thou discourse of God; even wert thou a Moses and a god to Pharaoh; even wert thou caught up like Paul to the Third Heaven, and hadst heard unspeakable words; even wert thou raised above them both, and exalted to Angelic or Archangelic place and dignity. For though a thing be all heavenly, or above heaven, and far higher in nature and nearer to God than we, yet it is farther distant from God, and from the complete comprehension of His Nature, than it is lifted above our complex and lowly and earthward sinking composition.

IV. Therefore we must begin again thus. It is difficult to conceive God but to define Him in words is an impossibility, as one of the Greek teachers of Divinity taught, not unskilfully, as it appears to me; with the intention that he might be thought to have apprehended Him; in that he says it is a hard thing to do; and yet may escape being convicted of ignorance because of the impossibility of giving expression to the apprehension. But in my opinion it is impossible to express Him, and yet more impossible to conceive Him. For that which may be conceived may perhaps be made clear by language, if not fairly well, at any rate imperfectly, to any one who is not quite deprived of his hearing, or slothful of understanding. But to comprehend the whole of so great a Subject as this is quite impossible and impracticable, not merely to the utterly careless and ignorant, but even to those who are highly exalted, and who love God, and in like manner to every created nature; seeing that the darkness of this world and the thick covering of the flesh is an obstacle to the full understanding of the truth. I do not know whether it is the same with the higher natures and purer Intelligences which because of their nearness to God, and because they are illumined with all His Light, may possibly see, if not the whole, at any rate more perfectly and distinctly than we do; some perhaps more, some less than others, in proportion to their rank.

V. But enough has been said on this point. As to what concerns us, it is not only the Peace of God which passeth all understanding and knowledge, nor only the things which God hath stored up in promise for the righteous, which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor mind conceived” except in a very small degree, nor the accurate knowledge of the Creation. For even of this I would have you know that you have only a shadow when you hear the words, “I will consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars,” and the settled order therein; not as if he were considering them now, but as destined to do so hereafter. But far before them is That nature Which is above them, and out of which they spring, the Incomprehensible and Illimitable—not, I mean, as to the fact of His being, but as to Its nature. For our preaching is not empty, nor our Faith vain, nor is this the doctrine we
proclaim; for we would not have you take our candid statement as a starting point for a quibbling denial of God, or of arrogance on account of our confession of ignorance. For it is one thing to be persuaded of the existence of a thing, and quite another to know what it is.

VI. Now our very eyes and the Law of Nature teach us that God exists and that He is the Efficient and Maintaining Cause of all things: our eyes, because they fall on visible objects, and see them in beautiful stability and progress, immovably moving and revolving if I may so say; natural Law, because through these visible things and their order, it reasons back to their Author. For how could this Universe have come into being or been put together, unless God had called it into existence, and held it together? For every one who sees a beautifully made lute, and considers the skill with which it has been fitted together and arranged, or who hears its melody, would think of none but the lutemaker, or the luteplayer, and would recur to him in mind, though he might not know him by sight. And thus to us also is manifested That which made and moves and preserves all created things, even though He be not comprehended by the mind. And very wanting in sense is he who will not willingly go thus far in following natural proofs; but not even this which we have fancied or formed, or which reason has sketched for us, proves the existence of a God. But if any one has got even to some extent a comprehension of this, how is God’s Being to be demonstrated? Who ever reached this extremity of wisdom? Who was ever deemed worthy of so great a gift? Who has opened the mouth of his mind and drawn in the Spirit, so as by Him that searcheth all things, yea the deep thing of God, to take in God, and no longer to need progress, since he already possesses the Extreme Object of desire, and That to which all the social life and all the intelligence of the best men press forward?

VII. For what will you conceive the Deity to be, if you rely upon all the approximations of reason? Or to what will reason carry you, O most philosophic of men and best of Theologians, who boast of your familiarity with the Unlimited? Is He a body? How then is He the Infinite and Limitless, and formless, and intangible, and invisible? or are these attributes of a body? What arrogance for such is not the nature of a body! Or will you say that He has a body, but not these attributes? O stupidity, that a Deity should possess nothing more than we do. For how is He an object of worship if He be circumscribed? Or how shall He escape being made of elements, and therefore subject to be resolved into them again, or even altogether dissolved? For every compound is a starting point of strife, and strife of separation, and dissolution. But dissolution is altogether foreign to God and to the First Nature. Therefore there can be no separation, that there may be no dissolution, and no strife that there may be no separation, and no composition that there may be no strife. Thus also there must be no body, that there may be no composition, and so the argument is established by going back from last to first.

VIII. And how shall we preserve the truth that God pervades all things and fills all, as it is written “Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord,” and “The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world,” if God partly contains and partly is contained? For either He will occupy an empty Universe, and so all things will have vanished for us, with this result, that we shall have
insulted God by making Him a body, and by robbing Him of all things which He has made; or else He will be a body contained in other bodies, which is impossible; or He will be enfolded in them, or contrasted with them, as liquids are mixed, and one divides and is divided by another;—a view which is more absurd and anile than even the atoms of Epicurus and so this argument concerning the body will fall through, and have no body and no solid basis at all. But if we are to assert that He is immaterial (as for example that Fifth Element which some have imagined), and that He is carried round in the circular movement...let us assume that He is immaterial, and that He is the Fifth Element; and, if they please, let Him be also bodiless in accordance with the independent drift and arrangement of their argument; for I will not at present differ with them on this point; in what respect then will He be one of those things which are in movement and agitation, to say nothing of the insult involved in making the Creator subject to the same movement as the creatures, and Him That carries all (if they will allow even this) one with those whom He carries. Again, what is the force that moves your Fifth Element, and what is it that moves all things, and what moves that, and what is the force that moves that? And so on ad infinitum. And how can He help being altogether contained in space if He be subject to motion? But if they assert that He is something other than this Fifth Element; suppose it is an angelic nature that they attribute to Him, how will they shew that Angels are corporeal, or what sort of bodies they have? And how far in that case could God, to Whom the Angels minister, be superior to the Angels? And if He is above them, there is again brought in an irrational swarm of bodies, and a depth of nonsense, that has no possible basis to stand upon.

IX. And thus we see that God is not a body. For no inspired teacher has yet asserted or admitted such a notion, nor has the sentence of our own Court allowed it. Nothing then remains but to conceive of Him as incorporeal. But this term Incorporeal, though granted, does not yet set before us—or contain within itself His Essence, any more than Unbegotten, or Unoriginate, or Unchanging, or Incorruptible, or any other predicate which is used concerning God or in reference to Him. For what effect is produced upon His Being or Substance by His having no beginning, and being incapable of change or limitation? Nay, the whole question of His Being is still left for the further consideration and exposition of him who truly has the mind of God and is advanced in contemplation. For just as to say “It is a body,” or “It was begotten,” is not sufficient to present clearly to the mind the various objects of which these predicates are used, but you must also express the subject of which you use them, if you would present the object of your thought clearly and adequately (for every one of these predicates, corporeal, begotten, mortal, may be used of a man, or a cow, or a horse). Just so he who is eagerly pursuing the nature of the Self-existent will not stop at saying what He is not, but must go on beyond what He is not, and say what He is; inasmuch as it is easier to take in some single point than to go on disowning point after point in endless detail, in order, both by the elimination of negatives and the assertion of positives to arrive at a comprehension of this subject.

But a man who states what God is not without going on to say what He is, acts much in the same way as one would who when asked how many twice five make, should answer, “Not two, nor three, nor four, nor five, nor twenty, nor thirty, nor in short any number below ten, nor any
multiple of ten;” but would not answer “ten,” nor settle the mind of his questioner upon the firm ground of the answer. For it is much easier, and more concise to shew what a thing is not from what it is, than to demonstrate what it is by stripping it of what it is not. And this surely is evident to every one.

X. Now since we have ascertained that God is incorporeal, let us proceed a little further with our examination. Is He Nowhere or Somewhere. For if He is Nowhere, then some person of a very inquiring turn of mind might ask, How is it then that He can even exist? For if the non-existent is nowhere, then that which is nowhere is also perhaps non-existent. But if He is Somewhere, He must be either in the Universe, or above the Universe. And if He is in the Universe, then He must be either in some part or in the whole. If in some part, then He will be circumscribed by that part which is less than Himself; but if everywhere, then by one which is further and greater—I mean the Universal, which contains the Particular; if the Universe is to be contained by the Universe, and no place is to be free from circumscription. This follows if He is contained in the Universe. And besides, where was He before the Universe was created, for this is a point of no little difficulty. But if He is above the Universe, is there nothing to distinguish this from the Universe, and where is this above situated? And how could this Transcendence and that which is transcended be distinguished in thought, if there is not a limit to divide and define them? Is it not necessary that there shall be some mean to mark off the Universe from that which is above the Universe? And what could this be but Place, which we have already rejected? For I have not yet brought forward the point that God would be altogether circumscribed, if He were even comprehensible in thought: for comprehension is one form of circumscription.

XI. Now, why have I gone into all this, perhaps too minutely for most people to listen to, and in accordance with the present manner of discourse, which despises noble simplicity, and has introduced a crooked and intricate style? That the tree may be known by its fruits; I mean, that the darkness which is at work in such teaching may be known by the obscurity of the arguments. For my purpose in doing so was, not to get credit for myself for astonishing utterances, or excessive wisdom, through tying knots and solving difficulties (this was the great miraculous gift of Daniel), but to make clear the point at which my argument has aimed from the first. And what was this? That the Divine Nature cannot be apprehended by human reason, and that we cannot even represent to ourselves all its greatness. And this not out of envy, for envy is far from the Divine Nature, which is passionless, and only good and Lord of all; especially envy of that which is the most honourable of all creatures. For what does the Word prefer to the rational and speaking creatures? Why, even their very existence is a proof of His supreme goodness. Nor yet is this incomprehensibility for the sake of His own glory and honour, Who is full, as if His possession of His glory and majesty depended upon the impossibility of approaching Him. For it is utterly sophistical and foreign to the character, I will not say of God, but of any moderately good man, who has any right ideas about himself, to seek his own supremacy by throwing a hindrance in the way of another.
XII. But whether there be other causes for it also, let them see who are nearer God, and are eye witnesses and spectators of His unsearchable judgments; if there are any who are so eminent in virtue, and who walk in the paths of the Infinite, as the saying is. As far, however, as we have attained, who measure with our little measure things hard to be understood, perhaps one reason is to prevent us from too readily throwing away the possession because it was so easily come by. For people cling tightly to that which they acquire with labour; but that which they acquire easily they quickly throw away, because it can be easily recovered. And so it is turned into a blessing, at least to all men who are sensible, that this blessing is not too easy. Or perhaps it is in order that we may not share the fate of Lucifer, who fell, and in consequence of receiving the full light make our necks stiff against the Lord Almighty, and suffer a fall, of all things most pitiable, from the height we had attained. Or perhaps it may be to give a greater reward hereafter for their labour and glorious life to those who have here been purified, and have exercised long patience in respect of that which they desired.

Therefore this darkness of the body has been placed between us and God, like the cloud of old between the Egyptians and the Hebrews; and this is perhaps what is meant by “He made darkness His secret place,” namely our dulness, through which few can see even a little. But as to this point, let those discuss it whose business it is; and let them ascend as far as possible in the examination. To us who are (as Jeremiah saith), “prisoners of the earth,” and covered with the denseness of carnal nature, this at all events is known, that as it is impossible for a man to step over his own shadow, however fast he may move (for the shadow will always move on as fast as it is being overtaken) or, as it is impossible for the eye to draw near to visible objects apart from the intervening air and light, or for a fish to glide about outside of the waters; so it is quite impracticable for those who are in the body to be conversant with objects of pure thought apart altogether from bodily objects. For something in our own environment is ever creeping in, even when the mind has most fully detached itself from the visible, and collected itself, and is attempting to apply itself to those invisible things which are akin to itself.

XIII. This will be made clear to you as follows:—Are not Spirit, and Fire, and Light, Love, and Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Mind and Reason, and the like, the names of the First Nature? What then? Can you conceive of Spirit apart from motion and diffusion; or of Fire without its fuel and its upward motion, and its proper colour and form? Or of Light unmingled with air, and loosed from that which is as it were its father and source? And how do you conceive of a mind? Is it not that which is inherent in some person not itself, and are not its movements thoughts, silent or uttered? And Reason...what else can you think it than that which is either silent within ourselves, or else outpoured (for I shrink from saying loosed)? And if you conceive of Wisdom, what is it but the habit of mind which you know as such, and which is concerned with contemplations either divine or human? And Justice and Love, are they not praiseworthy dispositions, the one opposed to injustice, the other to hate, and at one time intensifying themselves, at another relaxed, now taking possession of us, now leaving us alone, and in a word, making us what we are, and changing us as colours do bodies? Or are we rather to leave all these things, and to look at the Deity absolutely, as best we can, collecting a
fragmentary perception of It from Its images? What then is this subtile thing, which is of these, and yet is not these, or how can that Unity which is in its Nature uncomposite and incomparable, still be all of these, and each one of them perfectly? Thus our mind faints to transcend corporeal things, and to consort with the Incorporeal, stripped of all clothing of corporeal ideas, as long as it has to look with its inherent weakness at things above its strength. For every rational nature longs for God and for the First Cause, but is unable to grasp Him, for the reasons I have mentioned. Faint therefore with the desire, and as it were restive and impatient of the disability, it tries a second course, either to look at visible things, and out of some of them to make a god…(a poor contrivance, for in what respect and to what extent can that which is seen be higher and more godlike than that which sees, that this should worship that?) or else through the beauty and order of visible things to attain to that which is above sight; but not to suffer the loss of God through the magnificence of visible things.

XIV. From this cause some have made a god of the Sun, others of the Moon, others of the host of Stars, others of heaven itself with all its hosts, to which they have attributed the guiding of the Universe, according to the quality or quantity of their movement. Others again of the Elements, earth, air, water, fire, because of their useful nature, since without them human life cannot possibly exist. Others again have worshipped any chance visible objects, setting up the most beautiful of what they saw as their gods. And there are those who worship pictures and images, at first indeed of their own ancestors—at least, this is the case with the more affectionate and sensual—and honour the departed with memorials; and afterwards even those of strangers are worshipped by men of a later generation separated from them by a long interval; through ignorance of the First Nature, and following the traditional honour as lawful and necessary; for usage when confirmed by time was held to be Law. And I think that some who were courtiers of arbitrary power and extolled bodily strength and admired beauty, made a god in time out of him whom they honoured, perhaps getting hold of some fable to help on their imposture.

XV. And those of them who were most subject to passion deified their passions, or honoured them among their gods; Anger and Blood-thirstiness, Lust and Drunkenness, and every similar wickedness; and made out of this an ignoble and unjust excuse for their own sins. And some they left on earth, and some they hid beneath the earth (this being the only sign of wisdom about them), and some they raised to heaven.3457 O ridiculous distribution of inheritance! Then they gave to each of these concepts the name of some god or demon, by the authority and private judgment of their error, and set up statues whose costliness is a snare, and thought to honour them with blood and the steam of sacrifices, and sometimes even by most shameful actions, frenzies and manslaughter. For such honours were the fitting due of such gods. And before now men have insulted themselves by worshipping monsters, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things,3458 and of the very vilest and most absurd, and have made an offering to them of the glory of God; so that it is not easy to decide whether we ought most to despise the worshippers or the objects of their worship. Probably the worshippers are far the most contemptible, for though they are of a rational nature, and have received grace from God, they
have set up the worse as the better. And this was the trick of the Evil One, who abused good to an evil purpose, as in most of his evil deeds. For he laid hold of their desire in its wandering in search of God, in order to distort to himself the power, and steal the desire, leading it by the hand, like a blind man asking a road; and he hurled down and scattered some in one direction and some in another, into one pit of death and destruction.

XVI. This was their course. But reason receiving us in our desire for God, and in our sense of the impossibility of being without a leader and guide, and then making us apply ourselves to things visible and meeting with the things which have been since the beginning, doth not stay its course even here. For it was not the part of Wisdom to grant the sovereignty to things which are, as observation tells us, of equal rank. By these then it leads to that which is above these, and by which being is given to these. For what is it which ordered things in heaven and things in earth, and those which pass through air, and those which live in water; or rather the things which were before these, heaven and earth, air and water? Who mingled these, and who distributed them? What is it that each has in common with the other, and their mutual dependence and agreement? For I commend the man, though he was a heathen, who said, What gave movement to these, and drives their ceaseless and unhindered motion? Is it not the Artificer of them Who implanted reason in them all, in accordance with which the Universe is moved and controlled? Is it not He who made them and brought them into being? For we cannot attribute such a power to the Accidental. For, suppose that its existence is accidental, to what will you let us ascribe its order? And if you like we will grant you this: to what then will you ascribe its preservation and protection in accordance with the terms of its first creation. Do these belong to the Accidental, or to something else? Surely not to the Accidental. And what can this Something Else be but God? Thus reason that proceeds from God, that is implanted in all from the beginning and is the first law in us, and is bound up in all, leads us up to God through visible things. Let us begin again, and reason this out.

XVII. What God is in nature and essence, no man ever yet has discovered or can discover. Whether it will ever be discovered is a question which he who will may examine and decide. In my opinion it will be discovered when that within us which is godlike and divine, I mean our mind and reason, shall have mingled with its Like, and the image shall have ascended to the Archetype, of which it has now the desire. And this I think is the solution of that vexed problem as to “We shall know even as we are known.” But in our present life all that comes to us is but a little effluence, and as it were a small effulgence from a great Light. So that if anyone has known God, or has had the testimony of Scripture to his knowledge of God, we are to understand such an one to have possessed a degree of knowledge which gave him the appearance of being more fully enlightened than another who did not enjoy the same degree of illumination; and this relative superiority is spoken of as if it were absolute knowledge, not because it is really such, but by comparison with the power of that other.

XVIII. Thus Enos “hoped to call upon the Name of the Lord.” Hope was that for which he is commended; and that, not that he should know God, but that he should call upon him. And Enoch was translated, but it is not yet clear whether it was because he already comprehended the Divine Nature, or in order that he might comprehend it. And
Noah’s glory was that he was pleasing to God; he who was entrusted with the saving of the whole world from the waters, or rather of the Seeds of the world, escaped the Deluge in a small Ark. And Abraham, great Patriarch though he was, was justified by faith and offered a strange victim, the type of the Great Sacrifice. Yet he saw not God as God, but gave Him food as a man. He was approved because he worshipped as far as he comprehended. And Jacob dreamed of a lofty ladder and stair of Angels, and in a mystery anointed a pillar—perhaps to signify the Rock that was anointed for our sake—and gave to a place the name of The House of God in honour of Him whom he saw; and wrestled with God in human form; whatever this wrestling of God with man may mean...possibly it refers to the comparison of man’s virtue with God’s; and he bore on his body the marks of the wrestling, setting forth the defeat of the created nature; and for a reward of his reverence he received a change of his name; being named, instead of Jacob, Israel—that great and honourable name. Yet neither he nor any one on his behalf, unto this day, of all the Twelve Tribes who were his children, could boast that he comprehended the whole nature or the pure sight of God.

XIX. To Elias neither the strong wind, nor the fire, nor the earthquake, as you learn from the story, but a light breeze adumbrated the Presence of God, and not even this His Nature. And who was this Elias? The man whom a chariot of fire took up to heaven, signifying the superhuman excellency of the righteous man. And are you not amazed at Manoah the Judge of yore, and at Peter the disciple in later days; the one being unable to endure the sight even of one in whom was a representation of God; and saying, “We are undone, O wife, we have seen God;” speaking as though even a vision of God could not be grasped by human beings, let alone the Nature of God; and the other unable to endure the Presence of Christ in his boat and therefore bidding Him depart; and this though Peter was more zealous than the others for the knowledge of Christ, and received a blessing for this, and was entrusted with the greatest gifts. What would you say of Isaiah or Ezekiel, who was an eyewitness of very great mysteries, and of the other Prophets; for one of these saw the Lord of Sabaoth sitting on the Throne of glory, and circled and praised and hidden by the sixwinged Seraphim, and was himself purged by the live coal, and equipped for his prophetic office. And the other describes the Cherubic Chariot of God, and the Throne upon them, and the Firmament over it, and Him that shewed Himself in the Firmament, and Voices, and Forces, and Deeds. And whether this was an appearance by day, only visible to Saints, or an unerring vision of the night, or an impression on the mind holding converse with the future as if it were the present; or some other ineffable form of prophecy, I cannot say; the God of the Prophets knoweth, and they know who are thus inspired. But neither these of whom I am speaking, nor any of their fellows ever stood before the Council and Essence of God, as it is written, or saw, or proclaimed the Nature of God.

XX. If it had been permitted to Paul to utter what the Third Heaven contained, and his own advance, or ascension, or assumption thither, perhaps we should know something more about God’s Nature, if this was the mystery of the rapture. But since it was ineffable, we too will honour it by silence. Thus much we will hear Paul say about it, that we know in part and
we prophesy in part.3479 This and the like to this are the confessions of one who is not rude in knowledge,3480 who threatens to give proof of Christ speaking in him, the great doctor and champion of the truth. Wherefore he estimates all knowledge on earth only as through a glass darkly,3481 as taking its stand upon little images of the truth. Now, unless I appear to anyone too careful, and over anxious about the examination of this matter, perhaps it was of this and nothing else that the Word Himself intimated

that there were things which could not now be borne, but which should be borne and cleared up hereafter,3482 and which John the Forerunner of the Word and great Voice of the Truth declared even the whole world could not contain.3483

XXI. The truth then, and the whole Word is full of difficulty and obscurity; and as it were with a small instrument we are undertaking a great work, when with merely human wisdom we pursue the knowledge of the Self-existent, and in company with, or not apart from, the senses, by which we are borne hither and thither, and led into error, we apply ourselves to the search after things which are only to be grasped by the mind, and we are unable by meeting bare realities with bare intellect to approximate somewhat more closely to the truth, and to mould the mind by its concepts.

Now the subject of God is more hard to come at,3484 in proportion as it is more perfect than any other, and is open to more objections, and the solutions of them are more laborious. For every objection, however small, stops and hinders the course of our argument, and cuts off its further advance, just like men who suddenly check with the rein the horses in full career, and turn them right round by the unexpected shock. Thus Solomon, who was the wisest of all men,3485 whether before him or in his own time, to whom God gave breadth of heart, and a flood of contemplation, more abundant than the sand, even he, the more he entered into the depth, the more dizzy he became, and declared the furthest point of wisdom to be the discovery of how very far off she was from him.3486 Paul also tries to arrive at, I will not say the nature of God, for this he knew was utterly impossible, but only the judgments of God; and since he finds no way out, and no halting place in the ascent, and moreover, since the earnest searching of his mind after knowledge does not end in any definite conclusion, because some fresh unattained point is being continually disclosed to him (O marvel, that I have a like experience), he closes his discourse with astonishment, and calls this the riches of God,3487 and the depth, and confesses the unsearchableness of the judgments of God, in almost the very words of David, who at one time calls God’s judgments the great deep whose foundations cannot be reached by measure or sense;3488 and at another says that His knowledge of him and of his own constitution was marvellous,3489 and had attained greater strength than was in his own power or grasp.

XXII. For if, he says, I leave everything else alone, and consider myself and the whole nature and constitution of man, and how we are mingled, and what is our movement, and how the mortal was compounded with the immortal, and how it is that I flow downwards, and yet am borne upwards, and how the soul is circumscribed;3490 and how it gives life and shares in feelings; and how the mind is at once circumscribed and unlimited,3491 abiding in us and yet travelling over the Universe in swift motion and flow; how it is both received and imparted by
word, and passes through air, and enters with all things; how it shares in sense, and enshrouds itself away from sense. And even before these questions—what was our first moulding and composition in the workshop of nature, and what is our last formation and completion? What is the desire for and imparting of nourishment, and who brought us spontaneously to those first springs and sources of life? How is the body nourished by food, and the soul by reason? What is the drawing of nature, and the mutual relation between parents and children, that it should be held together by a spell of love? How is it that species are permanent, and are different in their characteristics, although there are so many that their individual marks cannot be described? How is it that the same animal is both mortal and immortal, the one by decease, the other by coming into being? For one departs, and another takes its place, just like the flow of a river, which is never still, yet ever constant. And you might discuss many more points concerning men’s members and parts, and their mutual adaptation both for use and beauty, and how some are connected and others disjoined, some are more excellent and others less comely, some are united and others divided, some contain and others are contained, according to the law and reason of Nature. Much too might be said about voices and ears. How is it that the voice is carried by the vocal organs, and received by the ears, and both are joined by the smiting and resounding of the medium of the air? Much too of the eyes, which have an indescribable communion with visible objects, and which are moved by the will alone, and that together, and are affected exactly as is the mind. For with equal speed the mind is joined to the objects of thought, the eye to those of sight. Much too concerning the other senses, not objects of the research of reason. And much concerning our rest in sleep, and the figments of dreams, and of memory and remembrance; of calculation, and anger, and desire; and in a word, all by which this little world called Man is swayed.

XXIII. Shall I reckon up for you the differences of the other animals, both from us and from each other,—differences of nature, and of production, and of nourishment, and of region, and of temper, and as it were of social life? How is it that some are gregarious and others solitary, some herbivorous and others carnivorous, some fierce and others tame, some fond of man and domesticated, others untamable and free? And some we might call bordering on reason and power of learning, while others are altogether destitute of reason, and incapable of being taught. Some with fuller senses, others with less; some immovable, and some with the power of walking, and some very swift, and some very slow; some surpassing in size or beauty, or in one or other of these respects; others very small or very ugly, or both; some strong, others weak, some apt at self-defence, others timid and crafty, and others again are unguarded. Some are laborious and thrifty, others altogether idle and improvident. And before we come to such points as these, how is it that some are crawling things, and others upright; some attached to one spot, some amphibious; some delight in beauty and others are unadorned; some are married and some single; some temperate and others intemperate; some have numerous offspring and others not; some are long-lived and others have but short lives? It would be a weary discourse to go through all the details.

XXIV. Look also at the fishy tribe gliding through the waters, and as it were flying through the
liquid element, and breathing its own air, but in danger when in contact with ours, as we are in
the waters; and mark their habits and dispositions, their intercourse and their births, their size
and their beauty, and their affection for places, and their wanderings, and their assemblings
and departings, and their properties which so nearly resemble those of the animals that dwell
on land; in some cases community, in others contrast of properties, both in name and shape.
And consider the tribes of birds, and their varieties of form and colour, both of those which are
voiceless and of songbirds. What is the reason of their melody, and from whom came it? Who
gave to the grasshopper the lute in his breast, and the songs and chirruping on the branches,
when they are moved by the sun to make their midday music, and sing among the groves, and
escort the wayfarer with their voices? Who wove the song for the swan when he spreads his
wings to the breezes, and makes melody of their rustling? For I will not speak of the forced
voices, and all the rest that art contrives against the truth. Whence does the peacock, that
boastful bird of Media, get his love of beauty and of praise (for he is fully conscious of his own
beauty), so that when he sees any one approaching, or when, as they say, he would make a
show before his hens, raising his neck and spreading his tail in circle around him, glittering like
gold and studded with stars, he makes a spectacle of his beauty to his lovers with pompous
strides? Now Holy Scripture admires the cleverness in weaving even of women, saying, Who
gave to woman skill in weaving and cleverness in the art of embroidery? This belongeth
to a living creature that hath reason, and exceedeth in wisdom and maketh way even as far as
the things of heaven.

XXV. But I would have you marvel at the natural knowledge even of irrational creatures, and if
you can, explain its cause. How is it that birds have for nests rocks and trees and roofs, and
adapt them both for safety and beauty, and suitably for the comfort of their nurslings?
Whence do bees and spiders get their love of work and art, by which the former plan their
honeycombs, and join them together by hexagonal and co-ordinate tubes, and construct the
foundation by means of a partition and an alternation of the angles with straight lines; and
this, as is the case, in such dusky hives and dark combs; and the latter weave their intricate
webs by such light and almost airy threads stretched in divers ways, and this from almost
invisible beginnings, to be at once a precious dwelling, and a trap for weaker creatures with a
view to enjoyment of food? What Euclid ever imitated these, while pursuing philosophical
enquiries with lines that have no real existence, and wearying himself with demonstrations?
From what Palamedes came the tactics, and, as the saying is, the movements and
configurations of cranes, and the systems of their movement in ranks and their complicated
flight? Who were their Phidiæ and Zeuxides, and who were the Parrhasii and Aglaophons who
knew how to draw and mould excessively beautiful things? What

298

harmonious Gnossian chorus of Dædalus, wrought for a girl to the highest pitch of
beauty? What Cretan Labyrinth, hard to get through, hard to unravel, as the poets say, and
continually crossing itself through the tricks of its construction? I will not speak of the ants’
storehouses and storekeepers, and of their treasurings of wood in quantities corresponding to
the time for which it is wanted, and all the other details which we know are told of their
marches and leaders and their good order in their works.
XXVI. If this knowledge has come within your reach and you are familiar with these branches of science, look at the differences of plants also, up to the artistic fashion of the leaves, which is adapted both to give the utmost pleasure to the eye, and to be of the greatest advantage to the fruit. Look too at the variety and lavish abundance of fruits, and most of all at the wondrous beauty of such as are most necessary. And consider the power of roots, and juices, and flowers, and odours, not only so very sweet, but also serviceable as medicines; and the graces and qualities of colours; and again the costly value, and the brilliant transparency of precious stones. Since nature has set before you all things as in an abundant banquet free to all, both the necessaries and the luxuries of life, in order that, if nothing else, you may at any rate know God by His benefits, and by your own sense of want be made wiser than you were. Next, I pray you, traverse the length and breadth of earth, the common mother of all, and the gulfs of the sea bound together with one another and with the land, and the beautiful forests, and the rivers and springs abundant and perennial, not only of waters cold and fit for drinking, and on the surface of the earth; but also such as running beneath the earth, and flowing under caverns, are then forced out by a violent blast, and repelled, and then filled with heat by this violence of strife and repulsion, burst out by little and little wherever they get a chance, and hence supply our need of hot baths in many parts of the earth, and in conjunction with the cold give us a healing which is without cost and spontaneous. Tell me how and whence are these things? What is this great web unwrought by art? These things are no less worthy of admiration, in respect of their mutual relations than when considered separately.

How is it that the earth stands solid and unswerving? On what is it supported? What is it that props it up, and on what does that rest? For indeed even reason has nothing to lean upon, but only the Will of God. And how is it that part of it is drawn up into mountain summits, and part laid down in plains, and this in various and differing ways? And because the variations are individually small, it both supplies our needs more liberally, and is more beautiful by its variety; part being distributed into habitations, and part left uninhabited, namely all the great height of Mountains, and the various clefts of its coast line cut off from it. Is not this the clearest proof of the majestic working of God?

XXVII. And with respect to the Sea even if I did not marvel at its greatness, yet I should have marvelled at its gentleness, in that although loose it stands within its boundaries; and if not at its gentleness, yet surely at its greatness; but since I marvel at both, I will praise the Power that is in both. What collected it? What bounded it? How is it raised and lulled to rest, as though respecting its neighbour earth? How, moreover, does it receive all the rivers, and yet remain the same, through the very superabundance of its immensity, if that term be permissible? How is the boundary of it, though it be an element of such magnitude, only sand? Have your natural philosophers with their knowledge of useless details anything to tell us, those men I mean who are really endeavouring to measure the sea with a wineglass, and such mighty works by their own conceptions? Or shall I give the really scientific explanation of it from Scripture concisely, and yet more satisfactorily and truly than by the longest arguments? “He hath fenced the face of the water with His command.”3496 This is the chain of fluid nature. And how doth He bring upon it the Nautilus that inhabits the dry land (i.e., man) in a little vessel, and with a little breeze (dost thou not marvel at the sight of this,—is not thy mind
astonished?), that earth and sea may be bound together by needs and commerce, and that things so widely separated by nature should be thus brought together into one for man? What are the first fountains of springs? Seek, O man, if you can trace out or find any of these things. And who was it who cleft the plains and the mountains for the rivers, and gave them an unhindered course? And how comes the marvel on the other side, that the Sea never overflows, nor the Rivers cease to flow? And what is the nourishing power of water, and what the difference therein; for some things are irrigated from above, and others drink from their roots, if I may luxuriate a little in my language when speaking of the luxuriant gifts of God.

XXVIII. And now, leaving the earth and the things of earth, soar into the air on the wings of thought, that our argument may advance in due path; and thence I will take you up to heavenly things, and to heaven itself, and things which are above heaven; for to that which is beyond my discourse hesitates to ascend, but still it shall ascend as far as may be. Who poured forth the air, that great and abundant wealth, not measured to men by their rank or fortunes; not restrained by boundaries; not divided out according to people’s ages; but like the distribution of the Manna received in sufficiency, and valued for its equality of distribution; the chariot of the winged creation; the seat of the winds; the moderator of the seasons; the quickener of living things, or rather the preserver of natural life in the body; in which bodies have their being, and by which we speak; in which is the light and all that it shines upon, and the sight which flows through it? And mark, if you please, what follows. I cannot give to the air the whole empire of all that is thought to belong to the air. What are the storehouses of the winds? What are the treasuries of the snow? Who, as Scripture hath said, hath begotten the drops of dew? Out of Whose womb came the ice? and Who bindeth the waters in the clouds, and, fixing part in the clouds (O marvel!) held by His Word though its nature is to flow, poureth out the rest upon the face of the whole earth, and scattereth it abroad in due season, and in just proportions, and neither suffereth the whole substance of moisture to go out free and uncontrolled (for sufficient was the cleansing in the days of Noah; and He who cannot lie is not forgetful of His own covenant); nor yet restraineth it entirely that we should not again stand in need of an Elias to bring the drought to an end. If He shall shut up heaven, it saith, who shall open it? If He open the floodgates, who shall shut them up? Who can bring an excess or withhold a sufficiency of rain, unless he govern the Universe by his own measures and balances? What scientific laws, pray, can you lay down concerning thunder and lightning, O you who thunder from the earth, and cannot shine with even little sparks of truth? To what vapours from earth will you attribute the creation of cloud, or is it due to some thickening of the air, or pressure or crash of clouds of excessive rarity, so as to make you think the pressure the cause of the lightning, and the crash that which makes the thunder? Or what compression of wind having no outlet will account to you for the lightning by its compression, and for the thunder by its bursting out?

Now if you have in your thought passed through the air and all the things of air, reach with me to heaven and the things of heaven. And let faith lead us rather than reason, if at least you have learnt the feebleness of the latter in matters nearer to you, and have known reason by
knowing the things that are beyond reason, so as not to be altogether on the earth or of the earth, because you are ignorant even of your ignorance.

XXIX. Who spread the sky around us, and set the stars in order? Or rather, first, can you tell me, of your own knowledge of the things in heaven, what are the sky and the stars; you who know not what lies at your very feet, and cannot even take the measure of yourself, and yet must busy yourself about what is above your nature, and gape at the illimitable? For, granted that you understand orbits and periods, and waxings and wanings, and settings and risings, and some degrees and minutes, and all the other things which make you so proud of your wonderful knowledge; you have not arrived at comprehension of the realities themselves, but only at an observation of some movement, which, when confirmed by longer practice, and drawing the observations of many individuals into one generalization, and thence deducing a law, has acquired the name of Science (just as the lunar phenomena have become generally known to our sight), being the basis of this knowledge. But if you are very scientific on this subject, and have a just claim to admiration, tell me what is the cause of this order and this movement. How came the sun to be a beacon-fire to the whole world, and to all eyes like the leader of some chorus, concealing all the rest of the stars by his brightness, more completely than some of them conceal others. The proof of this is that they shine against him, but he outshines them and does not even allow it to be perceived that they rose simultaneously with him, fair as a bridegroom, swift and great as a giant for I will not let his praises be sung from any other source than my own Scriptures—so mighty in strength that from one end to the other of the world he embraces all things in his heat, and there is nothing hid from the feeling thereof, but it fills both every eye with light, and every embodied creature with heat; warming, yet not burning, by the gentleness of its temper, and the order of its movement, present to all, and equally embracing all.

XXX. Have you considered the importance of the fact that a heathen writer speaks of the sun as holding the same position among material objects as God does among objects of thought? For the one gives light to the eyes, as the Other does to the mind; and is the most beautiful of the objects of sight, as God is of those of thought. But who gave him motion at first? And what is it which ever moves him in his circuit, though in his nature stable and immovable, truly unweared, and the giver and sustainer of life, and all the rest of the titles which the poets justly sing of him, and never resting in his course or his benefits? How comes he to be the creator of day when above the earth, and of night when below it? or whatever may be the right expression when one contemplates the sun? What are the mutual aggressions and concessions of day and night, and their regular irregularities—to use a somewhat strange expression? How comes he to be the maker and divider of the seasons, that come and depart in regular order, and as in a dance interweave with each other, or stand apart by a law of love on the one hand, and of order on the other, and mingle little by little, and steal on their neighbour, just as nights and days do, so as not to give us pain by their suddenness. This will be enough about the sun.
Do you know the nature and phenomena of the Moon, and the measures and courses of light, and how it is that the sun bears rule over the day, and the moon presides over the night; and while She gives confidence to wild beasts, He stirs Man up to work, raising or lowering himself as may be most serviceable? Know you the bond of Pleiades, or the fence of Orion as He who counteth the number of the stars and calleth them all by their names? Know you the differences of the glory of each, and the order of their movement, that I should trust you, when by them you weave the web of human concerns, and arm the creature against the Creator?

XXXI. What say you? Shall we pause here, after discussing nothing further than matter and visible things, or, since the Word knows the Tabernacle of Moses to be a figure of the whole creation—I mean the entire system of things visible and invisible—shall we pass the first veil, and stepping beyond the realm of sense, shall we look into the Holy Place, the Intellectual and Celestial creation? But not even this can we see in an incorporeal way, though it is incorporeal, since it is called—or is—Fire and Spirit. For He is said to make His Angels spirits, and His Ministers a flame of fire...though perhaps this “making” means preserving by that Word by which they came into existence. The Angel then is called spirit and fire; Spirit, as being a creature of the intellectual sphere; Fire, as being of a purifying nature; for I know that the same names belong to the First Nature. But, relatively to us at least, we must reckon the Angelic Nature incorporeal, or at any rate as nearly so as possible. Do you see how we get dizzy over this subject, and cannot advance to any point, unless it be as far as this, that we know there are Angels and Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Powers, Splendours, Ascents, Intelligent Powers or Intelligencies, pure natures and unalloyed, immovable to evil, or scarcely movable; ever circling in chorus round the First Cause (or how should we sing their praises?) illuminated thence with the purest Illumination, or one in one degree and one in another, proportionally to their nature and rank...so conformed to beauty and moulded that they become secondary Lights, and can enlighten others by the overflowings and largesses of the First Light? Ministrants of God’s Will, strong with both inborn and imparted strength, traversing all space, readily present to all at any place through their zeal for ministry and the agility of their nature...different individuals of them embracing different parts of the world, or appointed over different districts of the Universe, as He knoweth who ordered and distributed it all. Combining all things in one, solely with a view to the consent of the Creator of all things; Hymners of the Majesty of the Godhead, eternally contemplating the Eternal Glory, not that God may thereby gain an increase of glory, for nothing can be added to that which is full—to Him, who supplies good to all outside Himself but that there may never be a cessation of blessings to these first natures after God. If we have told these things as they deserve, it is by the grace of the Trinity, and of the one Godhead in Three Persons; but if less perfectly than we have desired, yet even so our discourse has gained its purpose. For this is what we were labouring to shew, that even the secondary natures surpass the power of our intellect; much more then the First and (for I fear to say merely That which is above all), the only Nature.

Oration XXIX.

The Third Theological Oration.
On the Son.

I. This then is what might be said to cut short our opponents’ readiness to argue and their hastiness with its consequent insecurity in all matters, but above all in those discussions which relate to God. But since to rebuke others is a matter of no difficulty whatever, but a very easy thing, which any one who likes can do; whereas to substitute one’s own belief for theirs is the part of a pious and intelligent man; let us, relying on the Holy Ghost, Who among them is dishonoured, but among us is adored, bring forth to the light our own conceptions about the Godhead, whatever these may be, like some noble and timely birth. Not that I have at other times been silent; for on this subject alone I am full of youthful strength and daring; but the fact is that under present circumstances I am even more bold to declare the truth, that I may not (to use the words of Scripture) by drawing back fall into the condemnation of being displeasing to God. And since every discourse is of a twofold nature, the one part establishing one’s own, and the other overthrowing one’s opponents’ position; let us first of all state our own position, and then try to controvert that of our opponents;—and both as briefly as possible, so that our arguments may be taken in at a glance (like those of the elementary treatises which they have devised to deceive simple or foolish persons), and that our thoughts may not be scattered by reason of the length of the discourse, like water which is not contained in a channel, but flows to waste over the open land.

II. The three most ancient opinions concerning God are Anarchia, Polyarchia, and Monarchia. The first two are the sport of the children of Hellas, and may they continue to be so. For Anarchy is a thing without order; and the Rule of Many is factious, and thus anarchical, and thus disorderly. For both these tend to the same thing, namely disorder; and this to dissolution, for disorder is the first step to dissolution.

But Monarchy is that which we hold in honour. It is, however, a Monarchy that is not limited to one Person, for it is possible for Unity if at variance with itself to come into a condition of plurality; but one which is made of an equality of Nature and a Union of mind, and an identity of motion, and a convergence of its elements to unity—a thing which is impossible to the created nature—so that though numerically distinct there is no severance of Essence. Therefore Unity having from all eternity arrived by motion at Duality, found its rest in Trinity. This is what we mean by Father and Son and Holy Ghost. The Father is the Begetter and the Emitter; the Son is the Begotten, and the Holy Ghost the Emission; for I know not how this could be expressed in terms altogether excluding visible things. For we shall not venture to speak of “an overflow of goodness,” as one of the Greek Philosophers dared to say, as if it were a bowl overflowing, and this in plain words in his Discourse on the First and Second Causes. Let us not ever look on this Generation as involuntary, like some natural overflow, hard to be retained, and by no means befitting our conception of Deity. Therefore let us confine ourselves within our limits, and speak of the Unbegotten and the Begotten and That which proceeds from the Father, as somewhere God the Word Himself saith.
III. When did these come into being? They are above all “When.” But, if I am to speak with something more of boldness,—when the Father did. And when did the Father come into being. There never was a time when He was not. And the same thing is true of the Son and the Holy Ghost. Ask me again, and again I will answer you, When was the Son begotten? When the Father was not begotten. And when did the Holy Ghost proceed? When the Son was, not proceeding but, begotten—beyond the sphere of time, and above the grasp of reason; although we cannot set forth that which is above time, if we avoid as we desire any expression which conveys the idea of time. For such expressions as “when” and “before” and “after” and “from the beginning” are not timeless, however much we may force them; unless indeed we were to take the Æon, that interval which is coextensive with the eternal things, and is not divided or measured by any motion, or by the revolution of the sun, as time is measured.

How then are They not alike unoriginate, if They are coeternal? Because They are from Him, though not after Him. For that which is unoriginate is eternal, but that which is eternal is not necessarily unoriginate, so long as it may be referred to the Father as its origin. Therefore in respect of Cause They are not unoriginate; but it is evident that the Cause is not necessarily prior to its effects, for the sun is not prior to its light. And yet They are in some sense unoriginate, in respect of time, even though you would scare simple minds with your quibbles, for the Sources of Time are not subject to time.

IV. But how can this generation be passionless? In that it is incorporeal. For if corporeal generation involves passion, incorporeal generation excludes it. And I will ask of you in turn, How is He God if He is created? For that which is created is not God. I refrain from reminding you that here too is passion if we take the creation in a bodily sense, as time, desire, imagination, thought, hope, pain, risk, failure, success, all of which and more than all find a place in the creature, as is evident to every one. Nay, I marvel that you do not venture so far as to conceive of marriages and times of pregnancy, and dangers of miscarriage, as if the Father could not have begotten at all if He had not begotten thus; or again, that you did not count up the modes of generation of birds and beasts and fishes, and bring under some one of them the Divine and Ineffable Generation, or even eliminate the Son out of your new hypothesis. And you cannot even see this, that as His Generation according to the flesh differs from all others (for where among men do you know of a Virgin Mother?), so does He differ also in His spiritual Generation; or rather He, Whose Existence is not the same as ours, differs from us also in His Generation.

V. Who then is that Father Who had no beginning? One Whose very Existence had no beginning; for one whose existence had a beginning must also have begun to be a Father. He did not then become a Father after He began to be, for His being had no beginning. And He is Father in the absolute sense, for He is not also Son; just as the Son is Son in the absolute sense, because He is not also Father. These names do not belong to us in the absolute sense, because we are both, and not one more than the other; and we are of both, and not of one only; and so we are divided, and by degrees become men, and perhaps not even men, and such as we did not desire, leaving and being left, so that only the relations remain, without the underlying
But, the objector says, the very form of the expression “He begat” and “He was begotten,” brings in the idea of a beginning of generation. But what if you do not use this expression, but say, “He had been begotten from the beginning” so as readily to evade your far-fetched and time-loving objections? Will you bring Scripture against us, as if we were forging something contrary to Scripture and to the truth? Why, every one knows that in practice we very often find tenses interchanged when time is spoken of; and especially is this the custom of Holy Scripture, not only in respect of the past tense, and of the present; but even of the future, as for instance “Why did the heathen rage?” when they had not yet raged and “they shall cross over the river on foot,” where the meaning is they did cross over. It would be a long task to reckon up all the expressions of this kind which students have noticed.

VI. So much for this point. What is their next objection, how full of contentiousness and impudence? He, they say, either voluntarily begat the Son, or else involuntarily. Next, as they think, they bind us on both sides with cords; these however are not strong, but very weak. For, they say, if it was involuntarily He was under the sway of some one, and who exercised this sway? And how is He, over whom it is exercised, God? But if voluntarily, the Son is a Son of Will; how then is He of the Father?—and they thus invent a new sort of Mother for him,—the Will,—in place of the Father. There is one good point which they may allege about this argument of theirs; namely, that they desert Passion, and take refuge in Will. For Will is not Passion.

303 Secondly, let us look at the strength of their argument. And it were best to wrestle with them at first at close quarters. You yourself, who so recklessly assert whatever takes your fancy; were you begotten voluntarily or involuntarily by your father? If involuntarily, then he was under some tyrant’s sway (O terrible violence!) and who was the tyrant? You will hardly say it was nature,—for nature is tolerant of chastity. If it was voluntarily, then by a few syllables your father is done away with, for you are shewn to be the son of Will, and not of your father. But I pass to the relation between God and the creature, and I put your own question to your own wisdom. Did God create all things voluntarily or under compulsion? If under compulsion, here also is the tyranny, and one who played the tyrant; if voluntarily, the creatures also are deprived of their God, and you before the rest, who invent such arguments and tricks of logic. For a partition is set up between the Creator and the creatures in the shape of Will. And yet I think that the Person who wills is distinct from the Act of willing; He who begets from the Act of begetting; the Speaker from the speech, or else we are all very stupid. On the one side we have the mover, and on the other that which is, so to speak, the motion. Thus the thing willed is not the child of will, for it does not always result therefrom; nor is that which is begotten the child of generation, nor that which is heard the child of speech, but of the Person who willed, or begat, or spoke. But the things of God are beyond all this, for with Him perhaps the Will to beget is generation, and there is no intermediate action (if we may accept this altogether, and not rather consider generation superior to will).

VII. Will you then let me play a little upon this word Father, for your example encourages me
to be so bold? The Father is God either willingly or unwillingly; and how will you escape from your own excessive acuteness? If willingly, when did He begin to will? It could not have been before He began to be, for there was nothing prior to Him. Or is one part of Him Will and another the object of Will? If so, He is divisible. So the question arises, as the result of your argument, whether He Himself is not the Child of Will. And if unwillingly, what compelled Him to exist, and how is He God if He was compelled—and that to nothing less than to be God? How then was He begotten, says my opponent. How was He created, if as you say, He was created? For this is a part of the same difficulty. Perhaps you would say, By Will and Word. You have not yet solved the whole difficulty; for it yet remains for you to shew how Will and Word gained the power of action. For man was not created in this way.

VIII. How then was He begotten? This Generation would have been no great thing, if you could have comprehended it who have no real knowledge even of your own generation, or at least who comprehend very little of it, and of that little you are ashamed to speak; and then do you think you know the whole? You will have to undergo much labour before you discover the laws of composition, formation, manifestation, and the bond whereby soul is united to body,—mind to soul, and reason to mind; and movement, increase, assimilation of food, sense, memory, recollection, and all the rest of the parts of which you are compounded; and which of them belongs to the soul and body together, and which to each independently of the other, and which is received from each other. For those parts whose maturity comes later, yet received their laws at the time of conception. Tell me what these laws are? And do not even then venture to speculate on the Generation of God; for that would be unsafe. For even if you knew all about your own, yet you do not by any means know about God’s. And if you do not understand your own, how can you know about God’s? For in proportion as God is harder to trace out than man, so is the heavenly Generation harder to comprehend than your own. But if you assert that because you cannot comprehend it, therefore He cannot have been begotten, it will be time for you to strike out many existing things which you cannot comprehend; and first of all God Himself. For you cannot say what He is, even if you are very reckless, and excessively proud of your intelligence. First, cast away your notions of flow and divisions and sections, and your conceptions of immaterial as if it were material birth, and then you may perhaps worthily conceive of the Divine Generation. How was He begotten?—I repeat the question in indignation. The Begetting of God must be honoured by silence. It is a great thing for you to learn that He was begotten. But the manner of His generation we will not admit that even Angels can conceive, much less you. Shall I tell you how it was? It was in a manner known to the Father Who begat, and to the Son Who was begotten. Anything more than this is hidden by a cloud, and escapes your dim sight.

IX. Well, but the Father begat a Son who

either was or was not in existence. What utter nonsense! This is a question which applies to you or me, who on the one hand were in existence, as for instance Levi in the loins of Abraham; and on the other hand came into existence; and so in some sense we are partly of what existed, and partly of what was nonexistent; whereas the contrary is the case with the original matter, which was certainly created out of what was non-existent, notwithstanding
that some pretend that it is unbegotten. But in this case “to be begotten,” even from the beginning, is concurrent with “to be.” On what then will you base this captious question? For what is older than that which is from the beginning, if we may place there the previous existence or non-existence of the Son? In either case we destroy its claim to be the Beginning. Or perhaps you will say, if we were to ask you whether the Father was of existent or non-existent substance, that he is twofold, partly pre-existing, partly existing; or that His case is the same with that of the Son; that is, that He was created out of non-existing matter, because of your ridiculous questions and your houses of sand, which cannot stand against the merest ripple.

I do not admit either solution, and I declare that your question contains an absurdity, and not a difficulty to answer. If however you think, in accordance with your dialectic assumptions, that one or other of these alternatives must necessarily be true in every case, let me ask you one little question: Is time in time, or is it not in time? If it is contained in time, then in what time, and what is it but that time, and how does it contain it? But if it is not contained in time, what is that surpassing wisdom which can conceive of a time which is timeless? Now, in regard to this expression, “I am now telling a lie,” admit one of these alternatives, either that it is true, or that it is a falsehood, without qualification (for we cannot admit that it is both). But this cannot be. For necessarily he either is lying, and so is telling the truth, or else he is telling the truth, and so is lying. What wonder is it then that, as in this case contraries are true, so in that case they should both be untrue, and so your clever puzzle prove mere foolishness? Solve me one more riddle. Were you present at your own generation, and are you now present to yourself, or is neither the case? If you were and are present, who were you, and with whom are you present? And how did your single self become thus both subject and object? But if neither of the above is the case, how did you get separated from yourself, and what is the cause of this disjoining? But, you will say, it is stupid to make a fuss about the question whether or no a single individual is present to himself; for the expression is not used of oneself but of others. Well, you may be certain that it is even more stupid to discuss the question whether That which was begotten from the beginning existed before its generation or not. For such a question arises only as to matter divisible by time.

X. But they say, The Unbegotten and the Begotten are not the same; and if this is so, neither is the Son the same as the Father. It is clear, without saying so, that this line of argument manifestly excludes either the Son or the Father from the Godhead. For if to be Unbegotten is the Essence of God, to be begotten is not that Essence; if the opposite is the case, the Unbegotten is excluded. What argument can contradict this? Choose then whichever blasphemy you prefer, my good inventor of a new theology, if indeed you are anxious at all costs to embrace a blasphemy. In the next place, in what sense do you assert that the Unbegotten and the Begotten are not the same? If you mean that the Uncreated and the created are not the same, I agree with you; for certainly the Unoriginate and the created are not of the same nature. But if you say that He That begat and That which is begotten are not the same, the statement is inaccurate. For it is in fact a necessary truth that they are the same. For the nature of the relation of Father to Child is this, that the offspring is of the same nature with the parent. Or we may argue thus again. What do you mean by Unbegotten and
Begotten, for if you mean the simple fact of being unbegotten or begotten, these are not the same; but if you mean Those to Whom these terms apply, how are They not the same? For example, Wisdom and Unwisdom are not the same in themselves, but yet both are attributes of man, who is the same; and they mark not a difference of essence, but one external to the essence. Are immortality and innocence and immutability also the essence of God? If so God has many essences and not one; or Deity is a compound of these. For He cannot be all these without composition, if they be essences.

XI. They do not however assert this, for these qualities are common also to other beings.

But God’s Essence is that which belongs to God alone, and is proper to Him. But they, who consider matter and form to be unbegotten, would not allow that to be unbegotten is the property of God alone (for we must cast away even further the darkness of the Manichæans). But suppose that it is the property of God alone. What of Adam? Was he not alone the direct creature of God? Yes, you will say. Was he then the only human being? By no means. And why, but because humanity does not consist in direct creation? For that which is begotten is also human. Just so neither is He Who is Unbegotten alone God, though He alone is Father. But grant that He Who is Begotten is God; for He is of God, as you must allow, even though you cling to your Unbegotten. Then how do you describe the Essence of God? Not by declaring what it is, but by rejecting what it is not. For your word signifies that He is not begotten; it does not present to you what is the real nature or condition of that which has no generation. What then is the Essence of God? It is for your infatuation to define this, since you are so anxious about His Generation too; but to us it will be a very great thing, if ever, even in the future, we learn this, when this darkness and dulness is done away for us, as He has promised Who cannot lie. This then may be the thought and hope of those who are purifying themselves with a view to this. Thus much we for our part will be bold to say, that if it is a great thing for the Father to be Unoriginate, it is no less a thing for the Son to have been Begotten of such a Father. For not only would He share the glory of the Unoriginate, since he is of the Unoriginate, but he has the added glory of His Generation, a thing so great and august in the eyes of all those who are not altogether grovelling and material in mind.

XII. But, they say, if the Son is the Same as the Father in respect of Essence, then if the Father is unbegotten, the Son must be so likewise. Quite so—if the Essence of God consists in being unbegotten; and so He would be a strange mixture, begottenly unbegotten. If, however, the difference is outside the Essence, how can you be so certain in speaking of this? Are you also your father’s father, so as in no respect to fall short of your father, since you are the same with him in essence? Is it not evident that our enquiry into the Nature of the Essence of God, if we make it, will leave Personality absolutely unaffected? But that Unbegotten is not a synonym of God is proved thus. If it were so, it would be necessary that since God is a relative term, Unbegotten should be so likewise; or that since Unbegotten is an absolute term, so must God be....God of no one. For words which are absolutely identical are similarly applied. But the word Unbegotten is not used relatively. For to what is it relative? And of what things is God the God? Why, of all things. How then can God and Unbegotten be identical terms? And again, since Begotten and Unbegotten are contradictories, like possession and deprivation, it
would follow that contradictory essences would co-exist, which is impossible. Or again, since possessions are prior to deprivations, and the latter are destructive of the former, not only must the Essence of the Son be prior to that of the Father, but it must be destroyed by the Father, on your hypothesis.

XIII. What now remains of their invincible arguments? Perhaps the last they will take refuge in is this. If God has never ceased to beget, the Generation is imperfect; and when will He cease? But if He has ceased, then He must have begun. Thus again these carnal minds bring forward carnal arguments. Whether He is eternally begotten or not, I do not yet say, until I have looked into the statement, “Before all the hills He begetteth Me,” more accurately. But I cannot see the necessity of their conclusion. For if, as they say, everything that is to come to an end had also a beginning, then surely that which has no end had no beginning. What then will they decide concerning the soul, or the Angelic nature? If it had a beginning, it will also have an end; and if it has no end, it is evident that according to them it had no beginning. But the truth is that it had a beginning, and will never have an end. Their assertion, then, that which will have an end also a beginning, is untrue. Our position, however, is, that as in the case of a horse, or an ox, or a man, the same definition applies to all the individuals of the same species, and whatever shares the definition has also a right to the Name; so in the very same way there is One Essence of God, and One Nature, and One Name; although in accordance with a distinction in our thoughts we use distinct Names and that whatever is properly called by this Name really is God; and what He is in Nature, That He is truly called—if at least we are to hold that Truth is a matter not of names but of realities. But our opponents, as if they were afraid of leaving any stone unturned to subvert the Truth, acknowledge indeed that the Son is God when they are compelled to do so by arguments and evidences; but they only mean that He is God in an ambiguous sense, and that He only shares the Name.

XIV. And when we advance this objection against them, “What do you mean to say then? That the Son is not properly God, just as a picture of an animal is not properly an animal? And if not properly God, in what sense is He God at all?” They reply, Why should not these terms be ambiguous, and in both cases be used in a proper sense? And they will give us such instances as the land-dog and the dogfish; where the word Dog is ambiguous, and yet in both cases is properly used, for there is such a species among the ambiguously named, or any other case in which the same appellative is used for two things of different nature. But, my good friend, in this case, when you include two natures under the same name, you do not assert that either is better than the other, or that the one is prior and the other posterior, or that one is in a greater degree and the other in a lesser that which is predicated of them both, for there is no connecting link which forces this necessity upon them. One is not a dog more than the other, and one less so; either the dogfish more than the land-dog, or the land-dog than the dogfish. Why should they be, or on what principle? But the community of name is here between things of equal value, though of different nature. But in the case of which we are speaking, you couple the Name of God with adorable Majesty, and make It surpass every essence and nature (an attribute of God alone), and then you ascribe this Name to the Father, while you deprive the Son of it, and make Him subject to the Father, and give Him only a secondary honour and
worship; and even if in words you bestow on Him one which is Equal, yet in practice you cut off His Deity, and pass malignantly from a use of the same Name implying an exact equality, to one which connects things which are not equal. And so the pictured and the living man are in your mouth an apter illustration of the relations of Deity than the dogs which I instanced. Or else you must concede to both an equal dignity of nature as well as a common name—even though you introduced these natures into your argument as different; and thus you destroy the analogy of your dogs, which you invented as an instance of inequality. For what is the force of your instance of ambiguity, if those whom you distinguish are not equal in honour? For it was not to prove an equality but an inequality that you took refuge in your dogs. How could anybody be more clearly convicted of fighting both against his own arguments, and against the Deity?

XV. And if, when we admit that in respect of being the Cause the Father is greater than the Son, they should assume the premiss that He is the Cause by Nature, and then deduce the conclusion that He is greater by Nature also, it is difficult to say whether they mislead most themselves or those with whom they are arguing. For it does not absolutely follow that all that is predicated of a class can also be predicated of all the individuals composing it; for the different particulars may belong to different individuals. For what hinders me, if I assume the same premiss, namely, that the Father is greater by Nature, and then add this other, Yet not by nature in every respect greater nor yet Father—from concluding, Therefore the Greater is not in every respect greater, nor the Father in every respect Father? Or, if you prefer it, let us put it in this way: God is an Essence: But an Essence is not in every case God; and draw the conclusion for yourself—Therefore God is not in every case God. I think the fallacy here is the arguing from a conditioned to an unconditioned use of a term, to use the technical expression of the logicians. For while we assign this word Greater to His Nature viewed as a Cause, they infer it of His Nature viewed in itself. It is just as if when we said that such a one was a dead man they were to infer simply that he was a Man.

XVI. How shall we pass over the following point, which is no less amazing than the rest? Father, they say, is a name either of an essence or of an Action, thinking to bind us down on both sides. If we say that it is a name of an essence, they will say that we agree with them that the Son is of another Essence, since there is but one Essence of God, and this, according to them, is preoccupied by the Father. On the other hand, if we say that it is the name of an Action, we shall be supposed to acknowledge plainly that the Son is created and not begotten. For where there is an Agent there must also be an Effect. And they will say they wonder how that which is made can be identical with That which made it. I should myself have been frightened with your distinction, if it had been necessary to accept one or other of the alternatives, and not rather put both aside, and state a third and truer one, namely, that Father is not a name either of an essence or of an action, most clever sirs. But it is the name of the Relation in which the Father stands to the Son, and the Son to the Father. For as with us these names make known a genuine and intimate relation, so, in the case before us too, they denote an identity of nature between Him That is begotten and Him That begets. But let us concede to you that Father is a
name of essence, it will still bring in the idea of Son, and will not make it of a different nature, according to common ideas and the force of these names. Let it be, if it so please you, the name of an action; you will not defeat us in this way either. The Homousion would be indeed the result of this action, or otherwise the conception of an action in this matter would be absurd. You see then how, even though you try to fight unfairly, we avoid your sophistries. But now, since we have ascertained how invincible you are in your arguments and sophistries, let us look at your strength in the Oracles of God, if perchance you may choose to persuade us out of them.

XVII. For we have learnt to believe in and to teach the Deity of the Son from their great and lofty utterances. And what utterances are these? These: God—The Word—He That Was In The Beginning and With The Beginning, and The Beginning. “In the Beginning was The Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,”3523 and “With Thee is the Beginning,”3524 and “He who calleth her The Beginning from generations.”3525 Then the Son is Only-begotten: The only “begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, it says, He hath declared Him.”3526 The Way, the Truth, the Life, the Light. “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life;” and “I am the Light of the World.”3527 Wisdom and Power, “Christ, the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God.”3528 The Effulgence, the Impress, the Image, the Seal; “Who being the Effulgence of His glory and the Impress of His Essence,”3529 and “the Image of His Goodness,”3530 and “Him hath God the Father sealed.”3531 Lord, King, He That Is, The Almighty. “The Lord rained down fire from the Lord;”3532 and “A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom;”3533 and “Which is and was and is to come, the Almighty”3534—all which are clearly spoken of the Son, with all the other passages of the same force, none of which is an afterthought, or added later to the Son or the Spirit, any more than to the Father Himself. For Their Perfection is not affected by additions. There never was a time when He was without the Word, or when He was not the Father, or when He was not true, or not wise, or not powerful, or devoid of life, or of splendour, or of goodness.

But in opposition to all these, do you reckon up for me the expressions which make for your ignorant arrogance, such as “My God and your God,”3535 or greater, or created, or made, or sanctified;3536 Add, if you like, Servant3537 and Obedient3538 and Gave3539 and Learnt,3540 and was commanded,3541 was sent,3542 can do nothing of Himself, either say, or judge, or give, or will.3543 And further these,—His ignorance,3544 subjection,3545 prayer,3546 asking,3547 increase,3548 being made perfect.3549 And if you like even more humble than these; such as speak of His sleeping,3550 hungering,3551 being in an agony,3552 and fearing;3553 or perhaps you would make even His Cross and Death a matter of reproach to Him. His Resurrection and Ascension I fancy you will leave to me, for in these is found something to support our position. A good many other things too you might pick up, if you desire to put together that equivocal and intruded god of yours, Who to us is True God, and equal to the Father. For every one of these points, taken separately, may very easily, if we go through them one by one, be explained to you in the most reverent sense, and the stumbling-block of the letter be cleaned away—that is, if your stumbling at it be honest, and not wilfully malicious. To give you the explanation in one sentence. What is lofty you are to apply to the Godhead, and to that Nature in Him which is superior to sufferings and incorporeal; but all that
is lowly to the composite condition of Him who for your sakes made Himself of no reputation and was Incarnate—yes, for it is no worse thing to say, was made Man, and afterwards was also exalted. The result will be that you will abandon these carnal and grovelling doctrines, and learn to be more sublime, and to ascend with His Godhead, and you will not remain permanently among the things of sight, but will rise up with Him into the world of thought, and come to know which passages refer to His Nature, and which to His assumption of Human Nature.

XIX. For He Whom you now treat with contempt was once above you. He Who is now Man was once the Uncompounded. What He was He continued to be; what He was not He took to Himself. In the beginning He was, uncaused; for what is the Cause of God? But afterwards for a cause He was born. And that cause was that you might be saved, who insult Him and despise His Godhead, because of this, that He took upon Him your denser nature, having converse with Flesh by means of Mind. While His inferior Nature, the Humanity, became God, because it was united to God, and became One Person because the Higher Nature prevailed in order that I too might be made God so far as He is made Man. He was born—but He had been begotten: He was born of a woman—but she was a Virgin. The first is human, the second Divine. In His Human nature He had no Father, but also in His Divine Nature no Mother. Both these belong to Godhead. He dwelt in the womb—but He was recognized by the Prophet, himself still in the womb, leaping before the Word, for Whose sake He came into being. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes—but He took off the swathing bands of the grave by His rising again. He was laid in a manger—but He was glorified by Angels, and proclaimed by a star, and worshipped by the Magi. Why are you offended by that which is presented to your sight, because you will not look at that which is presented to your mind? He was driven into exile into Egypt—but He drove away the Egyptian idols. He had no form nor comeliness in the eyes of the Jews—but to David He is fairer than the children of men. And on the Mountain He was bright as the lightning, and became more luminous than the sun, initiating us into the mystery of the future.

XX. He was baptized as Man—but He remitted sins as God—not because He needed purificatory rites Himself, but that He might sanctify the element of water. He was tempted as Man, but He conquered as God; yea, He bids us be of good cheer, for He has overcome the world. He hungered—but He fed thousands; He thirsted—but He cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. Yea, He promised that fountains should flow from them that believe. He was wearied, but He is the Rest of them that are weary and heavy laden. He was heavy with sleep, but He walked lightly over the sea. He rebuked the winds, He made Peter light as he began to sink. He pays tribute, but it is out of a fish; yea, He is the King of those who demanded it. He is called a Samaritan and a demoniac;—but He saves him that came down from Jerusalem and fell among thieves; the demons acknowledge Him, and He drives out demons and sinks in the sea legions of foul spirits, and sees the Prince of the demons falling like lightning. He is stoned, but is not taken. He prays, but He hears prayer. He weeps, but He causes tears to
cease. He asks where Lazarus was laid, for He was Man; but He raises Lazarus, for He was God. He is sold, and very cheap, for it is only for thirty pieces of silver; but He redeems the world, and that at a great price, for the Price was His own blood. As a sheep He is led to the slaughter, but He is the Shepherd of Israel, and now of the whole world also. As a Lamb He is silent, yet He is the Word, and is proclaimed by the Voice of one crying in the wilderness. He is bruised and wounded, but He healeth every disease and every infirmity. He is lifted up and nailed to the Tree, but by the Tree of Life He restoreth us; yea, He saveth even the Robber crucified with Him; yea, He wrapped the visible world in darkness. He is given vinegar to drink mingled with gall. Who? He who turned the water into wine, who is the destroyer of the bitter taste, who is Sweetness and altogether desire. He lays down His life, but He has power to take it again; and the veil is rent, for the mysterious doors of Heaven are opened; the rocks are cleft, the dead arise. He dies, but He gives life, and by His death destroys death. He is buried, but He rises again; He goes down into Hell, but He brings up the souls; He ascends to Heaven, and shall come again to judge the quick and the dead, and to put to the test such words as yours. If the one give you a starting point for your error, let the others put an end to it.

XXI. This, then, is our reply to those who would puzzle us; not given willingly indeed (for light talk and contradictions of words are not agreeable to the faithful, and one Adversary is enough for us), but of necessity, for the sake of our assailants (for medicines exist because of diseases), that they may be led to see that they are not all-wise nor invincible in those superfluous arguments which make void the Gospel. For when we leave off believing, and protect ourselves by mere strength of argument, and destroy the claim which the Spirit has upon our faith by questionings, and then our argument is not strong enough for the importance of the subject (and this must necessarily be the case, since it is put in motion by an organ of so little power as is our mind), what is the result? The weakness of the argument appears to belong to the mystery, and thus elegance of language makes void the Cross, as Paul also thought. For faith is that which completes our argument. But may He who proclaimeth unions and looseth those that are bound, and who putteth into our minds to solve the knots of their unnatural dogmas, if it may be, change these men and make them faithful instead of rhetoricians, Christians instead of that which they now are called. This indeed we entreat and beg for Christ’s sake. Be ye reconciled to God, and quench not the Spirit; or rather, may Christ be reconciled to you, and may the Spirit enlighten you, though so late. But if you are too fond of your quarrel, we at any rate will hold fast to the Trinity, and by the Trinity may we be saved, remaining pure and without offence, until the more perfect shewing forth of that which we desire, in Him, Christ our Lord, to Whom be the glory for ever. Amen.

Oration XXX.

The Fourth Theological Oration, Which is the Second Concerning the Son.

I. Since I have by the power of the Spirit sufficiently overthrown the subtleties and intricacies of the arguments, and already solved in the mass the objections and oppositions drawn from Holy Scripture, with which these sacrilegious robbers of the Bible and thieves of the sense of its
contents draw over the multitude to their side, and confuse the way of truth; and that not without clearness, as I believe all candid persons will say; attributing to the Deity the higher and diviner expressions, and the lower and more human to Him Who for us men was the Second Adam, and was God made capable of suffering to strive against sin;

yet we have not yet gone through the passages in detail, because of the haste of our argument. But since you demand of us a brief explanation of each of them, that you may not be carried away by the plausibilities of their arguments, we will therefore state the explanations summarily, dividing them into numbers for the sake of carrying them more easily in mind.

II. In their eyes the following is only too ready to hand “The Lord created me at the beginning of His ways with a view to His works.” How shall we meet this? Shall we bring an accusation against Solomon, or reject his former words because of his fall in after-life? Shall we say that the words are those of Wisdom herself, as it were of Knowledge and the Creator-word, in accordance with which all things were made? For Scripture often personifies many even lifeless objects; as for instance, “The Sea said” so and so; and, “The Depth saith, It is not in me;” 3597 and “The Heavens declare the glory of God;” 3598 and again a command is given to the Sword; 3599 and the Mountains and Hills are asked the reason of their skipping. 3600 We do not allege any of these, though some of our predecessors used them as powerful arguments. But let us grant that the expression is used of our Saviour Himself, the true Wisdom. Let us consider one small point together. What among all things that exist is unoriginate? The Godhead. For no one can tell the origin of God, that otherwise would be older than God. But what is the cause of the Manhood, which for our sake God assumed? It was surely our Salvation. What else could it be? Since then we find here clearly both the Created and the Begetteth Me, the argument is simple. Whatever we find joined with a cause we are to refer to the Manhood, but all that is absolute and unoriginate we are to reckon to the account of His Godhead. Well, then, is not this “Created” said in connection with a cause? He created Me, it so says, as the beginning of His ways, with a view to his works. Now, the Works of His Hands are verity and judgment; 3601 for whose sake He was anointed with Godhead; 3602 for this anointing is of the Manhood; but the “He begetteth Me” is not connected with a cause; or it is for you to shew the adjunct. What argument then will disprove that Wisdom is called a creature, in connection with the lower generation, but Begotten in respect of the first and more incomprehensible?

III. Next is the fact of His being called Servant 3603 and serving many well, and that it is a great thing for Him to be called the Child of God. For in truth He was in servitude to flesh and to birth and to the conditions of our life with a view to our liberation, and to that of all those whom He has saved, who were in bondage under sin. What greater destiny can befall man’s humility than that he should be intermingled with God, and by this intermingling should be deified, 3604 and that we should be so visited by the Dayspring from on high, 3605 that even that Holy Thing that should be born should be called the Son of the Highest, 3606 and that there should be bestowed upon Him a Name which is above every name? And what else can this be than God? — and that every knee should bow to Him That was made of no reputation for us, and That mingled the Form of God with the form of a servant, and that all the House of
Israel should know that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ?3607 For all this was done by the action of the Begotten, and by the good pleasure of Him That begat Him.

IV. Well, what is the second of their great irresistible passages? “He must reign,”3608 till such and such a time...and “be received by heaven until the time of restitution,”3609 and “have the seat at the Right Hand until the overthrow of His enemies.”3610 But after this? Must He cease to be King, or be removed from Heaven? Why, who shall make Him cease, or for what cause? What a bold and very anarchical interpreter you are; and yet you have heard that Of His Kingdom there shall be no end.3611 Your mistake arises from not understanding that Until is not always exclusive of that which comes after, but asserts up to that time, without denying what comes after it. To take a single instance—how else would you understand, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?”3612 Does it mean that He will no longer be so afterwards. And for what reason? But this is not the only cause of your error; you also fail to distinguish between the things that are signified. He is said to reign in one sense as the Almighty King, both of the willing and the unwilling; but in another as producing in us submission, and placing us under His Kingship as willingly acknowledging His Sovereignty. Of His Kingdom, considered in the former sense, there shall be no end. But in the second sense, what end will there be? His taking us as His servants, on our entrance into a state of salvation. For what need is there to Work Submission in us when we have already submitted? After which He arises to judge the earth, and to separate the saved from the lost. After that He is to stand as God in the midst of gods,3613 that is, of the saved, distinguishing and deciding of what honour and of what mansion each is worthy.

V. Take, in the next place, the subjection by which you subject the Son to the Father. What, you say, is He not now subject, or must He, if He is God, be subject to God?3614 You are fashioning your argument as if it concerned some robber, or some hostile deity. But look at it in this manner: that as for my sake He was called a curse,3615 Who destroyed my curse; and sin,3616 who taketh away the sin of the world; and became a new Adam3617 to take the place of the old, just so He makes my disobedience His own as Head of the whole body. As long then as I am disobedient and rebellious, both by denial of God and by my passions, so long Christ also is called disobedient on my account. But when all things shall be subdued unto Him on the one hand by acknowledgment of Him, and on the other by a reformation, then He Himself also will have fulfilled His submission, bringing me whom He has saved to God. For this, according to my view, is the subjection of Christ; namely, the fulfilling of the Father’s Will. But as the Son subjects all to the Father, so does the Father to the Son; the One by His Work, the Other by His good pleasure, as we have already said. And thus He Who subjects presents to God that which he has subjected, making our condition His own. Of the same kind, it appears to me, is the expression, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”3618 It was not He who was forsaken either by the Father, or by His own Godhead, as some have thought, as if It were afraid of the Passion, and therefore withdrew Itself from Him in His Sufferings (for who compelled Him either to be born on earth at all, or to be lifted up on the Cross?) But as I said, He was in His own Person representing us. For we were the forsaken and despised before, but
now by the Sufferings of Him Who could not suffer, we were taken up and saved. Similarly, He makes His own our folly and our transgressions; and says what follows in the Psalm, for it is very evident that the Twenty-first Psalm refers to Christ.

VI. The same consideration applies to another passage, “He learnt obedience by the things which He suffered,” and to His “strong crying and tears,” and His “Entreaties,” and His “being heard,” and His “Reverence,” all of which He wonderfully wrought out, like a drama whose plot was devised on our behalf. For in His character of the Word He was neither obedient nor disobedient. For such expressions belong to servants, and inferiors, and the one applies to the better sort of them, while the other belongs to those who deserve punishment. But, in the character of the Form of a Servant, He condescends to His fellow servants, nay, to His servants, and takes upon Him a strange form, bearing all me and mine in Himself, that in Himself He may exhaust the bad, as fire does wax, or as the sun does the mists of earth; and that I may partake of His nature by the blending. Thus He honours obedience by His action, and proves it experimentally by His Passion. For to possess the disposition is not enough, just as it would not be enough for us, unless we also proved it by our acts; for action is the proof of disposition.

And perhaps it would not be wrong to assume this also, that by the art of His love for man He gauges our obedience, and measures all by comparison with His own Sufferings, so that He may know our condition by His own, and how much is demanded of us, and how much we yield, taking into the account, along with our environment, our weakness also. For if the Light shining through the veil upon the darkness, that is upon this life, was persecuted by the other darkness (I mean, the Evil One and the Tempter), how much more will the darkness be persecuted, as being weaker than it? And what marvel is it, that though He entirely escaped, we have been, at any rate in part, overtaken? For it is a more wonderful thing that He should have been chased than that we should have been captured;—at least to the minds of all who reason aright on the subject. I will add yet another passage to those I have mentioned, because I think that it clearly tends to the same sense. I mean “In that He hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” But God will be all in all in the time of restitution; not in the sense that the Father alone will Be; and the Son be wholly resolved into Him, like a torch into a great pyre, from which it was reft away for a little space, and then put back (for I would not have even the Sabellians injured by such an expression); but the entire Godhead...when we shall be no longer divided (as we now are by movements and passions), and containing nothing at all of God, or very little, but shall be entirely like.

VII. As your third point you count the Word Greater; and as your fourth, To My God and your God. And indeed, if He had been called greater, and the word equal had not occurred, this might perhaps have been a point in their favour. But if we find both words clearly used what will these gentlemen have to say? How will it strengthen their argument? How will they reconcile the irreconcilable? For that the same thing should be at once greater than and equal to the same thing is an impossibility; and the evident solution is that the
Greater refers to origination, while the Equal belongs to the Nature; and this we acknowledge with much good will. But perhaps some one else will back up our attack on your argument, and assert, that That which is from such a Cause is not inferior to that which has no Cause; for it would share the glory of the Unoriginate, because it is from the Unoriginate. And there is, besides, the Generation, which is to all men a matter so marvellous and of such Majesty. For to say that he is greater than the Son considered as man, is true indeed, but is no great thing. For what marvel is it if God is greater than man? Surely that is enough to say in answer to their talk about Greater.

VIII. As to the other passages, My God would be used in respect, not of the Word, but of the Visible Word. For how could there be a God of Him Who is properly God? In the same way He is Father, not of the Visible, but of the Word; for our Lord was of two Natures; so that one expression is used properly, the other improperly in each of the two cases; but exactly the opposite way to their use in respect of us. For with respect to us God is properly our God, but not properly our Father. And this is the cause of the error of the Heretics, namely the joining of these two Names, which are interchanged because of the Union of the Natures. And an indication of this is found in the fact that wherever the Natures are distinguished in our thoughts from one another, the Names are also distinguished; as you hear in Paul’s words, “The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory.” The God of Christ, but the Father of glory. For although these two terms express but one Person, yet this is not by a Unity of Nature, but by a Union of the two. What could be clearer?

IX. Fifthly, let it be alleged that it is said of Him that He receives life, judgment, inheritance of the Gentiles, or power over all flesh, or glory, or disciples, or whatever else is mentioned. This also belongs to the Manhood; and yet if you were to ascribe it to the Godhead, it would be no absurdity. For you would not so ascribe it as if it were newly acquired, but as belonging to Him from the beginning by reason of nature, and not as an act of favour.

X. Sixthly, let it be asserted that it is written, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do. The solution of this is as follows:—Can and Cannot are not words with only one meaning, but have many meanings. On the one hand they are used sometimes in respect of deficiency of strength, sometimes in respect of time, and sometimes relatively to a certain object; as for instance, A Child cannot be an Athlete, or, A Puppy cannot see, or fight with so and so. Perhaps some day the child will be an athlete, the puppy will see, will fight with that other, though it may still be unable to fight with Any other. Or again, they may be used of that which is Generally true. For instance,—A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid; while yet it might possibly be hidden by another higher hill being in a line with it. Or in another sense they are used of a thing which is not reasonable; as, Can the Children of the Bridechamber fast while the Bridegroom is with them; whether He be considered as visible in bodily form (for the time of His sojourning among us was not one of mourning, but of gladness), or, as the Word. For why should they keep a bodily fast who are cleansed by the Word?
used of that which is contrary to the will; as in, He could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief,——i.e. of those who should receive them. For since in order to healing there is need of both faith in the patient and power in the Healer, when one of the two failed the other was impossible. But probably this sense also is to be referred to the head of the unreasonable. For healing is not reasonable in the case of those who would afterwards be injured by unbelief. The sentence The world cannot hate you, comes under the same head, as does also How can ye, being evil, speak good things? For in what sense is either impossible, except that it is contrary to the will? There is a somewhat similar meaning in the expressions which imply that a thing impossible by nature is possible to God if He so wills; as that a man cannot be born a second time, or that a needle will not let a camel through it. For what could prevent either of these things happening, if God so willed?

XI. And besides all this, there is the absolutely impossible and inadmissible, as that which we are now examining. For as we assert that it is impossible for God to be evil, or not to exist—for this would be indicative of weakness in God rather than of strength—or for the non-existent to exist, or for two and two to make both four and ten, so it is impossible and inconceivable that the Son should do anything that the Father doeth not. For all things that the Father hath are the Son’s; and on the other hand, all that belongs to the Son is the Father’s. Nothing then is peculiar, because all things are in common. For Their Being itself is common and equal, even though the Son receive it from the Father. It is in respect of this that it is said I live by the Father; not as though His Life and Being were kept together by the Father, but because He has His Being from Him beyond all time, and beyond all cause. But how does He see the Father doing, and do likewise? Is it like those who copy pictures and letters, because they cannot attain the truth unless by looking at the original, and being led by the hand by it? But how shall Wisdom stand in need of a teacher, or be incapable of acting unless taught? And in what sense does the Father “Do” in the present or in the past? Did He make another world before this one, or is He going to make a world to come? And did the Son look at that and make this? Or will He look at the other, and make one like it? According to this argument there must be Four worlds, two made by the Father, and two by the Son. What an absurdity! He cleanses lepers, and delivers men from evil spirits, and diseases, and quickens the dead, and walks upon the sea, and does all His other works; but in what case, or when did the Father do these acts before Him? Is it not clear that the Father impressed the ideas of these same actions, and the Word brings them to pass, yet not in slavish or unskilful fashion, but with full knowledge and in a masterly way, or, to speak more properly, like the Father? For in this sense I understand the words that whatsoever is done by the Father, these things doeth the Son likewise; not, that is, because of the likeness of the things done, but in respect of the Authority. This might well also be the meaning of the passage which says that the Father worketh hitherto and the Son also; and not only so but it refers also to the government and preservation of the things which He has made; as is shewn by the passage which says that He maketh His Angels Spirits, and that the earth is founded upon its steadfastness (though once for all these things were fixed and made) and that the thunder is made firm and the wind created. Of all these things the Word was given once, but the Action is continuous even now.
XII. Let them quote in the seventh place that The Son came down from Heaven, not to do His own Will, but the Will of Him That sent Him. Well, if this had not been said by Himself Who came down, we should say that the phrase was modelled as issuing from the Human Nature, not from Him who is conceived of in His character as the Saviour, for His Human Will cannot be opposed to God, seeing it is altogether taken into God; but conceived of simply as in our nature, inasmuch as the human will does not completely follow the Divine, but for the most part struggles against and resists it. For we understand in the same way the words, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; Nevertheless let not what I will but Thy Will prevail. For it is not likely that He did not know whether it was possible or not, or that He would oppose will to will. But since, as this is the language of Him Who assumed our Nature (for He it was Who came down), and not of the Nature which He assumed, we must meet the objection in this way, that the passage does not mean that the Son has a special will of His own, besides that of the Father, but that He has not; so that the meaning would be, “not to do Mine own Will, for there is none of Mine apart from, but that which is common to, Me and Thee; for as We have one Godhead, so We have one Will.”

For many such expressions are used in relation to this Community, and are expressed not positively but negatively; as, e.g., God giveth not the Spirit by measure, for as a matter of fact He does not give the Spirit to the Son, nor does He measure It, for God is not measured by God; or again, Not my transgression nor my sin. The words are not used because He has these things, but because He has them not. And again, Not for our righteousness which we have done, for we have not done any. And this meaning is evident also in the clauses which follow. For what, says He, is the Will of My Father? That everyone that believeth on the Son should be saved and obtain the final Resurrection. Now is this the Will of the Father, but not of the Son? Or does He preach the Gospel, and receive men’s faith against His will? Who could believe that? Moreover, that passage, too, which says that the Word which is heard is not the Son’s but the Father’s has the same force. For I cannot see how that which is common to two can be said to belong to one alone, however much I consider it, and I do not think any one else can. If then you hold this opinion concerning the Will, you will be right and reverent in your opinion, as I think, and as every right-minded person thinks.

XIII. The eighth passage is, That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent; and There is none good save one, that is, God. The solution of this appears to me very easy. For if you attribute this only to the Father, where will you place the Very Truth? For if you conceive in this manner of the meaning of To the only wise God, or Who only hath Immortality, Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, or to the king of the Ages, immortal, invisible, and only wise God, then the Son has vanished under sentence of death, or of darkness, or at any rate condemned to be neither wise nor king, nor invisible, nor God at all, which sums up all these points. And how will you prevent His Goodness, which especially belongs to God alone, from perishing with the rest? I, however, think that the passage That they may know Thee the only true God, was said to overthrow those gods which are falsely so called, for He would not have added and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent, if The Only True God were contrasted with Him, and the sentence
did not proceed upon the basis of a common Godhead. The “None is Good” meets the tempting Lawyer, who was testifying to His Goodness viewed as Man. For perfect goodness, He says, is God’s alone, even if a man is called perfectly good. As for instance, A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things. And, I will give the kingdom to one who is good above Thee...Words of God, speaking to Saul about David. Or again, Do good, O Lord, unto the good...and all other like expressions concerning those of us who are praised, upon whom it is a kind of effluence from the Supreme Good, and has come to them in a secondary degree. It will be best of all if we can persuade you of this. But if not, what will you say to the suggestion on the other side, that on your hypothesis the Son has been called the only God. In what passage? Why, in this:—This is your God; no other shall be accounted of in comparison with Him, and a little further on, after this did He shew Himself upon earth, and conversed with men. This addition proves clearly that the words are not used of the Father, but of the Son; for it was He Who in bodily form companied with us, and was in this lower world. Now, if we should determine to take these words as said in contrast with the Father, and not with the imaginary gods, we lose the Father by the very terms which we were pressing against the Son. And what could be more disastrous than such a victory?

XIV. Ninthly, they allege, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us. O, how beautiful and mystical and kind. For to intercede does not imply to seek for vengeance, as is most men’s way (for in that there would be something of humiliation), but it is to plead for us by reason of His Mediatorship, just as the Spirit also is said to make intercession for us. For there is One God, and One Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. For He still pleads even now as Man for my salvation; for He continues to wear the Body which He assumed, until He make me God by the power of His Incarnation; although He is no longer known after the flesh—I mean, the passions of the flesh, the same, except sin, as ours. Thus too, we have an Advocate, Jesus Christ, not indeed prostrating Himself for us before the Father, and falling down before Him in slavish fashion...Away with a suspicion so truly slavish and unworthy of the Spirit! For neither is it seemly for the Father to require this, nor for the Son to submit to it; nor is it just to think it of God. But by what He suffered as Man, He as the Word and the Counsellor persuades Him to be patient. I think this is the meaning of His Advocacy.

XV. Their tenth objection is the ignorance, and the statement that Of the last day and hour knoweth no man, not even the Son Himself, but the Father. And yet how can Wisdom be ignorant of anything—that is, Wisdom Who made the worlds, Who perfects them, Who remodels them, Who is the Limit of all things that were made, Who knoweth the things of God as the spirit of a man knows the things that are in him? For what can be more perfect than this knowledge? How then can you say that all things before that hour He knows accurately, and all things that are to happen about the time of the end, but of the hour itself He is ignorant? For such a thing would be like a riddle; as if one were to say that he knew accurately all that was in front of the wall, but did not know the wall itself; or that, knowing the end of the day, he did not know the beginning of the night—where knowledge of the one necessarily brings in the other. Thus everyone must see that He knows as God, and knows not
as Man;—if one may separate the visible from that which is discerned by thought alone. For the absolute and unconditioned use of the Name “The Son” in this passage, without the addition of whose Son, gives us this thought, that we are to understand the ignorance in the most reverent sense, by attributing it to the Manhood, and not to the Godhead.

XVI. If then this argument is sufficient, let us stop here, and not enquire further. But if not, our second argument is as follows:—Just as we do in all other instances, so let us refer His knowledge of the greatest events, in honour of the Father, to The Cause. And I think that anyone, even if he did not read it in the way that one of our own Students3676 did, would soon perceive that not even the Son knows the day or hour otherwise than as the Father does. For what do we conclude from this? That since the Father knows, therefore also does the Son, as it is evident that this cannot be known or comprehended by any but the First Nature. There remains for us to interpret the passage about His receiving commandment,3677 and having kept His Commandments, and done always those things that please Him; and further concerning His being made perfect,3678 and His exaltation,3679 and His learning obedience by the things which He suffered; and also His High Priesthood, and His Oblation, and His Betrayal, and His prayer to Him That was able to save Him from death, and His Agony and Bloody Sweat and Prayer,3680 and such like things; if it were not evident to every one that such words are concerned, not with That Nature Which is unchangeable and above all capacity of suffering, but with the possible Humanity. This, then, is the argument concerning these objections, so far as to be a sort of foundation and memorandum for the use of those who are better able to conduct the enquiry to a more complete working out. It may, however, be worth while, and will be consistent with what has been already said, instead of passing over without remark the actual Titles of the Son (there are many of them, and they are concerned with many of His Attributes), to set before you the meaning of each of them, and to point out the mystical meaning of the names.

XVII. We will begin thus. The Deity cannot be expressed in words. And this is proved to us, not only by argument, but by the wisest and most ancient of the Hebrews, so far as they have given us reason for conjecture. For they appropriated certain characters to the honour of the Deity, and would not even allow the name of anything inferior to God to be written with the same letters as that of God, because to their minds it was improper that the Deity should even to that extent admit any of His creatures to a share with Himself. How then could they have admitted that the invisible and separate Nature can be explained by divisible words? For neither has any one yet breathed the whole air, nor has any mind entirely comprehended, or speech exhaustively contained the Being of God. But we sketch Him by His Attributes, and so obtain a certain faint and feeble and partial idea concerning Him, and our best Theologian is he who has, not indeed discovered the whole, for our present chain does not allow of our seeing the whole, but conceived of Him to a greater extent than another, and gathered in himself more of the Likeness or adumbration of the Truth, or whatever we may call it.

XVIII. As far then as we can reach, He Who Is, and God, are the special names of His Essence;
and of these especially He Who Is, not only because when He spake to Moses in the mount, and Moses asked what His Name was, this was what He called Himself, bidding him say to the people “I Am hath sent me,” but also because we find that this Name is the more strictly appropriate. For the Name (God), even if, as those who are skilful in these matters say, it were derived from (to run) or from (to blaze), from continual motion, and because He consumes evil conditions of things (from which fact He is also called A Consuming Fire), would still be one of the Relative Names, and not an Absolute one; as again is the case with Lord which also is called a name of God. I am the Lord Thy God, He says, that is My name; and, The Lord is His name. But we are enquiring into a Nature Whose Being is absolute and not into Being bound up with something else. But Being is in its proper sense peculiar to God, and belongs to Him entirely, and is not limited or cut short by any Before or After, for indeed in him there is no past or future.

XIX. Of the other titles, some are evidently names of His Authority, others of His Government of the world, and of this viewed under a twofold aspect, the one before the other in the Incarnation. For instance the Almighty, the King of Glory, or of The Ages, or of The Powers, or of The Beloved, or of Kings. Or again the Lord of Sabaoth, that is of Hosts, or of Powers, or of Lords; these are clearly titles belonging to His Authority. But the God either of Salvation or of Vengeance, or of Peace, or of Righteousness; or of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of all the spiritual Israel that seeth God,—these belong to His Government. For since we are governed by these three things, the fear of punishment, the hope of salvation and of glory besides, and the practice of the virtues by which these are attained, the Name of the God of Vengeance governs fear, and that of the God of Salvation our hope, and that of the God of Virtues our practice; that whoever attains to any of these may, as carrying God in himself, press on yet more unto perfection, and to that affinity which arises out of virtues. Now these are Names common to the Godhead, but the Proper Name of the Unoriginate is Father, and that of the unoriginately Begotten is Son, and that of the unbegottenly Proceeding or going forth is The Holy Ghost. Let us proceed then to the Names of the Son, which were our starting point in this part of our argument.

XX. In my opinion He is called Son because He is identical with the Father in Essence; and not only for this reason, but also because He is Of Him. And He is called Only-Begotten, not because He is the only Son and of the Father alone, and only a Son; but also because the manner of His Sonship is peculiar to Himself and not shared by bodies. And He is called the Word, because He is related to the Father as Word to Mind; not only on account of His passionless Generation, but also because of the Union, and of His declaratory function. Perhaps too this relation might be compared to that between the Definition and the Thing defined since this also is called . For, it says, he that hath mental perception of the Son (for this is the meaning of Hath Seen) hath also perceived the Father; and the Son is a concise demonstration and easy setting forth of the Father’s Nature. For every thing that is begotten is a silent word of him that begat it. And if any one should say that this Name was given Him because He exists in all things that are, he would not be wrong. For what is there that consists but by
the word? He is also called Wisdom, as the Knowledge of things divine and human. For how is it possible that He Who made all things should be ignorant of the reasons of what He has made? And Power, as the Sustainer of all created things, and the Furnisher to them of power to keep themselves together. And Truth, as being in nature One and not many (for truth is one and falsehood is manifold), and as the pure Seal of the Father and His most unerring Impress. And the Image as of one substance with Him, and because He is of the Father, and not the Father of Him. For this is of the Nature of an Image, to be the reproduction of its Archetype, and of that whose name it bears; only that there is more here. For in ordinary language an image is a motionless representation of that which has motion; but in this case it is the living reproduction of the Living One, and is more exactly like than was Seth to Adam,3690 or any son to his father. For such is the nature of simple Existences, that it is not correct to say of them that they are Like in one particular and Unlike in another; but they are a complete resemblance, and should rather be called Identical than Like. Moreover he is called Light as being the Brightness of souls cleansed by word and life. For if ignorance and sin be darkness, knowledge and a godly life will be Light....And He is called Life, because He is Light, and is the constituting and creating Power of every reasonable soul. For in Him we live and move and have our being,3691 according to the double power of that Breathing into us; for we were all inspired by Him with breath,3692 and as many of us as were capable of it, and in so far as we open the mouth of our mind, with God the Holy Ghost. He is Righteousness, because He distributes according to that which we deserve, and is a righteous Arbiter both for those who are under the Law and for those who are under Grace, for soul and body, so that the former should rule, and the latter obey, and the higher have supremacy over the lower; that the worse may not rise in rebellion against the better. He is Sanctification, as being Purity, that the Pure may be contained by Purity. And Redemption, because He sets us free, who were held captive under sin, giving Himself a Ransom for us, the Sacrifice to make expiation for the world. And Resurrection, because He raises up from hence, and brings to life again us, who were slain by sin.

XXI. These names however are still common to Him Who is above us, and to Him Who came for our sake. But others are peculiarly our own, and belong to that nature which He assumed. So He is called Man, not only that through His Body He may be apprehended by embodied creatures, whereas otherwise this would be impossible because of His incomprehensible nature; but also that by Himself He may sanctify humanity, and be as it were a leaven to the whole lump; and by uniting to Himself that which was condemned may release it from all condemnation, becoming for all men all things that we are, except sin;—body, soul, mind and all through which death reaches—and thus He became Man, who is the combination of all these; God in visible form, because He retained that which is perceived by mind alone. He is Son of Man, both on account of Adam, and of the Virgin from Whom He came; from the one as a forefather, from the other as His Mother, both in accordance with the law of generation, and apart from it. He is Christ, because of His Godhead. For this is the Anointing of His Manhood, and does not, as is the case with all other Anointed Ones, sanctify by its action, but by the Presence in His Fulness of the Anointing One; the effect of which is that That which anoints is called Man, and makes that which is anointed God. He is The Way, because He leads us through Himself; The Door, as letting us in; the Shepherd, as making us dwell in a place of
green pastures, and bringing us up by waters of rest, and leading us there, and protecting us from wild beasts, converting the erring, bringing back that which was lost, binding up that which was broken, guarding the strong, and bringing them together in the Fold beyond, with words of pastoral knowledge. The Sheep, as the Victim: The Lamb, as being perfect: the Highpriest, as the Offerer; Melchisedec, as without Mother in that Nature which is above us, and without Father in ours; and without genealogy above (for who, it says, shall declare His generation?) and moreover, as King of Salem, which means Peace, and King of Righteousness, and as receiving tithes from Patriarchs, when they prevail over powers of evil. They are the titles of the Son. Walk through them, those that are lofty in a godlike manner; those that belong to the body in a manner suitable to them; or rather, altogether in a godlike manner, that thou mayest become a god, ascending from below, for His sake Who came down from on high for ours. In all and above all keep to this, and thou shalt never err, either in the loftier or the lowlier names; Jesus Christ is the Same yesterday and to-day in the Incarnation, and in the Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

The Fifth Theological Oration.

On the Holy Spirit.

I. Such then is the account of the Son, and in this manner He has escaped those who would stone Him, passing through the midst of them. For the Word is not stoned, but casts stones when He pleases; and uses a sling against wild beasts—that is, words—approaching the Mount in an unholy way. But, they go on, what have you to say about the Holy Ghost? From whence are you bringing in upon us this strange God, of Whom Scripture is silent? And even they who keep within bounds as to the Son speak thus. And just as we find in the case of roads and rivers, that they split off from one another and join again, so it happens also in this case, through the superabundance of impiety, that people who differ in all other respects have here some points of agreement, so that you never can tell for certain either where they are of one mind, or where they are in conflict.

II. Now the subject of the Holy Spirit presents a special difficulty, not only because when these men have become weary in their disputations concerning the Son, they struggle with greater heat against the Spirit (for it seems to be absolutely necessary for them to have some object on which to give expression to their impiety, or life would appear to them no longer worth living), but further because we ourselves also, being worn out by the multitude of their questions, are in something of the same condition with men who have lost their appetite; who having taken a dislike to some particular kind of food, shrink from all food; so we in like manner have an aversion from all discussions. Yet may the Spirit grant it to us, and then the discourse will proceed, and God will be glorified. Well then, we will leave to others who have worked upon this subject for us as well as for themselves, as we have worked upon it for them, the task of examining carefully and distinguishing in how many senses the word Spirit or the word Holy is used and understood in Holy Scripture, with the evidence suitable to such an enquiry; and of shewing how besides these the combination of the two words—I mean, Holy Spirit—is used in a peculiar sense; but we will apply ourselves to the remainder of the subject.
III. They then who are angry with us on the ground that we are bringing in a strange or interpolated God, viz.:—the Holy Ghost, and who fight so very hard for the letter, should know that they are afraid where no fear is; and I would have them clearly understand that their love for the letter is but a cloak for their impiety, as shall be shewn later on, when we refute their objections to the utmost of our power. But we have so much confidence in the Deity of the Spirit Whom we adore, that we will begin our teaching concerning His Godhead by fitting to Him the Names which belong to the Trinity, even though some persons may think us too bold. The Father was the True Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world. The Son was the True Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world. The Other Comforter was the True Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world. Was and Was and Was, but Was One Thing. Light thrice repeated; but One Light and One God. This was what David represented to himself long before when he said, In Thy Light shall we see Light. And now we have both seen and proclaim concisely and simply the doctrine of God the Trinity, comprehending out of Light (the Father), Light (the Son), in Light (the Holy Ghost). He that rejects it, let him reject it; and he that doeth iniquity, let him do iniquity; we proclaim that which we have understood. We will get us up into a high mountain, and will shout, if we be not heard, below; we will exalt the Spirit; we will not be afraid; or if we are afraid, it shall be of keeping silence, not of proclaiming.

IV. If ever there was a time when the Father was not, then there was a time when the Son was not. If ever there was a time when the Son was not, then there was a time when the Spirit was not. If the One was from the beginning, then the Three were so too. If you throw down the One, I am bold to assert that you do not set up the other Two. For what profit is there in an imperfect Godhead? Or rather, what Godhead can there be if it is not perfect? And how can that be perfect which lacks something of perfection? And surely there is something lacking if it hath not the Holy, and how would it have this if it were without the Spirit? For either holiness is something different from Him, and if so let some one tell me what it is conceived to be; or if it is the same, how is it not from the beginning, as if it were better for God to be at one time imperfect and apart from the Spirit? If He is not from the beginning, He is in the same rank with myself, even though a little before me; for we are both parted from Godhead by time. If He is in the same rank with myself, how can He make me God, or join me with Godhead?

V. Or rather, let me reason with you about Him from a somewhat earlier point, for we have already discussed the Trinity. The Sadducees altogether denied the existence of the Holy Spirit, just as they did that of Angels and the Resurrection; rejecting, I know not upon what ground, the important testimonies concerning Him in the Old Testament. And of the Greeks those who are more inclined to speak of God, and who approach nearest to us, have formed some conception of Him, as it seems to me, though they have differed as to His Name, and have addressed Him as the Mind of the World, or the External Mind, and the like. But of the wise men amongst ourselves, some have conceived of him as an Activity, some as a Creature, some as God; and some have been uncertain which to call Him, out of reverence for Scripture, they
say, as though it did not make the matter clear either way. And therefore they neither worship Him nor treat Him with dishonour, but take up a neutral position, or rather a very miserable one, with respect to Him. And of those who consider Him to be God, some are orthodox in mind only, while others venture to be so with the lips also. And I have heard of some who are even more clever, and measure Deity; and these agree with us that there are Three Conceptions; but they have separated these from one another so completely as to make one of them infinite both in essence and power, and the second in power but not in essence, and the third circumscribed in both; thus imitating in another way those who call them the Creator, the Co-operator, and the Minister, and consider that the same order and dignity which belongs to these names is also a sequence in the facts.

VI. But we cannot enter into any discussion with those who do not even believe in His existence, nor with the Greek babblers (for we would not be enriched in our argument with the oil of sinners). With the others, however, we will argue thus. The Holy Ghost must certainly be conceived of either as in the category of the Self-existent, or as in that of the things which are contemplated in another; of which classes those who are skilled in such matters call the one Substance and the other Accident. Now if He were an Accident, He would be an Activity of God, for what else, or of whom else, could He be, for surely this is what most avoids composition? And if He is an Activity, He will be effected, but will not effect and will cease to exist as soon as He has been effected, for this is the nature of an Activity. How is it then that He acts and says such and such things, and defines, and is grieved, and is angered, and has all the qualities which belong clearly to one that moves, and not to movement? But if He is a Substance and not an attribute of Substance, He will be conceived of either as a Creature of God, or as God. For anything between these two, whether having nothing in common with either, or a compound of both, not even they who invented the goat-stag could imagine. Now, if He is a creature, how do we believe in Him, how are we made perfect in Him? For it is not the same thing to believe IN a thing and to believe About it. The one belongs to Deity, the other to—any thing. But if He is God, then He is neither a creature, nor a thing made, nor a fellow servant, nor any of these lowly appellations.

VII. There—the word is with you. Let the slings be let go; let the syllogism be woven. Either He is altogether Unbegotten, or else He is Begotten. If He is Unbegotten, there are two Unoriginates. If he is Begotten, you must make a further subdivision. He is so either by the Father or by the Son. And if by the Father, there are two Sons, and they are Brothers. And you may make them twins if you like, or the one older and the other younger, since you are so very fond of the bodily conceptions. But if by the Son, then such a one will say, we get a glimpse of a Grandson God, than which nothing could be more absurd. For my part however, if I saw the necessity of the distinction, I should have acknowledged the facts without fear of the names. For it does not follow that because the Son is the Son in some higher relation (inasmuch as we could not in any other way than this point out that He is of God and Consubstantial), it would also be necessary to think that all the names of this lower world and of our kindred should be transferred to the Godhead. Or may be you would consider our God to be a male, according to the same arguments, because he is
called God and Father, and that Deity is feminine, from the gender of the word, and Spirit neuter, because It has nothing to do with generation; But if you would be silly enough to say, with the old myths and fables, that God begat the Son by a marriage with His own Will, we should be introduced to the Hermaphrodite god of Marcion and Valentinus who imagined these newfangled Æons.

VIII. But since we do not admit your first division, which declares that there is no mean between Begotten and Unbegotten, at once, along with your magnificent division, away go your Brothers and your Grandsons, as when the first link of an intricate chain is broken they are broken with it, and disappear from your system of divinity. For, tell me, what position will you assign to that which Proceeds, which has started up between the two terms of your division, and is introduced by a better Theologian than you, our Saviour Himself? Or perhaps you have taken that word out of your Gospels for the sake of your Third Testament, The Holy Ghost, which proceedeth from the Father; Who, inasmuch as He proceedeth from That Source, is no Creature; and inasmuch as He is not Begotten is no Son; and inasmuch as He is between the Unbegotten and the Begotten is God. And thus escaping the toils of your syllogisms, He has manifested himself as God, stronger than your divisions. What then is Procession? Do you tell me what is the Unbegottenness of the Father, and I will explain to you the physiology of the Generation of the Son and the Procession of the Spirit, and we shall both be frenzy-stricken for prying into the mystery of God. And who are we to do these things, we who cannot even see what lies at our feet, or number the sand of the sea, or the drops of rain, or the days of Eternity, much less enter into the Depths of God, and supply an account of that Nature which is so unspeakable and transcending all words?

IX. What then, say they, is there lacking to the Spirit which prevents His being a Son, for if there were not something lacking He would be a Son? We assert that there is nothing lacking—for God has no deficiency. But the difference of manifestation, if I may so express myself, or rather of their mutual relations one to another, has caused the difference of their Names. For indeed it is not some deficiency in the Son which prevents His being Father (for Sonship is not a deficiency), and yet He is not Father. According to this line of argument there must be some deficiency in the Father, in respect of His not being Son. For the Father is not Son, and yet this is not due to either deficiency or subjection of Essence; but the very fact of being Unbegotten or Begotten, or Proceeding has given the name of Father to the First, of the Son to the Second, and of the Third, Him of Whom we are speaking, of the Holy Ghost that the distinction of the Three Persons may be preserved in the one nature and dignity of the Godhead. For neither is the Son Father, for the Father is One, but He is what the Father is; nor is the Spirit Son because He is of God, for the Only-begotten is One, but He is what the Son is. The Three are One in Godhead, and the One Three in properties; so that neither is the Unity a Sabellian one, nor does the Trinity countenance the present evil distinction.

X. What then? Is the Spirit God? Most certainly. Well then, is He Consubstantial? Yes, if He is God. Grant me, says my opponent, that there spring from the same Source One who is a Son,
and One who is not a Son, and these of One Substance with the Source, and I admit a God and a God. Nay, if you will grant me that there is another God and another nature of God I will give you the same Trinity with the same name and facts. But since God is One and the Supreme Nature is One, how can I present to you the Likeness? Or will you seek it again in lower regions and in your own surroundings? It is very shameful, and not only shameful, but very foolish, to take from things below a guess at things above, and from a fluctuating nature at the things that are unchanging, and as Isaiah says, to seek the Living among the dead. But yet I will try, for your sake, to give you some assistance for your argument, even from that source. I think I will pass over other points, though I might bring forward many from animal history, some generally known, others only known to a few, of what nature has contrived with wonderful art in connection with the generation of animals. For not only are likes said to beget likes, and things diverse to beget things diverse, but also likes to be begotten by things diverse, and things diverse by likes. And if we may believe the story, there is yet another mode of generation, when an animal is self-consumed and self-begotten. There are also creatures which depart in some sort from their true natures, and undergo change and transformation from one creature into another, by a magnificence of nature. And indeed sometimes in the same species part may be generated and part not; and yet all of one substance; which is more like our present subject. I will just mention one fact of our own nature which every one knows, and then I will pass on to another part of the subject.

XI. What was Adam? A creature of God. What then was Eve? A fragment of the creature. And what was Seth? The begotten of both. Does it then seem to you that Creature and Fragment and Begotten are the same thing? Of course it does not. But were not these persons consubstantial? Of course they were. Well then, here it is an acknowledged fact that different persons may have the same substance. I say this, not that I would attribute creation or fraction or any property of body to the Godhead (let none of your contenders for a word be down upon me again), but that I may contemplate in these, as on a stage, things which are objects of thought alone. For it is not possible to trace out any image exactly to the whole extent of the truth. But, they say, what is the meaning of all this? For is not the one an offspring, and the other a something else of the One? Did not both Eve and Seth come from the one Adam? And were they both begotten by him? No; but the one was a fragment of him, and the other was begotten by him. And yet the two were one and the same thing; both were human beings; no one will deny that. Will you then give up your contention against the Spirit, that He must be either altogether begotten, or else cannot be consubstantial, or be God; and admit from human examples the possibility of our position? I think it will be well for you, unless you are determined to be very quarrelsome, and to fight against what is proved to demonstration.

XII. But, he says, who in ancient or modern times ever worshipped the Spirit? Who ever prayed to Him? Where is it written that we ought to worship Him, or to pray to Him, and whence have you derived this tenet of yours? We will give the more perfect reason hereafter, when we discuss the question of the unwritten; for the present it will suffice to say that it is the Spirit in Whom we worship, and in Whom we pray. For Scripture says, God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. And again,—We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with
groanings which cannot be uttered; 3713 and I will pray with the Spirit and I will pray with the understanding also; 3714—that is, in the mind and in the Spirit. Therefore to adore or to pray to the Spirit seems to me to be simply Himself offering prayer or adoration to Himself. And what godly or learned man would disapprove of this, because in fact the adoration of One is the adoration of the Three, because of the equality of honour and Deity between the Three? So I will not be frightened by the argument that all things are said to have been made by the Son; 3715 as if the Holy Spirit also were one of these things. For it says all things that were made, and not simply all things. For the Father was not, nor were any of the things that were not made. Prove that He was made, and then give Him to the Son, and number Him among the creatures; but until you can prove this you will gain nothing for your impiety from this comprehensive phrase. For if He was made, it was certainly through Christ; I myself would not deny that. But if He was not made, how can He be either one of the All, or through Christ? Cease then to dishonour the Father in your opposition to the Only-begotten (for it is no real honour, by presenting to Him a creature to rob Him of what is more valuable, a Son), and to dishonour the Son in your opposition to the Spirit. For He is not the Maker of a Fellow servant, but He is glorified with One of co-equal honour. Rank no part of the Trinity with thyself, lest thou fall away from the Trinity; cut not off from Either the One and equally august Nature; because if thou overthrow any of the Three thou wilt have overthrown the whole. Better to take a meagre view of the Unity than to venture on a complete impiety.

XIII. Our argument has now come to its principal point; and I am grieved that a problem that was long dead, and that had given way to faith, is now stirred up afresh; yet it is necessary to stand against these praters, and not to let judgment go by default, when we have the Word on our side, and are pleading the cause of the Spirit. If, say they, there is God and God and God, how is it that there are not Three Gods, or how is it that what is glorified is not a plurality of Principles? Who is it who say this? Those who have reached a more complete ungodliness, or even those who have taken the secondary part; I mean who are moderate in a sense in respect of the Son. For my argument is partly against both in common, partly against these latter in particular. What I have to say in answer to these is as follows:—What right have you who worship the Son, even though you have revolted from the Spirit, to call us Tritheists? Are not you Ditheists? For if you deny also the worship of the Only Begotten, you have clearly ranged yourself among our adversaries. And why should we deal kindly with you as not quite dead? But if you do worship Him, and are so far in the way of salvation, we will ask you what reasons you have to give for your ditheism, if you are charged with it? If there is in you a word of wisdom answer, and open to us also a way to an answer. For the very same reason with which you will repel a charge of Ditheism will prove sufficient for us against one of Tritheism. And thus we shall win the day by making use of you our accusers as our Advocates, than which nothing can be more generous.

XIV. What is our quarrel and dispute with both? To us there is One God, for the Godhead is One, and all that proceedeth from Him is referred to One, though we believe in Three Persons. For one is not more and another less God; nor is One before and another after; nor are They divided in will or parted in power; nor can you find here any of the qualities of divisible things;
but the Godhead is, to speak concisely, undivided in separate Persons; and there is one mingling of Light, as it were of three suns joined to each other. When then we look at the Godhead, or the First Cause, or the Monarchia, that which we conceive is One; but when we look at the Persons in Whom the Godhead dwells, and at Those Who timelessly and with equal glory have their Being from the First Cause—there are Three Whom we worship.

XV. What of that, they will say perhaps; do not the Greeks also believe in one Godhead, as their more advanced philosophers declare? And with us Humanity is one, namely the entire race; but yet they have many gods, not One, just as there are many men. But in this case the common nature has a unity which is only conceivable in thought; and the individuals are parted from one another very far indeed, both by time and by dispositions and by power. For we are not only compound beings, but also contrasted beings, both with one another and with ourselves; nor do we remain entirely the same for a single day, to say nothing of a whole lifetime, but both in body and in soul are in a perpetual state of flow and change. And perhaps the same may be said of the Angels and the whole of that superior nature which is second to the Trinity alone; although they are simple in some measure and more fixed in good, owing to their nearness to the highest Good.

XVI. Nor do those whom the Greeks worship as gods, and (to use their own expression) dæmons, need us in any respect for their accusers, but are convicted upon the testimony of their own theologians, some as subject to passion, some as given to faction, and full of innumerable evils and changes, and in a state of opposition, not only to one another, but even to their first causes, whom they call Oceani and Tethyes and Phanetes, and by several other names; and last of all a certain god who hated his children through his lust of rule, and swallowed up all the rest through his greediness that he might become the father of all men and gods whom he miserably devoured, and then vomited forth again. And if these are but myths and fables, as they say in order to escape the shamefulness of the story, what will they say in reference to the dictum that all things are divided into three parts, and that each god presides over a different part of the Universe, having a distinct province as well as a distinct rank? But our faith is not like this, nor is this the portion of Jacob, says my Theologian. But each of these Persons possesses Unity, not less with that which is United to it than with itself, by reason of the identity of Essence and Power. And this is the account of the Unity, so far as we have apprehended it. If then this account is the true one, let us thank God for the glimpse He has granted us; if it is not let us seek for a better.

XVII. As for the arguments with which you would overthrow the Union which we support, I know not whether we should say you are jesting or in earnest. For what is this argument? “Things of one essence, you say, are counted together,” and by this “counted together,” you mean that they are collected into one number. But things which are not of one essence are not thus counted...so that you cannot avoid speaking of three gods, according to this account, while we do not run any risk at all of it, inasmuch as we assert that they are not consubstantial. And so by a single word you have freed yourselves from trouble, and have
gained a pernicious victory, for in fact you have done something like what men do when they
hang themselves for fear of death. For to save yourselves trouble in your championship of the
Monarchia you have denied the Godhead, and abandoned the question to your opponents.
But for my part, even if labor should be necessary, I will not abandon the Object of my
adoration. And yet on this point I cannot see where the difficulty is.

XVIII. You say, Things of one essence are counted together, but those which are not
consubstantial are reckoned one by one. Where did you get this from? From what teachers of
dogma or mythology? Do you not know that every number expresses the quantity of what is
included under it, and not the nature of the things? But I am so old fashioned, or perhaps I
should say so unlearned, as to use the word Three of that number of things, even if they are of
a different nature, and to use One and One and One in a different way of so many units, even if
they are united in essence, looking not so much at the things themselves as at the quantity of
the things in respect of which the enumeration is made. But since you hold so very close to the
letter (although you are contending against the letter), pray take your demonstrations from
this source. There are in the Book of Proverbs three things which go well, a lion, a goat, and a
cock; and to these is added a fourth;—a King making a speech before the people,3721 to pass
over the other sets of four which are there counted up, although things of various natures.
And I find in Moses two Cherubim3722 counted singly. But now, in your technology, could
either the former things be called three, when they differ so greatly in their nature, or the
latter be treated as units when they are so closely connected and of one nature? For if I were
to speak of God and Mammon, as two masters, reckoned under one head, when they are so
very different from each other, I should probably be still more laughed at for such a
connumeration.

XIX. But to my mind, he says, those things are said to be connumerated and of the same
essence of which the names also correspond, as Three Men, or Three gods, but not Three this
and that. What does this concession amount to? It is suitable to one laying down the law as to
names, not to one who is asserting the truth. For I also will assert that Peter and James and
John are not three or consubstantial, so long as I cannot say Three Peters, or Three Jameses, or
Three Johns; for what you have reserved for common names we demand also for proper
names, in accordance with your arrangement; or else you will be unfair in not conceding to
others what you assume for yourself. What about John then, when in his Catholic Epistle he
says that there are Three that bear witness,3723 the Spirit

324
and the Water and the Blood? Do you think he is talking nonsense? First, because he has
ventured to reckon under one numeral things which are not consubstantial, though you say
this ought to be done only in the case of things which are consubstantial. For who would
assert that these are consubstantial? Secondly, because he has not been consistent in the way
he has happened upon his terms; for after using Three in the masculine gender he adds three
words which are neuter, contrary to the definitions and laws which you and your grammarians
have laid down. For what is the difference between putting a masculine Three first, and then
adding One and One and One in the neuter, or after a masculine One and One and One to use
the Three not in the masculine but in the neuter, which you yourself disclaim in the case of
Deity? What have you to say about the Crab, which may mean either an animal, or an instrument, or a constellation? And what about the Dog, now terrestrial, now aquatic, now celestial? Do you not see that three crabs or dogs are spoken of? Why of course it is so. Well then, are they therefore of one substance? None but a fool would say that. So you see how completely your argument from connumeration has broken down, and is refuted by all these instances. For if things that are of one substance are not always counted under one numeral, and things not of one substance are thus counted, and the pronunciation of the name once for all is used in both cases, what advantage do you gain towards your doctrine?

XX. I will look also at this further point, which is not without its bearing on the subject. One and One added together make Two; and Two resolved again becomes One and One, as is perfectly evident. If, however, elements which are added together must, as your theory requires, be consubstantial, and those which are separate be heterogeneous, then it will follow that the same things must be both consubstantial and heterogeneous. No: I laugh at your Counting Before and your Counting After, of which you are so proud, as if the facts themselves depended upon the order of their names. If this were so, according to the same law, since the same things are in consequence of the equality of their nature counted in Holy Scripture, sometimes in an earlier, sometimes in a later place, what prevents them from being at once more honourable and less honourable than themselves? I say the same of the names God and Lord, and of the prepositions Of Whom, and By Whom, and In Whom, by which you describe the Deity according to the rules of art for us, attributing the first to the Father, the second to the Son, and the third to the Holy Ghost. For what would you have done, if each of these expressions were constantly allotted to Each Person, when, the fact being that they are used of all the Persons, as is evident to those who have studied the question, you even so make them the ground of such inequality both of nature and dignity. This is sufficient for all who are not altogether wanting in sense. But since it is a matter of difficulty for you after you have once made an assault upon the Spirit, to check your rush, and not rather like a furious boar to push your quarrel to the bitter end, and to thrust yourself upon the knife until you have received the whole wound in your own breast; let us go on to see what further argument remains to you.

XXI. Over and over again you turn upon us the silence of Scripture. But that it is not a strange doctrine, nor an afterthought, but acknowledged and plainly set forth both by the ancients and many of our own day, is already demonstrated by many persons who have treated of this subject, and who have handled the Holy Scriptures, not with indifference or as a mere pastime, but have gone beneath the letter and looked into the inner meaning, and have been deemed worthy to see the hidden beauty, and have been irradiated by the light of knowledge. We, however in our turn will briefly prove it as far as may be, in order not to seem to be overcurious or improperly ambitious, building on another’s foundation. But since the fact, that Scripture does not very clearly or very often write Him God in express words (as it does first the Father and afterwards the Son), becomes to you an occasion of blasphemy and of this excessive wordiness and impiety, we will release you from this inconvenience by a short discussion of things and names, and especially of their use in Holy Scripture.

XXII. Some things have no existence, but are spoken of; others which do exist are not spoken
of; some neither exist nor are spoken of, and some both exist and are spoken of. Do you ask
me for proof of this? I am ready to give it. According to Scripture God sleeps and is awake, is
angry, walks, has the Cherubim for His Throne. And yet when did He become liable to passion,
and have you ever
325
heard that God has a body? This then is, though not really fact, a figure of speech. For we
have given names according to our own comprehension from our own attributes to those of
God. His remaining silent apart from us, and as it were not caring for us, for reasons known to
Himself, is what we call His sleeping; for our own sleep is such a state of inactivity. And again,
His sudden turning to do us good is the waking up; for waking is the dissolution of sleep, as
visitation is of turning away. And when He punishes, we say He is angry; for so it is with us,
punishment is the result of anger. And His working, now here now there, we call walking; for
walking is change from one place to another. His resting among the Holy Hosts, and as it were
loving to dwell among them, is His sitting and being enthroned; this, too, from ourselves, for
God resteth nowhere as He doth upon the Saints. His swiftness of moving is called flying, and
His watchful care is called His Face, and his giving and bestowing3725 is His hand; and, in a
word, every other of the powers or activities of God has depicted for us some other corporeal
one.

XXIII. Again, where do you get your Unbegotten and Unoriginate, those two citadels of your
position, or we our Immortal? Show me these in so many words, or we shall either set them
aside, or erase them as not contained in Scripture; and you are slain by your own principle, the
names you rely on being overthrown, and therewith the wall of refuge in which you trusted. Is
it not evident that they are due to passages which imply them, though the words do not
actually occur? What are these passages?—I am the first, and I am the last,3726 and before
Me there was no God, neither shall there be after Me.3727 For all that depends on that Am
makes for my side, for it has neither beginning nor ending. When you accept this, that nothing
is before Him, and that He has not an older Cause, you have implicitly given Him the titles
Unbegotten and Unoriginate. And to say that He has no end of Being is to call Him Immortal
and Indestructible. The first pairs, then, that I referred to are accounted for thus. But what are
the things which neither exist in fact nor are said? That God is evil; that a sphere is square;
that the past is present; that man is not a compound being. Have you ever known a man of
such stupidity as to venture either to think or to assert any such thing? It remains to shew
what are the things which exist, both in fact and in language. God, Man, Angel, Judgment,
Vanity (viz., such arguments as yours), and the subversion of faith and emptying of the
mystery.

XXIV. Since, then, there is so much difference in terms and things, why are you such a slave to
the letter, and a partisan of the Jewish wisdom, and a follower of syllables at the expense of
facts? But if, when you said twice five or twice seven, I concluded from your words that you
meant Ten or Fourteen; or if, when you spoke of a rational and mortal animal, that you meant
Man, should you think me to be talking nonsense? Surely not, because I should be merely
repeating your own meaning; for words do not belong more to the speaker of them than to
him who called them forth. As, then, in this case, I should have been looking, not so much at
the terms used, as at the thoughts they were meant to convey; so neither, if I found something
else either not at all or not clearly expressed in the Words of Scripture to be included in the
meaning, should I avoid giving it utterance, out of fear of your sophistical trick about terms. In
this way, then, we shall hold our own against the semi-orthodox—among whom I may not
count you. For since you deny the Titles of the Son, which are so many and so clear, it is quite
evident that even if you learnt a great many more and clearer ones you would not be moved to
reverence. But now I will take up the argument again a little way further back, and shew you,
though you are so clever, the reason for this entire system of secrery.

XXV. There have been in the whole period of the duration of the world two conspicuous
changes of men’s lives, which are also called two Testaments, or, on account of the wide
fame of the matter, two Earthquakes; the one from idols to the Law, the other from the Law to
the Gospel. And we are taught in the Gospel of a third earthquake, namely, from this Earth to
that which cannot be shaken or moved. Now the two Testaments are alike in this respect,
that the change was not made on a sudden, nor at the first movement of the endeavour. Why
not (for this is a point on which we must have information)? That no violence might be done to
us, but that we might be moved by persuasion. For nothing that is involuntary is durable; like
streams or trees which are kept back by force. But that which is voluntary is more durable and
safe.

326
The former is due to one who uses force, the latter is ours; the one is due to the gentleness of
God, the other to a tyrannical authority. Wherefore God did not think it behoved Him to
benefit the unwilling, but to do good to the willing. And therefore like a Tutor or Physician He
partly removes and partly condones ancestral habits, conceding some little of what tended to
pleasure, just as medical men do with their patients, that their medicine may be taken, being
artfully blended with what is nice. For it is no very easy matter to change from those habits
which custom and use have made honourable. For instance, the first cut off the idol, but left
the sacrifices; the second, while it destroyed the sacrifices did not forbid circumcision. Then,
when once men had submitted to the curtailment, they also yielded that which had been
conceded to them; in the first instance the sacrifices, in the second circumcision; and
became instead of Gentiles, Jews, and instead of Jews, Christians, being beguiled into the
Gospel by gradual changes. Paul is a proof of this; for having at one time administered
circumcision, and submitted to legal purification, he advanced till he could say, and I, brethren,
if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? His former conduct belonged
to the temporary dispensation, his latter to maturity.

XXVI. To this I may compare the case of Theology except that it proceeds the reverse way.
For in the case by which I have illustrated it the change is made by successive subtractions;
whereas here perfection is reached by additions. For the matter stands thus. The Old
Testament proclaimed the Father openly, and the Son more obscurely. The New manifested
the Son, and suggested the Deity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit Himself dwells among us, and
supplies us with a clearer demonstration of Himself. For it was not safe, when the Godhead of
the Father was not yet acknowledged, plainly to proclaim the Son; nor when that of the Son
was not yet received to burden us further (if I may use so bold an expression) with the Holy
Ghost; lest perhaps people might, like men loaded with food beyond their strength, and presenting eyes as yet too weak to bear it to the sun’s light, risk the loss even of that which was within the reach of their powers; but that by gradual additions, and, as David says, Goings up, and advances and progress from glory to glory,3734 the Light of the Trinity might shine upon the more illuminated. For this reason it was, I think, that He gradually came to dwell in the Disciples, measuring Himself out to them according to their capacity to receive Him, at the beginning of the Gospel, after the Passion, after the Ascension, making perfect their powers, being breathed upon them, and appearing in fiery tongues. And indeed it is by little and little that He is declared by Jesus, as you will learn for yourself if you will read more carefully. I will ask the Father, He says, and He will send you another Comforter, even the spirit of Truth.3735 This He said that He might not seem to be a rival God, or to make His discourses to them by another authority. Again, He shall send Him, but it is in My Name. He leaves out the I will ask, but He keeps the Shall send,3736 then again, I will send,—His own dignity. Then shall come,3737 the authority of the Spirit.

XXVII. You see lights breaking upon us, gradually; and the order of Theology, which it is better for us to keep, neither proclaiming things too suddenly, nor yet keeping them hidden to the end. For the former course would be unscientific, the latter atheistical; and the former would be calculated to startle outsiders, the latter to alienate our own people. I will add another point to what I have said; one which may readily have come into the mind of some others, but which I think a fruit of my own thought. Our Saviour had some things which, He said, could not be borne at that time by His disciples3738 (though they were filled with many teachings), perhaps for the reasons I have mentioned; and therefore they were hidden. And again He said that all things should be taught us by the Spirit when He should come to dwell amongst us.3739 Of these things one, I take it, was the Deity of the Spirit Himself, made clear later on when such knowledge should be seasonable and capable of being received after our Saviour’s restoration, when it would no longer be received with incredulity because of its marvellous character. For what greater thing than this did either He promise, or the Spirit teach. If indeed anything is to be considered great and worthy of the Majesty of God, which was either promised or taught.

XXVIII. This, then, is my position with regard to these things, and I hope it may be always my position, and that of whosoever is dear to me; to worship God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three Persons, One Godhead, undivided in honour and glory and substance and kingdom, as one of our own inspired philosophers3740 not long departed shewed. Let him not see the rising of the Morning Star, as Scripture saith,3741 nor the glory of its brightness, who is otherwise minded, or who follows the temper of the times, at one time being of one mind and of another at another time, and thinking unsoundly in the highest matters. For if He is not to be worshipped, how can He deify me by Baptism? but if He is to be worshipped, surely He is an Object of adoration, and if an Object of adoration He must be God; the one is linked to the other, a truly golden and saving chain. And indeed from the Spirit comes our New Birth, and from the New Birth our new creation, and from the new creation our deeper knowledge of the dignity of Him
from Whom it is derived.

XXIX. This, then, is what may be said by one who admits the silence of Scripture. But now the swarm of testimonies shall burst upon you from which the Deity of the Holy Ghost shall be shewn to all who are not excessively stupid, or else altogether enemies to the Spirit, to be most clearly recognized in Scripture. Look at these facts:—Christ is born; the Spirit is His Forerunner. He is baptized; the Spirit bears witness. He is tempted; the Spirit leads Him up. He works miracles; the Spirit accompanies them. He ascends; the Spirit takes His place. What great things are there in the idea of God which are not in His power? What titles which belong to God are not applied to Him, except only Unbegotten and Begotten? For it was needful that the distinctive properties of the Father and the Son should remain peculiar to Them, lest there should be confusion in the Godhead Which brings all things, even disorder itself, into due arrangement and good order. Indeed I tremble when I think of the abundance of the titles, and how many Names they outrage who fall foul of the Spirit. He is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Mind of Christ, the Spirit of The Lord, and Himself The Lord, the Spirit of Adoption, of Truth, of Liberty; the Spirit of Wisdom, of Understanding, of Counsel, of Might, of Knowledge, of Godliness, of the Fear of God. For He is the Maker of all these, filling all with His Essence, containing all things, filling the world in His Essence, yet incapable of being comprehended in His power by the world; good, upright, princely, by nature not by adoption; sanctifying, not sanctified; measuring, not measured; shared, not sharing; filling, not filled; containing, not contained; inherited, glorified, reckoned with the Father and the Son; held out as a threat; the Finger of God; fire like God; to manifest, as I take it, His consubstantiality; the Creator-Spirit, Who by Baptism and by Resurrection creates anew; the Spirit That knoweth all things, That teacheth, That bloweth where and to what extent He listeth; That guideth, talketh, sendeth forth, separateth, is angry or tempted; That revealeth, illumineth, quickeneth, or rather is the very Light and Life; That maketh Temples; That deifieth; That perfecteth so as even to anticipate Baptism, yet after Baptism to be sought as a separate gift; That doeth all things that God doeth; divided into fiery tongues; dividing gifts; making Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers; understanding manifold, clear, piercing, undefiled, unhindered, which is the same thing as Most wise and varied in His actions; and making all things clear and plain; and of independent power, unchangeable, Almighty, all-seeing, penetrating all spirits that are intelligent, pure, most subtle (the Angel Hosts I think); and also all prophetic spirits and apostolic in the same manner and not in the same places; for they lived in different places; thus showing that He is uncircumscrip...

XXX. They who say and teach these things, and moreover call Him another Paraclete in the sense of another God, who know that blasphemy against Him alone cannot be forgiven, and who branded with such fearful infamy Ananias and Sapphira for having lied to the Holy Ghost, what do you think of these men? Do they proclaim the Spirit God, or something else? Now really, you must be extraordinarily dull and far from the Spirit if you have any doubt about this and need some one to teach you. So important then, and so vivid are His Names. Why is it necessary to lay before you the testimony contained in the very words? And whatever in this case also is said in more lowly fashion, as that He is Given,
Sent, Divided; that He is the Gift, the Bounty, the Inspiration, the Promise, the Intercession for us, and, not to go into any further detail, any other expressions of the sort, is to be referred to the First Cause, that it may be shewn from Whom He is, and that men may not in heathen fashion admit Three Principles. For it is equally impious to confuse the Persons with the Sabellians, or to divide the Natures with the Arians.

XXXI. I have very carefully considered this matter in my own mind, and have looked at it in every point of view, in order to find some illustration of this most important subject, but I have been unable to discover any thing on earth with which to compare the nature of the Godhead. For even if I did happen upon some tiny likeness it escaped me for the most part, and left me down below with my example. I picture to myself an eye, a fountain, a river, as others have done before, to see if the first might be analogous to the Father, the second to the Son, and the third to the Holy Ghost. For in these there is no distinction in time, nor are they torn away from their connexion with each other, though they seem to be parted by three personalities. But I was afraid in the first place that I should present a flow in the Godhead, incapable of standing still; and secondly that by this figure a numerical unity would be introduced. For the eye and the spring and the river are numerically one, though in different forms.

XXXII. Again I thought of the sun and a ray and light. But here again there was a fear lest people should get an idea of composition in the Uncompounded Nature, such as there is in the Sun and the things that are in the Sun. And in the second place lest we should give Essence to the Father but deny Personality to the Others, and make Them only Powers of God, existing in Him and not Personal. For neither the ray nor the light is another sun, but they are only effulgences from the Sun, and qualities of His essence. And lest we should thus, as far as the illustration goes, attribute both Being and Not-being to God, which is even more monstrous. I have also heard that some one has suggested an illustration of the following kind. A ray of the Sun flashing upon a wall and trembling with the movement of the moisture which the beam has taken up in mid air, and then, being checked by the hard body, has set up a strange quivering. For it quivers with many rapid movements, and is not one rather than it is many, nor yet many rather than one; because by the swiftness of its union and separating it escapes before the eye can see it.

XXXIII. But it is not possible for me to make use of even this; because it is very evident what gives the ray its motion; but there is nothing prior to God which could set Him in motion; for He is Himself the Cause of all things, and He has no prior Cause. And secondly because in this case also there is a suggestion of such things as composition, diffusion, and an unsettled and unstable nature...none of which we can suppose in the Godhead. In a word, there is nothing which presents a standing point to my mind in these illustrations from which to consider the Object which I am trying to represent to myself, unless one may indulgently accept one point of the image while rejecting the rest. Finally, then, it seems best to me to let the images and the shadows go, as being deceitful and very far short of the truth; and clinging myself to the more reverent conception, and resting upon few words, using the guidance of the Holy Ghost, keeping to the end as my genuine comrade and companion the enlightenment which I have
received from Him, and passing through this world to persuade all others also to the best of my power to worship Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the One Godhead and Power. To Him belongs all glory and honour and might for ever and ever. Amen.

Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus (The Wonder Worker),
On the Subject of the Soul

You have instructed us, most excellent Tatian, to forward for your use a discourse upon the soul, laying it out in effective demonstrations. And this you have asked us to do without making use of the testimonies of Scripture,—a method which is opened to us, and which, to those who seek the pious mind, proves a manner of setting forth doctrine more convincing than any reasoning of man. You have said, however, that you desire this, not with a view to your own full assurance, taught as you already have been to hold by the Holy Scriptures and traditions, and to avoid being shaken in your convictions by any subtleties of man’s disputations, but with a view to the confuting of men who have different sentiments, and who do not admit that such credit is to be given to the Scriptures, and who endeavour, by a kind of cleverness of speech, to gain over those who are unversed in such discussions. Wherefore we were led to comply readily with this commission of yours, not shrinking from the task on account of inexperience in this method of disputation, but taking encouragement from the knowledge of your good-will toward us. For your kind and friendly disposition towards us will make you understand how to put forward publicly whatever you may approve of as rightly expressed by us, and to pass by and conceal whatever statement of ours you may judge to come short of what is proper. Knowing this, therefore, I have betaken myself with all confidence to the exposition. And in my discourse I shall use a certain order and consecution, such as those who are very expert in these matters employ towards those who desire to investigate any subject intelligently.

First of all, then, I shall propose to inquire by what criterion the soul can, according to its
nature, be apprehended; then by what means it can be proved to exist; thereafter, whether it is a substance or an accident; then consequently on these points, whether it is a body or is incorporeal; then, whether it is simple or compound; next, whether it is mortal or immortal; and finally, whether it is rational or irrational.

For these are the questions which are wont, above all, to be discussed, in any inquiry about the soul, as most important, and as best calculated to mark out its distinctive nature. And as demonstrations for the establishing of these matters of investigation, we shall employ those common modes of consideration by which the credibility of matters under hand is naturally attested. But for the purpose of brevity and utility, we shall at present make use only of those modes of argumentation which are most cogently demonstrative on the subject of our inquiry, in order that clear and intelligible notions may impart to us some readiness for meeting the gainsayers. With this, therefore, we shall commence our discussion.

I. Wherein is the Criterion for the Apprehension of the Soul.

All things that exist are either known by sense or apprehended by thought. And what falls under sense has its adequate demonstration in sense itself; for at once, with the application, it creates in us the impression of what underlies it. But what is apprehended by thought is known not by itself, but by its operations. The soul, consequently, being unknown by itself, shall be known property by its effects.

II. Whether the Soul Exists.

Our body, when it is put in action, is put in action either from without or from within. And that it is not put in action from without, is manifest from the circumstance that it is put in action neither by impulsion nor by traction, like soulless things. And again, if it is put in action from within, it is not put in action according to nature, like fire. For fire never loses its action as long as there is fire; whereas the body, when it has become dead, is a body void of action. Hence, if it is put in action neither from without, like soulless things, nor according to nature, after the fashion of fire, it is evident that it is put in action by the soul, which also furnishes life to it. If, then, the soul is shown to furnish the life to our body, the soul will also be known for itself by its operations.

III. Whether the Soul is a Substance.

That the soul is a substance, is proved in the following manner. In the first place, because the definition given to the term substance suits it very well. And that definition is to the effect, that substance is that which, being ever identical, and ever one in point of numeration with itself, is yet capable of taking on contraries in succession. And that this soul, without passing the limit of its own proper nature, takes on contraries in succession, is, I fancy, clear to everybody. For righteousness and unrighteousness, courage and cowardice, temperance and intemperance, are seen in it successively; and these are contraries. If, then, it is the property of a substance to be capable of taking on contraries in succession, and if the soul is shown to sustain the
definition in these terms, it follows that the soul is a substance. And in the second place, because if the body is a substance, the soul must also be a substance. For it cannot be, that what only has life imparted should be a substance, and that what imparts the life should be no substance: unless one should assert that the non-existent is the cause of the existent; or unless, again, one were insane enough to allege that the dependent object is itself the cause of that very thing in which it has its being, and without which it could not subsist.

IV. Whether the Soul is Incorporeal.

That the soul is in our body, has been shown above. We ought now, therefore, to ascertain in what manner it is in the body. Now, if it is in juxtaposition with it, as one pebble with another, it follows that the soul will be a body, and also that the whole body will not be animated with soul, inasmuch as with a certain part it will only be in juxtaposition. But if again, it is mingled or fused with the body, the soul will become multiplex, and not simple, and will thus be despoiled of the rationale proper to a soul. For what is multiplex is also divisible and dissoluble; and what is dissoluble, on the other hand, is compound; and what is compound is separable in a threefold manner. Moreover, body attached to body makes weight; but the soul, subsisting in the body, does not make weight, but rather imparts life. The soul, therefore, cannot be a body, but is incorporeal.

Again, if the soul is a body, it is put in action either from without or from within. But it is not put in action from without; for it is moved neither by impulsion nor by traction, like soulless things. Nor is it put in action from within, like objects animated with soul; for it is absurd to talk of a soul of the soul: it cannot, therefore, be a body, but it is incorporeal.

And besides, if the soul is a body, it has sensible qualities, and is maintained by nurture. But it is not thus nurtured. For if it is nurtured, it is not nurtured corporeally, like the body, but incorporeally; for it is nurtured by reason. It has not, therefore, sensible qualities: for neither is righteousness, nor courage, nor any one of these things, something that is seen; yet these are the qualities of the soul. It cannot, therefore, be a body, but is incorporeal.

Still further, as all corporeal substance is divided into animate and inanimate, let those who hold that the soul is a body tell us whether we are to call it animate or inanimate.

Finally, if every body has colour, and quantity, and figure, and if there is not one of these qualities perceptible in the soul, it follows that the soul is not a body.

V. Whether the Soul is Simple or Compound.

We prove, then, that the soul is simple, best of all, by those arguments by which its incorporeality has been demonstrated. For if it is not a body, while every body is compound, and what is composite is made up of parts, and is consequently multiplex, the soul, on the other hand, being incorporeal, is simple; since thus it is both uncompounded and indivisible into parts.
VI. Whether Our Soul is Immortal.

It follows, in my opinion, as a necessary consequence, that what is simple is immortal. And as to how that follows, hear my explanation: Nothing that exists is its own corrupter, else it could never have had any thorough consistency, even from the beginning. For things that are subject to corruption are corrupted by contraries: wherefore everything that is corrupted is subject to dissolution; and what is subject to dissolution is compound; and what is compound is of many parts; and what is made up of parts manifestly is made up of diverse parts; and the diverse is not the identical: consequently the soul, being simple, and not being made up of diverse parts, but being uncompound and indissoluble, must be, in virtue of that, incorruptible and immortal.

Besides, everything that is put in action by something else, and does not possess the principle of life in itself, but gets it from that which puts it in action, endures just so long as it is held by the power that operates in it; and whenever the operative power ceases, that also comes to a stand which has its capacity of action from it. But the soul, being self-acting, has no cessation of its being. For it follows, that what is self-acting is ever-acting; and what is ever-acting is unceasing; and what is unceasing is without end; and what is without end is incorruptible; and what is incorruptible is immortal. Consequently, if the soul is self-acting, as has been shown above, it follows that it is incorruptible and immortal, in accordance with the mode of reasoning already expressed.

And further, everything that is not corrupted by the evil proper to itself, is incorruptible; and the evil is opposed to the good, and is consequently its corrupter. For the evil of the body is nothing else than suffering, and disease, and death; just as, on the other hand, its excellency is beauty, life, health, and vigour. If, therefore, the soul is not corrupted by the evil proper to itself, and the evil of the soul is cowardice, intemperance, envy, and the like, and all these things do not despoil it of its powers of life and action, it follows that it is immortal.

VII. Whether Our Soul is Rational.

That our soul is rational, one might demonstrate by many arguments. And first of all from the fact that it has discovered the arts that are for the service of our life. For no one could say that these arts were introduced casually and accidentally, as no one could prove them to be idle, and of no utility for our life. If, then, these arts contribute to what is profitable for our life, and if the profitable is commendable, and if the commendable is constituted by reason, and if these things are the discovery of the soul, it follows that our soul is rational.

Again, that our soul is rational, is also proved by the fact that our senses are not sufficient for the apprehension of things. For we are not competent for the knowledge of things by the simple application of the faculty of sensation. But as we do not choose to rest in these without inquiry, that proves that the senses, apart from reason, are felt to be incapable of discriminating between things which are identical in form and similar in colour, though quite distinct in their natures. If, therefore, the senses, apart from reason, give us a false conception
of things, we have to consider whether things that are can be apprehended in reality or not. And if they can be apprehended, then the power which enables us to get at them is one different from, and superior to, the senses. And if they are not apprehended, it will not be possible for us at all to apprehend things which are different in their appearance from the reality. But that objects are apprehensible by us, is clear from the fact that we employ each in a way adaptable to utility, and again turn them to what we please. Consequently, if it has been shown that things which are can be apprehended by us, and if the senses, apart from reason, are an erroneous test of objects, it follows that the intellect is what distinguishes all things in reason, and discerns things as they are in their actuality. But the intellect is just the rational portion of the soul, and consequently the soul is rational.

Finally, because we do nothing without having first marked it out for ourselves; and as that is nothing else than just the high prerogative of the soul,—for its knowledge of things does not come to it from without, but it rather sets out these things, as it were, with the adornment of its own thoughts, and thus first pictures forth the object in itself, and only thereafter carries it out to actual fact,—and because the high prerogative of the soul is nothing else than the doing of all things with reason, in which respect it also differs from the senses, the soul has thereby been demonstrated to be rational.

Elucidations.

I.

(Substance or accident, p. 54.)

This essay is "rather the work of a philosopher than a bishop," says Dupin. He assigns it to an age when "Aristotle began to be in some reputation,"—a most important concession as to the estimate of this philosopher among the early faithful. We need not wonder that such admissions, honourable to his candour and to his orthodoxy, brought on him the hatred and persecutions of the Jesuits. Even Bossuet thought he went too far, and wrote against him. But, the whole system of Roman dogma being grounded in Aristotle's physics as well as in his metaphysics, Dupin was not orthodox in the eyes of the society that framed Aristotle into a creed, and made it the creed of the "Roman-Catholic Church." Note, e.g., "transubstantiation," which is not true if Aristotle's theory of accidents, etc., is false. It assumes an exploded science.

II.

(Prerogative of the soul, p. 56.)

If this "Discourse" be worthy of study, it may be profitably contrasted, step by step, with Tertullian's treatises on kindred subjects. That the early Christians should reason concerning the Soul, the Mind, the immortal Spirit, was natural in itself. But it was also forced upon them by the "philosophers" and the heretics, with whom they daily came into conflict. This is apparent from the Anti-Marcion of the great Carthaginian. The annotations upon that treatise,
and those On the Soul’s Testimony and On the Soul, may suffice as pointing out the best sources of information on speculative points and their bearings on theology. Compare, however, Athenagoras and the great Clement of Alexandria.

Footnotes
See Bacon’s apophthegm, No. 275, p. 172, Works, London, 1730.
Vol. iii. pp. 463, 474; also pp. 532, 537, 557, 570, and 587.
Compare, also, Bishop Kaye’s Tertullian, p. 199, etc.
E.g., vol. ii. p. 157, etc.
Vol. ii. pp. 440, 584 (Fragment), and what he says of free-will.

PROCATECHESIS, or,
PROLOGUE TO THE CATECHETICAL LECTURES,

CYRIL, ARCHBISHOP OF JERUSALEM

1. ALREADY there is an odor of blessedness upon you, O ye who are soon to be enlightened: already ye are gathering the spiritual flowers, to weave heavenly crowns: already the fragrance of the Holy Spirit has breathed upon you: already ye have gathered round the vestibule of the King’s palace; may ye be led in also by the King! For blossoms now have appeared upon the trees; may the fruit also be found perfect! Thus far there has been an inscription of your names, and a call to service, and torches of the bridal train, and a longing for heavenly citizenship, and a good purpose, and hope attendant thereon. For he lieth not who said, that to them that love God all things work together for good. God is lavish in beneficence, yet He waits for each man’s genuine will: therefore the Apostle added and said, to them that are called according to a purpose. The honesty of purpose makes thee called: for if thy body be here but not thy mind, it profiteth thee nothing.

2. Even Simon Magus once came to the Laver: he was baptized, but was not enlightened; and though he dipped his body in water, he enlightened not his heart with the Spirit: his body went down and came up, but his soul was not buried with Christ, nor raised with Him. Now I mention the statements of (men’s) falls, that thou mayest not fall: fo

3. A certain man in the Gospels once pried into the marriage feasts, and took an unbecoming garment, and came in, sat down, and ate: for the bridegroom permitted it. But when he saw them all clad in white, he ought to have assumed a garment of the same kind himself: whereas he partook of the like food, but was unlike them in fashion and in purpose. The
bridegroom, however, though bountiful, was not undiscerning: and in going round to each of the guests and observing them (for his care was not for their eating, but for their seemly behavior), he saw a stranger not having on a wedding garment, and said to him, Friend, how camest thou in hither? In what a color! With what a conscience! What though the door-keeper forbade thee not, because of the bountifulness of the entertainer? what though thou weft ignorant in what fashion thou shouldest come in to the banquet? — thou didst come in, and didst see the glittering fashions of the guests: shouldest thou not have been taught even by what was before thine eyes? Shouldest thou not have retired in good season, that thou mightest enter in good season again? But now thou hast come in unseasonably, to be unseasonably cast out. So he commands the servants, Bind his feet, which daringly intruded: bind his hands, which knew not how to put a bright garment around him: and cast him into the outer darkness; for he is unworthy of the wedding torches. Thou seest what happened to that man: make thine own condition safe.

4. For we, the ministers of Christ, have admitted every one, and occupying, as it were, the place of door-keepers we left the door open: and possibly thou didst enter with thy soul bemired with sins, and with a will defiled. Enter thou didst, and wast allowed: thy name was inscribed. Tell me, dost thou behold this venerable constitution of the Church? Dost thou view her order and discipline the reading of Scriptures, the presence of the ordained, the course of instruction? Be abashed at the place, and be taught by what thou seest. Go out opportunely now, and enter most opportunely tomorrow.

If the fashion of thy soul is avarice, put on another fashion and come in. Put off thy former fashion, cloke it not up. Put off, I pray thee, fornication and uncleanness, and put on the brightest robe of chastity. This charge I give thee, before Jesus the Bridegroom of souls come in and see their fashions. A long notice is allowed thee; thou hast forty days for repentance: thou hast full opportunity both to put off, and wash, and to put on and enter. But if thou persist in an evil purpose, the speaker is blameless, but thou must not look for the grace: for the water will receive, but the Spirit will not accept thee. If any one is conscious of his wound, let him take the salve; if any has fallen, let him arise. Let there be no Simon among you, no hypocrisy, no idle curiosity about the matter.

5. Possibly too thou art come on another pretext. It is possible that a man is wishing to pay court to a woman, and came hither on that account. The remark applies in like manner to women also in their turn. A slave also perhaps wishes to please his master, and a friend his friend. I accept this bait for the hook, and welcome thee, though thou camest with an evil purpose, yet as one to be saved by a good hope. Perhaps thou knewest not whither thou wert coming, nor in what kind of net thou art taken.
Thou art come within the Church’s nets: be taken alive, flee not: for Jesus is angling for thee, not in order to kill, but by killing to make alive: for thou must die and rise again. For thou hast heard the Apostle say, Dead indeed unto sin, but living unto righteousness. Die to thy sins, and live to righteousness, live from this very day.

6. See, I pray thee, how great a dignity Jesus bestows on thee. Thou weft called a Catechumen, while the word echoed round thee from without; hearing of hope, and knowing it not; hearing mysteries, and not understanding them; hearing Scriptures, and not knowing their depth. The echo is no longer around thee, but within thee; for the indwelling Spirit henceforth makes thy mind a house of God. When thou shalt have heard what is written concerning the mysteries, then wilt thou understand things which thou knewest not. And think not that thou receivest a small thing: though a miserable man, thou receivest one of God’s titles. Hear St. Paul saying, God is faithful. Hear another Scripture saying, God is faithful and just. Foreseeing this, the Psalmist, because men are to receive a title of God, spoke thus in the person of God: I said, Ye are Gods, and are all sons of the Most High. But beware lest thou have the title of “faithful,” but the will of the faithless. Thou hast entered into a contest, toil on through the race: another such opportunity thou canst not have. Were it thy wedding-day before thee, wouldest thou not have disregarded all else, and set about the preparation for the feast? And on the eve of consecrating thy soul to the heavenly Bridegroom, wilt thou not cease from carnal things, that thou mayest win spiritual?

7. We may not receive Baptism twice or thrice; else it might be said, Though I have failed once, I shall set it right a second time: whereas if thou fail once, the thing cannot be set right; for there is one Lord, and one faith, and one baptism: for only the heretics are re-baptized, because the former was no baptism.

8. For God seeks nothing else from us, save a good purpose. Say not, How are my sins blotted out? I tell thee, By willing, by believing. What can be shorter than this? But if, while thy lips declare thee willing, thy heart be silent, He knoweth the heart, who judgeth thee. Cease from this day from every evil deed. Let not thy tongue speak unseemly words, let thine eye abstain from sin, and from roving after things unprofitable.

9. Let thy feet hasten to the catechizings; receive with earnestness the exorcisms: whether thou be breathed upon or exorcised, the act is to thee salvation. Suppose thou hast gold unwrought and alloyed, mixed with various substances, copper, and tin, and iron, and lead: we seek to have the gold alone; can gold be purified from the foreign substances without fire? Even so without exorcisms the soul cannot be purified; and these exorcisms are divine, having been collected out of the divine Scriptures. Thy face has been veiled, that thy mind may henceforward be free, lest the
eye by roving make the heart rove also. But when thine eyes are veiled, thine ears are not hindered from receiving the means of salvation. For in like manner as those who are skilled in the goldsmith’s craft throw in their breath upon the fire through certain delicate instruments, and blowing up the gold which is hidden in the crucible stir the flame which surrounds it, and so find what they are seeking; even so when the exorcists inspire terror by the Spirit of God, and set the soul, as it were, on fire in the crucible of the body, the hostile demon tees away, and there abide salvation and the hope of eternal life, and the soul henceforth is cleansed from its sins and hath salvation. Let us then, brethren, abide in hope, and surrender ourselves, and hope, in order that the God of all may see our purpose, and grant us repentance that bringeth salvation. God hath called, and His call is to thee.

10. Attend closely to the catechizings, and though we should prolong our discourse, let not thy mind be wearied out. For thou art receiving armor against the adverse power, armor against heresies, against Jews, and Samaritans, and Gentiles. Thou hast many enemies; take to thee many darts, for thou hast many to hurl them at: and thou hast need to learn how to strike down the Greek, how to contend against heretic, against Jew and Samaritan. And the armor is ready, and most ready the sword of the Spirit: but thou also must stretch forth thy right hand with good resolution, that thou mayest war the Lord’s warfare, and overcome adverse powers, and become invincible against every heretical attempt.

11. Let me give thee this charge also. Study our teachings and keep them for ever. Think not that they are the ordinary homilies; for though they also are good and trustworthy, yet if we should neglect them today we may study them tomorrow. But if the teaching concerning the layer of regeneration delivered in a consecutive course be neglected today, when shall it be made right? Suppose it is the season for planting trees: if we do not dig, and dig deep, when else can that be planted rightly which has once been planted ill? Suppose, pray, that the Catechizing is a kind of building: if we do not bind the house together by regular bonds in the building, lest some gap be found, and the building become unsound, even our former labor is of no use. But stone must follow stone by course, and corner match with corner, and by our smoothing off inequalities the building must thus rise evenly. In like manner we are bringing to thee stones, as it were, of knowledge. Thou must hear concerning the living God, thou must hear of Judgment, must hear of Christ, and of the Resurrection. And many things there are to be discussed in succession, which though now dropped one by one are afterwards to be presented in harmonious connection. But unless thou fit them together in the one whole, and remember what is first, and what is second, the builder may build, but thou wilt find the building
unsound.

12. When, therefore, the Lecture is delivered, if a Catechumen ask thee what the teachers have said, tell nothing to him that is without. For we deliver to thee a mystery, and a hope of the life to come. Guard the mystery for Him who gives the reward. Let none ever say to thee, What harm to thee, if I also know it? So too the sick ask for wine; but if it be given at a wrong time it causes delirium, and two evils arise; the sick man dies, and the physician is blamed. Thus is it also with the Catechumen, if he hear anything from the believer: both the Catechumen becomes delirious (for he understands not what he has heard, and finds fault with the thing, and scoffs at what is said), and the believer is condemned as a traitor. But thou art now standing on the border: take heed, pray, to tell nothing out; not that the things spoken are not worthy to be told, but because his ear is unworthy to receive. Thou wast once thyself a Catechumen, and I described not what lay before thee. When by experience thou hast learned how high are the matters of our teaching, then thou wilt know that the Catechumens are not worthy to hear them.

13. Ye who have been enrolled are become sons and daughters of one Mother. When ye have come in before the hour of the exorcisms, let each one of you speak things tending to godliness: and if any of your number be not present, seek for him. If thou wert called to a banquet, wouldest thou not wait for thy fellow guest? If thou hadst a brother, wouldest thou not seek thy brother’s good?

Afterwards busy not thyself about unprofitable matters: neither, what the city has done, nor the village, nor the King, nor the Bishop, nor the Presbyter. Look upward; that is what thy present hour needeth. Be still, and know that I am God. If thou seest the believers ministering, and shewing no care, they enjoy security, they know what they have received, they are in possession of grace. But thou standest just now in the turn of the scale, to be received or not: copy not those who have freedom from anxiety, but cherish fear.

14. And when the Exorcism has been done, until the others who are being exorcised have come, let men be with men, and women with women. For now I need the example of Noah’s ark: in which were Noah and his sons, and his wife and his sons’ wives. For though the ark wa

passions be put away. Further, let the men when sitting have a useful book; and let one read, and another listen: and if there be no book, let one pray, and another speak something useful. And again let the party of young women sit together in like manner, either singing or reading quietly, so that their lips speak, but others’ ears catch not the sound: for I suffer not a woman to speak in the Church. And let the married woman also follow the same example, and pray; and let her lips move, but her voice be
unheard, that a Samuel may come, and thy barren soul give birth to the salvation of “God who hath heard thy prayer;” for this is the interpretation of the name Samuel.

15. I shall observe each man’s earnestness, each woman’s reverence. Let your mind be refined as by fire unto reverence; let your soul be forged as metal: let the stubbornness of unbelief be hammered out: let the superfluous scales of the iron drop off, and what is pure remain; let the rust of the iron be rubbed off, and the true metal remain. May God sometime shew you that night, the darkness which shines like the day, concerning which it is said, The darkness shall not be hidden from thee. and the night shall shine as the day. Then may the gate of Paradise be opened to every man and every woman among you. Then may you enjoy the Christ-hearing waters in their fragrance. Then may you receive the name of Christ, and the power of things divine. Even now, I beseech you, lift up the eye of the mind: even now imagine the choirs of Angels, and God the Lord of all there sitting, and His Only-begotten Son sitting with Him on His right hand, and the Spirit present with them; and Thrones and Dominions doing service, and every man of you and every woman receiving salvation. Even now let your ears ring, as it were, with that glorious sound, when over your salvation the angels shall chant, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: when like stars of the Church you shall enter in, bright in the body and radiant in the soul.

16. Great is the Baptism that lies before you: a ransom to captives; a remission of offenses; a death of sin; a new-birth of the soul; a garment of light; a holy indissoluble seal; a chariot to heaven; the delight of Paradise; a welcome into the kingdom; the gift of adoption! But there is a serpent by the wayside watching those who pass by: beware lest he bite thee with unbelief. He sees so many receiving salvation, and is seeking whom he may devour. Thou art coming in unto the Father of Spirits, but thou art going past that serpent. How then mayest thou pass him? Have thy feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; that even if he bite, he may not hurt thee. Have faith in-dwelling, steadfast hope, a strong sandal, that thou mayest pass the enemy, and enter the presence of thy Lord. Prepare thine own heart for reception of doctrine, for fellowship in holy mysteries. Pray more frequently, that God may make thee worthy of the heavenly and immortal mysteries. Cease not day nor night: but when sleep is banished from thine eyes, then let thy mind be free for prayer. And if thou find any shameful thought rise up in thy mind, turn to meditation upon Judgment to remind thee of Salvation. Give thy mind wholly to study, that it may forget base things. If thou find any one saying to thee, Art thou then going in, to descend into the water? Has the city just now no baths? take notice that it is the dragon of the sea who is laying these plots against thee.
Attend not to the lips of the talker, but to God who worketh in thee. Guard thine own soul, that thou be not ensnared, to the end that abiding in hope thou mayest become an heir of everlasting salvation.

17. We for our part as men charge and teach you thus: but make not ye our building hay and stubble and chaff, lest we suffer loss, from our work being burnt up: but make ye our work gold, and silver, and precious stones! For it lies in me to speak, but in thee to set thy mind upon it, and in God to make perfect. Let us nerve our minds, and brace up our souls, and prepare our hearts. The race is for our soul: our hope is of things eternal: and God, who knoweth your hearts, and observeth who is sincere, and who a hypocrite, is able both to guard the sincere, and to give faith to the hypocrite: for even to the unbeliever, if only he give his heart, God is able to give faith. So may He blot out the handwriting that is against you, and grant you forgiveness of your former trespasses; may He plant you into His Church, and enlist you in His own service, and put on you the armor of righteousness: may He fill you with the heavenly things of the New Covenant, and give you the seal of the Holy Spirit indelible throughout all ages, in Christ Jesus Our Lord: to whom be the glory for ever and ever! Amen.

116

(TO THE READER)

These Catechetical Lectures for those who are to be enlightened thou mayest lend to candidates for Baptism, and to believers who are already baptized, to read, but give not at all, neither to Catechumens, nor to any others who are not Christians, as thou shalt answer to the Lord. And if thou make a copy, write this in the beginning, as in the sight of the Lord.

Catechetical Instruction.

1. Catechesis. The term “Catechesis” in its widest sense includes instruction by word of mouth on any subject sacred or profane, but is especially applied to Christian teaching, whether of an elementary kind appropriate to new converts, or, as in the famous Catechetical School of Alexandria, extending to the higher interpretation of Holy Scripture, and the exposition of Christian philosophy.

The earliest known example of a Catechetical work is the “Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,” which Athanasius names among the “books not included in the Canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who are just recently coming to us, and wish to be instructed in the word of godliness.” The use of the Didache for the instruction of recent converts from Paganism agrees with its original purpose as stated in the longer title, “Teaching of the Lord through the Twelve Apostles for the Gentiles.” The first six chapters are evidently adapted for those who need elementary instruction, more particularly for Catechumens of Gentile descent, as distinct from Jewish candidates for Baptism.
remaining chapters of the Didache relate chiefly to the administration of Baptism, to Prayer, Fasting, and the services of the Lord’s Day, and to the celebration of the Agape and Eucharist. This same division of subjects is observed in the two classes of S. Cyril’s Catechetical Lectures: the first class, including the Procatechesis, consists of XIX Lectures addressed to candidates for Baptism, and these are followed by five “Mystagogic” Lectures, so called as being explanations of the Sacramental Mysteries to the newly-baptized.

The Didaché was taken as the basis of other manuals of instruction, as is evident from the fact that the greater part of the first six chapters is imbedded in “The Apostolical Church Order,” supposed to date from Egypt in the third century. The Greek text, with an English translation, of the part corresponding with the Didaché, is given in “The oldest Church Manual” as Document V.

A further development of the Didaché, “adapted to the state of the Eastern Church in the first half of the fourth century,” is contained in the Seventh Book of the Apostolical Constitutions of Pseudo-Clement of Rome, chs. i.–xxxii. “Here the Didaché is embodied almost word for word, but with significant omissions, alterations, and additions, which betray a later age….The Didaché was thus superseded by a more complete and timely Church Manual, and disappeared.” Dr. Schaff has appended this document also to his edition of the Didaché, noting the borrowed passages on the margin, and distinguishing them by spaced type in the Greek text, and by italics in the English translation.

In this work the directions concerning the instruction of Catechumens and their Baptism are addressed to the Catechist and the Minister of Baptism. They contain only a short outline (c. xxxix.) of the subjects in which the Catechumens are to be instructed, most if not all of which are explained at large in Cyril’s Lectures: and in the directions concerning Baptism, Chrism, and the Eucharist, the similarity is so close, that in many passages of the Constitutions the author seems to be referring especially to the use of the Church of Jerusalem.

From this close affinity with earlier works we may be assured that in the Catecheses of Cyril we have trustworthy evidence of the great care which the Church had from the beginning bestowed on the instruction and training of converts, before admitting them to the privilege of Baptism; but beyond this, Cyril’s own work has a peculiar value as the earliest extant example of a full, systematic, and continuous course of such instruction.

§ 2. Catechist. The duty of catechizing was not limited to a class of persons permanently set apart for that purpose, but all orders of the Clergy were accustomed to take part in the work. Even laymen were encouraged to teach children or new converts the first elements of religion, as we learn from Cyril’s exhortation: “If thou hast a child according to the flesh, admonish him of this now; and if thou hast begotten one through catechizing, put him also on his guard.” That this remark was addressed not to the Catechumens, but to such of the Faithful as happened to be present among his audience, appears from what he says elsewhere, “So thou likewise, though not daring before thy Baptism to wrestle with the adversaries, yet
after thou hast received the grace, and art henceforth confident in the armour of righteousness, must then do battle, and preach the Gospel, if thou wilt78.”

The more systematic instruction of those who had been already admitted to the order of Catechumens was entrusted to persons appointed to this special duty. Thus Origen “was in his eighteenth year when he took charge of the Catechetical School at Alexandria,” which “was entrusted to him alone by Demetrius, who presided over the Church79.” and S. Augustine’s Treatise, De Catechizandis Rudibus, was addressed to Deogratias, who being a Deacon at Carthage, and highly esteemed for his skill and success as a Catechist, felt so strongly the importance of the work and his own insufficiency, that he wrote to Augustine for advice as to the best method of instructing those who were brought to him to be taught the first elements of the Christian Faith.

The final training of the f??µ????, or candidates for Baptism, was undertaken in part by the Bishop himself, but chiefly by a Priest specially appointed by him. Of the part taken by the Bishop mention is made by S. Ambrose in a letter to his sister Marcellina (Ep. xx.): “On the following day, which was the Lord’s day, after the Lessons and Sermon, the Catechumens had been dismissed, and I was delivering the Creed to some candidates (Competentes) in the Baptistery of the Basilica.”

Of this “delivery of the Creed,” which was usually done by a Presbyter, we have examples in S. Augustine’s Sermons In traditione Symboli, ccxii.–ccxiv., each of which contains a brief recapitulation and explanation of the several articles of belief. In Serm. ccxiv., after a short introduction, we find the following note inserted by the preacher himself. [“After this preface the whole Creed is to be recited, without interposing any discussion. ‘I believe in God the Father Almighty,’ and the rest that follows. Which Creed, thou knowest, is not wont to be written: after it has been said, the following discussion (disputatio) is to be added.”]

From the opening words of Sermon ccxiv., and of ccxvi., “ad Competentes,” it is evident that these were delivered by S. Augustine as the first-fruits of his ministry very soon after he had been reluctantly ordained Priest (a.d. 391). Two other examples of addresses to Candidates for Baptism are the Catecheses I., II., p??? t??? µ?????ta? f?t??es?a?, delivered at Antioch by S. Chrysostom while a Presbyter.

Another duty often undertaken by the Bishop was to hear each Candidate separately recite the Creed, and then to expound to them all the Lord’s Prayer80.

§ 3. Catechumens. The term Catechumen denoted a person who was receiving instruction in the Christian religion with a view to being in due time baptized. Such persons were either converts from Paganism and Judaism, or children of Christian parents whose Baptism had been deferred. For though the practice of Infant-Baptism was certainly common in the Early Church81, it was not compulsory nor invariable. “In many cases Christian parents may have shared and acted on the opinion expressed by Tertullian in the second century, and by Gregory Nazianzen in the fourth, and thought it well to defer the Baptism of children, cases of grave
sickness excepted, till they were able to make answer in their own name to the interrogations of the baptismal rite.

It is stated by Bingham, but without any reference to ancient authors, that “the child of believing parents, as they were baptized in infancy, were admitted Catechumens as soon as they were capable of learning.” Though the title “Catechumen” was not usually applied to those who had been already baptized, it is probable that such children were admitted to the Lectures addressed to Catechumens both in the earlier and later stage of their preparation: for it seems to be implied in the passage quoted above from Cat. xv. 18, that admission was not limited to the candidates for Baptism.

To believe and to be baptized are the two essential conditions of membership in Christ’s Church: but for the admission of new converts to the class of Catechumens nothing more could be required than evidence of a sincere desire to understand, to believe, and ultimately to be baptized.

We know that unbelievers, Jews, and Heathens were allowed in the Apostolic age to be present at times in the Christian assemblies; and in Cyril’s days they stood in the lower part of the Church to hear the Psalms, Lessons, and Sermon.

Any persons who by thus hearing the word, or by other means, were brought to believe the truth of Christianity, and to wish for further instruction, were strictly examined as to their character, belief, and sincerity of purpose. The care with which such examinations were conducted is thus described by Origen: “The Christians, however, having previously, so far as possible, tested the souls of those who wish to become their hearers, and having previously admonished them in private, when they seem, before entering the community, to have made sufficient progress in the desire to lead a virtuous life, they then introduce them, having privately formed one class of those who are just beginners, and are being introduced, and have not yet received the mark of complete purification; and another of those who have manifested to the best of their ability the purpose of desiring no other things than are approved by Christians.” Such as were thus found worthy of admission were brought to the Bishop Presbyter, and received by the sign of the Cross, with prayer and imposition of hands, to the status of Catechumens.

We have a description by Eusebius of some of these ceremonies in the case of Constantine: When the Emperor felt his life to be drawing to a close, “he poured forth his supplications and confessions to God, kneeling on the pavement in the Church itself, in which he also now for the first time received the imposition of hands with prayer.” Soon after this the Bishops whom he had summoned to Nicomedia to give him Baptism, “performed the sacred ceremonies in the usual manner, and having given him the necessary instructions made him a partaker of the mystic ordinances.”

Another ceremony used in the admission of Catechumens, at least in some Churches,
mentioned by S. Augustine: “Sanctification is not of one kind only: for I suppose that Catechumens also are sanctified in a certain way of their own by the sign of Christ’s Cross, and the Prayer of the Imposition of Hands; and that which they receive, though it be not the Body of Christ, is yet an holy thing, and more holy than the common food which sustains us, because it is a sacrament.” From this passage it has been inferred that consecrated bread (e??p??s, panis benedictus), taken out of the oblations provided for the Eucharist, was given to the Catechumens,—an opinion which seemed to have some support in the comparison between “that which the Catechumens receive,” and “the food which sustains us.” But Bingham maintains that S. Augustine here refers only to the symbolical use of salt, of which he says in his Confessions, I. xi., that while yet a boy he “used to be marked with the sign of His Cross, and seasoned with His salt.” The meaning of this so-called “Sacrament of the Catechumens” was that by the symbol of salt “they might learn to purge and cleanse their souls from sin.”

In the African Church in the time of S. Augustine it was customary to anoint the new convert with exorcised oil at the time of his admission, but in the Eastern Church there seems to have been no such anointing until immediately before Baptism.

Persons who had been thus admitted to the class of Catechumens were usually regarded as Christians, but only in a lower degree, being still clearly distinguished from the Faithful. “Ask a man, Art thou a Christian? If he is a Pagan or a Jew, he answers, I am not. But if he say, I am, you ask him further, Catechumen or Faithful? If he answer, Catechumen, he has been anointed, but not yet baptized.” Augustine, like Tertullian, complains that among heretics there was no sure distinction between the Catechumen and the Faithful: and according to the second General Council, Canon 7, converts from certain heresies to the orthodox Faith were to be received only as heathen: “On the first day we make them Christians, on the second Catechumens, on the third we exorcise them by three times breathing on them on the face and on the ears; and so we instruct them (?at????με?), and make them frequent the Church for a long time, and listen to the Holy Scriptures, and then we baptize them.”

Whether Cyril calls his hearers Christians before they had been baptized is not very clear: in Cat. x. § 16, he seems to include them among those who are called by the “new name;” but in § 20 of the same Lecture he assumes that there may be present some one who “was before a believer (p?st??),” and to him he says “Thou wert called a Christian; be tender of the name,” and in Lect. xxi. i, speaking to those who had now been baptized, he says, “Having therefore become partakers of Christ, ye are properly called Christs. Now ye have been made Christs by receiving the antitype of the Holy Ghost,” that is, Chrism.

§ 4. Candidates for Baptism. Bingham, who himself makes four classes or degrees of Catechumens, acknowledges that “the Greek expositors of the ancient Canons,” and other writers, “usually make but two sorts.” These were (1) the imperfect (?te??ste??), called also hearers (????με?? , audientes), because in Church they were only allowed to remain till the Holy Scriptures had been read, the Sermon preached, the special prayers of the
Catechumens said, and the blessing given to each by the Bishop in the words of the “prayer of the imposition of hands.” After this the Deacon says, “Go out, ye catechumens, in peace.”

(2) After the Energumens also have been dismissed, the more perfect (τετελεσμένοι, φυλάκια) remain on their knees in prayer (εὐλαμβάνοντας τοὺς χειρότερους, θερίζων). Then the Deacon is to cry aloud, “Ye that are to be illuminated, pray. Let us the faithful all pray for them. And being sealed to God through His Christ, let them bow down their heads, and receive the blessing from the Bishop.” The “Prayer of the Imposition of hands” is then pronounced over them by the Bishop.

The period of probation and instruction varied at different times and places: according to Canon 42 of the Synod of Elvira, 305, it was to be two years: “He who has a good name, and wishes to become a Christian, must be a Catechumen two years: then he maybe baptized.” After this probation had been satisfactorily passed, the Catechumens invited to give in their names as Candidates for Baptism. This invitation, described by Cyril as a call to military service (στέπαστα), appears to have been often repeated on the approach of Lent. Thus S. Ambrose, in his Commentary on S. Luke, v. 5; We have toiled all night and have taken nothing, complains, “I too, Lord, know that for me it is night, when I have not Thy command. No one yet has given his name: with my voice I have cast the net throughout Epiphany, and as yet I have taken nothing.”

This preliminary “call to service” must be distinguished from the actual enlistment in the Christian army at Baptism, in anticipation of which Cyril prays for his hearers that God “may enlist them in His service, and put on them the armour of righteousness.” The same metaphorical language in reference to the Christian warfare recurs in many passages.

The next step for those who responded to the call was the registration of names (ματρικά). It appears from passages of Dionysius Pseudo-Areopagites, quoted by Bingham, that the Bishop, after laying his hand on each Catechumen’s head, commanded his Presbyters and Deacons to register his name, together with that of his sponsor (διήγημα) in the Diptychs of the living. This ceremony took place at Jerusalem at the beginning of Lent, as we learn from Procat. § 1: “Thou hast entered, been approved; thy name inscribed….A long notice is allowed thee; thou hast forty days for repentance.” Those who had been admitted as candidates for Baptism were in most Churches still reckoned among the Catechumens, being distinguished as s??a??a?te? , “competentes.” But from Cyril’s language in several passages it appears that in the Church of Jerusalem they ceased to be regarded as Catechumens, and were reckoned among the Faithful. “Thou wert called a Catechumen, while the word echoed round thee from without. Think not that thou receivest a small thing: though a miserable man, thou receivest one of God’s titles. Hear S. Paul saying, God is faithful. But beware, lest thou have the title of ‘faithful,’ but the will of the faithless.” “Thou receivest a new name which thou hadst not before. Heretofore thou wast a Catechumen, but now thou wilt be called a Believer (στήριξις).”

Again, “How great a dignity the Lord bestows on you in transferring you from the order of
Catechumens to that of the Faithful, the Apostle Paul shews, when he affirms, God is faithful104.”

Two passages in S. Cyril have been thought to imply that the newly-admitted Candidates for Baptism carried lighted torches in procession, perhaps on the first Sunday after the registration. He speaks of their having received “torches of the bridal procession105;” and on this expression the Benedictine Editor observes that “Wax tapers” were perhaps given to the Illuminandi to carry, a custom which may also be indicated in the words, “Ye who have lately lighted the torches of faith, guard them carefully in your hands unquenched106.”

Others are of opinion that the custom of carrying torches or tapers was observed only in the procession of the newly-baptized from the Baptistery to the Church107, and that here Cyril means by the “bridal lamps,” those motions of the Holy Ghost, and spiritual instructions, which had lighted their way to Christ, and to the entrance to His Kingdom108. This latter interpretation is rather vague and far-fetched, and it is evident that the words, “Ye who have lately lighted the torches of faith,” gain much in clearness and force, if suggested by the visible symbolism of a ceremony in which the Illuminandi had just borne their part. The lighted torches would be a significant symbol both of the marriage of the soul with Christ, and of its enlightenment by faith.

§ 5. f?t???με????. In the first words of his Introductory Lecture Cyril addresses his hearers as “Ye who are being enlightened,” and from the Titles of the Catechetical Lectures i.–xviii., we see that this name was constantly used to distinguish the candidates preparing for immediate Baptism.

The Verb f?t???? is frequently used by the LXX., both in a physical and in a spiritual sense. In the New Testament it is found but rarely in the physical sense109, being generally applied to the light of spiritual truth, and to Christ as its source110.

In two passages of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Aorist (f?t????τα??) marks “the decisive moment when the light was apprehended in its glory111,” from which the thought easily passes on to the public profession of the truth thus received, that is, to Baptism.

That the word began very early to be used in this new sense, is evident from Justin Martyr’s explanation of it in his First Apology, c. 61; where, after speaking of instruction in Christian doctrine, of the profession of faith, and the promise of repentance and holy living, as the necessary preparations for Baptism, he thus proceeds: “And this washing is called Illumination (s?t??μ?), because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understanding.112” The same transition of the meaning from instruction to Baptism is clearly implied by Clement of Alexandria: “Among the barbarian philosophers also to instruct and to enlighten is called to regenerate113,” and again: “For this reason the teaching, which made manifest the hidden things, has been called illumination (f?t??μ?)114.”
That this is the sense in which Cyril uses the word is placed beyond doubt by a passage of the
Lecture delivered immediately before the administration of Baptism: “that your soul being
previously illuminated (προτερουσίας ἀκοής) by the word of doctrine, ye may in each particular
discover the greatness of the gifts bestowed on you by God.”

We thus see that the Present Participle (προτερουσίας ἀκοής) describes a process of gradual
illumination during the course of instruction, to be completed in Baptism, a sense which is well
expressed in the Latin Gerundive “Illuminandi.” And as we have seen that the candidates are
addressed as ἀκοή even before the course of instruction has commenced, the quasi-
Future sense “follows necessarily from the context.”

The spiritual “Illumination,” of which Baptism was to be the completion and the seal, thus
became by a natural development one of the recognised names of Baptism itself. On the
contrary, the inverse process assumed by the Benedictine Editor is entirely unnatural. Starting
from the later ecclesiastical use of ἀκοή and ἀκοή as connoting Baptism, he supposes that
this was the first application of those terms, and that they were transferred to the previous
illumination acquired by instruction in Christian truth, only because this was a necessary
preparation for Baptism. He therefore maintains that ἀκοή throughout the Catechetical
Lectures is another term for ἑβάπτισμα: and as a decisive proof of this he refers to Cat. xvi.
26: Ἰσραήλ ἵσταται ἐν κυρίῳ ἐποιεῖται ἡ εἰρήνη. He does not observe that the grace is to
come upon “the person being baptized” at a time still future. This meaning of the passage is
made absolutely certain by the words which immediately follow,—“But in what manner I say
not, for I will not anticipate the proper season.” We may conclude, therefore, that in Cyril’s
Lectures the term ἀκοή refers to the preparatory course of enlightenment rather
than to Baptism. At the same time we must remember that in Cyril's day, and long before, ἀκοή
was constantly used to denote Baptism itself, as being the time of special illumination by the grace of the Holy Spirit then given. Thus
Clement of Alexandria writes: “In Baptism we are illuminated....This work is variously called
grace, and illumination (ἀκοή), and perfection, and washing:...illumination, by which that
holy light of salvation is beheld, that is, by which we see God clearly.” Gregory Nazianzen
speaks in the same way: “We call it gift, grace, baptism, chrism, illumination, garment of
incorruption, washing of regeneration, seal, all that is precious.”

On the Article, I Believe in One God. Also Concerning Heresies.

Isaiah xlvi. 16, 17. (Sept.)

Sanctify yourselves unto Me, O islands. Israel is saved by the Lord with an everlasting
salvation; they shall not be ashamed, neither shall they be confounded for ever, &c.

1. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed also be His Only-
begotten Son. For with the thought of God let the thought of Father at once be joined,
that the ascription of glory to the Father and the Son may be made indivisible. For the Father
hath not one glory, and the Son another, but one and the same, since He is the Father’s Only-begotten Son; and when the Father is glorified, the Son also shares the glory with Him, because the glory of the Son flows from His Father’s honour: and again, when the Son is glorified, the Father of so great a blessing is highly honoured.

2. Now though the mind is most rapid in its thoughts, yet the tongue needs words, and a long recital of intermediary speech. For the eye embraces at once a multitude of the ‘starry quire;’ but when any one wishes to describe them one by one, which is the Morning-star, and which, the Evening-star, and which each one of them, he has need of many words. In like manner again the mind in the briefest moment compasses earth and sea and all the bounds of the universe; but what it conceives in an instant, it uses many words to describe. Yet forcible as is the example I have mentioned, still it is after all weak and inadequate. For of God we speak not all we ought (for that is known to Him only), but so much as the capacity of human nature has received, and so much as our weakness can bear. For we explain not what God is but candidly confess that we have not exact knowledge concerning Him. For in what concerns God to confess our ignorance is the best knowledge. Therefore magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together—all of us in common, for one alone is powerless; nay rather, even if we be all united together, we shall yet not do it as we ought. I mean not you only who are here present, but even if all the nurslings of the whole Church throughout the world, both that which now is and that which shall be, should meet together, they would not be able worthily to sing the praises of their Shepherd.

3. A great and honourable man was Abrah
ham, but only great in comparison with men; and when he came before God, then speaking the truth candidly he saith, I am earth and ashes. He did not say ‘earth,’ and then cease, lest he should call himself by the name of that great element; but he added ‘and ashes,’ that he might represent his perishable and frail nature. Is there anything, he saith, smaller or lighter than ashes? For take, saith he, the comparison of ashes to a house, of a house to a city, a city to a province, a province to the Roman Empire, and the Roman Empire to the whole earth and all its bounds, and the whole earth to the heaven in which it is embosomed;—the earth, which bears the same proportion to the heaven as the centre to the whole circumference of a wheel, for the earth is no more than this in comparison with the heaven: consider then that this first heaven which is seen is less than the second, and the second than the third, for so far Scripture has named them, not that they are only so many, but because it was expedient for us to know so many only. And when in thought thou hast surveyed all the heavens, not yet will even the heavens be able to praise God as He is, nay, not if they should resound with a voice louder than thunder. But if these great vaults of the heavens cannot worthily sing God’s praise, when shall ‘earth and ashes,’ the smallest and least of things existing, be able to send up a worthy hymn of praise to God, or worthily to speak of God, that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and holdeth the inhabitants thereof as grasshoppers.

4. If any man attempt to speak of God, let him first describe the bounds of the earth. Thou
dwellest on the earth, and the limit of this earth which is thy dwelling thou knowest not: how then shalt thou be able to form a worthy thought of its Creator? Thou beholdest the stars, but their Maker thou beholdest not: count these which are visible, and then describe Him who is invisible, Who telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names828. Violent rains lately came pouring down upon us, and nearly destroyed us: number the drops in this city alone: nay, I say not in the city, but number the drops on thine own house for one single hour, if thou canst: but thou canst not. Learn then thine own weakness; learn from this instance the mightiness of God: for He hath numbered the drops of rain829, which have been poured down on all the earth, not only now but in all time. The sun is a work of God, which, great though it be, is but a spot in comparison with the whole heaven; first gaze stedfastly upon the sun, and then curiously scan the Lord of the sun. Seek not the things that are too deep for thee, neither search out the things that are above thy strength: what is commanded thee, think thereupon830.

5. But some one will say, If the Divine substance is incomprehensible, why then dost thou discourse of these things? So then, because I cannot drink up all the river, am I not even to take in moderation what is expedient for me? Because with eyes so constituted as mine I cannot take in all the sun, am I not even to look upon him enough to satisfy my wants? Or again, because I have entered into a great garden, and cannot eat all the supply of fruits, wouldst thou have me go away altogether hungry? I praise and glorify Him that made us; for it is a divine command which saith, Let every breath praise the Lord831. I am attempting now to glorify the Lord, but not to describe Him, knowing nevertheless that I shall fall short of glorifying Him worthily, yet deeming it a work of piety even to attempt it at all. For the Lord Jesus encourageth my weakness, by saying, No man hath seen God at any time832.

6. What then, some man will say, is it not written, The little ones’ Angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven833? Yes, but the Angels see God not as He is, but as far as they themselves are capable. For it is Jesus Himself who saith, Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father834. The Angels therefore behold as much as they can bear, and Archangels as much as they are able; and Thrones and Dominions more than the former, but yet less than His worthiness: for with the Son the Holy Ghost alone can rightly behold Him: for He searcheth all things, and knoweth even the deep things of God835: as indeed the Only-begotten Son also, with the Holy Ghost, knoweth the Father fully: For neither, saith He, knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him836. For He fully beholdeth, and, according as each can bear, revealeth God through the Spirit: since the Only-begotten Son together with the Holy Ghost is a partaker of the Father’s Godhead.

35

He, who837 was begotten knoweth Him who begat; and He Who begat knoweth Him who is begotten. Since Angels then are ignorant (for to each according to his own capacity doth the Only-begotten reveal Him through the Holy Ghost, as we have said), let no man be ashamed to confess his ignorance. I am speaking now, as all do on occasion: but how we speak, we cannot tell: how then can I declare Him who hath given us speech? I who have a soul, and cannot tell its distinctive properties, how shall I be able to describe its Giver?
7. For devotion it suffices us simply to know that we have a God; a God who is One, a living, an ever-living God; always like unto Himself; who has no Father, none mightier than Himself, no successor to thrust Him out from His kingdom: Who in name is manifold, in power infinite, in substance uniform. For though He is called Good, and Just, and Almighty and Sabaoth, He is not on that account diverse and various; but being one and the same, He sends forth countless operations of His Godhead, not exceeding here and deficient there, but being in all things like unto Himself. Not great in loving-kindness only, and little in wisdom, but with wisdom and loving-kindness in equal power: not seeing in part, and in part devoid of sight; but being all eye, and all ear, and all mind: not like us perceiving in part and in part not knowing; for such a statement were blasphemous, and unworthy of the Divine substance. He forekneweth the things that be; He is Holy, and Almighty, and excelleth all in goodness, and majesty, and wisdom: of Whom we can declare neither beginning, nor form, nor shape. For ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape, saith Holy Scripture. Wherefore Moses saith also to the Israelites: And take ye good heed to your own souls, for ye saw no similitude. For if it is wholly impossible to imagine His likeness, how shall thought come near His substance?

8. There have been many imaginations by many persons, and all have failed. Some have thought that God is fire; others that He is, as it were, a man with wings, because of a true text ill understood, Thou shalt hide me under the shadow of Thy wings. They forgot that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten, speaks in like manner concerning Himself to Jerusalem, How often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. For whereas God’s protecting power was conceived as wings, they failing to understand this sank down to the level of things human, and supposed that the Unsearchable exists in the likeness of man. Some again dared to say that He has seven eyes, because it is written, seven eyes of the Lord looking upon the whole earth. For if He has but seven eyes surrounding Him in part, His seeing is therefore partial and not perfect: but to say this of God is blasphemous; for we must believe that God is in all things perfect, according to our Saviour’s word, which saith, Your Father in heaven is perfect: perfect in sight, perfect in power, perfect in greatness, perfect in foreknowledge, perfect in goodness, perfect in justice, perfect in loving-kindness: not circumscribed in any space, but the Creator of all space, existing in all, and circumscribed by none. Heaven is His throne, but higher is He that sitteth thereon: and earth is His footstool, but His power reacheth unto things under the earth.

9. One He is, everywhere present, beholding all things, perceiving all things, creating all things through Christ: For all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made. A fountain of every good, abundant and unfailing, a river of blessings, an eternal light of never-failing splendour, an insuperable power condescending to our infirmities: whose very Name we dare not hear. Wilt thou find a footstep of the Lord? saith Job, or hast thou attained unto the least things which the Almighty hath made? If the least of His works are incomprehensible, shall He be
comprehended who made them all? Eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. If the things which God hath prepared are incomprehensible to our thoughts, how can we comprehend with our mind Himself who hath prepared them? O the depth of the riches, and wisdom, and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! saith the Apostle. If His judgments and His ways are incomprehensible, can He Himself be comprehended?

10. God then being thus great, and yet greater, (for even were I to change my whole substance into tongue, I could not speak His excellence: nay more, not even if all Angels should assemble, could they ever speak His worth), God being therefore so great in goodness and majesty, man hath yet dared to say to a stone that he hath graven, Thou art my God! O monstrous blindness, that from majesty so great came down so low! The tree which was planted by God, and nourished by the rain, and afterwards burnt and turned into ashes by the fire,—this is addressed as God, and the true God is despised. But the wickedness of idolatry grew yet more prodigal, and cat, and dog, and wolf were worshipped instead of God: the man-eating lion also was worshipped instead of God, the most loving friend of man. The snake and the serpent, counterfeit of him who thrust us out of Paradise, were worshipped, and He who planted Paradise was despised. And I am ashamed to say, and yet do say it, even onions were worshipped among some. Wine was given to make glad the heart of man: and Dionysus (Bacchus) was worshipped instead of God. God made corn by saying, Let the earth bring forth grass, yielding seed after his kind and after his likeness, that bread may strengthen man’s heart: why then was Demeter (Ceres) worshipped? Fire cometh forth from striking stones together even to this day: how then was Hephæstus (Vulcan) the creator of fire?

11. Whence came the polytheistic error of the Greeks? God has no body: whence then the adulteries alleged among those who are by them called gods? I say nothing of the transformations of Zeus into a swan: I am ashamed to speak of his transformations into a bull: for bellowings are unworthy of a god. The god of the Greeks has been found an adulterer, yet are they not ashamed: for if he is an adulterer let him not be called a god. They tell also of deaths, and falls, and thunder-strokes of their gods. Seest thou from how great a height and how low they have fallen? Was it without reason then that the Son of God came down from heaven? or was it that He might heal so great a wound? Was it without reason that the Son came? or was it in order that the Father might be acknowledged? Thou hast learned what moved the Only-begotten to come down from the throne at God’s right hand. The Father was despised, the Son must needs correct the error: for He Through Whom All Things Were Made must bring them all as offerings to the Lord of all. The wound must be healed: for what could be worse than this disease, that a stone should be worshipped instead of God?

Of Heresies.

12. And not among the heathen only did the devil make these assaults; for many of those who are falsely called Christians, and wrongfully addressed by the sweet name of Christ, have ere
now impiously dared to banish God from His own creation. I mean the brood of heretics, those most ungodly men of evil name, pretending to be friends of Christ but utterly hating Him. For he who blasphemes the Father of the Christ is an enemy of the Son. These men have dared to speak of two Godheads, one good and one evil! O monstrous blindness! If a Godhead, then assuredly good. But if not good, why called a Godhead? For if goodness is an attribute of God; if loving-kindness, beneficence, almighty power, are proper to God, then of two things one, either in calling Him God let the name and operation be united; or if they would rob Him of His operations, let them not give Him the bare name.

13. Heretics have dared to say that there are two Gods, and of good and evil two sources, and these unbegotten. If both are unbegotten it is certain that they are also equal, and both mighty. How then doth the light destroy the darkness? And do they ever exist together, or are they separated? Together they cannot be; for what fellowship hath light with darkness? saith the Apostle. But if they are far from each other, it is certain that they hold each his own place; and if they hold their own separate places, we are certainly in the realm of one God, and certainly worship one God. For thus we must conclude, even if we assent to their folly, that we must worship one God. Let us examine also what they say of the good God. Hath He power or no power? If He hath power, how did evil arise against His will? And how doth the evil substance intrude, if He be not willing? For if He knows but cannot hinder it, they charge Him with want of power; but if He has the power, yet hinders not, they accuse Him of treachery. Mark too their want of sense. At one time they say that the Evil One hath no communion with the good God in the creation of the world; but at another time they say that he hath the fourth part only. Also they say that the good God is the Father of Christ; but Christ they call this sun. If, therefore according to them, the world was made by the Evil One, and the sun is in the world, how is the Son of the Good an unwilling slave in the kingdom of the Evil? We bemire ourselves in speaking of these things, but we do it lest any of those present should from ignorance fall into the mire of the heretics. I know that I have defiled my own mouth and the ears of my listeners: yet it is expedient. For it is much better to hear absurdities charged against others, than to fall into them from ignorance: far better that thou know the mire and hate it, than unawares fall into it. For the godless system of the heresies is a road with many branches, and whenever a man has strayed from the one straight way, then he falls down precipices again and again.

14. The inventor of all heresy was Simon Magus: that Simon, who in the Acts of the Apostles thought to purchase with money the unsaleable grace of the Spirit, and heard the words, Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, and the rest: concerning whom also it is written, They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us. This man, after he had been cast out by the Apostles, came to Rome, and gaining over one Helena a harlot, was the first that dared with blasphemous mouth to say that it was himself who appeared on Mount Sinai as the Father, and afterwards appeared among the Jews, not in real flesh but in seeming, as Christ Jesus, and afterwards as the Holy Spirit whom Christ promised to send as the Paraclete. And he so deceived the
City of Rome that Claudius set up his statue, and wrote beneath it, in the language of the Romans, “Simoni Deo Sancto,” which being interpreted signifies, “To Simon the Holy God.”

15. As the delusion was extending, Peter and Paul, a noble pair, chief rulers of the Church, arrived and set the error right; and when the supposed god Simon wished to shew himself off, they straightway shewed him as a corpse. For Simon promised to rise aloft to heaven, and came riding in a daemons’ chariot on the air; but the servants of God fell on their knees, and having shewn that agreement of which Jesus spake, that if two of you shall agree concerning anything that they shall ask, it shall be done unto them, they launched the weapon of their concord in prayer against Magus, and struck him down to the earth. And marvellous though it was, yet no marvel. For Peter was there, who carrieth the keys of heaven: and nothing wonderful, for Paul was there, who was caught up to the third heaven, and into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. These brought the supposed God down from the sky to earth, thence to be taken down to the regions below the earth. In this man first the serpent of wickedness appeared; but when one head had been cut off, the root of wickedness was found again with many heads.

16. For Cerinthus made havoc of the Church, and Menander, and Carpocrates, Ebionites also, and Marcion, that mouthpiece of ungodliness. For he who proclaimed different gods, one the Good, the other the Just, contradicts the Son when He says, O righteous Father. And he who says again that the Father is one, and the maker of the world another, opposes the Son when He says, If then God so clothes the grass of the field which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the furnace of fire; and, Who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Here again is a second inventor of more mischief, this Marcion. For being confuted by the testimonies from the Old Testament which are quoted in the New, he was the first who dared to cut those testimonies out, and leave the preaching of the word of faith without witness, thus effacing the true God: and sought to undermine the Church’s faith, as if there were no heralds of it.

17. He again was succeeded by another, Basilides, of evil name, and dangerous character, a preacher of impurities. The contest of wickedness was aided also by Valentinus, a preacher of thirty gods. The Greeks tell of but few: and the man who was called—but more truly was not—a Christian extended the delusion to full thirty. He says, too, that Bythus the Abyss (for it became him as being an abyss of wickedness to begin his teaching from the Abyss) begat Silence, and of Silence begat the Word. This Bythus was worse than the Zeus of the Greeks, who was united to his sister: for Silence was said to be the child of Bythus. Dost thou see the absurdity invested with a show of Christianity? Wait a little, and thou wilt be shocked at his impiety; for he asserts that of this Bythus were begotten eight Eons; and of them, ten; and of them, other twelve, male and female. But whence is the proof of these things? See their silliness from their fabrications. Whence hast thou the proof of the thirty Eons? Because, saith he, it is written, that Jesus was baptized, being thirty years old. But even if He was baptized when thirty years old, what sort of
demonstration is this from the thirty years? Are there then five gods, because He brake five loaves among five thousand? Or because he had twelve Disciples, must there also be twelve gods?

18. And even this is still little compared with the impieties which follow. For the last of the deities being, as he dares to speak, both male and female, this, he says, is Wisdom894. What impiety! For the Wisdom of God895 is Christ His Only-begotten Son: and he by his doctrine degraded the Wisdom of God into a female element, and one of thirty, and the last fabrication. He also says that Wisdom attempted to behold the first God, and not bearing His brightness fell from heaven, and was cast out of her thirtieth place. Then she groaned, and of her groans begat the Devil896, and as she wept over her fall made of her tears the sea. Mark the impiety. For of Wisdom how is the Devil begotten, and of prudence wickedness, or of light darkness? He says too that the Devil begat others, some of whom created the world: and that the Christ came down in order to make mankind revolt from the Maker of the world.

19. But hear whom they say Christ Jesus to be, that thou mayest detest them yet more. For they say that after Wisdom had been cast down, in order that the number of the thirty might not be incomplete, the nine and twenty Æons contributed each a little part, and formed the Christ897: and they say that He also is both male and female898. Can anything be more impious than this? Anything more wretched? I am describing their delusion to thee, in order that thou mayest hate them the more. Shun, therefore, their impiety, and do not even give greeting to899 a man of this kind, lest thou have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness900: neither make curious inquiries, nor be willing to enter into conversation with them.

20. Hate all heretics, but especially him who is rightly named after mania901, who arose not long ago in the reign of Probus902. For the delusion began full seventy years ago903, and there are men still living who saw him with their very eyes. But hate him not for this, that he lived a short time ago; but because of his impious doctrines hate thou the worker of wickedness, the receptacle of all filth, who gathered up the mire of every heresy904. For aspiring to become pre-eminent among wicked men, he took the doctrines of all, and having combined them into one heresy filled with blasphemies and all iniquity, he makes havoc of the Church, or rather of those outside the Church, roaming about like a lion and devouring. Heed not their fair speech, nor their supposed humility: for they are serpents, a generation of vipers905. Judas too said Hail! Master906, even while he was betraying Him. Heed not their kisses, but beware of their venom.

21. Now, lest I seem to accuse him without reason, let me make a digression to tell who this Manes is, and in part what he teaches: for all time would fail to describe adequately the whole of his foul teaching. But for help in time of need907, store up in thy memory what I have said to former hearers, and will repeat to those now present, that they who know not may learn, and they who know may be reminded. Manes is not of Christian origin, God forbid! nor was he like Simon cast out of the Church, neither himself nor the teachers who were before him. For he steals other men’s wickedness, and makes their wickedness his own: but how and in what
manner thou must hear.

22. There was in Egypt one Scythianus908, a Saracen909 by birth, having nothing in common either with Judaism or with Christianity. This man, who dwelt at Alexandria and imitated the life of Aristotle910, composed four books911, one called a Gospel which had not the acts of Christ, but the mere name only, and one other called the book of Chapters, and a third of Mysteries, and a fourth, which they circulate now, the Treasure912. This man had a disciple, Terebinthus by name. But when Scythianus purposed to come into Judæa, and make havoc of the land, the Lord smote him with a deadly disease, and stayed the pestilence913.

23. But Terebinthus, his disciple in this wicked error, inherited his money and books and heresy914, and came to Palestine, and becoming known and condemned in Judæa915 he resolved to pass into Persia: but lest he should be recognised there also by his name he changed it and called himself Buddas916. However, he found adversaries there also in the priests of Mithras917: and being confuted in the discussion of many arguments and controversies, and at last hard pressed, he took refuge with a certain widow. Then having gone up on the housetop, and summoned the dæmons of the air, whom the Manichees to this day invoke over their abominable ceremony of the fig918, he was smitten of God, and cast down from the housetop, and expired: and so the second beast was cut off.

24. The books, however, which were the records of his impiety, remained; and both these and his money the widow inherited. And having neither kinsman nor any other friend, she determined to buy with the money a boy named Cubricus919: him she adopted and educated as a son in the learning of the Persians, and thus sharpened an evil weapon against mankind. So Cubricus, the vile slave, grew up in the midst of philosophers, and on the death of the widow inherited both the books and the money. Then, lest the name of slavery might be a reproach, instead of Cubricus he called himself Manes, which in the language of the Persians signifies discourse920. For as he thought himself something of a disputant, he surnamed himself Manes, as it were an excellent master of discourse. But though he contrived for himself an honourable title according to the language of the Persians, yet the providence of God caused him to become a self-accuser even against his will, that through thinking to honour himself in Persia, he might proclaim himself among the Greeks by name a maniac.

25. He dared too to say that he was the Paraclete, though it is written, But whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath no forgiveness921. He committed blasphemy therefore by saying that he was the Holy Ghost: let him that communicates with those heretics see with whom he is enrolling himself. The slave shook the world, since by three things the earth is shaken, and the fourth it cannot bear,—if a slave became a king922. Having come into public he now began to promise things above man’s power. The son of the King of the Persians was sick, and a multitude of physicians were in attendance: but Manes promised, as if he were a godly man, to cure him by prayer. With the departure of the physicians, the life of the child departed: and the man’s impiety was detected. So the would-be philosopher was a prisoner,
being cast into prison not for reproving the king in the cause of truth, not for destroying the
idols, but for promising to save and lying, or rather, if the truth must be told, for committing
murder. For the child who might have been saved by medical treatment, was murdered by this
man’s driving away the physicians, and killing him by want of treatment.

26. Now as there are very many wicked things which I tell thee of him, remember first his
blasphemy, secondly his slavery (not that slavery is a disgrace, but that his pretending to be
free-born, when he was a slave, was wicked), thirdly, the falsehood of his promise, fourthly,
the murder of the child, and fifthly,

the disgrace of the imprisonment. And there was not only the disgrace of the prison, but also
the flight from prison. For he who called himself the Paraclete and champion of the truth, ran
away: he was no successor of Jesus, who readily went to the Cross, but this man was the
reverse, a runaway. Moreover, the King of the Persians ordered the keepers of the prison to
be executed: so Manes was the cause of the child’s death through his vain boasting, and of the
gaolers’ death through his flight. Ought then he, who shared the guilt of murder, to be
worshipped? Ought he not to have followed the example of Jesus, and said, If ye seek Me, let
these go their way923? Ought he not to have said, like Jonas, Take me, and cast me into the
sea: for this storm is because of me924?

27. He escapes from the prison, and comes into Mesopotamia: but there Bishop Archelaus, a
shield of righteousness, encounters him925: and having accused him before philosophers as
judges, and having assembled an audience of Gentiles, lest if Christians gave judgment, the
judges might be thought to shew favour,—Tell us what thou preachest, said Archelaus to
Manes. And he, whose mouth was as an open sepulchre926, began first with blasphemy
against the Maker of all things, saying, The God of the Old Testament is the author of evils, as
He says of Himself, I am a consuming fire927. But the wise Archelaus undermined his
blasphemous argument by saying, “If the God of the Old Testament, as thou sayest, calls
Himself a fire, whose Son is He who saith, I came to send fire on the earth928? If thou findest
fault with Him who saith, The Lord killeth, and maketh alive929, why dost thou honour Peter,
who raised up Tabitha, but struck Sapphira dead? If again thou findest fault, because He
prepared fire, wherefore dost thou not find fault with Him who saith, Depart from Me into
everlasting fire930? If thou findest fault with Him who saith, I am God that make peace, and
create evil931, explain how Jesus saith, I came not to send peace but a sword932. Since both
speak alike, of two things one, either both are good, because of their agreement, or if Jesus is
blameless in so speaking. why blamest thou Him that saith the like in the Old Testament?”

28. Then Manes answers him: “And what sort of God causes blindness? For it is Paul who
saith, In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the
light of the Gospel should shine unto them933.” But Archelaus made a good retort, saying,
“Read a little before: But if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing934.
Seest thou that in them that are perishing it is veiled? For it is not right to give the things
which are holy unto the dogs935. Again, Is it only the God of the Old Testament that hath
blinded the minds of them that believe not? Hath not Jesus Himself said, For this cause speak I
unto them in parables, that seeing they may not see? Was it from hating them that He wished them not to see? Or because of their unworthiness, since their eyes they had closed. For where there is wilful wickedness, there is also a withholding of grace: for to him that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

29. “But if some are right in their interpretation, we must say as follows (for it is no unworthy expression)—If indeed He blinded the thoughts of them that believe not he blinded them for a good purpose, that they might look with new sight on what is good. For he said not, He blinded their soul, but, the thoughts of them that believe not. And the meaning is something of this kind: ‘Blind the lewd thoughts of the lewd, and the man is saved: blind the grasping and rapacious thought of the robber, and the man is saved.’ But wilt thou not understand it thus? Then there is yet another interpretation. The sun also blinds those whose sight is dim: and they whose eyes are diseased are hurt by the light and blinded. Not that the sun’s nature is to blind, but that the substance of the eyes is incapable of seeing. In like manner unbelievers being diseased in their heart cannot look upon the radiance of the Godhead. Nor hath he said, ‘He hath blinded their soul, that they should not hear the Gospel:’ but, that the light of the glory of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ should not shine unto them. For to hear the Gospel is permitted to all: but the glory of the Gospel is reserved for Christ’s true children only. Therefore the Lord spoke in parables to those who could not hear: but to the Disciples he explained the parables in private: for the brightness of the glory is for those who have been enlightened, the blinding for them that believe not.” These mysteries, which the Church now explains to thee who art passing out of the class of Catechumens, it is not the custom to explain to heathen. For to a heathen we do not explain the mysteries concerning Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, nor before Catechumens do we speak plainly of the mysteries: but many things we often speak in a veiled way, that the believers who know may understand, and they who know not may get no hurt.

42

30. By such and many other arguments the serpent was overthrown: thus did Archelaus wrestle with Manes and threw him. Again, he who had fled from prison flees from this place also: and having run away from his antagonist, he comes to a very poor village, like the serpent in Paradise when he left Adam and came to Eve. But the good shepherd Archelaus taking forethought for his sheep, when he heard of his flight, straightway hastened with all speed in search of the wolf. And when Manes suddenly saw his adversary, he rushed out and fled: it was however his last flight. For the officers of the King of Persia searched everywhere, and caught the fugitive: and the sentence, which he ought to have received in the presence of Archelaus, is passed upon him by the king’s officers. This Manes, whom his own disciples worship, is arrested and brought before the king. The king reproached him with his falsehood and his flight: poured scorn upon his slavish condition, avenged the murder of his child, and condemned him also for the murder of the gaolers: he commands him to be flayed after the Persian fashion. And while the rest of his body was given over for food of wild beasts, his skin, the receptacle of his vile mind, was hung up before the gates like a sack. He that called
himself the Paraclete and professed to know the future, knew not his own flight and capture.

31. This man has had three disciples, Thomas, and Baddas, and Hermas. Let none read the Gospel according to Thomas945: for it is the work not of one of the twelve Apostles, but of one of the three wicked disciples of Manes. Let none associate with the soul-destroying Manicheans, who by decoctions of chaff counterfeit the sad look of fasting, who speak evil of the Creator of meats, and greedily devour the daintiest, who teach that the man who plucks up this or that herb is changed into it. For if he who crops herbs or any vegetable is changed into the same, into how many will husbandmen and the tribe of gardeners be changed946? The gardener, as we see, has used his sickle against so many: into which then is he changed? Verily their doctrines are ridiculous, and fraught with their own condemnation and shame! The same man, being the shepherd of a flock, both sacrifices a sheep and kills a wolf. Into what then is he changed? Many men both net fishes and lime birds: into which then are they transformed?

32. Let those children of sloth, the Manicheans, make answer; who without labouring themselves eat up the labourers’ fruits: who welcome with smiling faces those who bring them their food, and return curses instead of blessings. For when a simple person brings them anything, “Stand outside a while,” saith he, “and I will bless thee.” Then having taken the bread into his hands (as those who have repented and left them have confessed), “I did not make thee,” says the Manichee to the bread: and sends up curses against the Most High; and curses him that made it, and so eats what was made947. If thou hatest the food, why didst thou look with smiling countenance on him that brought it to thee? If thou art thankful to the bringer, why dost thou utter thy blasphemy to God, who created and made it? So again he says, “I sowed thee not: may he be sown who sowed thee! I reaped thee not with a sickle: may he be reaped who reaped thee! I baked thee not with fire: may he be baked who baked thee!” A fine return for the kindness!

33. These are great faults, but still small in comparison with the rest. Their Baptism I dare not describe before men and women948. I dare not say what they distribute to their wretched communicants949….Truly we pollute our mouth in speaking of these things. Are the heathen more detestable than these? Are the Samaritans more wretched? Are Jews more impious? Are fornicators more impure950? But the Manichee sets these offerings in the midst of the altar as he considers it951. And dost thou, O man, receive instruction from such a mouth? On meeting this man dost thou greet him at all with a kiss? To say nothing of his other impiety, dost thou not flee from the defilement, and from men worse than profligates, more detestable than any prostitute?

34. Of these things the Church admonishes and teaches thee, and touches mire, that thou mayest not be bemired: she tells of the wounds, that thou mayest not be wounded. But for thee it is enough merely to know them: abstain from learning by experience. God thunders, and we all tremble; and they blaspheme. God lightens, and we all bow down to the earth; and they have their blasphemous sayings about the heavens952. These things are written in the books of the Manichees. These things we ourselves have read, because we could not believe
those who told of them: yes, for the sake of your salvation we have closely inquired into their perdition.

35. But may the Lord deliver us from such delusion: and may there be given to you a hatred against the serpent, that as they lie in wait for the heel, so you may trample on their head. Remember ye what I say. What agreement can there be between our state and theirs? What communion hath light with darkness? What hath the majesty of the Church to do with the abomination of the Manichees? Here is order, here is discipline, here is majesty, here is purity: here even to look upon a woman to lust after her is condemnation. Here is marriage with sanctity, here steadfast continence, here virginity in honour like unto the Angels: here partaking of food with thanksgiving, here gratitude to the Creator of the world. Here the Father of Christ is worshipped: here are taught fear and trembling before Him who sends the rain: here we ascribe glory to Him who makes the thunder and the lightning.

36. Make thou thy fold with the sheep: flee from the wolves: depart not from the Church. Hate those also who have ever been suspected in such matters: and unless in time thou perceive their repentance, do not rashly trust thyself among them. The truth of the Unity of God has been delivered to thee: learn to distinguish the pastures of doctrine. Be an approved banker, holding fast that which is good, abstaining from every form of evil. Or if thou hast ever been such as they, recognise and hate thy delusion. For there is a way of salvation, if thou reject the vomit, if thou from thy heart detest it, if thou depart from them, not with thy lips only, but with thy soul also: if thou worship the Father of Christ, the God of the Law and the Prophets, if thou acknowledge the Good and the Just to be one and the same God. And may He preserve you all, guarding you from falling or stumbling, stablished in the Faith, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

On the Incarnation, De Incarnatione Verbi Dei
By: St. Athanasius of Alexandria
Athanasius stood contra mundum ("against the world") in defense of the biblical doctrine of Christ. He opposed Arius when it seemed all the world would follow Arius's heresy. Athanasius's work remains even today the definitive statement of orthodox Trinitarianism.

1. Creation and the Fall

In our former book[1] we dealt fully enough with a few of the chief points about the heathen worship of idols, and how those false fears originally arose. We also, by God's grace, briefly indicated that the Word of the Father is Himself divine, that all things that are owe their being to His will and power, and that it is through Him that the Father gives order to creation, by Him that all things are moved, and through Him that they receive their being. Now, Macarius, true lover of Christ, we must take a step further in the faith of our holy religion, and consider also the Word's becoming Man and His divine Appearing in our midst. That mystery the Jews traduce, the Greeks deride, but we adore; and your own love and devotion to the Word also will be the greater, because in His Manhood He seems so little worth. For it is a fact that the more unbelievers pour scorn on Him, so much the more does He make His Godhead evident. The things which they, as men, rule out as impossible, He plainly shows to be possible; that which they deride as unfitting, His goodness makes most fit; and things which these wiseacres laugh at as "human" He by His inherent might declares divine. Thus by what seems His utter poverty and weakness on the cross He overturns the pomp and parade of idols, and quietly and hiddenly wins over the mockers and unbelievers to recognize Him as God.

Now in dealing with these matters it is necessary first to recall what has already been said. You must understand why it is that the Word of the Father, so great and so high, has been made manifest in bodily form. He has not assumed a body as proper to His own nature, far from it, for as the Word He is without body. He has been manifested in a human
body for this reason only, out of the love and goodness of His Father, for the salvation of us men. We will begin, then, with the creation of the world and with God its Maker, for the first fact that you must grasp is this: the renewal of creation has been wrought by the Self-same Word Who made it in the beginning. There is thus no inconsistency between creation and salvation for the One Father has employed the same Agent for both works, effecting the salvation of the world through the same Word Who made it in the beginning.

(2) In regard to the making of the universe and the creation of all things there have been various opinions, and each person has propounded the theory that suited his own taste. For instance, some say that all things are self-originated and, so to speak, haphazard. The Epicureans are among these; they deny that there is any Mind behind the universe at all. This view is contrary to all the facts of experience, their own existence included. For if all things had come into being in this automatic fashion, instead of being the outcome of Mind, though they existed, they would all be uniform and without distinction. In the universe everything would be sun or moon or whatever it was, and in the human body the whole would be hand or eye or foot. But in point of fact the sun and the moon and the earth are all different things, and even within the human body there are different members, such as foot and hand and head. This distinctness of things argues not a spontaneous generation but a prevenient Cause; and from that Cause we can apprehend God, the Designer and Maker of all.

Others take the view expressed by Plato, that giant among the Greeks. He said that God had made all things out of pre-existent and uncreated matter, just as the carpenter makes things only out of wood that already exists. But those who hold this view do not realize that to deny that God is Himself the Cause of matter is to impute limitation to Him, just as it is undoubtedly a limitation on the part of the carpenter that he can make nothing unless he has the wood. How could God be called
Maker and Artificer if His ability to make depended on some other cause, namely on matter itself? If He only worked up existing matter and did not Himself bring matter into being, He would be not the Creator but only a craftsman.

Then, again, there is the theory of the Gnostics, who have invented for themselves an Artificer of all things other than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. These simply shut their eyes to the obvious meaning of Scripture. For instance, the Lord, having reminded the Jews of the statement in Genesis, "He Who created them in the beginning made them male and female. . .," and having shown that for that reason a man should leave his parents and cleave to his wife, goes on to say with reference to the Creator, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder."[ 2] How can they get a creation independent of the Father out of that? And, again, St. John, speaking all inclusively, says, "All things became by Him and without Him came nothing into being.[ 3] How then could the Artificer be someone different, other than the Father of Christ?

(3)Such are the notions which men put forward. But the impiety of their foolish talk is plainly declared by the divine teaching of the Christian faith. From it we know that, because there is Mind behind the universe, it did not originate itself; because God is infinite, not finite, it was not made from pre-existent matter, but out of nothing and out of non-existence absolute and utter God brought it into being through the Word. He says as much in Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;[4] and again through that most helpful book The Shepherd, "Believe thou first and foremost that there is One God Who created and arranged all things and brought them out of non-existence into being."[ 5] Paul also indicates the same thing when he says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which we see now did not come into being out of things which had previously appeared."[6] For God is good—or rather, of all goodness He is Fountainhead, and it is
impossible for one who is good to be mean or grudging about anything. Grudging existence to none therefore, He made all things out of nothing through His own Word, our Lord Jesus Christ and of all these His earthly creatures He reserved especial mercy for the race of men. Upon them, therefore, upon men who, as animals, were essentially impermanent, He bestowed a grace which other creatures lacked—namely the impress of His own Image, a share in the reasonable being of the very Word Himself, so that, reflecting Him and themselves becoming reasonable and expressing the Mind of God even as He does, though in limited degree they might continue for ever in the blessed and only true life of the saints in paradise. But since the will of man could turn either way, God secured this grace that He had given by making it conditional from the first upon two things—namely, a law and a place. He set them in His own paradise, and laid upon them a single prohibition. If they guarded the grace and retained the loveliness of their original innocence, then the life of paradise should be theirs, without sorrow, pain or care, and after it the assurance of immortality in heaven. But if they went astray and became vile, throwing away their birthright of beauty, then they would come under the natural law of death and live no longer in paradise, but, dying outside of it, continue in death and in corruption. This is what Holy Scripture tells us, proclaiming the command of God, "Of every tree that is in the garden thou shalt surely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ye shall not eat, but in the day that ye do eat, ye shall surely die."[7] "Ye shall surely die"—not just die only, but remain in the state of death and of corruption.

You may be wondering why we are discussing the origin of men when we set out to talk about the Word’s becoming Man. The former subject is relevant to the latter for this reason: it was our sorry case that caused the Word to come down, our transgression that called out His love for us, so that He made haste to help us and to appear among us. It is we who were the cause of
His taking human form, and for our salvation that in His great love He was both born and manifested in a human body. For God had made man thus (that is, as an embodied spirit), and had willed that he should remain in incorruption. But men, having turned from the contemplation of God to evil of their own devising, had come inevitably under the law of death. Instead of remaining in the state in which God had created them, they were in process of becoming corrupted entirely, and death had them completely under its dominion. For the transgression of the commandment was making them turn back again according to their nature; and as they had at the beginning come into being out of non-existence, so were they now on the way to returning, through corruption, to non-existence again. The presence and love of the Word had called them into being; inevitably, therefore when they lost the knowledge of God, they lost existence with it; for it is God alone Who exists, evil is non-being, the negation and antithesis of good. By nature, of course, man is mortal, since he was made from nothing; but he bears also the Likeness of Him Who is, and if he preserves that Likeness through constant contemplation, then his nature is deprived of its power and he remains incorrupt. So is it affirmed in Wisdom: "The keeping of His laws is the assurance of incorruption."[8] And being incorrupt, he would be henceforth as God, as Holy Scripture says, "I have said, Ye are gods and sons of the Highest all of you: but ye die as men and fall as one of the princes."[ 9]

(5) This, then, was the plight of men. God had not only made them out of nothing, but had also graciously bestowed on them His own life by the grace of the Word. Then, turning from eternal things to things corruptible, by counsel of the devil, they had become the cause of their own corruption in death; for, as I said before, though they were by nature subject to corruption, the grace of their union with the Word made them capable of escaping from the natural law, provided that they retained the beauty of innocence with which they were created. That is to say, the presence of the
Word with them shielded them even from natural corruption, as also Wisdom says: God created man for incorruption and as an image of His own eternity; but by envy of the devil death entered into the world."[10] When this happened, men began to die, and corruption ran riot among them and held sway over them to an even more than natural degree, because it was the penalty of which God had forewarned them for transgressing the commandment. Indeed, they had in their sinning surpassed all limits; for, having invented wickedness in the beginning and so involved themselves in death and corruption, they had gone on gradually from bad to worse, not stopping at any one kind of evil, but continually, as with insatiable appetite, devising new kinds of sins. Adulteries and thefts were everywhere, murder and rapine filled the earth, law was disregarded in corruption and injustice, all kinds of iniquities were perpetrated by all, both singly and in common. Cities were warring with cities, nations were rising against nations, and the whole earth was rent with factions and battles, while each strove to outdo the other in wickedness. Even crimes contrary to nature were not unknown, but as the martyr-apostle of Christ says: "Their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature; and the men also, leaving the natural use of the woman, flamed out in lust towards each other, perpetrating shameless acts with their own sex, and receiving in their own persons the due recompense of their pervertedness."

Chapter 1 Notes
1. i.e. the Contra Gentes.
3. John i. 3.
4. Gen. i. 1.
5. The Shepherd of Hermas, Book 2. par 1.
6. Heb. xi. 3.
7. Gen. ii. 16 f.
8. Wisdom vi. 18.
9. Psalm lxxxii. 6 f.
10. Wisdom ii. 23 f.
11. Rom. i. 26 f.
2. The Divine Dilemma and Its Solution in the Incarnation

We saw in the last chapter that, because death and corruption were gaining ever firmer hold on them, the human race was in process of destruction. Man, who was created in God's image and in his possession of reason reflected the very Word Himself, was disappearing, and the work of God was being undone. The law of death, which followed from the Transgression, prevailed upon us, and from it there was no escape. The thing that was happening was in truth both monstrous and unfitting. It would, of course, have been unthinkable that God should go back upon His word and that man, having transgressed, should not die; but it was equally monstrous that beings which once had shared the nature of the Word should perish and turn back again into non-existence through corruption. It was unworthy of the goodness of God that creatures made by Him should be brought to nothing through the deceit wrought upon man by the devil; and it was supremely unfitting that the work of God in mankind should disappear, either through their own negligence or through the deceit of evil spirits.

As, then, the creatures whom He had created reasonable, like the Word, were in fact perishing, and such noble works were on the road to ruin, what then was God, being Good, to do? Was He to let corruption and death have their way with them? In that case, what was the use of having made them in the beginning? Surely it would have been better never to have been created at all than, having been created, to be neglected and perish; and, besides that, such indifference to the ruin of His own work before His very eyes would argue not goodness in God but limitation, and that far more than if He had never created men at all. It was impossible, therefore, that God should leave man to be carried off by corruption, because it would be unfitting and unworthy of Himself.

(7) Yet, true though this is, it is not the whole
matter. As we have already noted, it was unthinkable that God, the Father of Truth, should go back upon His word regarding death in order to ensure our continued existence. He could not falsify Himself; what, then, was God to do? Was He to demand repentance from men for their transgression? You might say that that was worthy of God, and argue further that, as through the Transgression they became subject to corruption, so through repentance they might return to incorruption again. But repentance would not guard the Divine consistency, for, if death did not hold dominion over men, God would still remain untrue. Nor does repentance recall men from what is according to their nature; all that it does is to make them cease from sinning. Had it been a case of a trespass only, and not of a subsequent corruption, repentance would have been well enough; but when once transgression had begun men came under the power of the corruption proper to their nature and were bereft of the grace which belonged to them as creatures in the Image of God. No, repentance could not meet the case. What—or rather Who was it that was needed for such grace and such recall as we required? Who, save the Word of God Himself, Who also in the beginning had made all things out of nothing? His part it was, and His alone, both to bring again the corruptible to incorruption and to maintain for the Father His consistency of character with all. For He alone, being Word of the Father and above all, was in consequence both able to recreate all, and worthy to suffer on behalf of all and to be an ambassador for all with the Father.

(8) For this purpose, then, the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God entered our world. In one sense, indeed, He was not far from it before, for no part of creation had ever been without Him Who, while ever abiding in union with the Father, yet fills all things that are. But now He entered the world in a new way, stooping to our level in His love and Self-revealing to us. He saw the reasonable race, the race of men that, like Himself, expressed the Father's Mind, wasting out
of existence, and death reigning over all in
corruption. He saw that corruption held us all the
closer, because it was the penalty for the
Transgression; He saw, too, how unthinkable it
would be for the law to be repealed before it was
fulfilled. He saw how unseemly it was that the very
things of which He Himself was the Artificer should
be disappearing. He saw how the surpassing
wickedness of men was mounting up against them;
He saw also their universal liability to death. All this
He saw and, pitying our race, moved with
compassion for our limitation, unable to endure
that death should have the mastery, rather than
that His creatures should perish and the work of
His Father for us men come to nought, He took to
Himself a body, a human body even as our own.
Nor did He will merely to become embodied or
merely to appear; had that been so, He could have
revealed His divine majesty in some other and
better way. No, He took our body, and not only so,
but He took it directly from a spotless, stainless
virgin, without the agency of human father—a pure
body, untainted by intercourse with man. He, the
Mighty One, the Artificer of all, Himself prepared
this body in the virgin as a temple for Himself, and
took it for His very own, as the instrument through
which He was known and in which He dwelt. Thus,
taking a body like our own, because all our bodies
were liable to the corruption of death, He
surrendered His body to death instead of all, and
offered it to the Father. This He did out of sheer
love for us, so that in His death all might die, and
the law of death thereby be abolished because,
having fulfilled in His body that for which it was
appointed, it was thereafter voided of its power for
men. This He did that He might turn again to
incorruption men who had turned back to
corruption, and make them alive through death by
the appropriation of His body and by the grace of
His resurrection. Thus He would make death to
disappear from them as utterly as straw from fire.
(9) The Word perceived that corruption could not
be got rid of otherwise than through death; yet He
Himself, as the Word, being immortal and the
Father's Son, was such as could not die. For this reason, therefore, He assumed a body capable of
death, in order that it, through belonging to the
Word Who is above all, might become in dying a
sufficient exchange for all, and, itself remaining
incorruptible through His indwelling, might
thereafter put an end to corruption for all others as
well, by the grace of the resurrection. It was by
surrendering to death the body which He had
taken, as an offering and sacrifice free from every
stain, that He forthwith abolished death for His
human brethren by the offering of the equivalent.
For naturally, since the Word of God was above
all, when He offered His own temple and bodily
instrument as a substitute for the life of all, He
fulfilled in death all that was required. Naturally
also, through this union of the immortal Son of God
with our human nature, all men were clothed with
incorruption in the promise of the resurrection. For
the solidarity of mankind is such that, by virtue of
the Word's indwelling in a single human body, the
corruption which goes with death has lost its power
over all. You know how it is when some great king
enters a large city and dwells in one of its houses;
because of his dwelling in that single house, the
whole city is honored, and enemies and robbers
cease to molest it. Even so is it with the King of all;
He has come into our country and dwelt in one
body amidst the many, and in consequence the
designs of the enemy against mankind have been
foiled and the corruption of death, which formerly
held them in its power, has simply ceased to be.
For the human race would have perished utterly
had not the Lord and Savior of all, the Son of God,
come among us to put an end to death.
(10) This great work was, indeed, supremely
worthy of the goodness of God. A king who has
founded a city, so far from neglecting it when
through the carelessness of the inhabitants it is
attacked by robbers, avenges it and saves it from
destruction, having regard rather to his own honor
than to the people's neglect. Much more, then, the
Word of the All-good Father was not unmindful of
the human race that He had called to be; but
rather, by the offering of His own body He abolished the death which they had incurred, and corrected their neglect by His own teaching. Thus by His own power He restored the whole nature of man. The Savior's own inspired disciples assure us of this. We read in one place: "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that, if One died on behalf of all, then all died, and He died for all that we should no longer live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died and rose again from the dead, even our Lord Jesus Christ."[1] And again another says: "But we behold Him Who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He should taste of death on behalf of every man." The same writer goes on to point out why it was necessary for God the Word and none other to become Man: "For it became Him, for Whom are all things and through Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through suffering.[2] He means that the rescue of mankind from corruption was the proper part only of Him Who made them in the beginning. He points out also that the Word assumed a human body, expressly in order that He might offer it in sacrifice for other like bodies: "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself assumed the same, in order that through death He might bring to nought Him that hath the power of death, that is to say, the Devil, and might rescue those who all their lives were enslaved by the fear of death."[3] For by the sacrifice of His own body He did two things: He put an end to the law of death which barred our way; and He made a new beginning of life for us, by giving us the hope of resurrection. By man death has gained its power over men; by the Word made Man death has been destroyed and life raised up anew. That is what Paul says, that true servant of Christ: For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. Just as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,"[4] and so forth. Now, therefore, when we die
we no longer do so as men condemned to death, but as those who are even now in process of rising we await the general resurrection of all, "which in its own times He shall show,"[5] even God Who wrought it and bestowed it on us. This, then, is the first cause of the Savior's becoming Man. There are, however, other things which show how wholly fitting is His blessed presence in our midst; and these we must now go on to consider.

Chapter 2 Notes
1. 2 Cor. v. 14 f.
2. Heb. ii. 9 ff.
3. Heb. ii. 14 f.
4. 1 Cor. xv. 21 f.
5. 1 Tim. vi. 15.

Go back to the top of Chapter 2
3. The Divine Dilemma and Its Solution in the Incarnation—continued

hen God the Almighty was making mankind through His own Word, He perceived that they, owing to the limitation of their nature, could not of themselves have any knowledge of their Artificer, the Incorporeal and Uncreated. He took pity on them, therefore, and did not leave them destitute of the knowledge of Himself, lest their very existence should prove purposeless. For of what use is existence to the creature if it cannot know its Maker? How could men be reasonable beings if they had no knowledge of the Word and Reason of the Father, through Whom they had received their being? They would be no better than the beasts, had they no knowledge save of earthly things; and why should God have made them at all, if He had not intended them to know Him? But, in fact, the good God has given them a share in His own Image, that is, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and has made even themselves after the same Image and Likeness. Why? Simply in order that through this gift of Godlikeness in themselves they may be able to perceive the Image Absolute, that is the Word Himself, and through Him to apprehend the Father; which knowledge of their
Maker is for men the only really happy and blessed life. But, as we have already seen, men, foolish as they are, thought little of the grace they had received, and turned away from God. They defiled their own soul so completely that they not only lost their apprehension of God, but invented for themselves other gods of various kinds. They fashioned idols for themselves in place of the truth and reverenced things that are not, rather than God Who is, as St. Paul says, "worshipping the creature rather than the Creator."[1] Moreover, and much worse, they transferred the honor which is due to God to material objects such as wood and stone, and also to man; and further even than that they went, as we said in our former book. Indeed, so impious were they that they worshipped evil spirits as gods in satisfaction of their lusts. They sacrificed brute beasts and immolated men, as the just due of these deities, thereby bringing themselves more and more under their insane control. Magic arts also were taught among them, oracles in sundry places led men astray, and the cause of everything in human life was traced to the stars as though nothing existed but that which could be seen. In a word, impiety and lawlessness were everywhere, and neither God nor His Word was known. Yet He had not hidden Himself from the sight of men nor given the knowledge of Himself in one way only; but rather He had unfolded it in many forms and by many ways. (12) God knew the limitation of mankind, you see; and though the grace of being made in His Image was sufficient to give them knowledge of the Word and through Him of the Father, as a safeguard against their neglect of this grace, He provided the works of creation also as means by which the Maker might be known. Nor was this all. Man's neglect of the indwelling grace tends ever to increase; and against this further frailty also God made provision by giving them a law, and by sending prophets, men whom they knew. Thus, if they were tardy in looking up to heaven, they might still gain knowledge of their Maker from those
close at hand; for men can learn directly about higher things from other men. Three ways thus lay open to them, by which they might obtain the knowledge of God. They could look up into the immensity of heaven, and by pondering the harmony of creation come to know its Ruler, the Word of the Father, Whose all-ruling providence makes known the Father to all. Or, if this was beyond them, they could converse with holy men, and through them learn to know God, the Artificer of all things, the Father of Christ, and to recognize the worship of idols as the negation of the truth and full of all impiety. Or else, in the third place, they could cease from lukewarmness and lead a good life merely by knowing the law. For the law was not given only for the Jews, nor was it solely for their sake that God sent the prophets, though it was to the Jews that they were sent and by the Jews that they were persecuted. The law and the prophets were a sacred school of the knowledge of God and the conduct of the spiritual life for the whole world.

So great, indeed, were the goodness and the love of God. Yet men, bowed down by the pleasures of the moment and by the frauds and illusions of the evil spirits, did not lift up their heads towards the truth. So burdened were they with their wickednesses that they seemed rather to be brute beasts than reasonable men, reflecting the very Likeness of the Word.

(13) What was God to do in face of this dehumanising of mankind, this universal hiding of the knowledge of Himself by the wiles of evil spirits? Was He to keep silence before so great a wrong and let men go on being thus deceived and kept in ignorance of Himself? If so, what was the use of having made them in His own Image originally? It would surely have been better for them always to have been brutes, rather than to revert to that condition when once they had shared the nature of the Word. Again, things being as they were, what was the use of their ever having had the knowledge of God? Surely it would have been better for God never to have bestowed it, than that
men should subsequently be found unworthy to receive it. Similarly, what possible profit could it be to God Himself, Who made men, if when made they did not worship Him, but regarded others as their makers? This would be tantamount to His having made them for others and not for Himself. Even an earthly king, though he is only a man, does not allow lands that he has colonized to pass into other hands or to desert to other rulers, but sends letters and friends and even visits them himself to recall them to their allegiance, rather than allow His work to be undone. How much more, then, will God be patient and painstaking with His creatures, that they be not led astray from Him to the service of those that are not, and that all the more because such error means for them sheer ruin, and because it is not right that those who had once shared His Image should be destroyed.

What, then, was God to do? What else could He possibly do, being God, but renew His Image in mankind, so that through it men might once more come to know Him? And how could this be done save by the coming of the very Image Himself, our Savior Jesus Christ? Men could not have done it, for they are only made after the Image; nor could angels have done it, for they are not the images of God. The Word of God came in His own Person, because it was He alone, the Image of the Father Who could recreate man made after the Image. In order to effect this re-creation, however, He had first to do away with death and corruption. Therefore He assumed a human body, in order that in it death might once for all be destroyed, and that men might be renewed according to the Image. The Image of the Father only was sufficient for this need. Here is an illustration to prove it.

(14) You know what happens when a portrait that has been painted on a panel becomes obliterated through external stains. The artist does not throw away the panel, but the subject of the portrait has to come and sit for it again, and then the likeness is re-drawn on the same material.

Even so was it with the All-holy Son of God. He,
the Image of the Father, came and dwelt in our midst, in order that He might renew mankind made after Himself, and seek out His lost sheep, even as He says in the Gospel: "I came to seek and to save that which was lost."[2] This also explains His saying to the Jews: "Except a man be born anew. . ."[3] a He was not referring to a man's natural birth from his mother, as they thought, but to the re-birth and re-creation of the soul in the Image of God.

Nor was this the only thing which only the Word could do. When the madness of idolatry and irreligion filled the world and the knowledge of God was hidden, whose part was it to teach the world about the Father? Man's, would you say? But men cannot run everywhere over the world, nor would their words carry sufficient weight if they did, nor would they be, unaided, a match for the evil spirits. Moreover, since even the best of men were confused and blinded by evil, how could they convert the souls and minds of others? You cannot put straight in others what is warped in yourself. Perhaps you will say, then, that creation was enough to teach men about the Father. But if that had been so, such great evils would never have occurred. Creation was there all the time, but it did not prevent men from wallowing in error. Once more, then, it was the Word of God, Who sees all that is in man and moves all things in creation, Who alone could meet the needs of the situation. It was His part and His alone, Whose ordering of the universe reveals the Father, to renew the same teaching. But how was He to do it? By the same means as before, perhaps you will say, that is, through the works of creation. But this was proven insufficient. Men had neglected to consider the heavens before, and now they were looking in the opposite direction. Wherefore, in all naturalness and fitness. desiring to do good to men, as Man He dwells, taking to Himself a body like the rest; and through His actions done in that body, as it were on their own level, He teaches those who would not learn by other means to know Himself, the Word of God, and through Him the Father.
(15) He deals with them as a good teacher with his pupils, coming down to their level and using simple means. St. Paul says as much: "Because in the wisdom of God the world in its wisdom knew not God, God thought fit through the simplicity of the News proclaimed to save those who believe."[4] Men had turned from the contemplation of God above, and were looking for Him in the opposite direction, down among created things and things of sense. The Savior of us all, the Word of God, in His great love took to Himself a body and moved as Man among men, meeting their senses, so to speak, half way. He became Himself an object for the senses, so that those who were seeking God in sensible things might apprehend the Father through the works which He, the Word of God, did in the body. Human and human minded as men were, therefore, to whichever side they looked in the sensible world they found themselves taught the truth. Were they awe-stricken by creation? They beheld it confessing Christ as Lord. Did their minds tend to regard men as Gods? The uniqueness of the Savior's works marked Him, alone of men, as Son of God. Were they drawn to evil spirits? They saw them driven out by the Lord and learned that the Word of God alone was God and that the evil spirits were not gods at all. Were they inclined to hero-worship and the cult of the dead? Then the fact that the Savior had risen from the dead showed them how false these other deities were, and that the Word of the Father is the one true Lord, the Lord even of death. For this reason was He both born and manifested as Man, for this He died and rose, in order that, eclipsing by His works all other human deeds, He might recall men from all the paths of error to know the Father. As He says Himself, "I came to seek and to save that which was lost."[5]

(16) When, then, the minds of men had fallen finally to the level of sensible things, the Word submitted to appear in a body, in order that He, as Man, might center their senses on Himself, and convince them through His human acts that He
Himself is not man only but also God, the Word and Wisdom of the true God. This is what Paul wants to tell us when he says: "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the length and breadth and height and depth, and to know the love of God that surpasses knowledge, so that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God." The Self-revealing of the Word is in every dimension—above, in creation; below, in the Incarnation; in the depth, in Hades; in the breadth, throughout the world. All things have been filled with the knowledge of God. For this reason He did not offer the sacrifice on behalf of all immediately He came, for if He had surrendered His body to death and then raised it again at once He would have ceased to be an object of our senses. Instead of that, He stayed in His body and let Himself be seen in it, doing acts and giving signs which showed Him to be not only man, but also God the Word. There were thus two things which the Savior did for us by becoming Man. He banished death from us and made us anew; and, invisible and imperceptible as in Himself He is, He became visible through His works and revealed Himself as the Word of the Father, the Ruler and King of the whole creation. (17) There is a paradox in this last statement which we must now examine. The Word was not hedged in by His body, nor did His presence in the body prevent His being present elsewhere as well. When He moved His body He did not cease also to direct the universe by His Mind and might. No. The marvelous truth is, that being the Word, so far from being Himself contained by anything, He actually contained all things Himself. In creation He is present everywhere, yet is distinct in being from it; ordering, directing, giving life to all, containing all, yet is He Himself the Uncontained, existing solely in His Father. As with the whole, so also is it with the part. Existing in a human body, to which He Himself gives life, He is still Source of life to all the universe, present in every part of it, yet outside the whole; and He is revealed both through the works
of His body and through His activity in the world. It is, indeed, the function of soul to behold things that are outside the body, but it cannot energize or move them. A man cannot transport things from one place to another, for instance, merely by thinking about them; nor can you or I move the sun and the stars just by sitting at home and looking at them. With the Word of God in His human nature, however, it was otherwise. His body was for Him not a limitation, but an instrument, so that He was both in it and in all things, and outside all things, resting in the Father alone. At one and the same time—this is the wonder— as Man He was living a human life, and as Word He was sustaining the life of the universe, and as Son He was in constant union with the Father. Not even His birth from a virgin, therefore, changed Him in any way, nor was He defiled by being in the body. Rather, He sanctified the body by being in it. For His being in everything does not mean that He shares the nature of everything, only that He gives all things their being and sustains them in it. Just as the sun is not defiled by the contact of its rays with earthly objects, but rather enlightens and purifies them, so He Who made the sun is not defiled by being made known in a body, but rather the body is cleansed and quickened by His indwelling, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."[7]

You must understand, therefore, that when writers on this sacred theme speak of Him as eating and drinking and being born, they mean that the body, as a body, was born and sustained with the food proper to its nature; while God the Word, Who was united with it, was at the same time ordering the universe and revealing Himself through His bodily acts as not man only but God. Those acts are rightly said to be His acts, because the body which did them did indeed belong to Him and none other; moreover, it was right that they should be thus attributed to Him as Man, in order to show that His body was a real one and not merely an appearance. From such ordinary acts as being born and taking food, He was recognized as being actually present in the body; but by the
extraordinary acts which He did through the body He proved Himself to be the Son of God. That is the meaning of His words to the unbelieving Jews: "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not; but if I do, even if ye believe not Me, believe My works, that ye may know that the Father is in Me and I in the Father."

Invisible in Himself, He is known from the works of creation; so also, when His Godhead is veiled in human nature, His bodily acts still declare Him to be not man only, but the Power and Word of God. To speak authoritatively to evil spirits, for instance, and to drive them out, is not human but divine; and who could see-Him curing all the diseases to which mankind is prone, and still deem Him mere man and not also God? He cleansed lepers, He made the lame to walk, He opened the ears of the deaf and the eyes of the blind, there was no sickness or weakness that-He did not drive away. Even the most casual observer can see that these were acts of God. The healing of the man born blind, for instance, who but the Father and Artificer of man, the Controller of his whole being, could thus have restored the faculty denied at birth? He Who did thus must surely be Himself the Lord of birth. This is proved also at the outset of His becoming Man. He formed His own body from the virgin; and that is no small proof of His Godhead, since He Who made that was the Maker of all else. And would not anyone infer from the fact of that body being begotten of a virgin only, without human father, that He Who appeared in it was also the Maker and Lord of all beside?

Again, consider the miracle at Cana. Would not anyone who saw the substance of water transmuted into wine understand that He Who did it was the Lord and Maker of the water that He changed? It was for the same reason that He walked on the sea as on dry land—to prove to the onlookers that He had mastery over all. And the feeding of the multitude, when He made little into much, so that from five loaves five thousand mouths were filled—did not that prove Him none other than the very Lord Whose Mind is over all?
Chapter 3 Notes
1. Rom. i. 25.
3. John iii. 3.
4. 1 Cor. i. 21.
7. 1 Peter ii. 22.

Go back to the top of Chapter 3

4. The Death of Christ

Il these things the Savior thought fit to do, so that, recognizing His bodily acts as works of God, men who were blind to His presence in creation might regain knowledge of the Father. For, as I said before, who that saw His authority over evil spirits and their response to it could doubt that He was, indeed, the Son, the Wisdom and the Power of God? Even the very creation broke silence at His behest and, marvelous to relate, confessed with one voice before the cross, that monument of victory, that He Who suffered thereon in the body was not man only, but Son of God and Savior of all. The sun veiled his face, the earth quaked, the mountains were rent asunder, all men were stricken with awe. These things showed that Christ on the cross was God, and that all creation was His slave and was bearing witness by its fear to the presence of its Master.

Thus, then, God the Word revealed Himself to men through His works. We must next consider the end of His earthly life and the nature of His bodily death. This is, indeed, the very center of our faith, and everywhere you hear men speak of it; by it, too, no less than by His other acts, Christ is revealed as God and Son of God.

(20) We have dealt as far as circumstances and our own understanding permit with the reason for His bodily manifestation. We have seen that to change the corruptible to incorruption was proper to none other than the Savior Himself, Who in the beginning made all things out of nothing; that only the Image of the Father could re-create the likeness of the Image in men, that none save our Lord Jesus Christ could give to mortals immortality,
and that only the Word Who orders all things and is alone the Father's true and sole-begotten Son could teach men about Him and abolish the worship of idols. But beyond all this, there was a debt owing which must needs be paid; for, as I said before, all men were due to die. Here, then, is the second reason why the Word dwelt among us, namely that having proved His Godhead by His works, He might offer the sacrifice on behalf of all, surrendering His own temple to death in place of all, to settle man's account with death and free him from the primal transgression. In the same act also He showed Himself mightier than death, displaying His own body incorruptible as the first-fruits of the resurrection.

You must not be surprised if we repeat ourselves in dealing with this subject. We are speaking of the good pleasure of God and of the things which He in His loving wisdom thought fit to do, and it is better to put the same thing in several ways than to run the risk of leaving something out. The body of the Word, then, being a real human body, in spite of its having been uniquely formed from a virgin, was of itself mortal and, like other bodies, liable to death. But the indwelling of the Word loosed it from this natural liability, so that corruption could not touch it. Thus it happened that two opposite marvels took place at once: the death of all was consummated in the Lord's body; yet, because the Word was in it, death and corruption were in the same act utterly abolished. Death there had to be, and death for all, so that the due of all might be paid. Wherefore, the Word, as I said, being Himself incapable of death, assumed a mortal body, that He might offer it as His own in place of all, and suffering for the sake of all through His union with it, "might bring to nought Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver them who all their lifetime were enslaved by the fear of death."[1]

(21) Have no fears then. Now that the common Savior of all has died on our behalf, we who believe in Christ no longer die, as men died aforetime, in fulfillment of the threat of the law.
That condemnation has come to an end; and now that, by the grace of the resurrection, corruption has been banished and done away, we are loosed from our mortal bodies in God's good time for each, so that we may obtain thereby a better resurrection. Like seeds cast into the earth, we do not perish in our dissolution, but like them shall rise again, death having been brought to nought by the grace of the Savior. That is why blessed Paul, through whom we all have surety of the resurrection, says: "This corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality; but when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?'"[ 2]

"Well then," some people may say, "if the essential thing was that He should surrender His body to death in place of all, why did He not do so as Man privately, without going to the length of public crucifixion? Surely it would have been more suitable for Him to have laid aside His body with honor than to endure so shameful a death." But look at this argument closely, and see how merely human it is, whereas what the Savior did was truly divine and worthy of His Godhead for several reasons. The first is this. The death of men under ordinary circumstances is the result of their natural weakness. They are essentially impermanent, so after a time they fall ill and when worn out they die. But the Lord is not like that. He is not weak, He is the Power of God and Word of God and Very Life Itself. If He had died quietly in His bed like other men it would have looked as if He did so in accordance with His nature, and as though He was indeed no more than other men. But because He was Himself Word and Life and Power His body was made strong, and because the death had to be accomplished, He took the occasion of perfecting His sacrifice not from Himself, but from others. How could He fall sick, Who had healed others? Or how could that body weaken and fail by
means of which others are made strong? Here, again, you may say, "Why did He not prevent death, as He did sickness?" Because it was precisely in order to be able to die that He had taken a body, and to prevent the death would have been to impede the resurrection. And as to the unsuitability of sickness for His body, as arguing weakness, you may say, "Did He then not hunger?" Yes, He hungered, because that was the property of His body, but He did not die of hunger because He Whose body hungered was the Lord. Similarly, though He died to ransom all, He did not see corruption. His body rose in perfect soundness, for it was the body of none other than the Life Himself.

(22) Someone else might say, perhaps, that it would have been better for the Lord to have avoided the designs of the Jews against Him, and so to have guarded His body from death altogether. But see how unfitting this also would have been for Him. Just as it would not have been fitting for Him to give His body to death by His own hand, being Word and being Life, so also it was not consonant with Himself that He should avoid the death inflicted by others. Rather, He pursued it to the uttermost, and in pursuance of His nature neither laid aside His body of His own accord nor escaped the plotting Jews. And this action showed no limitation or weakness in the Word; for He both waited for death in order to make an end of it, and hastened to accomplish it as an offering on behalf of all. Moreover, as it was the death of all mankind that the Savior came to accomplish, not His own, He did not lay aside His body by an individual act of dying, for to Him, as Life, this simply did not belong; but He accepted death at the hands of men, thereby completely to destroy it in His own body.

There are some further considerations which enable one to understand why the Lord's body had such an end. The supreme object of His coming was to bring about the resurrection of the body. This was to be the monument to His victory over death, the assurance to all that He had Himself
conquered corruption and that their own bodies also would eventually be incorrupt; and it was in token of that and as a pledge of the future resurrection that He kept His body incorrupt. But there again, if His body had fallen sick and the Word had left it in that condition, how unfitting it would have been! Should He Who healed the bodies of others neglect to keep His own in health? How would His miracles of healing be believed, if this were so? Surely people would either laugh at Him as unable to dispel disease or else consider Him lacking in proper human feeling because He could do so, but did not.

(23) Then, again, suppose without any illness He had just concealed His body somewhere, and then suddenly reappeared and said that He had risen from the dead. He would have been regarded merely as a teller of tales, and because there was no witness of His death, nobody would believe His resurrection. Death had to precede resurrection, for there could be no resurrection without it. A secret and unwitnessed death would have left the resurrection without any proof or evidence to support it. Again, why should He die a secret death, when He proclaimed the fact of His rising openly? Why should He drive out evil spirits and heal the man blind from birth and change water into wine, all publicly, in order to convince men that He was the Word, and not also declare publicly that incorruptibility of His mortal body, so that He might Himself be believed to be the Life? And how could His disciples have had boldness in speaking of the resurrection unless they could state it as a fact that He had first died? Or how could their hearers be expected to believe their assertion, unless they themselves also had witnessed His death? For if the Pharisees at the time refused to believe and forced others to deny also, though the things had happened before their very eyes, how many excuses for unbelief would they have contrived, if it had taken place secretly? Or how could the end of death and the victory over it have been declared, had not the Lord thus challenged it before the sight of all, and by the incorruption of
His body proved that henceforward it was annullled and void?
(24) There are some other possible objections that must be answered. Some might urge that, even granting the necessity of a public death for subsequent belief in the resurrection, it would surely have been better for Him to have arranged an honorable death for Himself, and so to have avoided the ignominy of the cross. But even this would have given ground for suspicion that His power over death was limited to the particular kind of death which He chose for Himself; and that again would furnish excuse for disbelieving the resurrection. Death came to His body, therefore, not from Himself but from enemy action, in order that the Savior might utterly abolish death in whatever form they offered it to Him. A generous wrestler, virile and strong, does not himself choose his antagonists, lest it should be thought that of some of them he is afraid. Rather, he lets the spectators choose them, and that all the more if these are hostile, so that he may overthrow whomsoever they match against him and thus vindicate his superior strength. Even so was it with Christ. He, the Life of all, our Lord and Savior, did not arrange the manner of his own death lest He should seem to be afraid of some other kind. No. He accepted and bore upon the cross a death inflicted by others, and those others His special enemies, a death which to them was supremely terrible and by no means to be faced; and He did this in order that, by destroying even this death, He might Himself be believed to be the Life, and the power of death be recognized as finally annulled. A marvelous and mighty paradox has thus occurred, for the death which they thought to inflict on Him as dishonor and disgrace has become the glorious monument to death's defeat. Therefore it is also, that He neither endured the death of John, who was beheaded, nor was He sawn asunder, like Isaiah: even in death He preserved His body whole and undivided, so that there should be no excuse hereafter for those who would divide the Church.
(25) So much for the objections of those outside
the Church. But if any honest Christian wants to know why He suffered death on the cross and not in some other way, we answer thus: in no other way was it expedient for us, indeed the Lord offered for our sakes the one death that was supremely good. He had come to bear the curse that lay on us; and how could He "become a curse"[3] otherwise than by accepting the accursed death? And that death is the cross, for it is written "Cursed is every one that hangeth on tree."[4] Again, the death of the Lord is the ransom of all, and by it "the middle wall of partition"[ 5] is broken down and the call of the Gentiles comes about. How could He have called us if He had not been crucified, for it is only on the cross that a man dies with arms outstretched? Here, again, we see the fitness of His death and of those outstretched arms: it was that He might draw His ancient people with the one and the Gentiles with the other, and join both together in Himself. Even so, He foretold the manner of His redeeming death, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Myself."[6] Again, the air is the sphere of the devil, the enemy of our race who, having fallen from heaven, endeavors with the other evil spirits who shared in his disobedience both to keep souls from the truth and to hinder the progress of those who are trying to follow it. The apostle refers to this when he says, "According to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience."[7] But the Lord came to overthrow the devil and to purify the air and to make "a way" for us up to heaven, as the apostle says, "through the veil, that is to say, His flesh."[ 8] This had to be done through death, and by what other kind of death could it be done, save by a death in the air, that is, on the cross? Here, again, you see how right and natural it was that the Lord should suffer thus; for being thus "lifted up," He cleansed the air from all the evil influences of the enemy. "I beheld Satan as lightning falling,"[9] He says; and thus He re-opened the road to heaven, saying again, "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors."[10] For it was not the Word
Himself. Who needed an opening of the gates, He being Lord of all, nor was any of His works closed to their Maker. No, it was we who needed it, we whom He Himself upbore in His own body—that body which He first offered to death on behalf of all, and then made through it a path to heaven.

Chapter 4 Notes
1. Heb. ii. 14 f
2. 1 Cor. xv. 53 ff.
6. John xii. 32.
7. Eph. ii. 2.
8. Heb. x. 20.

Go back to the top of Chapter 4
5. The Resurrection

sitting indeed, then, and wholly consonant was the death on the cross for us; and we can see how reasonable it was, and why it is that the salvation of the world could be accomplished in no other way. Even on the cross He did not hide Himself from sight; rather, He made all creation witness to the presence of its Maker. Then, having once let it be seen that it was truly dead, He did not allow that temple of His body to linger long, but forthwith on the third day raised it up, impassable and incorruptible, the pledge and token of His victory.

It was, of course, within His power thus to have raised His body and displayed it as alive directly after death. But the all-wise Savior did not do this, lest some should deny that it had really or completely died. Besides this, had the interval between His death and resurrection been but two days, the glory of His incorruption might not have appeared. He waited one whole day to show that His body was really dead, and then on the third day showed it incorruptible to all. The interval was no longer, lest people should have forgotten about it and grown doubtful whether it were in truth the same body. No, while the affair was still ringing in
their ears and their eyes were still straining and their minds in turmoil, and while those who had put Him to death were still on the spot and themselves witnessing to the fact of it, the Son of God after three days showed His once dead body immortal and incorruptible; and it was evident to all that it was from no natural weakness that the body which the Word indwelt had died, but in order that in it by the Savior’s power death might be done away.

(27) A very strong proof of this destruction of death and its conquest by the cross is supplied by a present fact, namely this. All the disciples of Christ despise death; they take the offensive against it and, instead of fearing it, by the sign of the cross and by faith in Christ trample on it as on something dead. Before the divine sojourn of the Savior, even the holiest of men were afraid of death, and mourned the dead as those who perish. But now that the Savior has raised His body, death is no longer terrible, but all those who believe in Christ tread it underfoot as nothing, and prefer to die rather than to deny their faith in Christ, knowing full well that when they die they do not perish, but live indeed, and become incorruptible through the resurrection. But that devil who of old wickedly exulted in death, now that the pains of death are loosed, he alone it is who remains truly dead. There is proof of this too; for men who, before they believe in Christ, think death horrible and are afraid of it, once they are converted despise it so completely that they go eagerly to meet it, and themselves become witnesses of the Savior’s resurrection from it. Even children hasten thus to die, and not men only, but women train themselves by bodily discipline to meet it. So weak has death become that even women, who used to be taken in by it, mock at it now as a dead thing robbed of all its strength. Death has become like a tyrant who has been completely conquered by the legitimate monarch; bound hand and foot the passers-by sneer at him, hitting him and abusing him, no longer afraid of his cruelty and rage, because of the king who has conquered him. So has death been conquered and branded for what it is by the
Savior on the cross. It is bound hand and foot, all who are in Christ trample it as they pass and as witnesses to Him deride it, scoffing and saying, "O Death, where is thy victory? O Grave, where is thy sting?"

(28) Is this a slender proof of the impotence of death, do you think? Or is it a slight indication of the Savior's victory over it, when boys and young girls who are in Christ look beyond this present life and train themselves to die? Every one is by nature afraid of death and of bodily dissolution; the marvel of marvels is that he who is enfolded in the faith of the cross despises this natural fear and for the sake of the cross is no longer cowardly in face of it. The natural property of fire is to burn. Suppose, then, that there was a substance such as the Indian asbestos is said to be, which had no fear of being burnt, but rather displayed the impotence of the fire by proving itself unburnable. If anyone doubted the truth of this, all he need do would be to wrap himself up in the substance in question and then touch the fire. Or, again, to revert to our former figure, if anyone wanted to see the tyrant bound and helpless, who used to be such a terror to others, he could do so simply by going into the country of the tyrant's conqueror. Even so, if anyone still doubts the conquest of death, after so many proofs and so many martyrdoms in Christ and such daily scorn of death by His truest servants, he certainly does well to marvel at so great a thing, but he must not be obstinate in unbelief and disregard of plain facts. No, he must be like the man who wants to prove the property of the asbestos, and like him who enters the conqueror's dominions to see the tyrant bound. He must embrace the faith of Christ, this unbeliever in the conquest of death, and come to His teaching. Then he will see how impotent death is and how completely conquered. Indeed, there have been many former unbelievers and deriders who, after they became believers, so scorned death as even themselves to become martyrs for Christ's sake.

(29) If, then, it is by the sign of the cross and by
faith in Christ that death is trampled underfoot, it is clear that it is Christ Himself and none other Who is the Archvictor over death and has robbed it of its power. Death used to be strong and terrible, but now, since the sojourn of the Savior and the death and resurrection of His body, it is despised; and obviously it is by the very Christ Who mounted on the cross that it has been destroyed and vanquished finally. When the sun rises after the night and the whole world is lit up by it, nobody doubts that it is the sun which has thus shed its light everywhere and driven away the dark. Equally clear is it, since this utter scorning and trampling down of death has ensued upon the Savior’s manifestation in the body and His death on the cross, that it is He Himself Who brought death to nought and daily raises monuments to His victory in His own disciples. How can you think otherwise, when you see men naturally weak hastening to death, unafraid at the prospect of corruption, fearless of the descent into Hades, even indeed with eager soul provoking it, not shrinking from tortures, but preferring thus to rush on death for Christ's sake, rather than to remain in this present life? If you see with your own eyes men and women and children, even, thus welcoming death for the sake of Christ's religion, how can you be so utterly silly and incredulous and maimed in your mind as not to realize that Christ, to Whom these all bear witness, Himself gives the victory to each, making death completely powerless for those who hold His faith and bear the sign of the cross? No one in his senses doubts that a snake is dead when he sees it trampled underfoot, especially when he knows how savage it used to be; nor, if he sees boys making fun of a lion, does he doubt that the brute is either dead or completely bereft of strength. These things can be seen with our own eyes, and it is the same with the conquest of death. Doubt no longer, then, when you see death mocked and scorned by those who believe in Christ, that by Christ death was destroyed, and the corruption that goes with it resolved and brought to end.
(30) What we have said is, indeed, no small proof of the destruction of death and of the fact that the cross of the Lord is the monument to His victory. But the resurrection of the body to immortality, which results henceforward from the work of Christ, the common Savior and true Life of all, is more effectively proved by facts than by words to those whose mental vision is sound. For, if, as we have shown, death was destroyed and everybody tramples on it because of Christ, how much more did He Himself first trample and destroy it in His own body! Death having been slain by Him, then, what other issue could there be than the resurrection of His body and its open demonstration as the monument of His victory? How could the destruction of death have been manifested at all, had not the Lord's body been raised? But if anyone finds even this insufficient, let him find proof of what has been said in present facts. Dead men cannot take effective action; their power of influence on others lasts only till the grave. Deeds and actions that energize others belong only to the living. Well, then, look at the facts in this case. The Savior is working mightily among men, every day He is invisibly persuading numbers of people all over the world, both within and beyond the Greek-speaking world, to accept His faith and be obedient to His teaching. Can anyone, in face of this, still doubt that He has risen and lives, or rather that He is Himself the Life? Does a dead man prick the consciences of men, so that they throw all the traditions of their fathers to the winds and bow down before the teaching of Christ? If He is no longer active in the world, as He must needs be if He is dead, how is it that He makes the living to cease from their activities, the adulterer from his adultery, the murderer from murdering, the unjust from avarice, while the profane and godless man becomes religious? If He did not rise, but is still dead, how is it that He routs and persecutes and overthrows the false gods, whom unbelievers think to be alive, and the evil spirits whom they worship? For where Christ is named, idolatry is destroyed and the fraud of evil
spirits is exposed; indeed, no such spirit can endure that Name, but takes to flight on sound of it. This is the work of One Who lives, not of one dead; and, more than that, it is the work of God. It would be absurd to say that the evil spirits whom He drives out and the idols which He destroys are alive, but that He Who drives out and destroys, and Whom they themselves acknowledge to be Son of God, is dead.

(31) In a word, then, those who disbelieve in the resurrection have no support in facts, if their gods and evil spirits do not drive away the supposedly dead Christ. Rather, it is He Who convicts them of being dead. We are agreed that a dead person can do nothing: yet the Savior works mightily every day, drawing men to religion, persuading them to virtue, teaching them about immortality, quickening their thirst for heavenly things, revealing the knowledge of the Father, inspiring strength in face of death, manifesting Himself to each, and displacing the irreligion of idols; while the gods and evil spirits of the unbelievers can do none of these things, but rather become dead at Christ's presence, all their ostentation barren and void. By the sign of the cross, on the contrary, all magic is stayed, all sorcery confounded, all the idols are abandoned and deserted, and all senseless pleasure ceases, as the eye of faith looks up from earth to heaven. Whom, then, are we to call dead? Shall we call Christ dead, Who effects all this? But the dead have not the faculty to effect anything. Or shall we call death dead, which effects nothing whatever, but lies as lifeless and ineffective as are the evil spirits and the idols? The Son of God, "living and effective," is active every day and effects the salvation of all; but death is daily proved to be stripped of all its strength, and it is the idols and the evil spirits who are dead, not He. No room for doubt remains, therefore, concerning the resurrection of His body. Indeed, it would seem that he who disbelieves this bodily rising of the Lord is ignorant of the power of the Word and Wisdom of God. If He took a body to Himself at all, and made it His own in
pursuance of His purpose, as we have shown that He did, what was the Lord to do with it, and what was ultimately to become of that body upon which the Word had descended? Mortal and offered to death on behalf of all as it was, it could not but die; indeed, it was for that very purpose that the Savior had prepared it for Himself. But on the other hand it could not remain dead, because it had become the very temple of Life. It therefore died, as mortal, but lived again because of the Life within it; and its resurrection is made known through its works. It is, indeed, in accordance with the nature of the invisible God that He should be thus known through His works; and those who doubt the Lord's resurrection because they do not now behold Him with their eyes, might as well deny the very laws of nature. They have ground for disbelief when works are lacking; but when the works cry out and prove the fact so clearly, why do they deliberately deny the risen life so manifestly shown? Even if their mental faculties are defective, surely their eyes can give them irrefragable proof of the power and Godhead of Christ. A blind man cannot see the sun, but he knows that it is above the earth from the warmth which it affords; similarly, let those who are still in the blindness of unbelief recognize the Godhead of Christ and the resurrection which He has brought about through His manifested power in others. Obviously He would not be expelling evil spirits and despoiling idols, if He were dead, for the evil spirits would not obey one who was dead. If, on the other hand, the very naming of Him drives them forth, He clearly is not dead; and the more so that the spirits, who perceive things unseen by men, would know if He were so and would refuse to obey Him. But, as a matter of fact, what profane persons doubt, the evil spirits know—namely that He is God; and for that reason they flee from Him and fall at His feet, crying out even as they cried when He was in the body, "We know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God," and, "Ah, what have I in common with Thee, Thou Son of God? I implore Thee, torment me not."[3]

Both from the confession of the evil spirits and
from the daily witness of His works, it is manifest, then, and let none presume to doubt it, that the Savior has raised His own body, and that He is very Son of God, having His being from God as from a Father, Whose Word and Wisdom and Whose Power He is. He it is Who in these latter days assumed a body for the salvation of us all, and taught the world concerning the Father. He it is Who has destroyed death and freely graced us all with incorruption through the promise of the resurrection, having raised His own body as its first-fruits, and displayed it by the sign of the cross as the monument to His victory over death and its corruption.

Chapter 5 Notes
1. Cor. xv. 55.

Go back to the top of Chapter 5

6. Refutation of the Jews
We have dealt thus far with the Incarnation of our Savior, and have found clear proof of the resurrection of His Body and His victory over death. Let us now go further and investigate the unbelief and the ridicule with which Jews and Gentiles respectively regard these same facts. It seems that in both cases the points at issue are the same, namely the unfittingness or incongruity (as it seems to them) alike of the cross and of the Word's becoming man at all. But we have no hesitation in taking up the argument against these objectors, for the proofs on our side are extremely clear.

First, then, we will consider the Jews. Their unbelief has its refutation in the Scriptures which even themselves read; for from cover to cover the inspired Book clearly teaches these things both in its entirety and in its actual words. Prophets foretold the marvel of the Virgin and of the Birth from her, saying, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God is with us."[1] And Moses, that truly great one in whose word the Jews trust so implicitly, he also recognized the
importance and truth of the matter. He puts it thus: "There shall arise a star from Jacob and a man from Israel, and he shall break in pieces the rulers of Moab."[2] And, again, "How lovely are thy dwellings, O Jacob, thy tents, O Israel! Like woodland valleys they give shade, and like parks by rivers, like tents which the Lord has pitched, like cedar-trees by streams. There shall come forth a Man from among his seed, and he shall rule over many peoples."[3] And, again, Isaiah says, "Before the Babe shall be old enough to call father or mother, he shall take the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria from under the eyes of the king of Assyria."[4] These words, then, foretell that a Man shall appear. And Scripture proclaims further that He that is to come is Lord of all. These are the words, "Behold, the Lord sitteth on an airy cloud and shall come into Egypt, and the man-made images of Egypt shall be shaken."[5] And it is from Egypt also that the Father calls him back, saying, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son."[6]

Moreover, the Scriptures are not silent even about His death. On the contrary, they refer to it with the utmost clearness. They have not feared to speak also of the cause of it. He endures it, they say, not for His own sake, but for the sake of bringing immortality and salvation to all, and they record also the plotting of the Jews against Him and all the indignities which He suffered at their hands. Certainly nobody who reads the Scriptures can plead ignorance of the facts as an excuse for error! There is this passage, for instance: "A man that is afflicted and knows how to bear weakness, for His face is turned away. He was dishonored and not considered, He bears our sins and suffers for our sakes. And we for our part thought Him distressed and afflicted and ill-used; but it was for our sins that He was wounded and for our lawlessness that He was made weak. Chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His bruising we are healed." O marvel at the love of the Word for men, for it is on our account that He is dishonored, so that we may be brought
to honor. "For all we," it goes on, "have strayed like sheep, man has strayed from his path, and the Lord has given Him up for our sins; and He Himself did not open His mouth at the ill-treatment. Like a sheep He was led to slaughter, and as a lamb is dumb before its shearer, so He opened not His mouth; in His humiliation His judgment was taken away." And then Scripture anticipates the surmises of any who might think from His suffering thus that He was just an ordinary man, and shows what power worked in His behalf. "Who shall declare of what lineage He comes?" it says, "for His life is exalted from the earth. By the lawlessnesses of the people was He brought to death, and I will give the wicked in return for His burial and the rich in return for His death. For He did no lawlessness, neither was deceit found in His mouth. And the Lord wills to heal Him of His affliction."

You have heard the prophecy of His death, and now, perhaps, you want to know what indications there are about the cross. Even this is not passed over in silence: on the contrary, the sacred writers proclaim it with the utmost plainness. Moses foretells it first, and that right loudly, when he says, "You shall see your Life hanging before your eyes, and shall not believe." After him the prophets also give their witness, saying, "But I as an innocent lamb brought to be offered was yet ignorant of it. They plotted evil against Me, saying, 'Come, let us cast wood into His bread, and wipe Him out from the land of the living.' And, again, "They pierced My hands and My feet, they counted all My bones, they divided My garments for themselves and cast lots for My clothing." Now a death lifted up and that takes place on wood can be none other than the death of the cross; moreover, it is only in that death that the hands and feet are pierced. Besides this, since the Savior dwelt among men, all nations everywhere have begun to know God; and this too Holy Writ expressly mentions. "There shall be the Root of Jesse," it says, "and he who rises up to rule the nations, on Him nations shall set their
These are just a few things in proof of what has taken place; but indeed all Scripture teems with disproof of Jewish unbelief. For example, which of the righteous men and holy prophets and patriarchs of whom the Divine Scriptures tell ever had his bodily birth from a virgin only? Was not Abel born of Adam, Enoch of Jared, Noah of Lamech, Abraham of Terah, Isaac of Abraham, and Jacob of Isaac? Was not Judah begotten by Jacob and Moses and Aaron by Ameram? Was not Samuel the son of Elkanah, David of Jesse, Solomon of David, Hezekiah of Ahaz, Josiah of Amon, Isaiah of Amos, Jeremiah of Hilkiah and Ezekiel of Buzi? Had not each of these a father as author of his being? So who is He that is born of a virgin only, that sign of which the prophet makes so much? Again, which of all those people had his birth announced to the world by a star in the heavens? When Moses was born his parents hid him. David was unknown even in his own neighborhood, so that mighty Samuel himself was ignorant of his existence and asked whether Jesse had yet another son. Abraham again became known to his neighbors as a great man only after his birth. But with Christ it was otherwise. The witness to His birth was not man, but a star shining in the heavens whence He was coming down. (36) Then, again, what king that ever was reigned and took trophies from his enemies before he had strength to call father or mother? Was not David thirty years old when he came to the throne and Solomon a grown young man? Did not Joash enter on his reign at the age of seven, and Josiah, some time after him, at about the same age, both of them fully able by that time to call father or mother? Who is there, then, that was reigning and despoiling his enemies almost before he was born? Let the Jews, who have investigated the matter, tell us if there was ever such a king in Israel or Judah—a king upon whom all the nations set their hopes and had peace, instead of being at enmity with him on every side! As long as Jerusalem stood there was constant war between
them, and they all fought against Israel. The
Assyrians oppressed Israel, the Egyptians
persecuted them, the Babylonians fell upon them,
and, strange to relate, even the Syrians their
neighbors were at war with them. And did not
David fight with Moab and smite the Syrians, and
Hezekiah quail at the boasting of Sennacherib?
Did not Amalek make war on Moses and the
Amorites oppose him, and did not the inhabitants
of Jericho array themselves against Joshua the
son of Nun? Did not the nations always regard
Israel with implacable hostility? Then it is worth
inquiring who it is, on whom the nations are to set
their hopes. Obviously there must be someone, for
the prophet could not have told a lie. But did any of
the holy prophets or of the early patriarchs die on
the cross for the salvation of all? Was any of them
wounded and killed for the healing of all? Did the
idols of Egypt fall down before any righteous man
or king that came there? Abraham came there
certainly, but idolatry prevailed just the same; and
Moses was born there, but the mistaken worship
was unchanged.

(37) Again, does Scripture tell of anyone who
was pierced in hands and feet or hung upon a tree
at all, and by means of a cross perfected his
sacrifice for the salvation of all? It was not
Abraham, for he died in his bed, as did also Isaac
and Jacob. Moses and Aaron died in the mountain,
and David ended his days in his house, without
anybody having plotted against him. Certainly he
had been sought by Saul, but he was preserved
unharmed. Again Isaiah was sawn asunder, but he
was not hung on a tree. Jeremiah was shamefully
used, but he did not die under condemnation.
Ezekiel suffered, but he did so, not on behalf of the
people, but only to signify to them what was going
to happen. Moreover, all these even when they
suffered were but men, like other men; but He
Whom the Scriptures declare to suffer on behalf of
all is called not merely man but Life of all, although
in point of fact He did share our human nature.
"You shall see your Life hanging before your
eyes," they say, and "Who shall declare of what
lineage He comes?" With all the saints we can trace their descent from the beginning, and see exactly how each came to be; but the Divine Word maintains that we cannot declare the lineage of Him Who is the Life. Who is it, then, of Whom Holy Writ thus speaks? Who is there so great that even the prophets foretell of Him such mighty things? There is indeed no one in the Scriptures at all, save the common Savior of all, the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. He it is that proceeded from a virgin, and appeared as man on earth, He it is Whose earthly lineage cannot be declared, because He alone derives His body from no human father, but from a virgin alone. We can trace the paternal descent of David and Moses and of all the patriarchs. But with the Savior we cannot do so, for it was He Himself Who caused the star to announce His bodily birth, and it was fitting that the Word, when He came down from heaven, should have His sign in heaven too, and fitting that the King of creation on His coming forth should be visibly recognized by all the world. He was actually born in Judea, yet men from Persia came to worship Him. He it is Who won victory from His demon foes and trophies from the idolaters even before His bodily appearing—namely, all the heathen who from every region have abjured the tradition of their fathers and the false worship of idols and are now placing their hope in Christ and transferring their allegiance to Him. The thing is happening before our very eyes, here in Egypt; and thereby another prophecy is fulfilled, for at no other time have the Egyptians ceased from their false worship save when the Lord of all, riding as on a cloud, came down here in the body and brought the error of idols to nothing and won over everybody to Himself and through Himself to the Father. He it is Who was crucified with the sun and moon as witnesses; and by His death salvation has come to all men, and all creation has been redeemed. He is the Life of all, and He it is Who like a sheep gave up His own body to death, His life for ours and our salvation.

(38) Yet the Jews disbelieve this. This argument
does not satisfy them. Well, then, let them be persuaded by other things in their own oracles. Of whom, for instance, do the prophets say "I was made manifest to those who did not seek Me, I was found by those who had not asked for Me? I said, 'See, here am I,' to the nation that had not called upon My Name. I stretched out My hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people."[ 14] Who is this person that was made manifest, one might ask the Jews? If the prophet is speaking of himself, then they must tell us how he was first hidden, in order to be manifested afterwards. And, again, what kind of man is this prophet, who was not only revealed after being hidden, but also stretched out his hands upon the cross? Those things happened to none of those righteous men: they happened only to the Word of God Who, being by nature without body, on our account appeared in a body and suffered for us all. And if even this is not enough for them, there is other overwhelming evidence by which they may be silenced. The Scripture says, "Be strong, hands that hang down and feeble knees, take courage, you of little faith, be strong and do not fear. See, our God will recompense judgment, He Himself will come and save us. Then the eyes of blind men shall be opened and the ears of deaf men shall hear, and stammerers shall speak distinctly." What can they say to this, or how can they look it in the face at all? For the prophecy does not only declare that God will dwell here, it also makes known the signs and the time of His coming. When God comes, it says, the blind will see, the lame will walk, the deaf will hear and the stammerers will speak distinctly. Can the Jews tell us when such signs occurred in Israel, or when anything of the kind took place at all in Jewry? The leper Naaman was cleansed, it is true, but no deaf man heard nor did any lame man walk. Elijah raised a dead person and so did Elisha; but no one blind from birth received his sight. To raise a dead person is a great thing indeed, but it is not such as the Savior did. And surely, since the Scriptures have not kept silence about the leper and the dead son of the widow, if a
lame man had walked and a blind man had received his sight, they would have mentioned these as well. Their silence on these points proves that the events never took place. When therefore did these things happen, unless when the Word of God Himself came in the body? Was it not when He came that lame men walked and stammerers spoke clearly and men blind from birth were given sight? And the Jews who saw it themselves testified to the fact that such things had never before occurred. "Since the world began," they said, "it has never been heard of that anyone should open the eyes of a man born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."[16] (39) But surely they cannot fight against plain facts. So it may be that, without denying what is written, they will maintain that they are still waiting for these things to happen, and that the Word of God is yet to come, for that is a theme on which they are always harping most brazenly, in spite of all the evidence against them. But they shall be refuted on this supreme point more clearly than on any, and that not by ourselves but by the most wise Daniel, for he signifies the actual date of the Savior's coming as well as His Divine sojourn in our midst. "Seventy weeks," he says, "are cut short upon thy people and upon the holy city, to make a complete end of sin and for sins to be sealed up and iniquities blotted out, and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to seal vision and prophet, and to anoint a Holy One of holies. And thou shalt know and understand from the going forth of the Word to answer,[ 17] and to build Jerusalem, until Christ the Prince."[ 18] In regard to the other prophecies, they may possibly be able to find excuses for deferring their reference to a future time, but what can they say to this one? How can they face it at all? Not only does it expressly mention the Anointed One, that is the Christ, it even declares that He Who is to be anointed is not man only, but the Holy One of holies! And it says that Jerusalem is to stand till His coming, and that after it prophet and vision shall cease in Israel! David was anointed of old,
and Solomon, and Hezekiah; but then Jerusalem
and the place stood, and prophets were
prophesying, Gad and Asaph and Nathan, and
later Isaiah and Hosea and Amos and others.
Moreover, those men who were anointed were
called holy certainly, but none of them was called
the Holy of holies. Nor is it any use for the Jews to
take refuge in the Captivity, and say that
Jerusalem did not exist then, for what about the
prophets? It is a fact that at the outset of the Exile
Daniel and Jeremiah were there, and Ezekiel and
Haggai and Zechariah also prophesied.
(40) So the Jews are indulging in fiction, and
transferring present time to future. When did
prophet and vision cease from Israel? Was it not
when Christ came, the Holy One of holies? It is, in
fact, a sign and notable proof of the coming of the
Word that Jerusalem no longer stands, neither is
prophet raised up nor vision revealed among them.
And it is natural that it should be so, for when He
that was signified had come, what need was there
any longer of any to signify Him? And when the
Truth had come, what further need was there of
the shadow? On His account only they prophesied
continually, until such time as Essential
Righteousness has come, Who was made the
Ransom for the sins of all. For the same reason
Jerusalem stood until the same time, in order that
there men might premeditate the types before the
Truth was known. So, of course, once the Holy
One of holies had come, both vision and prophecy
were sealed. And the kingdom of Jerusalem
ceased at the same time, because kings were to
be anointed among them only until the Holy of
holies had been anointed. Moses also prophesies
that the kingdom of the Jews shall stand until His
time, saying, "A ruler shall not fail from Judah nor a
prince from his loins, until the things laid up for him
shall come and the Expectation of the nations
Himself."[19] And that is why the Savior Himself
was always proclaiming "The law and the prophets
prophesied until John."[ 20] So if there is still king
or prophet or vision among the Jews, they do well
to deny that Christ is come; but if there is neither
king nor vision, and since that time all prophecy has been sealed and city and temple taken, how can they be so irreligious, how can they so flaunt the facts, as to deny Christ Who has brought it all about? Again, they see the heathen forsaking idols and setting their hopes through Christ on the God of Israel; why do they yet deny Christ Who after the flesh was born of the root of Jesse and reigns henceforward? Of course, if the heathen were worshipping some other god, and not confessing the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Moses, then they would do well to argue that God had not come. But if the heathen are honoring the same God Who gave the law to Moses and the promises to Abraham—the God Whose word too the Jews dishonored, why do they not recognize or rather why do they deliberately refuse to see that the Lord of Whom the Scriptures prophesied has shone forth to the world and appeared to it in a bodily form? Scripture declares it repeatedly. "The Lord God has appeared to us,"[21] and again, "He sent forth His Word and healed them."[22] And again, "It was no ambassador, no angel who saved us, but the Lord Himself."[23] The Jews are afflicted like some demented person who sees the earth lit up by the sun, but denies the sun that lights it up! What more is there for their Expected One to do when he comes? To call the heathen? But they are called already. To put an end to prophet and king and vision? But this too has already happened. To expose the God-denyingness of idols? It is already exposed and condemned. Or to destroy death? It is already destroyed. What then has not come to pass that the Christ must do? What is there left out or unfulfilled that the Jews should disbelieve so light-heartedly? The plain fact is, as I say, that there is no longer any king or prophet nor Jerusalem nor sacrifice nor vision among them; yet the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of God, and the Gentiles, forsaking atheism, are now taking refuge with the God of Abraham through the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Surely, then, it must be plain even to the most
shameless that the Christ has come, and that He has enlightened all men everywhere, and given them the true and divine teaching about His Father. Thus the Jews may be refuted by these and other arguments from the Divine teaching.

Chapter 6 Notes
1. Isaiah vii. 14.
2. Numbers xxiv. 17.
3. Numbers xxiv. 5-7.
4. Isaiah viii. 4
5. Isaiah xix. 1.
7. Isaiah liii. 3-5
8. Isaiah liii. 6-8.
9. Isaiah liii. 8-10.
10. Deut. xxviii. 66.
13. Isaiah xi. 10.
15. Isaiah xxxv. 3-6.
16. John ix. 32, 33."
17. "Answer" is LXX misreading for Hebrew "restore."
21. Psalm cxviii. 27.
22. Psalm cvii. 20.
23. Isaiah lxiii. 9.

Go Back to the top of Chapter 6
7. Refutation of the Gentiles

e come now to the unbelief of the Gentiles; and this is indeed a matter for complete astonishment, for they laugh at that which is no fit subject for mockery, yet fail to see the shame and ridiculousness of their own idols. But the arguments on our side do not lack weight, so we will confute them too on reasonable grounds, chiefly from what we ourselves also see.
First of all, what is there in our belief that is unfitting or ridiculous? Is it only that we say that the Word has been manifested in a body? Well, if they
themselves really love the truth, they will agree with us that this involved no unfittingness at all. If they deny that there is a Word of God at all, that will be extraordinary, for then they will be ridiculing what they do not know. But suppose they confess that there is a Word of God, that He is the Governor of all things, that in Elim the Father wrought the creation, that by His providence the whole receives light and life and being, and that He is King over all, so that He is known by means of the works of His providence, and through Him the Father. Suppose they confess all this, what then? Are they not unknowingly turning the ridicule against themselves? The Greek philosophers say that the universe is a great body, and they say truly, for we perceive the universe and its parts with our senses. But if the Word of God is in the universe, which is a body, and has entered into it in its every part, what is there surprising or unfitting in our saying that He has entered also into human nature? If it were unfitting for Him to have embodied Himself at all, then it would be unfitting for Him to have entered into the universe, and to be giving light and movement by His providence to all things in it, because the universe, as we have seen, is itself a body. But if it is right and fitting for Him to enter into the universe and to reveal Himself through it, then, because humanity is part of the universe along with the rest, it is no less fitting for Him to appear in a human body, and to enlighten and to work through that. And surely if it were wrong for a part of the universe to have been used to reveal His Divinity to men, it would be much more wrong that He should be so revealed by the whole!

(42) Take a parallel case. A man's personality actuates and quickens his whole body. If anyone said it was unsuitable for the man's power to be in the toe, he would be thought silly, because, while granting that a man penetrates and actuates the whole of his body, he denied his presence in the part. Similarly, no one who admits the presence of the Word of God in the universe as a whole should think it unsuitable for a single human body to be by
Him actuated and enlightened. But is it, perhaps, because humanity is a thing created and brought into being out of non-existence that they regard as unfitting the manifestation of the Savior in our nature? If so, it is high time that they spurned Him from creation too; for it, too, has been brought out of non-being into being by the Word. But if, on the other hand, although creation is a thing that has been made, it is not unsuitable for the Word to be present in it, then neither is it unsuitable for Him to be in man. Man is a part of the creation, as I said before; and the reasoning which applies to one applies to the other. All things derive from the Word their light and movement and life, as the Gentile authors themselves say, "In Him we live and move and have our being."[1] Very well then. That being so, it is by no means unbecoming that the Word should dwell in man. So if, as we say, the Word has used that in which He is as the means of His self-manifestation, what is there ridiculous in that? He could not have used it had He not been present in it; but we have already admitted that He is present both in the whole and in the parts. What, then, is there incredible in His manifesting Himself through that in which He is? By His own power He enters completely into each and all, and orders them throughout ungrudgingly; and, had He so willed, He could have revealed Himself and His Father by means of sun or moon or sky or earth or fire or water. Had He done so, no one could rightly have accused Him of acting unbecomingly, for He sustains in one whole all things at once, being present and invisibly revealed not only in the whole, but also in each particular part. This being so, and since, moreover, He has willed to reveal Himself through men, who are part of the whole, there can be nothing ridiculous in His using a human body to manifest the truth and knowledge of the Father. Does not the mind of man pervade his entire being, and yet find expression through one part only, namely the tongue? Does anybody say on that account that Mind has degraded itself? Of course not. Very well, then, no more is it
degrading for the Word, Who pervades all things, to have appeared in a human body. For, as I said before, if it were unfitting for Him thus to indwell the part, it would be equally so for Him to exist within the whole.

(43) Some may then ask, why did He not manifest Himself by means of other and nobler parts of creation, and use some nobler instrument, such as sun or moon or stars or fire or air, instead of mere man? The answer is this. The Lord did not come to make a display. He came to heal and to teach suffering men. For one who wanted to make a display the thing would have been just to appear and dazzle the beholders. But for Him Who came to heal and to teach the way was not merely to dwell here, but to put Himself at the disposal of those who needed Him, and to be manifested according as they could bear it, not vitiating the value of the Divine appearing by exceeding their capacity to receive it.

Moreover, nothing in creation had erred from the path of God’s purpose for it, save only man. Sun, moon, heaven, stars, water, air, none of these had swerved from their order, but, knowing the Word as their Maker and their King, remained as they were made. Men alone having rejected what is good, have invented nothings instead of the truth, and have ascribed the honor due to God and the knowledge concerning Him to demons and men in the form of stones. Obviously the Divine goodness could not overlook so grave a matter as this. But men could not recognize Him as ordering and ruling creation as a whole. So what does He do? He takes to Himself for instrument a part of the whole, namely a human body, and enters into that. Thus He ensured that men should recognize Him in the part who could not do so in the whole, and that those who could not lift their eyes to His unseen power might recognize and behold Him in the likeness of themselves. For, being men, they would naturally learn to know His Father more quickly and directly by means of a body that corresponded to their own and by the Divine works done through it; for by comparing His works with
their own they would judge His to be not human but Divine. And if, as they say, it were unsuitable for the Word to reveal Himself through bodily acts, it would be equally so for Him to do so through the works of the universe. His being in creation does not mean that He shares its nature; on the contrary, all created things partake of His power. Similarly, though He used the body as His instrument, He shared nothing of its defect,[2] but rather sanctified it by His indwelling. Does not even Plato, of whom the Greeks think so much, say that the Author of the Universe, seeing it storm-tossed and in danger of sinking into the state of dissolution, takes his seat at the helm of the Life-force of the universe, and comes to the rescue and puts everything right? What, then, is there incredible in our saying that, mankind having gone astray, the Word descended upon it and was manifest as man, so that by His intrinsic goodness and His steersmanship He might save it from the storm?

(44) It may be, however, that, though shamed into agreeing that this objection is void, the Greeks will want to raise another. They will say that, if God wanted to instruct and save mankind, He might have done so, not by His Word's assumption of a body, but, even as He at first created them, by the mere signification of His will. The reasonable reply to that is that the circumstances in the two cases are quite different. In the beginning, nothing as yet existed at all; all that was needed, therefore, in order to bring all things into being, was that His will to do so should be signified. But once man was in existence, and things that were, not things that were not, demanded to be healed, it followed as a matter of course that the Healer and Savior should align Himself with those things that existed already, in order to heal the existing evil. For that reason, therefore, He was made man, and used the body as His human instrument. If this were not the fitting way, and He willed to use an instrument at all, how otherwise was the Word to come? And whence could He take His instrument, save from among those already in existence and needing His
Godhead through One like themselves? It was not things non-existent that needed salvation, for which a bare creative word might have sufficed, but man—man already in existence and already in process of corruption and ruin. It was natural and right, therefore, for the Word to use a human instrument and by that means unfold Himself to all. You must know, moreover, that the corruption which had set in was not external to the body but established within it. The need, therefore, was that life should cleave to it in corruption's place, so that, just as death was brought into being in the body, life also might be engendered in it. If death had been exterior to the body, life might fittingly have been the same. But if death was within the body, woven into its very substance and dominating it as though completely one with it, the need was for Life to be woven into it instead, so that the body by thus enduing itself with life might cast corruption off. Suppose the Word had come outside the body instead of in it, He would, of course, have defeated death, because death is powerless against the Life. But the corruption inherent in the body would have remained in it none the less. Naturally, therefore, the Savior assumed a body for Himself, in order that the body, being interwoven as it were with life, should no longer remain a mortal thing, in thrall to death, but as endued with immortality and risen from death, should thenceforth remain immortal. For once having put off corruption, it could not rise, unless it put on life instead; and besides this, death of its very nature could not appear otherwise than in a body. Therefore He put on a body, so that in the body He might find death and blot it out. And, indeed, how could the Lord have been proved to be the Life at all, had He not endued with life that which was subject to death? Take an illustration. Stubble is a substance naturally destructible by fire; and it still remains stubble, fearing the menace of fire which has the natural property of consuming it, even if fire is kept away from it, so that it is not actually burnt. But suppose that, instead of merely keeping the fire from it somebody soaks the stubble with a quantity
of asbestos, the substance which is said to be the antidote to fire. Then the stubble no longer fears the fire, because it has put on that which fire cannot touch, and therefore it is safe. It is just the same with regard to the body and death. Had death been kept from it by a mere command, it would still have remained mortal and corruptible, according to its nature. To prevent this, it put on the incorporeal Word of God, and therefore fears neither death nor corruption any more, for it is clad with Life as with a garment and in it corruption is clean done away.

(45) The Word of God thus acted consistently in assuming a body and using a human instrument to vitalize the body. He was consistent in working through man to reveal Himself everywhere, as well as through the other parts of His creation, so that nothing was left void of His Divinity and knowledge. For I take up now the point I made before, namely that the Savior did this in order that He might fill all things everywhere with the knowledge of Himself, just as they are already filled with His presence, even as the Divine Scripture says, "The whole universe was filled with the knowledge of the Lord."[3] If a man looks up to heaven he sees there His ordering; but if he cannot look so high as heaven, but only so far as men, through His works he sees His power, incomparable with human might, and learns from them that He alone among men is God the Word. Or, if a man has gone astray among demons and is in fear of them, he may see this Man drive them out and judge therefrom that He is indeed their Master. Again, if a man has been immersed in the element of water and thinks that it is God—as indeed the Egyptians do worship water—he may see its very nature changed by Him and learn that the Lord is Creator of all. And if a man has gone down even to Hades, and stands awestruck before the heroes who have descended thither, regarding them as gods, still he may see the fact of Christ’s resurrection and His victory over death, and reason from it that, of all these, He alone is very Lord and God.
For the Lord touched all parts of creation, and freed and undeceived them all from every deceit. As St. Paul says, "Having put off from Himself the principalities and the powers, He triumphed on the cross,"[ 4] so that no one could possibly be any longer deceived, but everywhere might find the very Word of God. For thus man, enclosed on every side by the works of creation and everywhere—in heaven, in Hades, in men and on the earth, beholding the unfolded Godhead of the Word, is no longer deceived concerning God, but worships Christ alone, and through Him rightly knows the Father.

On these grounds, then, of reason and of principle, we will fairly silence the Gentiles in their turn. But if they think these arguments insufficient to confute them, we will go on in the next chapter to prove our point from facts.

Chapter 7 Notes
1. See Acts xvii. 28.
2. Literally, "He shared nothing of the things of the body."
3. Isaiah xi. 9.
4. Col. ii. 15.

Go Back to the top of Chapter 7
8. Refutation of the Gentiles--continued

hen did people begin to abandon the worship of idols, unless it were since the very Word of God came among men? When have oracles ceased and become void of meaning, among the Greeks and everywhere, except since the Savior has revealed Himself on earth? When did those whom the poets call gods and heroes begin to be adjudged as mere mortals, except when the Lord took the spoils of death and preserved incorruptible the body He had taken, raising it from among the dead? Or when did the deceitfulness and madness of demons fall under contempt, save when the Word, the Power of God, the Master of all these as well, condescended on account of the weakness of mankind and appeared on earth? When did the practice and theory of magic begin to be spurned under foot, if not at the
manifestation of the Divine Word to men? In a word, when did the wisdom of the Greeks become foolish, save when the true Wisdom of God revealed Himself on earth? In old times the whole world and every place in it was led astray by the worship of idols, and men thought the idols were the only gods that were. But now all over the world men are forsaking the fear of idols and taking refuge with Christ; and by worshipping Him as God they come through Him to know the Father also, Whom formerly they did not know. The amazing thing, moreover, is this. The objects of worship formerly were varied and countless; each place had its own idol and the so-called god of one place could not pass over to another in order to persuade the people there to worship him, but was barely reverenced even by his own. Indeed no! Nobody worshipped his neighbor's god, but every man had his own idol and thought that it was lord of all. But now Christ alone is worshipped, as One and the Same among all peoples everywhere; and what the feebleness of idols could not do, namely, convince even those dwelling close at hand, He has effected. He has persuaded not only those close at hand, but literally the entire world to worship one and the same Lord and through Him the Father.

(47) Again, in former times every place was full of the fraud of the oracles, and the utterances of those at Delphi and Dordona and in Boeotia and Lycia and Libya and Egypt and those of the Kabiri and the Pythoness were considered marvelous by the minds of men. But now, since Christ has been proclaimed everywhere, their madness too has ceased, and there is no one left among them to give oracles at all. Then, too, demons used to deceive men's minds by taking up their abode in springs or rivers or trees or stones and imposing upon simple people by their frauds. But now, since the Divine appearing of the Word, all this fantasy has ceased, for by the sign of the cross, if a man will but use it, he drives out their deceits. Again, people used to regard as gods those who are mentioned in the poets—Zeus and Kronos and
Apollo and the heroes, and in worshipping them they went astray. But now that the Savior has appeared among men, those others have been exposed as mortal men, and Christ alone is recognized as true God, Word of God, God Himself. And what is one to say about the magic that they think so marvelous? Before the sojourn of the Word, it was strong and active among Egyptians and Chaldeans and Indians and filled all who saw it with terror and astonishment. But by the coming of the Truth and the manifestation of the Word it too has been confuted and entirely destroyed. As to Greek wisdom, however, and the philosophers' noisy talk, I really think no one requires argument from us; for the amazing fact is patent to all that, for all that they had written so much, the Greeks failed to convince even a few from their own neighborhood in regard to immortality and the virtuous ordering of life. Christ alone, using common speech and through the agency of men not clever with their tongues, has convinced whole assemblies of people all the world over to despise death, and to take heed to the things that do not die, to look past the things of time and gaze on things eternal, to think nothing of earthly glory and to aspire only to immortality.

(48) These things which we have said are no mere words: they are attested by actual experience. Anyone who likes may see the proof of glory in the virgins of Christ, and in the young men who practice chastity as part of their religion, and in the assurance of immortality in so great and glad a company[ 1] of martyrs. Anyone, too, may put what we have said to the proof of experience in another way. In the very presence of the fraud of demons and the imposture of the oracles and the wonders of magic, let him use the sign of the cross which they all mock at, and but speak the Name of Christ, and he shall see how through Him demons are routed, oracles cease, and all magic and witchcraft is confounded.

Who, then, is this Christ and how great is He, Who by His Name and presence overshadows and confounds all things on every side, Who alone is
strong against all and has filled the whole world with His teaching? Let the Greeks tell us, who mock at Him without stint or shame. If He is a man, how is it that one man has proved stronger than all those whom they themselves regard as gods, and by His own power has shown them to be nothing? If they call Him a magician, how is it that by a magician all magic is destroyed, instead of being rendered strong? Had He conquered certain magicians or proved Himself superior to one of them only, they might reasonably think that He excelled the rest only by His greater skill. But the fact is that His cross has vanquished all magic entirely and has conquered the very name of it. Obviously, therefore, the Savior is no magician, for the very demons whom the magicians invoke flee from Him as from their Master. Who is He, then? Let the Greeks tell us, whose only serious pursuit is mockery! Perhaps they will say that He, too, is a demon, and that is why He prevailed. But even so the laugh is still on our side. for we can confute them by the same proofs as before. How could He be a demon, Who drives demons out? If it were only certain ones that He drove out, then they might reasonably think that He prevailed against them through the power of their Chief, as the Jews, wishing to insult Him, actually said. But since the fact is, here again, that at the mere naming of His Name all madness of the demons is rooted out and put to flight, obviously the Greeks are wrong here, too, and our Lord and Savior Christ is not, as they maintain, some demonic power. If, then, the Savior is neither a mere man nor a magician, nor one of the demons, but has by His Godhead confounded and overshadowed the opinions of the poets and the delusion of the demons and the wisdom of the Greeks, it must be manifest and will be owned by all that He is in truth Son of God, Existent Word and Wisdom and Power of the Father. This is the reason why His works are no mere human works, but, both intrinsically and by comparison with those of men, are recognized as being superhuman and truly the works of God.
What man that ever was, for instance, formed a body for himself from a virgin only? Or what man ever healed so many diseases as the common Lord of all? Who restored that which was lacking in man's nature or made one blind from birth to see? Aesculapius was deified by the Greeks because he practiced the art of healing and discovered herbs as remedies for bodily diseases, not, of course, forming them himself out of the earth, but finding them out by the study of nature. But what is that in comparison with what the Savior did when, instead of just healing a wound, He both fashioned essential being and restored to health the thing that He had formed? Hercules, too, is worshipped as a god by the Greeks because he fought against other men and destroyed wild animals by craft. But what is that to what the Word did, in driving away from men diseases and demons and even death itself? Dionysus is worshipped among them, because he taught men drunkenness; yet they ridicule the true Savior and Lord of all, Who taught men temperance.

That, however, is enough on this point. What will they say to the other marvels of His Godhead? At what man's death was the sun darkened and the earth shaken? Why, even to this day men are dying, and they did so also before that time. When did any such marvels happen in their case? Now shall we pass over the deeds done in His earthly body and mention those after His resurrection? Has any man's teaching, in any place or at any time, ever prevailed everywhere as one and the same, from one end of the earth to the other, so that his worship has fairly flown through every land? Again, if, as they say, Christ is man only and not God the Word, why do not the gods of the Greeks prevent His entering their domains? Or why, on the other hand, does the Word Himself dwelling in our midst make an end of their worship by His teaching and put their fraud to shame?

Many before Him have been kings and tyrants of the earth, history tells also of many among the Chaldeans and Egyptians and Indians.
who were wise men and magicians. But which of those, I do not say after his death, but while yet in this life, was ever able so far to prevail as to fill the whole world with his teaching and retrieve so great a multitude from the craven fear of idols, as our Savior has won over from idols to Himself? The Greek philosophers have compiled many works with persuasiveness and much skill in words; but what fruit have they to show for this such as has the cross of Christ? Their wise thoughts were persuasive enough until they died; yet even in their life-time their seeming influence was counterbalanced by their rivalry with one another, for they were a jealous company and declaimed against each other. But the Word of God, by strangest paradox, teaching in meaner language, has put the choicest sophists in the shade, and by confounding their teachings and drawing all men to Himself He has filled His own assemblies. Moreover, and this is the marvelous thing by going down as Man to death He has confounded all the sounding utterances of the wise men about the idols. For whose death ever drove out demons, or whose death did ever demons fear, save that of Christ? For where the Savior is named, there every demon is driven out. Again, who has ever so rid men of their natural passions that fornicators become chaste and murderers no longer wield the sword and those who formerly were craven cowards boldly play the man? In a word, what persuaded the barbarians and heathen folk in every place to drop their madness and give heed to peace, save the faith of Christ and the sign of the cross? What other things have given men such certain faith in immortality as have the cross of Christ and the resurrection of His body? The Greeks told all sorts of false tales, but they could never pretend that their idols rose again from death: indeed it never entered their heads that a body could exist again after death at all. And one would be particularly ready to listen to them on this point, because by these opinions they have exposed the weakness of their own idolatry, at the same time yielding to Christ the possibility of bodily
resurrection, so that by that means He might be recognized by all as Son of God.

(51) Again, who among men, either after his death or while yet living, taught about virginity and did not account this virtue impossible for human beings? But Christ our Savior and King of all has so prevailed with His teaching on this subject that even children not yet of lawful age promise that virginity which transcends the law. And who among men has ever been able to penetrate even to Scythians and Ethiopians, or Parthians or Armenians or those who are said to live beyond Hyrcania, or even the Egyptians and Chaldeans, people who give heed to magic and are more than naturally enslaved by the fear of demons and savage in their habits, and to preach at all about virtue and self-control and against the worshipping of idols, as has the Lord of all, the Power of God, our Lord Jesus Christ? Yet He not only preached through His own disciples, but also wrought so persuasively on men's understanding that, laying aside their savage habits and forsaking the worship of their ancestral gods, they learnt to know Him and through Him to worship the Father. While they were yet idolaters, the Greeks and Barbarians were always at war with each other, and were even cruel to their own kith and kin. Nobody could travel by land or sea at all unless he was armed with swords, because of their irreconcilable quarrels with each other. Indeed, the whole course of their life was carried on with the weapons, and the sword with them replaced the staff and was the mainstay of all aid. All this time, as I said before, they were serving idols and offering sacrifices to demons, and for all the superstitious awe that accompanied this idol worship, nothing could wean them from that warlike spirit. But, strange to relate, since they came over to the school of Christ, as men moved with real compunction they have laid aside their murderous cruelty and are war-minded no more. On the contrary, all is peace among them and nothing remains save desire for friendship.

(52) Who, then, is He Who has done these things and has united in peace those who hated
each other, save the beloved Son of the Father, the common Savior of all, Jesus Christ, Who by His own love underwent all things for our salvation? Even from the beginning, moreover, this peace that He was to administer was foretold, for Scripture says, "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into sickles, and nation shall not take sword against nation, neither shall they learn any more to wage war."[2] Nor is this by any means incredible. The barbarians of the present day are naturally savage in their habits, and as long as they sacrifice to their idols they rage furiously against each other and cannot bear to be a single hour without weapons. But when they hear the teaching of Christ, forthwith they turn from fighting to farming, and instead of arming themselves with swords extend their hands in prayer. In a word, instead of fighting each other, they take up arms against the devil and the demons, and overcome them by their selfcommand and integrity of soul. These facts are proof of the Godhead of the Savior, for He has taught men what they could never learn among the idols. It is also no small exposure of the weakness and nothingness of demons and idols, for it was because they knew their own weakness that the demons were always setting men to fight each other, fearing lest, if they ceased from mutual strife, they would turn to attack the demons themselves. For in truth the disciples of Christ, instead of fighting each other, stand arrayed against demons by their habits and virtuous actions, and chase them away and mock at their captain the devil. Even in youth they are chaste, they endure in times of testing and persevere in toils. When they are insulted, they are patient, when robbed they make light of it, and, marvelous to relate, they make light even of death itself, and become martyrs of Christ.

(53) And here is another proof of the Godhead of the Savior, which is indeed utterly amazing. What mere man or magician or tyrant or king was ever able by himself to do so much? Did anyone ever fight against the whole system of idol-worship and
the whole host of demons and all magic and all the wisdom of the Greeks, at a time when all of these were strong and flourishing and taking everybody in, as did our Lord, the very Word of God? Yet He is even now invisibly exposing every man's error, and single-handed is carrying off all men from them all, so that those who used to worship idols now tread them under foot, reputed magicians burn their books and the wise prefer to all studies the interpretation of the gospels. They are deserting those whom formerly they worshipped, they worship and confess as Christ and God Him Whom they used to ridicule as crucified. Their so-called gods are routed by the sign of the cross, and the crucified Savior is proclaimed in all the world as God and Son of God. Moreover, the gods worshipped among the Greeks are now falling into disrepute among them on account of the disgraceful things they did, for those who receive the teaching of Christ are more chaste in life than they. If these, and the like of them, are human works, let anyone who will show us similar ones done by men in former time, and so convince us. But if they are shown to be, and are the works not of men but of God, why are the unbelievers so irreligious as not to recognize the Master Who did them? They are afflicted as a man would be who failed to recognize God the Artificer through the works of creation. For surely if they had recognized His Godhead through His power over the universe, they would recognize also that the bodily works of Christ are not human, but are those of the Savior of all, the Word of God. And had they recognized this, as Paul says, "They would not have crucified the Lord of glory."[3]

(54) As, then, he who desires to see God Who by nature is invisible and not to be beheld, may yet perceive and know Him through His works, so too let him who does not see Christ with his understanding at least consider Him in His bodily works and test whether they be of man or God. If they be of man, then let him scoff; but if they be of God, let him not mock at things which are no fit subject for scorn, but rather let him recognize the
fact and marvel that things divine have been revealed to us by such humble means, that through death deathlessness has been made known to us, and through the Incarnation of the Word the Mind whence all things proceed has been declared, and its Agent and Ordainer, the Word of God Himself. He, indeed, assumed humanity that we might become God. He manifested Himself by means of a body in order that we might perceive the Mind of the unseen Father. He endured shame from men that we might inherit immortality. He Himself was unhurt by this, for He is impassable and incorruptible; but by His own impassability He kept and healed the suffering men on whose account He thus endured. In short, such and so many are the Savior's achievements that follow from His Incarnation, that to try to number them is like gazing at the open sea and trying to count the waves. One cannot see all the waves with one's eyes, for when one tries to do so those that are following on baffle one's senses. Even so, when one wants to take in all the achievements of Christ in the body, one cannot do so, even by reckoning them up, for the things that transcend one's thought are always more than those one thinks that one has grasped. As we cannot speak adequately about even a part of His work, therefore, it will be better for us not to speak about it as a whole. So we will mention but one thing more, and then leave the whole for you to marvel at. For, indeed, everything about it is marvelous, and wherever a man turns his gaze he sees the Godhead of the Word and is smitten with awe.

(55) The substance of what we have said so far may be summarized as follows. Since the Savior came to dwell among us, not only does idolatry no longer increase, but it is getting less and gradually ceasing to be. Similarly, not only does the wisdom of the Greeks no longer make any progress, but that which used to be is disappearing. And demons, so far from continuing to impose on people by their deceits and oracle-givings and sorceries, are routed by the sign of the cross if
they so much as try. On the other hand, while idolatry and everything else that opposes the faith of Christ is daily dwindling and weakening and falling, see, the Savior's teaching is increasing everywhere! Worship, then, the Savior "Who is above all" and mighty, even God the Word, and condemn those who are being defeated and made to disappear by Him. When the sun has come, darkness prevails no longer; any of it that may be left anywhere is driven away. So also, now that the Divine epiphany of the Word of God has taken place, the darkness of idols prevails no more, and all parts of the world in every direction are enlightened by His teaching. Similarly, if a king be reigning somewhere, but stays in his own house and does not let himself be seen, it often happens that some insubordinate fellows, taking advantage of his retirement, will have themselves proclaimed in his stead; and each of them, being invested with the semblance of kingship, misleads the simple who, because they cannot enter the palace and see the real king, are led astray by just hearing a king named. When the real king emerges, however, and appears to view, things stand differently. The insubordinate impostors are shown up by his presence, and men, seeing the real king, forsake those who previously misled them. In the same way the demons used formerly to impose on men, investing themselves with the honor due to God. But since the Word of God has been manifested in a body, and has made known to us His own Father, the fraud of the demons is stopped and made to disappear; and men, turning their eyes to the true God, Word of the Father, forsake the idols and come to know the true God. Now this is proof that Christ is God, the Word and Power of God. For whereas human things cease and the fact of Christ remains, it is clear to all that the things which cease are temporary, but that He Who remains is God and very Son of God, the sole-begotten Word.

Chapter 8 Notes
1. Literally, "so great a chorus" "choros" (Gk.) being properly a band of dancers and
ere, then, Macarius, is our offering to you who love Christ, a brief statement of the faith of Christ and of the manifestation of His Godhead to us. This will give you a beginning, and you must go on to prove its truth by the study of the Scriptures. They were written and inspired by God; and we, who have learned from inspired teachers who read the Scriptures and became martyrs for the Godhead of Christ, make further contribution to your eagerness to learn. From the Scriptures you will learn also of His second manifestation to us, glorious and divine indeed, when He shall come not in lowliness but in His proper glory, no longer in humiliation but in majesty, no longer to suffer but to bestow on us all the fruit of His cross— the resurrection and incorruptibility. No longer will He then be judged, but rather will Himself be Judge, judging each and all according to their deeds done in the body, whether good or ill. Then for the good is laid up the heavenly kingdom, but for those that practice evil outer darkness and the eternal fire. So also the Lord Himself says, "I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man seated on the right hand of power, coming on the clouds of heaven in the glory of the Father."[1] For that Day we have one of His own sayings to prepare us, "Get ready and watch, for ye know not the hour in which He cometh"[2] And blessed Paul says, "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive according as he practiced in the body, whether good or ill."[3] (57) But for the searching and right understanding of the Scriptures there is need of a good life and a pure soul, and for Christian virtue to guide the mind to grasp, so far as human nature can, the truth concerning God the Word. One cannot possibly understand the teaching of the saints unless one has a pure mind and is trying to
imitate their life. Anyone who wants to look at sunlight naturally wipes his eye clear first, in order to make, at any rate, some approximation to the purity of that on which he looks; and a person wishing to see a city or country goes to the place in order to do so. Similarly, anyone who wishes to understand the mind of the sacred writers must first cleanse his own life, and approach the saints by copying their deeds. Thus united to them in the fellowship of life, he will both understand the things revealed to them by God and, thenceforth escaping the peril that threatens sinners in the judgment, will receive that which is laid up for the saints in the kingdom of heaven. Of that reward it is written: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared"[4] for them that live a godly life and love the God and Father in Christ Jesus our Lord, through Whom and with Whom be to the Father Himself, with the Son Himself, in the Holy Spirit, honor and might and glory to ages of ages. Amen.

Chapter 9 Notes
1. Matt. xxvi. 64.
3. 2 Cor. v. 10.
4. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

RETURN TO GOD, by
H. H. POPE SHENOUDA III
Sin is being separated from God

Sin is the state of being separated from God and His Saints

What is the spiritual life? Is it not being close to God, as the the Psalm says "But it is good for me to draw near to God." (Ps. 73:28).

It is indeed! it is however, something more than this closeness. It means to abide in the Lord, according to what He told us: "Abide in Me, and I in you." (John 15:4).

A person whose life is firmly established in the Lord, enjoys His love." (John 15:10) and, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word." (John 14:23).

Therefore, sin is the state of being separated from God's love and from His commandments. It is the life of a person who has renounced God and His kingdom in order to be independent and who has begun to follow his own desires without putting God before him.

Such a person has become cut off from God and persists in the belief that he has an independent personality which can stand on its own and determine whatever it pleases for itself, quite apart from God's guidance and direction. This is just what happened when the Israelites demanded a king to rule them instead of God and God said to the prophet Samuel: "for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." (1 Sam. 8:7).

They rejected the life of submission which the children of God live in obedience and submission to His will. Saul, the king whom they took for themselves, also followed his own desires and asserted his independence from God. He did not want God to order things for him, or direct his affairs, but began to administer everything according to his own personal ideas, without asking what God's will would be!

Sinners cut themselves off from God's will and also dissociate themselves from His guidance and direction. God has expressed this separation with His words, "They have rejected me and forsaken me ". He said, "They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns; broken cisterns that can hold no water." (Jer. 2:13).

Quite simply then, sin is the state of being cut off from God, of
having abandoned Him and rejected Him. The sinner feels no love towards God, nor any special intimacy with Him. He has cut himself off from God, not only in his behaviour and manner, but in his heart, in his love and in his feelings too. His heart has begun to love other things which have taken the place of God. His concern is no longer for God, because he has started to be concerned about other things apart from God. These are what occupy his thoughts now and take up his time and divert his heart!

In the state of sin, the heart is cut off from God, in proportion to the extent that it loves the present world. If ones love for the world is total, then its separation from God will be total too, because "friendship with the world is enmity with God " (James 4:4) and "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15).

It is quite impossible for anyone to reconcile the two opposites, love of God and love of sin. He has to choose: either one or the other.

If you live with God, you will automatically be separated from sin and if you live in sin, you will consequently be separated from God. This means that you will be cut off from Him, from His kingdom, His will, His commandments, His love, His work and from fellowship with Him. As the Apostle says: "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." (1 John 1:5-6).

God is light; sin is darkness. The Bible says: " what communion has light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14). Whoever lives in darkness is obviously cut off from the light, meaning, from God. It was said about those people who cut themselves off from the Lord Jesus and rejected him, that they "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19).

Therefore, when you live in sin, you are rejecting fellowship with God. What is this fellowship?

The spiritual life is fellowship with the Holy Spirit, as we hear it said in the blessing at the end of every service (2 Cor. 13:14) and through this partnership we "may be partakers of the divine nature " (2 Pet. 1:4). This does not mean that we become partners in the actual divine substance or divinity. Rather we become partners in activity.

The Spirit of God participates with us in our lives, working in us, working with us and working through us. If you are in sin,
By breaking away from the Spirit of God like this, you are going against the warning which the Apostle gave, "Do not quench the Spirit." (1 Thess. 5:19). "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Eph. 4:30).

The sinner is not only cutting himself off from partnership with the Spirit, but what is more serious is that he is resisting the Spirit, as St. Stephen said in his rebuke to the people. (Acts 7:51).

Sin is to be separated from the Holy Spirit and from the Son too, for the Son is "the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:21). Therefore, one can reckon that anyone who is clearly foolish, must be cut off from the Son, otherwise his behaviour would be more prudent.

The Bible gives us an example of this in the parable of the foolish virgins (Matt. 25:2). The type of behaviour that comes from sinners is foolish behaviour, because it is unconnected to the divine wisdom of God. It is 'the foolishness of your people' of which we speak to the Lord during the Mass. Thus it was said in the book of Ecclesiastes, "the fool walks in darkness." (Eccl. 2:14).

Sin, therefore, is being separated from God, the very substance of wisdom.

Christ said to us, "you in Me, and I in you " (John 14:20).

How can He be in us while we are committing sin?! How can we be in Him at the same time as we are in sin?! It is obvious that if there is sin in us, then, at that time, we are in a state of being cut off from Christ.

While we are in sin, how can we be a temple for the Holy Spirit?! How can the Spirit of God dwell in us (1 Cor. 3:16) while we are committing sin, for the temple of God is sacred? (1 Cor. 3:17).

There is no doubt then, that sin is a state of being separated from God and from His fellowship.

It is to be separated from that holiness without which no one will see the Lord, for only the pure in heart will see God (Matt. 5:8). Whoever loses the purity of his heart through sin, will not set eyes on God. In fact he will be isolated from Him. Thus throughout history, sin has stood as a barrier between God and Man.

That intervening barrier came to be represented in the Old Testament in the Tent of Meeting.

This barrier, or curtain, which separated the people from the
holiest of holies, so that they could not enter into the sanctuary, (Ex. 26:33) is a symbol for their separation from God through sin. This was the barrier which Christ destroyed by his crucifixion and which we, with our sins every day, try to build up again!
The Bible says about the foolish virgins, that "the door was closed" and the foolish girls stood outside. Between them and the Lord was this divide, the closed door. Though they begged, "Lord, Lord, open the door for us!", he did not open it for them. In fact he said to them "I do not know you". (Matt. 25:11).
They cut themselves completely from Him and from His kingdom and His throne and also from the other wiser virgins.
We read of the same kind of separation, in the story of the rich man and Lazarus.
While Lazarus was in the arms of his father Abraham, the rich man looked on 'from afar'. Our forefather Abraham said to him, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed". (Luke 16:26).
In the life to come, the righteous will be in the heavenly Jerusalem, the place where God dwells with His people. No one unclean can enter here, nor anyone who is defiled, but only those whose names are written in the Book of Life (Rev. 21:27). It is here that the righteous will be separated from the sinners for ever.
God will divide the righteous from the sinners, the wheat from the chaff and the sheep from the goats and the wicked will be thrown into the outer darkness.
The darkness here means being cut off from the light, which is God and from the shining city of the heavenly Jerusalem. And the term "outer", applied to the darkness, signifies that the sinners will be beyond the group of the righteous, triumphant martyrs and far away from the Saints, whose lives were so remote from sin and were separated while on earth.
Thus, the sinner will be cut off in the afterlife from all those whom he had loved in this world.
Here on earth everyone is together: saints and sinners. In heaven however they will be separated. If anyone on earth loves a righteous person, he will not be able to see him in heaven, unless he repents here on earth and becomes righteous like his friend. By doing this, he will become entitled to a place in heaven alongside the righteous man.
If he remains a sinner, however, his connection with his loved one will be broken forever, whether that loved one was his son, brother, father or friend. He must become like his righteous friend, in order to enjoy his companionship in the eternal life. If the two who love each other are both sinners together, what would happen to them then? I can tell you that the suffering which each one would find in the hereafter would give him no opportunity to think of his friend and even if it did, the suffering of the other would be an additional torment to him. They would derive no comfort from their companionship.

The only solution, then, which unites those who love, in order that they can enjoy each other's close companionship, is for them to live in righteousness here on earth, which will entitle them to be joined together in heaven.

Thus we see that sin separates a person from God, from the Saints, from his loved ones and from the angels too. The Bible says that "The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and he delivers them." (Ps. 34:7).

If you are among those who fear the Lord, you will enjoy the companionship of the angels here in this world and in heaven too. As for sinners, though, they cut themselves off by their actions, from the hosts of angels, for the angels cannot bear to see the sinners' awful deeds. As they sin, they are also surrounded by devils, who encourage them further in whatever wrong they are doing.

Sin is not just being cut off from God, but also from His angels, His saints, His heaven and kingdom, both here on earth and in the life to come.

In the story of the prodigal son, it is obvious that the young man was separated from his father. He dissociated himself from his father. This was what he had sought and had actually

story of the lost coin also tells of the same kind of situation (Luke 15).

Sin is a state of separation from God, which means that it is a separation from the very nature of righteousness and goodness. It means to be cut off from the divine plan which God laid down for your salvation and to be cut off from the divine course which God wishes you to take. This all comes as a result of being separated from the Truth and following what is false; for the Truth is God. (John 14:6).

The separation from God began from the first sin, that of Adam's.
Adam cut himself off from God's love and from that close companionship and fond intimacy which had existed between them. He began to fear God and to hide from His face and if he heard his voice, he would flee in order not to meet Him, because he could not bear to face Him. How could he face Him?!

There is another aspect to Adam's sin, which is that he became cut off from the Tree of Life, from the Garden of Eden and the place of meeting with God (Gen. 3:22-23). And what else? He was cut off from that divine image in which he had been formed. After sinning, he was no longer in the form or likeness of God.

The result of Adam's sin was that he was separated from God and being separated from God was itself a sin. But how did it all come about?

21

God used to order things for Adam in the Garden of Eden and drew up for him the plan that he was to follow. Adam, in his sin, began to go his own way, independently of God and began to decide for himself what he thought was good and the kind of future he desired when he and Eve would become "like God, knowing good and evil". (Gen. 3:5)

The first human being began to choose friends and advisers for himself, to whom he listened more than to God and he began to behave as if he were an independent person, determining his own life, with no need for God. That is how he disobeyed God's command and became cut off from Him, through the actual sin he committed.

Cain, when he sinned, was also separated from God. He became a restless wanderer on the earth, fearful and afraid, because in his separation from God he became cut off, not only from righteousness, but also from the help and safety which God had provided. Accordingly he requested from the Lord, (full of bitterness and grief), "Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face." (Gen. 4:14).

Perhaps it was the same fear which the Prophet David had felt when he said, "Do not cast me away from your presence and do not take your Holy Spirit from me." (Ps. 51:11).

The phrase "How long will you hide Your face from me?" (Ps. 13:1) describes a situation which is much easier for a person to bear than to be banished from God's sight, as happened to Cain.

22

Saul's punishment was even harder, for "the Spirit of the
LORD departed from Saul", (1 Sam. 16:14) and it was said that directly afterwards "an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him." The moment Saul was cut off from God, he became under the domination of the devils. He became like an unfortified city, like a house without protection, an easy prey for the devils.

How difficult it is when you are caught up in that regression away from God!
It starts with disobedience against God and leads to contending with Him and being separated from Him. God's face becomes hidden to the individual and the Spirit of the Lord departs from him. He is cast out from God's face and evil spirits descend upon him to torment him.

But there is a condition still worse than being cut off from God, which is, to be "thrown into the fire and they are burned" (John 15:6 and Matt. 13:42), as was said about the branch which does not bear fruit. This is truly a very painful end for a branch which had once been part of the vine, but which now finds itself cut off from it and from the other branches.

From this example, then, we see that sin is also separation from the Church.

Sin Is Being Cut Off From The Community Of Saints

The Church is the community of saints who live in obedience to God. In the Creed we say, "we believe, in one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." Even the church, as a building, is a place that is sacred to the Lord. In the Psalms we say, "Holiness adorns Your house" (Ps. 93:5). God says to his people, "your camp shall be holy" (Dent. 23:14).

Therefore the sinner, because of his sin or because he has turned his back on God and the Church, is cutting himself off, through his behaviour, or his way of thinking, from the holy community of believers. But it, too, dissociates itself from him.

It is only the actions of the sinner which set him apart from the believers. His life bears no resemblance to theirs, his principles differ from theirs, his behaviour and form, his ways and methods, all these set him apart from them, spiritually, mentally and in the direction of his life. In fact even his speech and expressions differ from the language used by the saints, just as it says in the Bible: "your speech betrays you". (Matt. 26:73).

The Apostle John speaks about this separation when he says,
"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest." (1 John 3:10).

It is a separation of different types, according to their behaviour and the extent of their love for God. It is a clear distinction between the qualities of the sheep and those of the goats. The Church is supposed to be united in thought, belief and spirit. Whoever detaches himself from this position, is expressing his personal wish to dissociate himself from this one spirit. By doing this, he becomes a danger to the holy community, which in turn cuts him off from its membership, after he has made it clear through his own action that he has withdrawn himself. The Bible says in such a case, "put away from yourselves the evil person." (1 Cor. 5:13).

This process of detaching itself, which the Church undertakes, is in order to retain the sanctity of its membership. Concerning those who have turned away from the faith, the Apostle John, who spoke about love more than all the other apostles, says, "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him." (2 John 1-10).

The sacred assemblies at the time of the Old Testament also used to separate off those who diverted from the faith and the principle of being "shut out of the camp" (Num. 12:15), as it was known in the Old Testament, was applied to those individuals.

This is how the process of separation takes place, so that whatever is characterised by sin and whatever is unclean, takes place outside the camp. Like what happened to Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, whom God struck down with leprosy as a punishment, because she spread lies against Moses. "So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days." (Nu. 12:15)

Owing to this, the sacrifices which were offered to atone for the people's sins and by the blood of which they were enabled to enter into the sanctuary, were burned outside the camp, so that the camp remained holy. "For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp" (Heb. 13:11).

In the Old Testament, the peoples of the world were parted from the holy people because of their sins. The Ark, too, was an example of this division.

Noah, his sons and their wives, who were in the Ark, represented those who obtained salvation and who became directly under God's guidance.
The unbelieving sinners, however, were left outside, under the rule of death, for the waters to sweep away, thus destroying them and destroying their sins with them. They had refused to enter, with Noah, into life, since their acts were unlike his. They had separated themselves from God who had created them for life.

Saint John the Beloved said of such people: “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued” (1 John 2:19) They had cut themselves off from us and no longer belonged to us.

The phrase "they were not of us", is like the phrase of our Lord, "I never knew you". (Matt. 7:23).

Look at Judas: although he was one of the twelve, the phrase, "they did not really belong to us", which John spoke, could well have applied to him. He was one of our number and in the eyes of the people he was one of us too, but he was not one of us from the point of view of his heart and intentions. Thus he had not really been worthy to sit at the Last Supper with the other disciples. Therefore, when he took the morsel of bread, Satan entered him. The Bible says that as soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out; “Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately”(John 13:30) and by going out, he isolated himself from the disciples forever.

Paul's disciple, Demas, went the same way as Judas. He had started off as one of us, one of the senior preachers, one of Saint Paul's assistants. The Saint mentions him in his letter to the Colossians next to the name of Saint Luke the Physician (Col. 4:14) and he mentions him in his letter to Philemon, along with Mark and Aristarchus and puts his name before that of Luke (Philem. 1:24). It appears that he did not truly belong to us because, by loving the present world, he dissociated himself from the apostles, which is why Saint Paul says, in his final word on the tragedy of this man. "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world " (2 Tim. 4:10).

Demas dissociated himself from Saint Paul. His love for the world divided him from the entire ministry. His name was mentioned no more in the Bible, nor was he mentioned again as being among the community of believers. History records that he came to a painful end. He had not been able to bear the cross of Christ in the ministry and so had cut himself off from the life in Christ.

Sin is often a separation from the Cross of Christ.
It is to be cut off from the narrow gate by which the Lord ordered us to enter (Matt. 7:13). It is also to be separated from the hardships about which the Apostle told us, when he said, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22).

Sin is love of the world and the wide gate and the broad road. None of which accords with the Cross of Christ, about which Saint Paul said: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20).

Whoever dissociates himself from the cross, dissociates himself from God and the community of believers.

How easy it is for a person who has allowed himself to sin and who has become used to sinning, to be cut off from the Church. He separates himself from the company of saints and seeks another group, whose members will agree with his behaviour and not reprimand him for his sins.

He also dissociates himself from the Church, the spiritual meetings, the Communion and confession. He plans a new course for himself in which he can engage in his sinful ways without being criticised or censured by anyone. What is more is that he also deprives himself of the benefits to be gained from reading the Bible and spiritual books, because he is unable to carry out the spiritual practices which they instruct.

It is not the Church which has cut itself off from him, but he who has detached himself from the Church. He has withdrawn from within, from inside his heart and feelings, in his way of thinking and in the direction of his life which he has taken. He has come to love, instead, the cravings of the body, or the lust of his eyes, or boasting of what he has or does (1 John 2:16). Or he has come to love wealth, like the rich young man who withdrew from Christ and went away sadly, because he was very rich and was not prepared to give up his wealth to follow Jesus. (Matt. 19:22).

The Serious Consequences Of Being Cut Off From God And The Possibility Of Returning To Him

As for you, my friend, do not let the Devil cut you off from God, or lead you away from Him step by step, until he has cut you off altogether and has cut all the spiritual ties which connected you to the Lord's love.

Wake up quickly and spare a thought for your salvation. You can be sure that by being cut off from God, it is you who will be the loser, for you will lose your purity of heart, your
good standing and your eternal life. You will lose the true life, which is one of delight in the Lord and you will lose your soul, since you will lose your blessed eternity and the companionship of the saints. In return for that you will gain nothing here, as the Lord Jesus said: "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

What will you gain by cutting yourself off from God, His angels and His saints? You will just be making your fate the outer darkness in the lake of fire and brimstone. (Rev. 20:10) And you will be given the divine sentence against which there is no appeal.

But there is still an opportunity before you now to return to God.

It is unlikely that you will able to continue to be separated from God in this way. In your heart is a rebellious voice calling out to you to be reconciled to God. And God Himself wants you to return. For your separation from Him is not your proper position, nor is it the divine purpose of your creation.

I feel sure that you are bound to return. You will find no peace in this troublesome world and so will turn back to God. Perhaps that lovely phrase which was used about the dove in the story of the Flood, could be applied to you, that when it found no place to set its feet, it returned once again to the Ark. (Gen. 8:9).

The Ark is the ship of rescue to which God is calling you and it is the place where you will be safe from the storms of this world. Do not wait until you are sent some kind of hardship which brings you back, but come back by yourself, out of love for God, love for the good, or love for the eternal kingdom.

I realise that sin has set you apart from all that is good and has given you nothing in return, you have lost God in return for nothing. The Apostle Paul called all the desires of the world worthless and said that for the sake of the Lord, "I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him," and in fact he went on to say, "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8).

Do your best to put an end to this separation. If you cannot, then cry out to God and say to Him: "O Lord, I can't bear to be parted from you for one moment longer, not even for a split second."
You are life itself to me. Christ is life for me. If I am parted from you, I shall be lost and have no purpose. My life will have no meaning. It will be as if I am dead or do not exist. My real existence is in you. I cannot bear to be cut off from you, but if I should become separated from you for a while, be absolutely sure that it is only a temporary situation, something abnormal and something which I do not want. So take me back to you, Lord, by any means. Restore my soul, because without you I cannot live. In you I live and move and have my being. (Acts 17:28). If I am separated from you, I am cut off from power and grace and I am reduced to nothing. I will return to dust as I was, or rather become like the chaff which is scattered by the wind. (Ps. 1:4) Dear Lord, do not let me be parted from you. Take me back, guide me along the paths of righteousness for your Name's sake. (Ps. 23). Glory be to you, now and forevermore. Amen.

CHAPTER 2
THE RETURN TO GOD
"Turn to Me with all your heart," (Joel 2:12)
"Return to Me and I will return to you," (Mal. 3:7)
"Repent, therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," (Acts 3:19)

The Story Of Man's Separatiopn From God
The relationship between man and God began very happily. It was one based entirely on love. It was God who began this relationship, by creating man and infusing him with the breath of life. He made him in His own image and likeness and placed him in the Garden of Eden, where He gave him authority over all the creatures. God formed a relationship with man and would appear to him from time to time and speak with him. Man was God's friend: he enjoyed meeting Him in the Garden and learning directly from Him. God was man's spiritual guide in everything. He was the one who gave him the first instruction, with the first commandment. So how did the sin occur? How was it carried out? What did it consist of?
Sin, in short, is separating oneself from God. It is when a person breaks away from God and renounces Him, so that he can do what he pleases. The result of this separation gave rise to all other problems and all other sins. So, how did this separation come about then? How did it develop and what were its consequences?

1. Man was cut off from companionship with God: When man became cut off from an intimate relationship with God, he began to form a relationship with another intelligent being. Unfortunately, though, that new relationship was with an enemy of God, with the Devil, that ancient serpent!

2. He became cut off from God in knowledge: After having acquired his knowledge only from God, man began to acquire it in another way; from the advice and deceptions of the snake. He also expected to learn from the Tree of knowledge, which God had forbidden him to do. Thus he fell into a further separation.

3. He became cut off from God's command and His holy word.

4. He became cut off from God through the lusts of his heart; He began to desire the Tree and to crave for its fruit and he found it, "good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes... " (Gen. 3:6) This was how man fell into the desire for gratifying his instincts and for material things. The reason behind his desire to eat from the Tree in the first place, was a desire to become like God, as the serpent had tempted him. (Gen. 3:5).

5. Through being cut off from God, man was separated from the Truth: Since God is Truth, if a person is cut off from Him, he is automatically cut off from the Truth and follows what is false. It is well known that the Truth is constant and never changes, but that which is not the Truth is very changeable. When a person is parted from the Right, he enters into the Wrong and thus enters into a perpetual state of change. Each day brings him a new stance and a new feeling and he becomes a changeable creature, unstable in his outlook.

6. By being cut off from God, man became cut off from Life: for God is Truth and Life. (John 14:6). If a person is cut off from the real life, which is to be firmly established in God and have a stable faith in Him, he becomes dead from the spiritual point of view, according to what was
said about the prodigal son by his father, "for this my son was
dead...." (Luke 15:24). And the Lord's words, "you have a
name that you are alive, but you are dead.."(Rev. 3:1) will
begin to apply to such a person.
7. By being cut off from God, man became cut off from
power.
The source of his power had been God. But by being separated
from God, he became cut off from power and became weak.
36
The Devil overcame him and even the beasts gained power over
him, as did his fellow men. Likewise, his own personality began
to dominate him and he became a weak creature who could not
stand upright or fend for himself.
8. Through being cut off from God, man forfeited his
authority:
He became cut off from the authority which he had been given
by God over the other living creatures. He no longer had the
same authority over the beasts of the earth.
9. He also forfeited his dignity and respectability:
The respectability which he had enjoyed, through being in the
image and likeness of God, departed from him and he lost this
divine image with his fall into sin. As a result of losing his
respectability, he was expelled from the Garden of Eden and
stood before God like a guilty offender who deserved
punishment.
When the Devil saw man banished from God's presence, guilty
of sin and punished, he found it an opportunity to dominate him
and so the Devil set himself up as the lord of this world. That is
how his title became "the ruler of this world". (John 14:30).
37
10. As a result of his separation from God, man began to
collapse and fear entered him:
He began to be afraid of God, instead of loving Him and
enjoying an intimate relationship with Him.
Then he began to be afraid of his fellow men, like when Cain
was afraid and said, "anyone finds me will kill me". (Gen.
4:14). Man also began to fear the animals and anxiety,
confusion and worry came over him.
11. With his separation from God, man became separated
from the life of the Spirit.
Thus he came to be dominated by material concerns and by the
body. He fell into the sins of the flesh. The sins of the flesh
began to attack even the prophets and men of God, such as
Samson, David, Solomon and others. It was said: "For she has
cast down many wounded, And all who were slain by her were strong men." (Prov. 7:26).

12. Through being cut off from God, man went deeper and deeper into sin:
Little by little his sins began to grow and step by step man began to fall further, until he had gone to extremes in doing what was evil and squalid and in devising cunning tricks and arts and until his sins outnumbered the hairs on his head.

This, then, is the history of sin on the earth and man's separation from God. It is a history that records man's tragedy and from which we learn that sin never relaxes its efforts until it is brought to completion.

When the Devil makes someone fall into sin, he is not content simply with that, but continues to get the person more and more involved until he is unable to resist any longer. Then the Devil destroys him.

What is the solution then?
The only solution is to return to God and form a relationship with Him.

If sin is dissociating oneself from God, then the only cure is to dissociate oneself from sin and return to God. There is no other remedy besides this.

Separate yourself from sin, with all your heart, not only because it will wear you out, or because you are afraid of the Judgment Day and punishment, but because this sin of yours will take you far away from God and will cut you off from His sweet companionship.

What Does It Mean To Return To God?
In short, it means... forming a real and sincere relationship with God in your heart.

When I say a relationship, I do not just mean the external signs and practices of religion. Some people imagine that to return to God means that all they have to do is follow a programme of prayer, fasting, spiritual exercises, spiritual readings, meetings and mataniyas (prostrations).

All these are, fine, but do they spring from a heartfelt relationship with God, or not? In all these devotions, is there a love for God or not? Without this relationship of the heart and without this love, you will not really have come back to God, however much you pray, fast, read and perform mataniyas.
It is only through a relationship with God, which is one of love, that these spiritual means take on their effectiveness and strength. So the feeling must come from the heart first of all and then these practices will naturally follow. This is why the Lord says in the book of the Prophet Joel, "Turn to Me with all your heart". (Joel 2:12).

God says, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mournin rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God". (Joel 2:12-13).

It is the return of the heart, therefore, which is required: the heart first of all. And it is from this returning heart, which is crushed in remorse before God, that fasting and tears of repentance gain their strength.

It is amazing how many people get caught up in the means to reach God, such as the devotions, the spiritual exercises and the disciplines, but forget the end to which they are directed, which is God!

For example, there is the type of person who has set his heart on reciting a group of psalms, who becomes disheartened when he fails to reach his target, but who becomes happy if he manages to complete them, regardless of whether he has had any connection with God during this recital!! No, this is not the way.

The Psalms have a tremendous spiritual force, they have blessings and effectiveness and a profound influence of their own, provided that they come from a heart that is in a relationship with God.

Without this relationship and without the feelings of the heart, even though you pray, your prayer will be marked by apathy and by a confusion and wandering of your thoughts.

If you pray without any feelings, without enthusiasm or faith and without feeling God's presence, then the whole thing turns into just an empty exercise, without the relationship within the heart giving this practice any weight or value.

A person might fast, for example, but he might not bring God into his fast. All he is interested in is the period of abstinence and in seeing how long he can continue it and in his abstention from food and his asceticism. Perhaps he has set himself not to eat anything sweet, or anything cooked, or perhaps he has decided to restrict himself to bread, water and salt. If he manages what he has set himself to do, then he feels pleased with himself and feels that
he has been successful in his fast. As far as the idea of using fasting as a means of bringing him closer to God is concerned, this idea has probably never occurred to him!

The heart is the fundamental element and it is by the heart that we can distinguish between two types: One person might pray the Psalms and cast out devils by them, while another might pray the same Psalms and it is as though he is not praying at all, since he does not have any relationship with God in his heart. Needless to say the prayers of the second type produce little effect.

One person might fast and obtain mercies and forgiveness from God, as did the people of Ninevah. Yet someone else might fast and not receive such blessings, because he has not admitted God into his fast, like the Pharisee.

The heart, then, is the deciding rule. We want the return to God to be with the heart.

The return to God also means a firm and lasting return. It should be one in which there is no backsliding, for some people imagine that they have returned to God, yet live unbalanced lives, swinging from one thing to another. They might spend one day with God, full of enthusiasm for Him, while the next day they are caught up with the desires and lusts of the world. What was said in the story of the Ark, about the raven which Noah released after the Flood, that it "which kept going to and fro" (Gen. 8:7), could well be applied to these people.

Do not let your return to God be just a return for the sake of special occasions, or for the fasts, or for the sake of following certain instructions from your spiritual father, or because you want something in particular, because this would make it a return of convenience. After the particular reason for your return to God had passed, you would simply go back to your previous sinful ways and once again be separated from God!

You can learn a lesson about returning to God, from the stories of the saints.

Take St. Moses the black for example. When he returned to God, he returned with all his heart and never went back to his earlier sins. In fact he kept on growing and growing in his spiritual life until he became a spiritual guide and example to many.

There was also Mary the Copt, Pelagia and Augustine and others, all of whom returned to God, never again to part from Him. Moreover, they all went on to progress continually in
their spiritual growth, from a life of repentance, to a life of holiness.

To return to God means to return with a new heart.

God Himself says concerning this: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you" (Ezek. 36:26) St. Paul says: "be transformed by the renewing of your mind", (Rom. 12:2) which means adopting a new way of thinking and weighing things up, according to a new scale of values, rather than the old one. When St. Paul began to value the importance of thinking about spiritual matters, sin lost any influence over him.

Let the return to God be with fasting and self-abasement, just as the people of Nineveh returned to Him.

They heard the Prophet Jonah's warning that after forty days the city would be overturned (Jon. 3:4), but they did not lose hope of God's mercies and they returned to Him with fasting and humility. So what did they do?

"They declared a fast and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, “he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes." (Jon. 3:5-6)

Thus all the people covered themselves with sackcloth and cried out vehemently to God and returned from their wicked ways. Thus God returned to them.

In the book of Joel, we see the same fasting and self-abasement, when the Prophet said, "..Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and nursing babes; Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, And the bride from her dressing room. Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, Weep between the porch and the altar." (Joel 2:15-17).

We see the same situation in the fast of the Prophet Daniel and his humbling of himself before the Lord. He said: "Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession." (Da. 9:3-4) and "I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled." (Da. 10:2-3).

In the individual, the return to God is distinguished by an eagerness, a careful and painstaking attitude and a serious approach.
Whoever returns to God is very joyful about his return and is enthusiastic for this reconciliation which has taken place between them. He is also very careful so as not to let any backsliding or relapse occur to make him fall back to what he was.

He has experienced before, the problems that come from being too easy going and tolerant about sin. He has learned how if he is careless about his way of thinking, it soon changes into a feeling in his heart and then into a desire which flares up within him. This is how sin begins to dominate him and it becomes difficult to escape from it.

He therefore examins every thought and feeling carefully. He is careful about those sins which seem little in significance, as about those which are significant. His attitude is like that found in the Song of Songs, when it says: "Catch us the foxes, The little foxes that spoil the vines ". (Song 2:15) & to the sin itself, at its outset, he says: "Happy the one who takes and dashes Your little ones against the rock " (Ps. 137:9). By doing this he is being faithful in little things...

By such careful examination as this, you can test your faithfulness in returning to God. For if you are easygoing about sin and not strict with yourself, you are not being sincere in your return to God. Your heart is weak inside and will be easily brought down.

The true return to God is one of strength. It is a return in which God will give you a strength which you will feel in all aspects of your spiritual life: the strength to overcome sin, a strength to grow spiritually and to rise up. As mentioned in the book of the Prophet Isaiah, "He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary... those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint". (Is. 40:29-31).

Samson, the strong man, lost his strength when he sinned, because the grace of God departed from him. But when he returned to God, his strength came back to him.

Ask the Lord, then, to give you strength to return and to give you a strength that will stay with you as you return to Him, strength from His Holy Spirit... a strength which you can feel in everything which your hand touches, so that you will be just like the righteous man mentioned in the first Psalm, "Whatever he
does shall prospers." (Ps. 1:3).
Take for example a person who was very ill but who, after a blood transfusion, found that his strength and vitality returned quickly as the new blood entered him. In just the same way, the penitent returning to God, will feel his strength and vitality flowing back to him, through the action of the Holy Spirit entering him.
Whenever you find yourself feeling weak, look up and say to the Lord with absolute sincerity: "Why do I feel so weak? Has your grace left me because I have sinned?" "Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!" (Ps. 80:19) What a beautiful Psalm this is which the Church sings to God, addressing Him in humility: "Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts; Look down from heaven and see, And visit this vine..... which Your right hand has planted" (Ps. 80:14-15).
Will God return and watch over this vine? Does God want us to return to Him?
48
God Wants Us To Return
God calls us in love, "Return to Me and I will return to you." (Mal. 3:7); This phrase carries a great deal of emotional significance:
1. God is reminding us that our true and original state is with Him and that sin is something foreign that enters us from outside.
   It is as if He is saying to us, Your separation from me is not your true and original state. Your true position is to be firmly rooted in me, to abide in me, because I am the vine and you are the branches. (John 15:5) and in nature the branch is always firmly attached to the vine. "I am the head and you are the body, you are the limbs." (Eph. 5:23). So for you to be firmly established in me is something natural.
I am not calling you, then, to come to me, but to return to me.
Return to the natural position which has been yours since the beginning. Return to the divine form which was yours on the day that you were created. This separation of yours is something that has happened accidentally, just a temporary situation. It is not right for you to remain in this state.
49
The life of righteousness and holiness is not something new to you, but is your original nature in which my relationship with
you began and in which you will live with me in eternity."
2. The words "Return to me" bear proof of God's loving kindness:
What were we but dust and ashes, before God called us to return to Him?! It is God's love, which is inexpressible, which reminds us in the hymn "O my beloved come back to me", that God wants our relationship with Him to be close and permanent. He, whose name is Immanuel, meaning ‘God with us' (Matt. 1:23) takes delight in the sons of man. It is He who says to us, "I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:3) It is He who has made the heavenly Jerusalem, the dwelling of God is with men and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God. (Rev. 21:3).
3. It is good if you take the initiative, in your return to God:
For He is always the one who begins everything and He is the one who asks and He is the one who calls us to Him. What is more, He sent the prophets to us for this purpose and laid down for us the mystery of repentance. He promised us that if we return, He will forget the past entirely and never mention it again. (Jer. 31:34).
What does it mean, though, when He says, "Return to me and I will return to you"? Does it mean that our return must come before His, or that it is a condition of His return?! No, far from it! All He means by this is to say:
4. My return to you is guaranteed. The important thing is your return.
At any time that you call me, you will find me with you. In fact I am standing knocking at the door of your heart, that you might open it to me (Rev. 3:20). But the difficulty comes from your side. "If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me." That is why I say, "I will return to you", meaning, open the door of your heart that is shut against me, then "I will return to you". By this, God means 'I shall enter those hearts of yours, from which you have cast me out, by rejecting me in your sinfulness'.
'Come back to me, for I am with you, even though you do not feel my presence'.
St. Augustine was certainly right when he said, "You, O Lord, were with me, but I was not with you". God is with us and acts on our behalf, even when we are deep in sin. He is searching for us even though we have strayed from His fold and He calls
us, 'Come back to me'.
What does it mean, then, that He will return to us, if we return to Him?
His return to us means that we will feel that He is present with us. God's 'return' does not mean that He was away from us and is then going to come back. All that is necessary is for us to become aware once again that He is with us. If this feeling comes back to us, we will feel that God has returned to us.
Sometimes we imagine that God has left us, while it is we who have left Him. This reminds me of a time (in 1957) when I was so moved by the departure of the sun at the time of sunset and aware of how wrong we are to think that the sun is leaving us for the night, that I wrote in my journal: "I said to myself at sunset: it is not that the sun has hidden its face from the earth, but rather that the earth has turned its back on the sun". Yes, the truth is that the sun is fixed! It is The earth that revolves. What we call the 'sunset' is just an expression for the revolving of the earth around the sun.
This is analogous to the relationship between us and God. We feel that He has vanished and left us just because we have turned our backs and are no longer facing Him.
If we return to God, we feel that He is with us and we feel His light shining upon us, because God is the same for ever He does not move around or change "whom there is no variation or shadow of turning". (James 1:17).
Look, for what has taken you away from God.
Ask yourself at what point on the road did you part from Him? What sin divided you from Him and His love? know for sure that this separation has come from you.
52
"Remember therefore from where you have fallen ! Repent... " (Rev. 2:5).
Your feeling that God is far away from you is a feeling that the intimacy which had existed between you no longer exists, as a result of the fading of your love for Him, or because your sin has taken you away from Him.
5. The phrase "Return to me" also carries another emotive meaning, which is: God wants us to follow Him with all our hearts and will and love, which is why He says, "Return to me".
It is as if He is saying, "I cannot force you to love me, nor would I put pressure on you to form a relationship with me."
The matter depends on your free will. If you want me to return to you, I shall return to you. And if you do not, then you are free to follow your own path.

However, a person might say: "I want to but I am weak..."

In this case, it is enough that you wish to return, God will do the rest for you. As one of the Saints put it, "Virtue simply wants you to desire what is virtuous and nothing more than that..."

Throughout history, it is God who has begun the relationship with mankind.

It was He who began the relationship with our forefather Noah, by choosing him saving him and setting him apart from evil and the wicked. It was He who began the relationship with our forefather Abraham, whom He also chose and set apart from evil and the wicked similarly with Moses and his people. It was God who began the relationship with the twelve disciples when He said to them: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you..." (John 15:16).

Trust in God's desire for you to return to Him. At the same time, know that it is essential that you cooperate with Him in the desire and the action. You must believe absolutely that you need God in your life and that without Him you can do nothing. (John 15:5)

You must come to understand, from deep within, how sweet it is to live hand in hand with God and how sublime and beautiful it is to lead the spiritual life and to return to the image of God, to that purity and innocence which Adam once had.

You must recall the vows which you made to God at your baptism, when you promised to fight the Devil and all his evil deeds, all his wickedness and stratagems.

That was the time when you made a lovely new beginning, when you were born again of God and clothed in Christ. (Gal. 3:27) It was when you shed the old person in order to live a new life (Rom. 6:4-6) and when you became cleansed of every sin.

Little by little you forgot your vows and forgot that you were a son of God. You abandoned your purity and dissociated yourself from God and now you want to return to Him.

In order to return to God, remember that you belong to Him.

You do not belong to yourself and are not free to behave as you please. You belong to God who created you and who
redeemed you. St. Paul says to us: "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
The Devil has wrested you away from God. But God, out of his love for you, is holding you fast, because you belong to Him and He is saying. "Return to Me".
"Return to your purity, which you had before when you were abiding in me. Return to your calm and peace, for you will have none without me."
All those who go far away from God, or who are separated from Him, find no peace for themselves and live wearisome and troubled lives. St. Augustine experienced this and said to the Lord, "Our hearts will always be restless, until they find their rest in you."
The Lord, who wants us to return, says to us, when we are caught up in the troubles and anxieties of the world, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". (Matt. 11:28).
If you return to God, all your problems will be solved. You will live without a problem, because the only real problem in your life is to be separated from God. All other problems are a result of this. So if you return to God, you will live in peace: in peace with God and peace with yourself and with peace in your heart. "This is what the Sovereign Lord... says: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." (Isa. 30:15).
Therefore, return to the Lord. Return to the light, so as not to walk in darkness. Return to the Spirit, so as not to live for material things, or according to the flesh. Return to life, for sin is death.
In this way your youth will be renewed like the eagle's. (Ps. 103:5) You will feel comfort in your spiritual life and enthusiasm will flow back into you as you go about your daily affairs. Your life will become interesting and will take on a purpose. You will feel that God is within you and that He is with you. You will experience His kingdom and learn the sweetness of living closely with Him. You will know the meaning of the phrase, "it is good for me to draw near to God". (Ps. 73:28).
God wants us to return to Him. He wants us to have salvation and wishes us to love Him as He loves us. That is
why He says: "Turn to Me, with all your heart". (Joel 2:12) And the Divine Inspiration records this beautiful phrase for us, "Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord GOD, "and not that he should turn from his ways and live?" (Eze. 18:23).

God wants us to return to Him so that we might live... which is because sin is a state of spiritual death on earth and its consequence is eternal death.

God wants us to return, then, for our own good.

In addition to this, there is His loving kindness, for He does not delight at the death of a sinner. The death of a sinner is something which saddens God's heart, without any doubt.

When a sinner returns to Him, "there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance." (Luke 15:7).

The Apostles rejoiced and told the good news about the return of the Gentiles, to their disciples. (Acts 19:3).

The Bible uses the term 'return' in connection with the Gentiles, because faith in God was man's original condition, which applied to all people, long before the Gentiles separated themselves from this faith and from God. When they believed, this was considered return to God. (Acts 15:19).

An important fact which you must understand, my friend, is that God wants you to return to Him, more than you want it!

A sinful person may not care about his personal salvation and may not think of returning to God. Or he may enjoy sinning and prefer to continue to sin, feeling that a return to God would deprive him of all his pleasures.

In all this, God is striving continuously to bring back such a sinner to Him, by every means.

There are many great stories which show how God strives after sinners.

In chapter 15 of the Gospel according to our teacher Luke, the story of the lost sheep and the lost coin are mentioned. St. John's Gospel mentions how Christ strove to bring back the Samaritan woman at a time when she had no idea at all that she would encounter Him.

There is also the way that God stands at the door knocking, asking the soul to open and let Him in. I'm likely to get carried away telling you all these examples... The important thing to note is that all the missions of the Prophets have concentrated
on this subject, which is God's desire that we should return to Him and not just this desire of His, but also the action which He takes to achieve it.

At this point, we might ask: 'If our return to God is something pleasing to Him and God desires it and strives for it and we too desire it... how then do we return to Him?' Are you wondering: How do I return to God?

The most effective means to help you return to God is prayer.

Prayer Is The Means Of Returning
Pour out your heart before God and say to Him: 'O Lord, I want you. I want to come back to you. Please rescue me from my state and draw me back to you once again. Without you I am nothing. When I lost you, I lost my life. I lost my happiness and delight. My life became without any meaning or interest. I want to come back to you, O Lord, but "those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved " (Ps. 13:5). " Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God.""'. (Ps. 3:2).
I lost my strength when I went far away from you. Give me some of your strength. Please give me the divine assistance to help me to return to you.

Cast yourself before the Lord and wrestle with Him and say to Him: 'I shall not get up from here unless I have received your special blessing and feel that you have taken me back and count me among your children. I do not just want you to forgive my sin, I want you to remove from my heart any love of sin, once and for all. I cannot come back to you, if there is any love of sin in my heart. What should I do? Should I wait till the desire to sin has gone from my heart and then return to You? Yet it is only by You that I can be saved from it!

So I come to you with my sin, just as I am. You are the one who can take it from me.
If it were within my power to abandon the love of sin, I would have returned to you long ago. Save me from it, so that you can lead me in the procession of your victory.
Take any desire to sin from my heart and remove any domination which sin might have over my will. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" . (Ps. 51:7).
Just as you have given me the instruction to return, O Lord, give me the strength to carry it out.
Believe me, my friends, the person whose prayers are successful is the person whose repentance is sincere. St. Isaac The Syrian was right when he said, "Anyone who imagines that there is another way to repentance besides prayer, is deceived by the devils". Thus by prayer, you gain the strength with which to return to God. So force yourself to pray, rather than to engage in any other spiritual activity. In your prayers, wrestle with God, struggle with Him and talk to Him, even when you are still in the state of sin from which you wish to be saved.

Be determined in your prayers, that you will get from God the strength to return to Him.

Some people imagine that when they pray they are giving ... giving God words, time and feelings. But at its deepest, prayer is a process of taking, during which you feel that you have gained from God spiritual delight, blessing, strength, help and holiness in life. In fact, just for you to have made a connection with Him during your time of prayer, is enough to bring this into effect.

God is ready to listen to your prayer and to give, but the problem is this: that many people, in their prayers, do not wait until they have received...!

For example, someone might say a few words in prayer, become bored quickly, or fed up with praying any longer and so he leaves it without having gained anything...! God looks upon such a person and wonders, how he could have gone off so quickly without waiting to receive even a promise or some comfort. So hold fast to God, and say to Him, "I shall not leave you... I shall not let you go, until I feel that you have accepted me and taken me back into your love."

Prayer requires patience. It requires a struggle with God, in which you must prove that you are serious in what you ask. You must show that you are serious in your prayer of repentance and in your request for help to return to Him, so that when God answers your prayer and gives you strength, you will use it well and not waste it.

Talk to God in a very personal way in your prayers and ask Him: Do the weak fail to reach your kingdom, O Lord? Here I am, see how weak I am and how incapable of getting there with my human strength! Hold my hand and do not leave me to my weakness. Cleanse me and purify me, as you have cleansed and purified others. Didn't you say, "Ask and it will be given to
you”? (Matt. 7:7) Here I am asking and didn't you say, ".. my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.. "? here I am making my request.

O Lord, I shall hold on to all your promises and ask you for them. At least I shall hold on to your words. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them". (Eze. 36:26-7).

Dear Lord, in my case, where are these promises?

Here I am standing here, holding on to the horns of the alter. I am not one of those who pray for a couple of minutes and then leave. I take my stand and wait here for You, O Lord. I shall not abandon my prayer until I can leave it, feeling that I have had your grace bestowed on me for my repentance and until you have taken me back to you.

Nevertheless, dear Lord, please forgive my boldness, for I am only a child of yours and have just gone astray. Please treat me as a young son who knows nothing, while You, as a compassionate father know how to give your children good gifts. (Matt. 7:11).

Keep striving with God, as you would with a close loved one, with persistence, with humility, with perseverance, with tears and by talking to him and by whatever means you can, until you receive.

Trust that by such a struggle, you will receive comfort and enthusiasm, from your prayers or during your prayers and that you will feel that your state of separation from God is over once and for all. You will feel, too, that you have not just been repeating empty words in vain, like the unbelievers, but that you have been pouring out your whole soul before God, as did Hannah, the mother of Samuel.

Hannah prayed very hard and wept very bitterly and made very strong vows and did not leave the temple until she had received a promise that the Lord would give her the desire of her heart. (1 Sa. 1:15-17).

Let it be the same for you. Do not leave your prayers, unless you have formed a new relationship with God and have returned to Him.

After such prayer as this, it would be highly unlikely that you would abandon your praying and go off and sin against God! You would certainly feel ashamed of your prayers and of having
told God, that you would never leave Him.

63
This is how prayer teaches repentance and leads the person back to God and to His love.
But perhaps you might say: "I don't feel like praying at all."

My advice to you, then, is to pray just as you are and say to God, "Forgive me, dear Lord, if I pray without enthusiasm, but I pray out of the emptiness which is in my heart. It is you who gives me enthusiasm and warmth. It is you who pours your heavenly fire into my heart. Accept my prayers as they are, with all their faults. Things never start off perfect, for perfection only comes from you.

I am praying, even though it is without any spirit! I believe that you will give me of your Spirit. I would be mistaken if I said to you, O Lord, that with my human strength and willpower I could change into a spiritual person. There is no way that I could do that, for it is only by Your strength, Your blessing and grace and by Your Holy Spirit, that I could ever take on the image which You want me to have. It is only through Your guidance alone, with You holding my hand, leading me step by step, as You would lead a little child who is just learning to walk, that it can happen."

This is how I want you to pray and to receive from the Lord. Listen, during your prayer, for the voice of God, speaking in your heart. As David said in his Psalm, "I will hear what God the LORD will speak, For He will speak peace To His people and to His saints; But let them not turn back to folly" (Ps. 85:8).

David began the Psalm with a request, then after feeling God's response, he ended the Psalm in thanks. He said: " O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure " And at the end of the Psalm he says: " Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping. The LORD has heard my supPLICATION; The LORD will receive my prayer " (Ps. 6: 1&8-9).

This is the sort of prayer which indicates that you feel that the barrier which has been between you and God has disappeared. You feel as if the angels are climbing the steps to heaven with your prayers and bringing back down to you what you have requested. (Ge. 28:12).

You feel as if God's hand is stretching out to wipe every tear
from your eyes and as if the prayer of the Prophet David, in his great Psalm, is being brought into a reality within you. "Let my supplication come before you". (Ps. 119:170). You feel, as if one of the twenty four priests has taken your prayer and placed it in a golden brazier and raised it as purifying incense to the throne of God. (Rev. 5:8).
You feel as if one of the Seraphim has taken a burning coal from the altar and touched your lips with it and has said to you: "Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged". (Is. 6:7).
65
Truly, I say to you, by such prayers you can return to God. Let us cry aloud to Him, saying: " Restore us, O God of our salvation," (Ps. 85:4) and "Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the South." Then our mouth was filled with laughter, And our tongue with singing ... " and we will say, The LORD has done great things for us, And we are glad " (Ps. 126:2-4).
66
Adversity As A Reason
For Returning To God
The troubles which afflict us are not all of one kind:
There are troubles that afflict a person which are like a cross that he must carry for the sake of God, in order to obtain his crown, as happened to the Apostles and men of faith. (Heb. 11:36-7).
Other difficulties are there to test our faith, or to teach us to pray, (James 5:13) or that we might have the opportunity to be examples of patience, as happened to Job. (Job 5:11). There are other adversities which are designed to make a person aware of his weakness and to teach him to be humble, as happened to St. Paul (2 Cor. 12:7). There are yet other problems which come upon us because our sins have cut us off from God's grace. It is this last kind which I would like to tell you about now. These adversities which come as a result of our withdrawing from God's blessing, will not disappear byway of human wisdom, or through the use of human strength. There is only one means of solving them and that is by following God's words to us:
+ "Return to Me and I will return to you." (Mal. 3:7).
67
If a person returns to God with prayers and fasting and by humbling himself and if he returns to Him with sincere
repentance, then he will once again have an awareness of God in his life. God's grace will return to him as it had been before and will no longer be withheld from him. Consequently, the person's problem will also come to an end, as the factors causing it will have disappeared.

In the book of Judges, there are great many examples which illustrate this clearly.

The Bible says: "Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies." (Jg 2:11-14)

The Israelites were unable to stand, since the hand of the Lord was no longer with them.

When the hand of the Lord had been with them, the Red Sea had parted for them and drowned Pharaoh and his troops. The rock had split open to give them water and they had beaten Og, king of Bashan (Josh. 12:4) and Sihon, king of the Amorites (Josh. 13:21) and all the nations on the earth.

On this occasion, however they had been delivered into the hands of their enemies and had been unable to withstand them. The word of the Lord stood before them: "Return to me and I will return to you". When they cried aloud to the Lord, He heard their weeping and saved them.

How extensive is the Lord's love, even at a time when His blessing has been withheld! For the Bible says that He came back and "saved them out of the hands of their enemies ... for the Lord had compassion on them as they groaned under those who oppressed and afflicted them. (Judg. 2:18).

In all your troubles, do not say: "What should I do with my enemies, who have triumphed over me?" But rather ask yourself: "Is the hand of God with me or not? Have I left God and has His blessing left me, though it was with me before?" Listen to God's words, "Return to Me and I will return to you" and then, quickly return to the Lord and you will find that the divine aid, returns to you, making you, as it did to Jeremiah, "A fortified city and an iron pillar, And bronze
walls..... They will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you," says the LORD, "to deliver you.". (Jer. 1:18-19).

The story is repeated in the book of Judges... The people sinned and did evil and worshipped Baal and the Lord sold them into the hands of Cushan, king of Aram (Judg. 3:8). Then they cried aloud to the Lord and he raised up a deliverer for them, named Othniel and he rescued them.

The Spirit of the Lord was upon Othniel and the Lord gave Cushan into his hands, "So the land had rest for forty years". (Judg. 3:11).

On every occasion that they faced a dire adversity, they returned to God and He returned and saved them. Then they went back to their sins and to worshipping idols and so their troubles returned. This made them cry aloud to the Lord and He came back to them and rescued them.

As we go through history, we hear about the captivity in Babylon and Ashur. This also happened because the Israelites had done wrong and had worshipped idols. We read in the Bible of how the children of God wept by the rivers of Babylon and hung their harps on the poplar trees. (Ps. 137).

Yet all the while they were captives, the phrase "Return to me and I will return to you" echoed in their ears. During their captivity, there appeared holy men, such as the prophet Daniel and the three young men who were in the fiery furnace and the Prophet Ezekiel and various men of faith, such as Nehemiah, Ezra and Zerubabel, showed them examples of holy zeal. Then the Lord returned from the heat of His anger and restored His captive people.

How did the Lord return to them?

He returned because of the tears of Nehemiah and Ezra.

When Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem had fallen and that its gates had been burned by fire, his heart blazed with anger and he said: " I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying ..... then I said .. "O Lord... I confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. "We have acted very corruptly against You....O Lord let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant....." (Neh. 1:3-11).

And so the Lord returned. He bestowed His blessing upon Nehemiah before the eyes of the King of Persia and Nehemiah
was able to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
Then there was Ezra, who wept for the sins of his people and rent his clothes.
At the time of the presentation of the evening sacrifice, Ezra rose up from his self-abasement and knelt down in his torn garments. He stretched out his arms to God and said: "O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens....... You our God have punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and have given us such deliverance as this, "should we again break Your commandments...? "O LORD ... You are righteous! , for we are left as a remnant." (Ezra 9:3-15).

71 Ezra fasted and his people fasted with him. (Ezra 8:21) He wept and he made the people weep bitterly with him. (Ezra 10:1) The Lord heard and returned to His people.
With his fasting and prayers and weeping, Ezra was able to bring all his people back to God and God returned to them.
In the previous stories, the sinfulness of the entire people had angered God and so His blessing had been withdrawn from them, yet the prayers and crying of one person were able to bring God back to His people.
In other cases, it may have been that the sin of just one person was the cause of the whole trouble, like the sin of Achan, son of Carmi (Josh. 7) and like the fleeing of the Prophet Jonah from God (Jon. 1).
Thus return to God, not just for your own sake, but for the sake of those around you too. In every trouble that surrounds you and them, consider how you can return to God.
Do not think about those people around you who are causing you trouble, but think of yourself and of your relationship with God and of your return to Him. And have faith that the harshest and most powerful of enemies will not be able to maintain their stand when a pure eye, flooded with tears, is raised up to God, or when a pure heart speaks with God, or when innocent hands are stretched out to Him.
Our relationships with other people are only superficial, secondary relationships.
72 The most important thing is our relationship with God. As for our relationships with other people, these are only a consequence of our relationship with God... they change as our relationship with Him changes.
When the Sabeans took the cattle and the donkeys of the righteous Job and the Chaldeans took his camels, (Job 1: 14-17) he did not complain or blame God that they had taken them, he just said, "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away" (Job 1:21). Return to God and He will restore everything to you.

If you return to God, evil and the wicked will have no power over you.

Not only your enemies who rejoice that you have fallen, will not have any power over you, but even the Devils will not be able to overcome you; however much they might surround you, like bees round a honeycomb, they will die out as quickly as burning thorns. (Ps. 118). As the Prophet David says: " Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth; Yet they have not prevailed against me." (Ps. 129:2).

Neither sin nor lust would be able to overcome you, because the Lord is with you. He will give you strength and help and will lead you in triumphal procession in Christ (2 Cor. 2:14). If His heavenly grace leaves you, then the least thought will be able to overcome you and will weaken your resistance.

Then you will hear the voice of the Lord in your ear: "Return to me and I will return to you". Raise your heart to God and return to Him, that your strength might come back.

What does the phrase, "I will return to you" mean?

It means, "I will return to you with all my strength and help and I shall return to you with all my love: and we will be as we were before. It will be as if your sins had never been." For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer. 31:34). In short, "I will return to you" means, "we shall be reconciled".

Let us now go on to talk about reconciliation and being at peace with God.

Sin Is Contending Against God

It is wrong to put yourself on the opposite side to God.
A sinful person is one who opposes God, who defies Him and breaks His commandments. He abandons God's will in order to carry out his own wishes, making himself independent of God and dissociating himself from God. He loves sin more than he loves God, however much he might claim, with his tongue, to love Him!

The sinner flees from God. He does not like to talk with Him. And if he stands in prayer, then the Lord's words, "This people honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me," (Mark. 7:6) apply to him. Thus his prayers are without love, without emotion and without any spirit and are probably only said for the sake of performing a duty, or to satisfy himself. The sinner does not talk much about God and does not feel any loving intimacy with Him. The sinner also feels estranged from God, because sin has created a barrier separating him from God. Sin may develop from this level of contending against God, to the level of actually fighting against Him. St. James the Apostle talking about this said: "friendship with the world is enmity with God". (James. 4:4) and St. John the Evangelist says: "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2: 15).

Since sin is a kind of rift between man and God, we begin our masses with the prayer of reconciliation. Before we raise the Ebrosfarin (large linen covering the oblations) to pray the mass of the Saints, we pray the prayer of peace and reconciliation, because we must reconcile the people with God first of all, before we can pray and before we can offer the divine mysteries.

Thus we address God, the Son, in the Gregorian Mass saying, "You interceded for us with the Father and You broke down the barrier separating us and destroyed the old enmity between us. You reconciled those living on earth with those in heaven." The worst aspect of sin is that it is directed against God Himself: David, the Prophet, knew this fact well, which is why he said to the Lord, in his psalm of repentance, "Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight ". (Ps. 51:4).

David had obviously wronged Uriah the Hittite and Bathsheba, Uriah's wife, just as he had wronged himself, by spoiling his chastity, his purity and his morality. Nevertheless, none of this was of chief concern to him, when he said to the Lord, "Against you, you only have I sinned". That is because David could see that his sin was fundamentally against God, against His commandments and against His love and as a consequence of
that, it was against others too.

78
The righteous Joseph also realised that sin was first and foremost an offence against God, during the scene with Potiphar's wife, when he said: "How then can I..... and do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" He did not say, "and sin against Potiphar, or against Potiphar's wife", he simply said, "and sin against God". (Gen. 39:9). This is because sin is disobedience against God and opposition to Him. It shows a lack of love for God and shows that He has been banished from the individual's heart. It is a rebellion against God and a scorning of His commandments.

It was for all these reasons that Adam became afraid, after his downfall and hid from God's sight, for he knew that he had angered God by sinning.

It is a sad fact that whenever we sin, we grieve the Holy Spirit of God. (Eph. 4:30) The first consequence of sin is that it upsets God, the second is that it destroys the person. To atone for the result of the first, burnt sacrifices were offered (Lev. 1). To atone for the result of the second, sin offerings were presented (Lev. 4).

The Lord Jesus came to serve as the act of atonement for both of these sacrifices: so that he would appease the heart of the angry father, like a burnt sacrifice and so that he would save mankind, who was doomed, by being an offering for his sin. Probably what causes most pain of all to a person's heart, is not only the realisation that he has sinned against God, but rather that he has created a rift between himself and God and that God is no longer pleased with him.

The sacrifice of a burnt offering, in the Old Testament, was to appease God, to satisfy His angry heart. Thus the first sacrifices were made under the Mosaic law. It is mentioned in the first chapter of the book of Leviticus. It said that "when the burnt offering was to be presented it had to be offered “at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the L ORD” (Lev. 1:3),so that it would be acceptable to the Lord." Three times in the same chapter it is spoken of as, "a sweet aroma to the Lord." (Lev. 1:9, 13 & 17).

Its purpose was confined to this one point, which was to please God and fulfil His justice. Its purpose was not to save man, because that was the intention behind the sacrifice of sin. For this reason, no one partook of it, as they did of the sacrifices given for sin. It was consumed entirely by the fire, until it
turned into ashes. (Lev. 5:8 & 13). The fire represented divine justice.
It is as if the person presenting the burnt offering is saying to the Lord, as it is being offered: "What concerns me now is not my salvation, but that you should be pleased."
"What am I but dust and ashes?! I am the person least worthy to offer sacrifices on my behalf. Whether I am saved or not, is not my chief concern, but what is most important of all, O Lord, is that your heart should approve of me. After this do with me as you wish. I have sinned against you and I want to be reconciled with you. After I have become reconciled to you, will come my request for forgiveness and I know that you will forgive, without my need to ask."
What you should feel is the kind of feeling felt by a son, whose only concern is that his father should be pleased with him. It is not the feeling of the slave, whose only concern is to be saved from punishment.
Are you as keen as this to please your heavenly father and be reconciled to Him? Do you strive to heal the rift between yourself and God? Or do you do like Adam, who fled and hid himself from God?! Do you say as the righteous Job said, "Is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both," (Job 9:33)? Do you feel that sin has put you far away from God and created a breach between you?
There is something else which I need to tell you about, which is that:

Sin Being Unfaithful To God
In general, sin is disloyalty to God and a betrayal of Him. The sinful person is unfaithful to the love of our compassionate God, who loved us and showed us the full extent of his love. (John 13:1) and showered us with His good gifts.
Since God has considered us to be His children and has become a father to us, when we sin against Him, we are really letting Him down as a father. When we sin, we are also being unfaithful to the promises which we made to God at our baptism and which we have made on those occasions when He has saved us and which we have made whenever we have taken the Communion.
We are being unfaithful to God, because we, His children and chosen ones, join forces with His enemies, the Devils and we deny Him in preference to gratifying our own desires.
God asks us to be faithful, saying to each one of us, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Rev. 2:10). But we, by sinning, betray this fidelity. Our hearts do no abide in God's love, but are shaken by every whim and by every desire. They do not possess that steadfast, faithful love.

If we sin against God, we are really doing something worse than His enemies are doing, for their attacks are only considered to be hostility towards Him. Their enmity does not contain that element of betrayal which is involved in our sins, because of our position as sons of God, called after His name. How can we attack Him like this and join forces with His enemies? How can we sell our souls, which He bought with His blood and how can we banish His Holy Spirit from our hearts? Is not all this considered to be the utmost disloyalty?

Perhaps those who did not know God before have an excuse. But those who have known Him and lived with Him and experienced Him and upon whom He has bestowed His holy mysteries, who have then gone on to reject Him, how can they not be seen as traitors to His intimacy and love?! God Himself called this desertion of Him, being unfaithful, when He said, "For the house of Israel and the house of Judah Have dealt very treacherously with Me". (Jer. 5:11).

The theft committed by Achan the son of Carmi was considered a betrayal of the Lord. (Josh. 7:1). And marrying foreign women was also considered an act of unfaithfulness. (Ezra 10:2).

The Bible says, that king Saul, ". . . died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance " (1 Chr. 10:13).

The negligence of the priests and the Levites in the service of the house of the Lord, was considered unfaithfulness, which is why the good king Hezekiah said, "our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the LORD our God; they have forsaken Him, have turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the LORD... and put out the lamps. and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings ... " (2 Chr. 29:6-7).

As long as sin continues to be contention against God and unfaithfulness towards Him, then there must be reconciliation with Him.

The heart must return to Him and confess its betrayal. It must feel remorse and humble itself before Him, in order to be
forgiven and so that a new relationship from a faithful heart can begin.
The intention is that the reconciliation be enduring and irreversible. Because if you are reconciled with someone and behave as if you were his friend, but then come back the next day and upset him and insult him, this is not a real reconciliation. Reconciliation is the return of love, a true and lasting love.
The history of sin ends in reconciliation with God. The amazing thing, however, is that it is God, whom we have rejected, who strives for this reconciliation by every available means.

God Is Reconciled With Us
What was the work of all the prophets and apostles whom God sent to the world, except to establish peace between God and man? Look at St. Paul, who says: "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf. Be reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:20).
It is the Lord Jesus, then, who sends these ambassadors to us, asking us to be reconciled to Him. What a wonderful love this is!
It can be quite difficult for you if you decide to go to a person to make it up. You keep wondering whether he will accept your overtures of peace or not. Here it is God who wants reconciliation and who asks for it and who sends messengers for that very purpose, through whom He works with His grace and Holy Spirit. He says to mankind, "Come now, and let us reason together". (Isa. 1:18).
Not only this, but God even strives to be reconciled with those who are disobedient and stubborn, for He continues: "All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people." (Rom. 10:21).
Imagine God stretching out His hand all day long to befriend these stubborn people. The "all day long" means that He is doing it with all His patience and with hopeful expectation. He does not get tired of striving to reconcile sinners. It is He who looks at your heart and says: "This is My resting place forever, Here I will dwell, for I have desired it." (Ps. 132:14).
It is He who says to your soul, which is so precious to Him, "Listen, O daughter, Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father's house The King will greatly
desire your beauty " (Ps. 45:10-11).
In actual fact, the reconciliation of the Lord with man, was the reason for the divine incarnation.
Saint James Al-Sarugi said, "There was a rift between God and man and since mankind was unable to restore peace and be reconciled to God, God came down to man, in order to be reconciled to him."
The reconciliation of man with God, is also the aim of the redemption.
The blood of our Lord Jesus was the price of this reconciliation. The Apostle says concerning this: For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him " .and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross." (Col. 1:20).
See how dear the price of your reconciliation was and how precious your soul is to God. For we " were reconciled to God through the death of His Son." (Rom. 5:10) "that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them." (2 Cor. 5:19).
What part did Christ take in this reconciliation? The Apostle says: "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation... through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.." (Eph. 2:14-16).
Christ reconciled us to the Father by putting an end to the hostility and removing the barrier which divided us from Him. But we still sin and need to be reconciled with God every day. This is why there is the "ministry of reconciliation" which is the work of the apostles and the various orders of priests.
St. Paul says concerning this, that God "has given us the ministry of reconciliation" and that he "has committed to us the word of reconciliation". "We implore you on Christ's behalf.. Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:18, 19-20).
All the pastoral work of the priests, preachers and teachers is this "ministry of reconciliation" in pursuit of peace between God and man and for the most part, this is also the work of the holy sacraments.
God wants to be reconciled to you by every possible means. He says to you: "This rift between us has gone on for long enough, let us begin a new relationship, however much you run away from me, even if you go to a distant country, or hide behind the trees, or take you heart far away from me, I shall
still send messengers and prophets for the sake of your reconciliation. I shall send you ministers and shall send you my blessing. I shall provide the spiritual means and prepare the opportunities."

What else will God do?

God is also ready to send difficulties, either to us or to our loved ones, if need be, for the sake of our reconciliation. Perhaps a person will not come to God out of love, but will come after a blow of some sort, like Joseph's brothers, who were led to reconciliation through adversity. (Gen. 44).

The Lord says: ".. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

When adversities oppress you and you find that only God's tender loving heart shows you kindness, you will become reconciled with Him as you remember His love.

Every adversity whispers in your ear: Be reconciled with God. Remember, too, that God reconciles you to Him, for your own sake. He also reconciles you to Him in order to restore you, to cleanse you, to purify you and to make you holy. His love for you is so great that He will not abandon you, in case you go astray, or the enemy of Goodness, the Devil, preys upon you. God is afraid that you will perish if you go far away from Him and that you will change your principles and ideals and become like the other people in the world, worldly, materialistic and concerned with physical things. Thus He seeks reconciliation with you in order to save your soul. It would be a great pity if you were to lose this opportunity to be reconciled with God.

Great are the benefits that you will gain from this reconciliation.

In making peace with God, you will find forgiveness and salvation. The Lord will wash you so that you become whiter than snow. (Ps. 51). He will wipe away your sin and not remind you of your previous sins. (Jer. 31:34). In reconciliation you will gain inner peace and you will be reconciled to your own soul too. There will no longer be a struggle inside you.

Through reconciliation you will return to God's fold, you will no longer feel estranged from His house and His kingdom. In fact you will become one of those who dwells in the house of the Lord. (Eph. 2:19) Through reconciliation you will win eternal life, because according to the Lord: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own
soul?" (Mark 8:36).
If on occasions you spend a great deal of effort to make it up with other people, with whom you have only a temporary relationship on earth, then it stands to reason that you should be much more concerned about being reconciled to God, with whom you can have an eternal relationship that will never end! Be sure that you realise, then, how important God is for you and how important it is for you to be reconciled to Him.

Just look at how much effort the Lord has spent for the reconciliation of man, who is really only dust and ashes. But does man, this pile of dust and ashes, feel the same about being reconciled with his Creator?! I fear that what the Lord said to Jerusalem and her people applies to us: "How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!." (Matt. 23:37).

The Lord is standing at the door, but we do not open it to Him. How can reconciliation take place? What are the obstacles that hinder some people from responding and what is the solution?

How Reconciliation Takes Place
The first condition, without which there can be no reconciliation, is:
1. That you have a sincere desire to be reconciled to God:
The aim of all the means of grace and spiritual influences and all the other things which are conveyed to us by our spiritual guides, is to implant this idea in your heart, whereby you say with sincerity, "O Lord, I want to be reconciled with you." If your desire is honest and comes from deep within your heart, then without doubt you will find the means to connect yourself to God. God Himself will unite you to Him.
2. By having the desire, you begin the process, providing you are serious in your desire:
There are some people who may say that they want to come back to the Lord, but they have a thousand voices in their hearts crying out, "I want to sin". The desire for reconciliation with the Lord, comes only from their lips; it is not in their hearts. Someone might say "I want to be reconciled...", but deep down he does not really want it, because being reconciled to God will deprive him of many things which he loves and will cause him to enter by the narrow gate, which is against his wishes.
Perhaps the real reason behind all this is a favourite sin within his heart, or a habit which dominates him, or a fixed characteristic of his, or an intractable will.

Perhaps the thing that is hindering you from being reconciled with God, is that you are in the kind of state which our teacher, St. Paul, described in his Epistle to the Romans: "for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find." (Rom. 7:18) and "For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. ..... it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me." (Ro. 7:19-20).

If this is your problem, my friend, my advice to you is to:

3. Strive hard to follow God, so that He can change your heart:

Say to Him, "O Lord, save me from my heart and from my sin and from my natural inclinations. Let none of this be an obstacle in the way of my reconciliation with You. You have changed many peoples’ hearts and probably their state were even worse than mine. I wish that I could be one of those whose hearts You changed. O Lord, you changed the hearts of Moses the black, Augustine and Mary the Copt and Arianus and others... Is it so difficult for You to change my state?"

Consider my situation to be a complicated one, but when placed before your boundless power, it will not be hard to solve.

O Lord, I am unable to restore my own heart and make it peaceful, which is the first thing that I need in order to be reconciled with you.

It is only You who can mend this heart of mine and put into it the holy feelings appropriate for this reconciliation.

My son, why don’t you say to God, "give me your heart". (Prov. 23:26) "take it as it is..."

Purge it with your hyssop and it will be clean. Wash it and it will become whiter than snow. (Ps. 51:7). I am not asking you just to mend this heart of mine, but to create within me a pure heart (Ps. 51) and give me a new spirit. (Ezek. 36:26). If there is no love for you in my heart, then please give me this love.

Do not blame me for my lack of love, but just pour out your love into my heart by the Holy Spirit, according to the words of your Apostle. (Rom. 5:5).

Consider me as a little child, who wants something but does not know how to get it; who desires something but is unable to attain it and "Direct my footsteps." (Ps.119) for I stumble so often.
If I am not serious enough about the salvation of my soul, it is sufficient that you, O Lord, are serious about redeeming this soul of mine. If my willpower is not strong enough to save my soul, then certainly Your grace will be strong enough to save it. If I do not yet really want to live with You because of the blemishes in my character, then it will be enough that You want me to live with You. Your will can do whatever is necessary. If You, O Lord, abandon me to my own will and to my weakness, then I shall perish. Consider me as someone who is ill, who is not strong enough to heal himself, or to go to the doctor. Say the word so that your servant will be healed. (Matt. 8:8).

Offer to the Lord a prayer from your heart, that if your effort is not strong enough, then your prayer can make up for the deficiency. For "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (James 5:16).

In being reconciled to God, do not rely too much on your own understanding, or on your human strength. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding." (Prov. 3:5). Just take from God the strength which will support your weakness.

What God wants from you is your heart and will and faith. What is meant by 'will' is not some tremendous show of strength and determination, but rather the desire to be close to God. For a person might be weak, yet God can give him the strength to act. In fact God Himself might even work through him and work with him. As St. Paul said: "for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13). God wants your desire for reconciliation, because He never forces anyone to be reconciled with Him. If you can offer Him this desire, He will act together with you. I am not saying that He will do it all alone, otherwise this might encourage a person not to make any effort. On the other hand, your effort in working together with Him, will indicate the seriousness of your desire to be reconciled to Him.

So far, then, we have said that you must have a sincere desire for reconciliation and that when you are serious about your desire, you should try to carry it into effect by praying and asking for help to overcome any obstacles which you might encounter. What else do you need to do?
4. Avoid anything in the future which might upset God, so that your reconciliation does not suffer a relapse and you return to the state you were in before. If you are reconciled with God, don't then turn back and join forces with His enemies.

Endeavour to avoid all potential areas of sin, because very often the heart yearns for God, but then its desire grows cold, under the influence of some kind of opposition. People are easily influenced and you can see how easy it is for human nature to go from one extreme to another, if it has not yet become firmly and fully established in God.

Make sure that you realise, too, that to be reconciled with God does not just mean that all you have to do is to say the words 'I have sinned'. Many people have said this before but have not benefited from it, because their words were not sincere. Reconciliation with God means to live a life that is distinctive by its being one that is pleasing to God. It means a productive way of behaviour in which the individual strives, in practical ways, to please God and win His love. It is not enough just to be confined to a negative approach, such is not entering into any new form of hostility towards God, or opposition to Him. There has to be a positive orientation in which the reconciliation is turned into love.

5. Therefore I advise you to live within the realm of divine influence:

Spend your time with God and occupy your thoughts with Him. Do not let your relationship with God be only for that one day a week which we call 'the Lord's day', but let it be for the whole week. Let it be a relationship which lasts a whole lifetime.

Do not imagine that reconciliation with God just means that you only ever do what is righteous. It is, of course, very good if you can behave virtuously, but always bear in mind that virtues are not the goal but the goal is God Himself. Virtue, in the sense of doing good, is only a means in which you can express your closeness to God, but your real goal is to achieve this closeness with God, in continuous love. If you follow a life of virtue and righteousness, do not be tempted to consider yourself more highly, or expect others to consider you someone special. But rather let it be that by this piety you become bound much closer to God, so that your heart becomes worthy to remain in His dwellings. So be very alert and careful!

Do not leave God's circle for your own personal one, or even
for the one of virtuousness.
Let the center of your interest and the focus of all your efforts be God and His love. Let your heart always be aglow and keep your relationship with God always strong.
A mistake which many people make is to practice various virtues and doing good, but without having an awareness of God in their lives, or in their emotions. But as far as you are concerned, say to God: "I want to feel Your presence, O Lord and I want You to make Yourself known to me. I want to be alone with You and open my heart to You. I want to love You more than anyone else and more than anything else. I am prepared to lose everything for Your sake and I count it all worthless in comparison to finding rest in You and finding my existence in You. (Phil. 3:8).
This is the fervour that comes from reconciliation and which turns into love.
In this enthusiasm, hold fast to all spiritual means which kindle your emotions towards God and strengthen your relationship with Him.
6. Read about the Saints of Repentance who were reconciled with God and who loved Him.
Mediate on the lives of the Saints and how God filled their hearts and how eager they became to please Him. Their stories will kindle within you a love for God and resurrect a love for goodness hidden in your heart. For there exists deep within everyone, however much he falls into sin, a longing for goodness. For God created man in His own image and likeness and evil is something extraneous which intrudes into the human character.
Whenever a person does something bad, he hears a voice inside him protesting against it and there comes a time when he can no longer silence this voice.
When he reads the biographies of the Saints, or sees an example of true virtue, his heart will easily be stirred from within and he will feel his inferiority. His eyes will be filled with tears and he will acknowledge that spiritual excellence is truly the highest thing of all, whether he aspires to it and progresses towards it or not. Any person who is enslaved to a particular desire, must have inside him something which protests against it, however much he tries to ignore it.
7. In your reconciliation with God, do not feel any regret at those pleasures of the world which you have left for His
sake. For these are wars from Satan.
Do not be like Lot's wife, who looked back as she was leaving Sodom. (Gen. 19:26) On the contrary, you should rather feel happy that you have been saved from this past. The sinner loses any sense of his own worth in his own eyes and in the eyes of others.
If Satan tempts us to sin now, he will condemn us with it on the Day of Judgment before God and other people and he will consider us to be among his troops because we were led by him. He will consider himself to possess any of our limbs or organs that have submitted to him. We can remain hopeful of success in our fight against the Devil, if we remember what our Lord said about him: "for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me." (John. 14:30).
8. If you are reconciled with God, take care to continue your reconciliation. Give a considerable thought to the prospect of eternal life and the kingdom of God.
Let your thoughts be far-ranging and not confined only to those few days which we live on earth, with all their ties to material things and the body. If you have laboured for the Lord and have carried a cross in your reconciliation with Him, then say to yourself that: "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us". (Rom. 8:18).
Those who live in a good relationship with God live fixing their eyes "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:18).
9. Be on your guard against new concepts which might upset your spiritual balance,
Which say to you: What is wrong in doing this? or which play down the enormity of sins, or which call them by another name or offer justifications to excuse them all. Under such influences sin no longer appears to be wrong and the spiritual feeling disappears and the person does not feel that he is upsetting God in any way by what he does. He probably imagines that God is angry with him for no reason at all!
A person in this state, therefore, does not find any justification, or see any reason, for asking for reconciliation, since he does not feel that he has done wrong! One of the obvious and essential conditions or reconciliation, though, is for the individual to feel sorry for his sins. This can only come about if
a person holds fast to the proper healthy spiritual values which
the Saints have handed down to us through their examples and
through their words and their lives.
10. Be quick to respond to the voice of God in your heart.
If you hear the voice of God inside you calling you to Him, do
not ignore it, or be slow to respond, lest your heart should
harden and you lose the spiritual effect. As the Apostle said:
"Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts
as in the rebellion." (Heb. 3: 5).
11. One of the basic conditions of reconciliation is that you
must prefer God to yourself.
The most dangerous thing that hinders reconciliation is that you
prefer what you want, to what God wants and that your self
becomes an idol which you worship. For as long as you seek to
please yourself in everything, you will not be able to be
reconciled with God. It is good for us to bear in mind what our
Lord Jesus said: "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him
deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me (Mark
8:34). Even in the Lord's prayer which He taught us, He put
our own personal requests at the end, while what pertains
especially to God is at the beginning.
To deny yourself on earth, is to win yourself in heaven.
101
This is why the Lord said to us: "For whoever desires to save
his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will
find it." (Matt. 16:25). And He also said, " He who finds his life
will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it”
(Matt. 10: 39).
What have you lost for the sake of the Lord? What lengths have
you gone to for His sake?
If you truly wish to be reconciled to God, then remember this
principle and keep it in your heart.
God first, others second and yourself last of all.
Be reconciled to God and reconciled with others and then you
will be at peace with yourself and heaven and earth will be at
one with you.
12. When you are reconciled with God, be prepared to feel
a change in your life.
Do not carry on living in the same way, with the same character
and behaviour and thoughts, but let your reconciliation with
God change your life, for the better. That personality of yours
which Satan used to dominate before, will become a character
which possesses the strength to fight the devils and the humility
to stand before God. It will show a spirit of love, service and
tolerance in its dealing with others.
May the Lord be with you.

Selections From
THE SAYINGS
Of
THE DESERT
FATHERS

The 1975 publication

ABBA ANTHONY THE GREAT
Anthony the Great, called 'The Father of Monks' was born in central Egypt about AD the son of peasant farmers who were Christian. In c. 269 he heard the Gospel read in church and applied to himself the words. 'Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor and come . . .' He devoted himself to a life of asceticism under the guidance of a recluse near his village. In c. 285 he went alone into the desert to live in complete solitude. His reputation attracted followers, who settled near him, and in c. 305 he came out of his hermitage in order to act as their spiritual father. Five years later he again retired into solitude. He visited Alexandria at least twice. Once during the persecution of Christians and again to support the Bishop Athanasius against heresy. He died at the age of one hundred and five. His life was written by Saint Athanasius and was very influential in spreading the ideals of monasticism throughout the Christian World.

1. When the holy Abba Anthony lived in the desert he
was beset by accidie, and attacked by many sinful thoughts. He said to God, 'Lord, I want to be saved but these thoughts do not leave me alone; what shall I do in my affliction? How can I be saved?' A short while afterwards, when he got up to go out, Anthony saw a man like himself sitting at his work, getting up from his work to pray, then sitting down and plaiting a rope, then getting up again to pray. It was an angel of the Lord sent to correct and reassure him. He heard the angel saying to him, 'Do this and you will be saved.' At these words, Anthony was filled with joy and courage. He did this, and he was saved.

2. When the same Abba Anthony thought about the depth of the judgements of God, he asked, 'Lord, how is it that some die when they are young, while others drag on to extreme old age? Why are there those who are poor and those who are rich? Why do wicked men prosper and why are the just in need?' He heard a voice answering him, 'Anthony, keep your attention on yourself; these things are according to the judgement of God, and it is not to your advantage to know anything about them.'

3. Someone asked Abba Anthony, 'What must one do in order to please God?' The old man replied, 'Pay attention to what I tell you: whoever you may be, always have God before your eyes; whatever you do, do it according to the testimony of the holy Scriptures; in whatever place you live, do not easily leave it. Keep these three precepts and you will be saved.'

4. Abba Anthony said to Abba Poemen, 'this is the great work of a man: always to take the blame for his own sins before God and to expect temptation to his last breath.'

5. He also said, 'Whoever has not experienced temptation cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. He even added, 'Without temptations no-one can be saved.'

6. Abba Pambo asked Abba Anthony, 'What ought I to do?' and the old man said to him 'Do not trust in your own righteousness do not worry about the past, but control your tongue and your stomach.'

7. Abba Anthony said, 'I saw the snares that the enemy spreads out over the world and I said groaning, "What can get through from such snares?" Then I heard a voice saying to me, "Humility."'

8. He also said, 'Some have afflicted their bodies by
asceticism, but they lack discernment, and so they are far from God.'
9. He also said, 'Our life and our death is with our neighbour. If we gain our brother, we have gained God, but if we scandalise our brother, we have sinned against Christ.'
10. He said also, 'Just as fish die if they stay too long out of water, so the monks who loiter outside their cells or pass their time with men of the world lose the intensity of inner peace. So like a fish going towards the sea, we must hurry to reach our cell, for fear that if we delay outside we will lose our interior watchfulness.'
11. He said also, 'He who wishes to live in solitude in the desert is delivered from three conflicts: hearing, speech, and sight; there is only one conflict for him and that is with fornication.'
12. Some brothers came to find Abba Anthony to tell him about the visions they were having, and to find out from him if they were true or if they came from the demons. They had a donkey, which died on the way. When they reached the place where the old man was, he said to them before they could ask him anything, 'How was it that the little donkey died on the way here?' They said, 'How do you know about that, Father?' And he told them, 'The demons showed me what happened.' So they said, 'That was what we came to question you about, for fear we were being deceived, for we have visions which often turn out to be true.' Thus the old man convinced them, by the example of the donkey, that their visions came from the demons.
13. A hunter in the desert saw Abba Anthony enjoying himself with the brethren and he was shocked. Wanting to show him that it was necessary sometimes to meet the needs of the brethren, the old man said to him, 'Put an arrow in your bow and shoot it.' So he did. The old man then said, 'Shoot another,' and he did so. Then the old man said, 'Shoot yet again and the hunter replied 'If I bend my bow so much I will break it.' Then the old man said to him, 'It is the same with the work of God. If we stretch the brethren beyond measure they will soon break. Sometimes it is necessary to come down to meet their needs.' When he heard these words the hunter was pierced by compunction and, greatly edified by the old man, he went away. As for the brethren, they went home strengthened.
14. Abba Anthony heard of a very young monk who had
performed a miracle on the road. Seeing the old men walking with difficulty along the road, he ordered the wild asses to come and carry them until they reached Abba Anthony. Those whom they had carried told Abba Anthony about it. He said to them, 'This monk seems to me to be a ship loaded with goods but I do not know if he will reach harbour.' After a while, Anthony suddenly began to weep, to tear his hair and lament. His disciples said to him, 'Why are you weeping, Father?' and the old man replied, 'A great pillar of the Church has just fallen (he meant the young monk) but go to him and see what has happened.' So the disciples went and found the monk sitting on a mat and weeping for the sin he had committed. Seeing the disciples of the old man he said, 'Tell the old man to pray that God will give me just ten days and I hope I will have made satisfaction.' But in the space of five days he died.

15. The brothers praised a monk before Abba Anthony. When the monk came to see him, Anthony wanted to know how he would bear insults; and seeing that he could not bear them at all, he said to him, 'You are like a village magnificently decorated on the outside, but destroyed from within by robbers.'

16. A brother said to Abba Anthony, 'Pray for me.' The old man said to him, 'I will have no mercy upon you, nor will God have any, if you yourself do not make an effort and if you do not pray to God.'

17. One day some old men came to see Abba Anthony. In the midst of them was Abba Joseph. Wanting to test them, the old man suggested a text from the Scriptures, and, beginning with the youngest, he asked them what it meant. Each gave his opinion as he was able. But to each one the old man said, 'You have not understood it.' Last of all he said to Abba Joseph, 'How would you explain this saying?' and he replied, 'I do not know.' Then Abba Anthony 'Indeed Abba Joseph has found the way, for he has said: "I do said, not know."'

18. Some brothers were coming from Scetis to see Abba Anthony. When they were getting into a boat to go there, they found an old man who also wanted to go there. The brothers did not know him. They sat in the boat, occupied by turns with the words of the Fathers, Scripture and their manual work. As for the old man, he remained silent. When they arrived on shore they found that the old man was going
to the cell of Abba Anthony too. When they reached the place, Anthony said to them, 'You found this old man a good companion for the journey?' Then he said to the old man, 'You have brought many good brethren with you, father.' The old man said, 'No doubt they are good, but they do not have a door to their house and anyone who wishes can enter the stable and loose the ass.' He meant that the brethren said whatever came into their mouths.

19. The brethren came to the Abba Anthony and said to him, 'Speak a word; how are we to be saved?' The old man said to them, 'You have heard the Scriptures. That should teach you how.' But they said, 'We want to hear from you too, Father.' Then the old man said to them, 'The Gospel says, "if anyone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also."' (Matt. 5.39) They said, 'We cannot do that.' The old man said, 'If you cannot offer the other cheek, at least allow one cheek to be struck.' 'We cannot do that either,' they said. So he said, 'If you are not able to do that, do not return evil for evil,' and they said, 'we cannot do that either.' Then the old man said to his disciple, 'Prepare a little brew of corn for these invalids. If you cannot do this, or that, what can I do for you? What you need is prayers.'

20. A brother renounced the world and gave his goods to the poor, but he kept back a little for his personal expenses. He went to see Abba Anthony. When he told him this, the old man said to him, 'If you want to be a monk, go into the village, buy some meat, cover your naked body with it and come here like that.' The brother did so, and the dogs and birds tore at his flesh. When he came back the old man asked him whether he had followed his advice. He showed him his wounded body, and Saint Anthony said, 'Those who renounce the world but want to keep something for themselves are torn in this way by the demons who make war on them.'

21. It happened one day that one of the brethren in the monastery of Abba Elias was tempted. Cast out of the monastery, he went over the mountain to Abba Anthony. The brother lived near him for a while and then Anthony sent him back to the monastery from which he had been expelled. When the brothers saw him they cast him out yet again, and he went back to Abba Anthony saying, 'My Father, they will not receive me.' Then the old man sent them a message
saying, 'A boat was shipwrecked at sea and lost its cargo; with great difficulty it reached the shore; but you want to throw into the sea that which has found a safe harbour on the shore. 'When the brothers understood that it was Abba Anthony who had sent them this monk, they received him at once.

22. Abba Anthony said, 'I believe that the body possesses a natural movement, to which it is adapted, but which it cannot follow without the consent of the soul; it only signifies in the body a movement without passion. There is another movement, which comes from the nourishment and warming of the body by eating and drinking, and this causes the heat of the blood to stir up the body to work. That is why the apostle said, "Do not get drunk with wine for that is debauchery." (Ephes. 5:18) And in the Gospel the Lord also recommends this to his disciples: "Take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness." (Luke 21:34) But there is yet another movement, which afflicts those who fight, and that comes from the wiles and jealousy of the demons. You must understand what these three bodily movements are: one is natural, one comes from too much to eat, the third is caused by the demons.'

23. He also said, 'God does not allow the same warfare and temptations to this generation as he did formerly, for men are weaker now and cannot bear so much.'

24. It was revealed to Abba Anthony in his desert that there was one who was his equal in the city. He was a doctor by profession and whatever he had beyond his needs he gave to the poor, and every day he sang the Sanctus with the angels.

ABBA ARSENIUS

Arsenius was born in Rome about 360. A well-educated man, of senatorial rank, he was appointed by the Emperor Theodosius 1 as tutor to the princes Arcadius and Honorius. He left the palace in 394 and sailed secretly to Alexandria. From there he went to Scetis and placed himself under the guidance of Abba John the Dwarf. He became an anchorite near Petra in Scetis. He seems to have had only three disciples, Alexander, Zoilus and Daniel. He was renowned for his austerity and silence and his combined with his learning made him seem somewhat
forbidding to the Coptic monks. After the second devastation of Scetis in 434 he went to the mountain of Troe where he died in 449.

1. While still living in the palace, Abba Arsenius prayed to God in these words, 'Lord, lead me in the way of salvation.' And a voice came saying to him, 'Arsenius, flee from men and you will be saved.'

2. Having withdrawn to the solitary life he made the same prayer again and he heard a voice saying to him, 'Arsenius, flee, be silent, pray always, for these are the source of sinlessness.'

3. It happened that when Abba Arsenius was sitting in his cell that he was harassed by demons. His servants, on their return, stood outside his cell and heard him praying to God in these words, 'O God, do not leave me. I have done nothing good in your sight, but according to your goodness, let me now make a beginning of good.'

4. It was said of him that, just as none in the palace had worn more splendid garments than he when he lived there, so no one in the Church wore such poor clothing.

5. Someone said to blessed Arsenius, 'How is it that we, with all our education and our wide knowledge get nowhere, while these Egyptian peasants acquire so many virtues?' Abba Arsenius said to him, 'We indeed get nothing from our secular education, but these Egyptian peasants acquire the virtues by hard work.'

6. One day Abba Arsenius consulted an old Egyptian monk about his own thoughts. Someone noticed this and said to him, 'Abba Arsenius, how is it that you with such a good Latin and Greek education ask this peasant about your thoughts?' He replied, 'I have indeed been taught Latin and Greek, but I do not know even the alphabet of this peasant.'

7. Blessed Archbishop Theophilus, accompanied by a magistrate, came one day to find Abba Arsenius. He questioned the old man, to hear a word from him. After a short silence the old man answered him 'Will you put into practice what I say to you?' They promised him this. 'If you hear Arsenius is anywhere, do not go there.'

8. Another time the archbishop, intending to come to see him, sent someone to see if the old man would receive him. Arsenius told him 'If you come, I shall receive you; but if I receive you, I receive everyone and therefore I shall no longer live here.' Hearing that, the archbishop said, 'If I drive
him away by going to him, I shall not go any more.?

9. A brother questioned Abba Arsenius to hear a word of him and the old man said to him, 'Strive with all your might to bring your interior activity into accord with God, and you will overcome exterior passions.'

10. He also said, 'If we seek God, he will show himself to us, and if we keep him, he will remain close to us.'

11. Someone said to Abba Arsenius, 'My thoughts trouble me, saying, "You can neither fast nor work; at least go and visit the sick, for that is also charity."' But the old man, recognising the suggestions of the demons, said to him, 'Go, eat, drink, sleep, do no work, only do not leave your cell.' For he knew that steadfastness in the cell keeps a monk in the right way.

12. Abba Arsenius used to say that a monk travelling abroad should not get involved in anything; thus he will remain in peace.

13. Abba Mark said to Abba Arsenius, 'Why do you avoid us?' The old man said to him, 'God knows that I love you, but I cannot live with God and with men. The thousands and ten thousands of the heavenly hosts have but one will, while men have many. So I cannot leave God to be with men.'

14. Abba Daniel said of Abba Arsenius that he used to pass the whole night without sleeping, and in the early morning when nature compelled him to go to sleep, he would say to sleep, 'Come here, wicked servant.' Then, seated, he would snatch a little sleep and soon wake up again.

15. Abba Arsenius used to say that one-hour's sleep is enough for a monk if he is a good fighter.

16. The old man used to tell how one day someone handed round a few dried figs in Scetis. Because they were not worth anything, no one took any to Abba Arsenius in order not to offend him. Learning of it, the old man did not come to the synaxis saying, 'You have cast me out by not giving me a share of the blessing which God had given the brethren and which I was not worthy to receive.' Everyone heard of this and was edified at the old man's humility. Then the priest went to take him the small dried figs and brought him to the synaxis with joy.

17. Abba Daniel used to say, 'He lived with us many a
long year and every year we used to take him only one 
basket of bread and when we went to find him the next year 
we would eat some of that bread.'
18. It was said of the same Abba Arsenius that he only 
changed the water for his palm-leaves once a year; the rest of 
the time he simply added to it. One old man implored him in 
these words, 'Why do you not change the water for these 
palm-leaves when it smells 'Instead of the perfumes and 
aromatics which bad?' He said to him, I used in the world I 
must bear this bad smell.'
19. Abba Daniel used to tell how when Abba Arsenius 
learned that all the varieties of fruit were ripe he would say, 
'Bring me some.' He would taste a very little of each, just 
one, giving thanks to God.
20. Once at Scetis Abba Arsenius was ill and he was 
without even a scrap of linen. As he had nothing with which 
18 
to buy any, he received some through another's charity and 
he said, 'I give you thanks, Lord, for having considered me 
worthy to receive this charity in your name.'
21. It was said of him that his cell was thirty-two miles 
away and that he did not readily leave it: that in fact others 
did his errands. When Scetis was destroyed he left weeping 
and said, 'The world has lost Rome and the monks have lost 
Scetis.
22. Abba Mark asked Abba Arsenius 'Is it good to have 
nothing extra in the cell? I know a brother who had some 
vegetables and he has pulled them up.' Abba Arsenius 
replied, 'Undoubtedly that is good but it must be done 
according to a man's capacity. For if he does not have the 
strength for such a practice he will soon plant others.'
23. Abba Daniel, the disciple of Abba Arsenius, related 
this: 'One day I found myself close to Abba Alexander and he 
was full of sorrow. He lay down and stared up into the air 
because of his sorrow. Now it happened that the blessed 
Arsenius came to speak with him and saw him lying down. 
During their conversation he said to him, 'And who was the 
layman whom I saw here?' Abba Alexander said, here did 
you see him?' He said, 'As I was coming down the mountain 
I cast my eyes in this direction towards the cave and I saw a 
man stretched full length looking up into the air.' So Abba 
Alexander did penance, saying, 'Forgive me, it was I; I was 
overcome by sorrow. 'The old man said to him, 'Well now, 
so it was you? Good; I thought it was a layman and that was
why I asked you.'
24. Another time Abba Arsenius said to Abba Alexander, 'When you have cut your palm-leaves, come and eat with me, but if visitors come, eat with them.' Now Abba Alexander worked slowly and carefully. When the time came, he had not finished the palm leaves and wishing to follow the old man's instructions, he waited until he had finished them. When Abba Arsenius saw that he was late, he ate, thinking that he had had guests. But Abba Alexander, when at last he had finished, came away. And the old man said to him, 'Have you had visitors?' 'No,' he said. 'Then why did you not come? The other replied, 'You told me to come when I had cut the palm-leaves; and following your instructions, I did not come, because I had not finished.' The old man marveled at his exactitude and said to him, 'Break your fast at once so as to celebrate the synaxis untroubled, and drink some water, otherwise your body will soon suffer.'

20

ABBA DANIEL

Daniel was a disciple of Arsenius. He was present at his death in AD 449. Daniel being left his tunic, hair, shirt and sandals said, 'And I unworthy wear them that I may receive a blessing.'
1. It was said concerning Abba Daniel, that when the barbarians invaded Scetis and the Fathers fled away, the old man said, 'If God does not care for me, why still live?' Then he passed through the midst of the barbarians without being seen. He said to himself therefore, 'See how God has cared for me, since I am not dead. Now I will do that which is human and flee with the Fathers.'
2. A brother asked Abba Daniel, 'Give me a commandment and I will keep it.' He replied, 'Never put your hand in the dish with a woman, and never eat with her; thus you will escape a little the demon of fornication.'
3. Abba Daniel said, 'At Babylon the daughter of an important person was possessed by a devil. A monk for whom her father had a great affection said to him, 'No-one can heal your daughter except some anchorites whom I know; but if you ask them to do so, they will not agree because of their humility. Let us therefore do this: when they come to the market, look as though you want to buy their goods and when they come to receive the price, we will ask them to say a prayer and I believe she will be healed.
When they came to the market they found a disciple of the old men setting there selling their goods and they led him away with the baskets, so that he should receive the price of them. But when the monk reached the house, the woman possessed with the devil came and slapped him. But he only turned the other cheek, according to the Lord's Command. (Matt. 5.39) The devil, tortured by this, cried out, "What violence! The commandment of Jesus drives me out."

Immediately the woman was cleansed. When the old men came, they told them what had happened and they glorified God saying, "This is how the pride of the devil is brought low, through the humility of the commandment of Christ."

4. Abba Daniel also said, 'The body prospers in the measure in which the soul is weakened, and the soul prospers in the measure in which the body is weakened.'

5. One day Abba Daniel and Abba Ammoe went on a journey together. Abba Ammoe said, 'When shall we, too, settle down, in a cell, Father?' Abba Daniel replied, 'Who shall separate us henceforth from God? God is in the cell, and, on the other hand, he is outside also.'

6. Abba Daniel said that when Abba Arsenius was at Scetis, there was a monk there who used to steal the possessions of the old men. Abba Arsenius took him into his cell in order to convert him and to give the old men some peace. He said to him, 'Everything you want I will get for you, only do not steal.' So he gave him gold, coins, clothes and everything he needed. But the brother began to steal again. So the old men, seeing that he had not stopped, drove him away saying, 'If there is a brother who commits a sin through weakness, one must bear it, but if he steals, drive him away, for it is hurtful to his soul and troubles all those who live in the neighbourhood.'

7. This is what Abba Daniel, the Pharanite, said, 'Our Father Abba Arsenius told us of an inhabitant of Scetis, of notable life and of simple faith; through his naivety' he was deceived and said, "The bread which we receive is not really the body of Christ, but a symbol." Two old men having learnt that he had uttered this saying, knowing that he was outstanding in his way of life, knew that he had not spoken through malice, but through simplicity. So they came to find him and said, "Father, we have heard a proposition contrary to the faith on the part of someone who says that the bread
which we receive is not really the body of Christ, but a symbol." The old man said, "It is I who have said that." Then the old men exhorted him saying, "Do not hold this position, Father, but hold one in conformity with that which the catholic Church has given us. We believe, for our part, that the bread itself is the body of Christ and that the cup itself is his blood and this in all truth and not a symbol. But as in the beginning, God formed man in his image, taking the dust of the earth, without anyone being able to say that it is not the image of God, even though it is not seen to be so; thus it is with the bread of which he said that it is his body; and so we believe that it is really the body of Christ." The old man said to them, "As long as I have not been persuaded by the thing itself, I shall not be fully convinced." So they said, "Let us pray God about this mystery throughout the whole of this week and we believe that God will reveal it to us." The old man received this saying with joy and he prayed in these words, "Lord, you know that it is not through malice that I do not believe and so that I may not err through ignorance, reveal this mystery to me, Lord Jesus Christ." The old men returned to their cells and they also prayed God, saying, "Lord Jesus Christ, reveal this mystery to the old man, that he may believe and not lose his reward." God heard both the prayers. At the end of the week they came to church on Sunday and sat all three on the same mat, the old man in the middle. Then their eyes were opened and when the bread was placed on the holy table, there appeared as it were a little child to these three alone. And when the priest put out his hand to break the bread, behold an angel descended from heaven with a sword and poured the child's blood into the chalice. When the priest cut the bread into small pieces, the angel also cut the child in pieces. When they drew near to receive the sacred elements the old man alone received a morsel of bloody flesh. Seeing this he was afraid and cried out, "Lord, I believe that this bread is your flesh and this chalice your blood." Immediately the flesh, which he held in his hand, became bread, according to the mystery and he took it, giving thanks to God. Then the old men said to him, "God knows human nature and that man cannot eat raw flesh and that is why he has changed his body into bread and his blood into wine, for those who receive it in faith." Then they gave thanks to God for the old man, because he had allowed him not to lose the reward of his labour. So all three
returned with joy to their own cells.'

24

ABBA JOHN THE DWARF
John the Dwarf, son of poor parents in Tees, was born about 339. The second story here clearly belongs to his youth at home before he became a monk, while he was living with his family. At the age of eighteen he went to Scetis and was trained by Abba Ammoes for twelve years. One of the most vivid characters in the desert, he attracted many disciples and in order to preserve his own solitude he dug himself a cave underground. He was ordained priest, and the number of his sayings, recorded and preserved, points to his importance among his disciples. After 407 he went to Suez and the Mountain of Anthony.

1. It was said of Abba John the Dwarf that he withdrew and lived in the desert 'at Scetis with an old man of Thebes. His Abba, taking a piece of dry wood, planted it and said to him, 'Water it every day with a bottle of water, until it bears fruit.' Now the water was so far away that he had to leave in the evening and return the following morning. At the end of three years the wood came to life and bore fruit. Then the old man took some of the fruit and carried it to the church saying to the brethren, 'Take and eat the fruit of obedience.'

2. It was said of Abba John the Dwarf, that one day he said to his elder brothers 'I should like to be free of all care, like the angels, who do not work, but ceaselessly offer worship to God.' So he took off his cloak and went away into the desert. After a week he came back to his brother. When he knocked on the door, he heard his brother say, before he opened it 'Who are you? 'He said, 'I am John, your brother. 'But he replied, 'John has become an angel, and henceforth he is no longer among men.' Then the other begged him saying, 'It is I.' However, his brother did not let him in, but left him there in distress until morning. Then, opening the door, he said to him, 'You are a man and you must once again work in order to eat.' Then John made a prostration before him, saying, 'Forgive me.'

3. Abba John the Dwarf said, 'If a king wanted to take possession of his enemy's city, he would begin by cutting off the water and the food and so his enemies, dying of hunger, would submit to him. It is the same with the passions of the flesh: if a man goes about fasting and hungry the enemies of his soul grow weak.'
4. He also said, 'He who gorges himself and talks with a boy has already in his thought committed fornication with him.'
5. He also said, 'Going up the road again towards Scetis with some ropes, I saw the camel driver talking and he made me angry; so, leaving my goods, I took to flight.'
6. On another occasion in summertime, he heard a brother talking angrily to his neighbour, saying, 'Ah! you too?' So leaving the harvest, he took to flight.
7. Some old men were entertaining themselves at Scetis by having a meal together; amongst them was Abba John. A venerable priest got up to offer drink, but nobody accepted any from him, except John the Dwarf. They were surprised and said to him, 'How is it that you, the youngest, dared to let yourself be served by the priest?' Then he said to them, 'When I get up to offer drink, I am glad when everyone accepts it, since I am receiving my reward; that is the reason, then, that I accepted it, so that he also might gain his reward and not be grieved by seeing that no-one would accept anything from him.' When they heard this, they were all filled with wonder and edification at his discretion.
8. One day when he was sitting in front of the church, the brethren were consulting him about their thoughts. One of the old men who saw it became a prey to jealousy and said to him, 'John, your vessel is full of poison.' Abba John said to him, 'That is very true, Abba; and you have said that when you only see the outside, but if you were able to see the inside, too, what would you say then?'
9. The brethren used to tell how the brethren were sitting one day at an agape and one brother at table began to laugh. When he saw that, Abba John began to weep, saying, 'What does this brother have in his heart that he should laugh, when he ought to weep, because he is eating at an agape?'
10. Some brethren came one day to test him to see whether he would let his thoughts get dissipated and speak of the things of this world. They said to him, 'We give thanks to God that this year there has been much rain and the palm trees have been able to drink, and their shoots have grown, and the brethren have found manual work.' Abba John said to them, 'So it is when the Holy Spirit descends into the hearts of men; they are renewed and they put forth leaves in the fear of God.'
11. It was said of him that one day he was weaving rope
for two baskets, but he made it into one without noticing, until it had reached the wall, because his spirit was occupied in contemplation.

12. Abba John said, 'I am like a man sitting under a great tree, who sees wild beasts and snakes coming against him in great numbers. When he cannot withstand them any longer, he runs to climb the tree and is saved. It is just the same with me; I sit in my cell and I am aware of evil thoughts coming against me, and when I have no more strength against them, I take refuge in God by prayer and I am saved from the enemy.'

13. Abba Poemen said of Abba John the Dwarf that he had prayed God to take his passions away from him so that he might become free from care. He went and told an old man this: 'I find myself in peace, without an enemy,' he said. The old man said to him, 'Go, beseech God to stir up warfare so that you may regain the affliction and humility that you used to have, for it is by warfare that the soul makes progress.' So he besought God and when warfare came, he no longer prayed that it might be taken away, but said, 'Lord, give me strength for the fight.'

14. Abba John said, 'Here is what one of the old men in ecstasy said: "Three monks were standing at the edge of the sea, and a voice came to them from the other side saying, 'Take wings of fire and come here to me.' The first two did so and reached the other shore, but the third remained, crying and weeping exceedingly. But later wings were given to him also, not of fire, but weak and without strength, so that with great difficulty he reached the other shore, sometimes under water, sometimes above it. So it is with the present generation; if they are given wings they are not of fire, but wings that are weak and without power."

15. A brother questioned Abba John saying, 'How is it that my soul, bruised with wounds, does not blush to speak against my neighbour?' The old man told him a parable relating to slander, 'There was a poor man who had a wife. He saw another very beautiful woman and he took her. They were both quite naked. A feast was being held somewhere near and both women begged him to take them with him. Taking both of them, he put them into a barrel and put them aboard a ship. and so they reached the place. When it became hot, the people lay down to rest. One of the women
looked out of the barrel and seeing no one, went to a pile of rubbish and joining old rags together, made herself a girdle and then walked about confidently. The other, sitting inside the barrel, naked, said, "Look at that courtesan who is not ashamed to walk about naked." Grieved at this her husband said to her "This is truly wonderful! She at least hides her nakedness, but, as for you, you are completely naked; are you not ashamed to say that?" So it is when one speaks against one's neighbour."

16. The old man also said this to a certain brother about the soul which wishes to be converted, 'There was in a city a courtesan who had many lovers. One of the governors approached her, saying, "Promise me you will be good, and I will marry you." She promised this and he took her and brought her to his house. Her lovers, seeking her again, said to one another, 'That lord has taken her with him to his house, so if we go to his house and he learns of it, he will condemn us. But let us go to the back, and whistle to her. Then, when she recognises the sound of the whistle she will come down to us; as for us, we shall be unassailable." When she heard the whistle, the woman stopped her ears and withdrew to the inner chamber and shut the doors.' The old man said that this courtesan is our soul, that her lovers are the passions and other men; that the lord is Christ; that the inner chamber is the eternal dwelling; those who whistle are the evil demons, but the soul always takes refuge in the Lord.

17. One day when Abba John was going up to Scetis with some other brothers, their guide lost his way for it was night-time. So the brothers said to Abba John, 'What shall we do, Abba, in order not to die wandering about, for the brother has lost the way?' The old man said to them, 'If we speak to him, he will be filled with grief and shame. But look here, I will pretend to be ill and say I cannot walk any more; then we can stay here till the dawn.' This he did. The others said, 'We will not go on either, but we will stay with you.' They sat there until the dawn, and in this way they did not upset the brother.

18. There was an old man at Scetis, very austere of body, but not very clear in his thoughts. He went to see Abba John to ask him about forgetfulness. Having received a word from him, he returned to his cell and forgot what Abba John had said to him. He went off again to ask him and having
heard the same word from him he returned with it. As he
got near his cell, he forgot it again. This he did many times;
he went there, but while he was returning he was overcome
by forgetfulness. Later, meeting the old man he said to him,
'Do you know, Abba, that I have forgotten again what you
said to me? But I did not want to overburden you, so I did
not come back.' Abba John said to him, 'Go and light a lamp.'
He lit it. He said to him, 'Bring some more lamps, and light
them from the first.' He did so. Then Abba John said to the
old man, 'Has that lamp suffered any loss from the fact that
other lamps have been lit from it?' He said, 'No.' The old man
continued, 'So it is with John; even if the whole of Scetis
30
came to see me, they would not separate me from the love of
Christ. Consequently, whenever you want to, come to me
without hesitation.' So, thanks to the endurance of these two
men, God took forgetfulness away from the old man. Such
was the work of the monks of Scetis; they inspire fervour in
those who are in the conflict and do violence to themselves
to win others to do good.
19. A brother questioned Abba John, saying, 'What
ought I to do? A brother often comes to fetch me for work,
and since I am ill and weak, I get tired out working; what
should I do, in order to keep the commandment? 'The old
man answered him saying, 'Caleb said to Joshua, the son of
Nun: "I was forty years old when Moses, the servant of the
Lord, sent me with you into the desert in this land; and now I
am eighty-five years of age; as then, so now I can still take
part in the battle and withdraw from it." (cf. Jos. 14.7-1 1) In
the same way you, too, if you are strong enough to go out
and to come in, go to work; but if you cannot do it, sit down
in your cell and weep for your sins and when they find you
filled with compunction, they will not compel you to go out.'
20. Abba John said, 'Who sold Joseph?' A brother replied
saying, 'It was his brethren.' The old man said to him, 'No, it
was his humility which sold him, because he could have said,
"I am their brother" and have objected, but, because he kept
silence, he sold himself by his humility. It is also his humility
which set him up as chief in Egypt.'
21. Abba John said, 'We have put the light burden on one
side, that is to say, self-accusation, and we have loaded
ourselves with a heavy one, that is to say, self-justification.'
31
22. He also said, 'Humility and the fear of God are above
23. The same Abba was sitting in church one day and he gave a sigh, unaware that there was someone behind him. When he noticed it he lay prostrate before him, saying, 'Forgive me, Abba, for I have not yet made a beginning.'

24. The same Abba said to his disciple, 'Let us honour one only, and everyone will honour us; for if we despise one, that is God, everyone will despise us, and we will be lost.'

ABBA ISIDORE THE PRIEST

Isidore the Priest was a monk of Scetis and early companion of Macarius. He is mentioned by Cassian as one of the heads of the four communities in Scetis.

1. It was said of Abba Isidore, priest of Scetis, that when anyone had a brother who was sick, or careless or irritable, and wanted to send him away, he said, 'Bring him here to me. Then he took charge of him and by his longsuffering he cured him.

2. A brother asked him, 'Why are the demons so frightened of you?' The old man said to him, 'Because I have practised asceticism the day I became a monk, and not allowed anger to reach my lips.'

3. He also said that for forty years he had been tempted to sin in thought but that he had never consented either to covetousness or to anger.

4. He also said, 'When I was younger and remained in my cell I set no limit to prayer; the night was for me as much the time of prayer as the day.'

5. Abba Poemen used to say this about Abba Isidore: every night he plaited a bundle of palms, and the brethren pleaded with him saying, 'Rest a little, for you are getting old.' But he said to them, 'Even if Isidore were burned, and his ashes thrown to the winds, I would not allow myself any relaxation because the Son of God came here for our sake.'

6. The same Abba said concerning Abba Isidore that his thoughts said to him, 'You are a great man.' He said to them, 'Am I to be compared with Abba Anthony; am I become like Abba Pambo, or like the other Fathers who pleased God?' When he said this he was at peace. When the demons who are at war with men tried to make him afraid, suggesting that, after all this, he would still go to hell, he replied, 'Even if I am sent there, I shall find you beneath me.'

7. Abba Isidore said, 'One day I went to the market place to sell some small goods; when I saw anger
approaching me, I left the things and fled.'
8. Abba Isidore went one day to see Abba Theophilus, archbishop of Alexandria and when he returned to Scetis the brethren asked him, 'What is going on in the city?' But he said to them, 'Truly, brothers, I did not see the face of anyone there, except that of the archbishop.' Hearing this they were very anxious and said to him, 'Has there been a disaster there, then, Abba?' He said, 'Not at all, but the thought of looking at anyone did not get the better of me.' At these words they were filled with admiration, and strengthened in their intention of guarding the eyes from all distraction.
34
ABBA MACARIUS THE GREAT
Macarius the Great (the Egyptian), born c. AD 300, was a former camel-driver, who traded in nitre. He was one of the pioneers of Scetis. He was ordained priest and lived as an anchorite in a village until he was falsely blamed for the pregnancy of a girl there; when he was cleared, he went to Scetis. Like many of the early monks, he travelled about and was not fixed in any one place, as these stories show. Cassian said of him, 'He was the first who found a way to inhabit the desert of Scetis.' He was much influenced by Anthony the Great and visited him at least twice. He died in A. D. 390.
1. Abba Macarius said this about himself: 'When I was young and was living in a cell in Egypt, they took me to make me a cleric in the village. Because I did not wish to receive this dignity, I fled to another place. Then a devout layman joined me; he sold my manual work for me and served me. Now it happened that a virgin in the village, under the weight of temptation, committed sin. When she became pregnant, they asked her who was to blame. She said, "The anchorite." Then they came to seize me, led me to the village and hung pots black with soot and various other things round my neck and led me through the village in all directions, beating me and saying, "This monk has defiled our virgin, catch him, catch him and they beat me almost to death. Then one of the old men came and said: "What are you doing, how long will you go on beating this strange monk?" The man who served me was walking behind me, full of shame, for they covered him with insults too, saying,
35
"Look at this anchorite, for whom you stood surety; what
has he done?" The girl's parents said, "Do not let him go till he has given a pledge that he will keep her." I spoke to my servant and he vouched for me. Going to my cell, I gave him all the baskets I had, saying, "Sell them, and give my wife something to eat." Then I said to myself, "Macarius, you have found yourself a wife; you must work a little more in order to keep her." So I worked night and day and sent my work to her. But when the time came for the wretch to give birth, she remained in labour many days without bringing forth, and they said to her, "What is the matter?" She said, "I know what it is, it is because I slandered the anchorite, and accused him unjustly; it is not he who is to blame, but such and such a young man." Then the man who served me came to me full of joy saying, "The virgin could not give birth until she had said 'The anchorite had nothing to do with it, but I have lied about him.' The whole village wants to come here solemnly and do penance before you." But when I heard this, for fear people would disturb me, I got up and fled here to Scetis. That is the original reason why I came here.'

2.

One day Macarius the Egyptian went from Scetis to the mountain of Nitria for the offering of Abba Pambo. The old men said to him, 'Father, say a word to the brethren.' He said, 'I have not yet become a monk myself, but I have seen monks. One day when I was sitting in my cell, my thoughts were troubling me, suggesting that I should go to the desert and see what I could see there. I remained for five years, fighting against this thought, saying, perhaps it comes from the demons. But since the thought persisted, I left for the desert. There I found a sheet of water and an island in the midst, and the animals of the desert came to drink there. In the midst of these animals I saw two naked men, and my body trembled, for I believed they were spirits. Seeing me shaking, they said to me, "Do not be afraid, for we are men." Then I said to them, "Where do you come from, and how did you come to this desert?" They said, "We come from a monastery and having agreed together, we came here forty years ago. One of us is an Egyptian and the other a Libyan." They questioned me and asked me, "How is the world? Is the water rising in due time? Is the world enjoying prosperity?" I replied it was, then I asked them, "How can I become a monk?" They said to me, "If you do not give up all that is in the world, you cannot become a monk." I said to them, "But I am weak, and I cannot do as you do." So they
said to me: "If you cannot become like us, sit in your cell and weep for your sins." I asked them, "When the winter comes are you not frozen? And when the heat comes do not your bodies bum?" They said, "It is God who has made this way of life for us. We do not freeze in winter, and the summer does us no harm." That is why I said that I have not yet become a monk, but I have seen monks.'

3. When Abba Macarius dwelt in the great desert, he was the only one living as an anchorite, but lower down there was another desert where several brothers dwelt. The old man was surveying the road when he saw Satan drawing near in the likeness of a man and he passed by his dwelling. He seemed to be wearing some kind of cotton garment, full of holes, and a small flask hung at each hole. The old man said to him, 'Where are you off to?' He said, 'I am going to stir up the memories of the brethren.' The old man said, 'And what is the purpose of these small flasks?' He replied, 'I am taking food for the brethren to taste.' The old man said, 'All those kinds?' He replied, 'Yes, for if a brother does not like one sort of food, I offer him another, and if he does not like the second any better, I offer him a third; and of all these varieties he will like one at least.'

With these words he departed. The old man remained watching the road until he saw him coming back again. When the old man saw him, he said to him: 'Good health to you.' The other replied: 'How can I be in good health?' The old man asked him what he meant, and he replied, 'Because they all opposed me, and no one received me.' The old man said, 'Ah, you did not find any friends down there?' He replied, 'Yes, I have a monk who is a friend down there. He at least obeys me and when he sees me he changes like the wind.'

The old man asked him the name of this monk. 'Theopemptus,' he replied. With these words he went away. Then Abba Macarius got up and went to the desert below his own. When they heard of it the brothers took branches of palm to go to meet him. Each one got ready, thinking that it was to him the old man was coming down. But he enquired which was the one on the mountain called Theopemptus, and when he had found out he went to his cell. Theopemptus received him with joy. When he was alone with him the old man asked him, 'How are you getting on?' Theopemptus replied, 'Thanks to your prayers, all goes well.'
The old man asked: 'Do not your thoughts war against you?' He replied: 'Up to now, it is all right,' for he was afraid to admit anything. The old man said to him, 'See how many years I have lived as an ascetic, and am praised by all, and though I am old, the spirit of fornication troubles me.' Theopemptus said, 'Believe me, Abba, it is the same with me.' The old man went on admitting that other thoughts still warred against him, until he had brought him to admit them about himself. Then he said, 'How do you fast?' He replied, 'Till the ninth hour.' 'Practise fasting a little later; meditate on the Gospel and the other Scriptures, and if an alien thought arises within you, never look at it but always look upwards, and the Lord will come at once to your help.' When he had given the brother this rule, the old man then returned to his solitude. He was watching the road once more when he saw the devil, to whom he said, 'Where are you going this time?' He replied, 'To arouse the memories of the brothers,' and he went away. When he came back the saint asked him, 'How are the brothers?' He replied that it had gone badly. The old man asked him why. He replied, 'They are all obdurate, and the worst is the one friend I had who used to obey me. I do not know what has changed him, but not only does he not obey me any more, but he has become the most obdurate of them all. So I have promised myself not to go down there again at least not for a long time from now.' When he had said this, he went away leaving the old man, and the saint returned to his cell.

4. One day Abba Macarius the Great came to Abba Anthony's dwelling on the mountain. When he knocked on the door, Anthony came out to him and said to him, 'Who are you?' He replied, 'I am Macarius.' Then Anthony went inside and shut the door leaving him there. Later, seeing his patience, he opened the door and received Macarius with joy, saying to him, 'I have wanted to see you for a long time, having heard about you.' He rendered him all the duties of hospitality and made him rest for he was very tired. When evening came, Abba Anthony soaked some palm-leaves for himself, and Abba Macarius said to him, 'Allow me to soak some for myself.' He replied: 'Do so.' Having made a large bundle, he soaked them. Then sitting down in the evening they spoke of the salvation of the soul, while they plaited the leaves. The rope which Macarius was making hung down through the window in the cave. Going in early, blessed
Anthony saw the length of Abba Macarius' rope and said, 'Great power comes out of these hands.'

5. Concerning the devastation of Scetis, Abba Macarius said to the brethren, 'When you see a cell built close to the marsh, know that the devastation of Scetis is near; when you see trees, know that it is at the doors; and when you see young children, take up your sheep-skins, and go away.'

6. Again, wishing to comfort the brethren, he said, 'A mother came here with her little child, possessed with a devil, who said to his mother, "Get up, woman, let us go away from here." She replied, "I cannot walk any further," and the little child said to her, "I will carry you myself." I wondered at the devil's tricks and how eager he was to make them flee.'

7. Abba Sisoes said, 'When I was at Scetis with Macarius, we went up, seven of us, to bring in the harvest. Now a widow cried out behind us and would not stop weeping. So the old man called the owner of the field and said to him, "What is the matter with the woman that she goes on weeping?" "It is because her husband received a deposit in trust from someone and he died suddenly without saying where he had hidden it, and the owner of the deposit wants to take her and her children and make slaves of them." The old man said to him, "Tell her to come to us, when we take our mid-day rest." The woman came, and the old man said to her, "Why are you weeping all the time like this?" She replied, "My husband who had received a deposit on trust from someone, has died and he did not say when he died, where he had put it." The old man said to her, "Come, show me where you have buried him." Taking the brethren with him, he went with her. When they had come to the place, the old man said to her, "Go away to your house." While the brethren prayed, the old man asked the dead man, "So and so, where have you put the deposit?" The corpse replied, "It is hidden in the house, at the foot of the bed." The old man said, "Rest again, until the day of resurrection." When they saw this, the brethren were filled with fear and threw themselves at his feet. But the old man said to them, "It is not for my sake that this has happened, for I am nothing, but it is because of the widow and the orphans that God has performed this miracle. This is what is remarkable, that God wants the soul to be
without sin and grants it all it asks." He went to tell the widow where the deposit was. Taking it, she returned it to its owner and thus freed her children. All who heard this story gave glory to God.'

8. Abba Peter said this about the holy Macarius: 'One day he came to the cell of an anchorite who happened to be ill, and he asked him if he would take something to eat, though his cell was stripped bare. When the other replied, "Some sherbet," that courageous man did not hesitate, but went as far as Alexandria to fetch some for the sick man. The astonishing thing is that no-one knew about it.'

9. He also said that when Abba Macarius received all the brethren in simplicity, some of them asked him why he mixed with them like this. He replied, 'For twelve years I served the Lord, so that he might grant me this gift, and do you all advise me to give it up?'

10. They said about Abba Macarius that when he visited the brethren he laid this rule upon himself, 'If there is wine, drink some for the brethren's sake, but for each cup of wine, spend a day without drinking water.' So the brothers would offer him some refreshment, and the old man would accept it joyfully to mortify himself; but when his disciple got to know about it he said to the brethren, 'In the name of God, do not offer him any more, or he will go and kill himself in his cell.' When they heard that, the brethren did not offer him wine any more.

11. When Abba Macarius was returning from the marsh to his cell one day carrying some palm-leaves, he met the devil on the road with a scythe. The latter struck at him as much as he pleased, but in vain, and he said to him, 'What is your power, Macarius, that makes me powerless against you? All that you do, I do, too; you fast, so do I; you keep vigil, and I do not sleep at all; in one thing only do you beat me.' Abba Macarius asked what that was. He said, 'Your humility. Because of that I can do nothing against you.'

12. Some Fathers questioned Abba Macarius the Egyptian, 'Why is it that whether you eat, or whether you fast, your body is always emaciated?' The old man said to them, 'The little bit of wood that is used to poke the vine branches when they are burning ends by being entirely burnt up by the fire; in the same way, man purifies his soul in the fear of God, and the fear of God bums up his body.'

13. One day Abba Macarius went up from Scetis to
Terenuthis and went into the temple to sleep. Now there were some old coffins of the pagans there. Taking one, he put it under his head as a pillow. The devils, seeing his audacity, were filled with jealousy and to make him afraid they called out, as though addressing a woman, 'So and so, come to bath with us.' Another devil replied from beneath him, as though among the dead, 'I have a stranger on top of me, and I cannot come.' But the old man was not afraid. On the contrary, he knocked on the coffin with assurance, saying, 'Awake, and go into the darkness, if you can.'

Hearing this, the devils began to cry out with all their might, 'You have overcome us.' Filled with confusion, they fled.

14. It was said of Abba Macarius the Egyptian that one day when he was going up from Scetis with a load of baskets, he sat down, overcome with weariness and began to say to himself, 'My God, you know very well that I cannot go any further,' and immediately he found himself at the river.

15. A man of Egypt had a paralytic son. He brought him to the cell of Abba Macarius, and put him down at the door weeping and went a good distance away. The old man stooped down and saw the child, and said to him, 'Who brought you here?' He replied, 'My father threw me down here and went away.' Then the old man said to him, 'Get up, and go back to him.' The child was cured on the spot; he got up and rejoined his father and they returned to their own home.

16. Abba Macarius the Great said to the brothers at Scetis when he dismissed the assembly, 'Flee, my brothers.' One of the old men asked him, 'Where could we flee to beyond this desert?' He put his finger on his lips and said, 'Flee that,' and he went into his cell, shut the door and sat down.

17. The same Abba Macarius said, 'If you reprove someone, you yourself get carried away by anger and you are satisfying your own passion; do not lose yourself, therefore, in order to save another.'

18. The same Abba Macarius while he was in Egypt discovered a man who owned a beast of burden engaged in plundering Macarius' goods. So he came up to the thief as if he was a stranger and he helped him to load the animal. He saw him off in great peace of soul, saying, 'We have brought
nothing into this world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.' (1 Tim. 6.7) 'The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' (Job 1.2 1)

19. Abba Macarius was asked, 'How should one pray?'
The old man said, 'There is no need at all to make long discourses; it is enough to stretch out one's hands and say, "Lord, as you will, and as you know, have mercy." And if the conflict grows fiercer say, "Lord, help!" He knows very well what we need and he shows us his mercy.'

20. Abba Macarius said, 'If slander has become to you the same as praise, poverty as riches, deprivation as abundance, you will not die. Indeed it is impossible for anyone who firmly believes, who labours with devotion, to fall into the impurity of the passions and be led astray by the demons.'

21. It was said that two brothers at Scetis had fallen into sin and that Abba Macarius of Alexandria had excommunicated them. Some brethren came and told Abba Macarius the Great of Egypt about it. He said, 'It is not the brothers who are excommunicated; it is Macarius (for he loved him).’ Hearing that the old man had excommunicated him, Abba Macarius fled to the marsh. Then Abba Macarius the Great went out and found him eaten up by mosquitoes. He said to him, 'So you have excommunicated some brothers; and yet they live apart in the village. I myself have excommunicated you and like a pretty young girl to the utmost privacy of her chamber, you have fled here. I have summoned the two brothers, and have learnt from them what happened, and I have told them nothing has happened. Examine yourself, then, my brother, and see if you have not been the sport of the demons, for you have lacked perception in this matter. But repent of your fault.' Then the other asked him, 'Please give me a penance.' Faced with his humility, the old man said, 'Go, fast for three weeks, eating only once a week.' For it was his usual custom to fast for the whole week.

22. Abba Moses said to Abba Macarius at Scetis, 'I should like to live in quiet prayer and the brethren do not let me.' Abba Macarius said to him, 'I see that you are a sensitive man and incapable of sending a brother away. Well, if you want to live in peace, go to the interior desert, to Petra, and there you will be at peace.' And so he found peace.

23. A brother came to see Abba Macarius the Egyptian,
and said to him, 'Abba, give me a word, that I may be saved.' So the old man said, 'Go to the cemetery and abuse the dead.' The brother went there, abused them and threw stones at them; then he returned and told the old man about it. The latter said to him, 'Didn't they say anything to you?' He replied, 'No.' The old man said, 'Go back tomorrow and praise them.' So the brother went away and praised them, calling them, 'Apostles, saints and righteous men.' He returned to the old man and said to him, 'I have complimented them'. And the old man said to him, 'Did they not answer you?' The brother said no. The old man said to him, 'You know how you insulted them and they did not reply, and how you praised them and they did not speak; so you too if you wish to be saved must do the same and become a dead man. Like the dead, take no account of either the scorn of men or their praises, and you can be saved.'

45

24. One day when Abba Macarius was going down to Egypt with some brethren, he heard a boy saying to his mother, 'Mother, there is a rich man who likes me, but I detest him; and on the other hand, there is a poor man who hates me, and I love him.' Hearing these words, Abba Macarius marvelled. So the brethren said to him: 'What is this saying, Abba, that makes you marvel?' The old man said to them, 'Truly, our Lord is rich and loves us, and we do not listen to him; while our enemy the devil is poor and hates us, but we love his impurity.'

46

ABBA MOSES
Moses, called the Robber or the Negro, was a released slave who lived as a robber in Nitria; late in life he became a monk and was trained by Isidore the Priest. He was ordained priest and became one of the great fathers of Scetis. On the advice of Macarius he retired to Petra; he was martyred with seven others barbarian invaders.

1. It happened that Abba Moses was struggling with the temptation of fornication. Unable to stay any longer in the cell, he went and told Abba Isidore. The old man exhorted him to return to his cell. But he refused, saying, 'Abba, I cannot.' Then Abba Isidore took Moses out onto the terrace and said to him, 'Look towards the west.' He looked and saw hordes of demons flying about and making a noise before launching an attack. Then Abba Isidore said to him, 'Look
towards the east.' He turned and saw an innumerable multitude of holy angels shining with glory. Abba Isidore said, 'See, these are sent by the Lord to the saints to bring them help, while those in the west fight against them. Those who are with us are more in number than they are.' Then Abba Moses, gave thanks to God, plucked up courage and returned to his cell.

2. A brother at Scetis committed a fault. A council was called to which Abba Moses was invited, but he refused to go to it. Then the priest sent someone to say to him, 'Come, for everyone is waiting' for you. 'So he got up and went. He took a leaking jug, filled it with water and carried it with him. The others came out to meet him and said to him, 'What is this, Father?' The old man said to them, (my sins ran out behind me, and I do not see them, and today I am coming to judge the errors of another.' When they heard that they said no more to the brother but forgave him.

3. Another day when a council was being held in Scetis, the Fathers treated Moses with contempt in order to test him, saying, 'Why does this black man come among us?' When he heard this he kept silence. When the council was dismissed, they said to him, 'Abba, did that not grieve you at all? 'He said to them, 'I was grieved, but I kept silence.'

4. It was said of Abba Moses that he was ordained and the ephod was placed upon him. The archbishop said to him, 'See, Abba Moses, now you are entirely white.' The old man said to him, 'It is true of the outside, lord and father, but what about Him who sees the inside?' Wishing to test him the archbishop said to the priests, 'When Abba Moses comes into the sanctuary, drive him out, and go with him to hear what he says.' So the old man came in and they covered him with abuse, and drove him out, saying, 'Outside, black man!' Going out, he said to himself, 'They have acted rightly concerning you, for your skin is as black as ashes. You are not a man so why should you be allowed to meet men?'

5. Once the order was given at Scetis, 'Fast the week.' Now it happened that some brothers came from Egypt to visit Abba Moses and he cooked something for them. Seeing some smoke, the neighbours said to the ministers, 'Look, Moses has broken the commandment and has cooked something in his cell.' The ministers said, 'When he comes, we will speak to him ourselves.' When the Saturday came, since they knew Abba Moses' remarkable way of life, the
ministers said to him in front of everyone, 'O Abba Moses, you did not keep the commandment of men, but it was so that you might keep the commandment of God.'

6. A brother came to Scetis to visit Abba Moses and asked him for a word. The old man said to him, 'Go, sit in your cell, and your cell will teach you everything.'

7. Abba Moses said, 'The man who flees and lives in solitude is like a bunch of grapes ripened by the sun, but he who remains amongst men is like an unripe grape.'

8. The magistrate heard about Abba Moses one day and he went to Scetis to see him. They told the old man. He got up and fled to the marsh. Some people met him and said to him, 'Old man, tell us where the cell of Abba Moses is.' He said to them, 'What do you want with him? He is a fool.' So the magistrate went back to the church and said to the ministers, 'I heard people talk about Abba Moses and I went to see him, but there was an old man going into Egypt who crossed our path and we asked him where Abba Moses' cell is, and he said to us, "What do you want with him? He is a fool."' When they heard this, the clergy were offended and said, 'What kind of an old man was it who spoke like that about the holy man to you?' He said, 'An old man wearing old clothes, a big black man. 'They said, 'It was Abba Moses himself and it was in order not to meet you that he said that.' The magistrate went away greatly edified.

9. At Scetis Abba Moses used to say, 'If we keep the commandments of our Fathers, I will answer for it on God's behalf that the barbarians will not come here. But if we do not keep the commandments of God, this place will be devastated.'

10. One day, when the brethren were sitting beside him, he said to them, 'Look, the barbarians are coming to Scetis today; get up and flee.' They said to him, 'Abba, won't you flee too?' He said to them, 'As for me, I have been waiting for this day for many years, that the word of the Lord Christ may be fulfilled which says, "All who take the sword will perish by the sword."' (Matt. 26.52) They said to him, 'We will not flee either, but we will die with you.' He said to them: 'That is nothing to do with me; let everyone decide for himself whether he stops or not.' Now there were seven brothers there and he said to them, 'Look, the barbarians are drawing near to the door.' They came in and slew them. But
one fled and hid under the cover of a pile of rope and he saw seven crowns descending and crowning them.

11. A brother questioned Abba Moses saying, 'I see something in front of me and I am not able to grasp it.' The old man said to him, 'If you do not become dead like those who are in the tomb, you will not be able to grasp it.'

12. Abba Poemen said that a brother asked Abba Moses how someone could consider himself as dead towards his neighbour. The old man said to him, 'If a man does not think in his heart that he is already three days dead and in the tomb, he cannot attain this saying.'

50

ABBA SERAPION

1. One day Abba Serapion passed through an Egyptian village and there he saw a courtesan who stayed in her own cell. The old man said to her, 'Expect me this evening, for I should like to come and spend the night with you.' She replied, 'Very well, Abba.' She got ready and made the bed. When evening came, the old man came to see her and entered her cell and said to her, 'Have you got the bed ready?' She said, 'Yes, Abba.' Then he closed the door and said to her, 'Wait a bit, for we have a rule of prayer and I must fulfil that first.' So the old man began his prayers. He took the Psalter and at each psalm he said a prayer for the courtesan, begging God that she might be converted and saved, and God heard him. The woman stood trembling and praying beside the old man. When he had completed the whole Psalter the woman fell to the ground. Then the old man, beginning the Epistle, read a great deal from the apostle and completed his prayers. The woman was filled with compunction and understood that he had not come to see her to commit sin but to save her soul and she fell at his feet, saying, 'Abba, do me this kindness and take me where I can please God.' So the old man took her to a monastery of virgins and entrusted her to the Amma and he said, 'Take this sister and do not put any yoke or commandment on her as on the other sisters, but if she wants something, give it her and allow her to walk as she wishes.' After some days the courtesan said, 'I am a sinner; I wish to eat every second day.' A little later she said, 'I have committed many sins and I wish to eat every fourth day.' A few days later she besought the Amma saying, 'Since I have grieved God greatly by my sins, do me the kindness of putting me in a
cell and shutting it completely and giving me a little bread and some work through the window. 'The Amma did so and the woman pleased God all the rest of her life.

2. A brother said to Abba Serapion, 'Give me a word.' The old man said to him, 'What shall I say to you? You have taken the living of the widows and orphans and put it on your shelves.' For he saw them full of books.

3. Abba Serapion said, 'When the soldiers of the emperor are standing at attention, they cannot look to the right or left; it is the same for the man who stands before God and looks towards him in fear at all times; he cannot then fear anything from the enemy.'

4. A brother went to find Abba Serapion. According to his custom, the old man invited him to say a prayer. But the other, calling himself a sinner and unworthy of the monastic habit, did not obey. Next Abba Serapion wanted to wash his feet, but using the same words again, the visitor prevented him. Then Abba Serapion made him eat and he began to eat with him. Then he admonished him saying, 'My son, if you want to make progress stay in your cell and pay attention to yourself and your manual work; going out is not so profitable for you as remaining at home.' When he heard these words the visitor was offended and his expression changed so much that the old man could not but notice it. So he said to him, 'Up to now you have called yourself a sinner and accused yourself of being unworthy to live, but when I admonished you lovingly, you were extremely put out. If you want to be humble, learn to bear generously what others unfairly inflict upon you and do not harbour empty words in your heart.' Hearing this, the brother asked the old man's forgiveness and went away greatly edified.

Augustine on God and Free Will:
The "Psychological" Proof For the Existence of God
Developed By Saint Augustine

BY PATRICK J. KREMER, S.J.
1948

INTRODUCTION
The best-known proofs for the existence of God are the classic Quinque Viae, most carefully developed by St. Thomas Aquinas. However, these proofs do not represent the only efforts of thinkers to arrive at so important a fact. The proof from the universal consent of mankind found wide favor among the Fathers of the Church. St. Anselm attempted an approach through our concept of God. Other men, philosophers and theologians, have made other efforts. It is our purpose in this paper to discuss one such effort. We seek to record, to appreciate, and to criticize what may be called the psychological proof for the existence of God advanced by St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.

It is true that the elements of all the classic proofs are to be found in St. Augustine. It is true that he attached special importance to the proof from the consent of the human race. But the argument which he developed most fully and most carefully is this psychological proof. We may profitably
study this argument, not only because it may be a Sixth Way to prove God's existence, but because, as cayre says, "The idea of God is the central point in Augustine's thought." IExamining this argument, we may learn much of the method and the thought of this great Doctor. For, although he considered a proof for God's existence one of the easiest of tasks, and although he thought that those who are ignorant of God's existence must be very few in number; nevertheless, he systematically worked out this proof from reason. our task, then, will be to record as faithfully as possible the route taken by st. Augustine. First, we will trace out the argument as it appears in fullest form, in the De Libera Arbitrio.

Then we will follow the same itinerary in the De Vera Religione. And yet again we will attempt to set down the whole proof with texts drawn also from other works than these two. This task accomplished, we will form an opinion with regard to the principle on which the proof is based. We will seek to answer the questions: Is it ontological? Does it have an essential connection with st. Augustine's doctrine ..... 

THE PROOF IN THE DE LIBERO ARBITRIO
The De Libero Arbitrio was written in Rome and Africa between the years 388 and 395. It is done in dialogue form: Augustine discusses the question of evil, its nature and particularly its source, with Evodius, a member of his household who later became Bishop of Uzala. The discussion is rather extended. Although the argument we are handling occurs in the second book, it seems well to summarize the first book, so as to give something of the context, for this procedure will aid the understanding of the proof.

Evodius introduces the question by asking whether God is the author of evil. Augustine points out the distinction between the evil that one does and the evil that one suffers; and adds the comment that God, since He is just, I cannot be the author of the former type. Moreover, since evil-doers are 1 Aurelius Augustinus, De Libero Arbitrio, editor J.P. Migne, Garnier Fratres, PariB; 1877, Book I, Chapter 1, Number 1; Patrologiae Latinae Cursus Completus, Tome 32, Column 1222: 11 • si Deum justum fatemur, nam et fioc negare sacrilegium est • " All references to Augustine's works will be to this edition (PL).
punished by the just God, they must be the authors of their own evil deeds.

How then, asks Evodius, do,es man learn to commit evil deeds? Augustine answers that man does not learn this from any evil teacher. "For if he is evil, he is not a teacher; if he is a teacher, he is not evil. 11 2 The question, therefore, remains: Whence does it come about that we should do evil? Augustine admits that this is a knotty problem, since God is the author of all things that exist and yet cannot be the author of sin. He points out some of God's perfections: His goodness, His omnipotence, His creative activity. This he does to encourage Evodius to pursue the inquiry. "For God will be present and will make us understand what we have believed. 11 3 This method of calling upon God to help the investigation and this praise of God should be underlined. It is a method typical of st. Augustine, and it will recur in the second book, where the proof for the existence of God begins. Furthermore, one should note the fact that Augustine wants to understand what he believes by faith; that is, he wants to proceed by way of reason, taking his starting point from that which he believes by faith. This purpose he repeats in the next chapter:

"But now we are striving to know by understanding and to hold firmly that which we have taken on faith."4 Again in the fourth chapter he recalls to Evodius' mind their desire to investigate the problem by reason: "But you must recall that we have undertaken to understand that which we believe."5 This reminder is constantly on St. Augustine's lips. He is endeavoring to make a philosophical investigation. The remainder of the first book need not delay us long. Taking up the question of the source of evil, Augustine says that it seems to come from libido or cupiditas. He then mulls over some objections: first, whether killing out of fear for one's own life is inspired by cupidity (and this leads to a discussion of culpable cupidity); secondly, whether the homicide permitted by law, as in a just war or to defend one's virtue or to protect one's life against an unjust attacker,
can be traced to cupidity. Evodius' reply includes a distinction between man-made law and the divine law.

This distinction Augustine takes up for the purpose of showing that

4 Ibid., I, 3, 6; PL 32, 1225: "Sed nunc molimur id quod in 1laem recepimus, etiam intelligendo scire ac tenere ffirmissimum."

5 Ibid., I, 4, 10; PL 02, 1226: "Sed meminisse te oportet id mmc a nobis susceptum, ut intelligamus quod credimus.

man-made law is temporal and mutable, whereas the divine law is eternal and immutable and the norm according to which manmade laws are to be judged.6 Since the divine law states that it is proper that all things be well-ordered, man must be ordered properly in himself. But the highest faculty in man is his reason. Therefore he is well-ordered in himself if everything in him is subject to reason. This right order is true wisdom; lack of it marks the foolish man.

st. Augustine has now begun to speak more directly of his principal subject, free will. He continues. No mind can be forced to the service of cupidity, because cupidity of itself is not stronger than the mind. Consequently, the man who has forsaken wisdom to serve his cupidity is justly punished. He has indulged his own will. F~s punishment here consists in the errors, wanderings, and stupid decisions into which he falls. Moreover, he rightly suffers the loss of eternal life, because he has willingly taken up the service of cupidity which he could have refused.

This idea Augustine repeats again and again in chapters 12-15 of the first book, in which he answers objections, amplifies and illustrates his proof, points out some of its consequences. In chapter 16 he presents a summary of the argument given:

Quocirca licet nunc animadvertere et considerare, utrum sit aliud male facere, quam neglectis rebus aeternis, quibus per seipsam mens fruitur, et per seipsam percipi t, et quas amana ami-ttere non potest, temporalia et quae per corpus hominis partem vilissimam. sentiuntur, et numquam esse certa possunt, quasi magna et miranda sectari.7

Evodius agrees that they have indeed discovered what evil is and whence it comes; namely from man's free will. He
is, however, disturbed by the further problem of why God gave man free will, since man would not sin if he were not free.

Sed quaero utrum ipsum liberum arbitrium quo peccandi facultatem habere convincimur, oportuerit nobis dari ab eo qui non fecit. Videmur enim non fuisse peccaturi, si isto careremus; et metuandum est ne hoc modo Deus etiam malefactorum nostrorum auctor existimetur.

Augustine promises to take up, with God's help, the problems of whether God gave us our free will and whether He ought to have done so; but puts them off until another time. True to his word, he does resume the discussion in the second book of the De Libero Arbitrio, the book with which we are really concerned, inasmuch as it contains the argument we are examining.

Evodius first returns to the attack by asking why God gave man free will, since, if man did not possess this faculty, he could not sin. In answer, Augustine elicits the fact that God made us what we are. But it is also true that God would not give us anything evil, anything we ought not have. And yet, as we have seen, it is by means of this free will of ours that we sin; and we know (on authority) that we are justly punished for our sins. Augustine then gives the preliminary response that God, by punishing man for sin, indicates that man used his free will for another reason than that for which it was given. Hence he argues that the reason for which it was given is that man might live properly. Hence too, free will is a good and it is fitting that God give it to man.

Evodius thereupon objects. If God gave man free will that he might live properly, why can it be turned aside to evil? Augustine replies that, if it is uncertain whether or not God gave us this gift, we must seek to determine whether it is a good gift: if it is, it certainly came from Him; if not, it certainly did not come from Him. But, says Evodius, although I know with unshakable faith that God gave us this gift; nevertheless, since by reason I am not certain that it is a good gift, I am also uncertain by reason that God gave it.

Ah, says Augustine, let us then begin with what we hold for certain. Are you certain that God exists? Evodius
answers that he is certain with the certainty of faith. However, he reminds Augustine of their original purpose: "But now we seek to know and to understand that which we believe." Thereupon Augustine, agreeing that believing and understanding are two different things, launches forth on his famous proof for the existence of God. First, however, he demands faith in God's existence, for "no one becomes capable of finding God, unless he first believe what he is afterwards to know." This demand is, in reality, a request for good will on the part of the listener or reader, as can be seen from a reading of the entire chapter.

Before Augustine plunges into the problem with which we are here concerned, he pauses for one important moment. He proves to Evodius, from the very fact of his existence, that the human mind is capable of attaining truth. Even if Evodius doubts this ability, he knows for certain that he exists. For one cannot doubt unless he exists. This insistence upon so fundamental a fact may be due to St. Augustine's previous acquaintance with the Manichaeans, who said that man could know nothing for certain. At any rate, it is a point of capital importance to be made at the outset of a proof from reason.

continuing his plan of taking a start from that which is held for certain, Augustine elicits from Evodius the facts that Evodius is, that he is alive, and that he has understanding. Together they arrive at the conclusion that understanding is the highest of these three. "Tenemus etiam id esse in his tribus praestantius, quod homo cum duobus caeteris habet, id est intelligere, quod habentem sequitur et esse et vivere."

The next step is to show--or rather merely to get Evodius' consent--that man has five senses, each of which has its own proper object, some of which have also a common object. However, in addition to these external senses, there is a certain interior sense whose function it is to gather the data brought in through the external senses in such a way that the possessor seeks what is good for itself and avoids
what may harm it.12 Although this interior sense is superior to the exterior senses,13 it is not the reason, since it is clear that brutes also possess it. That it is superior to the external senses is shown by the fact that, whereas no exterior sense can be aware of itself, the interior sense both senses corporeal objects by means of the exterior senses and also is aware of the sense itself. For if it did not have this power, if it did not sense the difference, for example, between seeing and not seeing, how would it control the eye? Again, if it were not aware of its own life, how would it flee from what is harmful to that life? All this, however, can be explained on the sense level.14

Of course a difficulty at once arises: if all this can be explained on the sense level, how can the interior sense be called superior to the exterior senses? Here Augustine, recognizing the difficulty, pauses to recapitulate, to give his argument in a different way, and to lay down a principle which is of the first importance in his proof.

It is true that both the exterior senses and the interior sense must be placed in the class of things which exist and are alive. It is also true that this interior sense is not reason, for it does not understand. Can we say, then, that it is superior to the exterior senses in that it has these senses as its object? This is not a criterion, since the object of sense--or of intelligence, for that matter--is not, simply because it is the object, inferior to the subject. What, then, can our criterion be? It is this. Just as the bodily senses in some way (quodamodo) "judge" their object, so the interior sense "judges" and "advises" the exterior senses, recognizing and seeking what they need, directing them to action. Since that which judges about something is superior to that which is judged, the interior sense excels the exterior senses. This important principle is stated clearly in the last sentence of the following significant quotation.

Quia moderatorem et judicem querndam hujus ~he exterior sens~ illum [interior sense~ esse cognosce. Nam et si quid huic1:1n officio defuerit, ille tamquam debitum a ministro flagitat, sicut paulo ante disputatum est~ Non enim se videre, aut non
vider-e sensus oculi videt, et quia
non videt, non potest quid sibi
desit, aut quid satis sit judicare;
sed ille interior, quo a&nonetur et
anima bestiae aperire oculum clausum,
et quod deesse sentit implore. Nulli
autem dubium est eum qui judicat, eo
de quo judicat esse meliorem.15
15 Ibid., II, 5, 12; PL 32, 1247.
Making use of the principle, Augustine ascends higher
in the hierarchy of beings. Reason in man is clearly seen to
be above external corporeal objects, the exterior senses, and
the interior sense. For as the exterior sense in some way
judges its object, and as the interior sense in some way judges
the exterior senses, so reason in the strictest sense judges
all these things. In fact, this principle gives justification
to the original hierarchy which Augustine and Evodius had
employed, namely, "vivere, intelligere; because living
beings judge non-living beings and intelligent beings judge
irrational beings, both living and non-living. Hereupon, they
come to the conclusion that nothing in man is superior to
reason.16
Now that this point has been philosophically established
to Evodius' satisfaction, Augustine rather surprisingly asks
whether Evodius will be willing to admit that God exists if
only it is proved to him that something exists superior to
man's intellect. Evodius is at first unwilling to grant this;
for, he says, this being might still be inferior to God.
Augustine then asks if Evodius is willing to admit that an
external and immutable being--if such can be proved to exist
16 Ibid., II, 6, 13; PL 32, 1248: "A. Quare vide, obsecro,
ultrim aliquid invenire possis, quod sit in natura hominis
ratione sublimius. E. Nihil omnino melius video."
above our intellects--is God, for corporeal beings and the
senses and reason itself are all subject to change. Evodius
grants this. Then Augustine promises to demonstrate that an
eternal, immutable being does exist above our intellect and
that either this being is God, or, if some being is superior,
this latter is God. In any case, once he has shown that this
being superior to our intellects does exist, he will have shown
that God exists. This will be the course the remainder of
the proof will take.
A pause here is in order that three important statements
may be given proper attention. The first is that the principle
to be used in determining one being's superiority to another
is that that which judges is superior to that about which it
judges. The second is the insistence upon God's immutability.
"Sed, quaeso te, si non inveneris esse aliquid supra nostram
rationem, nisi quod aeternum et incommutabile est, dubitabisne
hunc Deum dicere. The third is, again, that the proof is
to proceed by way of reason, that is, it is to be philosophical.
Quae si nullo adhibito corporis instrumento,
neque per tactum, neque per gustatum,
Ibid., II, 6, 14; PL 32, 1248: 11Bene habet, nam mihi satis
err! ostendere esse aliquid hujusmodi, quod aut fateberis
Deum esse, aut si aliquid supra est, eum ips~ Deum esse
concedes. Quare sive supra sit aliquid, sive non sit,
manifestum erit Deum esse, cum ego, quod promisi, esse supra
rationem, eodem ipso adjuvants monstravero." ~, II, 6, 14; PL 32, 1248.
neque per olfactum, neque per aures, neque
per oculos, neque per ullum sensum se
inferiorem, sed per seipsam [ratio] cerni t
aeternum aliquid-et incommutabile, simul
et seipsam inferiorem, et illum oportet Deum
suum esse fateatur.19
The next step in the proof for the existence of God is
begun by an analogy. Our senses and our reason belong to us
alone; we do not all share, for example, in one great sense of
hearing. Augustine's sense of hearing is distinct from that
of Evodius. However, the objects of sense are, in varying
degrees, the common property of all. For, although two men
tasting the same honey cannot taste the identically same portio
of that honey; nevertheless, the same sound can at the same
time be heard by all in its vicinity. Some objects of sense,
therefore, are not changed by being perceived by the senses;
hence, they do not belong to the nature of the sense but are
rather common property.
Proprium ergo et quasi privatum intelligendum
est, quod unicuique nostrum soli est, et
quod in se solus sentit, quod ad suam naturam
pertinet: commune autem et quasi publicum,
quod ab omnibus sentientibus nulla sui
corruptione atque commutatlonem sentitur.20
The point of the analogy is this: just as there are some
objects which can, while remaining unchanged in themselves,
19 Ibid., II, 6, 14; PL 32, 1248. Italics mine.
20 Ibid., II, 7, 19; PL 32, 1251.
be perceived by the senses, and which are common to all sentient beings perceiving them; so there will be an object or objects of the reason which can be perceived by all intelligent beings and yet be in no wise changed by the fact that they are intellectually perceived.

Is there some being which every intelligent being apprehends by his reason alone and which, whether apprehended or not, remains one and unchangeable? One such being is number. Since number is built up of unity, it cannot be perceived by the senses. For the senses perceive only bodies, all of which are made up of innumerable parts. Moreover, the laws of number are eternally true and immutable; for example, "• quotus quisque numerus est ab ipso principio, totus post illum sit duplus ejus." Finally, these laws are common to all who have understanding, but remain true whether or not they are rationally apprehended. Hence, we have established the fact that number is one of the kind of being we are seeking.

It occurs to Augustine that number and wisdom are joined together in Ecclesiasticus: "Circuivi ego et cor meum, ut 21 ibid., II, 8, 23; PL 32, 1253.
22 f.51"Q., II, 8, 24; PL 32, 1253: "His et talibus multis documentis coguntur fateri, quibus disputantibus Deus donavit ingenium, et pertinacia caliginum non obducit, rationem veritatemque numerorum et ad sensus corporis non pertinere, et invertibilem sinceramque consistere, et omnibus ratiocinantibus ad videndum eadem communem."

Hence he investigates wisdom to determine whether or not it too is the kind of being he is trying to find above the intellect.

In the first place he wants to know if wisdom is common to all men. It would seem not, says Evodius, for different men consider themselves wise while engaging in very different enterprises: the military art, business, philosophy, etc. Augustine points out that wisdom is the truth in which the supreme Good is perceived and grasped. 23 For all men seek what appears to them as good in all that they do, even though they are mistaken in regard to what actually is good. But the more men err in this respect, the less wise they are; for they go farther from the truth in which the Supreme Good is perceived and grasped. They are wise in proportion as they approach the Supreme Good which gives real happiness. 24 Hence, as all men wish to be happy, all have some notion of wisdom. Can we now say that one wisdom is common to all
rational beings, or are there as many wisps as there are intellects? Evodius, still bothered by the fact that different
23 Ibid., II, 9, 26; PL 32, 1254: "Num aliam putas esse sapientiam nisi veritatem, in qua cernitur et tenetur summum bonum?
"Et quanto magis in via vitae quis errat, tanto minus sapit. Tanto enim magis longe est a veritate, in qua cernitur et tenetur summum bonum."

men pursue different objects as their Supreme Good, is not yet convinced that there is one wisdom; nor does the analogy with the sun, in whose light are seen many different objects, completely win him over.

Accordingly, Augustine gives several examples to prove his argument. He runs through several truths, several rules of wisdom, upon which ~11 men agree: that the incorruptible is to be preferred to the corruptible, that the eternal is to be preferred to the temporal, that like things should be compared with like. With each new example, he asks: "These truths go to make up wisdom and are held by all men, aren't they?" To each question Evodius is forced logically to answer: "Prorsus sine dubio," "Certissimum est," or "Manifestissime." Hence it is clear that, just as the true and unchangeable rules of number are common to all men, so too there are true and unchangeable rules of wisdom common to all.25

To Evodius' inquiry whether or not wisdom and number are the same thing, Augustine devotes some time. He says that it 25 Ibid., II, 10, 29; PL 32, 1257: "Quam ergo verae atque incommutabiles sunt regulae numerorum, quorum rationem atque veritatem incommutabiliter atque communiter omnibus eam cernentibus, praesto esse dixisti; tam sunt verae atque incommutabiles regulae sapientiae, de quibus paucis nunc singillatim interrogatus respondisti esse veras atque manifestas, easque omnibus qui haec intueri valent, communes ad contemplandum adesse concedis."

seems that they are different in that, while number is found in all things, true wisdom is found only in some men. But, he concludes, be that as it may, the point to seize is that both are incontrovertibly true.

Having, then, shown that wisdom is common to all men, Augustine must show that it is immutable and that it is superior to our minds. It is one and common to all intelligent beings, as we have shown, just as a sound is common to all who are present to hear it. It is unchangeable, as can best be seen by some examples: eternal things always were, are, and always
will be superior to temporal; seven plus three always did make, do make, and always make ten. The mind also gives recognition to this fact by immediately accepting such truths rather than judging them. Finally, the truth which is wisdom is superior to our minds. It is not inferior, since we do not judge it, saying that it ought to be thus and thus; but we judge according to it, using it as a norm. But if it were inferior we would judge about it, not according to it. It is not equal to our minds, since it is immutable, whereas our minds are forever changing. Indeed, we even judge our own minds according to the norm of this truth. It remains, therefore, that this truth, this wisdom, is superior to our minds. Consequently we see that above our intellects there are at least number and wisdom, both of which are eternal and immutable. Instead of completing his proof immediately, Augustine first devotes some time to the praise of wisdom. He exhorts Evodius to rejoice in the truth which alone suffices for beatitude, to rejoice in it as other men rejoice in lesser goods. For this truth alone can be possessed securely at all times and in all places; it alone can be grasped wholly by many men at the same time. In a beautiful passage, reminiscent of Cicero's praise of the liberal arts in his Pro Arabia 29, Augustine sings the praises of this truth.

At illa veritatis et sapientiae pulchritudo tantum adsit perseverans voluntas fruendi.

28 Ibid., "Si autem esset aequalis mentibus nostris haec veritas, mutabilis etiam ipsa esset. Mentes enim nostrae aliquando earn plus vident, aliquando minus, et ex hoc fatentur se esse mutabiles: cum illa in se manens nee proficiat cum plus a nobis videtur, nee deficiat cum minus, sed integra et incorrupta, et converses laetificet lumine, et aversos punit caecitate. Quid, quod etiam de ipsis mentibus nostris secundum illam judicamus, cum de illa nullo modo judicare possimus-...

29 Marcus Tullius Cicero, Oratio pro Arabia: "Nam ceterae neque temporum sunt neque aetatum omnium neque locorum; at haec studia adulescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant,
This passage is included, not because of its literary beauty (although that would be sufficient to justify the insertion), but because it aptly illustrates St. Augustine's affective method. Augustine continually reaches out to grasp with his will that which he has apprehended by his intellect. True, he has insisted throughout the ~ Libero Arbitrio that he is proceeding by way of the reason--and so he is. However, at the same time he is anxious to seize and possess with his will the eternal truth at which his reason has arrived. His philosophizing has a practical purpose too.

To return to the argument itself, we have only to see how St. Augustine brings it to its conclusion. This he does very briefly. He reminds Evodius that the latter had granted that God's existence would be proved if it were shown at length that some being exists above our intellects, provided that no being is superior to this latter. Augustine says that he has, by demonstrating that some being does exist above our intellects, already proved that God exists; for either this being is itself God, or, if some still higher being exists, this latter is God. In any case, God exists. This they knew by faith; now they know it by reason also. Thus is the proof concluded.

It appears unnecessary to give what follows in the ~ Libero Arbitrio. What preceded seemed important in order that we might see in what context the argument was set. But to give,
even briefly, all that follows would draw us away from our main point. Suffice it, therefore, to say that Augustine proves that free will is a good thing and comes from God, that he answers the difficulty about the will's being able to be turned to evil, and that he discusses the nature of evil.32 The course that the proof has taken may now be given briefly. Beginning with a demand for faith in God's existence, which is really an assurance of good will, Augustine proceeds by way of reason to prove that God exists. After he has

31 Ibid., II, 15, 39; PL 32, 1262: "Quod non jam solum indubitatum, quantum arbitror, fide retinemus, sed etiam certa, quamvis adhuc tenuissima, forma cognitionis attingimus."

32 For a well-developed summary of the entire three books of the De Libero Arbitrio, see Vernon J. Bourke, Ph.D., Augustine's Quest of Wisdom, Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1945, 90=101.

proved the aptitude of the mind for truth, he takes his start from certain, evident facts: that Evodius is, that he is alive, that he has understanding. Then he sets up a hierarchy of beings in order to see if God exists at the top of this scale. First, there are non-living corporeal beings; then in sentient beings the exterior senses, above which is an interior sense; then in man comes reason, man's highest faculty. If above man's reason there is some immutable and eternal being, says Augustine, then God exists. Employing the principle he has used all along (id quod judicat eo de quo judicat est melius), he shows that number and wisdom are superior to man's reason. Whether or not these two are distinct is not here pertinent. The important point is that they exist, that they are common to all men, that they are immutable, and that they are superior to man's reason. Therefore, since some such thing exists above our minds, God exists. For God is either this thing, or, if there is another still higher, then the latter is God. In any case, God exists.

This is the proof as St. Augustine presents it in his De Libero Arbitrio.33 It must be admitted that it seems unfinished and that it gives rise, if not to objections, at least to demands for a fuller explanation. It is evident that 33 In the Libri Retractationum nothing is said which affects the proof. ~ it is sinuous and discursive. These questions, however, will be taken up in later sections of this paper.

~...~

CHAPTER II
THE PROOF, IN THE DE VERA RELIGIOE
In this section st. Augustine’s proof for the existence of God will be taken as it stands in the De Vera Religione and will be treated in much the same manner as was that contained in the De Libero Arbitrio. That is, the thought which Augustine developed will be stated as faithfully and accurately as we can present it, with little added. No criticism of the argument will be given here, no judgment concerning its validity and only that comment which seems necessary in calling attention to some particularly significant point. Fewer references to the text are required in this section, since the argument in this work is quite brief and compact.

The De Vera Religione was written at Tagaste between 389 and 391, and the work is addressed to Romanianus, the kindly gentleman whose generosity had made it possible for the young Augustine to continue his studies at Carthage after his father's death. The purpose of the treatise is to present some of the most fundamental truths of Catholicism and at the same time to refute the Manichaeans; in fact, it is the last of those five works of Augustine which Paulinus of Nola referred to as the Pentateuchum contra Manichaeos. It seems necessary here, not to present the whole argument which precedes the proof for the existence of God, but merely to point out some of the statements which are pertinent to our later discussion. The first of these statements is the reiterated insistence upon the inutility of God, in distinction to all else which is mutable.

Quamobrem sit tibi manifestum atque perceptum, nullum errorem in religione esse potuisse, si anima pro Deo suo non coleret animam, aut corpus, aut phantasmata sua, aut horum aliqua duo conjuncta, aut certe simul omnia: sed in hac vita societati generis humani sine dolo temporaliter congruens, aeterna meditaretur, unum Deum colens; qui nisi permaneret incommutabilis, nulla mutabilis natura remaneret. Mutari autem animam posse, non quidem localiter, sed tamen temporaliter, suis affectionibus quisque cognoscit. Corpus vero et temporibus et locis
esse mutabile, cuivis advertere
facile est. Phantasmata porro
nibil sunt aliud quam de specie
corporis corporeo sensu attracta
figmenta: quae memoriae mandare ut
accepta aunt, vel partiri, vel
multiplicare, vel contrahere, vel
distendere, vel ordinare, vel perturbare,
vel quolibet modo figurare cogitando
facillimum est, sed cum verum
quae itur, cavere et vitare difficile.2
1 Bourke, Augustine's Quest of Wisdom, 117-121, contains an excellent pr~cis of the whOTe work.
2 De Vera Religione, 10, 18; PL 34, 130.
~ --------~ And it is to this attribute of God that Augustine constantly
appeals in his proof.

The second notable point is Augustine's discussion of
the respective places of reason and of authority. In chapters
24-28, inclusive, he treats of authority, even showing that
reason must be used to establish the validity of authority.
Then, in chapter 29, where he begins the proof for the existence
of God, he shows how man is led to God by reason.
Et quoniam de auctoritatis beneficentia,
quantmn in praesentia satis visum est,
locuti sumus; videamus quatenus ratio
possit progradire a visibilibus ad
invisibilia, et a temporalibus ad
aeterna conscendens.3
He begins the process by noting that every living
substance is to be set above every non-living substance. But
there is a hierarchy even among living substances, for that
power is outstanding in the human soul, not by which it senses
sensible things, but by which it forms judgments about sensible
things. Brutes may have more acute sense perceptions than
humans; but they cannot judge what the senses bring to them,
whereas we can judge even the senses themselves. And it is
clear that the one judging is more excellent than the thing
about which the judgment is made.4 Hence, as sensitive life
3 Ibid., 29, 53; PL 34, 145.
4 IbiO., 29, 53; PL 34, 145: " ••• praestantiorem esse judicantem
quam illa rea est de qua judicatur."
is higher than mere inanimate existence, so is rational life
higher than both.
This would make our rational nature the highest of natures, if it judges according to itself; that is, if it is itself the final norm for judgment. However, the reason is mutable, now knowing more, now less, judging better the more it participates in science or wisdom. Therefore, we must look into this science or wisdom—not that gained by sensible experience, but that gained by reasoning. For a certain lack of harmony in construction, say, may offend our senses, while a symmetrical arrangement pleases them. Why is this? Is it merely due to experience? No, it cannot be. For it is harmony in beautiful objects which gives us pleasure. This harmony depends upon unity, equality, a gradation of unlike parts. However, since bodies are not simply one, this unity cannot be seen by bodily eyes nor by any sense. It can be perceived by the mind alone. We would not seek equality in bodies nor be able to judge that a corporeal object is imperfect, if the mind could not see what is perfect and so be able to compare and to judge.

Now all sensibly beautiful objects are changeable in space and time; but the unity and equality, according to which the mind judges these objects, is independent of space and time. For according to this unity and equality we judge all things, whatever their location in space and time: a round cartwheel or a round vase or a round coin. Equal years, equal months, equal days—all are judged "by the one identical and unchangeable equality." Moreover, since greater and smaller figures or motions are judged according to the same law of similarity or equality, this law is greater potentially than all these things. In space of place or time, however, it is neither greater nor smaller: not greater, for then we could not judge lesser things according to the whole law; not smaller, for then we could not judge greater things by it. Hence this law is entirely immutable. Hence too we see that the mutable human mind does not judge according to itself, but according to this law. Therefore, there is something above the human mind: an unchangeable law, which is called truth.

So far, St. Augustine has shown that sensitive life is above inanimate creation; that rational life is above sensitive life; that there is an unchangeable law, called truth, above
The reason for this is that the mind, which does not judge of bodies according to itself, must acknowledge the superiority of that nature about which it cannot judge, but according to which it judges. Since my mind recognizes equality, I can say why similar parts of any body ought to correspond to one another. Accordingly I judge that those things are better in so far as they are closer to the law which I see mentally. But I cannot say why these things which I understand ought to be as they are. Why these things please us and why we love them, we cannot say.

As we judge inferior beings according to the truth, so only the Truth judges us. Even the Father judges according to this standard of truth; "non enim minor est quam ipse." According to the same law of truth does the Son judge men.

In this He acts much the same as men, who judge of temporal laws when they make them; but once these laws have been established, a judge does not judge about these laws, but according to them. Moreover, good men consult the eternal law, about which they cannot judge, when they decide what must be ordered or forbidden. To understand the difference, let it be noted that, when we cognize something, it suffices to see that that thing is such or such; but, when we judge, we add that it
ought to be such or such.

Actually the argument was completed when Augustine said that the immutable nature above reason is God Himself. Augustine adds an explanation of the difference between judging about something and judging according to it. He does this, it would seem, to bring out the fact that the eternal, immutable truth above our minds is God Himself. However, this fact does not seem really to be proved here. God is truth, but we do not use Him directly as a norm for judging. Perhaps St. Augustine here would say that God is the only sufficient reason for the truth existing above our intellects. Perhaps he confuses the abstracted truths which we know with the subsistent Truth which is God. He certainly proceeds quickly and without explanation from the rule of truth above our intellects to the existence of God. Since it is the purpose of succeeding chapters to discuss the principle on which the argument is based and the validity of the proof, in this place the procedure which St. Augustine employed is simply set down.

The course, then, that the argument takes is this: sensitive creatures are higher in the scale of being than inanimate things; rational beings are higher than irrational; but above the rational soul is the truth, according to which the soul judges, but about which it cannot judge. This eternal, immutable truth is God Himself. About this statement of the argument certain features may be noted. First the argument is philosophical, given in answer to the question: How can the reason lead us to God? Second, the procedure is up the scale of being to that which is immutable. Third, the approach is through the soul, the soul's realization that there is something superior to itself. Fourth, the last step—that the immutable Truth is God—is brief, quick, and by no means immediately evident. It seems that some previous knowledge of God is required, at least the vulgar notion of Him. Finally, the principle used to determine the superiority of one being to another is the same as that used in the Q! Libero Arbitrio; namely, that that which judges about another is superior to that about which it judges. The chapters of the De Vera Religione which follow are not pertinent to our present argument, and so may be dismissed without comment here.
CHAPTER III
COMPLETE SYNTHESIS 01’1 THE PROOF
In this section, the argument will be put together in its fullest form. Although it is nowhere presented by St. Augustine more completely than in the De Libero Arbitrio, it will help to gather the various presentations so as to form one complete statement of it. Hence, various texts--drawn from De Vera Religione, De Libero Arbitrio, De Diversis Quaestionibus L~XXIII, Confessiones, De Ordine-- will be adduced in order. It is hoped thus to round out our presentation of the argument in St. Augustine himself.
The great Bishop regularly begins his argument from a consideration of the different grades of being, showing in what way one is higher than another. His purpose is to arrive 1 Charles Boyer, S.J., Essais sur la Doctrine de Saint Augustin, Gabriel Beauchesne-et ~s Fils, Paris, 1932, 62:
"L'ascension tout entiere avec tous ses-degres, que saint Augustin reprend si souvent d'une fagon vraiment identique, forme un unique tout, une seule demonstration. Le sensible, le sens, la raison, la verite qui est au-dessus de la raison, voila les etapes necessaires de l'itin~raire, quand il est Drace avec le souci d'etre complet."

at God at the summit of all beings.2 Some beings merely exist, some have life, some have intelligence. Living beings are higher than those merely existing, since they have the two perfections of existence arid life. 3 Rational beings are higher in the scale, since they have intelligence as well as existence and life.

Further to prove this gradation, St. Augustine sometimes even goes through the exterior senses and the interior sense, which so gathers the data brought in through the exterior senses that its possessor seeks what is good for itself and avoids what is harmful. The interior sense is superior to the exterior senses, since it both senses corporeal things and also is aware of the sense itself. However, since all this activity is on the sense level, how can it truly be said that the interior sense is superior? It is superior ultimately, not because it has the exterior senses as its object, but because it in some~ way "judges" them, recognizing what they need and 2 Let it be noted again, however, that in the De Libero
Arbitrio he first demonstrates the aptitude 0? the mind
for truth.
3 De Vera Religione, 29, 52.; PL 34, 145.; "Quaelibet namque Viva substantia cuilibet non vivae substantiae, naturae lege praeponitur."
4 De Libero Arbitrio, II, 3, 7; PL 32, 1243-4: "Quia cum tria Sunt haec, esse, vivere, intelligere; et lapis est, et pecus vivit, nee tamen lapidem puto vivere, aut pecus intelligere; qui autem intelligit, eum et esse et vivere, certissimum est; quare non dubito id excellentius judicare, cui omnia tria insunt, quam id cui unum vel duo desit."

directing them to action. The important principle used here and to be used again is often reiterated: "Nulli autem dubium est eum qui judicat, eo de quo judicat esse meliorem."5 Again, fiIam vero illud videre facillimum est, praestantiorem esse judicantem, quam illa res est de qua judicatur."6 And it is made use of in the statement: "Mens enim humana de visibilibus judicans, potest agnoscere omnibus visibilibus seipsam esse meliorem."

Up to this point, St. Augustine has proved the superiority of sentient life to inanimate creation, and, among the senses, the superiority of the interior to the exterior. He then pushes the argument further, in order to demonstrate that there is something in man higher even than the interior sense. Applying the principle just stated, we see that reason is higher than anything else in man.8 The proof of this is: "Non solum autem rationalis vita de sensibilibus, sed de ipsis quoque sensibus judicat."9

Therefore, the best part of man, that which is highest in the scale of being, is human reason. Why is St. Augustine so anxious to establish this fact? The reason is that he wishes to prove that, if there exists a reality superior to the human reason, then God exists. Unless he had demonstrated that reason is superior to all other created beings, his argument could not proceed; for evidently he begins with a notion of God as the supreme being. Boyer puts the argument in a neat syllogism10 which brings out the point well. He says:

9 De Vera Religione, 29, 53; PL 34, 145.
10 Ibid., II, 5, 12; PL 32, 1247.
S'il est quelque chose au dessus de
notre raison, Dieu existe. Or il est
quelque chose au dessus de notre
raison. Done, Dieu existe.
As was noted in the presentation of the argument in the
De Libero Arbitrio, the apodosis of the major comes upon us
with something of a surprise. To explain it we may say that
the point of the preceding proof is not merely to show that
there is nothing above the reason in man, but to lead up to the
fact that there is something above the reason outside man.
However, merely to prove the existence of a reality outside man
10 It is helpful to reduce St. Augustine's argument to
syllogistic form, but it must be noted that the scholastic
brevity is not his. L. de Mondadon, "De la Connaissance
de Soi-m~me Ja. la Connaissance de Dieu, 11 in Recherches de
Science Religieuse, Paris, 1913, 148, gives this warningwhile commenting on Portalie's precis
of the argument:
11 Incontestablement, ce syllogisme a le merite de dire les
d chases ' 1 i d" / 'une fagon a a fo s courte, eggee et claire,
mais je'ne surprendrai personne en ajoutant que cette vive
et seche allure ne se retrouve pas dans saint Augustin."
11 Charles Boyer, S.J., L'Idee de Verite dans la Philosophie
de Saint Augustin, Gabriel Beauchesne, PariB; 1920, 50.
---and superior to man's reason, is not necessarily to attain to
God. Consequently, Augustine proceeds through the reason for
a very definite purpose. He wishes to find there something
which will lead him to God. This thing is truth.
Gilson describes this procedure of St. Augustine in
much the same way as we have given it:
Toute notre recherche, en effet, tend
vers un ~tre necessaire, irr~uable,
 eternal, tel qu'il n'en existe pas
de plus grand et qui par consequent
soit Dieu. Il ne suffit done pas de
depasser l'homme pour atteindre un
tel ~tre, mais il faut depasser en
l'homrae quelque chose de tel que ce
qui se trouve au dela ne puisse etre
que Dieu. Or une seule voie possible
s'ouvre devant une recherche ainsi
engaggee: cella qui passe par la verite.
12 How does the fact that the intellect possesses truth lead
us to God? It is due to the character of truth, its eternity
and immutability. Augustine evidently pre-supposes a common
notion of God as the supreme, eternal, and immutable Being.
Hence the existence above our intellects of eternal, immutable
truth will prove the existence of God.
Now, the intellect recognizes that it is itself mutable
and that there is above it immutable truth. "Quae tamen cum
etiam se propter defectum profectumque in sapientia fatetur
esse mutabilem, invenit supra se esse incommutabilem veritatem:
atque ita adhaerens post ipsam ••• beata efficitur.nl3
One class of truth is number, a favorite example of St.
Augustine. Number is built up of unity, which cannot be
perceived by the senses. No body can produce the notion of
unity, since no body is simply one. The senses, whose object
is corporeal substances, cannot give us the notion of unity.
The reason cannot produce unity as an effect, because this
notion is common to all without being changed in any way by
the fact that it is known. The laws of number are eternally
true, whether apprehended or not.14 Therefore, number is an
eternal, immutable truth.

Another such truth is Wisdom, either in speculative or in
moral matters. Wisdom consists in knowing and possessing the
supreme good. "Num aliam putas esse sapientiam nisi veritatem,
in qua cernitur et tenetur summum bonum?nl6 Wisdom is common
13 De Diversis Quaestionibus LXXXIII, q. 45; PL 40, 28.
14 De Ordine, II, 19, 5o; PL 32, 1018: "Sed unum ad duo, vel
duo ad quattuor, verissima ratio est: nee magis heri fuit
ista ratio vera quam hodie; nee magis eras aut post annum
erit vera; nee si omnia iste mundus concidat, poterit
ista ratio non esse."
15 Cf. De Libero Arbitrio, II, 8, 20-24; PL 32, l251-3;De Verae1i~ione, c. 30; PL 34, 145-7; De
Ordine, II, d;
~2, 1o 1-3. -- 16 De Libero Arbitrio, II, 9, 26; PL 32, 1254.
to all men in that all seek the Supreme Good, whether or not
they are mistaken in pursuing what they think is good.
Moreover, the rules of wisdom are eternal and unchangeable.
For example, it always has been, is, and always will be true
that eternal things are to be preferred to temporal. Wisdom,
therefore, constitutes another example of eternal, immutable
truth. Quam ergo verae atque incommutabiles
aunt regulae numerorum, quorum rationem
atque veritatem incommutabilitatem atque
Having proved the existence of such truth, Augustine then shows that this truth is above our intellects. The intellect recognizes the fact that the truth is superior to it. The truth is not inferior to reason, since the intellect does not judge about the laws of number or wisdom, but judges according to them. It is not equal to reason, since the truth is immutable, whereas human reason is mutable. It remains, then, that the truth, eternal and immutable, exists above our intellects.

Sometimes St. Augustine at once brings the argument to a close here, for this truth is God Himself. So in the De Religione he says: "Nee jam illud ambigendum est, incommutabilem naturam, quae supra rationalem animam sit, Deum esse; et ibi esse primam vitam et primam essentiam, ubi est prima sapientia." So too in the Confessiones he exclaims of the unchangeable light above his intellect: "Qui novit veritatem, novit eam; et qui novit eam, novit aeternitatem. Charitas novit eam. O aeterna veritas, et vera charitas, et chara aeternitas t tu es Deus meus; tibi suspiro die ac nocte." In the De Libero Arbitrio, however, he goes a bit further. He says that, by showing that there exists some reality above our intellects, he has shown that God exists; for either this reality (truth) is itself God, or, if there is some being above it, this latter is God. "Si enim aliquid est excellentius, ille potius Deus est; si autem non est, jam ipsa veritas Deus est. Sive ergo illud sit, sive non sit, Deum 20 Ibid.: "Si autem asset aequalis mentibus nostris haec veritas, mutabilis etiam ipsa esset. Mentes enim nostrae aliquando earn plus vident, aliquando minus, et ex hoc fatentur se esse mutabiles."

21 De ~ Religione, 31, 57; PL 34, 147.
tamen esse, negare non poteris."23
Just how St. Augustine arrives at this conclusion does
not immediately appear. The principle behind the proof will,
however, be treated in chapter IV. Here we may note that
Augustine gives some hint of it in the De Diversis ~uaestionibus
LXXXIII:
Quod autem est omni anima melius, id Deum
dicimus • Intelligit autem rationalis
anima Deum. Nam intelligit quod semper
ejusmodi est, neque ullam patitur mutationem.
At et corpus per tempus et locos, et anima
ipsa rationalis, quod aliquando sapiens,
aliquando stulta est, mutationem patitur.
Quod autem semper eodem modo est, melius
profecto est quam id quod non ita est. Nee
quidquam est melius rationali anima nisi Deus.24
Here the Bishop of Hippo evidently pre-supposes a vulgar
notion of God as an immutable being, superior to every other
being.25 Having, then, proved that the human reason is not the
highest in the order of being, but that there exists an
unchangeable reality superior to it, he concludes that God
exists.
23 De Libero Arbitrio, II, 15, 39; PL 32, 1262.
24 De Diversis Quaestionibus LXXXIII, q. 54; PL 40, 38. And
In the Retractationes, c. 26; PL 32, 627, Augustine amends
the statement: "Ubi quod dixi, 1 Quod autem est omni anima
melius, id Deum dicimus,' magis dici debuit, "Omni create
spiritu melius. "
25 Gilson, Introduction, 12: 11D1 abord il est clair qu'aux
yeux de saint Augustin l'idee de Dieu est une connaissance
universelle et naturellement inseparable de l'esprit
humain."
This is the complete "psychological" argument of St.
Augustine for the existence of God. With all its nuances, its
long and leisurely winding, its flashes of rhetoric, it is
typically Augustine's. Put in cold scholastic form, as we
noted above, it loses the character given it by its author.
However, for the sake of summary, the brief statement of it
given by Portali~ will suffice to conclude this chapter.
Elle repose sur la constation d'une verite
evernelle et immuable, superieure a l'homme,
et pourrait Btre formulee ains: La raison
de l'homme occupant le plus haut degré
de la hiérarchie des êtres de ce monde, si
elle découvre un être plus parfait, oet cet être sera Dieu. Or, ma raison constate ~u•au-dessus
d'elle, 11 y a la verite
ternelle et immuable, qu'elle ne cree pas,
mais qu'elle contemple, qui n'est ni mienne,
ni en moi, puisque les autres la contemplent
aussi bien que moi et hors de moi. Cette
verite est done Dieu lui-même, ou si l'on
suppose en être encore plus élève, nous
conduit de moins a cet être, source de
toute verite.26
26 E. Portalie, article "Saint Augustin" in Dictionnaire de
Théologie Catholique, editors A. Vacant et alii, Letouzey
et Ane, Paris, 1903, I, 2345.

CHAPTER IV
THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THE PROOF IS BASED
Now that the "psychological" proof has been set down as
contained in its two principal sources and assembled completely
in a separate section, our discussion of it may get under way.
As was indicated in more than one place, the final step in the
argumentation is somewhat obscure. St. Augustine proves
~lowly and carefully that there exists an immutable reality,
called Truth, above our intellects. Then he hastens to conclude
that God exists. Is he justified in so doing? Is his proof
complete in itself? If the proof is complete, on what principle
does the final step depend? These are the questions which
ought to be answered.
Before discussing these questions, however, it is well
to call to mind again that Augustine employed most of the
traditional proofs for God's existence (although almost never
specifically as proofs, but only as parts of sections or
meditations) and did not confine himself to this one alone.
Usually he gave these arguments in a highly literary style,
taking little care to develop them fully and with philosophical
exactness. Portalie describes his method well:
Il a touche a toutes les preuves classiques
de l'existence de Dieu, mais on trouverait
rarement chez lui une demonstration
systematique. Il attache une importance
particuliere au consentement du genre
humain ••• L'antique preuve par la finalite
et l'ordre du monde a ete developee par
lui avec une delicatesse, une grace, une
emotion inimitables: partout dans la 
beaute de la nature il lit le nom de 
L t archi tee de vin ••• Mais son eloquence 
est surtout admirable quand il developpe 
la preuve metaphysique du monde fini et 
changeant, reclamant un createur infini 
et immuable.I
The reason for bringing in this reminder is that some 
maintain that the proof we are treating is not complete in 
itself. Should this claim on examination prove correct, or 
should it be decided that the proof is invalid, one should 
realize that St. Augustine did not pin all his rational attempts 
to prove God's existence on this single proof.
Descoqs attacks the argument precisely on the ground 
that it is incomplete in itself. He argues that the only 
possibility of saving it is by reducing it to some other 
argument. He says:
Mais du point de vue strictement rationnel, 
dans l'ordre du discours scientifique et 
dans le plan de la construction rigoureuse, 
d'une construction systematique et 
ordonnee de l'edifice de nos connaissances 
sur Dieu, les discussions que nous avons \ poursuivies dans la these, montrent assez, 
~-----------------------~
nous semble-t-il, que cette preuve ne suffit 
pas, a elle toute seule, pour conclure de 
fonction efficace. Le seul moyen de lui 
conserver une valeur probante est de la 
ramener a la contingence soit par ltinter- m~diaire des r~alites concretes d'oh lea 
idees abstraites, interm~diaire que nous 
avons nous-meme reconnu valable dans la 
critique de la premi~re partie de la these, 
mais une telle r~duction ne semble pas ~tre du tout dans la ligne de penseee de 
s. Augustin; soit en consid~rant ces 
idees comme creees, comme produites en 
ous par une cause transcandante et d'ou 
ous remonterions a celle-ci par la voie de 
causalite, ou plus exactement comme un 
reflet o~ noua saisirions d'embl~e la cause 
transcandante.2
Even then he is dissatisfied with the proof. rr:Mais 
n'implique-t-elle pas un innatismme ou du moins toute la th~orie 
l' de l 1 illumination difficilement compatible avec lea donnees
Moreover, it certainly smacks of ontologiam, according to the same author. Other men, as Billot, Mercier, and Loinaz, agree with him on this point because they see in the proof an illegitimate conclusion to the existence of God as the sufficient reason of the eternal, immutable truths above our intellects; whereas these truths actually have reality, antecedently to our knowing them, only in so far as they are known by the divine intellect. In other words, once we already know that God exists, we know the eternal reality of these truths. But we cannot conclude to the existence of God, not otherwise known, as the sufficient reason for these truths; for, given the essences of finite things and the abstractive power of our intellect, there is no need to seek the sufficient reason for them in the existence of God. In this way does Descoqs, along with Billot, Loinaz, Mercier, and others, argue against the proof. Even some of its defenders feel that ultimately it must be reduced to one of the Quinque Viae in order to be complete. A full discussion of this question, however, is relegated to the following chapter. We record the opinion that the proof is not complete in itself only as an aid to our chief effort in this section: to discover the principle of the argument as St. Augustine understood it, the principle he intended to employ. Those who defend the argument as being complete maintain that Augustine intended that it prove the existence of God as

4 Louis Billot, S.J., De Deo Uno et Trino, Universitas Pontifical Gregoriana; Rome, 1935; 35; 76 (note); "argumentum profecto non concludit nisi ostendatur ipsam naturam rationalem non esse a se, sed a prima causa a qua pendet rerum universitas, et tunc fit reductio ad unam e quinque viis supra expositis. Si autem procederet argumentum ex ipsa obiectiva necessitate et aeternitate quam in his principiis mens nostra intuetur, quasi per se solam argueret existentianl alicuius entis necessarii, sic non videtur valida demonstratio. 11


6 D • J. Mercier, Metaphysique GtSne'rale, Insti tut Superieur de Philosophie, Louvain, 1923, 40-50. His opinion too is treated in Chapter V of this paper.

that Augustine intended that it prove the existence of God as
in some way the sufficient reason for the eternal, universal, immutable truth above our intellects. But not all agree on the principle which he employed. In an article on the philosophy of St. Augustine, Van steenberghen briefly reviews the proof, then says in conclusion that the argument proves the existence of God as exemplary cause. La disjonction ^tablie entre le reel et l'ideal par la conception platonicienne de la connaissance intellectuelle, semble exclure une interpretation strictement metaphysique de l'argument _ideologique, n bien que, aux yeux de s. Augustin, le caractere-raier-me-relent une valeur absolue, ontologique, metaphysique, et non pas ideale seulement. Dans cet argument, le rapport entre les "Incommutabiliter vera" et la "Veritas incommutabil~semble bien impliquer lea notions de participation et de causalit~ exemplaire. - D'autre part, a cote et auteur de l'argument ideologique proprement dit, les idees de contingence, de causalit~, et de creation ~ont frequemment utilisees par s. Augustin. 7 Not completely satisfied with this statement of his position, Van Steenberghen explains and qualifies it. ~_Mais ces perspectives differentes ne _paraisssent pas parfaitement unifiees et une mise au point s'impose: il suffir~it de dire, par exemple, que la n~cessite metaphysique du vrai est saisie, par nous / autres hommes, dans le reel contingent, pour assurer a la preuve augustinienne une base inebenable. Car elle s'appuyerait alors sur les caract~res de nos jugements consid~res, non pas dans leur signification purement logique ou id~ale, ni dans leur existence/eurement psychologique, mais dans ~ ~ leur port e metaphysique. Rattachee solidement a l'ordre reel, la preuve ~ augustinienne devient une preuve metaphysique authentique, ou, plus exactement, l'unique preuve metaphysique consid~r~ sous l'angle du vrai transcendental et
This explanation is not convincing, at least if it is intended to prove that the argument is complete and yet not an ontological argument. If recourse be made to "Le reel contingent"—from which the intellect can by its abstractive power arrive at universal truth—then there seems to be no need to appeal to the existence of God. And this latter is exactly the point of the whole proof. Hence Descoqs's rather trenchant criticism of Van Steenberghen's case seems justified.

La premiere partie de ces conclusions nous parait certaine et ne saurait soulever de difficultés sérieuses. La seconde en revanche demanderait des précisions. Nous consentons sans aucune peine et nous/ soutenons bien en effet que 11 la nécessité métaphysique du vrai saisie dans le reel contingent peut assurer a cette preuve métaphysique considérable sous l'angle du vrai transcendental une base in-branlable, mais a la condition de l'appuyer sur la contingence de ce meme reel, c'est-a-dire en derniere analyse, comme l'indiquent les mots meme, sur 1 l'insuffisance Adans l'etre, et done sur la necessité, de l'etre premier, cause efficiente de ce reel, et par le fait meme, cause exemplaire. Si causalité exemplaire est detachee de l'autre, elle reate, quoad nos, sans point d'attache, au-dessus du Vlae, et ne prouve rien.

Of course a rejection of one argument adduced is not sufficient to throw out the whole possibility that the argument is intended to prove the existence of God as exemplary cause. Nor is this procedure attempted here. Instead, let us first review other opinions.

Boyer insists very strongly that the principle underlying the argument is the principle of causality. After a long introduction to the point, he says: "Si importante, si decisive meme, en quelque sorte, qu'en soit la raison, il faut la dire sans plus attendre: le philosophe d 1 Hippone est mu par le principe de causalité ••• rrO Whereupon Boyer sets forth numerous examples of the use Augustine made of this principle: in his De Genesi ad Litteram (IV, 32, 49), in his Enarrationes
in Psalmos (Ps. 44, n. 13), in his De Trinitate (XII, 5, 5), in
9 Descoqs, Praelectiones, II, 134.
10 Boyer, Essais, 58.
his De Civitate Dei (XI, 4, 2), etc. He observes rather
disgustedly: "Certains semblent vraiment trop croire qu'il
faille être "psychique" jusqu'aux moelles pour avoir l'idée
de cause, et pour s'en servir.
It is true that the examples of St. Augustine's use of
the principle of causality would point to God as efficient
cause. However, Boyer rather seems to hold that this
"psychological" argument proves the existence of a God Who is
exemplary cause. For in summarizing the argument, speaking of
Wisdom and Truth, he says:
Mais ces perfection, qui sont substantiellement Dieu, nous les percevons a
travers le reflet d'elles-mêmes dans
notre âme. Leur empreinte, leur
participation, et pour dire le mot,
leur image, est en notre âme, est
notre âme en sa partie supérieure; et l', la preuve de Dieu consiste précisément l', a aiair
que la règle de notre pensée
et de notre vouloir, c'est-a-dire
notre raison qui est bien notre et
qui est une partie de notre âme, l', n'est
intelligible que comme participation
et comme image d'une vérité absolue
qui est Dieu.
De Mondadon also believes that progress in the argumentation is made by use of the principle
of causality, perhaps
both efficient and exemplary. After presenting his outline
11 Ibid., 61.
12 Ibid., 90.
of the argument, he adds:
\ Au reste, le passage de l'un à l'autre se
fait par l'intermédiaire de la causalité, l', laquelle on nous renvoie, quand on parle
de lumière intelligible l l' et de maître
intérieur l l' ou plus clairement, quand on l l', A
nomme la vérité vie et âme de l'ame
raisonnable,l3
And in the passage which follows, he indicates that Augustine
intended to prove God either as exemplary or as efficient cause.
From his summary of the argument quoted at the conclusion
, of the last section, it appears that Portalie understands
Augustine to proceed by way of causality, probably efficient
causality. For, he says, the argument must conclude to an
immutable "source de toute verite."
Before presenting our own conclusion, we may profitably
learn the position of one more authority. Gilson frankly
admits that St. Augustine knew the principle of causality and
that he made use of it in some places to prove the existence
of God.
Sans doute, Augustin a souvent et expressément
insisté sur le fait que la mutabilité même
du monde des corps atteste sa contingence
et sa dépendance h l'égard d'un être
nécessaire qui est Dieu. On ne peut donc
nier que sa doctrine contienne tous les
elements nécessaires d'une preuve de ce
13 De Mondodon, 11 De la Connaissance de Soi-même 'a la
genre et par conséquent que cette preuve,... ne soit compatible avec l'augustinisme
le plus authentique.14
However, Gilson very justly notes that St. Augustine used
such proofs rather as pious meditations, as parts of sermons
or discourses, rather than as proofs properly so called. Where
he does develop a proper proof, he always passes by way of the
mind. Why so? Gilson answers:
, Et la raison en est claire. Interrogées
par nous sur leur nature et leur origine,
les choses sensibles répondent en effet
par le spectacle de leur mutabilité même:
ce n'est pas nous qui nous sommes faites; il
faut donc les transcender pour atteindre
leur cause; or leur cause ne peut " être
atteinte en tant que cause de ce qu'elles
ont de changeant et contingent, qui est
du non-être, mais en tant que cause de
ce qu'elles ont de stable, qui est de l'Être. Ce qu'elles ont de stable, c'est
le nombre, 1 1 ordre et la mesure; or,
au-dessus de leur nombre se touve celui
de notre pensée qui les connaît; transcendons ce nombre lui-même, nous l'atteignons celui
de la Verité qui est
Dieu.15'
Therefore, in going by way of the mind, one arrives at
the truth. Especially are mathematical and metaphysical
truths apt for the proof, since they are eternal and immutable.
The only sufficient reason for these truths is God Himself.
Thus, Gilson evidently concludes that the principle underlying
the argument is that of sufficient reason.
Le point critique de la démonstration est évidemment le dernier, ou Dieu se trouve posé comme la seule raison suffisante de "la vérité présente à la pensée.

The various opinions given above are useful for several reasons. First, they may serve to make precise our own notions. Second, they are the opinions of men well versed in the writings of St. Augustine. Third, by their variety they indicate the difficulty of the question. It was stated above that the last step in St. Augustine's argument is somewhat obscure. The very difference of opinion regarding the principle which underlies this last step should amply prove that statement.

In the face of such disagreement, it may seem presumptuous to try to resolve the question. On the other hand, it would be unsatisfactory to pass over it without giving any personal opinion and the reasons for holding it. In the first place, the conclusion of Descoqs that the proof is in itself incomplete does not seem to me to be justified. I do not say that the argument is valid; it could be complete without being valid. And it does appear to be complete. Why does St. Augustine proceed by way of thought? 

Is it not to arrive at something above our mind, something which has such characteristics that neither sensible objects nor the mind could produce it—In proceeding in this way, he comes to truth, truth Which is eternal and unchangeable. Does he not at once conclude from this that God exists? The argumentation, then, appears clear and complete: there must exist some being itself eternal and immutable, in order to explain metaphysical and mathematical truth. It may be granted that St. Augustine does not explicitly state this step, and does not explicitly enunciate his principle. Nevertheless, his very manner of proceeding indicates that he adopted this particular way for the purpose of arriving at God as the ultimate explanation for truths of this character. Therefore, it seems logical to conclude that the argument is complete in itself.

Furthermore, the objection that some principle must be dragged to explain the reasoning, in order to give it a solid basis, seems unfair and untrue. When St. Augustine
presented the argument fully, as in the De Libero Arbitrio, he evidently intended it to be a systematic proof for the existence of God. But, unless some principle demanding that God be necessary to explain immutable truth were at least implicitly included, the argument would be no argument at all. There would be no basis for concluding to God's existence. However, the whole set-up, in which St. Augustine of set purpose works toward that truth which is above the intellect and whose existence demands the existence of God, clearly indicates that the great African Bishop relied on this principle in his proof. Therefore, the principle is in the argument itself; and need not be shoved into it by its defenders, in order to bolster an otherwise incomplete proof.

For much the same reasons as those given above, I conclude that the principle on which the argument rests is the principle of sufficient reason. The argument begins by showing that, in man, nothing is superior to the intellect. Why does St. Augustine so begin? That he may arrive at the truth, which is the object of the intellect. But why does he work toward truth? Because truth possesses certain qualities which can be explained neither by sensible bodies nor by the intellect. For the truths chosen by St. Augustine are mathematical and metaphysical truths, truths which are eternal and immutable. Why does he select these truths, and, once having proved their existence above our intellects, immediately conclude that God exists? The answer is that these truths are not the product of our mutable intellects. Even though the intellect is the highest thing in man, it cannot serve to explain these truths. Therefore, God must exist as the only sufficient reason for these truths--and a God Who is unchangeable and eternal even as the truths themselves are. Consequently, it seems that the proof rests on the principle of sufficient reason. The statement of the argument in the De Libero Arbitrio, as reproduced in Chapter I, will, it appears, bear out those steps which lead to this conclusion.

In summary, this section was intended to determine the principle underlying St. Augustine's "psychological" proof for the existence of God. It has been seen that some, like Descoqs, maintain that the argument is in itself not complete. We have endeavored to show that it is complete, since it is at least implicitly based on the principle of sufficient reason - and this in the very way in which St. Augustine presented it. Others, who hold that the argument is complete, variously

18 F.J. Thonnard, A.A., Précis d'Histoire de la Philosophie,
Desclee et Cie, Paris, 1946, 214. Fr. Thonnard notes that St. Augustine did not favor the proof from efficient causality of the sensible world. Then he adds this reason for Augustine's procedure: "Pourquoi repugne-t-il a monter directement du sensible a Dieu? La raison, semble-t-il, est que ce chemin ne lui paraissait pas sar. L'ordre des choses sensibles en effet, pouvait pleinement s'expliquer, h la mani~re des stoiciens et de Plotin, par l'Ame du monde, et celle-ci, finie et changeante, n'étaitP'asencore Dieu. Augustin la jugeait inutile, sachant par la roi que tout a et6 cree par le Verbe; "Ylais rationnellement, il ne la jugeait pas absurde; et pour trouver Dieu, il prit, semble-t-il, le parti de l'eviter. Or la voie, a ses yeux, la plus, efficace, etait le methode platonicienne du recueillement et de la purification, le retour par les degres de notre vie interieure ou le sommet des v~rit~s eternelles p"rrmet d'atteindre incontestablement Dieu, seul immuable et eternel."

explain the principle from which the conclusion is drawn. Some hold out for exemplary causality; others, for efficient causality; others, for the principle of sufficient reason. For the reasons given immediately above, we agree with the last named conclusion.

CHAP'.PER V
0NrI
0LOGISM AND THE PROOF; ITS VALIDITY

The fact (if granted) that the proof is complete does not necessarily prove the validity of the argument. Other difficulties may be--indeed, have been--urged against this proof. The principal of these difficulties is that the argument is ontological, in so far as it concludes from our thoughts of the eternal truths to their real existence from eternity, which fact can only be explained by the real existence of God. In his Theodicea, Palumbo lists those who have especially attacked the argument: Billot, Mercier, Van der Mersch, Loinaz, Mindorff, Cuervo, Balthazar, Ricard, Descoqs. Then he observes: "Iuxta auctores praefatos argumentum ideologicum nullum habet valorem ad Dei existentiam ostendendam et demonstrandam et ontologismum aut innatismum sapit.nl Although it is not our purpose here to discuss ontologism itself, we may give a definition of what we mean by it. It is a system according to which the first and immediate object of 1 1:'1
ranciscus Antonius Palumbo, Theodicea, Pontif'icium Athenaeum
the intellect is God Himself, simpliciter, Whom one immediately apprehends by simple intuition, in which intuition one knows all other things. Although there are several variations of the system, into which we do not propose to enter, this definition is satisfactory for the purposes of this discussion.

With regard to the knowledge of God, the system holds that the human mind continually intuits God. Again, this intuition is variously explained by the Ontologists. We are concerned to give only a general statement of the position, since such a statement is adequate for our purposes.

As a final introductory step, it should be noted that an argument may be ontological without by that very fact being ontologistic. In other words, there may be a transition from the logical order to the real in the argument (ontological), and still no confirmation given to and no reliance placed on the position which holds that the human mind has a direct intuition of God (ontologistic). This distinction is important and, we think, legitimate. In speaking of the ontological argument simultaneo, Descoqs makes the same distinction:

Hoc argumentum confundi nequit cum Ontologismo, et potest proponi quin ullo modo accipiatur intuition Ontologistarum, prouti re vera habetur. Fautores enim praesentis argumenti in ordine reali mere abstractive stant, tamquam puncto a quo, cum dicant ideam Dei infiniti et perfecti quam sponte eff'ormant, habere valorem objectivum absolutum. Sed plerique, saltern hodierni, omnem intuitionem Dei respunt quae esset ratio fundamentalis illius objectivitatis ideae. Valor enim virtusque a priori rationis ad hoc stabilendum juxta eos sufficiunt.

There are varied opinions in this matter. Some authors maintain that the argument is ontological; some, that it is ontologistic; some, that it is both ontological and ontologistic together. Certain non-scholastics and the Ontologists themselves, of course, accept the argument as ontologistic and yet valid. The opinions of a few scholastic authors may well be reviewed.

In the forefront of those who oppose the argument is Descoqs. He does not quite want to call St. Augustine an
Ontologist, at least in the Doctor's use of this argument; but he insinuates all along that the argument is surely ontological and probably ontologistic. In regard to the former point, he agrees with the observation of Gilson that the proof prepares, because it formally implies, the ontological argument of St. Anselm. He says:

C'est aussi bien la pensee qui a inspir:
toute notre critique de cette preuve par
Descoqs, Praelectiones, I, 609.

As Leibniz in his Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement Humain, IV, 11; and Malebranche in Recherche de la Verite, III, 7, 2.

Concerning the question of whether the proof is ontologistic, he is not so certain. He admits that it is a valid proof for one who holds the Platonic ideas and illumination, but doubts that it otherwise has any force at all. Although he does not settle the question, he does express concern that St. Augustine used such expressions as: "Deus lux est in qua omnia cognoscimus, 11 and " • in ipsa, quae supra mentem est, incommutabili veritate omnia cognoscimus." While leaving the question to others for settlement, Descoqs indicates that he believes that the proof is ontologistic as well as ontological.

Loinaz also opposes the argument on the grounds of principium petit, inasmuch as the eternal existence of the truths appealed to can only be granted if it is already known that God exists.

Sane omnis veritas, omnia possibilitas
fundari debet in Deo existente; sine quo proin neutrum dari poterit. Extra hanc hypothesim nee verum nee falsum aderit,
sed absolutum nihil. Brevi: Maior argumenti aprioristice, si Deus non
5 Descoqs, Praelectiones, II, 132.

6 Ibid.
supponatur, falsa est. Hinc Deus demonstretur ex existentibus; quod sufficit.7
Mercier notes that, given the possibles, the relations which govern them and the truth of these relations are independent of time and space. However, the possibles are not given, unless it is already supposed that God exists and knows them. He summarizes his criticism of the argument:
En resumé, aucune essence possible n'est nécessaire en elle-même absolument. La seule chose nécessaire, c'est que, posons l'existence soit dans la nature, soit dans la pensée humaine, d'une essence donnée, il se produise entre les éléments qui la constituent, des rapports nécessaires de compatibilité et d'incompatibilité: bref, la nécessité des possibles est une nécessité conditionnelle de rapports.

He then concludes that the theory according to which God would be the sufficient reason of the possibles and of their properties "aboutit logiquement à l'ontologisme." 9 De Mondadon flatly denies that the argument of St. Augustine has anything in common with the arguments of St. Anselm10 and Descartes, or with the ideological argument of 7 Loinaz, Praelectiones e Theologia Naturali, 82.

9 Ibid., 49.

8 Mercier, Metaphysique Générale, 44.

10 In this de Mondadon directly sets himself against J. Martin, who maintained that the Augustinian argument was a prelude to the Anselmian. Cf. J. Martin, Saint Augustin, Librairie J.elix Alcan, Paris, 1923, 99-109.

Bossuet and Leibniz. He says that those are mistaken (as Malebranche and Leibniz) who would find in St. Augustine texts to prove their own ontologistic doctrine. However, he adds a wise observation:

Nous pouvons, cependant, reprocher à saint Augustin de n'avoir pas assez distingué au net les divers aspects de la vérité extramontale, accord objectif de la pensée avec son terme, fondements concrets des représentations abstraites, exemplaire éternel des âtres, cause première des actes intellectuels. De 1 ses apparentes concessions à 1 ontologisme. Platonicien, intuitif et orateur, il n'a pas assez surveillé, pas assez contrôlé son raisonnement; il court d'un élan fougueux, on ne le suit plus et on fait fausse route. Although Descoqs tries to find an ally in Gilson, it does not appear that the latter would go so far as the former. For Gilson finds that the proof is complete, being based upon the principle of sufficient reason. Moreover, he clearly denies that it is ontologistic.

... Mais il apparaît de même coup qu'en découvrant ainsi la transcendance de la vérité, c'est 1 existence de Dieu que la pensée découvre, puisque ce qu'elle aperçoit au-dessus de l'homme, c'est 1 est de 1 éternel, de l'immuable, et du nécessaire, c 1 est-adire
une réalité qui possède tous les attributs de Dieu lui-même. Non pas, sans doute, qu’en voyant la vérité dans sa propre pensée, l’œil voie l’essence même de Dieu. Elle n’atteint pas alors le terme dont la possession lui conférerait la bénédiction, mais elle voit du moins quel terme il lui reste à atteindre pour jouir de cette bénédiction et entrer dans son repos.

On the other hand, he admits that the proof leads to the metaphysical speculations of St. Anselm, but qualifies this statement. Ainsi, de même qu’elle prepare sous son premier aspect le symbolisme médiéval du monde sensible, envisagé sous ce deuxième aspect, elle ouvre la voie aux spéculations métaphysiques d’un saint Anselme, qui cherchant h découverte de l’existence de Dieu dans l’idée même que nous avons de lui. Non qu’il ait développé cette preuve, mais saint Augustin n’en avait pas moins certainement engagé la recherche dans une direction qui conduisait naturellement à la preuve de Proslogion.

It is Boyer who defends the argument most often and most at length. B’irst he points out that the larger number of authors do not find in St. Augustine the teaching of an immediate vision of God in our natural knowledge. He goes on to say that the two questions are always distinct; hence he considers the proof apart from the question of ontologism. Nor can anyone correctly argue, he says, (as some, relying on the famous passage in the Confessiones, have done) that Augustine taught two kinds of knowledge of God: one direct and immediate, the other mediate in the mirror of the human soul.
Il n'y a donc d'objet immédiat pour notre esprit que des objets créés. Le plus parfait de ces objets, celui qui nous aide le mieux à connaître Dieu, c'est l'âme humaine dans l'acte de la charité.

Again in the schematic presentation of the proof, which he gives in his book L'Idée de Vérité dans la Philosophie de Saint Augustin, Boyer endeavors to show that the proof is not ontological. His whole strenuous defense of it is intended to prove its validity. He also denies that the argument is ontologistic, concluding with these words:

"C'est donc, croyons-nous, s'égarder que de voir dans la preuve de Dieu, chez saint Augustin, l'exposé, soit du système de la vision en Dieu, comme l'a fait Malebranche, soit de l'intuition immédiate de Dieu, telle que l'ont comprise les ontologistes du dernier siècle.

15 Boyer himself names Ambrosius Victor, Malebranche, and Hessen.

16 Confessions, VII, 10, 16; PL 32, 742: "Intravi, et vidi qualicumque oculo animae meae, supra eundem oculum animae meae supra mentem meam, lucem incommutabilem ••• "

17 Boyer, Essai, 90.

18 Boyer, L'Idée, 70-71.

Along with these defenders of St. Augustine's proof may be named Hontheim, who in his Institutiones Theodicaeae gives a long defense, 19 Bossuet, 20 Fenelon, 21 Leibniz, 22 Kleutgen, 23 Sertillanges, 24 Garrigou-Lagrange, 25 and others. They are listed here that we may see how great is the controversy on this matter.

In giving my own opinion on this difficult question, I should like to call attention to the distinction made in the introductory remarks of this chapter. The proof may be ontological (that is, involve an illegitimate jump from the ideal to the real order) without being ontologistic (that is, without implying a direct vision of God). For it seems to me that the proof is ontological objectively, and yet not ontologistic.

To take up the latter problem first, it seems well to remark with de Mondadon that St. Augustine was not always careful to guard his remarks in such a way as to prevent

quibusdam existimandum est ex mente s. Augustini ipsum Deum esse objectum, quod intelligentia nostra directe contemplatur, quando vera pronuntiat."
20 Connaissance de Dieu et de Soi-meme, IV, 5.
21 Traitl de l 1Eirstenee-ae-oieu, I, 2, 50; II, 3, 49.
22 Nouveaui:Essais sur l'Eltenaement Humain, IV, 11.
23 Phi1osophie SchoiiStique, IV, 11, 4.
24 "L'Idee de Dieu et 1a V~rite," in Revue Thomiste, sept., 1940.
25 Dieu, 296-302.

misunderstanding. We may cite two outstanding examples which taken together surely allow misinterpretation. Augustine says that he sees the unchangeable light above his intellect, and again identifies this light with God. In the Conf'essiones, he writes: 11 Intravi, et vidi qualicumque oculo animae meae supra eundem oculum animae meae supra mentem meam, lucem incommutabilem."26 And in the De Vera Religione: "Nee jam illud
ambigendum est, incommutabilem naturam, quae supra rationalem animam sit, Deum esse.rr27 That this is dangerous language may be granted; that it is a proof' that the argument is ontologic
need not be granted.
The first fact to be considered is this: St. Augustine regularly calls for faith in God's existence, even when he is about to prove the same point by reason. In the De Vera Religione, the sections leading up to the proof discuss what faith has to tell us about the existence and nature of God. In the De Libero Arbitrio, at the outset he asks: 11 Illud saltern tibi certum est, Deum esse"; and Evodius replies: "Etiam hoc non contemplando, sed credendo inconcussum teneo.n28 But it is at once evident that, where there is faith, there is no room for an immediate vision of God, which would exclude faith.
Conf'essiones, VII, 10, 16; PL 32, 742.
De Vera Religione, 31, 57; PL 34, 147.
De LIOero Ar itrio, II~ 2, 5; PL 32, 1242.
Ontologists such as Malebranche may have faith in revelation and mysteries, but they cannot logically have faith in the existence of God. It is faith in precisely this fact which Augustine demands at the outset of his argument. Moreover, the question of the respective positions of faith and reason is so prominent in St. Augustine thet it can hardly be argued that he would be unaware of the inconsistency of demanding faith in the existence of that which we intuit. Therefore, in his very demand for faith the great Doctor shows how far opposed he is to ontologiam.
Secondly, the principle on which the philosophical proof is based is, as we have endeavored to prove, the principle of sufficient reason. It is granted that in pious and rhetorical passages St. Augustine does not speak with philosophical precision, and so may seem to hold a direct intuition of God. Nevertheless, in the discussion in the De Libero Arbitrio, he argues by psychological method to those truths of which God is the sole sufficient reason. He does not argue: "We have a direct vision of God; therefore we know that He exists." His laborious process rather excludes this direct vision. The argumentation is not to the psychological "fact" that we directly intuit God. It is rather to the fact that we recognize above our minds eternal and immutable truths; the changeable mind cannot be the explanation of these truths; therefore, God must exist as the only reason sufficient to explain their existence. Again, then, we must conclude that the argument is not ontologistic.

Finally, St. Augustine in the De Trinitate endeavors to explain st. Paul's words: 11We see now through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face.n29 He realizes that the true explanation can only be that God is seen, not directly, but in something which "reflects" Him. He seeks those things which may provide the best reflection.

Quale sit et quod sit hoc speculum, si quae ramus, profecto illud occurrit, quod in speculo nisi imago cernitur. Hoc ergo facere conati sumus, ut per imaginem hanc quod nos sumus, videremus utcumque a quo facti sumus, tamquam per speculum.30

This is the reason why it may be said that Augustine, while employing elements of the classical proofs for God's existence, really considered them all part of his one proof. He is seeking the mirror in which he may see God. Working from sensible creatures, he arrives at God by means of the argument from causality, by means of the order in the universe, etc. But the mirror in which he best sees God is the human soul itself. As Boyer summarizes it,

Il n'y a done d'objet immédiat pour notre esprit que des objets créés. Le plus parfait de ces objets est celui qui nous aide le mieux à connaître Dieu, c'est l'âme humaine dans l'acte de la charité.31
It has been shown that this is the route which St. Augustine follows in the argument as we have presented it from his works. However, such a route—long and slow and tedious—is entirely unnecessary if one has an immediate vision of God. The words of St. Paul, moreover, are not explained if we see "face to face" here below, even though in a less perfect manner than we shall see God in heaven. Again, it appears that we must come to the same conclusion; namely, that the argument is not ontological.

There remains, however, the other question of whether or not the proof is ontological. We have noted the divergence of opinion in this matter. I have stated that, in my opinion, the proof is ontological. It is time now to give the reasons for that opinion.

In the course of his argument, St. Augustine proceeds from inanimate creatures, to brutes, to rational beings. He shows that the highest thing in man is his reason. He proves that, above reason, there exist eternal and immutable truths. These truths, he says, are above reason because reason realizes that it does not judge them, but judges according to them; and because the mutable intellect cannot produce or explain immutable truth. He concludes that God exists. We have shown that this conclusion must rest on the fact that God alone is the sufficient reason to explain the existence of these truths. It seems to me that this procedure involves a leap from the logical order to the real.

For whence come these truths, with their characteristics of universality, eternity, and immutability? How can it be said that they exist above our intellects? If these truths are taken materially, as abstracted from the real order by the intellect, they do not require the existence of God as their

31 Boyer, Essais, 90.
32 In Augustine's own system this is not necessarily true. If he did not hold abstraction in the Thomistic sense, the proof would not be ontological for him. This point is taken up later. For the present, Thonnard, Precis d'Histoire de la Philosophie, 214-215: Mais ce passage obligatoire par notre esprit suscite une objection contre la valeur de la demonstration augustinienne: en s'appuyant sur le caractere de nos idées, n'est-elle pas un passage illégitime du logique au réel? ••• mais saint Augustin échappe à l'objection, car il ne se base aucunement sur nos idées abstraites, ignorant totalement l'abstraction. Les vérités éternelles expriment pour lui le fait de
notre vie intellectuelle saisi par l'intuition—q\-e la conscience, avec toutes ses richesses d'\-'tre, resumant pour ainsi dire et concentrant en soi la réalité des degrés inférieurs qu'elle juge et règle. Le 'assage ill\-'gitime du logique au réel est donc bien évité et la preuve augustinienne, sans être parfaitement réductible aux cadres thomistes, garde sa pleine valeur de démonstration rationnelle." 

Although not wholly agreeing with this reasoning, we think it worthy of note here.

sufficient reason. For, given the abstractive power of the intellect, given the essences of finite things which actually are particular, temporal, mutable, and contingent, one can abstract from individuating notes and from real existence. Then these essences are, in their ideal form, universal, eternal, immutable, and necessary. But they do not require the eternal and immutable God as the sufficient reason for their existence. It is true, as Descoqs points out and as certain defenders of the argument attempt to do, that the proof may be reduced to the argument from contingency (if these truths are taken as contingent essences abstracted from contingent existing beings), or to the argument from the grades of being (if these truths are taken in themselves as determined, finite realities). So reduced it is a valid argument. However, it seems that st. Augustine himself does not argue in this way.

On the other hand, if these truths are taken formally—that is, only in the ideal and intelligible order—and if the argument is taken as complete in itself, there seems to be an illegitimate transfer from the ideal to the real order. For these truths necessarily imply a relation to some mind, either human or divine. But since, by hypothesis, it is not yet certain that God exists, then such truths imply a relation only to the human intellect and have their sufficient reason in our intellect and in things. If they exist from eternity, then there must be a mind knowing them from eternity. But the eternity of these truths is acquired only by the abstraction made from really existing things by the human mind, under the supposition that we do not yet know whether or not God exists. Hence, if one concludes from this truth, as abstracted by the human intellect and therefore in the ideal order only, to the real existence of God, one falls into the ontological error. This the argument, if taken in itself, seems to do. And it has been demonstrated elsewhere that the argument should be taken as complete in itself.

It might be added that, granted the existence of God
proved in some other way, the argument can be used to demonstrate that eternal truths have only in God the sufficient reason for their existence. However, it is precisely this supposition which one arguing to the existence of God cannot make.

For the conclusion of this section, a short summary is in order. It has been shown that there has been controversy on two points concerning this proof. Some have held that the argument is ontologistic, that St. Augustine must have taught that we have a direct vision of God. They have adduced texts to prove this point. In reply, we have endeavored to show that Augustine's thought is not ontologistic, although his words are somewhat careless at times. Specifically, we have tried to prove that this proof is not ontologistic. Secondly, some authors defend the validity of the proof, while others say that, if taken as a separate proof, it is an ontological argument. After giving several opinions on both sides, we attempted to demonstrate that the proof is ontological. It follows, of course, that the proof is—again in my opinion—invalid.33

33 Of. Palumbo, *rheodicea, 213-222. The author gives an admirable summary of the proof, the position and reasons of both those who defend the argument and those who oppose it. I have drawn on him heavily for the last part of this section.

CHAPTER VI
DEPENDENCE ON THE DOCTRINE OF ILLUMINATION

Having concluded our discussion of the validity of St. Augustine's argument, we might perhaps logically proceed at once to some remarks on the spirit animating it. However, there is another question so closely connected with this proof that we cannot overlook it. Does the proof depend on the Augustinian doctrine of illumination? Are the two distinct? These are the questions which underlie the discussion in this chapter. Briefly, the doctrine of illumination which St. Augustine proposed is this: in order to know anything, our human intellect must receive a mysterious influence from God, an illumination of some sort, in the light of which it knows the truth. Time and again Augustine explains the origin of our ideas and our intellectual knowledge in this way. After he had rejected the Neoplatonic theory of reminiscence, he developed this theory of his own, often using metaphors to bring out his meaning. God is the sun of the soul,1 its interior master,2 the light in which

1 Soliloquiorum Libri Duo, I, 8, 15; PL 32, 877: "Ergo et illa
quae in disciplinis traduntur, quae quisquis intelligit, verissima esse nulla dubitatione concedit, credendum est ea we see all things.3 In the De Civitate Dei, the Word is called the light of the soul, even for the acquisition of natural knowledge, which Augustine is there discussing.4 Now it must be admitted that this doctrine is interpreted in several different ways. Complete discussion of the doctrine lies outside the scope of this paper. However, some of the interpretations will be presented. A brief refutation will be made of some; the reasons for adopting the interpretation followed will be stated.

First, there is the pantheistic interpretation, which would make St. Augustine an Averroist. According to this non posse intelligi, nisi ab alio quasi sole illustrentur." 2 De Magistro, 12, 40; PL 32, 1217: neum vero de iis agitur quae mente conspicimus, id est intellectu atque ratione, ea quidem loquimur quae praesentia contuemur in illa interiore luce veritatis, qua ipse qui dicitur homo interior, illustratur et furitur: sed tunc quoque noster auditor, si et ipse illa secreto ac simplici oculo videt; novit quod dico sua contemplatione, non verbis meis. Ergo ne hunc quidem doceo vera dicens, vera intuentem, docetur enim non verbis meis, sed ipsis rebus, Deo intus pandente, manifestis.

3 De Genesi ad Litteram, XII, 31, 59; PL 34, 479: "Aliud autem est IPsum lumen quo illustratur anima ut omnia vel in se vel in illo veraciter intellects conspiciat." 4 De Civitate Dei, X, 2; PL 41, 279: "In qua differentia Sit!s ostenditur, animam rationalem vel intellectualem, quis erat in Joanne, sibi lumen esse non posse, sed alterius veri luminis participatione lucere. Hoc et ipse Joannes fatetur, ubi ei perhibens testimonium dicit: 'Nos omnes de plenitudine ejus accepimus.'" This is given as a comment on the opening verses of the Gospel according to St. John.

interpretation, God, as universal intellect, would see the truth in us and we in Him. Since Augustine rejects eternal creation (as in the De Civitate Dei) and yet holds creation ~ nihilo (as in the De Vera Religione), a pantheistic explanation of his system is impossible. Malebranche, J:telon, and Bossuet, among others, have put an ontologistic interpretation on the doctrine of illumination.7 They say that Augustine taught that our soul sees God Himself and in Him the divine ideas. However, as we have already shown
in the previous chapter, St. Augustine clearly rejected any
direct vision of God. The very metaphors he used in exposing
his system indicate, not that it is God Himself who is seen,
but rather that other things are known because of some influence
of God on the human soul. Portalie sums up the case against
a position which we shall not again refute at length:
D'après saint Augustin, Dieu soleil de
L'âme, n'apparaît jamais comme un objet
que nous voyons, mais comme un agent qui
produit en notre âme ce par quoi nous
pouvons connaître:
A third interpretation is offered by the scholastic
5 De Civitate Dei, X, 31; PL 41, 311-312; and XI, 6, PL 41,
322: "Cum tempore autem factus est mundus."
6 De Vera Religione, 18, 35, PL 44, 137: "Unde fecit? Ex
nibilo!"
7 Places cited in previous chapter.
8 Portalie, "Saint Augustin, 11 DTC, I, 2335. In this section
we have borrowed much from this excellent article.
school, proposed by such men as Zigliari, Franzelin, and
Lepidi.9 According to them, God is the light of the intellect
inasmuch as He is its creative cause and the source and exemplar
of all truth. This interpretation of St. Augustine seems
insufficient. In the first place, although the Bishop of
Hippo would certainly accept the two statements, he said more
than they say. He was striving constantly for an explanation
of the problem of knowledge. Merely to maintain that God
created the human intellect and that He is the source of truth,
does not solve this problem. How does the human mind arrive at
the truth? That is what he wanted to explain. And he introduced his doctrine of illumination
precisely in order to provide
the answer to this further question. The texts already cited--
. and this is the second point--indicate that God, in addition to
creating our intellect, must continually illuminate it so that it
may know the truth. Hence, if we may believe that St. Augustine
offered any solution to the problem of knowledge, it seems that
9 Zigliari in Della Luce Intellectuale, I, 11-13; Franzelin in
De Deo Uno, 140-145; Lepidi in De Ontologismo, 192-225.
Boyer-in-Eis Essais admits that Augustine and Aristotle
follow different routes, but maintains that, after all, they
are not so very far apart in the end result. So p. 163:
"Vraiment quelque di verses qu'il s'agit de les voies parcourues,
la différence au point d'arrivée est minima, s'il y en a
une • 11 Cf. the whole chapter on "Saint Thomas et Saint
Augustin." Descoq's criticism of Boyer for attempting to
reconcile St. Augustine and St. Thomas in this matter (Praelectiones, I, 557-559), while perhaps 'harsh, seems to me to be sound.

we must reject this interpretation as inadequate.

A final interpretation is offered here. It is that of Portale~ and the one followed in this discussion. It maintains that the action of God in our intellectual knowledge does not consist in His showing Himself to us, but in producing in our minds an image of the truth.

On peut la formuler ainsi: Notre âme ne peut atteindre à la vérité intellectuelle, sans une influence mystérieuse de Dieu, ne consistant point à se montrer lui-même à nous (objective), mais ~ produire (effective)

Dans notre ~e comme une image de ces

I I verites qui determine notre connaissance.

En langage scolastique, le rôle que les aristoteliciens attribuent à l'intellect agent qui produit les species impressae,

ce système l'attribue à Dieu: Lui, le maître, il parlerait à l'âme, en ce sens qu'il imprimerait cette représentation des vérités éternelles qui serait la / cause de notre connaissance. Les idées ne seraient pas innées comme dans les anges, mais successivement produites dans l'âme qui les connaîtrait en elle-même.

Does this proof for the existence of God have an essential dependence on St. Augustine's theory of illumination as interpreted above? Descoqs seems to maintain such an essential dependence. For, in his sketch of the proof, he explains that St. Augustine argued directly from the illumination of the soul by God to the existence of God.

10 I Portalie, nsaint Augustin,n DTC, I, 2336.

/ Cette rapidité avec laquelle s. Augustin expose l'essentiel de sa preuve, montre qu'il la tient pour évidente: et d'ailleurs est-ce bien une preuve, si par ce mot on entend une deduction logique qui nous conduit à la certitude? Si la pensee humaine est sans cease sous l'action de la lumi~re divine, comme le suppose s. Augustin, et si, sans elle,-elle ne peUt rien connaître, tout homme, par le fait m~me qu il m~ne une vie raisonnable, est en contact ~troit avec Dieu, il en a dej~ une connaissance
implicite. Il lui suffira donc de réfléchir sur lui-même, sur son activité intellectuelle, pour prendre aussitôt conscience de sa dépendance à l'égard de la vérité divine et donc de l'existence de cette vérité sans laquelle il ne pourrait même pas penser. Ainsi l'existence de Dieu nous est plutôt livrée par une analyse psychologique que par un véritable raisonnement.

Gilson agrees that the two—this proof and illumination—are essentially connected in St. Augustine. He gives his reason:

'Il est d'abord évident par ce qui précède que l'on ne saurait distinguer chez saint Augustin le problème de l'existence de Dieu du problème de la connaissance; c'est une seule et même question de savoir comment nous concevons la vérité et de connaître l'existence de la Vérité, aussi la preuve s'accomplit-elle toute entière à l'intérieur de la pensée, sans que la considération de 1er ordre sensible doive obligatoirement intervenir.'

Descoqs, Praelectiones, II, 131.

While not stating his opinion precisely about this proof, Portalie, seems to come to the same conclusion. For he says that the question of illumination is of the first importance in St. Augustine, 11 especially because of the role which this theory plays in the augustinian system: it is not an isolated problem, it is a part, an aspect, of the great general problem of our dependence upon God. In other words, he would favor the opinion upholding the essential connection of the two questions.

Boyer, on the other hand, maintains that the two are distinct. In his consideration of the proof, he deliberately separates the one question from the other, observing that, although one may cast light on the other, they should be treated separately.

Afin de décrire avec exactitude la manière dont saint Augustin a prouvé Dieu, il faut distinguer constamment cette question de plusieurs autres qui l'accompagnent d'ordinaire dans les textes. Etablir que Dieu est, ce n'est pas expliquer comment nous connaissions Dieu, ni comment il agit.
sur notre intelligence, ni quel rapport
il soutient avec les autres êtres, ni
même comment il est. Les théories de la
vision de Dieu, de l'illumination, de la
participation, de l'essence divine, se
rencontrent souvent, soit toutes ensemble
13 Portalè', "Saint Augustin," DTC, I, 2334: "• surtout 1
cause du rôle que joue cette théorie dans le système
augustinien: ce n'est pas un problème isolé, c'est une
partie, un aspect du grand problème général de notre
dépendance de Dieu."
soit l'une ou l'autre d'entre elles, dans
"la même page que la preuve de l'existence
de Dieu. Parce qu'elles sont connexes, on
est tenté de les confondre. Sans doute,
elles s'éclairent l'une l'autre, mais / je seulement quand chacune a été rendue
lumineuse pour sa part. Sinon, la synthèse est trouble, et le système encombre de
difficultés.
This sampling of opinions should indicate that this point
too is as much controverted as are the other questions concerned
with this proof. But what conclusions may be drawn from the
argument itself?
In the first place, it should be noted that St. Augustine
himself does not explicitly introduce his theory of illumination
into the argument. He begins the proof in the De Libero
Arbitrio by demonstrating that the human mind is capable of
knowing truth.
Quare prius abs te quaere, ut de manifestissimis capiamus exordium; utrum tu
ipse sis. An tu fortasse metuis, ne in
hac interrogatione fallaris, cum utique
si non esses, falli omnino non posses?15
But note that he makes no appeal to the doctrine of illumination
to establish this fact. Again, he arrives at the point where
14 Boyer, L'Idée, 49. Cf. also Essais, 51-53: "Comme toutefois
les deux questions sont de soi distinctes, nous ne
considérerons directement dans ces pages que la preuve de
Dieu, et nous négligerons les controverses qui portent
d'emblée sur l'illumination."
15 De Libero Arbitrio, II, 3, 7; PL 32, 1243.
the mind recognizes eternal truth above itself. How does the
mind get at this truth? Augustine does not answer the question
here. He states it as a fact of psychological experience: "It
is sufficiently clear that above our mind there is a law which
is called truth.16 Nor in any other place in his proof does
he explicitly advance his answer to the problem of knowledge. However, it should be noted that, in the second place, St. Augustine must have used his doctrine implicitly; that is, he presumed its validity throughout his proof. As Portalie says, illumination is not an isolated doctrine; it runs through all the speculations of the great Doctor. A priori, we might say that he would not abandon it in this particular demonstration. Of course, he could not mention it explicitly, because to say that God illumines our intellect is to presume what is to be proved; namely, that God exists. However, when we examine the proof, we see that Augustine chose to proceed by way of the mind, first demonstrating briefly the ability of the mind to know truth. He is not concerned here to explain how the mind gets at the truth; but it seems certain that, if questioned, he would give the answer he so often gave elsewhere--his doctrine of illumination. Since the whole proof proceeds through the mind to get at something above the mind, since this something above the mind is truth, since the mind knows this truth--since all this is so, it seems clear! _ posteriori that St. Augustine implicitly employed his illumination theory even in the proof for the existence of God.

It must be admitted, nevertheless, that even this implicit use of the theory does not as yet prove any essential dependence of the proof upon it. Whether there is such an essential connection is a further question. But first let us make one point clear. Descoqs implies that St. Augustine argued from his theory of illumination to the existence of God. According to Descoqs, Augustine says that every man has an implicit knowledge of God; by reflection on his own intellectual activity he learns of his dependence upon the divine truth and then of the existence of this truth without which he would not even be able to think. Why do we know truth and justice? Because the divine truth and justice illumine us. In this way Descoqs seems to argue that Augustine used his very doctrine of illumination to prove the existence of God. Whether or not this is really the sense of Descoqs' words, the fact clearly stands that such a procedure would be invalid. It would be a vicious circle to advance a theory of knowledge which implies the existence of God, and then to demonstrate the existence of God by means of this
theory. However, there is no evidence that St. Augustine
proceeds in this way. He first establishes the ability of the
mind to grasp truth, independently of any theory as to how the
mind grasps it. Then, again independently of any theory, he
appeals to the fact that the mind recognizes immutable truth
above itself. Finally, he shows that God must exist if this
truth exists. In the whole procedure, be it noted, he argues
to and from facts, but not from his theory of illumination.
Nevertheless, it seems to me that there is, in Augustine's
mind and method, an essential connection of this proof for the
existence of God and the solution of the problem of knowledge
by illumination. It was pointed out in the previous chapter
that this proof is ontological if taken as a separate argument.
Whereas Augustine argues from the existence of immutable and
eternal truth to the existence of God as--so we think--the
sufficient reason for this truth; in a Thomistic explanation
the theory of abstraction would account for the immutability,
eternity, and universality of truth, given sensible things and
the abstractive power of the mind. For it was noted that, if
one argued from the existence of truth as abstracted by the
mind and so in the ideal order, to the real existence of God,
then one would fall into the ontological error. It appeared
that, objectively, Augustine had fallen into this error.
However, his method seems to indicate that he did not wish to
take this truth as abstracted, and yet regarded his proof as
complete in itself. If in his solution to the problem of
knowledge there is no abstractive process by which truths in
the ideal order would be universal and immutable; if the only
explanation is that these truths must have God as the sufficient
reason for their universality and immutability; in that
hypothesis the argument would be valid. Therefore, if St.
Augustine assumed in his proof the validity of his illumination
theory, a theory in which there would be no abstraction in the
Thomistic sense; then for him the argument would be valid.
No other explanation than this latter (barring simple error on
Augustine’s part) seems adequate. Consequently, both to his
mind and in fact the proof has an essential dependence on the
doctrine of illumination.

18 Boyer, Essais, ch. 5 and 6, attempts to show that Augustine
actually did hold abstraction in the Thomistic sense, or at
least that this is not incompatible with his doctrine.
Descoqs remarks: "La these du P. Boyer sur le thomisme
de s. Augustin et le possibilit de ramener sa theorie de la
connaissance ~ l abstraction aristotelico-thomiste, est de
plus en plus battue en br'hche." (Praelectiones, I, 559.)
19 Descoqs, Praelectiones, II, 132-133: flpour qui adopte la
metaphysique platonicienne du monde des intelligibles et des
idees, ou pour qui admet deja Dieu et l'illumination du
Verbe, une telle maniere de voir vaut sans doute; mais pour
qui n'admet pas cette met~hysique des idees, ou ne tient
pas encore Dieu, il est bien evident que la preuve qui ~ ~ s'y appuie n'a plus la meme force, si
meme elle en conserve
aucune."
Before concluding this chapter, it might be well to
remark with Portalie that st. Augustine's doctrine of illumination is still a free theological
opinion, which may be used
to solve the problem of knowledge. st~ Thomas treated it with
respect. Suarez commented that in so obscure a matter liberty
remains for the theologian. Illustrious men, particularly of
the school of st. Bonaventure, have defended it. Although it
does not seem even probable philosophically today, it has had
considerable historical importance.
In summary, these points may be set down. The theory of
illumination has been variously interpreted. The interpretation
here followed is that which explains God's influence in intellectual knowledge as the
production of an image of the truth
in the human mind. Although the question of the essential
connection of this proof with the doctrine of illumination is
controverted, this conclusion seems valid from a study of the
proof itself: St. Augustine does not argue from his theory to
the existence of God, but in his method there is an essential
connection between the two.
CF~TER VII
THE SPIRIT OF THE PROOF
Although the logical steps and principles of St.
Augustine's proof have been sufficiently analyzed, there remain
to be discussed certain characteristics or features of this
proof which indicate the spirit in which it was conceived and
set down.
One characteristic stroke of St. Augustine's pen is the
discursive nature of the argument. In the first chapter a
complete account of the proof and the parts of the De Libero
Arbitrio preceding it was set down. There were seen all the
nuances, the short halts, the rhetorical flourishes, in which
st. Augustine seemed to take delight. There is the step-by-step
procedure from inanimate things all the way up to the intellectual soul and above. There is the
slow build-up, beginning
with a demand for faith in God's existence and a demonstration
of the ability of the mind to attain truth. There is the questioning method and a concretizing of the problem, the effective practical method of the apologist. There is the pause to praise Wisdom and to urge Evodius to embrace it—and this in flowing rhetoric. There is all the sinuousness of a majestic river flowing to its outlet. In fact, the whole proof is inserted into a discussion of free will and the origin of evil. Not for Augustine the short, sharp strokes of the scholastic syllogism, not even in this work where he deliberately sets himself to demonstrate by reason the existence of God. De Mondaton gives a good description of this method: 

I Soit qu’il la développe en un dialogue avec son ami Evodius • a travers l'entrecroisement des reflexions, soit qu’il la resserre • I en quelques phrases d'une brieve musculeuse et comme fremissant.e, jamais il ne manque d'y mettre une richesse de nuances que ne laisserait point soupçonner le lucide raccourci de la forme scolastique.3

Moreover, in presentations of the proof in other works, st. Augustine becomes even more rhetorical. In the Confessio—,4 which we will have occasion to quote below, in sermons and discourses, or in the De Diversis Quaestionibus LXXXIII,5 he demonstrates that style which is the wonder and despair of those who read him. For example:

Omne quod est, aut eodem modo semper est, aut non. Et omnia anima omni corpore melior est. Melius est enim omne quod vivificat, quam id quod vivificatur: corpus autem ab anima vivificari, non a corpore animam nemo ambiguicit. ～od autem corpus non est, et tamen a1 iquid est, aut anima est, aut ea melius aliquid. Deterius enim omni corpore nihil est: quia et si materiam quia dixerit, unde ipsum corpus fit; recte, quoniam caret omni specie, nihil dicitur • Si quid enim esset medium, aut vivificaretur ab anima, aut vivificaret animam, aut
neutrum: aut vivificaret corpus aut vivificaretur a corpore aut neutrum.6
Perhaps even more characteristic of St. Augustine’s
method is the psychological approach here employed. ^ he proof
begins with a demonstration of the mind’s capacity for truth.,
The progress is ever upwards toward the soul. Then comes an
analysis of the psychological fact: the mind recognizes above
itself the immutable law of Truth. So studiously does he
employ the method in this proof—as should be clear from the
account given—that both J. Martin and Descoqs, to name two,
maintain that the argument is rather an analysis of our implicit
knowledge of God than a proper demonstration. Influenced
perhaps by his Neoplatonic background, Augustine always favored
De Diversis Quaestionibus LXXXIII, q.54; PL 40, 38.
'J.' Martin, Saint Au~ustin, lol: "Tout, pour saint Augustin,
se ramene a ce poin fondamental: l'intelligence hunlaine
a primitivement une connaissance de Dieu, totale et tr~s
confuse • et, pour ne pas sortir du sujet, elle verifie
que, prouver l'existence de Dieu, c'est percevoir avec ‘ quelque clarte ce que l•on savait deja,
mais trop
confuseusement." - Descoqs, Praelectiones, II, 131: 11Ainsi
l'existence de Dieu nous est plut8t livre par une analyse
psychologique que par un veritable raisonnement."
such an approach, an approach as modern as television. And in
this sort of study he was a master. Portalie says of him:
Dans l'etude de l'~e, Augustin est plus
heureux que dans son angelologie trop pen~tree de neoplatonisme. Ici il semble
vivre dans son domaine: un don exquis
d'observation int~rieure et d'analyse
penEltrante lui ;>ermet de dElcrire avec une
saisissante precision les phenom~nes les
plus d~licats de notre vie intime.8
Some elements in the proof which rise from this background
of Neoplatonism may be indicated. .
he most noticeable is the
very principle which Augustine employed. He asked Evodius:
"Are you willing to admit that God exists if I can prove to
you th&t there exists something superior to the human
intellect?"9 Now this line of attack is directly out of
Plotinus, as Augustine himself says in the De Civitate Dei.
Dicit ergo ille magnus Platonicus, animam
rationalem (sive potius intellectualis
dicenda sit, ex quo genere etiam immortaliium beatorumque animas esse intelligit,
quos in coelestibus sedibus habitare non
dubitat) non habere supra se naturam nisi
Dei, qui fabricatus est mundum, a quo et ipsa facta est.
Another indication of his philosophical background is
9 De Libero Arbitrio, II, 6, i~PL 32, 1248: "Quid si iriquid invenire potuerimus, quod non solum esse non dubites, sed eti~ ipsa nostra ratione praestantius? dubitabisne illud quidquid est, Deum dicere?"
10 De Civitate Dei, X, 2; PL 41, 279-280.
found in his mode of advancing step by step through the various grades of being. He wishes to transcend the sensible order, but in the longest expose of his proof he feels obliged to do so gradually. As Boyer and Descoqs remark, once he has traveled this route, he need not traverse all the steps again. However, when he follows the itinerary from start to finish in such a way that Evodius may follow him, he takes one step at a time to arrive at the truth above our intellect. This procedure through the "degrees of being" may also be called Platonic. Again, the effort to pass from things to their ideas, from the sensible to the intelligible, is distinctive of St. Augustine. Gilson observes that his normal route is from the exterior world to the soul, and from the soul to God.11 One reason for this is undoubtedly the prominence of ideas in Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy. Another reason is the fact that Augustine had at one time conceived of God in a material way, as the Confessiones abundantly testify. Now he wishes to prove the spirituality of God by placing him clearly above the intelligibles.12 And it may be added that his concern to establish the mind's ability to grasp truth, at the very outset, grows out of his own Manichaean difficulties. For 11 Gilson, Introduction, 24: " ••• alors m~me qu' elle part du monde ext~rieur, ltitin6raire normal d'une preuve augustinienne va done du monde ~ l•Bme et de l'rune a Dieu."
12 Cf. fhonnard 1 s observation, given in Chapter IV, p. 57.
the Manichaens denied that man can know anything with certainty. These more or less autobiographical marks, then, are also characteristic.
Something which he did not learn from his early philosophical training, but which he garnered from his own hard experience, is also evident in the proof. It is the insistence on faith, coming from belief in authority.
We all remember the chapters of his Confessions, where Augustine relates how, after vainly trying to reach truth, and
eventually faith, by means of reason alone, he had at last discovered that all the rational truth about God that had been taught by the philosophers could be grasped at once, pure of all errors, and enriched with many a more than philosophical truth by the simple act of faith of the most illiterate among the faithful. From that time on, Augustine was never to forget that the safest way to reach truth is not the one that starts from reason and then goes on from rational certitude to faith, but, on the contrary, the way whose starting point is faith and then goes on from revelation to reason.13

Having once learned this lesson, Augustine indeed never failed to draw profit from it. He demands faith in the existence of God before he seeks to prove that fact rationally in the De Libero Arbitrio.14 The whole section which, in the De~ Religione, precedes the proof is concerned with establishing the priority of faith on authority and the reasonableness of faith.15 Only then does he attempt to prove by reason what he already knows by faith. Both the effort to bring in reason to support faith and the clearly defined subordination of reason to faith are typical of the great African Bishop.

To this list, which is not intended to be exhaustive, two other distinctive marks of the hand of Augustine may be added. The one is his affective method which culminates in the other, a great wonder at God Who may be enjoyed in mystical contemplation. The two may be treated together.

As Augustine led Evodius along the path toward God, he came upon Wisdom. Wisdom is a part of the proof. But for Augustine it is more than a logical step in an argument. It is something to be admired and praised and sought.

At illa veritatis et sapientiae pulchritude, tantum adsit perseverans voluntas fruendi, nee multitudine audientium constipata

14 De Libero Arbitrio, II, 2, 6; PL 32, 1243: n ••• neque quisquwm inveniendo Deo fit idoneus, nisi antea crediderit quod est postea cogniturus." Again, Ibid., II, 2, 5; PL 32, 1242: "A. Illud saltern tibi certum es~eum esse. E. Etia~a hoc non contemplando, sed credendo
inconcussum teneo."
15 De Vera Religione, chapters 24-28; PL 34, 141-144. -- f secludit venientes, nee peragitur tempore, nee migrat locis, nee nocte intercipitur, nee umbra intercluditur, nee sensibus corporis subjacet.16

And again he says: "Ecce tibi est ipsa veritas: amplectere illam si potes, et fruere illa, et delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui.nl7 Now, for Augustine, God is, above all, Truth. He has said it in the works of which we have given an account. He said it often, but nowhere more clearly than in the De Trinitate: uEcce vide, si potes, o anima pergravata corpore quod corrumpitur, et onusta terrenis cogitationibus multis et variis; ecce vide, si potes; Deus Veritas est.nl8

When we realize this fact, we understand the Saint's insistence upon embracing the truth. This grasp of truth may be only that which is ordinarily permitted to men. It may amount to supernatural ecstasy. Boyer believes that the logical culmination of the argument was, for Augustine, a mystical vision of God.l9 Surely there are texts which bear out the opinion.

In the De Ordine, after proving the existence of God, 16 De Libero Arbitrio, II, 14, 38; PL 32, '1262.
17 IOid., II, 13, 35; PL 32, 1260.
18 ue'Trinitate, VIII, 2, 3; PL 42, 949.
19 BOyer, Essais, 77-96.
st. Augustine breaks out into ecstatic praise of Him.
Cum autem se composuerit et-ordinaverit, ac concinnam pulchramque reddiderit, audebit jam Deum videre, atque ipsum fontem unde manat omne verum, ipsumque Patrem Veritatis. Deus magne, qui erunt illi oculi l Quam sani, quam decori, quam valentes, quam constantes, quam sereni, quam beati J Quid autem est illud quod vident? quid, quaeso? Quid arbitremur, quid aestimemus, quid loquamur? Quotidiana verba occurrunt, et sordidata aunt omnia vilissimis rebus. Nihil amplius dicam, nisi promitti nobis aspectum pulchritudinis, cujus imitatione pulchra cujus comparatione foeda sunt caetera.20
And the famous passage in the Confessiones, already so often referred to and quoted, seems to corroborate the opinion that this last step is ecstasy.21

Furthermore, in the Confessiones and the De Trinitate, St. Augustine describes what might be a supernatural vision. It is brief and difficult to retain: "Ecce in ipso primo ictu quo velut corruscatione perstringeris, cum dicitur Veritas, mane, si potes. Sed non potes; relaberis in ista solita atque terrena."22 It is granted to few, the clean of heart: Sed et priusquam videamus conspicere atque percipere Deum, sicut conspici et percipi potest, quod mundicordibus licet: Beati enim mundicordes, quia ipsi Deum videbunt; nisi per fidem diligatur, non poterit cor mundari

20 De Ordine, II, 19, 61; PL 32, 1019.
21 Confessiones, VII, 10, 16; PL 32, 742.
22 De Trinitate, VIII, 2, 3; PL 42, 949.

Possibly it is supernatural ecstasy which is described in the Confessiones, where St. Augustine describes a special sort of vision •

• et venimus in mentes nostras et transcendimus eas, ut attingeremus regionem ubertatis indeficientis, ubi pascis

Israel in aeternum veritatis pabulo, et ubi vita sapientia est, per quam fiunt omnia ista, et quae fuerunt, et quae futura aunt, et ipsa non fit, sed sic est ut fuit, et sic erit semper; quin potius fuisset et futurum esse non est in ea, sed esse solum, quoniam aeterna eat; nam fuisset et futurum esse, non est aeternum. Et dum loquimur et inhiamus illi, attingimus earn modice toto ictu cordia.24

We are not concerned here, however, to prove that the argument for God's existence finds its culmination in ecstasy. It is enough to have shown that Augustine's method here, as in all his works, is effective, that it tends toward union with that which it seeks.

These features of the proof, then, are characteristic of St. Augustine's style, procedure, and way of thinking: the discursive nature of the argument, the rhetorical flourishes in style, the psychological approach to the problem, the
indications of a Neoplatonic philosophical background, and finally the affective method leading to an enjoyment of God, probably in mystical contemplation. Thus, as this is "la demonstration augustinienne par excellence," it is also a proof typical in every way of St. Augustine's method and manner.

CONCLUSION
The picture would seem to be complete. But before the "pin.xit" is affixed in the corner, it might be well to make a rapid review of the whole process, from the broad sketch to the detailed drawing, from the critical testing to the appreciation. First was given a faithful account of St. Augustine's proof for the existence of God as he traced it out most fully in the De Libero Arbitrio. Then, in order that the route he took stand out more clearly, that same route was followed in the De Vera Religione. Finally, the whole itinerary was gone over once again, and a master chart, as it were, was compiled from directions given in several of the Saint's works.
Next was the period of testing. Here it was first decided that the proof finally rests upon the principle of sufficient reason, for the argument ultimately proves the existence of God as the sole sufficient reason for the immutable truth which exists above our intellect. In the fifth chapter, in answer to the question, "Is the proof ontological?" the conclusion was reached that it is ontological, inasmuch as it seems to involve an illegitimate transfer from the logical to the real order. But at the same time it is not ontologistic, since it does not depend on a direct vision or God. With regard to the connection or the proof with St. Augustine's doctrine or illumination, although it seems clear that the Doctor did not argue from this doctrine to the existence or God, and although he did not explicitly use the doctrine in his proof; nevertheless, the argument does have an essential dependence on this theory, it it is to be considered a complete proof. Finally, the proof is entirely characteristic or st. Augustine, for the distinctive marks or his genius may clearly be seen throughout it. This paper may end with the excellent observation which Gilson makes about the proof:

Cette tendance proronde a trouver en Dieu seul la raison suffisante de l'idée que nous avons de lui est le lien qui rattache à la metaphysique "augustinienne celles de saint
Anselme, de saint Bonaventure, de Duns Scot et de Descartes; mais, en un sens, la demonstration qu'il en propose depasse de beaucoup celles qu'elle a inspirées, car elle n'est ni un argument, ni une suite d'arguments, mais une metaphysique complète, plus une morale, avec la mystique même qu'elle la couronne. Le doute initial, l'appel à la roi, l'evidence de la pensée, la spiritualité de l'âme et la transcendance de la vérité, chacun des moments successifs de la preuve est la traduction d'une expérience.

personelle qu'il importe de méditer pour que l'interprétation metaphysique en devienne intelligible.

1 Gilson, Introduction, 29

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources
Augustinus, Aurelius, Opera Omnia, in Patrologiae Latinae cursus Completus, editor ;r. P. Migne, Paris, Garnier Fratres, 1887, 221 vol.:
Confessionum Libri XIII, vol. 32.
De Civitate Dei, vol. 41.
De Diversis Quaestionibus LXXXIII, vol. 40.
De Genesi ad Litteram Libri XII, vol. 54.
De Magistro Liber ~ vol. 32.
De Trinitate Libri XV, vol. 42.
De Vera Religione Liber Unus, vol. 34.
Soliloquiorum Libri ~ vol. 32.

Secondary Sources
Bourke, Vernon J., Augustine's Quest of Wisdom, Milwaukee, Bruce Publishing Company, 1945. --
Boyer, S.J., Charles, Christianisme et N~o-Platonisme dans la Formation de Saint Augustin, Parra, Gabriel Beauchesne; 1920.
--------, L'Idée de Vérité dans la Philosophie de Saint Augustin, Paris, Gaor~el Beau~hesne, 192b. --
Cayr~, A.A., Fulbert, Pr~cis de Patrologie et d'Histoire de la Th~ologie, Paris, DesCT~e et Cie, 1~. --
Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., R., God, His Existence and His Nature,
translated by Bede Rose, St. Louis, Herder Book Company, 1946.
Geny, S.J., Paul, Brevis Conspectus Historiae Philosophiae,
Gilson, Etienne, God and Philosophy, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1941.
Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, r93IT:
Hontheim, S.J., Joseph, Institutiones Theodicaeae, Fribourg,
B. Herder Book Company, 1893.
Loinaz, S.J., John R., Praelectiones et Theologia Naturali,
Taurini, Marietti, 1929.
Martin, Jules, Saint Augustin, Paris, Librairie Felix Alcan,
1923.
Mercier, D.J., Metaphysique Generale, Louvain, Institut Superieur de Philosopie, 1923, 2 vol.
Palumbo, Franciscus Antonius, I1 heodicea, Rome, Pontificium Athenaeum Urbanianum, 1942.
Articles
De Mondadon, L., "De la Connaissance de Soi-meme ala Connaissance de Dieu," Recherches de Science Religieuse,
IV (1913), 148 ff.
van Steenberghen, F., "La Philosophie de s. Augustin d'apres lea travaux. du Centenaire," R~vue Neo-Scolastique de Philosophie, XXXV (1933), 106 ££.

A quote from Catholic Community Forum:

"St. Thomas, in his Summa Theologica, sets forth five separate proofs for the existence of God,
Unlike St. Anselm's proof, which deals with pure concepts, St. Thomas' proofs rely on the world
of our experience-what we can see around us. In these proofs we can easily see the influence
of Aristotle and his doctrine of the Four Causes.

1) The Proof from Motion. We observe motion all around us. Whatever is in motion now was at
rest until moved by something else, and that by something else, and so on. But if there were an
infinite series of movers, all waiting to be moved by something else, then actual motion could
never have got started, and there would be no motion now. But there is motion now. So there must be a First Mover which is itself unmoved. This First Mover we call God.

2) The Proof from Efficient Cause. Everything in the world has its efficient cause--its maker--and that maker has its maker, and so on. The coffee table was made by the carpenter, the carpenter by his or her parents, and on and on. But if there were just an infinite series of such makers, the series could never have got started, and therefore be nothing now. But there is something everything there is! So there must have been a First Maker, that was not itself made, and that First Maker we call God.

3) The Proof from Necessary vs. Possible Being. Possible, or contingent, beings are those, such as cars and trees and you and I, whose existence is not necessary. For all such beings there is a time before they come to be when they are not yet, and a time after they cease to be when they are no more. If everything were merely possible, there would have been a time, long ago, when nothing had yet come to be. Nothing comes from nothing, so in that case there would be nothing now! But there is something now-the world and everything in it-so there must be at least one necessary being. This Necessary Being we call God.

4) The Proof from Degrees of Perfection. We all evaluate things and people in terms of their being more or less perfectly true, good, noble and so on. We have certain standards of how things and people should be. But we would have no such standards unless there were some being that is perfect in every way, something that is the truest, noblest, and best. That Most Perfect Being we call God.

5) The Proof from Design. As we look at the world around us, and ourselves, we see ample evidence of design--the bird's wing, designed for the purpose of flight; the human ear, designed for the purpose of hearing; the natural environment, designed to support life; and on and on. If there is design, there must be a designer. That Designer we call God triskelion, I interpret proof #3 as talking about the creation of the elements; proof #2 as talking about the forming of the elements into creation; and proof #1 as creation being put into motion.”

Saint Augustine and Aquinas are both famously known for their philosophical and theological explorations, with Augustine writing in the late fourth to early fifth century and Aquinas in the thirteenth. While they are both known for attempting to reconcile ancient philosophy with Christianity, they went about this task in different ways. Augustine is known for taking a Platonic route, whereas Aquinas was much more Aristotelian. The two both explored the faith and reason dichotomy, the nature of the soul, and knowledge.

Section I: Faith and Reason

With the Middle Ages came the rebirth of the idea that religious belief did not only stem from faith, but also from reason. This idea was no stranger to ancient thinkers, but it
reappeared with Augustine. To be clear on what the two are; faith is seen by the two philosophers as a trust in scripture and one’s own personal belief that God exists. Reason would be a more rational approach to the proof of God, with appeal to evidence and logic. St. Augustine believed that faith and reason had an interdependent relationship in understanding God, but also that faith would always be the truest way to God. Additionally, both faith and reason were only accessible due to divine grace of God. As stated before, Augustine was very much a Neo-Platonist. He believed because the Platonists studied the eternal and unchanging that these ideas were beneficial to understanding and clarifying the Christian faith.

While Augustine believed that using reason (which for him included logic, history, and natural sciences) was beneficial to illuminating the Christian faith, he also believed that using these avenues in order to do so was only necessary if one was not a Christian. He believed that a Christian did not have to take such recourse to philosophy (reason) because he felt faith was superior to reason in terms of belief in God. He believed an intellectual investigation of faith should be understood as fides quaerens intellectum, or faith seeking understanding. Augustine held that faith was to come first, especially if reason should contradict scripture. In such a case, he regarded the Church, rather than the individual believer, as having the final authority to say what “reason” could be used in one’s personal inquiry into their faith.

Saint Thomas Aquinas took a fairly different stance on the faith and reason dichotomy. He did not make as clear a distinction between faith and reason, as Augustine did, but did believe that all creation and truth is emanated from God. Aquinas did not believe that reason and faith conflicted, though there are truths that reason cannot attain that faith can. Aquinas called this idea a “two fold truth”. He held that something can be true of faith, false or inconclusive in philosophy, but never the other way around. This idea supports the idea that while reason can lead one to a greater understanding of the world, it cannot lead to attainment of the higher truths that faith can.

Aquinas believed that faith and reason, are essential and not contradictory, in fact, knowledge is essential in the act of faith. He asserts that faith is the intellectual act, and its object is truth. Thus, any truth will necessarily lead to faith. Aquinas claimed that while people cannot comprehend God as an object, the intellect can grasp his existence indirectly, and this grasp comes through reason.

Aquinas somewhat agrees with Augustine on the question of contradiction between reason and scripture. Aquinas maintained that while there may be no evidence of something from sensational experience, which he took to be how we perceive the world, we must trust in “articles of faith” which he defines as divine testimony, or scripture. For example, though there is no sensational evidence for the world not being eternal, Aquinas believed that the “article of faith” (and through his logical argument) that we must accept this as true.

Section II: The Soul

Over the course of his writings, Augustine made changes to his views on the soul. In his
earlier writings he took on a very Platonic definition in that the human soul is a substance that is capable of reason and is made to rule the human body. This soul is separate from the body and is merely using it. This view changed a bit later in his writings, when he places more importance on the unity of the body and soul. While Augustine believes that a human being certainly is a rational soul that controls the human body, he also says that the “soul which has a body does not make two persons, but one human being” (Johannis evangelium tractatus). However, he does remain true to his Platonic ideals by placing the soul in the Plato’s real of understanding or forms, where abstract ideas reside. Augustine believed the soul was a “rider” of the body, which made the clear distinction of material and immaterial substances; body and soul.

Christianity teaches there is life after death. Augustine was committed to this view as he took scripture to be the direct word of God. He believed that “after the Fall [original sin] this [the afterlife] was not available to us. In redeeming us from our original sin by his death and resurrection from death, Jesus redeemed us from original sin, restored our relationship with God, and made it possible for us once again to live eternally with God in the life hereafter.” (Wall) Augustine believed that the soul went on to live in kingdom of heaven, and entrance to the kingdom was “available to all who love God and their neighbor.”

Augustine has two arguments, derived from Platonic reasoning, as to why the soul is immortal. His first argument pertains to science. Augustine argues that if science exists anywhere, it exists in the living. Also, since science is eternal, that in which it lives must be eternal too. He further argues that humans are the only living beings who possess a rational soul, and cannot reason without science. Therefore, science must exist in human soul; thereby concluding the human soul is immortal. Augustine’s second argument for the immortality of the soul is that the “mind is life, and thus it cannot lack itself.” He explains this further by asserting that when a living thing dies, we do not think of the physical matter as being dead, but as it being abandoned by life. Augustine believed the mind (soul) to be source of life for a body, and something cannot lack itself; the soul cannot lack itself, thus it cannot die. (De Immortalitate Animae)

Thomas Aquinas had similar views in that there is indeed life after death, and that the soul is separable from the body, but went about supporting these claims in a different way than Augustine. First, we will explore Aquinas’ view of the nature of the soul. Aquinas took a very Aristotelian viewpoint this topic in sticking with his idea of “causes”. Aristotle asserted that there were “four causes”, material, formal, efficient, and final. Aquinas agreed with Aristotle in believing that the soul was the “formal” cause of the body. This made Aquinas’ view on the soul compatible with Aristotle’s because it set up his argument to suggest that the soul could be separated by abstraction from the body, which will be explained further in this section.

One of Aquinas’ weaker arguments for life after death is that of desire. This argument states that no desire goes in vain under God. By this statement, Aquinas infers that the desire to live after death of the body would not go in vain either. A stronger argument for the
possibility of the immortal soul is concept formation. Aquinas asserted that because people are capable of thinking of abstract ideas apart from material substances, for example, thinking of a triangle without seeing one, that this is evidence of the soul being able to exist without attachment to material substances also.

Perhaps the strongest argument Aquinas made for the immortality of the soul is the justification of separation of the body and soul. As stated before, Aquinas was very influenced by Aristotle, and that is no different when he accounts for the soul. To understand Aquinas’ views on the soul we must first clarify between “subsistent” and “substance”. A subsistent for Aquinas is something that is able to exist on its own, not in another. A substance is something that “is subsistent and complete in nature – a nature being an intrinsic principle of movement and change in the subject.” (SEP) Thus, both the human body and soul are both capable of existing on their own, but they are only substances when joined together in their complete nature. By this Aquinas also is accepting that the soul is the form of the body, which is yet another Aristotelian view he adopted in order to argue for the immortality of the soul.

Aquinas argues that because the soul is a spiritual entity, it does not depend on matter and can exist separately from the body. Aquinas believes that the human existence in its perfect form is in the dual nature of soul and body, which relates directly to his belief in resurrection in the afterlife. Aquinas appears to have three arguments for the immortality of the soul.

Secion III: Knowledge

Augustine drew much of his theory of knowledge from Plato, especially in his desire for certain knowledge rather than changing or impermanent knowledge. Contrary to Aquinas, Augustine was not an empiricist. Augustine believed “that the truth is found from within, through a process of illumination, and not by observing the world of nature. It had been Plato’s view that such knowledge arose from a process of remembering the Forms from a past existence, which was made possible by the Good illuminating the mind to remember. Augustine builds upon these Platonic ideas but alters them dramatically” (Wall). Augustine agreed with Plato in the sense that true knowledge came from within, but Plato believed it came from “remember”, whereas Augustine believed it came from “illumination”.

Augustine believed that these certainties could not be taught, just as Plato thought, but Augustine thought these ideas came from illumination through Christ, the divine teacher. This is why Augustine believed reason to be divine, “because understanding is made possible by the “light of Christ”, and thus is a gift from God” (Wall). Augustine believed that in any instance an idea is formed in the rational human soul, synonymous with mind in most cases, it is because Christ “illuminated” us and placed that idea there. Thus, rationality is divine.

To equate Augustine back to Plato, both philosophers believed that it was impossible to attain knowledge through the perceptible world. This idea stems from Platonic theory of knowledge in that the material world (the first layer of Plato’s Divided Line) is ever changing.
and unreliable as a source of information. Just as Plato believed it was an impossible source of information about his Good, which we can liken to Augustine’s God, there is no way for Augustine to learn about God through a shifting world when he desires to know about the eternal God. Augustine did not hold the belief that we form abstract concepts from seeing multiples of certain objects, or learning of a concept, but also through illumination, equatable to Plato’s belief that one must “remember” abstract concepts, or Forms.

Both philosophers place much importance on the faith one must have in God through mystical experience, but treat sensory information very different. Aquinas, contrary to Augustine, was quite the empiricist. As he drew on Aristotle, who was also an empiricist, Aquinas believed the senses are that through which we find the truth. Aquinas, along with Aristotle, believed that abstraction is a process that takes place in the human mind. A person, after seeing multiple material objects, such as a ball, will be able to abstract the general form of the object, thus being able to construct the abstract idea of a ball in their mind, which would be a process done by the “active intellect”. Aquinas expanded upon Aristotle’s ideas of the intellect and how we understand information. Aquinas argued that the intellect understands “phantasms”, or internal copies of what we perceive, by abstracting. The “passive intellect” is the part of the intellect that knows material objects, that which Aquinas believed is how we know all objects. To understand phantasms, we need the passive intellect to understand what we are seeing. The active intellect is the part of the intellect able to abstract from knowledge of the passive.

Both Aquinas and Augustine agree upon the fact that God is the object of ultimate knowledge. The philosophers would see eye to eye on the fact that one can know God through reason, while no one can know or understand God fully because man is but God’s creation.

While both of these theologians and philosophers maintained ideals greatly influenced by Christianity, they both reconciled their beliefs in very different ways. Augustine was very much influenced by Plato, whereas Aquinas was guided very intensely by Aristotle. The ancient philosophers had extreme sway on both Augustine and Aquinas, and it showed in their philosophies of faith and reason, the soul, and knowledge greatly. One concept the two were in agreement on, despite the many differences they had, is that God was the object of human all three of these topics.
AUGUSTINE'S PHILOSOPHICAL
ARGUMENTS FOR THE HUMAN SOUL
AS A SPIRITUAL SUBSTANCE

Acknowledgments
For the conception and completion of this work I am particularly indebted to Prof. Josef Seifert who through his own studies on the body-mind problem in general and his personal love for Augustine inspired me to choose and write on this topic, which work he then accompanied and furthered with many valuable hints and suggestions. My sincere thanks I want to express also to my Second Reader Prof. Fernando Inciarte for his kind and spontaneous acceptance of this task.

In a special way, I am committed to Dr John Crosby who not only improved my work stylistically, but who stimulated me philosophically by many critical, yet thought-provoking remarks. I am also grateful to Fr Tadeusz Styczen and Dr Robert Wood for their critical reading and commenting on this work, and to Fr. Placid Csizmazia O. Cist. for his co-operative help with the translating of Augustine into English.

Also I do not want to forget the technical help and moral support that I received from my friends in the German College in Rome during the final stages of completing this work. At last, I want to thank the entire philosophical community of professors, students and friends, formerly at the University of Dallas and now at the International Academy of Philosophy, for their stimulating interest in the pursuit of philosophy and for the many inspiring discussions in which I could participate, expressing my sincere hope that this 'tradition' may continue and may yield fruit in the service of the philosophia perennis.

Introduction
St Augustine (November 13, 354-August 28, 430) is a figure whose influence on the development of ideas is undisputed. Only a few thinkers have achieved an equally lasting effect on the history of thought. This is one main reason for the vastness of the literature that has been devoted to him. Numerous monographs have been, and are still being, written on various aspects of his thought and on him personally as a man who lived a most unusual and extraordinary life. He was, and is, of interest not only for theologians, but also for philosophers from various backgrounds, for historians, psychologists, linguists, and for anyone who wants to be spiritually nourished by his ideas.

In the light of this great number of studies of St Augustine's life and thought the question could
be raised why one should add a further work to this list. What fruit could it yield to study him anew
after so much work has been done on him? Is such an endeavour not doomed, from the very
outset, to result in a mere repetition of what has already been found and explicated? For
various reasons, I think that such an enterprise is nevertheless worth pursuing, particularly
with respect to St Augustine's philosophy of mind.

Augustine, to my mind, was a thinker who possessed an amazing capability of penetrating into
and grasping the structures and reasons of reality in a way that in its originality and depth has
rarely been surpassed. He was one of those minds that in their 'restlessness of heart' are
existentially driven to finding truth, troubled by the idea of possibly being in illusion and error.
He can Introduction
rightly be called one of the greatest 'searchers for the truth' in the history of thought. From
this personal zeal for truth sprang his desire to communicate to others what he discovered as
true, encouraging his friends and students to open up their mental eyes and to see 'on their
own' what is given in reality. He stimulated them to ask questions and to discuss disputed
issues in order to approach reality originally and to grasp ever more deeply its inexhaustible
richness. Any study, therefore, that seeks to follow the countless analyses and hints of reality in
Augustine's work can and should constitute
a philosophic grasp of things alone does far more than repeat already existing secondary
literature. For to rediscover and perhaps to unfold a great mind saw is as such a new original
insight into reality, especially when it brings to light ever deeper dimensions of being.

Surveying the available literature on our topic, one finds a surprising lack of such a
philosophical method of studying Augustine, which will more concretely be outlined below.
And above
all, the wealth of insight that is found particularly in Augustine's argumentation for the spiritual
incorporeality and substantiality of the human mind has hardly been studied and developed in
one
single systematic treatment.5 Yet it is precisely this topic that not only played a prominent role
in Augustine's own thought,6 but that is also of vital interest for the contemporary state of
mind, in which
various materialistic positions are predominant. Therefore, in view of the literature, or lack of
it, on this question in Augustine, and in view of the present-day discussion of the body-mind
problem
in general, to 'dig out' his analyses and arguments, even by complementing and unfolding them
in the light of subsequent developments of Augustinian thought and by securing them against
critical
objections not explicitly posed to Augustine, seems to be a particularly needed endeavour. It is
in this that I see the main contribution the present study is to make.

Starting point and method
In an early work, Augustine writes that he wants to know nothing more than God and the
This desire can truly be said to permeate his whole life and thought both before and after his Introduction conversion. As he later recounts in his Confessiones, his reading of Cicero's Hortensius in his youth already awoke in him the striving for timeless wisdom and for God. It led him to join the Manicheans from whom he hoped to find this wisdom. But their dualistic of the two equal powers of good and evil, and of the soul being imprisoned in an essentially evil body, left him disappointed. Particularly their solution to the problem of the origin of evil was for him extremely dissatisfying. He left the Manicheans. After having gone through a period of sceptical doubt, he heard some sermons of Ambrose in Milan and encountered through him the books of the Platonists. These helped him to overcome his earlier view of God whom he had conceived solely in terms of corporeal images, and to get accustomed to the idea of a purely spiritual being.

Through the Manichean influence Augustine, as he later writes, went through a period in which he was unable to think of anything spiritual. 'Being' was for him what man perceives through the eyes - that is, something corporeal; whatever could not be thought except in terms of bodily extension he held to be nothing at all (nihil prorsus esse arbitrabar). Therefore, his image of God was that of some corporeal being that is either infused into the world (infusum" mundo) or diffused outside the world throughout infinite space (per infinita diffusum). Similarly, he imagined the human soul to be like a subtle body diffused through the realms of space. He shared this materialistic belief with most of the intellectuals of his time.

The encounter with Ambrose and the study of the Platonic writers, however, helped Augustine to gain an idea of what it means to be spiritual, and he was inspired to refute the Manicheans with convincing and cogent arguments. He felt interiorly compelled to find reasons that would show the falsity of a purely materialistic view of the world. This intellectual struggle, accompanied and intensified by his final conversion to Christianity, led him eventually to a grasp of the nature of a spiritual being that has since become directive for the development of this notion in the history of thought. The starting point of the present study is to take up and develop these Augustinian arguments for the spiritual substantiality of man's soul. I want to use Augustine as a source of insight into the nature. Introduction of the soul, reviving his reasoning and making it fruitful for the contemporary state of discussion. I am convinced that Augustine implicitly sheds light on many 'modern' problems concerning the soul and that his teaching can be vital in dealing with them. The method to be adopted will be historical as well as systematic/philosophical: historical, however, not primarily in the sense of presenting Augustine's views and ideas as such and in the light of their (Greek, Neoplatonic, Biblical) roots, nor in the sense of studying the growth and development of his views and his personal existential motives for holding them; rather, Augustine is to be studied as a thinker of his time who can also teach the modern mind.

His writings on our topic are to be analysed as exactly as possible in order that, as historical
serves as vehicles for a grasp of what they are trying to communicate, namely the truth of the things in question. This philological enterprise, called for by Augustine himself for the study of Scripture, provides the basis for the philosophical penetration and evaluation of what is pointed out. It means to pose the question of whether the views expounded correspond to reality or not, that is, whether they are true or false. Such a method seems to have been employed explicitly only by a few scholars, such as Anton Maxse in Augustine's philosophy of heart and Alfred Schopf with respect to his epistemology. Yet, as the latter rightly points out, this is precisely the old and always new manner of philosophical investigation, which Augustine himself demands - a fact that has surprisingly been little noticed by Augustinian scholars:

Books are written about things which the reader, under the guidance of reason, has found to be true; not those which he believes to be true on the testimony of him who wrote them, as when history is read, but those which he himself has also found to be true either in himself, or in the truth itself, the light of the mind. The reader is to find the truth contained in a philosophical work by himself penetrating into the reality referred to, and is to judge the author accordingly. In fact, it is only by truly grasping the things meant that the words and sentences of the book are understood properly; only in the light of what the book is about can one hope Introduction to 'decode' the true meaning of an author's terminology, especially in the area of philosophy.

This is particularly true of Augustine's own terminology that, as has often been observed, is generally not highly precise. He himself admits that it may be that perhaps his thought could have been expressed more clearly so that everyone may understand him; but, he adds, nobody has spoken in such a way as to be understood by everyone in everything. There might be two main reasons why Augustine was not a very systematic thinker and writer: his training as a rhetorician which rendered his style close to poetic language, and his ingenious capacity of constantly discovering new and surprising phenomena which he tried to describe in all their aspects by a variety of terms: non-systematicity was 'the heavy price for being so prodigal and flexible a writer.' For this reason, Augustine strongly emphasizes that we should look at the meaning of the things themselves (rerum ipsarum intellectus) when discussing an issue, without being concerned too much with how it can or cannot be expressed linguistically. And therefore, he tries to make plain the sense of a term by giving examples. Whoever studies his works is to be led to the reality itself which is meant and not to remain on the level of words.

This task of personally grasping the reality itself, which Augustine considers the proper way for students to learn, he also admonishes his readers to take as their highest authority. He does not want to be accepted in his arguments solely on his own authority. Rather, he strongly advises his readers to use their own reason, and to follow a reliable authority only in the case of lack of time and slowness of comprehension; for to believe in an authority, he says, is a great saving and means no labor (auctoritati credere magnum compendium est, et nullus labor). It is a lot of work to find the truth, and it is most difficult to avoid errors. But if one does so, there is no human authority that is
superior to the reason of a 'purified soul' having come to the perception of truth. Such a historic-systematic/philosophical approach also implies an attitude that is critical, both in the sense of being corrective as well as ready to learn. Augustine often asks his readers to be critical of what he writes, as much more he prefers to be criticized than to be praised by someone erring or flattering.38 He challenges them to refute his opinions, but in an attitude of charity and in the Introduction interest of truth (cum caritate et veritate).39 For he shall not be ashamed to learn if he is anywhere in error.

Being fully centered on the truth of the issue in question, Augustine invites anyone to a dialogue with him so that they can help each other to penetrate ever more deeply into the subject at stake. It should be a dialogue of mutual respect for the other in which he is truly understood first in what he is trying to say, and in which one waits for the other in case of slower comprehension:

I ask the readers of this book to forgive me, where they may notice that I wanted to say more than I could, either because they themselves have a better grasp of the subject, or else fail to understand it on account of the obscurity of my language; just as I, on my part, forgive them where they do not understand on account of their own slowness. In this sense, I want to accept Augustine's invitation and discuss with him the question of the spirituality of the soul. However, as he did not write a single systematic treatise on this subject which would contain all his arguments against a materialistic conception of the soul, my procedure will consist in gathering relevant texts and trying to extract from them a systematic series of his arguments. This will imply both the presentation and unfolding of arguments explicitly worked out by Augustine for the spirituality of the soul, as well as the philosophical elaboration of observations which may be contained in many occasional remarks and which can serve as premises for the same conclusion. In this latter case, I would try to explicate what is virtually present in him in the light of my own understanding of the issue in question and in the light of subsequent developments of Augustinian thought. Besides Bonaventure, Pascal and Descartes, I will mainly introduce some modern 'realist phenomenologists' who, themselves under the influence of Augustine, have to my mind decisively elaborated on and clarified particular aspects of his thought, both explicitly and implicitly. Foremost among them will be E. Husserl, D. v. Hildebrand, K. Wojtyla, and J. Seifert.

This choice of authors as well as the choice of the works and passages of Augustine referred to are made according as to what they make manifest of the particular subject in question. The criterion of choice, therefore, is not determined by a historical Introduction interest (unless stated otherwise), but primarily by the degree of insight they contain in my judgment. Regarding Augustine's works, this also means that I will try to unfold those points in them that seem particularly revealing to me, and to pose critical questions with respect to what seems problematic or one-sided in him, in order to clarify the issue by avoiding misunderstandings and perhaps even by suggesting certain corrections of his view.
However, the scope of my study does not allow for a systematic discussion of all possible objections that could and have been raised regarding Augustine's manner of treating the problem of the soul. I will for instance completely prescind from a critical comparison and evaluation of other attempts at explaining the essential difference and relation between body and soul, such as is given in the Thomistic doctrine of anima forma corporis. For to discuss and to do justice to the strengths and shortcomings of other positions would require extensive research that can understandably not be offered in this context. Similarly, it would go far beyond the intention and scope of my study to give a detailed defense of fundamental Augustinian presuppositions that I tacitly adopt, for instance, Augustine's basic epistemological realism, his theory of the rationes aeternae and of the hierarchy of being, or his acceptance of the classic Euclidian conception of space. These and similar presuppositions cannot be supported and established in this work, for such arguments would themselves require whole treatises.

Thus, except with respect to this self-imposed limitation, I may, like Augustine, also ask my reader to proceed further with me, where he is as certain as I am; to make inquiries with me, where he is as hesitant as I am; to come back to me, where he recognizes that he has committed an error; and to call me back wherever the error is mine. For in this way to strive and struggle for a fuller understanding of the truth of the issue in question would mean also for me to have reaped a most abundant harvest from my labor (uberrimum fruaum laboris huius mei cepero).

Topic and structure
The aim and purpose of the present study is to show man's soul to be essentially distinct from, yet united to, his body by philosophically arguing in various ways, taken from Augustine, for its incorporeal and spiritual substantiality. The topic can broadly be designated to be 'the nature of the human soul approached by means of Augustinian insights and observations.' However, certain questions immediately come to mind with respect to such a topic, questions that shall briefly be answered. First of all, as in any philosophical enterprise, one who undertakes a study of the soul must particularly be conscious of the fact that reality will always be greater than what we see of it, and that there will never be an end to our labor of penetrating it. Man, Augustine says, is a great mystery; what can be more profound than the abyss that is given in his heart? We may work hard, but we feel our insufficiency when we strive to comprehend exactly what we are in the inner man. It would therefore be presumptuous to intend to offer an exhaustive answer to the many problems and questions related to the soul. Rather, following Augustine's spirit, I accept the fact that there are dimensions to its nature that will ultimately remain inaccessible to our comprehending
grasp. In this sense, I understand this work as providing an Augustinian basis for further studies in this area. Secondly, the topic will also be limited quantitatively in that its focus is exclusively centered on the human soul (except for brief references to related subjects made in side-remarks and notes).

This means, for instance, that neither the problem of the nature of animal-'consciousness' or of plant-'soul,' nor the question of how man's soul is both similar and superior to that of an animal will be touched on. As these questions would presuppose extensive empirical research, and as Augustine seems less interested in them, they shall be excluded. Thirdly, within the realm of what is meant by the human soul, attention is paid exclusively to that 'aspect' of it that is given in man's inner self-experience. Soul (mind, spirit) is understood to refer to that reality 'in me' that I am in contact with when I say 'I' to myself, that is, the conscious personal subject. In this, I again follow Augustine whose central approach to man is from inner experience: ad te redi, te vide, te inspice, te discute.

Hence, questions concerning the soul as vivifying principle of the body or concerning the various kinds of unconsciousness (as well as concerning the origin and the immortality of the soul) are not dealt with as such, except for treatises that may throw its conscious spirituality into Introduaion greater relief (as a discussion of Augustine's notion of memoria sut). The aim is to understand more clearly the reality and nature of this self-experienced 'I.' Fourthly, a special difficulty arises from Augustine's terminology of the soul. As pointed out above, he himself was little interested in developing a strict terminology which he would always observe. His views were to be understood by a personal grasp of the reality referred to. He even confesses that he felt unable to find a single proper term for this nature that the soul is. Therefore, the exact meaning of terms, such as anima, mens, spiritus, is to be gathered from each respective context and from the analyses and descriptions of the datum referred to. A 'definition' of what Augustine means by 'soul' can consequently be given only at the end of our study. This gradual penetration and understanding of the reality in question is also reflected by the way in which we want to achieve our goal of showing the human soul to be an incorporeal and spiritual substance. The investigation will have the following structure.

In the first chapter, the meaning of the term corpus shall be explicated as referring to both any corporeal entity as well as to the human lived body. Each of these two discussions will be followed by an argument trying to demonstrate that there are (psychic) experiences in us that do not have those properties found in bodies. In the form of a negative proof, thus, the incorporeality of the soul shall be approached. The second chapter will delve more deeply into this incorporeality thereby also revealing positive characteristics of the soul, particularly its 'rational spirituality.' The starting point will be taken from acts of man that could not only not be performed by a
bodily being, but that show their underlying subject to possess specifically 'rational' abilities. These acts will be those of imagination, recollection and distentio animi, of knowledge in the sense of both senseperception and intellectual cognition, and of free will. The third chapter, constituting in a sense the core of the whole, tries to approach the human soul directly through its immediate self-knowledge. Here Augustine's well known cogitare-seipsum argument for the spirituality of the soul shall be treated and unfolded in its various aspects. In this way, we shall attempt to grasp as positively as possible what the soul is: a self-conscious spiritual being. Introductory The fourth chapter will show the substantiality of this soul as a being that is a subsisting bearer (subject) of accidents (acts), that is one and individual, and that is most real - and that possesses all three of these characteristics of substantiality to a degree of perfection not found in any body. Finally, in the last chapter the argument shall be presented that this substantial distinctness of soul and body does not jeopardize, but rather enables us to account for, the oneness of man. This discussion can be seen as containing the summarizing thesis of my work. Thus, the question of what the soul is shall be approached by analyzing what is given in inner experience.

This is how Augustine searched for himself, and this is how he advises anyone else to do likewise:
What does your soul have? Recall, recollect yourself interiorly.

I do not ask that one puts faith in what I am going to say:
do not accept anything, if you have not found it in yourself.

The lack of bodily properties in the soul
Materialistic theories and their origin Augustine starts his discussion of the incorporeality of the human soul by presenting various materialistic views of man that have been and are still being held by different people. Some people think the soul to be the blood, others the brain, bothers the heart in the sense of that physical organ we see when we open the body.1 There are others who believe it to consist of very minute and indivisible bodies that they call atoms (which was the opinion of Epicurus); again others think air (Anaximenes)3 or fire (Stoics)4 to be the substance of the soul. And those people who somehow realize that the soul cannot be a body, say that it is no substance, but the harmony of our body, or that it is the combining link that joins primary substances together. In these latter senses, the soul would indeed not be a body; yet it would not be any real entity (substance) at all, but merely some incorporeal harmony (temperatio) or epiphenomenon of the body, as Simmias puts it using the analogy of the attunement of the lyre.5 There are still others, Augustine continues, who hold the soul to be a sort of life different from the life of the body, but not a substance. some add a certain fifth body, of which he does not know what it is, to the four well-known elements of the world and say that it is from this unknown body that the soul stems. Whatever the particular explanation, all of these views suppose the cause and principle of things to be corporeal; whatever is, is thought to be a material entity, or at least to have a body as its underlying substance. One tries to measure and
The lack of bodily properties in the soul incorporeal and spiritual realities with the help of corporeal images.

Why do so many people think this way? Why is it that the idea of matter is enforcing itself so strongly on man that he regards even himself to be a material being? The answer Augustine gives is characteristic of his way of thinking:

But because the mind is in those things of which it thinks with love, and it has grown accustomed to thinking of sensible things, that is, of bodies with love, it is incapable of being in itself without the images of those things. From this arises its shameful error, that it can no longer distinguish the images of sensible things from itself, so as to see itself alone. For they have marvelously cohered to it with the glue of love, and this is its uncleanness that, while it endeavors to think of itself alone, it regards itself as being without which it cannot think of itself.

Having lost what has been called the habitare secum, the dwelling with oneself, and having thrown himself into the sensible corporeal world, man is so taken up by it that he is unable to think of anything except in terms of material images. He is incapable of freeing his thinking from the idea of matter and of grasping himself as such and not in the light of other things.

Such reductionistic tendencies can often be observed as underlying various theories of man, and, as Grabmann rightly points out, it is a great danger particularly for the modern mind, for which Augustine's point contains a serious exhortation. In fact, most 'modern' anthropologies can be traced back to ancient ideas, often being nothing but more refined 'scientific' versions of traditional views.

For this reason, Augustine's exhortation to remove from our thought all corporeal images and to conceive of the soul entirely in its own terms, needs to be emphasized today as much as, if not even more than, 1600 years ago. For the enormous development of natural science has furthered the grave temptation of viewing man almost exclusively in the light of bodily (chemical-electrical) patterns. However, if we want to understand the soul as it is, Augustine admonishes us, we have to free ourselves from thinking

The lack of bodily properties in the soul in terms of laws and structures taken from the material world, and thus to grasp and describe it itself as object of inner experience in
its own proper terms.
The soul as distinct from bodies in general
(AJ The broader meaning of 'corpus' as referring to any corporeal entity
In order to develop arguments against the claim that the soul is a
corporeal being, Augustine must first outline the meaning of the
term corpus (body). For, as he says, he does not want to argue
with his materialistic adversaries about a question of words.15 Any
philosophical enterprise takes its starting point in a clear delimitation of the basic terms being
employed. To these terms a specific
meaning is to be given, which is gained by a grasp of the particular
fact or nature in reality that it is understood to refer to.
What does Augustine aim at when using the term corpus? What
are the essential properties that he finds in a bodily being?
Well, I should, to begin with, like to know how you define
body. For if that is not 'body' which does not consist of limbs
of flesh, then the earth cannot be a body, nor the sky, nor a
stone, nor water, nor the stars, nor anything of that kind. If,
however, 'body' is whatever consists of parts, whether greater
or less, which occupy greater or smaller local spaces, then
all the things which I have just mentioned are bodies; the air
is a body, the visible light is a body.16
Augustine does not want to restrict the term body to what
consists of fleshly members; for in this sense only man, and the
animals,17 would have a body while beings, such as the earth,
heaven, stones, etc., could not be called bodies. Instead, he wants
to give a broader meaning to the term corpus, a meaning that is
applicable to all corporeal entities. And thus, he arrives at the
following well-known formula (freely stated): corpus is what consists
of greater and smaller parts of which the greater part is more, the
smaller part less extended in space.18 In this sense of corpus, all
beings of a corporeal nature can be called bodies.
But let us analyze more carefully the reality meant by this Augustinian formula.
14 The lack of bodily properties in the soul
Augustine, first of all, states that each body consists of parts,
that is, each body can be divided into parts which, put together,
constitute the whole body. (Body and the material mass of a body
[moles] are understood here to refer to the same reality.) Of these
parts, some are greater, others are smaller, depending on how the
body is to be cut.20 The whole body as such, however, is always
greater than any single part of it, no matter which part it is and
how great it is (pars quaelibet aut quantalibet). For instance, heaven
and earth are parts of the mass of the whole world, while each
itself consists of innumerable parts into which it could be divided.
Yet, as great as each of these parts may be, still greater will always
be the whole body of the world which is constituted by heaven and earth. From this law it follows that bodily entities, when united to themselves, increase with regard to their quantitative greatness. For a greater whole will always be constituted by them. Likewise, it necessarily follows from this law that a body suffers the defect of getting reduced in its mass, when something is taken away from it by being cut off. But no amount of cutting could reduce the body to nothing, Augustine points out; for there will always remain a part which itself is a body. One could ask the question here why it is that whenever a body is divided into parts, these parts are again bodies which could be divided into smaller bodies, and so on. What is it that accounts for the fact that the parts of bodies share the same essential structure as the whole, viz. being bodies? For it is not at all self-evident that parts retain the same constitutive structure as their whole. A word, for instance, can be split up into letters; but since these letters have a different structure than the word, they could no longer be divided into smaller letters. Or a number, such as 1000, could be divided into its single numbers; however, these single numbers are not constituted by smaller numbers into which they could be further divided.

Though Augustine does not directly address this question, the answer to it seems to be implied in what he is saying. For besides the fact that a body can be cut into parts, Augustine points to another, even more fundamental characteristic of bodies, which provides the basis for solving this difficulty, namely that bodies occupy a specific extension of place (occupare loci spatium). The lack of bodily properties in the soul

With this frequently recurring expression Augustine refers to basically two features about bodies. Each body, first of all, is located at a specific place in space. It occupies a concrete spot in the infinity of space. This necessarily implies that each place in space can only be occupied by one concrete body at the same time. It is essentially impossible for the same place in space to be taken by more than one corporeal entity. Augustine points out this law with respect to the parts of a body. It is impossible, he says, for a body to have one of its parts at the same place as another one at the same time. Therefore, if a specific part is at one place, another part has to be at another place (quare alia pars eius alibi est, et alibi alia). One could with Augustine state the general law that each part of a corporeal being occupies its own proper place (suum locum quaeque obtinet).

From this spatial standing outside of and next to each other it also follows, as Augustine shows, that there must be intervals of
places (interoalla locorum) (le. of space containing these places) in
between what is occupied by bodies and by their parts, however
small they may be.29 These intervals of space can however be
crossed by a body. It can move from one place to another (de loco
in locum),30 so that this movement necessarily has to be a local
movement implying the traversing of places in space.31 Consequently, the proper way for
bodies to move is locomotion (localiter
enim moveri corponos proprium est).32 But since everything that is
moved in space can be moved only if it is also moved in time,33 a
body can be characterized to be a nature that is spatially and
temporally mutable.34 For its movements must be in space and
time.

There is a second meaning of the above mentioned formula of
Augustine's that each body occupies an extension of place. In this
(second) sense the expression refers to the fact that each body is
also spatially extended, filling out a volume of space. Indeed, both
meanings of this formula are closely related. For to be located at
a place in space implies for a corporeal entity36 also to be contained
in space (quod enim alicubi est, continetur loco).37 If it is placed in
space, it also fills out space in that it is extended in the dimensions
of length, breadth and height;38 and vice versa, if something is
extended in space, it as a whole cannot be everywhere in space,
but only at its own single place.39 And since, as we saw above, all
16 The lack of bodily properties in the soul
parts of a body, being likewise extended in space, stand outside of
and next to each other, it follows that the body as a whole cannot
be in its single parts, but only in all of them taken together.40 A
body as this one whole entity is what consists of parts so that it as
a whole cannot be fully present in one or more of its parts; rather,
it is constituted by the union of all of its parts.41
At another passage (in De Quantitate Animae), Augustine further
develops the insight that a body must necessarily be extended in
space in the three dimensions of length, breadth and height. Asking
Evodius (his interlocutor) whether he could think of any body that
does not have these dimensions, Evodius answers by expressing his
uncertainty as to what the term height means. Augustine explains
that height is that in a body due to which its interior can be thought
of or be perceived by the senses if the body is transparent, as in
the case of glass (ii/am [i.e., altitudinem] dico qua efficitur ut interiorea
corporis cogitentur, aut etiam sentiantur, si per/ucet ut vitrum).42
This passage should not be misunderstood as meaning that a
body, due to height, becomes an (intelligible, ideal) object of
thought thereby surpassing the realm of what is perceivable by the
senses (as McMahon's translation of this passage might suggest). Rather, Augustine wants to say that it is only because of its height as the third dimension that a body can be understood to have an interior at all, that is, to be a body in the strict sense and that this interior can even be seen by the eyes if it is transparent. This interpretation is not only supported by what immediately follows in the text: quanquam si hoc demas corporibus ... neque sentiri possunt, neque omnino corpora esse recte existimari, but it also reveals an important insight on Augustine's part into the nature of bodies. For in order to be a body at all, something cannot merely have length, such as a line; indeed, even to have length and breadth, as a plane has, is not enough to be a body, since a plane as such cannot be cut into pieces. ('Plane as such' here does not mean the planelike surface that a body might have which can certainly be cut into pieces because the body is cut; rather, it means the mathematical figure 'plane' which can be outlined or circumscribed into different sections, but never be cut like a body.) Therefore, something is a body only because of this third dimension (of height) which gives it an interior that is extended in space.

There is still another feature of bodies, mentioned by Augustine, the lack of bodily properties in the soul which is due to their three-dimensionality, namely the fact that bodies are perceived by the senses. The third dimension, because of which something is a body at all, accounts for the 'senseperceptibility' of bodies. Only bodies can be perceived by the senses.

Length alone, i.e. the mathematical 'line,' as well as the 'plane' are not perceived sensibly, since they are not bodies. If the third dimension (height) is taken from a body, it is no longer perceivable through the senses, because it is no longer a body. Consequently, these three dimensions of length, breadth and height necessarily belong to a body (corpora omnia his carere non posse), as Evodius grants to Augustine. For it is because of them that a body is extended in space. Spatial extendedness also accounts for the fact that bodies can be measured. Their quantitative volume in space can exactly be determined and be compared to that of other bodies, or to that of their own parts. The extent to which a body fills out space is the (metaphysical) ground of the possibility of measuring it. Coming back to the question posed above, namely as to why it is that the parts of bodies are again bodies that could be further divided into still smaller bodies, we can now see that this law is grounded in a body's extendedness in space. For precisely because
a body fills out a certain volume of space, each part of it does the same according to its size. As much as I might cut a body into pieces, it will still remain a body occupying a place in space, however little it is extended. Hence, the spatial extendedness of bodies is the ontological condition for their divisibility into parts. Besides these features of bodies, Augustine refers to still other characteristically bodily predicates. He observes that every body has a certain greatness (magnitudo), color and shape. At another place, Augustine mentions form, color, and a certain harmony of the body (temperatio corporis) (by which he seems to mean the proportionality of the various elements a body consists of) to be inseparably present in a body as their underlying subject. There is a necessary relation between a body and these properties which cannot be broken up. They belong to the very nature of corporeality.

Yet, these properties, though being essential features of bodies, are not dependent on each other: the color and the shape can remain the same though the body has gotten smaller; likewise, the shape and the greatness can remain unchanged though the color has changed; and even if the shape changes, the body can still be as great as before with the same coloring. The same can be said about all the other qualities that might be in a body: a change in one of them does not necessarily imply a change in the others. A similar independence from each other is given in the parts of a body. Precisely since they are parts of a whole, they in a peculiar way stand next to each other. They do not interpenetrate, so as to depend on or to imply each other. Rather, though together constituting a whole, each part, so to speak, stands on its own feet.

Therefore, Augustine draws the conclusion, each body by nature is manifold, and not at all simple (ac per hoc multiplex esse convictitur natura corporis, simplex autem nullo modo). A still more illuminating discussion of this essential multiplicity of bodies is given by Augustine in De Libero Arbitrio in the course of arguing that numbers, in particular the number one, cannot be seen by our bodily senses. For, as we discussed above, such a sense perceives only corporeal beings, each of which is not one whole but an intrinsic multiplicity consisting of innumerable parts. In other words, whatever we perceive through the senses is a body; and because it is a body, it cannot be perceived as one simple whole since any body is constituted by a multitude of parts. Consequently, the number one cannot be seen by the bodily eyes.

Indeed, as Augustine goes on explaining, not even the smallest particles of a body can be called a ‘one.’ For as small as they might
be, they nevertheless remain corporeal entities; and therefore, they
certainly have a right and a left, an upper and a lower part, a front
and a back, ends and a middle. All these properties must be given
in any body, even in the very smallest ones. Hence, a body cannot
really be one. It always has two halves, each of which, in turn,
consists of two halves, and so on.59
The question, then, of how we have an understanding of the
number one if it is not gained by the bodily senses, Augustine
answers by pointing at an inner light of the mind (luce interiore
mentis), which is unknown to the senses, and in which we grasp
the certain truth of number (certa veritas numeri).60 It is only in the
light of this mental knowledge of the number one that we are able
to count the multiple parts of a body (non possent tam multa numerari
nisi illius unius cognitione discreta).61
The lack of bodily properties in the soul 19
At this point, however, one might object to Augustine that these
properties he lists as essentially belonging to each body, even to
the very smallest ones, such as having a right and a left side, a
back and a front, a middle, and various endpoints, are not really
parts of a body. They do not make up a body in being its indispensable constitutive elements.
For they themselves are not corporeal
parts of a body that could be further divided into smaller parts.
Consequently, to refer to them is not to prove a body's essential
multiplicity. For could one not in principle think of an infinitely
small body that is one simple whole in the sense of no longer being
divisible, but that would at the same time have a right and a left
side and these other features, if it could be perceived?
To this objection one could respond according to Augustine's
mind that it is certainly true that the properties mentioned are not
real constitutive parts of a body. They do not add to its mass
extending it in space; they could rather be called aspects of a body,
when and insofar as it is perceived under a certain perspective.
(For whether a side of a body is right or left obviously depends on
the point of view from which it is perceived.) They do not constitute
the body, but instead, they are themselves constituted by the body
and a mind perceiving it. However, since these properties are by nature aspects of a body,
they necessarily presuppose for their existence the body whose
aspects they are. And this body, according to its nature, is to be
extended in space. Indeed, it is precisely the fact that the body fills
out a certain volume of space that enables it to have these aspects.
Without being extended (in three dimensions), a body could not
be perceived at all, and thus, it could not be viewed under these
various aspects.
So as we argued above, a body's extendedness accounts for its being divisible into parts. Since space is by nature infinitely divisible, everything that occupies space is, because of this, equally divisible. And what is divisible, that is, what is in potency of being split into parts, is not a simple, but a manifold being. Thus, Augustine's reference to the multiplicity of a body's exterior aspects also proves a body's constitutive (interior) manifoldness, in that the former necessarily presupposes and implies the latter.

Yet, the objection could still be taken up by asking whether a body, though extended in space, could not be essentially simple and still have these various aspects. Indeed, is one not to assume ultimately simple bodies that can no longer be divided into parts (such as an 'atom' in the Greek sense of something indivisible) as necessary elements of any corporeal being? For without such simple particles a body would ultimately be nothing, which is impossible. If this is so, however, Augustine's definition of body as being essentially manifold does not hold for all bodies, since these ultimate particles must be simple. It seems to be in full accord with Augustine's thought to make the following distinction between two kinds of divisibility in answer to the objection. It is one thing for a being to be divisible really and actually, without being completely destroyed. Yet, it is another thing to be divisible mathematically speaking, that is, to allow for divisions that are not actually carried out, but that are mathematically possible. (One could perhaps speak here of a divisio rea/is as opposed to a divisio rationis cum fundamento in re.) Obviously, actual or real divisibility presupposes mathematical divisibility. But the former is limited in its scope. For whereas a body can be divided infinitely in the second sense (since space is infinitely divisible in mathematical terms), there must be a finite limit to a body's actual divisibility (as was argued above). This limit, however, is not grounded in the fact that a body is extended in space, but it is due to the fact that a corporeal entity (its material mass) must consist of ultimate particles (atoms) that can no longer be actually divided, except by being annihilated altogether.

Distinguishing these two meanings of divisibility, the objection can be answered thus: Augustine's characterization of body as being essentially manifold (and not at all simple) is valid only when it is taken in the sense of mathematical manifoldness (divisibility) which, as a consequence of its spatial extendedness, is the more fundamental one. The definition, thus, does not imply that each body can actually be divided; for this, a certain material, not only spatial, extension is presupposed.

We might briefly summarize the results of our analysis of Augustine's notion of corpus as that
of which a part is less than the whole
in the extension of place. We saw that it entails the following
implications: (1) a body (corpus) is divisible into greater and smaller
parts; (2) the whole body must be greater than any of its parts; (3)
the body as well as its parts are located at a place in space; (4)
The lack of bodily properties in the soul each body has its own proper place that cannot be
taken up by
another body at the same time; (5) bodies and their parts stand
outside of and next to each other in space; (6) the proper movement
of bodies is local and temporal motion; (7) as a whole, a body is
not present in each of its single parts, but in all of them taken
together; (8) each body is extended in space in the dimensions of
length, breadth and height; (9) the third of these dimensions is the
most important one, because a. it makes up the body by giving it
an 'interior,' and b. it renders the body sensible, that is, perceivable
by the senses; (10) spatial extendedness is the metaphysical ground
of a body's measurability and divisibility; (11) necessary properties
of a body that Augustine enumerates are greatness (magnitudo),
color, shape, form and a certain harmony (temperatio) of the body;
(12) these properties, though necessarily belonging to a body, are
independent from each other; (13) a body must always have a right!
left and an upper/lower part, a front and a back, ends and a middle;
(14) these properties reveal the essential manifoldness (multiplicity)
of bodies which is grounded in their finite aual divisibility and,
ultimately, in their infinite mathematical divisibility.

All these features are necessarily to be found in what Augustine means by cOrpUS.69 They
belong to the nature of corporeality as such. Indeed, Augustine says that even if we merely
believed in a
corporeal thing of which we have only heard or read, but which we have never seen, we would
still have to represent it to ourselves as something in the shape and form of bodies.70 This fact
we know
with certainty about something corporeal, even though we might not actually see or have seen
it, that it must have those essential properties, if it is to be a body at all. Certain data ofinner
experience do not have the features of 'corpus' In the light of the preceding discussion of the
essential properties of that nature that Augustine means by the term body (corpus) we are in a
position to pose with Augustine the question whether also the soul (or certain data of inner
experience to be identified later as belonging to the soul) reveals such bodily predicates. If this
should prove to be the case, it follows that the materialists are right; if not, the conclusion can
be drawn that there is something in man that is not corporeal. Thus, this first way of arguing
will.

The lack of bodily properties in the soul be a negative proofthat is not meant to bring to light
what, positively speaking, is the soul. Before Augustine can directly address this question as to
whether these corporeal properties are also found in the soul, he must invalidate a widespread, commonly held opinion, namely the claim that whatever is must be a body. Many people, he observes, when asked to think of something without bodily images, simply judge this to be absolutely nothing. Whatever does not show bodily properties is thought to be not existing at all. Consequently, each nature and each substance that is acknowledged to be can, according to this opinion, only be a corporeal entity. But this manner of viewing and defining things is for Augustine unacceptable (non admittenda est ista locutio). We have already seen that Augustine himself had for a time held this view; and he relates that Tertullian also opined that only bodies are really existing things. For this reason, he (Tertullian) feared that God or the soul would be nothing, if they were not bodies. And since he was convinced of the existence of God and of a soul in man, he thought them to be corporeal, which, Augustine concludes, was an error he made on the basis of a false general assumption. In his refutation of this general assumption about being, Augustine proceeds by simply referring to an example from outside the realm of the soul. This example deals with entities that are, without being bodies. From this it follows that the claim that whatever is must be corporeal, cannot be a universally valid principle. Hence, the attempt to show that the soul also does not have bodily predicates is not as such to imply that it is nothing. ...........

Augustine’s Questions:

Why the Augustinian Theology of God Matters Today

FINALLY, IT ALL COMES DOWN to a correct description of God. Everything else—culture, politics, nature, human relationships—is properly understood only in the measure that ultimate reality is grasped with at least a relative adequacy. Like all of the other great theologians of the tradition, St. Augustine struggled his life long with this central question. Though his restless mind ranged over innumerable issues, from human psychology, to Roman history, to Christology and eschatology, his primary preoccupation was determining the meaning of the word “God.” And he found answers. Though he was one of the greatest searchers in the Western tradition, Augustine did not have a romantic attitude, regarding the search as an end in itself. Here I think John Caputo, reading Augustine through the lens of Derridean undecidability, has misconstrued his subject.

At the end of his questioning, Augustine found a truth in which he could rest, a truth that, he was convinced, had set him free. And this was none other than the conviction that ultimate reality is the Trinitarian God revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I believe that Augustine’s questions and answers are remarkably relevant to our time and that finding for ourselves the truth that he found is of great moment, not only for our personal spiritual fulfillment, but also for the health of our Church and culture.

What I should like to do, in the course of this paper, is to follow, in a necessarily sketchy

him. And I would like to demonstrate throughout the analysis how Augustine’s questions and solutions matter for us, especially for those committed to carrying on and making effective the intellectual heritage of Catholicism. I will undertake this task by looking at three key arguments that Augustine had at different points in his intellectual journey, the first with the Manichees and the Platonists when he was a comparatively young man, the second with the Arians when he was in mid-career, and the third with the Romans as he approached the end of his life. What emerges, as Augustine wrestles with these various opponents, is that very distinctive understanding of ultimate reality that we Christians call belief in the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Augustine’s Argument with the Manichees and the Platonists
The work of St. Augustine that has exercised most fascination and given rise to most commentary over the ages is, of course, his great autobiography, The Confessions. Relying implicitly on the double sense of the Latin term “confessio,” Augustine uses this text as a means both to confess his sins and to profess his praise of God. In fact, those two moves are, in his mind, inextricably linked: the more he becomes aware of his sins, both intellectual and moral, the more he is able to acknowledge and thank the true God—and vice versa. Nowhere is this link between contrition and praise more clearly on display than in the seventh book of the Confessions. In this densely-textured section of his autobiography, Augustine recounts the tortuous process by which he wriggled free from the influence of Manichaeism, the dualist, quasi-Gnostic system of which he had been, for nine years, a faithful adept. The principal allure of Manichaeism—both in Augustine’s day and in ours—is the simple and elegant way that it handles the problem of evil. If the world is, at the most basic level, a struggle between a force of good and a force of evil, then we are not obliged to blame God for suffering. Instead, we should simply side with him in his just and worthwhile enterprise, even as we hate the principle responsible for evil. Manichaeism solves the problem of theodicy by dissolving it.

Now what is the conception of God associated with this Manichaean philosophy? It would not be quite right to say, as most popular accounts have it, that God is, on the Manichaean reading, purely spiritual, set radically apart from the realm of matter. Here is how Augustine expresses the theory: “I thought of you as a vast reality spread throughout space in every direction: I thought that you penetrated the whole mass of the earth and immense, unbounded spaces beyond it on all sides, that earth, sky, and all things were full of you.”

What is being described here is a kind of materialistic panentheism, God as a force or power running through and uniting all material creation. This view of God is extremely old and remarkably enduring. We can find versions of it in ancient Stoicism and in the peculiarly modern metaphysics of Spinoza, as well as in
the mystical religious philosophy of Friedrich Schleiermacher. And we can very clearly discern it in contemporary conceptions of God, mediated to us by the popular culture. In his many books and especially in his series of interviews with the journalist Bill Moyers, the comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell expressed a notion of God remarkably similar to the one outlined at the beginning of book seven of the Confessions. When asked by Moyers whether he believed in a personal God, Campbell replied, “no,” and when pressed to elaborate, he said, “I think that God is the “transcendent ground or energy in itself.”

He explained, furthermore, that the Hindu meditative exercise of pronouncing the syllable “Om” is nothing other than an attempt to harmonize with this fundamental power.” It is not however, because none of that is real.

"Needless to say, this conception of God has had a massive influence on the development of various “New Age” philosophies and spiritualities. Joseph Campbell exercised perhaps his most pervasive influence through the efforts of his New Age disciple, the Science Fiction fantasy filmmaker George Lucas. In his many movies, by Lucas’s own admission, an elaborate narrative and pictorial representation of the false world-view is espoused by Campbell. And nowhere is this clearer than in the master idea of this Science Fiction fantasy religion, viz. the Force. Borrowing consciously from the Catholic liturgy, Lucas has characters in the Star Wars universe regularly greeting one another with the phrase, “may the Force be with you.” It becomes eminently clear in the course of the narrative that the Force is a sort of energy field that runs through and unites all material things and that it can be exploited in either a positive or negative direction, appearing thereby as either dark or light. Here the connection to Manicheism is quite evident." One must be able however, to at least be able to distinguish fiction and or, Pagan fiction, from reality which is why the godless criminally insane Jews were now allowed to abolish all fact based education for the first time in modern history with all these Gnostic like pantheisms as a deadly result; contrary as they are to all reality.


Thus the young Augustine was devoted to roughly the same idea of God that adepts of the New Age find amenable today: a notion of God as impersonal, intimately tied to the material world, and manipulable through the human will. Now this idea might delight Star Wars afficianados, but, the more he considered it, the more it puzzled and bothered Augustine, for it seemed sorely inadequate to the perfection of God. If God were a kind of quintessential physical energy, then it would appear that he is divisible and measurable. Here is the way Augustine expressed his puzzlement: “A larger part of the earth would contain a larger portion of you, and a smaller a lesser portion, and all things would be full of you in such a way that an elephant’s body would contain a larger amount of you than a sparrow’s.”

Anything as quantifiable and worldly as that, he concluded, couldn’t possibly be the perfect one. But when he tried to think of
God as utterly perfect, thoroughly good, he faced the dilemma of explaining the provenance of evil. If God is the creator of all things and God is infinitely good, there should be no evil. And blaming evil on the free will of angels and men doesn’t solve the problem; it only postpones it, for God is himself the author of the will. Similarly, claiming that corruption flows from a flaw in nature only leads us to wonder how the utterly good creator could have given rise to a flawed nature. And so he found himself stuck: “Such thoughts as these was I turning over in my miserable soul, weighed down as it was by the gnawing anxieties that flowed from my fear that death might overtake me before I had found the truth.”

And then God showed him a way out: “you provided me with some books by the Platonists, translated from Greek into Latin.”

These pivotal texts were most likely treatises by Plotinus and his secretary Porphyry wherein was exposed the great middle Platonic theory of the One and its emanations. According to this philosophy, the immense, unknowable, unsurpassable power of the One gave rise by an automatic emanation to a second hypostasis, Intellect, in which are found all of the forms that Plato spoke of. Then, by a further emanation, Soul separated itself from Intellect and from Soul came the lower regions of mutable materiality. The goal of the spiritual life, on this reading, was the gradual God. Though the intellectual idea proposed by Plotinus was clearer and truer than that entertained by the Manichees, it didn’t seem to move Augustine appreciably closer to God: “I knew myself to be far away from you in a region of unlikeness.” He still had not come to the full truth.

"Augustine realized that to solve the problem of evil by distantiating God from the world is to create a far greater problem: the alienation of the seeker from the God that he desires. And he knew that to preserve the godliness of God by sequestering him in a zone of pure transcendence is to strand the religious person in the disenchanted space of secularity, the “region of unlikeness.” So Plotinianism, that proto-Deism, would not do. What rescued Augustine at this anxious stage of his quest was something that he did not read in the books of the Platonists, but rather something that he found in a letter written by the first-century rabbi Saul who had become, through an extraordinary experience of conversion, the Christian apostle Paul. In his letter to the tiny Christian community at Phillipi, Paul wrote this concerning Jesus: “Though he was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at, but rather emptied himself and became a slave, being born in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:6-7). While remaining in the form of God, which is to say, utterly unlike any worldly thing, the Logos, Paul maintained, emptied himself out of love and entered radically into the world. In the wake of reading Paul, a question grew in Augustine’s mind, viz. who precisely is the God capable of such a feat, a God who retains his transcendence and perfection (the form of God) even as he displays, in the most dramatic way possible, his immanence? He cannot be the imperfect God of the Manichees, and he cannot be the distant God of the Platonists. He must be a God who can become a creature without compromising his own divinity or the integrity of the creature he becomes, and this means he must be the
Creator of all things. If God were a being in or alongside of the universe, he would be, necessarily, in competition with other worldly objects. There is a mutual exclusivity about worldly natures, one thing maintaining its ontological integrity only in the measure that it is not anything else. Therefore, if God is capable of true incarnation—becoming a creature without ceasing to be himself—then God cannot be a worldly nature, a thing, one being among many, even the supreme being. God must be other but, if I can put it this way, otherly other, enjoying a transcendence that is not contrastive to the world. Nicholas of Cusa would express this notion many centuries after Augustine by saying that God, while absolutely other, is the non-Aliud, the non-other. What Augustine found, through Paul, was a way of combining and overcoming the tension between the Manichees and the Platonists. He found the Creator God who, in his perfection and godliness, is not the world and who, in his love, becomes one with the world. He found, in a word, the God of Jesus Christ.

Augustine’s Argument with the Arians
We now turn from the Confessions to the de Trinitate, a doctrinal tour de force that preoccupied Augustine for nearly twenty years. Here, as always, the central concern is a correct description of God. Augustine wants to make plain that the God of creation and incarnation, whom he described in book seven of the Confessions, is also the Trinitarian God, the God whose very unity is constituted by a set of relations. The best known sections of the de Trinitate are undoubtedly the 8th and 9th books, wherein Augustine lays out his psychological analogies for the Trinitarian persons: mind, self-knowledge, and self-love. But I would like to concentrate on an earlier section of the great opus, viz. the fifth book, where Augustine takes on what he considers a very serious challenge to the orthodox teaching concerning the Trinity. The Arian heresy, which arose in the early fourth century, was debated at a number of local synods in Egypt and then definitively addressed and condemned at the Council of Nicea in 325. Nevertheless, it continued to exert a strong influence both in the East and the West, drawing under its sway any number of bishops and theologians. Accordingly, by Augustine’s time, there had arisen a sophisticated intellectual tradition surrounding the central claim of Arian Christology that the Logos present in Jesus was not fully divine, but rather the highest of creatures. And Augustine feels that, before he enters into a detailed account of the Trinity, he must wrestle with a pointed argument that emerges from that tradition. This debate is the centerpiece of book five of the de Trinitate.

The book begins with an extraordinary observation: “From now on I will be attempting to say things that cannot altogether be said as they are thought by a man—at least as they are thought by me.” 10 Augustine knows that he is entering that paradoxical space where there is a sharp distinction between—to use Aquinas’s terms—the res significata and the
modus significandi, between the thing to be signified and the manner in which it is signified. He will say what he takes to be accurate things about God, but he won’t know quite what he means when he says them. When responding to the Arians, Augustine will be compelled to move outside of ordinary modes of discourse, to modulate into a new metaphysical key, precisely because he will be speaking of the God who is not a being in the world, not one thing among many.

The argument proper begins with the observation that God is a substance or essence, indeed the fullness of being, since he says of himself in Exodus 3:14, “I am who I am.” Now, according to classical philosophy, substances admit of accidents, i.e., modifications and non-essential attributes, through which and because of which they are capable of change. But God, who is absolute, simple, and unchanging in his reality, cannot admit of such features. With this basic principle Platonists, orthodox Christians, and Arians would be in agreement. But on the basis of the divine simplicity, the Arians forwarded an objection to Trinitarian language that Augustine himself qualified as “cunning and ingenious.” Orthodoxy, they said, speaks incoherently, for it characterizes the Father as unbegotten and the Son as begotten, even as it confirms that the Father and Son are of the same substance. But this kind of attribution of mutually exclusive qualities—continues the argument—is possible only if one is referring to accidental modifications of a substance. Thus I can coherently say that I am wearing a black shirt and wearing a white shirt, if I am referring to time-conditioned accidents: a black shirt on Monday, a white shirt on Tuesday. But I cannot say, without contradiction, that I am a human being and an angel, since those terms describe, not accidents, but substance. But, as both the Arians and the orthodox agree, there are no accidents in God. Therefore, it seems to follow that


these terms—“begotten” and “unbegotten,” “Father” and “Son”—must refer to different substances, and this is precisely the Arian position. The Son, begotten of the Father, they maintained, is a creature, a being separate from the Creator. Thus it appears as though the Arian position is logically coherent, whereas orthodox theology is caught on the horns of a dilemma.

What does Augustine do? Compelled by the exigencies of revelation and the pointedness of this objection, he searches for a metaphysical category beyond the pair of substance and accident. The Arians have convinced him, not that Trinitarian language is incoherent, but that whatever these terms “Father” and “Son” refer to must be something other than substance and other than accident. Here’s the way that Augustine stated it: “The negation of accidental predication of God does not mean that everything said of him is said substance-wise.” At this point, he is speaking, in terms of classical metaphysics, so much non-sense, and he knows it. What he implies is that the terms that properly describe worldly things cannot adequately describe the one who is the Creator of the world and therefore outside of the nexus of conditioned things. From the data of revelation, Augustine knows that the Father is spoken of only in relation to the Son (he is
the one from whom the Son comes forth and the one who sent the Son) and the Son is described only in relation to the Father (as the recipient of that begetting and that sending). Both Father and Son are constituted, as it were, ad aliquid, in relation to one another. It would be quite impossible to speak of the Father in abstraction from the Son and vice versa. At the same time, the revealed Scriptures also teach that neither Father nor Son can be described as subject to accidental modification, since both are clearly described as divine: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God” (Jn. 1:1). Therefore, both are ad aliquid, yet without change, modification, or evolution: “Since the Father is only called so because he has a Son, and the Son is only called so because he has a Father, these things are not said substancewise, as neither is said with reference to itself...Nor are they said modification-wise, because what is signified by calling them Father and Son belongs to them eternally and unchangeably.”

So what precisely are these strange things, these relational substances, these substantial relations, unlike anything in creation? Following the lead of the tradition, Augustine chooses to call them “persons,” but he is well aware of the problem inherent in this kind of appellation. To call Father, Son, and Holy Spirit “persons” is to run the risk of giving the false impression that they are three separate beings, three substances standing over and against one another, like three human persons meeting one another across a table. So why use this highly ambiguous term? Augustine’s answer constitutes, I think, one of the great moments in the history of negative theology: “we call them ‘persons’ not in order to say precisely what they are, but in order not to be reduced to silence.”14 In other words, we give them this name so that we have something to say when we are asked what they are. Centuries after Augustine, St. Anselm would memorably call the Trinitarian persons, “nescio quid,” I don’t know what. And Thomas Aquinas would call them “subsistent relations.”

Now to be fair, a critic might wonder at this point how all of this is anything but logic chopping, special pleading, and obfuscation. The language that Augustine formulates to hold off the Arian criticism is a gesture in the direction of something quite revolutionary, namely, that to be God is to be a community of relationality. This peculiar set of terms indicates that the ground of existence, the Creator of all things, is a co-inherent communio of three persons, each one constituted by its relation to the other two. In his Introduction to Christianity, Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, commented that the Trinitarian formula implies that the relative has been absolutized, thereby turning on their heads both ancient and modern philosophy.15 In most forms of metaphysics, both ancient and modern, and in accord with common sense, substance is privileged over relationship, the latter viewed as a modification of the former. On Aristotle’s reading, for example, substance comes first, since substance coincides with the basic category of being, and

relationships, derivative of substance, come definitively second. But in light of the Trinitarian formula, we see something completely different: at the most fundamental level of existence, substance and relationship utterly coincide. To be is to be in rapport with another, for the Father is the Father only in relation to the Son, and the Son is Son only in relation to the Father, and the Holy Spirit is nothing but the relation between the Father and the Son. Through and through, the divine reality is a communion of love. God is like a harmony or a musical chord. Though it is impossible to think three things or objects together as one, without falling into contradiction, it is altogether possible to think three notes together as one, perhaps the A-note played in three different octaves. This we find, not contradictory, but delightful and congruent. And so the three “persons” of the Trinity, the three subsistent relations, might be construed as a musical pattern.

Now even if we have followed Augustine’s argument to this point and find it convincing as an answer to the Arian objection, we might perhaps still wonder why this clarification matters for us today. As I’ve already hinted, the modern world is very much under the sway of a substantialist notion of reality, the conviction that individual things are the basic constituents of being. We can find this individualist and antagonistic ontology in Leibniz’s monadology, Kant’s account of the moral life, and in Neitzsche’s doctrine that plays of power are metaphysically basic. We can also discern it in the assumptions that undergird the political life in most of Western culture, including and especially in our own country. The principal philosophical figure among the founding fathers of this nation was Thomas Jefferson, and the opening paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence are the clearest articulation of Jefferson’s perspective. Society, we hear, is not natural but artificial, a construct of individuals whose pursuit of happiness lands them in the untenable position of violating one another’s rights. Government is instituted, we are further instructed, so as to secure and protect these threatened rights. The chief influence on Jefferson’s political philosophy was, of course, John Locke, but behind Locke stood the pivotal figure of Thomas Hobbes, the first great philosopher to dissent from the classical position that human beings are, by nature, social animals. Hobbes taught that we are, by nature, not social but antagonistic, since we are all striving as fully as possible to achieve our self-interested ends. This condition results in the war of all against all, the terrible state of nature that Hobbes famously described as “nasty, brutish, and short.” The fear of violent death is what compels individuals, very much against their wills, to enter into a social contract and institute government. Though somewhat softened and nuanced, this same basic form is easily discernable in the ruminations of Jefferson.

My point is this: the Hobbesian account of politics rests upon the assumption of the primacy—both chronological and ontological—of the individual person over the community. Modern politics, like classical metaphysics, is thus rooted in the conviction that substance trumps relationship. What would political philosophy look like were the Trinitarian assumption that relationship is ontologically basic to hold sway? Would
social contract theories not have to give way to accounts of society that are far more communitarian and mystical? And would the sovereign individual not have to cede to the self constituted precisely by a set of relationships with others? Would not society, in a word, have to be re-thought precisely as an imago Trinitatis?

Augustine’s Argument with the Romans
The two arguments that we have been considering led to a third, one that preoccupied Augustine toward the end of his life and that found expression in the third of his masterpieces, The City of God. As is well known, Augustine composed this work in order to counter the charges made after the sack of Rome in 410 that the empire had collapsed because of the nefarious influence of Christianity. His answer was, in a nutshell, that Rome fell, not due to its adoption of Christian thought and practice, but due to decidedly un-Christian vices buried deep within its own body politic. What strikes the modern reader of The City of God most immediately perhaps is Augustine’s adamant refusal to dialogue with representatives of the polity of Rome. In so many of the theological engagements with culture today, a correlationist model holds sway, that is to say, the establishment of a correspondance between the concerns and questions of the secular society on the one hand and the data contained in revelation and tradition on the other. But Augustine’s style is not the least correlationist or accommodationist. He is not looking for a way to make the social theory of Rome compatible with an interiorized Christian piety; rather, he is attempting to show that what passes for justice and right social order in Rome is in fact fraudulent and that the Church alone represents the right political vision.

Though it was seen by its own apologists as the paragon of law and justice, Rome is in fact nothing but a collectivity of thieves. The reason is that Roman order is based upon self-love, the fundamental principle of what Augustine calls the civitas terrena, the earthly city or the city of man. His argument for this extraordinary—and at the time deeply counter-intuitive—claim has a theological phase and a political phase. Let us consider first the theological dimension. Many contemporary readers of The City of God find puzzling the amount of time and space that Augustine devotes to the critique of the Roman gods and goddesses and of Roman practices of worship. In point of fact this critical analysis is decisive to his overall argument, for Augustine is convinced that political rectitude follows as a direct consequence of right religion. Rome is an ersatz political order precisely because it indulges in the worship of false deities. Even the most casual survey of Roman mythology and literature reveals that the gods whom Rome reverenced were, from a moral standpoint, highly questionable. According to the accounts of their own devotees, they engaged in every sort of immoral activity from rivalry, pettiness, and jealousy, to backstabbing and outright warfare. They seemed hardly gods at all but projections of the worst elements of human beings. Augustine in fact does not hesitate to characterize them as the demons spoken of in the Scriptures. But the point is this: to discover what a society worships is to discover what it values most highly, seeks to imitate, and considers ontologically basic. Rome’s worship of violent and antagonistic gods thus gives away the game. Romans must believe that proper social order is a declension of the morally disreputable social order of the
Olympian deities, and this means that their justice is, despite its sterling reputation, phony.


And from this theological analysis flows the properly political phase of Augustine’s anti-Roman argument. Rome is a social order based upon the libido dominandi, the lust to dominate, which is so characteristic of the gods that Rome honors. 18 This particular determination of Roman society can be easily discerned in the founding myth of Romulus and Remus. The twin boys, who were tellingly nursed by a wolf, came into conflict soon after establishing the new city, and Romulus killed his brother, thus establishing his dominance. The political lesson implied in this story is that order is a function of violence and conquest. And this lesson, on Augustine’s reading, provided the leitmotif for all of Roman history. He remarks that the door to the temple of Mars—the god of war—has been open throughout the Roman centuries, proving that the “justice” of Rome is not the tranquillitas ordinis, but a certain quietude born of fear. The libido dominandi of the gods and goddesses became the libido dominandi of the Roman political authorities, bad worship conducing to bad government. It was due, Augustine argues, to the fundamental injustice of this Roman pseudo-order that the empire dissolved and was overrun.

What Augustine proposes over and against the Roman ordo is a different form of worship and a different form of government. Christians believe, not in the dysfunctional and demonic gods of paganism, but rather in the one God of creation, the power who brings the whole of the universe into being ex nihilo. In the pagan myths, order comes through a primal act of violence and conquest: Saturn devouring his children, Jupiter conquering and killing his father and then parcelling out earth, sea, and sky to his pliant siblings. But there is none of this in the Christian account, according to which God, who has no need of the world, brings the whole of creation into being from nothing. 19 This means that God does not wrestle anything outside of himself into submission or subject it to conquest, for there is, quite literally, nothing upon which God could impose himself. Rather, in a sheerly generous and non-violent act, God brings the universe into existence, gifting it with a participation in his own act of existence. In a word, ordo comes through peace. Augustine insists that when such a God is worshipped, a fundamentally different

Milbank, 391.

form of social order comes into existence, one based upon connection, compassion,
forgiveness and non-violence. This other city, this alternative form of political arrangement, is the civitas Dei that figures in the title of Augustine’s great work. It is an earthly community that mirrors the heavenly communio of the angels and saints, gathered in worship around the throne of God.

Augustine affects a brilliant correlation between the founding myth of Romulus and Remus and the Biblical story of Cain and Abel. In the Scriptural account, Cain, in his jealousy slays his own brother and becomes, in a fascinating detail, the founder of cities, thus a blood brother of Romulus. But whereas Romulus is the hero of the Roman story; Cain is cursed in the Biblical account. Both Romulus and Cain are, through their violence, progenitors of the earthly city, but the Bible is under no illusion that that way of arrangement is anything but criminal and unjust. In the Roman myths, the gods sanction the primal violence; in the Biblical story, God sides with the murdered victim. Just before commencing his public ministry, Jesus confronts the devil in the wilderness. In Matthew’s version of this story, the climactic temptation has to do with power. In one glance, the devil shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in their splendor and offers them to him, specifying that they are in his gift precisely because they belong to him. That frank Biblical assessment of the nature of worldly power is perfectly in line with the story of Cain and utterly antipathetic to Rome’s self-congratulatory conviction that it is the paragon of justice.

Now Augustine’s metaphysical vision of creation and participation held sway in the Christian thought world through the high Middle Ages and was given especially convincing expression by Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century. Thomas saw creatures as intimately connected to one another through their common connection to the creator God. As the myriad elements in a Gothic rose window are linked to one another and to the center by the integrity of the design, so all creatures are united to one another by their shared provenance from the God who creates ex nihilo. This integrated vision begins to come apart through the metaphysical and epistemological adjustments proposed by Duns Scotus and William of Occam in the later middle ages. Turning from Aquinas’s analogical conception (the epistemological correlate to a participation metaphysics), they opted for a univocal construal of the term “being,” thus placing God and creatures under the same ontological umbrella. And this move turned God into one being—however supreme—among many, thereby effectively severing the links between God and creatures and hence among creatures themselves. No longer joined ontologically by the most intimate bonds, creatures and God had to negotiate their relationship artificially and extrinsically, by means of law. That this theological move had a political counterpart in social contract theories of modernity should not, if we are careful Augustinians, surprise us in the least.

Does this final Augustinian argument have a resonance today? Many contemporary
theologians—Stanley Hauerwas, John Milbank, Graham Ward, Michael Baxter to name just a few—hold that Augustine’s disagreement with Rome remains extremely instructive in regard to our engagements both theological and political. They think that we have largely lost sight of the properly subversive quality of the Biblical revelation that God is love and that all creatures exist in the measure that they participate in the divine love. The modern nation-state, they tend to argue, resting as it does on fundamentally Hobbesian foundations, grows up out of a metaphysical vision at odds with that of authentic Christianity. And one of the principal tragedies of our time, they continue, is the co-opting and positioning of Christianity by the nation-state. Conforming to the banalities of a civil religion, the Christian churches lose their prophetic edge and ratify a fundamentally Deist conception of God and an antagonistic understanding of social relations.

And what the churches should be doing is following the program laid out in The City of God, viz. the identification of the contemporary political order as antithetical to the Gospel. And, on a more practical level, they should be following the example of Martin Luther King in this country and John Paul II in Poland. Both of those prophetic figures refused the easy option of correlation and accommodation and, from a Gospel perspective, named the false theologies that undergirded the unjust social practices against which they fought. John Paul II was consistently careful to root his critique of Communism in an alternative vision of reality, a metaphysics of love and co-inherence. Precisely because God is who he is, the social practices of Communism are de-humanizing. How thoroughly Augustinian, by the way, was John Paul’s practice of situating the celebration of the liturgy at the heart of the project of social critique. Both Augustine and John Paul knew that right politics follows from right worship.

Conclusion
Let me bring this already too-lengthy paper to a close with just a few simple remarks. First, as John Henry Newman knew, the theological principle is basic to a healthy Christianity. This means that a properly functioning Catholicism is a thinking religion. Catholics are not fideists; instead, they stubbornly reflect upon the data of revelation, drawing out their implications and seeing their interrelationships. They take as their model the Virgin Mary who did not simply observe the extraordinary events of revelation, but rather “turned them over in her heart, treasuring them.” Throughout his long life, Augustine thought about God, asking the hard questions, pursuing puzzles and conundra that would not have occurred to the average believer. And in the process, he produced a subtle, beautiful and finally revolutionary theology of God. So those of us today who are committed to the propagation of the Catholic tradition in and for the wider society should take Augustine’s restless intelligence as a model.

Secondly and relatedly, ideas have consequences. Over the centuries, so-called pragmatists have opined that abstractions have little to do with the real world. Only those utterly blind to history could see that attitude as anything but idiotic. To be sure, they
have to find effective mediators, but abstract ideas are practically the engine of historical change. The most potent idea of all, of course, is that of God, and St. Augustine perceived that the correct articulation of that notion can and must have far-reaching practical implications. We, the present-day keepers of the compelling Catholic understanding of God, should share that Augustinian perception.


De Trinitate
Augustine’s purposes,
Cambridge University Press

In writing De Trinitate Augustine had three main objectives. He wished to demonstrate to critics of the Nicene creed that the divinity and co-equality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are rooted in scripture. He intended to tell pagan philosophers the need for faith in a divine mediator so that divine self-revelation and redemption can occur. Finally, he wanted to convince his readers that salvation and spiritual growth are connected with knowing themselves as images of the Triune God, from whom they came and toward whom they go, with a dynamic tendency to union realized by likeness to God who is Love. Augustine’s approach was that of faith seeking understanding of the mystery of one God as Father, Son, and Spirit. He held that one can know God’s existence and attributes by human reason (Rom. 1.20) but not God as Trinity. The New Testament tells of the Persons and of their oneness. As a divine mystery, this is humanly incomprehensible. Some understanding, however, is possible by reflection on what Revelation implies. Augustine inferred that the one God is three Persons in such a way that they are one divine Being, yet distinct from one another and dynamically within one another (circumincessio, perichoresis).

There is no evidence in De Trinitate that Augustine asserted divine unity to be prior to Trinity, nor Trinity to unity. He states that there is no divinity apart from the three divine Persons.3 But since anti-Nicene critics cited scriptural texts to deduce that neither Christ nor the Word of God is God, his first effort was to defend the divine unity by scriptural exegesis. Reason was used, however, to promote understanding of the Trinity by the faithful and to convince philosophers and theologians that the oneness and threeness of God is philosophically and logically defensible.

Setting
It is necessary to read De Trinitate within its historical setting. The 350s to the 380s was a period of response and reaction to the Nicene Creed. Pro-Nicene and anti-Nicene theologians used technical expressions for the Son as equal to the Father or similar to the Father, or of one will with the Father.4

The Nicene theology of the 380s emphasized the traditional teaching that the
nature of the Trinity had the result that its operations outside the godhead are inseparable. In 389 Nebridius, Augustine’s student friend, wrote to ask him: How is it that, if the Trinity does all things together in unity, the Son alone is said to be incarnated and not the Father and Holy Spirit as well? This marked the beginning of Augustine’s theology being structured around the inseparable activities of the Trinity, with the Son as revealer of God the Trinity. His Trinitarian theology and christology are not separated.

In Augustine’s Letter 11 can be found an early answer to this question. He continues to answer it in the De Trinitate, which was begun in 399 and finished possibly before 421. Book 12 was incomplete when the manuscript was circulated among admirers. Considering this piracy an impediment to revising earlier books, he reluctantly finished it at the request of Aurelius, bishop of Carthage, and for friends.

All fifteen books of De Trinitate follow the method of faith seeking understanding (Isaiah 7.9). Augustine cites scriptural bases for the doctrine of the Trinity and its image in man and woman. The first seven books focus on the doctrine of the Trinity established from scripture and the philosophical concepts used to prevent misunderstanding. The last eight books deal with an investigation of what the image of God in human persons can reveal of God’s inner life and the human vocation to likeness to the Trinity.

The historical context of De Trinitate makes it an exegetical, theological, philosophical, and polemical work. Its systematic and pastoral character is also discernible.

Biblical exegesis and theology: Books 1–4

Augustine was not the first theologian to write extensively on the Trinity. He knew of the Trinity not only from the Nicene Creed and from scripture but also from Catholic commentators on scriptural texts. The one commentator he names is Hilary of Poitiers.

Scriptural evidence for God as Trinity includes Christ’s telling the apostles to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28.19). The Trinity is also manifested at the baptism of Christ. Only the Son became man; only the Father declared: “You are my Son” (Mark 1:10); only the Spirit appeared in the form of a dove and later at Pentecost in strong winds and tongues of fire. These manifestations, Augustine wrote, worry some who, having heard that the Trinity acts inseparably in whatever each Person does outside the godhead, want to understand how the Son’s incarnation, the Father’s declaration, and the Spirit’s appearances were all accomplished by the one Trinity. In Book 15.11.20 Augustine answers the question why only the Son became man. Only the Word of God was made flesh, although the Trinity brought it about, in order that by the inner understanding of truth human beings might live according to truth, following and imitating Christ. Just as in human communication the spoken word follows the mental word conceived by thinking, so Christ as the Word of God took flesh to communicate with human persons. He is the exemplary cause of creation and salvation.
Scripture frequently refers to the Son as having been “sent” by the Father and to the Holy Spirit as “sent” by Father and Son. Theologians spoke of these sendings as “missions.” Augustine explained them as the Father’s self-communication, intended to make known God’s love for humankind (the “economy” of salvation) and to give some clue to the mutual relations within the godhead. But before dwelling on these important matters, he first had to respond to past and current objections to the divinity of the Son. Two texts fully quoted by Augustine are from the Prologue to St. John’s Gospel and St. Paul’s epistle to the Philippians: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . all things were made through him (John 1.1) . . . and the Word became flesh” (John 1.14). “Jesus Christ, who being in the form of God did not think it robbery to be equal to God” (Phil. 2.6).

As evidence for the divinity of the Spirit he cites an epistle of St. Paul (1 Cor. 6.15–20) which calls the bodies of Christians members of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit cannot therefore be inferior to Christ.11 Certain texts taken by Homoeans to mean that Christ, or even the Word of God, is subordinate to the Father Augustine interpreted by the traditional exegetical rule: the scriptural texts referring to the Son as less than the Father, in the form of a servant, are referring to the Son’s humanity; scriptural texts referring to the Son as equal to the Father are referring to the Son’s divinity (1 Cor. 14.28). In the form of a servant, Augustine noted, recalling Phil. 2.6, Christ said, “The Father is greater than I” (John 14.28). In the form of God, Christ said, “As the Father has life in himself, so he also gave the Son to have life in himself” (John 5.26), “I and the Father are one” (John 10.30). And when of the Holy Spirit it is said that “he will teach you all truth,” this teaching is done in virtue of his divinity (John 16.13).12

Scriptural texts referring to the sending of the Son and Spirit into the world were interpreted by some anti-Nicene theologians and formerly by the “economic” theologians13 to argue that the one sent is less than the sender, and therefore only the Father is God. They even held that the Old Testament recorded certain “missions” of the divine Persons. Augustine argued that the “missions” began in the New Testament. The Father had been signified by certain bodily manifestations of angels in the Old Testament but was never said to have been De Trinitate sent. In the Old Testament God unfolded the plan of salvation through visible symbolic phenomena and verbal utterances.14 A mission includes not only the state of being sent but also the purpose for which one is sent. “When the fullness of time had come, God sent his son, made of woman, made under law, to redeem those who were under law” (Gal. 4.4). Christ was sent to overcome despair and, as mediator, to unify people by incorporating them in himself. He came to give through his death and resurrection access to eternal life, “and this is eternal life, that they may know you and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17.3). Being sent, Augustine argued, means not being less than God but rather being from the Father as principle of origin, God from God, light from light.15 The Son was made flesh, beginning a unique
relationship with human persons. The Spirit was sent to unite human persons with one another, originating a unique relationship as the animating Spirit of the Christian community. Augustine used this discussion of being sent to point out that the scriptures demonstrate that the Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son and is, therefore, not begotten. He specifies that this dual procession of the Spirit (filioque) does not eliminate the Father’s being the principium, or source of all deity. Augustine wrote at length and movingly of the Son and Spirit entering human history on behalf of human persons (1 John 3.7–9). Faith, he taught, brings participation in their Trinitarian life of love through grace. Thus, for Augustine, the doctrine of the Trinity was the center of Christian spirituality, intended to affect one’s way of life. He found the divine missions manifesting a Trinitarian “God for us . . . and for our salvation.” In their divinity the Persons remain always transcendent, but their missions reveal the eternal generation of the Son, the procession of the Holy Spirit, and their love for humankind. While the various semi-Arian theologians to whom Augustine responded did not deny that the names of Father, Son and Spirit are in the New Testament, they nevertheless interpreted them as descending forms of divinity, with the Father only as true God, quite like Plotinus’ triad of the One, the Nous, and the AllSoul. It was an Arian and Neoplatonic triad that Augustine refused to accept as the true Christian Trinity. Instead, he produced scriptural evidence for the coequality of the Three Persons as God while each is distinct from the other by a dissimilar relationship. Not only is his response to Arians non-Neoplatonist: he directly engages in an anti-pagan philosophical discussion in chapters 3 and 4 of Book 4 over the question of mediation, and argues against materialistic philosophies in Book 10. Both Plotinus and Porphyry held that the human intellect could know God without a mediator or faith; Porphyry also considered it beneath human dignity to have faith in a God made flesh and crucified. Citing this as a sin of pride, Augustine declared that to know the existence of God and something about him the cambridge companion to augustine is not union with him. Porphyry himself realized that many were unable to make the Plotinian intellectual ascent to the One. For them he advocated a purification of the imagination by theurgic rites in which demons were invoked to bring about a vision of the gods. Augustine called such theurgy a satanic deception. Augustine argued that the sacrifice of Christ defeated the Devil so that people now have access to eternal life through the death and resurrection of Christ. Real purification is through faith and trust in Christ, preceded by faith in the historical actions and words of Jesus. The relation of Christian faith to history and to the divine Word of God made flesh is a significant departure from Neoplatonic philosophy. The Word of God entered human history, Augustine explains, to incorporate human individuals into his body. Christ will lead them back to the Father who created them, where they will be in eternal life, “the glory
of God.” This is Augustine’s interpretation of 1 Cor. 15.28 which had been used by anti-Nicene theologians to assert the subordination of the Son’s being.

Trinity language: Books 5–7
For Augustine, one can know by reason more what God is not than what God is. This is called negative or apophatic theology. But there is some positive theology, and theologians use philosophical terms to clarify what Scripture asserts. In the Nicene creed the term “consubstantial” (homoousion)...
22 denoted the common being of the three Persons. The Son was said to be of one “substance” with the Father. Arians23 had argued against the consubstantial being of the Persons. Since Aristotelian accidents modify changeable substances, the Arians asserted that God’s simplicity does not allow accidents to be attributed to him. Augustine agreed.24 But the Arians inferred from this claim that to call the Father “Unbegotten” and the Son “Begotten” meant that these terms referred to the divine Substance, and they therefore concluded that the Son differs in substance from the Father. To this Augustine responded that between substantial predication and accidental predication there is “relative” predication.25 Since the Son is always Son and the Father is always Father, relationship in the unchangeable divine sphere is perpetual relationship. Father and Son, Augustine pointed out, are words indicating relationship and they refer to another (ad aliquid). “Unbegotten” merely means that the Father is not from another. Begotten and Unbegotten as predicates of relationship are not predicated of the divine Substance, but of the second and first divine persons.

Augustine criticized, as improperly applied to God, the term “substance,”26 etymologically understood as standing under accidents. He advised that what the Greeks call ousia should be translated into Latin as essentia, i.e. being. As we have the word knowledge from “to know,” so we have being from “to be” (“ita De Trinitate ab eo quod est esse dicta est essentia”). “And who is more than he who said to his servant: ‘I am who am,’ and ‘Tell the sons of Israel: He who is sent me to you?’” (Exodus 3.14). That which cannot change deserves really and truly to “BE.” Augustine criticized the ambiguity resulting from the Latin translation of hypostasis by substantia. The Greeks called the Trinity one ousia and three hypostaseis. He commented: “I do not know what difference they wish to make between ousia and hypostasis.”28 When the Latins translate hypostasis by substantia, this Greek statement becomes one essentiam or substantiam and three substantias(one being or substance and three substances!) Because of this resulting contradiction, the Latins called the Trinity one Substance (Being) and three Persons.

The term “person” is useful, but can mislead, Augustine believed. Interpreted as a theatrical mask or role, it might imply a Sabellian29 view of Son and Spirit. By this time also the term “person” referred to individual human beings, and Augustine apparently feared it might indicate the separability of the divine Persons. He held that the Trinity’s inseparable activity entails its inseparable
being. Moreover, “person” was viewed by him as an absolute term predicable of each and all of the divine persons. He used it to answer the question: Three what?  

Augustine also wondered about the proper name for the Holy Spirit. Holy, Spirit, and Love are common to all three Persons. However, in proceeding from the Father and Son, the Holy Spirit is given all that is God. So the Spirit is from them as Gift, eternally giveable. Because the Holy Spirit’s proper name is the relational one of Gift of Father and Son who are holy and spirit, the Gift’s distinctive name is Holy Spirit. 

The Search for the image of the Trinity: Books 8–15  
These books are also a search for an understanding of the belief that human persons are created to the image of the Trinity (Genesis 1.26). Since God cannot be seen directly, an indirect approach is to study human images of God. Not merely an introspective, psychological search, it is guided by the divine missions and the desire to know the value of realizing that one is an image of God. Augustine began looking within human persons to “show that there are three somethings which can both be separately presented and also operate inseparably.” 

Book 8 is described by a recent commentator as an ontological link between the divine mystery of the Trinity and the more accessible mystery of the human self. Identifying truth and goodness with God, a Christianization of Platonism, Augustine links human knowing and understanding, willing and loving, to God. This is a first link between God and the human image. Augustine the cambridge companion to augustine also explores what the word “God” means. Faith is the response to God’s selfrevelation and the only access to God as Trinity. By faith persons communicate with God, who communicated with them by creation and by sending the Son and Spirit. Just as some general knowledge is involved in loving what one does not know, so some knowledge is involved in loving by believing. The historical knowledge of Christ’s life is prologue to loving Christ. Augustine praises caritas or dilectio, two special kinds of amor (love). Amor is both affective and volitional; the term refers to both desire and enjoyment. Going beyond the pagan appreciation of goodness to which love is directed, he declares the absolute value of love itself. He repeats St. John, who said not only that God is love, but that love is God (1 John 4.7–21).

Investigating the love of self, understood as lover, object loved, and love itself, he admits that when one loves oneself, only two are present: the lover and love. “But supposing I only love myself, are there now not two merely, what I love and love? Lover and what is being loved are the same thing when one loves oneself.” 36 Augustine was searching for triadic human activities that were distinct and yet somehow one. Although Augustine seeks the image of God in the human person as an analogy of the divine processions, he cannot forget what scripture has revealed of the historical course of the human image from its beauty and defacement in Adam to its renovation through the grace of Christ. These discussions are not
digressions. His Trinitarian theology is not separated from soteriology. In Books 9 and 10, there is psychology without the full nature of the human soul being studied. Augustine refers not to soul-powers but to the functioning of the mind, the apex or highest level of the soul. He defines the terms to be used as animus, mens, anima. Animus refers to rational soul; mens to its highest level; these together are the “inner man.” Anima refers to soul but not necessarily to human soul only. It is the subject of the lower sense-functioning of the “outer man.” These terms – outer and inner – are from St. Paul (2 Cor. 4.16).

Mens (mind), as spiritual, is where God is imaged, but it is not mind in the modern sense. It includes volitional, affective, and cognitive activities. In Book 9 the first mental image of the Trinity is analyzed: the mind knowing and loving itself so that, all equal but distinct, mutually related and co-inherent, consubstantial and one substance, this image is an analogue of the Trinity. Human knowledge is discussed as participation in the rationes aeternae and as divine illumination. The latter pertains to the truth of judgments and standards by which one lives, not to concept-formation. Augustine distinguishes judgments of truth from the fabrication of images, which promotes falsehood. When in Book 10 he confronts the Delphic Oracle’s command to “know thyself,” he declares that the mind cannot but know itself as immediately present to itself. Why then the command? Because the mind can be unconscious of itself. “I believe that it De Trinitate should think about itself and live according to its nature . . . under him [God] it should be subject to and over all that it should govern . . . Indeed it does many things it does through perverse desires as if it had forgotten itself.”

41 Selfpresence is not enough; to know oneself one must think of oneself (se cogitare); only then comes understanding (scire, intellegere).42 The command to know oneself is to return from overabsorption in sense images which cause forgetfulness of self. Here Augustine enumerates erroneous views of mind as material; and the certainties available to the mind are specified.43 The first trinity of mind knowing and loving itself, and the next two mental trinities, were inspired by the Prologue to St. John’s Gospel where the Word of God is uttered by the Father. Augustine looks within the mind and says that there is nothing that humans think, say, or do that is not preceded by a mental word brought forth within us.44 This word is conceived in love, and love joins the word with the mind from which it is born. The word is equal to the mind because what is begotten is equal to its begetter. The love or desire by which knowledge is conceived is not an offspring of the mind; but what is known, considered as known, is an offspring, and this is loved in the sense that it is enjoyed. “And so there is a certain image of the Trinity: the mind itself, its knowledge, which is its offspring, and love as a third; these three are one and one substance.”45 This mental trinity which begins with mind is superseded by two later ones beginning with memory, but the structure of the “begotten word” remains central to the later trinities. Augustine moves to intellectual remembering and offers a second mental
trinity of remembering, understanding, and loving self. He sees this triad as the human person’s natural capacity for uniting with God; this capacity remains even when impaired by loss of union with God.46 “When memory is called life, and mind, and substance, it is so called with reference to itself, but when it is called memory, it is so called with reference to another.”47 The same is true of understanding and will. Therefore the three are one and have a oneness as mind. They are three with reference to each other, co-equal, and each equal to the three because they contain each other, and are all contained by each.48 Augustine intimates that in creating human persons to the image of God, God wished them always to be mindful of the divine presence. Only when the mind comes to the perfect vision of God will this image be God’s perfect likeness (1 Cor. 13.12).

Before taking up the final mental trinity, Augustine in Book 11 offers two triads of sense perception and imagination to enable readers to recognize more easily the three members of each triad as really distinct because material. Being on the sense level, perception and imagination are not presented as images of God.49 In this same Book two functions of the mind are distinguished: contemplating truth as the source of true judgments (sapientia) and the rational activity of knowing and managing temporal affairs (scientia). One might interpret this as the current distinction between the theoretical and the practical intellect. God’s image is in the cambridge companion to augustine the contemplative mind, for only this, as wisdom, lasts forever. The act of faith belongs to the rational (practical) mind, which focuses on the temporal Christ, his life, words, death, and resurrection. Human beings ascend from knowledge (scientia) in this temporal life to wisdom (sapientia) in eternal life where God is contemplated. Augustine’s analysis of faith, which he describes as far more than an act of will, is presented in Book 13.

While the mental trinity of remembering, understanding, and loving self described in Book 10 is a natural image of God as co-eternal with himself, the true image of God, thoroughly explained in Book 14, is that of remembering, understanding, and loving God. This is awakened by grace and renewed throughout one’s lifetime.

In Book 15 Augustine acknowledges that even the best image is inadequate to represent a triune God who is both simple and eternal.51 His search for such an image has at least shown that three things can be one, and has been beneficial. It gave awareness of spirit life as utterly different from material life. The dismissal of a triune God often occurs because people try to think of it imaginatively or materially. Moreover, memory as source of understanding and will makes one conscious of the Father; understanding reminds one of the Son as the self-communication of the Father; in will one recognizes the Spirit, who is love.

But the dissimilarity between temporal being and eternal Being, between changeable and unchangeable Being, is greater than the similarity. The divine Trinity is one with God; the human image is not identical with the human being.
Remembering, understanding, and loving are functions of a human subject, whereas the Trinitarian Persons are not functions of a divine subject. There is no substitute for faith in Christ and what he reveals of Father and Spirit.53

Conclusion
The originality of Augustine is mainly found in his doctrine of the Holy Spirit and in the centrality he gave to love in Trinitarian life, and to love as renewing human likeness to the Trinity. That human beings were created images not of the Son alone but of the whole Trinity, according to Genesis 1:26, was a departure from the teaching of some predecessors. The likeness to the Trinity occurs because “the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom. 5.5). Referring to the mutual love in the Trinity, Augustine wrote: “We are commanded to imitate this mutuality by grace, both with reference to God and to each other, in the two precepts on which the whole law and the Prophets depend” (Matthew 22:40).55 Thus Christian Trinitarian spirituality is a continual rhythm of receiving love and giving love. Moreover, Augustine advanced Trinitarian theology by his use of relative predication to show that the unity and trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not impossible. Augustine admitted the De Trinitate incompleteness and limitation of his theological findings and looked to others to continue the search for more understanding. He never aimed to eliminate the mystery of the Trinity, revealed in scripture and calling for faith. Augustine ends with a prayer: “Let me remember you, let me understand you, let me love you. Increase these things in me until you reform me completely.” He reminds his readers that to be mindful of God in this way and to image the Trinity who is Love is a lifelong process and the dynamic vocation of every human creature. The image will be perfected in the future, transformed through the Spirit. “When this image therefore has been renewed by this transformation, and thus made perfect, then we shall be like to God, since we shall see him not through a mirror, but just as he is, which the Apostle calls face to face”(1 Cor. 13.12).

The Thought of St. Augustine
1990

St. Augustine, also known as Aurelius Augustinus, was born in AD 354 and died in 430 at Hippo, North Africa, in a region now better known as modern Algeria. He was raised in a town called Thagaste. There he suffered the twin misfortunes of the early death of his father, Patrick, and an impoverished education which did little to foster his knowledge and understanding. His mother, Monica, influenced him deeply and remained his best friend until her death in 388. Three years later (and against his wishes) Augustine was ordained presbyter for a small congregation at the busy seaport of Hippo Regius, forty five miles from his birthplace. His reluctance could not mask his outstanding abilities and it was not long before he was consecrated bishop of the province. For thirty four years his episcopal duties engaged him in a constant round of preaching,
administration, travel and the care of his people. Despite the demands on his time, and the various controversies which embroiled him as a champion of orthodoxy, he never ceased to be a thinker and scholar. He wrote extensively and his surviving writings exceed those of any other ancient author. His vast output includes one hundred and thirteen books and treatises, over two hundred letters, and more than five hundred sermons. Although a citizen of the ancient world whose outlook was shaped by the cultures of Greece and Rome, Augustine is in important respects our contemporary. His influence has proved pervasive, affecting the way we think about the human condition and the meaning of the word ‘God’. His concern for words and meanings and their relation to reality finds a modern resonance in the thought of the philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, who included Augustine’s writings among his favourite books.

Once freed from the arrogance and certainties of youth, Augustine saw that with all his formidable intellectual powers, something more than intellect was required in the pursuit of truth. He would have inclined to the remark made by Pascal that ‘the heart has its reasons that reason knows not of’. Similarly, we can see from his great autobiography ‘The Confessions’ that his search for truth made plain to him the depths and disposition of the human heart. Outstanding figure that he was, Augustine knew from personal experience that sin darkens the mind and makes crooked the motives of the heart. In his ‘Confessions’ he recalls how as a youth he had stolen pears from an orchard—not out of hunger but merely as a lawless escapade. This was forever to remind him of the Genesis story of Adam and Eve with its insistence that humankind seeks the ‘forbidden fruit’ simply because it is forbidden. He drew support from St. Paul and in particular the Epistle to the Romans (Ch. 7 v. 21-24). In our own time the radical nature of sin is either ignored or denied and it may be that we need the insight of a modern writer like Muriel Spark to see what Augustine was driving at:

Everyone sins but any other
Sinner can blame an indifferent mother
or being suppressed, or going without dinner,
But I myself am a self-made sinner.
I never was hungry as a kid;
Anything I wanted to do I did,
And nobody whispered in my presence
Or complicated my adolescence.
If only I had been pampered, cursed
Or warned of ghosts; if only I nursed
A dark obsession and was trying to free it,
I could blame all that; but as I see it
I am a sinner in the purest sense,
Original par excell-ence
And I can’t tell a lie or drink too much gin
But I think of my immaculate approach to sin.

Augustine saw himself as a sinner in ‘the purest sense’. Indeed the picture he paints of himself in the pages of the Confessions is at times so unflattering that it would be easy to overlook the more engaging aspects of his personality which more than compensate for the acknowledged vices. The need for sexual gratification was over-whelmingly strong during
his adolescence. At the age of seventeen he took a mistress to whom he remained faithful for many years. She bore him a son, Adeodatus, whose untimely death caused Augustine genuine grief.

Having rejected Christianity as somewhat vulgar and simplistic he then attached himself to the religion of the Manichees. Their founder Mani, who was by all accounts a self-deluded fanatic, had been crucified in Persia in AD 277. He designated himself the Apostle of God, the Paraclete foretold by Jesus. His followers were required to renounce the world as the place of darkness, and the lower half of the body as the work of the devil. The Old Testament with its emphasis on the goodness of creation was denied any binding authority, and a similar fate befell any passages in the New Testament which suggested that the world was not irredeemably evil.

Many fantastic notions were peddled in Mani’s name and it seems curious, if not astonishing to us, that a man of Augustine’s stature should have been taken in for so long by such spurious doctrines. He remained an adherent for ten years (a to discover in the turbulence of a bygone age, the figure of Augustine holding fast to God and his purpose in creating the world. Here in his own words he describes the tragic fate of the city of Rome following the invasion of Alaric and his soldiers: an event of such significance that it was to call forth from Augustine a work of the highest genius.

At this time Rome was overwhelmed in disaster after its capture by the Goths under their king Alaric. Those who worship the multitude of false gods, whom we usually call pagans, tried to lay the blame for the disaster on the Christian religion, and began to blaspheme the true God more fiercely and bitterly than before. This fired me with zeal for the house of God and I began to write the City of God to confute their blasphemies and falsehood. This took a number of years for other tasks intervened . . . but the great work . . . was at last finished in twenty two books.

He began the City of God at the age of fifty nine and concluded it when he was seventy two. In the opening sentences of the Preface the purpose of his sustained endeavours is made clear:

Here my dear Marcellinus is the fulfilment of my promise, a book in which I have taken upon myself the task of defending the glorious City of God against those who prefer their own gods to the Founder of that City.

Augustine with considerable panache and fantastic detail sets before us a divine society consisting of those predestined to reign with God from the beginning of time. Separate and apart from this company of the elect are those unfortunate ones who have lived by merely human standards and as such are doomed to eternal punishment.

It is hard not to feel a certain unease (a distaste even) when confronted with a vision of the future in which some are blessed and others damned for reasons which on the surface seem less than compelling. We shall look at these later. For now we can say that man’s highest good, according to Augustine, is eternal life with God. This does not necessarily entail a rejection of the world’s values—to do so would be to fall prey to the negative and world—denying doctrines of the Manichees which he had left behind prior to his conversion. But power, wealth, fame, ambition—all the things that so easily lay a fatal claim upon human lives—are to be seen as transient when placed in the context of eternity. In one of the most celebrated passages of the Confessions he declares: ‘Thou hast made us for thyself, and our
hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee’. The human heart is in pilgrimage and its destination—the true God—is the pearl of great price of which the Scriptures spoke.

It seems natural to ask from where Augustine derived these transcendent notions. He knew his Bible of course but he was no philosopher in the trained technical sense and was only partially acquainted with the works of Plato and Aristotle. He had received a rhetorical education and the core of his training was in the art of speaking. It is all the more remarkable therefore (and, not least, a measure of his intellectual genius) that he was able to weave Greek thought into his theology and furnish it with his own insights derived from Scripture. If he was indebted to anyone it was the second-century religious philosopher, Plotinus.

According to a contemporary biographer, Plotinus seems to have been a somewhat eccentric genius whose life exemplified the ascetic ideal. He was a vegetarian who never acknowledged his birthday. Food and sleep were kept to an absolute minimum and baths did not seem to figure at all on his list of personal priorities. What consumed him was the philosophical system he had developed from his reading of Plato and Aristotle. Added to this were his own theological reflections on God and the nature of the external world. Augustine had but one reservation concerning his mentor’s system: admirable though it was as an attempt to reach the truth about the universe, it lacked the divine illumination of the intellect, which, for Augustine, made natural knowledge possible.

The same cannot be said for Augustine’s own highly-distinctive style which is revealed in the last three books of the Confessions. They provide a marvellously discursive interpretation of the book of Genesis and the story of creation. Philosophical reflections on the problem of time and the hidden meaning of scripture combine together with an adoration of God which pervades virtually everything he writes. Augustine is not bound by the traditional time-scale of the Bible and readily concedes the possibility that the world has been in existence long before the arrival of man. He would have had some difficulty with later views of creation describing it as an event which began at six o’clock on the evening of 22nd October 4004 BC and took one hundred and forty four hours to complete.

In this respect he is remarkably modern without having access to the vastly different cosmology which informs our thinking today. We can only speculate at his reaction to a universe at once grander and more mysterious than he could have possibly imagined. Probably he would have had little time for theories which assert that creation is an accidental product of chance and randomness (see for example, Prof. J. Monod Chance and Necessity). Like Einstein in the earlier part of our own century he would have refuted any notion that ‘God plays dice with the world’. Augustine had a keen sense of its astonishing order and design both of which are dependent on the goodness and graciousness of God. Both The Confessions and the City of God contain many allusions to the world’s intoxicating beauty: The manifold diversity of beauty in sky and earth and sea; the abundance of light and its miraculous loveliness; the dark shades of woods, the colour and fragment of flowers; the multitudinous varieties of birds with their song and bright plumage . . . Then there is the mighty spectacle of the sea.

2

We are reminded almost irresistibly of St. Francis and nature poets like Wordsworth and Traherne for whom the world is the divine work of an almighty hand.

Alongside the order and loveliness of things exist calamity and woe. For Augustine this was
not a matter of speculation but observable fact. He was acutely aware of the despondency induced in ordinary people by these brute realities yet saw it as his duty to remind them of their own responsibilities if things went awry:
Each generation thinks its own time uniquely awful; that morality and religion have never been at so low an ebb . . . and civilized values have never been more threatened. But whether times are good or bad depends on the moral quality of individual and social life and it is up to us.

3
There is profit in this message for us today. We seem to lack the historical perspective and assorted varieties of fatalism seem to hold many lives in their sway. Atrocities on a global scale no longer surprise us and we have too easily accepted what the German philosopher, Hannah Arendt has described as ‘the banality of evil’. Far from despairing, Augustine urges readers of any generation to feel their individual and collective strength. They have more influence on events than they realize.
The good ordering of society however cannot be divorced from the quality and integrity of its rulers. In welcoming the earlier conversion of the Emperor Constantine to Christianity, Augustine was not blind to the later intrigues and power-struggles—the domination of the weak by the strong. He had read Sallust’s sobering account of Roman republican history and endorsed his celebrated dictum that Roman society was characterized by ‘private affluence and public squalor’.
A fair society in Augustine’s view was one of mutual interdependence secured by justice. On this point he was quite uncompromising: ‘Take away justice and what are governments but gangsters on a large scale?’

4
He was then on the side of the poor yet the earthly city all about him seemed impervious to their needs. The defenders of the status quo were invariably rich and powerful—a world removed from the poverty of those below them. The Church did what it could with its daily soup kitchen and register of paupers, but the real and pressing need was for a re-distribution of taxation. Once again Augustine strikes a contemporary note with his insistence that political structures must necessarily be concerned with the ‘common good’ and not just a minority within society.
In speaking so unequivocally we might suppose that Augustine could be regarded as a champion of revolution (violent or otherwise). Not so. Whatever failings a government displays towards its subjects, it rules as a divinely-ordained instrument within society and as such has indubitable rights. Rulers are approved by God as St. Paul made clear (Romans, Chapter 13) and are necessary because of the greed and wickedness of the human heart. Left to their own devices men would wreak havoc upon the world. Unless there is law and order (to which all ostensibly consent) there can be no peace.
Augustine’s thinking at this point bears some resemblance to the much later thought of Thomas Hobbes

5
. His great work of political philosophy Leviathan presents human life as ‘nasty, brutish and short’. In such a world a powerful state is needed to control the impulses of its members which threaten the good of all. Despite the similarities, the world of Augustine ultimately belongs to God and cannot therefore be regarded as nothing more than a
ferocious battleground of conflicting interests. That we give due deference to the requirements of the State is to acknowledge that its authority derives from, and, to some extent, reflects the immutable law of God. Government has a moral basis therefore and does not rely solely on brute force for its authority. Even if we acquit Hobbes of the agnosticism of which he was sometimes accused in his own day, it is doubtful whether he could side with Augustine here. For Hobbes, sound government is made possible by the consent of the people and the judicious use of power. Metaphysical considerations, are, strictly speaking, irrelevant to the world’s principal business of competition and survival.

Enough has been said already to show that in conceding the divine right of the State to exert control over its people, Augustine does not lead us to suppose that the City of God can be identified with any temporal institution. Certainly not the ruling elite, and, more surprisingly, not even the Church here on earth. It is, from our contemporary viewpoint, remarkable that he very rarely identifies the City of God with the Church.

Others may have cited St. Paul’s saying that the Church is ‘without spot or blemish’. For Augustine it was rather more the case that the true believer should love the Church ‘warts and all’. As priest and bishop he loved the Church passionately—indeed spent himself in her defence and service. Yet he knew the members of his congregations to be average sensual people. Their obvious failings, the moral and spiritual lapses of his clergy, and the occasional easy compromise of the Church with the spirit of the age were all matters which momentarily depressed him. The monastery at Hippo received many dubious characters who, despite their avowed interest to change, seemed unable to shake off their old destructive ways. It seemed that a crook could still remain a crook even after taking religious vows.

Interestingly, Augustine never conceived of the Church as a purely clerical affair. The ordained ministry, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, had an important role to perform liturgically and pastorally. For him the veracity of the gospel was not authenticated by any appeal to a spiritual hierarchy but rather to the faith of the universal Church. He comments at one point: ‘I would not have believed the gospel if the authority of the universal Church had not constrained me to do so’.

It could be argued that Cardinal John Henry Newman was drawn to a similar conclusion in the nineteenth century when he stressed the necessity of consulting all the faithful in matters of doctrine. His deep study of doctrinal controversies in the Early Church of the fourth century led him to the view that when the supposed guardians of the faith were in danger of apostasizing, it was the faithful witness of ordinary believers that maintained the Church in truth.

This idea of the Church as the whole people of God was to figure prominently in the discussions and documents of the Second Vatican Council where the invisible hand of Newman was acknowledged to have played a significant part. The prescient Cardinal had prepared the way for the Council’s Constitutions on the Church (Lumen Gentium) and on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum). That the laity were now seen to have an indispensable role in the life and mission of the Church owed much to the shared view of Newman and Augustine. Indeed one could go further and say quite simply that a Church without a laity would be lost.

Before moving away from the Church as an object of concern, it is noteworthy that at various
points in the City of God, Augustine displays a dual-conception of its [the Church] nature and purpose. On the one hand it is a visible body ruled by bishops who are successors of the apostles, and among whom the Bishop of Rome has primacy. Then again, it is also portrayed as the ‘supernatural reality of the congregation of the predestined’. Somewhat enigmatically, he goes on to say that the Church ‘has in her midst those who are united with her in the participation of the sacraments, but who will not join with her in the eternal destiny of the saints’. Even more surprisingly, among those presently regarded as the enemies of the Church are ‘citizens to be’. 

On this reckoning it would be highly presumptuous to state categorically who will be finally included in the company of the elect. In Augustine’s own words ‘there are others outside the visible city of the Church who yet one day will belong to the City of God as a supernatural reality’. God alone then knows who are his own and the elect can never be sure of their destiny.

Before we look at some of the criticisms elicited by these strange notions (and, not least, in fairness to Augustine himself) we need to understand his teaching on predestination. Notwithstanding the initial concern we might feel at its apparent arbitrariness and severity, closer scrutiny does reveal a certain coherence at the heart of this daunting doctrine. Predestination is about our human destiny—both in this life and in the world to come. To be finally included among the blessed is to receive salvation which is the gift of God. Augustine sees the human race as a ‘mass of perdition’ caused by the sin of Adam and compounded by all who constitute his posterity. Man is incapable therefore of pulling himself up by his bootstraps and can only be set on the right path by the grace of God. Grace alone is the means whereby our freedom is restored because from the first moments of infancy we are held captive in the dark dungeon of pride and selfishness.

The greatness of God’s grace is revealed in the sending of his Son to die and rise again. But that is not all. Preachers have been commissioned to preach the good news of the gospel and call sinners to repentance. Their response is two-fold: some believe and accept it while others reject it. Both responses may be ascribed to the election of God. The elect, of whom there are a fixed number will in time believe and be saved. The non-elect are lost because God rejected them on account of their sin. As sinners they are justly condemned to punishment. This appears manifestly unfair in that all men as Adam’s off-spring deserve the same treatment. But, as a matter of fact, God does not treat all alike. Some are justly condemned, while others, despite their sin, are mercifully blessed. Augustine answers the objection by quoting Romans, Chapter 9 v19 and Chapter 11 v33. The will of God in this respect is hidden and it is blasphemy on the part of man to attempt to discover it. ‘A gulf of bottomless depth is God’s unsearchable purpose’. Man is mere clay in the hands of the potter and is not entitled to question the One who fashioned him. Furthermore God’s justice is not called into question by his seeming severity because sinners are left to the just recompense of their sins: ‘Kind in his kindness to some, righteous in his punishment of others and good in respect of all, because it is good when that which is due is rendered; and righteous in respect of all, since that which is not due is given without wrong to anyone’.

If this seems somewhat convoluted, put more simply, Augustine seems to be saying that those who receive mercy can only be grateful for grace they had done nothing to deserve. On the other hand, those who do not receive mercy can have no ground to remonstrate against a
verdict which all in Adam deserve. With obvious justification Augustine’s critics were rightly quick to signal their complaints. They pointed to his highly selective use of Scriptural texts and, even more damagingly, to the forced use of Biblical passages which manifestly failed to fit his overall thesis. They argued for example that the New Testament text ‘God wills all to be saved’ had to be interpreted by Augustine in the minimalist sense of including some representatives of every race of mankind instead of the more obvious all-inclusive sense. But it was not just his dubious exegesis that gave rise to concern. There was the sense that his speculations had gone too far—that he had, so to speak, fallen foul of the criteria he had himself set down and strayed in to mysteries beyond mortal comprehension. Not least, there was the concern that predestination with its ready-made categories of lost and saved could induce moral laxity. After all, if one’s eternal destiny lies utterly beyond one’s personal control, what incentive is there in trying to be good?

No discussion of predestination would be adequate without reference to the counter-blast it called forth in the form of Pelagianism. Pelagius was a monk of British origin who was not unsympathetic to Augustine’s analysis of the human condition as a state which gives rise to misery and ends in death. In certain important respects however, Pelagius declared himself unable to swallow the doctrine of predestination undiluted. Quite simply he was more optimistic about human nature than his episcopal adversary. He could not believe that humanity inherited a flawed nature. That we were born into sin he did not contest. What he rejected was the view that we were born with sin as a sort of crippling contagion transmitted by the act of sexual intercourse. To Pelagians, Augustine never seemed at ease with the human body—an unfortunate legacy perhaps from the oppressive Manichean spell which had held him captive for so long during the earlier (and formative) part of his life. It is a matter of regret that for many centuries the teaching of the Church on human sexuality has suffered from its adherence to Augustine’s distorted emphasis. Pelagius saw man as being endowed with a divine capacity for doing good. Whether he chooses to do good depends upon himself. He may go wrong and choose evil but nevertheless a genuine and free choice has been exerted. In theory, therefore, it is possible for man to keep the commandments and be without sin. Admittedly, without the help of grace this undertaking is bound to end in failure or despair. But even this prospect was, for Pelagius, less debilitating than the view he opposed with its insistence that everything—even man’s will—is the initiative of God. Surely, he argued, this destroyed man’s answerability before God and hence his responsibility for his actions.

Augustine’s reply (conducted over a number of years) castigated Pelagius as a perverter of Christianity. Instead of appropriating the good news of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of mankind, humanity now had the invidious task of saving itself by good works. Moreover these incipient humanistic ideals inclined, in Augustine’s view, to elevate man at the expense of Christ and the sacraments of the Church. Christ was, after all, the most eminent example of predestination. He was predestined to be the Son of God and the Head of the Church, not by any merit in himself, but purely by the grace of God. His entire life was given as a means of our salvation, and not simply as an example for us to emulate in the questionable hope of meriting eternal life through our own endeavours. Similarly, any perceived devaluation of the efficacy of the sacraments had to be resisted. If
man was as hopelessly wayward as Augustine’s teaching implied, then a corresponding emphasis had to be given to baptism and the eucharist as objective means of grace. To view man as the master of his fate (which was Augustine’s mistaken belief about Pelagius) called into question the absolute necessity of the sacraments and, by extension, the very authority of the Church.

Matters of the highest principle seemed to be at stake. Augustine’s rhetoric became more extreme and eventually Pelagius was condemned. His ideas, like those of Augustine, have influenced later generations providing ammunition for those wishing to preserve respectively the freedom of the will and human responsibility, or the absolute sovereignty of God. Augustine’s final word on this tortuous matter is to be found in a book he wrote for Simplicianus of Milan. ‘In trying to solve this question I made strenuous efforts on behalf of the preservation of the free choice of the human will, but the grace of God defeated me’. Little else was to defeat Augustine during his lifetime. The Pelagian controversy occupied him for more than twenty years and earned him the title of Doctor of Grace. As a bishop, he also struggled long and, initially unsuccessfully, to bring the Donatists into union with the Catholic Church. The process of reconciliation was arduous with persuasion and debate of little or no purpose. Augustine finally consented to the intervention of the government and, reluctantly, to the use of force. Centuries later, long and bloody wars were to ensue as a result of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Although Augustine hated violence, his doctrines of the Church and of grace, and the different interpretations placed on them by opposing sides during the sixteenth century, were to result in the very thing he deplored. His anti-Donatist writings were plundered by zealots eager to find select quotations which, taken out of context, could support the torture and burning of heretics. Motivated by their own perverted notion of orthodoxy and a deep fear of unorthodox ideas, they wilfully ignored the many passages in Augustine’s works where he clearly opposed torture and capital punishment.

Sadly, the last months of his life were spent in a crowded city filled with refugees fleeing from the Vandal hordes swarming over Africa. In the winter of 429-430, their army and navy surrounded the seaport of Hippo. Augustine died on the 28th August and was spared the sight of a devastated city. Almost miraculously, and to the inestimable benefit of the Christian centuries to come, his library and writings survived intact. Innumerable minds have never ceased to be grateful for the nourishment and stimulation they have provided.

ROD GARNER is Lay Training Officer in the Diocese of York and Priest-in-Charge of St. Paul’s, Sculcoates, Kingston upon Hull.

Endnotes:
2) City of God, Book 21.
3) Sermons 25, 80.
4) City of God, Book 4 Ch. 4.
6) English theologian (1801-1890).
Chapter 1.— How the Pretensions of the Manichæans are to Be Refuted. Two Manichæan Falsehoods

1. Enough, probably, has been done in our other books in the way of answering the ignorant and profane attacks which the Manichæans make on the law, which is called the Old Testament, in a spirit of vainglorious boasting, and with the approval of the uninstructed. Here, too, I may shortly touch upon the subject. For every one with average intelligence can easily see that the explanation of the Scriptures should be sought for from those who are the professed teachers of the Scriptures; and that it may happen, and indeed always happens, that many things seem absurd to the ignorant, which, when they are explained by the learned, appear all the more excellent, and are received in the explanation with the greater pleasure on account of the obstructions which made it difficult to reach the meaning. This commonly happens as regards the holy books of the Old Testament, if only the man who meets with difficulties applies to a pious teacher, and not to a profane critic, and if he begins his inquiries from a desire to find truth, and not in rash opposition. And should the inquirer meet with some, whether bishops or presbyters, or any officials or ministers of the Catholic Church, who either avoid in all cases opening up mysteries, or, content with simple faith, have no desire for more recondite knowledge, he must not despair of finding the knowledge of the truth in a case where neither are all able to teach to whom the inquiry is addressed, nor are all inquirers worthy of learning the truth. Diligence and piety are both necessary: on the one hand, we must have knowledge to find truth, and, on the other hand, we must deserve to get the knowledge.

2. But as the Manichæans have two tricks for catching the unwary, so as to make them take them as teachers — one, that of finding fault with the Scriptures, which they either misunderstand or wish to be misunderstood, the other, that of making a show of chastity and of notable abstinence — this book shall contain our doctrine of life and morals according to Catholic teaching, and will perhaps make it appear how easy it is to pretend to virtue, and how difficult to possess virtue. I will refrain, if I can, from attacking their weak points, which I know well, with the violence with which they attack what they know nothing of; for I wish them, if possible, to be cured rather than conquered. And I will quote such testimonies from the Scriptures as they are bound to believe, for they shall be from the New Testament; and even from this I will take none of the passages which the Manichæans when hard pressed are accustomed to call spurious, but passages which they are obliged to acknowledge and approve. And for every testimony from apostolic teaching I will bring a similar statement from the Old Testament, that if they ever become willing to wake up from their persistent dreams, and to rise towards the light of Christian faith, they may discover both how far from being Christian is the life which they profess, and how truly Christian is the Scripture which they cavil at.

Chapter 2.— He Begins with Arguments, in Compliance with the Mistaken Method of the Manichæans

3. Where, then, shall I begin? With authority, or with reasoning? In the order of nature, when
we learn anything, authority precedes reasoning. For a reason may seem weak, when, after it is
given, it requires authority to confirm it. But because the minds of men are obscured by
familiarity with darkness, which covers them in the night of sins and evil habits, and cannot
perceive in a way suitable to the clearness and purity of reason, there is most wholesome
provision for bringing the dazzled eye into the light of truth under the congenial shade of
authority. But since we have to do with people who are perverse in all their thoughts and
words and actions, and who insist on nothing more than on beginning with argument, I will, as
a concession to them, take what I think a wrong method in discussion. For I like to imitate, as
far as I can, the gentleness of my Lord Jesus Christ, who took on Himself the evil of death itself,
wishing to free us from it.

Chapter 3.— Happiness is in the Enjoyment of Man's Chief Good. Two Conditions of the Chief
Good: 1st, Nothing is Better Than It; 2d, It Cannot Be Lost Against the Will

4. How then, according to reason, ought man to live? We all certainly desire to live happily; and
there is no human being but assents to this statement almost before it is made. But the title
happy cannot, in my opinion, belong either to him who has not what he loves, whatever it may
be, or to him who has what he loves if it is hurtful or to him who does not love what he has,
although it is good in perfection. For one who seeks what he cannot obtain suffers torture, and
one who has got what is not desirable is cheated, and one who does not seek for what is worth
seeking for is diseased. Now in all these cases the mind cannot but be unhappy, and happiness
and unhappiness cannot reside at the same time in one man; so in none of these cases can the
man be happy. I find, then, a fourth case, where the happy life exists, — when that which is
man's chief good is both loved and possessed. For what do we call enjoyment but having at
hand the objects of love? And no one can be happy who does not enjoy what is man's chief
good, nor is there any one who enjoys this who is not happy. We must then have at hand our
chief good, if we think of living happily.

5. We must now inquire what is man's chief good, which of course cannot be anything inferior
to man himself. For whoever follows after what is inferior to himself, becomes himself inferior.
But every man is bound to follow what is best. Wherefore man's chief good is not inferior to
man. Is it then something similar to man himself? It must be so, if there is nothing above man
which he is capable of enjoying. But if we find something which is both superior to man, and
can be possessed by the man who loves it, who can doubt that in seeking for happiness man
should endeavor to reach that which is more excellent than the being who makes the
endeavor. For if happiness consists in the enjoyment of a good than which there is nothing
better, which we call the chief good, how can a man be properly called happy who has not yet
attained to his chief good? Or how can that be the chief good beyond which something better
remains for us to arrive at? Such, then, being the chief good, it must be something which
cannot be lost against the will. For no one can feel confident regarding a good which he knows
can be taken from him, although he wishes to keep and cherish it. But if a man feels no
confidence regarding the good which he enjoys, how can he be happy while in such fear of
losing it?

Chapter 4.— Man — What?
6. Let us then see what is better than man. This must necessarily be hard to find, unless we first ask and examine what man is. I am not now called upon to give a definition of man. The question here seems to me to be — since almost all agree, or at least, which is enough, those I have now to do with are of the same opinion with me, that we are made up of soul and body — What is man? Is he both of these? Or is he the body only, or the soul only? For although the things are two, soul and body, and although neither without the other could be called man (for the body would not be man without the soul, nor again would the soul be man if there were not a body animated by it), still it is possible that one of these may be held to be man, and may be called so. What then do we call man? Is he soul and body, as in a double harness, or like a centaur? Or do we mean the body only, as being in the service of the soul which rules it, as the word lamp denotes not the light and the case together, but only the case, yet it is on account of the light that it is so called? Or do we mean only the mind, and that on account of the body which it rules, as horseman means not the man and the horse, but the man only, and that as employed in ruling the horse? This dispute is not easy to settle; or, if the proof is plain, the statement requires time. This is an expenditure of time and strength which we need not incur. For whether the name man belongs to both, or only to the soul, the chief good of man is not the chief good of the body; but what is the chief good either of both soul and body, or of the soul only, that is man's chief good.

Chapter 5.— Man's Chief Good is Not the Chief Good of the Body Only, But the Chief Good of the Soul

7. Now if we ask what is the chief good of the body, reason obliges us to admit that it is that by means of which the body comes to be in its best state. But of all the things which invigorate the body, there is nothing better or greater than the soul. The chief good of the body, then, is not bodily pleasure, not absence of pain, not strength, not beauty, not swiftness, or whatever else is usually reckoned among the goods of the body, but simply the soul. For all the things mentioned the soul supplies to the body by its presence, and, what is above them all, life. Hence I conclude that the soul is not the chief good of man, whether we give the name of man to soul and body together, or to the soul alone. For as according to reason, the chief good of the body is that which is better than the body, and from which the body receives vigor and life, so whether the soul itself is man, or soul and body both, we must discover whether there is anything which goes before the soul itself, in following which the soul comes to the perfection of good of which it is capable in its own kind. If such a thing can be found, all uncertainty must be at an end, and we must pronounce this to be really and truly the chief good of man.

8. If, again, the body is man, it must be admitted that the soul is the chief good of man. But clearly, when we treat of morals — when we inquire what manner of life must be held in order to obtain happiness — it is not the body to which the precepts are addressed, it is not bodily discipline which we discuss. In short, the observance of good customs belongs to that part of us which inquires and learns, which are the prerogatives of the soul; so, when we speak of attaining to virtue, the question does not regard the body. But if it follows, as it does, that the body which is ruled over by a soul possessed of virtue is ruled both better and more honorably, and is in its greatest perfection in consequence of the perfection of the soul which rightfully governs it, that which gives perfection to the soul will be man's chief good, though we call the
body man. For if my coachman, in obedience to me, feeds and drives the horses he has charge of in the most satisfactory manner, himself enjoying the more of my bounty in proportion to his good conduct, can any one deny that the good condition of the horses, as well as that of the coachman, is due to me? So the question seems to me to be not, whether soul and body is man, or the soul only, or the body only, but what gives perfection to the soul; for when this is obtained, a man cannot but be either perfect, or at least much better than in the absence of this one thing.

Chapter 6.— Virtue Gives Perfection to the Soul; The Soul Obtains Virtue by Following God; Following God is the Happy Life

9. No one will question that virtue gives perfection to the soul. But it is a very proper subject of inquiry whether this virtue can exist by itself or only in the soul. Here again arises a profound discussion, needing lengthy treatment; but perhaps my summary will serve the purpose. God will, I trust, assist me, so that, notwithstanding our feebleness, we may give instruction on these great matters briefly as well as intelligibly. In either case, whether virtue can exist by itself without the soul, or can exist only in the soul, undoubtedly in the pursuit of virtue the soul follows after something, and this must be either the soul itself, or virtue, or something else. But if the soul follows after itself in the pursuit of virtue, it follows after a foolish thing; for before obtaining virtue it is foolish. Now the height of a follower's desire is to reach that which he follows after. So the soul must either not wish to reach what it follows after, which is utterly absurd and unreasonable, or, in following after itself while foolish, it reaches the folly which it flees from. But if it follows after virtue in the desire to reach it, how can it follow what does not exist? Or how can it desire to reach what it already possesses? Either, therefore, virtue exists beyond the soul, or if we are not allowed to give the name of virtue except to the habit and disposition of the wise soul, which can exist only in the soul, we must allow that the soul follows after something else in order that virtue may be produced in itself; for neither by following after nothing, nor by following after folly, can the soul, according to my reasoning, attain to wisdom.

10. This something else then, by following after which the soul becomes possessed of virtue and wisdom, is either a wise man or God. But we have said already that it must be something that we cannot lose against our will. No one can think it necessary to ask whether a wise man, supposing we are content to follow after him, can be taken from us in spite of our unwillingness or our persistence. God then remains, in following after whom we live well, and in reaching whom we live both well and happily. If any deny God's existence, why should I consider the method of dealing with them, when it is doubtful whether they ought to be dealt with at all? At any rate, it would require a different starting-point, a different plan, a different investigation from what we are now engaged in. I am now addressing those who do not deny the existence of God, and who, moreover, allow that human affairs are not disregarded by Him. For there is no one, I suppose, who makes any profession of religion but will hold that divine Providence cares at least for our souls.

Chapter 7.— The Knowledge of God to Be Obtained from the Scripture. The Plan and Principal Mysteries of the Divine Scheme of Redemption
11. But how can we follow after Him whom we do not see? Or how can we see Him, we who are not only men, but also men of weak understanding? For though God is seen not with the eyes but with the mind, where can such a mind be found as shall, while obscured by foolishness, succeed or even attempt to drink in that light? We must therefore have recourse to the instructions of those whom we have reason to think wise. Thus far argument brings us. For in human things reasoning is employed, not as of greater certainty, but as easier from use. But when we come to divine things, this faculty turns away; it cannot behold; it pants, and gasps, and burns with desire; it falls back from the light of truth, and turns again to its wonted obscurity, not from choice, but from exhaustion. What a dreadful catastrophe is this, that the soul should be reduced to greater helplessness when it is seeking rest from its toil! So, when we are hasting to retire into darkness, it will be well that by the appointment of adorable Wisdom we should be met by the friendly shade of authority, and should be attracted by the wonderful character of its contents, and by the utterances of its pages, which, like shadows, typify and attemper the truth.

12. What more could have been done for our salvation? What can be more gracious and bountiful than divine providence, which, when man had fallen from its laws, and, in just retribution for his coveting mortal things, had brought forth a mortal offspring, still did not wholly abandon him? For in this most righteous government, whose ways are strange and inscrutable, there is, by means of unknown connections established in the creatures subject to it, both a severity of punishment and a mercifulness of salvation. How beautiful this is, how great, how worthy of God, in fine, how true, which is all we are seeking for, we shall never be able to perceive, unless, beginning with things human and at hand, and holding by the faith and the precepts of true religion, we continue without turning from it in the way which God has secured for us by the separation of the patriarchs, by the bond of the law, by the foresight of the prophets, by the witness of the apostles, by the blood of the martyrs, and by the subjugation of the Gentiles. From this point, then, let no one ask me for my opinion, but let us rather hear the oracles, and submit our weak inferences to the announcements of Heaven.

Chapter 8.— God is the Chief Good, Whom We are to Seek After with Supreme Affection

13. Let us see how the Lord Himself in the gospel has taught us to live; how, too, Paul the apostle,—for the Manichæans dare not reject these Scriptures. Let us hear, O Christ, what chief end You prescribe to us; and that is evidently the chief end after which we are told to strive with supreme affection. "You shall love," He says, "the Lord your God." Tell me also, I pray You, what must be the measure of love; for I fear lest the desire enkindled in my heart should either exceed or come short in fervor. "With all your heart," He says. Nor is that enough. "With all your soul." Nor is it enough yet. "With all your mind." Matthew 22:37 What do you wish more? I might, perhaps, wish more if I could see the possibility of more. What does Paul say on this? "We know," he says, "that all things issue in good to them that love God." Let him, too, say what is the measure of love. "Who then," he says, "shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?" We have heard, then, what and how much we must love; this we must strive after, and to this we must refer all our plans. The perfection of all our good things and our perfect good is God. We must neither come short of this nor go beyond it: the one is
dangerous, the other impossible.

Chapter 9.— Harmony of the Old and New Testament on the Precepts of Charity.
14. Come now, let us examine, or rather let us take notice — for it is obvious and can be seen, at once — whether the authority of the Old Testament too agrees with those statements taken from the gospel and the apostle. What need to speak of the first statement, when it is clear to all that it is a quotation from the law given by Moses? For it is there written, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." Deuteronomy 6:5 And not to go farther for a passage of the Old Testament to compare with that of the apostle, he has himself added one. For after saying that no tribulation, no distress, no persecution, no pressure of bodily want, no peril, no sword, separates us from the love of Christ, he immediately adds, "As it is written, For Your sake we are in suffering all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." The Manichæans are in the habit of saying that this is an interpolation — so unable are they to reply, that they are forced in their extremity to say this. But every one can see that this is all that is left for men to say when it is proved that they are wrong.

15. And yet I ask them if they deny that this is said in the Old Testament, or if they hold that the passage in the Old Testament does not agree with that of the apostle. For the first, the books will prove it; and as for the second, those prevaricators who fly off at a tangent will be brought to agree with me, if they will only reflect a little and consider what is said, or else I will press upon them the opinion of those who judge impartially. For what could agree more harmoniously than these passages? For tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, cause great suffering to man while in this life. So all these words are implied in the single quotation from the law, where it is said, "For Your sake we are in suffering." The only other thing is the sword, which does not inflict a painful life, but removes whatever life it meets with. Answering to this are the words, "We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." And love could not have been more plainly expressed than by the words, "For Your sake." Suppose, then, that this testimony is not found in the Apostle Paul, but is quoted by me, must you not prove, you heretic, either that this is not written in the old law, or that it does not harmonize with the apostle? And if you dare not say either of these things (for you are shut up by the reading of the manuscript, which will show that it is written, and by common sense, which sees that nothing could agree better with what is said by the apostle), why do you imagine that there is any force in accusing the Scriptures of being corrupted? And once more, what will you reply to a man who says to you, This is what I understand, this is my view, this is my belief, and I read these books only because I see that everything in them agrees with the Christian faith? Or tell me at once if you will venture deliberately to tell me to the face that we are not to believe that the apostles and martyrs are spoken of as having endured great sufferings for Christ's sake, and as having been accounted by their persecutors as sheep for the slaughter? If you cannot say this, why should you bring a charge against the book in which I find what you acknowledge I ought to believe?

Chapter 10.— What the Church Teaches About God. The Two Gods of the Manichæans
16. Will you say that you grant that we are bound to love God, but not the God worshipped by
those who acknowledge the authority of the Old Testament? In that case you refuse to worship the God who made heaven and earth, for this is the God set forth all through these books. And you admit that the whole of the world, which is called heaven and earth, had God and a good God for its author and maker. For in speaking to you about God we must make a distinction. For you hold that there are two gods, one good and the other bad.

But if you say that you worship and approve of worshipping the God who made heaven and earth, but not the God supported by the authority of the Old Testament, you act impertinently in trying, though vainly, to attribute to us views and opinions altogether unlike the wholesome and profitable doctrine we really hold. Nor can your silly and profane discourses be at all compared with the expositions in which learned and pious men of the Catholic Church open up those Scriptures to the willing and worthy. Our understanding of the law and the prophets is quite different from what you suppose. Mistake us no longer. We do not worship a God who repents, or is envious, or needy, or cruel, or who takes pleasure in the blood of men or beasts, or is pleased with guilt and crime, or whose possession of the earth is limited to a little corner of it. These and such like are the silly notions you are in the habit of denouncing at great length. Your denunciation does not touch us. The fancies of old women or of children you attack with a vehemence that is only ridiculous. Any one whom you persuade in this way to join you shows no fault in the teaching of the Church, but only proves his own ignorance of it.

17. If, then, you have any human feeling — if you have any regard for your own welfare — you should rather examine with diligence and piety the meaning of these passages of Scripture. You should examine, unhappy beings that you are; for we condemn with no less severity and copiousness any faith which attributes to God what is unbecoming Him, and in those by whom these passages are literally understood we correct the mistake of ignorance, and look upon persistence in it as absurd. And in many other things which you cannot understand there is in the Catholic teaching a check on the belief of those who have got beyond mental childishness, not in years, but in knowledge and understanding — old in the progress towards wisdom. For we learn the folly of believing that God is bounded by any amount of space, even though infinite; and it is held unlawful to think of God, or any part of Him, as moving from one place to another. And should any one suppose that anything in God's substance or nature can suffer change or conversion, he will be held guilty of wild profanity. There are thus among us children who think of God as having a human form, which they suppose He really has, which is a most degrading idea; and there are many of full age to whose mind the majesty of God appears in its inviolableness and unchangeableness as not only above the human body, but above their own mind itself. These ages, as we said, are distinguished not by time, but by virtue and discretion. Among you, again, there is no one who will picture God in a human form; but neither is there one who sets God apart from the contamination of human error. As regards those who are fed like crying babies at the breast of the Catholic Church, if they are not carried off by heretics, they are nourished according to the vigor and capacity of each, and arrive at last, one in one way and another in another, first to a perfect man, and then to the maturity and hoary hairs of wisdom, when they may get life as they desire, and life in perfect happiness.

Chapter 11.— God is the One Object of Love; Therefore He is Man's Chief Good. Nothing is
Better Than God. God Cannot Be Lost Against Our Will

18. Following after God is the desire of happiness; to reach God is happiness itself. We follow after God by loving Him; we reach Him, not by becoming entirely what He is, but in nearness to Him, and in wonderful and immaterial contact with Him, and in being inwardly illuminated and occupied by His truth and holiness. He is light itself; we get enlightenment from Him. The greatest commandment, therefore, which leads to happy life, and the first, is this: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and soul, and mind." For to those who love the Lord all things issue in good. Hence Paul adds shortly after, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor virtue, nor things present, nor things future, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39 If, then, to those who love God all things issue in good, and if, as no one doubts, the chief or perfect good is not only to be loved, but to be loved so that nothing shall be loved better, as is expressed in the words, "With all your soul, with all your heart, and with all your mind," who, I ask, will not at once conclude, when these things are all settled and most surely believed, that our chief good which we must hasten to arrive at in preference to all other things is nothing else than God? And then, if nothing can separate us from His love, must not this be surer as well as better than any other good?

19. But let us consider the points separately. No one separates us from this by threatening death. For that with which we love God cannot die, except in not loving God; for death is not to love God, and that is when we prefer anything to Him in affection and pursuit. No one separates us from this in promising life; for no one separates us from the fountain in promising water. Angels do not separate us; for the mind cleaving to God is not inferior in strength to an angel. Virtue does not separate us; for if what is here called virtue is that which has power in this world, the mind cleaving to God is far above the whole world. Or if this virtue is perfect rectitude of our mind itself, this in the case of another will favor our union with God, and in ourselves will itself unite us with God. Present troubles do not separate us; for we feel their burden less the closer we cling to Him from whom they try to separate us. The promise of future things does not separate us; for both future good of every kind is surest in the promise of God, and nothing is better than God Himself, who undoubtedly is already present to those who truly cleave to Him. Height and depth do not separate us; for if the height and depth of knowledge are what is meant, I will rather not be inquisitive than be separated from God; nor can any instruction by which error is removed separate me from Him, by separation from whom it is that any one is in error. Or if what is meant are the higher and lower parts of this world, how can the promise of heaven separate me from Him who made heaven? Or who from beneath can frighten me into forsaking God, when I should not have known of things beneath but by forsaking Him? In fine, what place can remove me from His love, when He could not be all in every place unless He were contained in none?

Chapter 12.— We are United to God by Love, in Subjection to Him

20. "No other creature," he says, separates us. O man of profound mysteries! He thought it not enough to say, no creature: but he says no other creature; teaching that with which we love God and by which we cleave to God, our mind, namely, and understanding, is itself a creature. Thus the body is another creature; and if the mind is an object of intellectual perception, and is
known only by this means, the other creature is all that is an object of sense, which as it were makes itself known through the eyes, or ears, or smell, or taste, or touch, and this must be inferior to what is perceived by the intellect alone. Now, as God also can be known by the worthy, only intellectually, exalted though He is above the intelligent mind as being its Creator and Author, there was danger lest the human mind, from being reckoned among invisible and immaterial things, should be thought to be of the same nature with Him who created it, and so should fall away by pride from Him to whom it should be united by love. For the mind becomes like God, to the extent vouchsafed by its subjection of itself to Him for information and enlightenment. And if it obtains the greatest nearness by that subjection which produces likeness, it must be far removed from Him by that presumption which would make the likeness greater. It is this presumption which leads the mind to refuse obedience to the laws of God, in the desire to be sovereign, as God is.

21. The farther, then, the mind departs from God, not in space, but in affection and lust after things below Him, the more it is filled with folly and wretchedness. So by love it returns to God — a love which places it not along with God, but under Him. And the more ardor and eagerness there is in this, the happier and more elevated will the mind be, and with God as sole governor it will be in perfect liberty. Hence it must know that it is a creature. It must believe what is the truth — that its Creator remains ever possessed of the inviolable and immutable nature of truth and wisdom, and must confess, even in view of the errors from which it desires deliverance, that it is liable to folly and falsehood. But then again, it must take care that it be not separated by the love of the other creature, that is, of this visible world, from the love of God Himself, which sanctifies it in order to lasting happiness. No other creature, then — for we are ourselves a creature — separates us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Chapter 13.— We are Joined Inseparably to God by Christ and His Spirit

22. Let this same Paul tell us who is this Christ Jesus our Lord. "To them that are called," he says, "we preach Christ the virtue of God, and the wisdom of God." 1 Corinthians 1:23-24 And does not Christ Himself say, "I am the truth?" John 14:6 If, then, we ask what it is to live well — that is, to strive after happiness by living well — it must assuredly be to love virtue, to love wisdom, to love truth, and to love with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind; virtue which is inviolable and immutable, wisdom which never gives place to folly, truth which knows no change or variation from its uniform character. Through this the Father Himself is seen; for it is said, "No man comes unto the Father but by me." To this we cleave by sanctification. For when sanctified we burn with full and perfect love, which is the only security for our not turning away from God, and for our being conformed to Him rather than to this world; for "He has predestinated us," says the same apostle, "that we should be conformed to the image of His Son." Romans 8:29

23. It is through love, then, that we become conformed to God; and by this conformation, and configuration, and circumcision from this world we are not confounded with the things which are properly subject to us. And this is done by the Holy Spirit. "For hope," he says, "does not confound us; for the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given
unto us." Romans 5:5 But we could not possibly be restored to perfection by the Holy Spirit, unless He Himself continued always perfect and immutable. And this plainly could not be unless He were of the nature and of the very substance of God, who alone is always possessed of immutability and invarableness. "The creature," it is affirmed, not by me but by Paul, "has been made subject to vanity." Romans 8:20 And what is subject to vanity is unable to separate us from vanity, and to unite us to the truth. But the Holy Spirit does this for us. He is therefore no creature. For whatever is, must be either God or the creature.

Chapter 14.— We Cleave to the Trinity, Our Chief Good, by Love
24. We ought then to love God, the Trinity in unity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; for this must be said to be God Himself, for it is said of God, truly and in the most exalted sense, "Of whom are all things, by whom are all things, in whom are all things." Those are Paul's words. And what does he add? "To Him be glory." Romans 11:36 All this is exactly true. He does not say, To them; for God is one. And what is meant by, To Him be glory, but to Him be chief and perfect and widespread praise? For as the praise improves and extends, so the love and affection increases in fervor. And when this is the case, mankind cannot but advance with sure and firm step to a life of perfection and bliss. This, I suppose, is all we wish to find when we speak of the chief good of man, to which all must be referred in life and conduct. For the good plainly exists; and we have shown by reasoning, as far as we were able, and by the divine authority which goes beyond our reasoning, that it is nothing else but God Himself. For how can any thing be man's chief good but that in cleaving to which he is blessed? Now this is nothing but God, to whom we can cleave only by affection, desire, and love.

Chapter 15.— The Christian Definition of the Four Virtues
25. As to virtue leading us to a happy life, I hold virtue to be nothing else than perfect love of God. For the fourfold division of virtue I regard as taken from four forms of love. For these four virtues (would that all felt their influence in their minds as they have their names in their mouths!), I should have no hesitation in defining them: that temperance is love giving itself entirely to that which is loved; fortitude is love readily bearing all things for the sake of the loved object; justice is love serving only the loved object, and therefore ruling rightly; prudence is love distinguishing with sagacity between what hinders it and what helps it. The object of this love is not anything, but only God, the chief good, the highest wisdom, the perfect harmony. So we may express the definition thus: that temperance is love keeping itself entire and incorrupt for God; fortitude is love bearing everything readily for the sake of God; justice is love serving God only, and therefore ruling well all else, as subject to man; prudence is love making a right distinction between what helps it towards God and what might hinder it.

Chapter 16.— Harmony of the Old and New Testaments
26. I will briefly set forth the manner of life according to these virtues, one by one, after I have brought forward, as I promised, passages from the Old Testament parallel to those I have been quoting from the New Testament. For is Paul alone in saying that we should be joined to God so that there should be nothing between to separate us? Does not the prophet say the same most aptly and concisely in the words, "It is good for me to cleave to God?" Does not this one word cleave express all that the apostle says at length about love? And do not the words, It is
good, point to the apostle's statement, "All things issue in good to them that love God?" Thus in one clause and in two words the prophet sets forth the power and the fruit of love.

27. And as the apostle says that the Son of God is the virtue of God and the wisdom of God — virtue being understood to refer to action, and wisdom to teaching (as in the gospel these two things are expressed in the words, "All things were made by Him," which belongs to action and virtue; and then, referring to teaching and the knowledge of the truth, he says, "The life was the light of men" John 1:3-4) — could anything agree better with these passages than what is said in the Old Testament of wisdom, "She reaches from end to end in strength, and orders all things sweetly?" For reaching in strength expresses virtue, while ordering sweetly expresses skill and method. But if this seems obscure, see what follows: "And of all," he says, "God loved her; for she teaches the knowledge of God, and chooses His works." Nothing more is found here about action; for choosing works is not the same as working, so this refers to teaching. There remains action to correspond with the virtue, to complete the truth we wish to prove. Read then what comes next: "But if," he says, "the possession which is desired in life is honorable, what is more honorable than wisdom, which works all things?" Could anything be brought forward more striking or more distinct than this, or even more fully expressed? Or, if you wish more, hear another passage of the same meaning. "Wisdom," he says, "teaches sobriety, and justice, and virtue." Sobriety refers, I think, to the knowledge of the truth, or to teaching; justice and virtue to work and action. And I know nothing comparable to these two things, that is, to efficiency in action and sobriety in contemplation, which the virtue of God and the wisdom of God, that is, the Son of God, gives to them that love Him, when the same prophet goes on to show their value; for it is thus stated: "Wisdom teaches sobriety, and justice, and virtue, than which nothing is more useful in life to man."

28. Perhaps some may think that those passages do not refer to the Son of God. What, then, is taught in the following words: "She displays the nobility of her birth, having her dwelling with God?" Wisdom 8:3 To what does birth refer but to parentage? And does not dwelling with the Father claim and assert equality? Again, as Paul says that the Son of God is the wisdom of God, 1 Corinthians 1:24 and as the Lord Himself says, "No man knows the Father save the only-begotten Son," Matthew 11:27 what could be more concordant than those words of the prophet: "With You is wisdom which knows Your works, which was present at the time of Your making the world, and knew what would be pleasing in Your eyes?" Wisdom 9:9 And as Christ is called the truth, which is also taught by His being called the brightness of the Father Hebrews 1:3 (for there is nothing round about the sun but its brightness which is produced from it), what is there in the Old Testament more plainly and obviously in accordance with this than the words, "Your truth is round about You?" Once more, Wisdom herself says in the gospel, "No man comes unto the Father but by me;" John 14:6 and the prophet says, "Who knows Your mind, unless You give wisdom?" and a little after, "The things pleasing to You men have learned, and have been healed by wisdom." Wisdom 9:17-19

29. Paul says, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us;" Romans 5:5 and the prophet says, "The Holy Spirit of knowledge will shun guile." Wisdom 1:5 For where there is guile there is no love. Paul says that we are "conformed to the
image of the Son of God;” Romans 8:29 and the prophet says, "The light of Your countenance is stamped upon us." Paul teaches that the Holy Spirit is God, and therefore is no creature; and the prophet says, "You send Your Spirit from the higher." Wisdom 9:17 For God alone is the highest, than whom nothing is higher. Paul shows that the Trinity is one God, when he says, "To Him be glory;" Romans 11:36 and in the Old Testament it is said, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God.” Deuteronomy 6:4

Chapter 17.— Appeal to the Manichæans, Calling on Them to Repent

30. What more do you wish? Why do you resist ignorantly and obstinately? Why do you pervert untutored minds by your mischievous teaching? The God of both Testaments is one. For as there is an agreement in the passages quoted from both, so is there in all the rest, if you are willing to consider them carefully and impartially. But because many expressions are undignified, and so far adapted to minds creeping on the earth, that they may rise by human things to divine, while many are figurative, that the inquiring mind may have the more profit from the exertion of finding their meaning, and the more delight when it is found, you pervert this admirable arrangement of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of deceiving and ensnaring your followers. As to the reason why divine Providence permits you to do this, and as to the truth of the apostle's saying, "There must needs be many heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you," 1 Corinthians 11:19 it would take long to discuss these things, and you, with whom we have now to do, are not capable of understanding them. I know you well. To the consideration of divine things, which are far higher than you suppose, you bring minds quite gross and sickly, from being fed with material images.

31. We must therefore in your case try not to make you understand divine things, which is impossible, but to make you desire to understand. This is the work of the pure and guileless love of God, which is seen chiefly in the conduct, and of which we have already said much. This love, inspired by the Holy Spirit, leads to the Son, that is, to the wisdom of God, by which the Father Himself is known. For if wisdom and truth are not sought for with the whole strength of the mind, it cannot possibly be found. But when it is sought as it deserves to be, it cannot withdraw or hide itself from its lovers. Hence its words, which you too are in the habit of repeating, "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:" Matthew 7:7 "Nothing is hid which shall not be revealed." Matthew 10:26 It is love that asks, love that seeks, love that knocks, love that reveals, love, too, that gives continuance in what is revealed. From this love of wisdom, and this studious inquiry, we are not debarred by the Old Testament, as you always say most falsely, but are exhorted to this with the greatest urgency.

32. Hear, then, at length, and consider, I pray you, what is said by the prophet: "Wisdom is glorious, and never fades away; yea, she is easily seen of them that love her, and found of such as seek her. She prevents them that desire her, in making herself first known unto them. Whoever seeks her early shall have no great travail; for he shall find her sitting at his doors. To think, therefore, upon her is perfection of wisdom; and whoever watches for her shall quickly be without care. For she goes about seeking such as are worthy of her, shows herself favorably unto them in the ways, and meets them in every thought. For the very true beginning of her is
the desire of discipline; and the care of discipline is love; and love is the keeping of her laws; and the giving heed unto her laws is the assurance of incorruption; and incorruption makes us near unto God. Therefore the desire of wisdom brings to a kingdom." Wisdom 6:12-20 Will you still continue in dogged hostility to these things? Do not things thus stated, though not yet understood, make it evident to every one that they contain something deep and unutterable? Would that you could understand the things here said! Forthwith you would abjure all your silly legends and your unmeaning material imaginations, and with great alacrity, sincere love, and full assurance of faith, would betake yourselves bodily to the shelter of the most holy bosom of the Catholic Church.

Chapter 18.— Only in the Catholic Church is Perfect Truth Established on the Harmony of Both Testaments
33. I could, according to the little ability I have, take up the points separately, and could expound and prove the truths I have learned, which are generally more excellent and lofty than words can express; but this cannot be done while you bark at it. For not in vain is it said, "Give not that which is holy to dogs." Matthew 7:6 Do not be angry. I too barked and was a dog; and then, as was right, instead of the food of teaching, I got the rod of correction. But were there in you that love of which we are speaking, or should it ever be in you as much as the greatness of the truth to be known requires, may God vouchsafe to show you that neither is there among the Manichaens the Christian faith which leads to the summit of wisdom and truth, the attainment of which is the true happy life, nor is it anywhere but in the Catholic teaching. Is not this what the Apostle Paul appears to desire when he says, "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant unto you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man: that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the height, and length, and breadth, and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God?" Ephesians 3:14-19 Could anything be more plainly expressed?

34. Wake up a little, I beseech you, and see the harmony of both Testaments, making it quite plain and certain what should be the manner of life in our conduct, and to what all things should be referred. To the love of God we are incited by the gospel, when it is said, "Ask, seek, knock;" Matthew 7:7 by Paul, when he says, "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend;" Ephesians 3:7 by the prophet also, when he says that wisdom can easily be known by those who love it, seek for it, desire it, watch for it, think about it, care for it. The salvation of the mind and the way of happiness is pointed out by the concord of both Scriptures; and yet you choose rather to bark at these things than to obey them. I will tell you in one word what I think. Do you listen to the learned men of the Catholic Church with as peaceable a disposition, and with the same zeal, that I had when for nine years I attended on you: there will be no need of so long a time as that during which you made a fool of me. In a much, a very much, shorter time you will see the difference between truth and vanity.

Chapter 19.— Description of the Duties of Temperance, According to the Sacred Scriptures
35. It is now time to return to the four virtues, and to draw out and prescribe a way of life in
conformity with them, taking each separately. First, then, let us consider temperance, which
promises us a kind of integrity and incorruption in the love by which we are united to God. The
office of temperance is in restraining and quieting the passions which make us pant for those
things which turn us away from the laws of God and from the enjoyment of His goodness, that
is, in a word, from the happy life. For there is the abode of truth; and in enjoying its
contemplation, and in cleaving closely to it, we are assuredly happy; but departing from this,
men become entangled in great errors and sorrows. For, as the apostle says, "The root of all
evils is covetousness; which some having followed, have made shipwreck of the faith, and have
pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6:10 And this sin of the soul is
quite plainly, to those rightly understanding, set forth in the Old Testament in the
transgression of Adam in Paradise. Thus, as the apostle says, "In Adam we all die, and in Christ
we shall all rise again." 1 Corinthians 15:22 Oh, the depth of these mysteries! But I refrain; for I
am now engaged not in teaching you the truth, but in making you unlearn your errors, if I can,
that is, if God aid my purpose regarding you.

36. Paul then says that covetousness is the root of all evils; and by covetousness the old law
also intimates that the first man fell. Paul tells us to put off the old man and put on the new.
Colossians 3:9-10 By the old man he means Adam who sinned, and by the new man him whom
the Son of God took to Himself in consecration for our redemption. For he says in another
place, "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven, heavenly. As is the
earthly, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are
heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the
heavenly," 1 Corinthians 15:47-49 — that is, put off the old man, and put on the new. The
whole duty of temperance, then, is to put off the old man, and to be renewed in God — that is,
to scorn all bodily delights, and the popular applause, and to turn the whole love to things
divine and unseen. Hence that following passage which is so admirable: "Though our outward
man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day." 2 Corinthians 4:16 Hear, too, the prophet
singing, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." What can be
said against such harmony except by blind barkers?

Chapter 20.— We are Required to Despise All Sensible Things, and to Love God Alone
37. Bodily delights have their source in all those things with which the bodily sense comes in
contact, and which are by some called the objects of sense; and among these the noblest is
light, in the common meaning of the word, because among our senses also, which the mind
uses in acting through the body, there is nothing more valuable than the eyes, and so in the
Holy Scriptures all the objects of sense are spoken of as visible things. Thus in the New
Testament we are warned against the love of these things in the following words: "While we
look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which
are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:18 This
shows how far from being Christians those are who hold that the sun and moon are to be not
only loved but worshipped. For what is seen if the sun and moon are not? But we are
forbidden to regard things which are seen. The man, therefore, who wishes to offer that
incorrupt love to God must not love these things too. This subject I will inquire into more
particularly elsewhere. Here my plan is to write not of faith, but of the life by which we become worthy of knowing what we believe. God then alone is to be loved; and all this world, that is, all sensible things, are to be despised; — while, however, they are to be used as this life requires.

Chapter 21.— Popular Renown and Inquisitiveness are Condemned in the Sacred Scriptures

38. Popular renown is thus slighted and scorned in the New Testament: "If I wished," says St. Paul, "to please men, I should not be the servant of Christ." Galatians 1:10 Again, there is another production of the soul formed by imaginations derived from material things, and called the knowledge of things. In reference to this we are fitly warned against inquisitiveness to correct which is the great function of temperance. Thus it is said, "Take heed lest any one seduce you by philosophy." And because the word philosophy originally means the love and pursuit of wisdom, a thing of great value and to be sought with the whole mind, the apostle, with great prudence, that he might not be thought to deter from the love of wisdom, has added the words, "And the elements of this world." Colossians 2:8 For some people, neglecting virtues, and ignorant of what God is, and of the majesty of nature which remains always the same, think that they are engaged in an important business when searching with the greatest inquisitiveness and eagerness into this material mass which we call the world. This begets so much pride, that they look upon themselves as inhabitants of the heaven of which they often discourse. The soul, then, which purposes to keep itself chaste for God must refrain from the desire of vain knowledge like this. For this desire usually produces delusion, so that the soul thinks that nothing exists but what is material; or if, from regard to authority, it confesses that there is an immaterial existence, it can think of it only under material images, and has no belief regarding it but that imposed by the bodily sense. We may apply to this the precept about fleeing from idolatry.

39. To this New Testament authority, requiring us not to love anything in this world, 1 John 2:15 especially in that passage where it is said, "Be not conformed to this world," Romans 12:2 — for the point is to show that a man is conformed to whatever he loves, — to this authority, then, if I seek for a parallel passage in the Old Testament, I find several; but there is one book of Solomon, called Ecclesiastes, which at great length brings all earthly things into utter contempt. The book begins thus: "Vanity of the vain, says the Preacher, vanity of the vain; all is vanity. What profit has a man of all his labor which he takes under the sun?" Ecclesiastes 1:2-3 If all these words are considered, weighed, and thoroughly examined, many things are found of essential importance to those who seek to flee from the world and to take shelter in God; but this requires time and our discourse hastens on to other topics. But, after this beginning, he goes on to show in detail that the vain are those who are deceived by things of this sort; and he calls this which deceives them vanity — not that God did not create those things, but because men choose to subject themselves by their sins to those things, which the divine law has made subject to them in well-doing. For when you consider things beneath yourself to be admirable and desirable, what is this but to be cheated and misled by unreal goods? The man, then, who is temperate in such mortal and transient things has his rule of life confirmed by both Testaments, that he should love none of these things, nor think them desirable for their own sakes, but should use them as far as is required for the purposes and duties of life, with the moderation of an employer instead of the ardor of a lover. These
Chapter 22.— Fortitude Comes from the Love of God

40. On fortitude we must be brief. The love, then, of which we speak, which ought with all sanctity to burn in desire for God, is called temperance, in not seeking for earthly things, and fortitude in bearing the loss of them. But among all things which are possessed in this life, the body is, by God’s most righteous laws, for the sin of old, man’s heaviest bond, which is well known as a fact but most incomprehensible in its mystery. Lest this bond should be shaken and disturbed, the soul is shaken with the fear of toil and pain; lest it should be lost and destroyed, the soul is shaken with the fear of death. For the soul loves it from the force of habit, not knowing that by using it well and wisely its resurrection and reformation will, by the divine help and decree, be without any trouble made subject to its authority. But when the soul turns to God wholly in this love, it knows these things, and so will not only disregard death, but will even desire it.

41. Then there is the great struggle with pain. But there is nothing, though of iron hardness, which the fire of love cannot subdue. And when the mind is carried up to God in this love, it will soar above all torture free and glorious, with wings beauteous and unhurt, on which chaste love rises to the embrace of God. Otherwise God must allow the lovers of gold, the lovers of praise, the lovers of women, to have more fortitude than the lovers of Himself, though love in those cases is rather to be called passion or lust. And yet even here we may see with what force the mind presses on with unflagging energy, in spite of all alarms, towards that it loves; and we learn that we should bear all things rather than forsake God, since those men bear so much in order to forsake Him.

Chapter 23.— Scripture Precepts and Examples of Fortitude

42. Instead of quoting here authorities from the New Testament, where it is said, "Tribulation works patience; and patience, experience and experience, hope;" Romans 5:3-4 and where, in addition to these words, there is proof and confirmation of them from the example of those who spoke them; I will rather summon an example of patience from the Old Testament, against which the Manichæans make fierce assaults. Nor will I refer to the man who, in the midst of great bodily suffering, and with a dreadful disease in his limbs, not only bore human evils, but discoursed of things divine. Whoever gives considerate attention to the utterances of this man, will learn from every one of them what value is to be attached to those things which men try to keep in their power, and in so doing are themselves brought by passion into bondage, so that they become the slaves of mortal things, while seeking ignorantly to be their masters. This man, in the loss of all his wealth, and on being suddenly reduced to the greatest poverty, kept his mind so unshaken and fixed upon God, as to manifest that these things were not great in his view, but that he was great in relation to them, and God to him. Job 1:2 If this mind were to be found in men in our day, we should not be so strongly cautioned in the New Testament against the possession of these things in order that we may be perfect; for to have these things without cleaving to them is much more admirable than not to have them at all.
43. But since we are speaking here of bearing pain and bodily sufferings, I pass from this man, great as he was, indomitable as he was: this is the case of a man. But these Scriptures present to me a woman of amazing fortitude, and I must at once go on to her case. This woman, along with seven children, allowed the tyrant and executioner to extract her vitals from her body rather than a profane word from her mouth, encouraging her sons by her exhortations, though she suffered in the tortures of their bodies, and was herself to undergo what she called on them to bear. What patience could be greater than this? And yet why should we be astonished that the love of God, implanted in her inmost heart, bore up against tyrant, and executioner, and pain, and sex, and natural affection? Had she not heard, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints?" Had she not heard, "A patient man is better than the mightiest?" Proverbs 16:32 Had she not heard, "All that is appointed you receive; and in pain bear it; and in abasement keep your patience: for in fire are gold and silver tried?" Sirach 2:4-5 Had she not heard, "The fire tries the vessels of the potter, and for just men is the trial of tribulation?" Sirach 27:6 These she knew, and many other precepts of fortitude written in these books, which alone existed at that time, by the same divine Spirit who writes those in the New Testament.

Chapter 24.— Of Justice and Prudence

44. What of justice that pertains to God? As the Lord says, "You cannot serve two masters," Matthew 6:24 and the apostle denounces those who serve the creature rather than the Creator, Romans 1:25 was it not said before in the Old Testament, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve?" Deuteronomy 6:13 I need say no more on this, for these books are full of such passages. The lover, then, whom we are describing, will get from justice this rule of life, that he must with perfect readiness serve the God whom he loves, the highest good, the highest wisdom, the highest peace; and as regards all other things, must either rule them as subject to himself, or treat them with a view to their subjection. This rule of life, is, as we have shown, confirmed by the authority of both Testaments.

45. With equal brevity we must treat of prudence, to which it belongs to discern between what is to be desired and what to be shunned. Without this, nothing can be done of what we have already spoken of. It is the part of prudence to keep watch with most anxious vigilance, lest any evil influence should stealthily creep in upon us. Thus the Lord often exclaims, "Watch;" Matthew 24:42 and He says, "Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you." John 12:35 And then it is said, "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" 1 Corinthians 5:6 And no passage can be quoted from the Old Testament more expressly condemning this mental somnolence, which makes us insensible to destruction advancing on us step by step, than those words of the prophet, "He who despises small things shall fall by degrees." Sirach 19:1 On this topic I might discourse at length did our haste allow of it. And did our present task demand it, we might perhaps prove the depth of these mysteries, by making a mock of which profane men in their perfect ignorance fall, not certainly by degrees, but with a headlong overthrow.

Chapter 25.— Four Moral Duties Regarding the Love of God, of Which Love the Reward is Eternal Life and the Knowledge of the Truth
46. I need say no more about right conduct. For if God is man's chief good, which you cannot deny, it clearly follows, since to seek the chief good is to live well, that to live well is nothing else but to love God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind; and, as arising from this, that this love must be preserved entire and incorrupt, which is the part of temperance; that it give way before no troubles, which is the part of fortitude; that it serve no other, which is the part of justice; that it be watchful in its inspection of things lest craft or fraud steal in, which is the part of prudence. This is the one perfection of man, by which alone he can succeed in attaining to the purity of truth. This both Testaments enjoin in concert; this is commended on both sides alike. Why do you continue to cast reproaches on Scriptures of which you are ignorant? Do you not see the folly of your attack upon books which only those who do not understand them find fault with, and which only those who find fault fail in understanding? For neither can an enemy know them, nor can one who knows them be other than a friend to them.

47. Let us then, as many as have in view to reach eternal life, love God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind. For eternal life contains the whole reward in the promise of which we rejoice; nor can the reward precede desert, nor be given to a man before he is worthy of it. What can be more unjust than this, and what is more just than God? We should not then demand the reward before we deserve to get it. Here, perhaps, it is not out of place to ask what is eternal life; or rather let us hear the Bestower of it: "This," He says, "is life eternal, that they should know You, the true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." John 17:3 So eternal life is the knowledge of the truth. See, then, how perverse and preposterous is the character of those who think that their teaching of the knowledge of God will make us perfect, when this is the reward of those already perfect! What else, then, have we to do but first to love with full affection Him whom we desire to know? Hence arises that principle on which we have all along insisted, that there is nothing more wholesome in the Catholic Church than using authority before argument.

Chapter 26.— Love of Ourselves and of Our Neighbor

48. To proceed to what remains. It may be thought that there is nothing here about man himself, the lover. But to think this, shows a want of clear perception. For it is impossible for one who loves God not to love himself. For he alone has a proper love for himself who aims diligently at the attainment of the chief and true good; and if this is nothing else but God, as has been shown, what is to prevent one who loves God from loving himself? And then, among men should there be no bond of mutual love? Yea, verily; so that we can think of no surer step towards the love of God than the love of man to man.

49. Let the Lord then supply us with the other precept in answer to the question about the precepts of life; for He was not satisfied with one as knowing that God is one thing and man another, and that the difference is nothing less than that between the Creator and the thing created in the likeness of its Creator. He says then that the second precept is, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:39 Now you love yourself suitably when you love God better than yourself. What, then, you aim at in yourself you must aim at in your neighbor, namely, that he may love God with a perfect affection. For you do not love him as yourself,
unless you try to draw him to that good which you are yourself pursuing. For this is the one
good which has room for all to pursue it along with you. From this precept proceed the duties
of human society, in which it is hard to keep from error. But the first thing to aim at is, that we
should be benevolent, that is, that we cherish no malice and no evil design against another. For
man is the nearest neighbor of man.

50. Hear also what Paul says: "The love of our neighbor," he says, "works no ill." Romans 13:10
The testimonies here made use of are very short, but, if I mistake not, they are to the point,
and sufficient for the purpose. And every one knows how many and how weighty are the
words to be found everywhere in these books on the love of our neighbor. But as a man may
sin against another in two ways, either by injuring him or by not helping him when it is in his
power, and as it is for these things which no loving man would do that men are called wicked,
all that is required is, I think, proved by these words, "The love of our neighbor works no ill."
And if we cannot attain to good unless we first desist from working evil, our love of our
neighbor is a sort of cradle of our love to God, so that, as it is said, "the love of our neighbor
works no ill," we may rise from this to these other words, "We know that all things issue in
good to them that love God." Romans 8:28

51. But there is a sense in which these either rise together to fullness and perfection, or, while
the love of God is first in beginning, the love of our neighbor is first in coming to perfection. For
perhaps divine love takes hold on us more rapidly at the outset, but we reach perfection more
easily in lower things. However that may be, the main point is this, that no one should think
that while he despises his neighbor he will come to happiness and to the God whom he loves.
And would that it were as easy to seek the good of our neighbor, or to avoid hurting him, as it
is for one well trained and kind-hearted to love his neighbor! These things require more than
mere good-will, and can be done only by a high degree of thoughtfulness and prudence, which
belongs only to those to whom it is given by God, the source of all good. On this topic — which
is one, I think, of great difficulty — I will try to say a few words such as my plan admits of,
resting all my hope in Him whose gifts these are.

Chapter 27.— On Doing Good to the Body of Our Neighbor
52. Man, then, as viewed by his fellow-man, is a rational soul with a mortal and earthly body in
its service. Therefore he who loves his neighbor does good partly to the man's body, and partly
to his soul. What benefits the body is called medicine; what benefits the soul, discipline.
Medicine here includes everything that either preserves or restores bodily health. It includes,
therefore, not only what belongs to the art of medical men, properly so called, but also food
and drink, clothing and shelter, and every means of covering and protection to guard our
bodies against injuries and mishaps from without as well as from within. For hunger and thirst,
and cold and heat, and all violence from without, produce loss of that health which is the point
to be considered.

53. Hence those who seasonably and wisely supply all the things required for warding off these
evils and distresses are called compassionate, although they may have been so wise that no
painful feeling disturbed their mind in the exercise of compassion. No doubt the word
compassionate implies suffering in the heart of the man who feels for the sorrow of another.
And it is equally true that a wise man ought to be free from all painful emotion when he assists
the needy, when he gives food to the hungry and water to the thirsty, when he clothes the
naked, when he takes the stranger into his house, when he sets free the oppressed, when,
lastly, he extends his charity to the dead in giving them burial. Still the epithet compassionate
is a proper one, although he acts with tranquillity of mind, not from the stimulus of painful
feeling, but from motives of benevolence. There is no harm in the word compassionate when
there is no passion in the case.

54. Fools, again, who avoid the exercise of compassion as a vice, because they are not
sufficiently moved by a sense of duty without feeling also distressful emotion, are frozen into
hard insensibility, which is very different from the calm of a rational serenity. God, on the other
hand, is properly called compassionate; and the sense in which He is so will be understood by
those whom piety and diligence have made fit to understand. There is a danger lest, in using
the words of the learned, we harden the souls of the unlearned by leading them away from
compassion instead of softening them with the desire of a charitable disposition. As
compassion, then, requires us to ward off these distresses from others, so harmlessness
forbids the infliction of them.

Chapter 28.— On Doing Good to the Soul of Our Neighbor. Two Parts of Discipline, Restraint
and Instruction. Through Good Conduct We Arrive at the Knowledge of the Truth
55. As regards discipline, by which the health of the mind is restored, without which bodily
health avails nothing for security against misery, the subject is one of great difficulty. And as in
the body we said it is one thing to cure diseases and wounds, which few can do properly, and
another thing to meet the cravings of hunger and thirst, and to give assistance in all the other
ways in which any man may at any time help another; so in the mind there are some things in
which the high and rare offices of the teacher are not much called for — as, for instance, in
advice and exhortation to give to the needy the things already mentioned as required for the
body. To give such advice is to aid the mind by discipline, as giving the things themselves is
aiding the body by our resources. But there are other cases where diseases of the mind, many
and various in kind, are healed in a way strange and indescribable. Unless His medicine were
sent from heaven to men, so heedlessly do they go on in sin, there would be no hope of
salvation; and, indeed, even bodily health, if you go to the root of the matter, can have come
to men from none but God, who gives to all things their being and their well-being.

56. This discipline, then, which is the medicine of the mind, as far as we can gather from the
sacred Scriptures, includes two things, restraint and instruction. Restraint implies fear, and
instruction love, in the person benefited by the discipline; for in the giver of the benefit there is
the love without the fear. In both of these God Himself, by whose goodness and mercy it is that
we are anything, has given us in the two Testaments a rule of discipline. For though both are
found in both Testaments, still fear is prominent in the Old, and love in the New; which the
apostle calls bondage in the one, and liberty in the other. Of the marvellous order and divine
harmony of these Testaments it would take long to speak, and many pious and learned men
have discoursed on it. The theme demands many books to set it forth and explain it as far as is
possible for man. He, then, who loves his neighbor endeavors all he can to procure his safety in
body and in soul, making the health of the mind the standard in his treatment of the body. And
as regards the mind, his endeavors are in this order, that he should first fear and then love
God. This is true excellence of conduct, and thus the knowledge of the truth is acquired which
we are ever in the pursuit of.

57. The Manichæans agree with me as regards the duty of loving God and our neighbor, but
they deny that this is taught in the Old Testament. How greatly they err in this is, I think, clearly
shown by the passages quoted above on both these duties. But, in a single word, and one
which only stark madness can oppose, do they not see the unreasonableness of denying that
these very two precepts which they commend are quoted by the Lord in the Gospel from the
Old Testament, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul,
and with all your mind;" and the other, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself?" Or if they
dare not deny this, from the light of truth being too strong for them, let them deny that these
precepts are salutary; let them deny, if they can, that they teach the best morality; let them
assert that it is not a duty to love God, or to love our neighbor; that all things do not issue in
good to them that love God; that it is not true that the love of our neighbor works no ill (a two-
fold regulation of human life which is most salutary and excellent). By such assertions they cut
themselves off not only from Christians, but from mankind. But if they dare not speak thus, but
must confess the divinity of the precepts, why do they not desist from assailing and maligning
with horrible profanity the books from which they are quoted?

58. Will they say, as they often do, that although we find these precepts in the books, it does
not follow that all is good that is found there? How to meet and refute this quibble I do not
well see. Shall I discuss the words of the Old Testament one by one, to prove to stubborn and
ignorant men their perfect agreement with the New Testament? But when will this be done?
When shall I have time, or they patience? What, then, is to be done? Shall I desert the cause,
and leave them to escape detection in an opinion which, though false and impious, is hard to
disprove? I will not. God will Himself be at hand to aid me; nor will He suffer me in those straits
to remain helpless or forsaken.

Chapter 29.— Of the Authority of the Scriptures

59. Attend, then, you Manichæans, if perchance there are some of you of whom your
superstition has hold so as to allow you yet to escape. Attend, I say, without obstinacy, without
the desire to oppose, otherwise your decision will be fatal to yourselves. No one can doubt,
and you are not so lost to the truth as not to understand that if it is good, as all allow, to love
God and our neighbor, whatever hangs on these two precepts cannot rightly be pronounced
bad. What it is that hangs on them it would be absurd to think of learning from me. Hear Christ
Himself; hear Christ, I say; hear the Wisdom of God: "On these two commandments," He says,
"hang all the law and the prophets." Matthew 22:40

60. What can the most shameless obstinacy say to this? That these are not Christ's words? But
they are written in the Gospel as His words. That the writing is false? Is not this most profane
blasphemy? Is it not most presumptuous to speak thus? Is it not most foolhardy? Is it not most
criminal? The worshippers of idols, who hate even the name of Christ, never dared to speak thus against these Scriptures. For the utter overthrow of all literature will follow, and there will be an end to all books handed down from the past, if what is supported by such a strong popular belief and established by the uniform testimony of so many men and so many times, is brought into such suspicion, that it is not allowed to have the credit and the authority of common history. In fine, what can you quote from any writings of which I may not speak in this way if it is quoted against my opinion and my purpose?

61. And is it not intolerable that they forbid us to believe a book widely known and placed now in the hands of all, while they insist on our believing the book which they quote? If any writing is to be suspected, what should be more so than one which has not merited notoriety, or which may be throughout a forgery, bearing a false name? If you force such a writing on me against my will, and make a display of authority to drive me into belief, shall I, when I have a writing which I see spread far and wide for a length of time, and sanctioned by the concordant testimony of churches scattered over all the world, degrade myself by doubting, and, worse degradation, by doubting at your suggestion? Even if you brought forward other readings, I should not receive them unless supported by general agreement; and this being the case, do you think that now, when you bring forward nothing to compare with the text except your own silly and inconsiderate statement, mankind are so unreasonable and so forsaken by divine Providence as to prefer to those Scriptures not others quoted by you in refutation, but merely your own words? You ought to bring forward another manuscript with the same contents, but incorrupt and more correct, with only the passage wanting which you charge with being spurious. For example, if you hold that the Epistle of Paul to the Romans is spurious, you must bring forward another incorrupt, or rather another manuscript with the same epistle of the same apostle, free from error and corruption. You say you will not, lest you be suspected of corrupting it. This is your usual reply, and a true one. Were you to do this, we should assuredly have this very suspicion; and all men of any sense would have it too. See then what you are to think of your own authority; and consider whether it is right to believe your words against these Scriptures, when the simple fact that a manuscript is brought forward by you makes it dangerous to put faith in it.

Chapter 30.— The Church Apostrophised as Teacher of All Wisdom. Doctrine of the Catholic Church

62. But why say more on this? For who but sees that men who dare to speak thus against the Christian Scriptures, though they may not be what they are suspected of being, are at least no Christians? For to Christians this rule of life is given, that we should love the Lord Our God with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind, and our neighbor as ourselves; for on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Rightly, then, Catholic Church, most true mother of Christians, do you not only teach that God alone, to find whom is the happiest life, must be worshipped in perfect purity and chastity, bringing in no creature as an object of adoration whom we should be required to serve; and from that incorrupt and inviolable eternity to which alone man should be made subject, in cleaving to which alone the rational soul escapes misery, excluding everything made, everything liable to change, everything under the power of time; without confounding what eternity, and truth, and peace
itself keeps separate, or separating what a common majesty unites: but you also contain love and charity to our neighbor in such a way, that for all kinds of diseases with which souls are for their sins afflicted, there is found with you a medicine of prevailing efficacy.

63. Your training and teaching are childlike for children, forcible for youths, peaceful for the aged, taking into account the age of the mind as well as of the body. Thou subjectest women to their husbands in chaste and faithful obedience, not to gratify passion, but for the propagation of offspring, and for domestic society. You give to men authority over their wives, not to mock the weaker sex, but in the laws of unfeigned love. Thou dost subordinate children to their parents in a kind of free bondage, and dost set parents over their children in a godly rule. You bind brothers to brothers in a religious tie stronger and closer than that of blood. Without violation of the connections of nature and of choice, you bring within the bond of mutual love every relationship of kindred, and every alliance of affinity. Thou teachest servants to cleave to their masters from delight in their task rather than from the necessity of their position. You render masters forbearing to their servants, from a regard to God their common Master, and more disposed to advise than to compel. Thou unitest citizen to citizen, nation to nation, yea, man to man, from the recollection of their first parents, not only in society but in fraternity. Thou teachest kings to seek the good of their peoples; you counsel peoples to be subject to their kings. Thou teachest carefully to whom honor is due, to whom regard, to whom reverence, to whom fear, to whom consolation, to whom admonition, to whom encouragement, to whom discipline, to whom rebuke, to whom punishment; showing both how all are not due to all, and how to all love is due, and how injury is due to none.

64. Then, after this human love has nourished and invigorated the mind cleaving to your breast, and fitted it for following God, when the divine majesty has begun to disclose itself as far as suffices for man while a dweller on the earth, such fervent charity is produced, and such a flame of divine love is kindled, that by the burning out of all vices, and by the purification and sanctification of the man, it becomes plain how divine are these words, "I am a consuming fire," and, "I have come to send fire on the earth." Luke 12:49 These two utterances of one God stamped on both Testaments, exhibit with harmonious testimony, the sanctification of the soul, pointing forward to the accomplishment of that which is also quoted in the New Testament from the Old: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? Where, O death, is your contest?" Could these heretics understand this one saying, no longer proud but quite reconciled, they would worship God nowhere but with you and in your bosom. In you, as is fit, divine precepts are kept by widely-scattered multitudes. In you, as is fit, it is well understood how much more heinous sin is when the law is known than when it is unknown. For "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law," 1 Corinthians 15:56 which adds to the force with which the consciousness of disregard of the precept strikes and slays. In you it is seen, as is fit, how vain is effort under the law, when lust lays waste the mind, and is held in check by fear of punishment, instead of being overborne by the love of virtue. Yours, as is fit, are the many hospitable, the many friendly, the many compassionate, the many learned, the many chaste, the many saints, the many so ardent in their love to God, that in perfect continence and amazing indifference to this world they find happiness even in solitude.
Chapter 31.— The Life of the Anachoretes and Cœnobites Set Against the Continence of the Manichæans

65. What must we think is seen by those who can live without seeing their fellow-creatures, though not without loving them? It must be something transcending human things in contemplating which man can live without seeing his fellow-man. Hear now, you Manichæans, the customs and notable continence of perfect Christians, who have thought it right not only to praise but also to practise the height of chastity, that you may be restrained, if there is any shame in you, from vaunting your abstinence before uninstructed minds as if it were the hardest of all things. I will speak of things of which you are not ignorant, though you hide them from us. For who does not know that there is a daily increasing multitude of Christian men of absolute continence spread all over the world, especially in the East and in Egypt, as you cannot help knowing?

66. I will say nothing of those to whom I just now alluded, who, in complete seclusion from the view of men, inhabit regions utterly barren, content with simple bread, which is brought to them periodically, and with water, enjoying communion with God, to whom in purity of mind they cleave, and most blessed in contemplating His beauty, which can be seen only by the understanding of saints. I will say nothing of them, because some people think them to have abandoned human things more than they ought, not considering how much those may benefit us in their minds by prayer, and in their lives by example, whose bodies we are not permitted to see. But to discuss this point would take long, and would be fruitless; for if a man does not of his own accord regard this high pitch of sanctity as admirable and honorable, how can our speaking lead him to do so? Only the Manichæans, who make a boast of nothing, should be reminded that the abstinence and continence of the great saints of the Catholic Church has gone so far, that some think it should be checked and recalled within the limits of humanity — so far above men, even in the judgment of those who disapprove, have their minds soared.

67. But if this is beyond our tolerance, who can but admire and commend those who, slighting and discarding the pleasures of this world, living together in a most chaste and holy society, unite in passing their time in prayers, in readings, in discussions, without any swelling of pride, or noise of contention, or sullenness of envy; but quiet, modest, peaceful, their life is one of perfect harmony and devotion to God, an offering most acceptable to Him from whom the power to do those things is obtained? No one possesses anything of his own; no one is a burden to another. They work with their hands in such occupations as may feed their bodies without distracting their minds from God. The product of their toil they give to the decans or tithesmen — so called from being set over the tithes — so that no one is occupied with the care of his body, either in food or clothes, or in anything else required for daily use or for the common ailments. These decans, again, arranging everything with great care, and meeting promptly the demands made by that life on account of bodily infirmities, have one called "father," to whom they give in their accounts. These fathers are not only more saintly in their conduct, but also distinguished for divine learning, and of high character in every way; and without pride they superintend those whom they call their children, having themselves great authority in giving orders, and meeting with willing obedience from those under their charge. At the close of the day they assemble from their separate dwellings before their meal to hear
their father, assembling to the number of three thousand at least for one father; for one may have even a much larger number than this. They listen with astonishing eagerness in perfect silence, and give expression to the feelings of their minds as moved by the words of the preacher, in groans, or tears, or signs of joy without noise or shouting. Then there is refreshment for the body, as much as health and a sound condition of the body requires, every one checking unlawful appetite, so as not to go to excess even in the poor, inexpensive fare provided. So they not only abstain from flesh and wine, in order to gain the mastery over their passions, but also from those things which are only the more likely to whet the appetite of the palate and of the stomach, from what some call their greater cleanness, which often serves as a ridiculous and disgraceful excuse for an unseemly taste for exquisite viands, as distant from animal food. Whatever they possess in addition to what is required for their support (and much is obtained, owing to their industry and frugality), they distribute to the needy with greater care than they took in procuring it for themselves. For while they make no effort to obtain abundance, they make every effort to prevent their abundance remaining with them — so much so, that they send shiploads to places inhabited by poor people. I need say no more on a matter known to all.

68. Such, too, is the life of the women, who serve God assiduously and chastely, living apart and removed as far as propriety demands from the men, to whom they are united only in pious affection and in imitation of virtue. No young men are allowed access to them, nor even old men, however respectable and approved, except to the porch, in order to furnish necessary supplies. For the women occupy and maintain themselves by working in wool, and hand over the cloth to the brethren, from whom, in return, they get what they need for food. Such customs, such a life, such arrangements, such a system, I could not commend as it deserves, if I wished to commend it; besides, I am afraid that it would seem as if I thought it unlikely to gain acceptance from the mere description of it, if I considered myself obliged to add an ornamental eulogium to the simple narrative. You Manichæans, find fault here if you can. Do not bring into prominence our tares before men too blind to discriminate.

Chapter 32.— Praise of the Clergy
69. There is not, however, such narrowness in the moral excellence of the Catholic Church as that I should limit my praise of it to the life of those here mentioned. For how many bishops have I known most excellent and holy men, how many presbyters, how many deacons, and ministers of all kinds of the divine sacraments, whose virtue seems to me more admirable and more worthy of commendation on account of the greater difficulty of preserving it amidst the manifold varieties of men, and in this life of turmoil! For they preside over men needing cure as much as over those already cured. The vices of the crowd must be borne with in order that they may be cured, and the plague must be endured before it is subdued. To keep here the best way of life and a mind calm and peaceful is very hard. Here, in a word, we are among people who are learning to live. There they live.

Chapter 33.— Another Kind of Men Living Together in Cities. Fasts of Three Days
70. Still I would not on this account cast a slight upon a praiseworthy class of Christians — those, namely, who live together in cities, quite apart from common life. I saw at Milan a
lodging-house of saints, in number not a few, presided over by one presbyter, a man of great excellence and learning. At Rome I knew several places where there was in each one eminent for weight of character, and prudence, and divine knowledge, presiding over all the rest who lived with him, in Christian charity, and sanctity, and liberty. These, too, are not burdensome to any one; but, in the Eastern fashion, and on the authority of the Apostle Paul, they maintain themselves with their own hands. I was told that many practised fasts of quite amazing severity, not merely taking only one meal daily towards night, which is everywhere quite common, but very often continuing for three days or more in succession without food or drink. And this among not men only, but women, who also live together in great numbers as widows or virgins, gaining a livelihood by spinning and weaving, and presided over in each case by a woman of the greatest judgment and experience, skilled and accomplished not only in directing and forming moral conduct, but also in instructing the understanding.

71. With all this, no one is pressed to endure hardships for which he is unfit; nothing is imposed on any one against his will; nor is he condemned by the rest because he confesses himself too feeble to imitate them: for they bear in mind how strongly Scripture enjoins charity on all: they bear in mind "To the pure all things are pure," Titus 1:15 and "Not that which enters into your mouth defiles you, but that which comes out of it." Matthew 15:11 Accordingly, all their endeavors are concerned not about the rejection of kinds of food as polluted, but about the subjugation of inordinate desire and the maintenance of brotherly love. They remember, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them;" 1 Corinthians 6:13 and again, "Neither if we eat shall we abound, nor if we refrain from eating shall we be in want;" 1 Corinthians 8:8 and, above all, this: "It is good, my brethren, not to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor anything whereby your brother is offended;" for this passage shows that love is the end to be aimed at in all these things. "For one man," he says, "believes that he can eat all things: another, who is weak, eats herbs. He that eats, let him not despise him that eats not; and let not him that eats not judge him that eats: for God has approved him. Who are you that you should judge another man’s servant? To his own master he stands or fails; but he shall stand: for God is able to make him to stand." And a little after: "He that eats, to the Lord he eats, and gives God thanks; and he that eats not, to the Lord he eats not, and gives God thanks." And also in what follows: "So every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not, then, any more judge one another: but judge this rather, that you place no stumbling-block, or cause of offense, in the way of a brother. I know, and am confident in the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing common in itself: but to him that thinks anything to be common, to him it is common." Could he have shown better that it is not in the things we eat, but in the mind, that there is a power able to pollute it, and therefore that even those who are fit to think lightly of these things, and know perfectly that they are not polluted if they take any food in mental superiority, without being gluttons, should still have regard to charity? See what he adds: "For if your brother be grieved with your meat, now you do not walk charitably." Romans 14:2-21

72. Read the rest: it is too long to quote all. You will find that those able to think lightly of such things — that is, those of greater strength and stability — are told that they must nevertheless abstain, lest those should be offended who from their weakness are still in need of such
abstinence. The people I was describing know and observe these things; for they are Christians, not heretics. They understand Scripture according to the apostolic teaching, not according to the presumptuous and fictitious name of apostle. Him that eats not no one despises; him that eats no one judges; he who is weak eats herbs. Many who are strong, however, do this for the sake of the weak; with many the reason for so doing is not this, but that they may have a cheaper diet, and may lead a life of the greatest tranquillity, with the least expensive provision for the support of the body. "For all things are lawful for me," he says; "but I will not be brought under the power of any." 1 Corinthians 6:12 Thus many do not eat flesh, and yet do not superstitiously regard it as unclean. And so the same people who abstain when in health take it when unwell without any fear, if it is required as a cure. Many drink no wine; but they do not think that wine defiles them; for they cause it to be given with the greatest propriety and moderation to people of languid temperament, and, in short, to all who cannot have bodily health without it. When some foolishly refuse it, they counsel them as brothers not to let a silly superstition make them weaker instead of making them holier. They read to them the apostle's precept to his disciple to "take a little wine for his many infirmities." 1 Timothy 5:23 Then they diligently exercise piety; bodily exercise, they know, profits for a short time, as the same apostle says. 1 Timothy 4:8

73. Those, then who are able, and they are without number, abstain both from flesh and from wine for two reasons: either for the weakness of their brethren, or for their own liberty. Charity is principally attended to. There is charity in their choice of diet, charity in their speech, charity in their dress, charity in their looks. Charity is the point where they meet, and the plan by which they act. To transgress against charity is thought criminal, like transgressing against God. Whatever opposes this is attacked and expelled; whatever injures it is not allowed to continue for a single day. They know that it has been so enjoined by Christ and the apostles; that without it all things are empty, with it all are fulfilled.

Chapter 34.— The Church is Not to Be Blamed for the Conduct of Bad Christians, Worshippers of Tombs and Pictures

74. Make objections against these, you Manichæans, if you can. Look at these people, and speak of them reproachfully, if you dare, without falsehood. Compare their fasts with your fasts, their chastity with yours; compare them to yourselves in dress, food, self-restraint, and, lastly, in charity. Compare, which is most to the point, their precepts with yours. Then you will see the difference between show and sincerity, between the right way and the wrong, between faith and imposture, between strength and inflatedness, between happiness and wretchedness, between unity and disunion; in short, between the sirens of superstition and the harbor of religion.

75. Do not summon against me professors of the Christian name, who neither know nor give evidence of the power of their profession. Do not hunt up the numbers of ignorant people, who even in the true religion are superstitious, or are so given up to evil passions as to forget what they have promised to God. I know that there are many worshippers of tombs and pictures. I know that there are many who drink to great excess over the dead, and who, in the feasts which they make for corpses, bury themselves over the buried, and give to their gluttony
and drunkenness the name of religion. I know that there are many who in words have renounced this world, and yet desire to be burdened with all the weight of worldly things, and rejoice in such burdens. Nor is it surprising that among so many multitudes you should find some by condemning whose life you may deceive the unwary and seduce them from Catholic safety; for in your small numbers you are at a loss when called on to show even one out of those whom you call the elect who keeps the precepts, which in your indefensible superstition you profess. How silly those are, how impious, how mischievous, and to what extent they are neglected by most, nearly all of you, I have shown in another volume.

76. My advice to you now is this: that you should at least desist from slandering the Catholic Church, by declaiming against the conduct of men whom the Church herself condemns, seeking daily to correct them as wicked children. Then, if any of them by good will and by the help of God are corrected, they regain by repentance what they had lost by sin. Those, again, who with wicked will persist in their old vices, or even add to them others still worse, are indeed allowed to remain in the field of the Lord, and to grow along with the good seed; but the time for separating the tares will come. Or if, from their having at least the Christian name, they are to be placed among the chaff rather than among thistles, there will also come One to purge the floor and to separate the chaff from the wheat, and to assign to each part (according to its desert) the due reward.

Chapter 35.—Marriage and Property Allowed to the Baptized by the Apostles

77. Meanwhile, why do you rage? Why does party spirit blind your eyes? Why do you entangle yourselves in a long defense of such great error? Seek for fruit in the field, seek for wheat in the floor: they will be found easily, and will present themselves to the inquirer. Why do you look so exclusively at the dross? Why do you use the roughness of the hedge to scare away the inexperienced from the fatness of the garden? There is a proper entrance, though known to but a few; and by it men come in, though you disbelieve it, or do not wish to find it. In the Catholic Church there are believers without number who do not use the world, and there are those who "use it," in the words of the apostle, "as not using it," 1 Corinthians 7:31 as was proved in those times when Christians were forced to worship idols. For then, how many wealthy men, how many peasant householders, how many merchants, how many military men, how many leading men in their own cities, and how many senators, people of both sexes, giving up all these empty and transitory things, though while they used them they were not bound down by them, endured death for the salutary faith and religion, and proved to unbelievers that instead of being possessed by all these things they really possessed them?

78. Why do you reproach us by saying that men renewed in baptism ought no longer to beget children, or to possess fields, and houses, and money? Paul allows it. For, as cannot be denied, he wrote to believers, after recounting many kinds of evil-doers who shall not possess the kingdom of God: "And such were you," he says: "but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." By the washed and sanctified, no one, assuredly, will venture to think any are meant but believers, and those who have renounced this world. But, after showing to whom he writes, let us see whether he allows these things to them. He goes on: "All things are lawful for me, but all things
are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meat for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. But God raised up the Lord, and will raise us up also by His own power. Do you not know that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. Do you not know that he which is joined to an harlot is made one body? For the two, says He, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Whatever sin a man does is without the body: but he that commits fornication sins against his own body. Do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price: glorify God, and carry Him in your body." 1 Corinthians 6:11-20 "But of the things concerning which you wrote to me: it is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife has not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband has not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that you may have leisure for prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself: but every man has his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that." 1 Corinthians 7:1-7

79. Has the apostle, think you, both shown sufficiently to the strong what is highest, and permitted to the weaker what is next best? Not to touch a woman he shows is highest when he says, "I would that all men were even as I myself." But next to this highest is conjugal chastity, that man may not be the prey of fornication. Did he say that these people were not yet believers because they were married? Indeed, by this conjugal chastity he says that those who are united are sanctified by one another, if one of them is an unbeliever, and that their children also are sanctified. "The unbelieving husband," he says, "is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving woman by the believing husband: otherwise your children would be unclean; but now are they holy." 1 Corinthians 7:14 Why do you persist in opposition to such plain truth? Why do you try to darken the light of Scripture by vain shadows?

80. Do not say that catechumens are allowed to have wives, but not believers; that catechumens may have money, but not believers. For there are many who use as not using. And in that sacred washing the renewal of the new man is begun so as gradually to reach perfection, in some more quickly, in others more slowly. The progress, however, to a new life is made in the case of many, if we view the matter without hostility, but attentively. As the apostle says of himself, "Though the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day." 2 Corinthians 4:16 The apostle says that the inward man is renewed day by day that it may reach perfection; and you wish it to begin with perfection! And it were well if you did wish it. In reality, you aim not at raising the weak, but at misleading the unwary. You ought not to have spoken so arrogantly, even if it were known that you are perfect in your childish precepts. But when your conscience knows that those whom you bring into your sect, when they come to a more intimate acquaintance with you, will find many things in you which nobody hearing
you accuse others would suspect, is it not great impertinence to demand perfection in the weaker Catholics, to turn away the inexperienced from the Catholic Church, while you show nothing of the kind in yourself to those thus turned away? But not to seem to inveigh against you without reason, I will now close this volume, and will proceed at last to set forth the precepts of your life and your notable customs.


Hilary of Poitiers – On the Trinity

On the Trinity
De Trinitate

1. When I was seeking an employment adequate to the powers of human life and righteous in itself, whether prompted by nature or suggested by the researches of the wise, whereby I might attain to some result worthy of that Divine gift of understanding which has been given us, many things occurred to me which in general esteem were thought to render life both useful and desirable. And especially that which now, as always in the past, is regarded as most to be desired, leisure combined with wealth, came before my mind. The one without the other seemed rather a source of evil than an opportunity for good, for leisure in poverty is felt to be almost an exile from life itself, while wealth possessed amid anxiety is in itself an affliction, rendered the worse by the deeper humiliation which he must suffer who loses, after possessing, the things that most are wished and sought. And yet, though these two embrace the highest and best of the luxuries of life, they seem not far removed from the normal pleasures of the beasts which, as they roam through shady places rich in herbage, enjoy at once their safety from toil and the abundance of their food. For if this be regarded as the best and most perfect conduct of the life of man, it results that one Object is common, though the range of feelings differ, to us and the whole unreasoning animal world, Since all of them, in that bounteous provision and absolute leisure which nature bestows, have full scope for enjoyment without anxiety for possession

2. I believe that the mass of mankind have spurned from themselves and censured in others
this acquiescence in a thoughtless, animal life, for no other reason than that nature herself has
taught them that it is unworthy of humanity to hold themselves born only to gratify their greed
and their sloth, and ushered into life for no high aim of glorious deed or fair accomplishment,
and that this very life was granted without the power of progress towards immortality; a life,
indeed, which then we should confidently assert did not deserve to be regarded as a gift of
God, since, racked by pain and laden with trouble, it wastes itself upon itself from the blank
mind of infancy to the wanderings of age. I believe that men, prompted by nature herself, have
raised themselves through teaching and practice to the virtues which we name patience and
temperance and forbearance, under the conviction that right living means right action and
right thought, and that Immortal God has not given life only to end in death; for none can
believe that the Giver of good has bestowed the pleasant sense of life in order that it may be
overcast by the gloomy fear of dying.

3. And yet, though I could not tax with folly and uselessness this counsel of theirs to keep the
soul free from blame, and evade by foresight or elude by skill or endure with patience the
troubles of life, still I could not regard these men as guides competent to lead me to the good
and happy Life. Their precepts were platitudes, on the mere level of human impulse; animal
instinct could not fail to comprehend them, and he who understood but disobeyed would have
fallen into an insanity baser than animal unreason. Moreover, my soul was eager not merely to
do the things, neglect of which brings shame and suffering, but to know the God and Father
Who had given this great gift, to Whom, it felt, it owed its whole self, Whose service was its
true honour, on Whom all its hopes were fixed, in Whose lovingkindness, as in a safe home and
haven, it could rest amid all the troubles of this anxious life. It was inflamed with a passionate
desire to apprehend Him or to know Him. Fresco of St Hilary of Poitiers

4. Some of these teachers brought forward large households of dubious deities, and under the persuasion that
there is a sexual activity in divine beings narrated births and lineages from god to god. Others
asserted that there were gods greater and less, of distinction proportionate to their power.
Some denied the existence of any gods whatever, and confined their reverence to a nature
which, in their opinion owes its being to chance-led vibrations and collisions. On the other
hand, many followed the common belief in asserting the existence of a God, but proclaimed
Him heedless and indifferent to the affairs of men. Again, some worshipped in the elements of
earth and air the actual bodily and visible forms of created things; and, finally, some made
their gods dwell within images of men or of beasts, tame or wild, of birds or of snakes, and
confined the Lord of the universe and Father of infinity within these narrow prisons of metal or
stone or wood. These I was sure, could be no exponents of truth, for though they were at one
in the absurdity, the foulness, the impiety of their observances, they were at variance
concerning the essential articles of their senseless belief. My soul was distracted amid all these
claims, yet still it pressed along that profitable road which leads inevitably to the true
knowledge of God. It could not hold that neglect of a world created by Himself was worthy to
be attributed to God, or that deities endowed with sex, and lines of begetters and begotten,
were compatible with the pure and mighty nature of the Godhead. Nay, rather, it was sure that
that which is Divine and eternal must be one without distinction of sex, for that which is self-
existent cannot have left outside itself anything superior to itself. Hence omnipotence and
everty are the possession of One only, for omnipotence is incapable of degrees of strength or
weakness, and eternity of priority or succession. In God we must worship absolute eternity and absolute power. While my mind was dwelling on these and on many like thoughts, I chaunted upon the books which, according to the tradition of the Hebrew faith, were written by Moses and the prophets, and found in these words spoken by God the Creator testifying of Himself ‘I AM THAT I AM, and again, He THAT IS hath sent me unto you.’ I confess that I was amazed to find in them an indication concerning God so exact that it expressed in the terms best adapted to human understanding an unattainable insight into the mystery of the Divine nature. For no property of God which the mind can grasp is more characteristic of Him than existence, since existence, in the absolute sense, cannot be predicated of that which shall come to an end, or of that which has had a beginning, and He who now joins continuity of being with the possession of perfect felicity could not in the past, nor can in the future, be non-existent; for whatsoever is Divine can neither be originated nor destroyed. Wherefore, since God’s eternity is inseparable from Himself, it was worthy of Him to reveal this one thing, that He is, as the assurance of His absolute eternity.

6. For such an indication of God’s infinity the words ‘I AM THAT I AM’ were clearly adequate; but, in addition, we needed to apprehend the operation of His majesty and power. For while absolute existence is peculiar to Him Who, abiding eternally, had no beginning in a past however remote, we hear again an utterance worthy of Himself issuing from the eternal and Holy God, Who says, Who ho! deth the heaven in His palm and the earth in His hand, and again, The heaven is My throne and the earth is the footstool of My feet. What house will ye build Me or what shall be the place of My rest? The whole heaven is held in the palm of God, the whole earth grasped, in His hand. Now the word of God, profitable as it is to the cursory thought of a pious mind, reveals a deeper meaning to the patient student than to the momentary hearer. For this heaven which is held in the palm of God is also His throne, and the earth which is grasped in His hand is also the footstool beneath His feet. This was not written that from throne and footstool, metaphors drawn from the posture of one sitting, we should conclude that He has extension in space, as of a body, for that which is His throne and footstool is also held in hand and palm by that infinite Omnipotence. It was written that in all born and created things God might be known within them and without, overshadowing and indwelling, surrounding all and interfused through all, since palm and hand, which hold, reveal the might of His external control, while throne and footstool, by their support of a sitter, display the subservience of outward things to One within Who, Himself outside them, encloses all in His grasp, let dwells within the external world which is His own. In this wise does God, from within and from without, control and correspond to the universe; being infinite He is present in all things, in Him Who is infinite all are included. In devout thoughts such as these my soul, engrossed in the pursuit of truth, took its delight. For it seemed that the greatness of God so far surpassed the mental powers of His handiwork, that however far the limited mind of man might strain in the hazardous effort to define Him, the gap was not lessened between the finite nature which struggled and the boundless infinity that lay beyond its ken, I had come by reverent reflection on my own part to understand this, but I found it confirmed by the words of the prophet, Whether shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I go down into hell, Thou art there also; if I have taken my wings before dawn and made my dwelling in the uttermost parts of the sea (Thou art
there). For thither Thy hand shall guide me and Thy right hand shall hold me. There is no space
where God is not; space does not exist apart from Him. He is in heaven, in hell, beyond the
seas; dwelling in all things and enveloping all. Thus He embraces, and is embraced by, the
universe, confined to no part of it but pervading all.

7. Therefore, although my soul drew joy from the apprehension of this august and
unfathomable Mind, because it could worship as its own Father and Creator so limitless an
Infinity, yet with a still more eager desire it sought to know the true aspect of its infinite and
eternal Lord, that it might be able to believe that that immeasurable Deity was apparelled in
splendour befitting the beauty of His wisdom. Then, while the devout soul was baffled and
astray through its own feebleness, it caught from the prophet’s voice this scale of comparison
for God, admirably expressed, By the greatness of His works and the beauty of the things that
He hath made the Creator of worlds is rightly discerned. The Creator of great things is supreme
in greatness, of beautiful things in beauty. Since the work transcends our thoughts, all thought
must be transcended by the Maker. Thus heaven and air and earth and seas are fair: fair also
the whole universe, as the Greeks agree, who from its beautiful ordering call it kosmos, that is,
order. But if our thought can estimate this beauty of the universe by a natural instinct—an
instinct such as we see in certain birds and beasts whose voice, though it fall below the level of
our understanding, yet has a sense clear to them though they cannot utter it, and in which,
since all speech is the expression of some thought, there lies a meaning patent to themselves—
must not the Lord of this universal beauty be recognised as Himself most beautiful amid all the
beauty that surrounds Him? For though the splendour of His eternal glory overtax our mind’s
best powers, it cannot fail to see that He is beautiful. We must in truth confess that God is
most beautiful, and that with a beauty which, though it transcend our comprehension, forces
itself upon our perception.

8. Thus my mind, full of these results which by its own reflection and the teaching of Scripture
it had attained, rested with assurance, as on some peaceful watch-tower, upon that glorious
conclusion, recognising that its true nature made it capable of one homage to its Creator, and
of none other, whether greater or less; the homage namely of conviction that His is a greatness
too vast for our comprehension but not for our faith. For a reasonable faith is akin to reason
and accepts its aid, even though that same reason cannot cope with the vastness of eternal
Omnipotence.

9. Beneath all these thoughts lay an instinctive hope, which strengthened my assertion of the
faith, in some perfect blessedness hereafter to be earned by devout thoughts concerning God
and upright life; the reward, as it were, that awaits the triumphant warrior. For true faith in
God would pass unrewarded, if the soul be destroyed by death, and quenched in the extinction
of bodily life. Even unaided reason pleaded that it was unworthy of God to usher man into an
existence which has some share of His thought and wisdom, only to await the sentence of life
withdrawn and of eternal death; to create him out of nothing to take his place in the World,
only that when he has taken it he may perish. For, on the only rational theory of creation, its
purpose was that things non-existent should come into being, not that things existing should
cease to be.
10. Yet my soul was weighed down with fear both for itself and for the body. It retained a firm conviction, and a devout loyalty to the true faith concerning God, but had come to harbour a deep anxiety concerning itself and the bodily dwelling which must, it thought, share its destruction. While in this state, in addition to its knowledge of the teaching of the Law and Prophets, it learned the truths taught by the Apostle in the Gospel;—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made. That which was made in Him is life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light. That was the true light, which lighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own things, and they that were His own received Him not. But to as many as received Him He gave power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. Here the soul makes an advance beyond the attainment of its natural capacities, is taught more than it had dreamed concerning God. For it learns that its Creator is God of God; it hears that the Word is God and was with God in the beginning. It comes to understand that the Light of the world was abiding in the world and that the world knew Him not; that He came to His own possession and that they that were His own received Him not; but that they who do receive Him by virtue of their faith advance to be sons of God, being born not of the embrace of the flesh nor of the conception of the blood nor of bodily desire, but of God; finally, it learns that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and that His glory was seen, which, as of the Only-begotten from the Father, is perfect through grace and truth.

11. Herein my soul, trembling and distressed, found a hope wider than it had imagined. First came its introduction to the knowledge of God the Father. Then it learnt that the eternity and infinity and beauty which, by the light of natural reason, it had attributed to its Creator belonged also to God the Only-begotten. It did not disperse its faith among a plurality of deities, for it heard that He is God of God; nor did it fall into the error of attributing a difference of nature to this God of God, for it learnt that He is full of grace and truth. Nor yet did my soul perceive anything contrary to reason in God of God, since He was revealed as having been in the beginning God with God. It saw that there are very few who attain to the knowledge of this saving faith, though its reward be great, for even His own received Him not though they who receive Him are promoted to be sons of God by a birth, not of the flesh but of faith. It learnt also that this sonship to God is not a compulsion but a possibility. for, while the Divine gift is offered to all, it is no heredity inevitably imprinted but a prize awarded to willing choice. And test this very truth that whosoever will may become a son of God should stagger the weakness of our faith (for most we desire, but least expect, that which from its very greatness we find it hard to hope for), God the Word became flesh, that through His Incarnation our flesh might attain to union with God the Word. And lest we should think that this incarnate Word was some other than God the Word, or that His flesh was of a body
different from ours, He dwelt among us that by His dwelling He might be known as the indwelling God, and, by His dwelling among us, known as God incarnate in no other flesh than our own, and moreover, though He had condescended to take our flesh, not destitute of His own attributes; for He, the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, is fully possessed of His own attributes and truly endowed with ours.

12. This lesson in the Divine mysteries was gladly welcomed by my soul, now drawing near through the flesh to God, called to new birth through faith, entrusted with liberty and power to win the heavenly regeneration, conscious of the love of its Father and Creator, sure that He would not annihilate a creature whom He had summoned out of nothing into life. And it could estimate how high are these truths above the mental vision of man; for the reason which deals with the common objects of thought can conceive of nothing as existent beyond what it perceives within itself or can create out of itself. My soul measured the mighty workings of God, wrought on the scale of His eternal omnipotence, not by its own powers of perception but by a boundless faith; and therefore refused to disbelieve, because it could not understand, that God was in the beginning with God, and that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, but bore in mind the truth that with the will to believe would come the power to understand.

13. And lest the soul should stray and linger in some delusion of heathen philosophy, it receives this further lesson of perfect loyalty to the holy faith, taught by the Apostle in words inspired:–Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the word, and not after Christ; for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are made full in Him, Which is the Head of all principality and power; in Whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in putting off the body, of the flesh, but wash the circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye have risen again through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. And you, when ye were dead in sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He hath quickened with Him, having forgiven you all your sins, blotting out the band which was against us by its ordinances, which was contrary to us; and He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the Cross; and having put off the flesh He made a show of powers openly, triumphing over them through confidence in Himself. Steadfast faith rejects the vain subtleties of philosophic enquiry; truth refuses to be vanquished by these treacherous devices of human folly, and enslaved by falsehood. It will not confine God within the limits which barred our common reason, nor judge after the rudiments of the world concerning Christ, in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in such wise that the utmost efforts of the earthly mind to comprehend Him are baffled by that immeasurable Eternity and Omnipotence. My soul judged of Him as One Who, drawing us upward to partake of His own Divine nature, has loosened henceforth the bond of bodily observances Who, unlike the Symbolic Law, has initiated us into no rites of mutilating the flesh, but Whose purpose is that our spirit, circumcised from vice, should purify all the natural faculties of the body by abstinence from sin, that we being buried with His Death in Baptism may return to the life of eternity (since regeneration to life is death to the former life), and dying to our sins be born again to immortality, that even as He abandoned His immortality to die for us, so should we awaken from death to immortality with Him. For He took upon Him the flesh in which we have sinned
that by wearing our flesh He might forgive sins; a flesh which He shares with us by wearing it, not by sinning in it. He blotted out through death the sentence of death, that by a new creation of our race in Himself He might sweep away the penalty appointed by the former Law. He let them nail Him to the cross that He might nail to the curse of the cross and abolish all the curses to which the world is condemned. He suffered as man to the utmost that He might put powers to shame. For Scripture had foretold that He Who is God should die; that the victory and triumph of them that trust in Him lay in the fact that He, Who is immortal and cannot be overcome by death, was to die that mortals might gain eternity. These deeds of God, wrought in a manner beyond our comprehension, cannot, I repeat, be understood by our natural faculties, for the work of the Infinite and Eternal can only be grasped by an infinite intelligence. Hence, just as the truths that God became man, that the Immortal died that the Eternal was buried, do not belong to the rational order but are an unique work of power, so on the other hand it is an effect not of intellect but of omnipotence that He Who is man is also God, that He Who died is immortal, that He Who was buried is eternal. We, then, are raised together by God in Christ through His death. But, since in Christ there is the fulness of the Godhead, we have herein a revelation of God the Father joining to raise us in Him Who died; and we must confess that Christ Jesus is none other than God in all the fulness of the Deity.

14. In this calm assurance of safety did my soul gladly and hopefully take its rest, and feared so little the interruption of death, that death seemed only a name for eternal life. And the life of this present body was so far from seeming a burden or affliction that it was regarded as children regard their alphabet, sick men their draught, shipwrecked sailors their swim, young men the training for their profession, future commanders their first campaign; that is, as an endurable submission to present necessities, bearing the promise of a blissful immortality. And further, I began to proclaim those truths in which my soul had a personal faith, as a duty of the episcopate which had been laid upon me, employing my office to promote the salvation of all men.

15. While I was thus engaged there came to light certain fallacies of rash and wicked men, hopeless for themselves and merciless towards others, who made their own feeble nature the measure of the might of God’s nature. They claimed, not that they had ascended to an infinite knowledge of infinite things, but that they had reduced all knowledge, undefined before, within the scope of ordinary reason, and fixed the limits of the faith. Whereas the true work of religion is a service of obedience; and these were men heedless of their own weakness, reckless of Divine realities, who undertook to improve upon the teaching of God.

16. Not to touch upon the vain enquiries of other heretics—concerning whom however, when the course of my argument gives occasion, I will not be silent—there are those who tamper with the faith of the Gospel by denying, under the cloak of loyalty to the One God, the birth of God the Only-begotten. They assert that there was an extension of God into man, not a descent; that He, Who for the season that He took our flesh was Son of Man, had not been previously, nor was then, Son of God; that there was no Divine birth in His case, but an identity of Begetter and Begotten; and (to maintain what they consider a perfect loyalty to the unity of God) that there was an unbroken continuity in the Incarnation, the Father extending Himself into the
Virgin, and Himself being born as His own Son. Others, on the contrary (heretics, because there is no salvation apart from Christ, Who in the beginning was God the Word with God), deny that He was born and declare that He was merely created. Birth, they hold, would confess Him to be true God, while creation proves His Godhead unreal; and though this explanation be a fraud against the faith in the unity of God, regarded as an accurate definition, yet they think it may pass muster as figurative language. They degrade, in name and in belief, His true birth to the level of a creation, to cut Him off from the Divine unity, that, as a creature called into being, He may not claim the fulness of the Godhead, which is not His by a true birth.

17. My soul has been burning to answer these insane attacks. I call to mind that the very centre of a saving faith is the belief not merely in God, but in God as a Father; not merely in Christ, but in Christ as the Son of God; in Him, not as a creature, but as God the Creator, born of God. My prime object is by the clear assertions of prophets and evangelists to refute the insanity and ignorance of men who use the unity of God (in itself a pious and profitable confession) as a cloak for their denial either that in Christ God was born, or else that He is very God. Their purpose is to isolate a solitary God at the heart of the faith by making Christ, though mighty, only a creature; because, so they allege, a birth of God widens the believer’s faith into a trust in more gods than one. But we, divinely taught to confess neither two Gods nor yet a solitary God, will adduce the evidence of the Gospels and the prophets for our confession of God the Father and God the Son, united, not confounded, in our faith. We will not admit Their identity nor allow, as a compromise, that Christ is God in some imperfect sense; for God, born of God, cannot be the same as His Father, since He is His Son, nor yet can He be different in nature.

18. And you, whose warmth of faith and passion for a truth unknown to the world and its philosophers shall prompt to read me, must remember to eschew the feeble and baseless conjectures of earthly minds, and in devout willingness to learn must break down the barriers of prejudice and half-knowledge. The new faculties of the regenerate intellect are needed; each must have his understanding enlightened by the heavenly gift imparted to the soul. First he must take his stand upon the sure ground [substantia = upostai ] of God, as holy Jeremiah says, that since he is to hear about that nature [substantial he may expand his thoughts till they are worthy of the theme, not fixing some arbitrary standard for himself, but judging as of infinity. And again, though he be aware that he is partaker of the Divine nature, as the holy apostle Peter says in his second Epistle, yet he must not measure the Divine nature by the limitations of his own, but gauge God’s assertions concerning Himself by the scale of His own glorious self-revelation. For he is the best student who does not read his thoughts into the book, but lets it reveal its own; who draws from it its sense, and does not import his own into it, nor force upon its words a meaning which he had determined was the right one before he opened its pages. Since then we are to discourse of the things of God, let us assume that God has full knowledge of Himself, and bow with humble reverence to His words. For He Whom we can only know through His own utterances is the fitting witness concerning Himself.

19. If in our discussion of the nature and birth of God we adduce certain analogies, let no one suppose that such comparisons are perfect and complete. There can be no comparison between God and earthly things, yet the weakness of our understanding forces us to seek for
illustrations from a lower sphere to explain our meaning about loftier themes. The course of daily life shews how our experience in ordinary matters enables us to form conclusions on unfamiliar subjects. We must therefore regard any comparison as helpful to man rather than as descriptive of God, since it suggests, rather than exhausts, the sense we seek. Nor let such a comparison be thought too bold when it sets side by side carnal anti spiritual natures, things invisible and things palpable, since it avows itself a necessary aid to the weakness of the human mind, and deprecates the condemnation due to an imperfect analogy. On this principle I proceed with my task, intending to use the terms supplied by God, yet colouring my argument with illustrations drawn from human life.

20. And first, I have so laid out the plan of the whole work as to consult the advantage of the reader by the logical order in which its books are arranged. It has been my resolve to publish no half-finished and ill-considered treatise, lest its disorderly array should resemble the confused clamour of a mob of peasants. And since no one can scale a precipice unless there be jutting ledges to aid his progress to the summit, I have here set down in order the primary outlines of our ascent leading our difficult course of argument up the easiest path; not cutting steps in the face of the rock, but levelling it to a gentle slope, that so the traveller, almost without a sense of effort may reach the heights.

21. Thus, after the present first book, the second expounds the mystery of the Divine birth, that those who shall be baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost may know the true Names, and not be perplexed about their sense but accurately informed as to fact and meaning, and so receive full assurance that in the words which are used they have the true Names, and that those Names involve the truth.

22. After this short and simple discourse concerning the Trinity, the third book makes further progress, sure though slow. Citing the greatest instances of His power, it brings within the range of faith’s understanding that saying, in itself beyond our comprehension, I in the Father and the Father in Me, which Christ utters concerning Himself. Thus truth beyond the dull wit of man is the prize of faith equipped with reason and knowledge; for neither may we doubt God’s Word concerning Himself, nor can we suppose that the devout reason is incapable of apprehending His might.

23. The fourth book starts With the doctrines of the heretics, and disowns complicity in the fallacies whereby they are traducing the faith of the Church. It publishes that infidel creed which a number of them have lately promulgated, and exposes the dishonesty, and therefore the wickedness, of their arguments from the Law for what they call the unity of God. It sets out the whole evidence of Law and Prophets to demonstrate the impiety of asserting the unity of God to the exclusion of the Godhead of Christ, and the treason of alleging that if Christ be God the Only-begotten, then God is not one.

24. The fifth book follows in reply the sequence of heretical assertion. They had falsely declared that they followed the law in the sense which they assigned to the unity of God, and that they had proved from it that the true God is of one Person; and this in order to rob the
Lord Christ of His birth by their conclusion concerning the One true God, for birth is the evidence of origin. In answer I assert, step by step, what they deny; for from the Law and the Prophets I demonstrate that there are not two gods, nor one isolated true God, neither perverting the faith in the Divine unity nor denying the birth of Christ. And since they say that the Lord Jesus Christ, created rather than born, bears the Divine Name by gift and not by right, I have proved His true Divinity from the Prophets in such a way that, He being acknowledged very God, the assurance of His inherent Godhead shall hold us fast to the certainty that God is One.

25. The sixth book reveals the full deceitfulness of this heretical teaching. To win credit for their assertions they denounce the impious doctrine of heretics:—of Valentinus, to wit, and Sabellius and Manichaeus and Hieracas, and appropriate the godly language of the Church as a cover for their blasphemy. They reprove and alter the language of these heretics, correcting it into a vague resemblance to orthodoxy, in order to suppress the holy faith while apparently denouncing heresy. But we state clearly what is the language and what the doctrine of each of these men, and acquit the Church of any complicity or fellowship with condemned heretics. Their words which deserve condemnation we condemn, and those which claim our humble acceptance we accept. Thus that Divine Sonship of Jesus Christ, which is the object of their most strenuous denial, we prove by the witness of the Father, by Christ’s own assertion, by the preaching of Apostles, by the faith of believers, by the cries of devils, by the contradiction of Jews, in itself a confession, by the recognition of the heathen who had not known God; and all this to rescue from dispute a truth of which Christ had left us no excuse for ignorance.

26. Next the seventh book, starting from the basis of a true faith now attained, delivers its verdict in the great debate. First, armed with its sound and incontrovertible proof of the impregnable faith, it takes part in the conflict raging between Sabellius and Hebion and these opponents of the true Godhead. It joins issue with Sabellius on his denial of the pre-existence of Christ, and with his assailants on their assertion that He is a creature. Sabellius overlooked the eternity of the Son, but believed that true God worked in a human body. Our present adversaries deny that He was born, assert that He was created, and fail to see in His deeds the works of very God. What both sides dispute, we believe. Sabellius denies that it was the Son who was working, and he is wrong; but he proves his case triumphantly when he alleges that the work done was that of true God. The Church shares his victory over those who deny that in Christ was very God. But when Sabellius denies that Christ existed before the worlds, his adversaries prove to conviction that Christ’s activity is from everlasting, and we are on their side in this confutation of Sabellius, who recognises true God, but not God the Son, in this activity. And our two previous adversaries join forces to refute Hebion, the second demonstrating the eternal existence of Christ, while the first proves that His work is that of very God. Thus the heretics overthrow one another, while the Church, as against Sabellius, against those who call Christ a creature, against Hebion, bears witness that the Lord Jesus Christ is very God of very God, born before the worlds and born in after times as man.

27. No one can doubt that we have taken the course of true reverence and of sound doctrine when, after proving from Law and Prophets first that Christ is the Son of God, and next that He
is true God, and flits without breach of the mysterious unity, we proceed to support the Law
and the Prophets by the evidence of the Gospels, and prove from them also that He is the Son
of God and Himself very God. It is the easiest of tasks, after demonstrating His right to the
Name of Son, to shew that the Name truly describes His relation to the Father; though indeed
universal usage regards the granting of the name of son as convincing evidence of sonship. But,
to leave no loophole for the trickery and deceit of these traducers of the true birth of God the
Only-begotten, we have used His true Godhead as evidence of His true Sonship; to shew that
He Who (as is confessed by all) bears the Name of Son of God is actually God, we have adduced
His Name, His birth, His nature, His power, His assertions. We have proved that His Name is an
accurate description of Himself, that the title of Son is an evidence of birth, that in His birth He
retained His Divine Nature, and with His nature His power, and that that power manifested
itself in conscious and deliberate self-revelation. I have set down the Gospel proofs of each
several point, shewing how His self-revelation displays His power, how His power reveals His
nature, how His nature is His by birthright, and from His birth comes His title to the name of
Son. Thus every whisper of blasphemy is silenced, for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself by the
witness of His own mouth has taught us that He is, as His Name, His birth, His nature, His
power declare, in the true sense of Deity, very God of very God.

28. While its two predecessors have been devoted to the confirmation of the faith in Christ as
Son of God and true God, the eighth book is taken up with the proof of the unity of God,
shewing that this unity is consistent with the birth of the Son, and that the birth involves no
duality in the Godhead. First it exposes the sophistry with which these heretics have attempted
to avoid, though they could not deny, the confession of the real existence of God, Father and
Son; it demolishes their helpless and absurd plea that in such passages as, And the multitude of
them that believed were one soul and heart, and again, He that planteth and He that watereth
are one, and Neither far these only do I pray, but for them also that shall believe on Me
through their word, that they may all be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee,
that they also may be in Us, a unity of will and mind, not of Divinity, is expressed. From a
consideration of the true sense of these texts we shew that they involve the reality of the
Divine birth; and then, displaying the whole series of our Lord’s self-revelations, we exhibit, in
the language of Apostles and in the very words of the Holy Spirit, the whole and perfect
mystery of the glory of God as Father and as Only-begotten Son. Because there is a Father we
know that there is a Son; in that Son the Father is manifested to us, and hence our certainty
that He is born the Only-begotten and that He is very God.

29. In matters essential to salvation it is not enough to advance the proofs which faith supplies
and finds sufficient. Arguments which we have not tested may delude us into a
misapprehension of the meaning of our own words, unless we take the offensive by exposing
the hollowness of the enemy’s proofs, and so establish our own faith upon the demonstrated
absurdity of his. The ninth book, therefore, is employed in refuting the arguments by which the
heretics attempt to invalidate the birth of God the Only-begotten;—heretics who ignore the
mystery of the revelation hidden from the beginning of the world, and forget that the Gospel
faith proclaims the union of God and man. For their denial that our Lord Jesus Christ is God,
like unto God and equal with God as Son with Father, born of God and by right of His birth
subsisting as very Spirit, they are accustomed to appeal to such words of our Lord as, Why
callest thou Me good? None is good save One, even God. They argue that by His reproof of the
man who called Him good, and by His assertion of the goodness of God only, He excludes
Himself from the goodness of that God Who alone is good and from that true Divinity which
belongs only to One. With this text their blasphemous reasoning connects another, And this is
life eternal that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send,
Jesus Christ. Here, they say, He confesses that the Father is the only true God, and that He
Himself is neither true nor God, since this recognition of an only true God is limited to the
Possessor of the attributes assigned. And they profess to be quite clear about His meaning in
this passage, since He also says, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He hath seen the
Father doing. The fact that He can only copy is said to be evidence of the limitation of His
nature. There can be no comparison between Omnipotence and One whose action is
dependent upon the previous activity of Another reason itself draws an absolute line between
power and the want of power. That line is so clear that He Himself has avowed concerning God
the Father, The Father is greater than I. So frank a confession silences all demur; it is
blasphemy and madness to assign the dignity and nature of Gaol to One who disclaims them.
So utterly devoid is He of the qualities of true God that He actually bears witness concerning
Himself, But of that day and hour knoweth no one, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son,
but God only L A son who knows not his father’s secret must, from his ignorance, be alien from
the father who knows; a nature limited in knowledge cannot partake of that majesty and might
which alone is exempt from the tyranny of ignorance.

30. We therefore expose the blasphemous misunderstanding at which they have arrived by
distortion and perversion of the meaning of Christ’s words. We account for those words by
stating what manner of questions He was answering, at what times He was speaking, what
partial knowledge He was deigning to impart; we make the circumstances explain the words,
and do not force the former into consistency with the latter. Thus each case of variance, that
for instance between The Father is greater than I, and I and the Father are One, or between
None is good save One, even God, and He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also, or a
difference so wide as that between Father, all things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are
Mine, and That they may know Thee, the only, true God, or between I in the Father and the
Father in Me, and But of the day and hour knoweth no one, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son,
but the Father only, is explained by a discrimination between gradual revelation and
full expression of His nature and power. Both are utterances of the same Speaker, and an
exposition of the real force of each group will shew that Christ’s true Godhead is no whir
impaired because, to form the mystery of the Gospel faith, the birth and Name of Christ were
revealed gradually, and under conditions which He chose of occasion and time.

31. The purpose of the tenth book is one in harmony with the faith. For since, in the folly which
passes with them for wisdom, the heretics have twisted some Of the circumstances and
utterances of the Passion into an insolent contradiction of the Divine nature and power of the
Lord Jesus Christ, I am compelled to prove that this is a blasphemous misinterpretation, and
that these things were put on record by the Lord Himself as evidences of His true and absolute
majesty. In their parody of the faith they deceive themselves with words such as, My saul is
sorrowful even unto death. He, they think, must be far removed from the blissful and passionless life of God, over Whose soul brooded this crushing fear of an impending woe, Who under the pressure of suffering even humbled Himself to pray, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me, and assuredly bore the appearance of fearing to endure the trials from which He prayed for release; Whose whole nature was so overwhelmed by agony that in those moments on the Cross He cried, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? forced by the bitterness of His pain to complain that He was forsaken: Who, destitute of the Father’s help, gave up the ghost with the words, Father; into Thy hands I commend My Spirit. The fear, they say, which beset Him at the moment of expiring made Him entrust His Spirit to the care of God the Father: the very hopelessness of His own condition forced Him to commit His Soul to the keeping of Another.

32. Their folly being as great as their blasphemy, they fail to mark that Christ’s words, spoken under similar circumstances, are always consistent; they cleave to the letter and ignore the purpose of His words. There is the widest difference between My soul is sorrowful even unto death, and Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power so also between Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away, from Me, and The cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it? and further between My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? and Verily I say unto thee, Today shall thou be with Me in Paradise, and between Father into Thy hands I commend My Spirit, and Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do; and their narrow minds, unable to grasp the Divine meaning, plunge into blasphemy in the attempt at explanation. There is a broad distinction between anxiety and a mind at ease, between haste and the prayer for delay, between words of anguish and words of encouragement, between despair for self and confident entreaty for others; and the heretics display their impiety by ignoring the assertions of Deity and the Divine nature of Christ, which account for the one class, of His words, while they concentrate their attention upon the deeds and words which refer only to His ministry on earth. I have therefore set out all the elements contained in the mystery of the Soul and Body of the Lord Jesus Christ; all have been sought out, none suppressed. Next, casting the calm light of reason upon the question, I have referred each of His sayings to the class to which its meaning attaches it, and so have shewn that He had also a confidence which never wavered a will which never faltered, an assurance which never murmured, that, when He commended His own soul to the Father, in this was involved a prayer for the pardon of others. Thus a complete presentment of the teaching of the Gospel interprets and confirms all (and not some only) of the words of Christ.

33. And so—for not even the glory of the Resurrection has opened the eyes of these lost men and kept them within the manifest bounds of the faith—they have forged a weapon for their blasphemy out of a pretended reverence, and even perverted the revelation of a mystery into an insult to God. From the words, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, to My God and your God, they argue that since that Father is ours as much as His, and that God also ours and His, His own confession that He shares with us in that relation to the Father and to God excludes Him from true Divinity, and subordinates Him to God the Creator Whose creature and
inferior He is, as we are, although He has received the adoption of a Son. Nay more, we must not suppose that He possesses any of the characters of the Divine nature, since the Apostle says, But when He saith, all things are put in subjection, this is except Him Who did subject all things unto Him, for when all things shall have been subjected unto Him, then shall also He Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all. For, so they say, subjection is evidence of want of power in the subject and of its possession by the sovereign. The eleventh book is employed in a reverent discussion of this argument; it proves from these very words of the Apostle not only that subjection is no evidence of want of power in Christ but that it actually is a sign of His true Divinity as God the Son; that the fact that His Father and God is also our Father and God is an infinite advantage to us and no degradation to Him, since He Who has been born as Man and suffered all the afflictions of our flesh has gone up on high to our God and Father, to receive His glory as Man our Representative.

34. In this treatise we have followed the course which we know is pursued in every branch of education. First come easy lessons and a familiarity, slowly attained by practice, with the groundwork of the subject; then the student may make proof, in the business of life, of the training which he has received. Thus the soldier, when he is perfect in his exercises, can go out to battle; the advocate ventures into the conflicts of the courts when he is versed in the pleadings of the school of rhetoric; the sailor who has learned to navigate his ship in the land-locked harbour of his home may be trusted amid the storms of open seas and distant climes. Such has been our proceeding in this most serious and difficult science in which the whole faith is taught. First came simple instruction for the untaught believer in the birth, the name, the Divinity, the true Divinity of Christ; since then we have quietly and steadily advanced till our readers can demolish every plea or the heretics; and now at last we have pitted them against the adversary in the present great and glorious conflict. The mind of men is powerless with the ordinary resources of unaided reason to grasp the idea of an eternal birth, but they attain by study of things Divine to the apprehension of mysteries which lie beyond the range of common thought. They can explode that paradox concerning the Lord Jesus, which derives all its strength and semblance of cogency from a purblind pagan philosophy: the paradox which asserts, There was a time when He was not, and He was not before He was born, and He was made out of nothing; as though His birth were proof that He had previously been non-existent and at a given moment came into being, and God the Only-begotten could thus be subjected to the conception of time, as if the faith itself [by conferring the title of ‘Son’] and the very nature of birth proved that there was a time when He was not. Accordingly they argue that He was born out of nothing, on the ground that birth implies the grant of being to that which previously had no being. We proclaim in answer, on the evidence of Apostles and Evangelists, that the Father is eternal and the Son eternal, and demonstrate that the Son is God of all with an absolute, not a limited, pre-existence; that these bold assaults of their blasphemous logic—He was born out of nothing, and He was not before He was born—are powerless against Him; that His eternity is consistent with sonship, and His sonship with eternity; that there was in Him no unique exemption from birth but a birth from everlasting, for, while birth implies a Father, Divinity is inseparable from eternity.

35. Ignorance of prophetic diction and unskilfulness in interpreting Scripture has led them into
a perversion of the point and meaning of the passage, The Lord created Me far a beginning of His ways for His works. They labour to establish from it that Christ is created, rather than born, as God, and hence partakes the nature of created beings, though He excel them in the manner of His creation, and has no glory of Divine birth but only the powers of a transcendent creature. We in reply, without importing any new considerations or preconceived opinions, will make this very passage of Wisdom display its own true meaning and object. We will show that the fact that He was created for the beginning of the ways of God and for His works, cannot be twisted into evidence concerning the Divine and eternal birth, because creation for these purposes and birth from everlasting are two entirely different things. Where birth is meant, there birth, and nothing but birth, is spoken of; where creation is mentioned, the cause of that creation is first named. There is a Wisdom born before all things, and again there is a wisdom created for particular purposes; the Wisdom which is from everlasting is one, the wisdom which has come into existence during the lapse of time is another.

36. Having thus concluded that we must reject the word ‘creation’ from our confession of faith in God the Only-begotten, we proceed to lay down the teachings of reason and of piety concerning the Holy Spirit, that the reader, whose convictions have been established by patient and earnest study of the preceding books, may be provided with a complete presentation of the faith. This end will be attained when the blasphemies of heretical teaching on this theme also have been swept away, and the mystery, pure and undefiled, of the Trinity which regenerates us has been fixed in terms of saving precision on the authority of Apostles and Evangelists. Men will no longer dare, on the strength of mere human reasoning, to rank among creatures that Divine Spirit, Whom we receive as the pledge of immortality and source of fellowship with the sinless nature of God.

37. I know, O Lord God Almighty, that I owe Thee, as the chief duty of my life, the devotion of all my words and thoughts to Thyself. The gift of speech which Thou hast bestowed can bring me no higher reward than the opportunity of service in preaching Thee and displaying Thee as Thou art, as Father and Father of God the Only-begotten, to the world in its blindness and the heretic in his rebellion. But this is the mere expression of my own desire; I must pray also for the gift of Thy help and compassion, that the breath of Thy Spirit may fill the sails of faith and confession which I have spread, and a favouring wind be sent to forward me on my voyage of instruction. We can trust the promise of Him Who said, Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you; and we in our want shall pray for the things we need. We shall bring an untiring energy to the study of Thy Prophets and Apostles, and we shall knock for entrance at every gate of hidden knowledge, but it is Thine to answer the prayer, to grant the thing we seek, to open the door on which we beat. Our minds are born with dull and clouded vision, our feeble intellect is penned within the barriers of an impassable ignorance concerning things Divine; but the study of Thy revelation elevates our soul to the comprehension of sacred truth, and submission to the faith is the path to a certainty beyond the reach of unassisted reason.

38. And therefore we look to Thy support for the first trembling steps of this undertaking, to Thy aid that it may gain strength and prosper. We look to Thee to give us the fellowship of that
Spirit Who guided the Prophets and the Apostles, that we may take their words in the sense in which they spoke and assign its right shade of meaning to every utterance. For we shall speak of things which they preached in a mystery; of Thee, O God Eternal, Father of the Eternal and Only-begotten God, Who alone art without birth, and of the One Lord Jesus Christ, born of Thee from everlasting. We may not sever Him from Thee, or make Him one of a plurality of Gods, on any plea of difference of nature. We may not say that He is not begotten of Thee, because Thou art One. We must not fail to confess Him as true God, seeing that He is born of Thee, true God, His Father. Grant us, therefore, precision of language, soundness of argument, grace of style, loyalty to truth. Enable us to utter the things that we believe, that so we may confess, as Prophets and Apostles have taught us, Thee, One God our Father, and One Lord Jesus Christ, and put to silence the gainsaying of heretics, proclaiming Thee as God, yet not solitary, and Him as God, in no unreal sense.

Book 2 (back to top)

1. BELIEVERS have always found their satisfaction in that Divine utterance, which our ears heard recited from the Gospel at the moment when that Power, which is its attestation, was bestowed upon us:—Go now and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. What element in the mystery of man’s salvation is not included in those words? What is forgotten, what left in darkness? All is full, as from the Divine fulness; perfect, as from the Divine perfection. The passage contains the exact words to be used, the essential acts, the sequence of processes, an insight into the Divine nature. He bade them baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that is with confession of the Creator and of the Only-begotten, and of the Gift. For God the Father is One, from Whom are all things; and our Lord Jesus Christ the Only-begotten, through Whom are all things, is One; and the Spirit, God’s Gift to us, Who pervades all things, is also One. Thus all are ranged according to powers possessed and benefits conferred;—the One Power from Whom all, the One Offspring through Whom all, the One Gilt Who gives us perfect hope. Nothing can be found lacking in that supreme Union which embraces, in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, infinity in the Eternal, His Likeness in His express Image, our enjoyment of Him in the Gift.

2. But the errors of heretics and blasphemers force us to deal with unlawful matters, to scale perilous heights, to speak unutterable words, to trespass on forbidden ground. Faith ought in silence to fulfil the commandments, worshipping the Father, reverencing with Him the Son, abounding in the Holy Ghost, but we must strain the poor resources of our language to express thoughts too great for words. The error of others compels us to err in daring to embody in human terms truths which ought to be hidden in the silent veneration of the heart.

3. For there have risen many who have given to the plain words of Holy Writ some arbitrary interpretation of their own, instead of its true anti only sense, and this in defiance of the clear meaning of words. Heresy lies in the sense assigned, not in the word written; the guilt is that of the expositor, not of the text. Is not truth indestructible? When we hear the name Father, is
not sonship involved in that Name? The Holy Ghost is mentioned by name; must He not exist? We can no more separate fatherhood from the Father or sonship from the Son than we can deny the existence in the Holy Ghost of that gift which we receive. Yet men of distorted mind plunge the whole matter in doubt and difficulty, fatuously reversing the clear meaning of words, and depriving the Father of His fatherhood because they wish to strip the Son of His sonship. They take away the fatherhood by asserting that the Son is not a Son by nature; for a son is not of the nature of his father when begetter and begotten have not the same properties, and he is no son whose being is different from that of the father, and unlike it. Yet in what sense is God a Father (as He is), if He have not begotten in His Son that same substance and nature which are His own?

4. Since, therefore, they cannot make any change in the facts recorded, they bring novel principles and theories of man’s device to bear upon them. Sabellius, for instance, makes the Son an extension of the Father; and the faith in this regard a matter of words rather than of reality, for he makes one and the same Person, Son to Himself and also Father. Hebion allows no beginning to the Son of God except from Mary, and represents Him not as first God and then man. but as first man then God; declares that the Virgin did not receive into herself One previously existent, Who had been in the beginning God the Word dwelling with God, but that through the agency of the Word she bore Flesh; the ‘Word’ meaning in his opinion not the nature of the pre-existent Only-begotten God, but only the sound of an uplifted voice. Similarly certain teachers of our present day assert that the Image and Wisdom and Power of God was produced out of nothing, and in time. They do this to save God, regarded as Father of the Son, from being lowered to the Son’s level. They are fearful lest this birth of the Son from Him should deprive Him of His glory, and therefore come to God’s rescue by styling His Son a creature made out of nothing, in order that God may live on in solitary perfection without a Son born of Himself and partaking His nature. What wonder that their doctrine of the Holy Ghost should be different from ours, when they presume to subject the Giver of that Holy Ghost to creation, and change, and non-existence. They destroy the consistency and completeness of the mystery of the faith. They break up the absolute unity of God by assigning differences of nature where all is clearly common to Each; they deny the Father by robbing He Son of His true Sonship; they deny the Holy Ghost in their blindness to the facts that we possess Him and that Christ gave Him. They betray ill-trained souls to ruin by their boast of the logical perfection of their doctrine; they deceive their hearers by emptying terms of their meaning, through the Names remain to witness to the truth. I pass over the pitfalls of other heresies, Valentinian, Marcionite, Manichee and the rest. From time to time they catch the attention of some foolish souls and prove fatal by the very infection of their contact; one plague as destructive as another when once the poison of their teaching has found its way into the hearer’s thoughts.

5. Their treason involves us in the difficult and dangerous position of having to make a definite pronouncement, beyond the statements of Scripture, upon this grave and abstruse matter. The Lord said that the nations were to be baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The words of the faith are clear; the heretics do their utmost to involve the meaning in doubt. We may not on this account add to the appointed form, yet we must set a
limit to their license of interpretation. Since their malice, inspired by the devil’s cunning, empties the doctrine of its meaning while it retains the Names which convey the truth, we must emphasise the truth which those Names convey. We must proclaim, exactly as we shall find them in the words of Scripture, the majesty and functions of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and so debar the heretics from robbing these Names of their connotation of Divine character, and compel them by means of these very Names to confine their use of terms to their proper meaning. I cannot conceive what manner of mind our opponents have, who pervert the truth, darken the light, divide the indivisible rend the scatheless, dissolve the perfect unity. It may seem to them a light thing to tear up Perfection, to make laws for Omnipotence, to limit Infinity; as for me, the task of answering them fills me with anxiety; my brain whirls, my intellect is stunned, my very words must be a confession, not that I am weak of utterance, but that I am dumb. Yet a wish to undertake the task forces itself upon me; it means withstanding the proud, guiding the wanderer, warning the ignorant. But the subject is inexhaustible; I can see no limit to my venture of speaking concerning God in terms more precise than He Himself has used. He has assigned the Names—Father, Son and Holy Ghost,—which are our information of the Divine nature. Words cannot express or feeling embrace or reason apprehend the results of enquiry carried further; all is ineffable, unattainable, incomprehensible. Language is exhausted by the magnitude of the theme, the splendour of its effulgence blinds the gazing eye, the intellect cannot compass its boundless extent. Still, under the necessity that is laid upon us, with a prayer for pardon to Him Whose attributes these are, we will venture, enquire and speak; and moreover—it is the only promise that in so grave a matter we dare to make—we will accept whatever conclusion He shall indicate.

6. It is the Father to Whom all existence owes its origin. In Christ and through Christ He is the source of all. In contrast to all else He is self-existent. He does not draw His being from without, but possesses it from Himself and in Himself. He is infinite, for nothing contains Him and He contains all things; He is eternally unconditioned by space, for He is illimitable; eternally anterior to time, for time is His creation. Let imagination range to what you may suppose is God’s utmost limit, and you will find Him present there; strain as you will there is always a further horizon towards which to strain. Infinity is His property, just as the power of making such effort is yours. Words will fail you, but His being will not be circumscribed. Or again, turn back the pages of history, and you will find Him ever present; should numbers fail to express the antiquity to which you have penetrated, yet God’s eternity is not diminished. Gird up your intellect to comprehend Him as a whole; He eludes you, God, as a whole, has left something within your grasp, but this something is inextricably involved in His entirety. Thus you have missed the whole, since it is only a part which remains in your hands; nay, not even a part, for you are dealing with a whole which you have failed to divide. For a part implies division, a whole is undivided, and God is everywhere and wholly present wherever He is.

Reason, therefore, cannot cope with Him, since no point of contemplation can be found outside Himself and since eternity is eternally His. This is a true statement of the mystery of that unfathomable nature which is expressed by the Name ‘Father:’ God invisible, ineffable, infinite. Let us confess by our silence that words cannot describe Him; let sense admit that it is foiled in the attempt to apprehend, and reason in the effort to define. Yet He has, as we said,
in ‘Father’ a name to indicate His nature; He is a Father unconditioned. He does not, as men do, receive the power of paternity from an external source. He is unbegotten, everlasting, inherently eternal. To the Son only is He known, for no one knoweth the Father save the Son and him to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him, nor yet the Son save the Father. Each has perfect and complete knowledge of the Other. Therefore, since no one knoweth the Father save the Son, let our thoughts of the Father be at one with the thoughts of the Son, the only faithful Witness, Who reveals Him to us.

7. It is easier for me to feel this concerning the Father than to say it. I am well aware that no words are adequate to describe His attributes. We must feel that He is invisible, incomprehensible, eternal. But to say that He is self-existent and self-originating and self-sustained, that He is invisible and incomprehensible and immortal; all this is an acknowledgment of His glory, a hint of our meaning, a sketch of our thoughts, but speech is powerless to tell us what God is, words cannot express the reality. You hear that He is self-existent; human reason cannot explain such independence. We can find objects which uphold, and objects which are upheld, but that which thus exists is obviously distinct from that which is the cause of its existence. Again, if you hear that He is self-originating, no instance can be found in which the giver of the gift of life is identical with the life that is given. If you hear that He is immortal, then there is something which does not spring from Him and with which He has, by His very nature, no contact; and, indeed, death is not the only thing which this word ‘immortal’ claims as independent of God. If you hear that He is incomprehensible, that is as much as to say that He is non-existent, since contact with Him is impossible. If you say that He is invisible, a being that does not visibly exist cannot be sure of its own existence. Thus our confession of God fails through the defects of language; the best combination of words we can devise cannot indicate the reality and the greatness of God. The perfect knowledge of God is so to know Him that we are sure we must not be ignorant of Him, yet cannot describe Him. We must believe, must apprehend, must worship; and such acts of devotion must stand in lieu of definition.

8. We have now exchanged the perils of a harbourless coast for the storms of the open sea. We can neither safely advance nor safely retreat, yet the way that lies before us has greater hardships than that which lies behind. The Father is what He is, and as He is manifested, so we must believe. The mind shrinks in dread from treating of the Son; at every word I tremble lest I be betrayed into treason. For He is the Offspring of the Unbegotten, One from One, true from true, living from living, perfect from perfect; the Power of Power, the Wisdom of Wisdom, the Glory of Glory, the Likeness of the invisible God, the ImageUnbegotten Father. Yet in what sense can we conceive that the Only-begotten is the Offspring of the Unbegotten? Repeatedly the Father cries from heaven, This is My beloved Son in Whom I well pleased. It is no rending or severance, for He that begat is without passions, and He that was born is the Image of the invisible God and bears witness, The Father is in Me and I in the Father. It is no mere adoption, for He is the true Son of God and cries, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also. Nor did He come into existence in obedience to a command as did created things, for He is the Only-begotten of the One God; and He has life in Himself, even as He that begot Him has life, for He says, As the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son to have life in
Himself. Nor is there a portion of the Father resident in the Son, for the Son bears witness, All things that the Father hath are Mine, and again, And all things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and the Apostle testifies, For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and by the nature of things a portion cannot possess the whole. He is the perfect Son of the perfect Father, for He Who has all has given all to Him. Yet we must not imagine that the Father did not give, because He still possesses, or that He has lost, because He gave to the Son.

9. The manner of this birth is therefore a secret confined to the Two. If any one lays upon his personal incapacity his failure to solve the mystery, ill spite of the certainty that Father and Son stand to Each Other in those relations, he will be still more pained at the ignorance to which I confess. I, too, am in the dark, yet I ask no questions. I look for comfort to the fact that Archangels share my ignorance, that Angels have not heard the explanation, and worlds do not contain it, that no prophet has espied it and no Apostle sought for it, that the Son Himself has not revealed it. Let such pitiful complaints cease. Whoever you are that search into these mysteries, I do not bid you resume your exploration of height and breadth and depth; I ask you rather to acquiesce patiently in your ignorance of the mode of Divine generation, seeing that you know not how His creatures come into existence. Answer me this one question:–Do your senses give you any evidence that you yourself were begotten? Can you explain the process by which you became a father? I do not ask whence you drew perception, how you obtained life, whence your reason comes, what is the nature of your senses of smell, touch, sight, hearing; the fact that we have the use of all these is the evidence that they exist. What I ask is:–How do you give them to your children? How do you ingraft the senses, lighten the eyes, implant tile mind? Tell me, if you can. You have, then, powers which you do not understand, you impart gifts which you cannot comprehend. You are calmly indifferent to the mysteries of your own being, profanely impatient of ignorance concerning the mysteries of God’s.

10. Listen then to the Unbegotten Father, listen to the Only-begotten Son. Hear His words, The Father is greater than I, and I and the Father are One, and He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also, and The Father is in Me and I in the Father, and I went out from the Fathers, and Who is in the bosom of the Father, and Whatsoever the Father hath He hath delivered to the Son, and The Son hath life in Himself, even as the Father hath in Himself. Hear in these words the Son, the Image, the Wisdom, the Power, the Glory of God. Next mark the Holy Ghost proclaiming Who shall declare His generation? Note the Lord’s assurance, No one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son and He to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him, Penetrate into the mystery, plunge into the darkness which shrouds that birth, where you will be alone with God the Unbegotten and God the Only-begotten. Make your start, continue, persevere. I know that you will not reach the goal, but I shall rejoice at your progress. For He who devoutly treads an endless road, though he reach no conclusion, will profit by his exertions. Reason will fail for want of words, but when it comes to a stand it will be the better for the effort made.

11. The Son draws His life from that Father Who truly has life; the Only begotten from the Unbegotten, Offspring from Parent, Living from Living. As the Father hath life in Himself, even
so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself. The Son is perfect from Him that is perfect,
for He is whole from Him that is whole. This is no division or severance, for Each is in the Other,
and the fulness of the Godhead is in the Son. Incomprehensible is begotten of
Incomprehensible, for none else knows Them, but Each knows the Other; Invisible is begotten
of Invisible, for the Son is the Image of the invisible God, and he that has seen the Son has seen
the Father also. There is a distinction, for They are Father and Son; not that Their Divinity is
different in kind, for Both are One, God of God, One God Only begotten of One God
Unbegotten. They are not two Gods, but One of One; not two Unbegotten, for the Son is born
of the Unborn. There is no diversity, for the life of the living God is in the living Christ. So much
I have resolved to say concerning the nature of their Divinity not imagining that I have
succeeded in making a summary of the faith, but recognising that the theme is inexhaustible.
So faith, you object, has no service to render, since there is nothing that it can comprehend.
Not so; the proper service of faith is to grasp and confess the truth that it is incompetent to
comprehend its Object.

12. It remains to say something more concerning the mysterious generation of the Son; or
rather this something more is everything. I quiver, I linger, my powers fail, I know not where to
begin. I cannot tell the time of the Son’s birth; it were impious not to be certain of the fact.
Whom shall I entreat? Whom shall I call to my aid? From what books shall I borrow the terms
needed to state so hard a problem? Shall I ransack the philosophy of Greece? No! I have read,
Where is the wise? Where is the enquirer of this world? In this matter, then, the world’s
philosophers, the wise men of paganism, are dumb: for they have rejected the wisdom of God.
Shall I turn to the Scribe of the law? He is in darkness, for the Cross of Christ is an offence to
him. Shall I, perchance, bid you shut your eyes to heresy, and pass it by in silence, on the
ground that sufficient reverence is shown to Him Whom we preach if we believe that lepers
were cleansed, the deaf heard, the lame ran, the palsied stood, the blind (in general) received
sight, the blind from his birth had eyes given to him, devils were routed, the sick recovered, the
dead lived. The heretics confess all this, and perish.

13. Look now to see a thing not less miraculous than lame men running, blind men seeing, the
flight of devils, the life from the dead. There stands by my side, to guide me through the
difficulties which I have enunciated, a poor fisherman, ignorant, uneducated, fishing-lines in
hand, clothes dripping, muddy feet, every inch a sailor. Consider and decide whether it were
the greater feat to raise the dead or impart to an untrained mind the knowledge of mysteries
so deep as he reveals by saying, In the beginning was the Word. What means this In the
beginning was? He ranges backward over the spaces of time, centuries are left behind, ages are
cancelled. Fix in your mind what date you will for this beginning; you miss the mark, for even
then He, of Whom we are speaking, was. Survey the universe, note well what is written of it, In
the beginning God made the heaven and the earth. This word beginning fixes the moment of
creation; you can assign its date to an event which is definitely stated to have happened in the
beginning. But this fisherman of mine, unlettered and unread, is untrammelled by time,
undaunted by its immensity; he pierces beyond the beginning. For his was has no limit of time
and no commencement; the uncreated Word was in the beginning.
14. But perhaps we shall find that our fisherman has been guilty of departure from the terms of the problem proposed for solution. He has set the Word free from the limitations of time; that which is free lives its own life and is bound to no obedience. Let us, therefore, pay our best attention to what follows:—And the Word was with God. We find that it is with God that the Word, Which was before the beginning, exists unconditioned by time. The Word, Which was, is with God. He Who is absent when we seek for His gin in time is present all the while with the Creator of time. For this once our fisherman has escaped; perhaps he will succumb to the difficulties which await him.

15. For you will plead that a word is the sound of a voice; that it is a naming of things. an utterance of thoughts. This Word was with God, and was in the beginning; the expression of the eternal Thinker’s thoughts must be eternal. For the present I will give you a brief answer of my own on the fisherman’s behalf, till we see what defence he has to make for his own simplicity. The nature, then, of a word is that it is first a potentiality, afterwards a past event; an existing thing only while it is being heard. How can we say, In the beginning was the Word, when a word neither exists before, nor lives after, a definite point of time? Can we even say that there is a point of time in which a word exists? Not only are the words in a speaker’s mouth non-existent until they are spoken, and perished the instant they are uttered, but even in the moment of utterance there is a change from the sound which commences to that which ends a word. Such is the reply that suggests itself to me as a bystander. But your opponent the Fisherman has an answer of his own. He will begin by reproving you for your inattention. Even though your unpractised ear failed to catch the first clause, In the beginning was the Word, why complain of the next, And the Word was with God? Was it And the Word was in God that you heard,—the dictum of some profound philosophy? Or is it that your provincial dialect makes no distinction between in and with? The assertion is that Which was in the beginning was with, not in, Another. But I will not argue from the beginning of the sentence; the sequel can take care of itself. Hear now the rank and the name of the Word:—And the Word was God. Your plea that the Word is the sound of a voice, the utterance of a thought, falls to the ground. The Word is a reality, not a sound, a Being, not a speech, God, not a nonentity.

16. But I tremble to say it; the audacity staggers me. I hear, And the Word was God; I, whom the prophets have taught that God is One. To save me from further fears, give me, friend Fisherman, a fuller imparting of this great mystery. Show that these assertions are consistent with the unity of God; that there is no blasphemy in them, no explaining away, no denial of eternity. He continues, He was in the beginning with God. This He was in the beginning removes the limit of time; the word God shows that He is more than a voice; that He is with God proves that He neither encroaches nor is encroached upon, for His identity is not swallowed up in that of Another, and He is clearly stated to be present with the One Unbegotten God as God, His One and Only-begotten Son.

17. We are still waiting, Fisherman, for your full description of the Word. He was in the beginning, it may be said, but perhaps He was not before the beginning. To this also I will furnish a reply on my Fisherman’s behalf. The Word could not be other than He was; that was is unconditional and unlimited. But what says the Fisherman for himself? All things were made
through Him. Thus, since nothing exists apart from Him through Whom the universe came into being, He, the Author of all things, must have an immeasurable existence. For time is a cognisable and divisible measure of extension, not in space, but in duration. All things are from Him, without exception; time then itself is His creature.

18. But, my Fisherman, the objection will be raised that you are reckless and extravagant in your language; that All things were made through Him needs qualification. There is the Unbegotten, made of none; there is also the Son, begotten of the Unborn Father. This All things is an unguarded statement, admitting no exceptions. While we are silent, not daring to answer or trying to think of some reply, do you break in with, And without film was nothing made. You have restored the Author of the Godhead to His place, while proclaiming that He has a Companion. From your saying that nothing was made without Him, I learn that He was not alone. He through Whom the work was done is One; He without Whom it was not done is Another: a distinction is drawn between Creator and Companion.

19. Reverence for the One Unbegotten Creator distressed me, lest in your sweeping assertion that all things were made by the Word you had included Him. You have banished my fears by your Without Him was nothing made. Yet this same Without Him was nothing made brings trouble and distraction. There was, then, something made by that Other; not made, it is true, without Him. If the Other did make anything, even though the Word were present at the making, then it is untrue that through Him all things were made. It is one thing to be the Creator’s Companion, quite another to be the Creator’s Self. I could find answers of my own to the previous objections; in this case, Fisherman, I can only turn at once to your words, All things were made through Him. And now I understand, for the Apostle has enlightened me:—Things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all are through Him and in Him.

20. Since, then, all things were made through Him, come to our help and tell us what it was that was made not without Him. That which was made in Him is life. That which was made in Him was certainly not made without Him; for that which was made in Him was also made through Him. All things were created in Him and through Him. They were created in Him, for He was born as God the Creator. Again, nothing that was made in Him was made without Him, for the reason that God the Begotten was life, and was born as Life, not made life after His birth; for there are not two elements in Him, one inborn and one afterwards conferred. There is no interval in His case between birth and maturity. None of the things that were created in Him was made without Him, for He is the Life which made their creation possible. Moreover God, the Son of God, became God by virtue of His birth, not after He was born. Being born the Living from the Living, the True from the True, the Perfect from the Perfect, He was born in full possession of His powers. He needed not to learn in after time what His birth was, but was conscious of His Godhead by the very fact that He was born as God of God. I and the Father are One, are the words of the Only-begotten Son of the Unbegotten. It is the voice of the One God proclaiming Himself to be Father and Son; Father speaking in the Son and Son in the Father. Hence also He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also; hence All that the Father hath, He hath given to the Son; hence As the Father hath life in Himself so hath He given to the Son to
have life in Himself; hence No one knoweth the Father save the Son, nor the Son save the Father; hence In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

21. This Life is the Light of men, the Light which lightens the darkness. To comfort us for that powerlessness to describe His generation of which the prophet speaks, the Fisherman adds, And the darkness comprehended Him not. The language of unaided reason was baffled and silenced; the Fisherman who lay on the bosom of the Lord was taught to express the mystery. His language is not the world’s language, for He deals with things that are not of the world. Let us know what it is, if there be any teaching that you can extract from his words, more than their plain sense conveys; if you can translate into other terms the truth we have elicited, publish them abroad. If there be none—indeed, because there are none—let us accept with reverence this teaching of the fisherman, and recognise in his words the oracles of God. Let us cling in adoration to the true confession of Father and Son, Unbegotten and Only-begotten ineffably, Whose majesty defies all expression and all perception. Let us, like John, lie on the bosom of the Lord Jesus, that we too may understand and proclaim the mystery.

22. This faith, and every part of it, is impressed upon us by the evidence of the Gospels, by the teaching of the Apostles, by the futility of the treacherous attacks which heretics make on every side. The foundation stands firm and unshaken in face of winds and rains and torrents; storms cannot overthrow it, nor dripping waters hollow it, nor floods sweep it away. Its excellence is proved by the failure of countless assaults to impair it. Certain remedies are so compounded as to be of value not merely against some single disease but against all; they are of universal efficacy. So it is with the Catholic faith. It is not a medicine for some special malady, but for every ill; virulence cannot master, nor numbers defeat, nor complexity baffle it. One and unchanging it faces and conquers all its foes. Marvellous it is that one form of words should contain a remedy for every disease, a statement of truth to confront every contrivance of falsehood. Let heresy muster its forces and every sect come forth to battle. Let our answer to their challenge be that there is One Unbegotten God the Father, and One Only-begotten Son of God, perfect Offspring of perfect Parent; that the Sun was begotten by no lessening of the Father or subtraction from His Substance, but that He Who possesses all things begot an all-possessing Son; a Son not emanating nor proceeding from the Father, but compact of, and inherent in, the whole Divinity, of Him Who wherever He is present is present eternally; One free from time, unlimited in duration, since by Him all things were made, and, indeed, He could not be confined within a limit created by Himself. Such is the Catholic and Apostolic Faith which the Gospel has taught us and we avow.

23. Let Sabellius, if he dare, confound Father and Son as two names with one meaning, making of them not Unity but One Person. He shall have a prompt answer from the Gospels, not once or twice, but often repeated, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. He shall hear the words, The Father is greater than I, and I go to the Father, and Father, I thank Thee, and Glorify Me, Father, and Thou art the Son of the living God. Let Hebion try to sap the faith, who allows the Son of God no life before the Virgin’s womb, and sees in Him the Word only after His life as flesh had begun. We will bid him read again, Father, glorify Me with Thine own Self with that glory which I had with Thee before the world was, and In the beginning was the Word, and
the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and All things were made through Him, and He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world knew Him not. Let the preachers whose apostleship is of the newest fashion—an apostleship of Antichrist—come forward and pour their mockery and insult upon the Son of God. They must hear, I came out from the Father and The Son in the Father’s bosom, and I and the Father are One, and I in the Father, and the Father in Me. And lastly, if they be wrath, as the Jews were, that Christ should claim God for His own Father, making Himself equal with God, they must take the answer which He gave the Jews, Believe My works, that the Father is in Me and I in the Father. Thus our one immovable foundation, our one blissful rock of faith, is the confession from Peter’s mouth, Thou art the Son of the living God. On it we can base an answer to every objection with which perverted ingenuity or embittered treachery may assail the truth.

24. In what remains we have the appointment of the Father’s will. The Virgin, the birth, the Body, then the Cross, the death, the visit to the lower world; these things are our salvation. For the sake of mankind the Son of God was born of the Virgin and of the Holy Ghost. In this process He ministered to Himself; by His own power—the power of God—which overshadowed her He sowed the beginning of His Body, and entered on the first stage of His life in the flesh. He did it that by His Incarnation He might take to Himself from the Virgin the fleshly nature, and that through this commingling there might come into being a hallowed Body of all humanity; that so through that Body which He was pleased to assume all mankind might be hid in Him, and He in return, through His unseen existence, be reproduced in all. Thus the invisible Image of God scorned not the shame which marks the beginnings of human life. He passed through every stage; through conception, birth, wailing, cradle and each successive humiliation.

25. What worthy return can we make for so great a condescension? The One Only-begotten God, ineffably born of God, entered the Virgin’s womb and grew and took the frame of poor humanity. He Who upholds the universe, within Whom and through Whom are all things, was brought forth by common childbirth; He at Whose voice Archangels and Angels tremble, and heaven and earth and all the elements of this world are melted, was heard in childish wailing. The Invisible and Incomprehensible, Whom sight and feeling and touch cannot gauge, was wrapped in a cradle. If any man deem all this unworthy of God, the greater must he own his debt for the benefit conferred the less such condescension befits the majesty of God. He by Whom man was made had nothing to gain by becoming Man; it was our gain that God was incarnate and dwelt among us, making all flesh His home by taking upon Him the flesh of One. We were raised because He was lowered; shame to Him was glory to us. He, being God, made flesh His residence, and we in return are lifted anew from the flesh to God.

26. But lest perchance fastidious minds be exercised by cradle and wailing, birth and conception, we must render to God the glory which each of these contains, that we may approach His self-abasement with souls duly filled with His claim to reign, and not forget His majesty in His condescension. Let us note, therefore, who were attendant on His conception. All Angel speaks to Zacharias; fertility is given to the barren; the priest comes forth dumb from the place of incense; John bursts forth into speech while yet confined within his mother’s
womb; an Angel blesses Mary and promises that she, a virgin, shall be the mother of the Son of God. Conscious of her virginity, she is distressed at this hard thing; the Angel explains to her the mighty working of God, saying, The Holy Ghost shall come from above into thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. The Holy Ghost, descending from above, hallowed the Virgin’s womb, and breathing therein (for The Spirit bloweth where it listeth), mingled Himself with the fleshly nature of man, and annexed by force and might that foreign domain. And, lest through weakness of the human structure failure should ensue, the power of the Most High overshadowed the Virgin, strengthening her feebleness in semblance of a cloud east round her, that the shadow, which was the might of God, might fortify her bodily frame to receive the procreative power of the Spirit. Such is the glory of the conception.

27. And now let us consider the glory which accompanies the birth, the wailing and the cradle. The Angel tells Joseph that the Virgin shall bear a Son, and that Son shall be named Emmanuel, that is, God with us. The Spirit foretells it through the prophet, the Angel bears witness; He that is born is God with us. The light of a new star shines forth for the Magi; a heavenly sign escorts the Lord of heaven. An Angel brings to the shepherds the news that Christ the Lord is born, the Saviour of the world. A multitude of the heavenly host flock together to sing the praise of that childbirth; the rejoicing of the Divine company proclaims the fulfilment of the mighty work. Then glory to God in heaven, and peace an earth to men of good will is announced. And now the Magi come and worship Him wrapped in swaddling clothes; after a life devoted to mystic rites of vain philosophy they bow the knee before a Babe laid in His cradle. Thus the Magi stoop to reverence the infirmities of Infancy; its cries are saluted by the heavenly joy of angels; the Spirit Who inspired the prophet, the heralding Angel, the light of the new star, all minister around Him. In such wise was it that the Holy Ghost’s descent and the overshadowing power of the Most High brought Him to His birth. The inward reality is widely different from the outward appearance; the eye sees one thing, the soul another. A virgin bears; her child is of God. An Infant wails; angels are heard in praise. There are coarse swaddling clothes; God is being worshipped. The glory of His Majesty is not forfeited when He assumes the lowliness of flesh.

28. So was it also during His further life on earth. The whole time which He passed in human form was spent upon the works of God. I have no space for details; it must suffice to say that in all the varied acts of power and healing which He wrought, the fact is conspicuous that He was man by virtue of the flesh He had taken, God by the evidence of the works He did.

29. Concerning the Holy Spirit I ought not to be silent, and yet I have no need to speak; still, for the sake of those who are in ignorance, I cannot refrain. There is no need to speak, because we are bound to confess Him, proceeding, as He does, from Father and Son. For my own part, I think it wrong to discuss the question of His existence. He does exist, inasmuch as He is given, received, retained; He is joined with Father and Son in our confession of the faith, and cannot he excluded from a true confession of Father and Son; take away a part, and the whole faith is marred. If any man demand what meaning we attach to this conclusion, he, as well as we, has read the words of the Apostle, Because ye are sons of God, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father, and Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in Whom ye have
been sealed, and again, But we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are given unto us by Gad, and also But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God is in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is not His, and further, But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies for the sake of His Spirit which dwelleth in you. Wherefore since He is, and is given, and is possessed, and is of God, let His traducers take refuge in silence. When they ask, Through Whom is He? To what end does He exist? Of what nature is He? We answer that He it is through Whom all things exist, and from Whom are all things, and that He is the Spirit of God, God’s gift to the faithful. If our answer displease them, their displeasure must also fall upon the Apostles and the Prophets, who spoke of Him exactly as we have spoken. And furthermore, Father and Son must incur the same displeasure.

30. The reason, I believe, why certain people continue in ignorance or doubt is that they see this third Name, that of the Holy Spirit, often used to signify the Father or the Son. No objection need be raised to this; whether it be Father or Son, He is Spirit, and He is holy.

31. But the words of the Gospel, For God is Spirit, need careful examination as to their sense and their purpose. For every saying has an antecedent cause and an aim which must be ascertained by study of the meaning. We must bear this in mind lest, on the strength of the words, God is Spirit, we deny not only the Name, but also the work and the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Lord was speaking with a woman of Samaria, for He had come to be the Redeemer for all mankind, After He had discoursed at length of the living water, and of her five husbands, and of him whom she then had who was not her husband, the woman answered, Lord, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. The Lord replied, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that which ye know not; we warship that which we know; far salvation is from the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. For God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in the Spirit and in truth, for God is Spirit. We see that the woman, her mind full of inherited tradition, thought that God must be worshipped either on a mountain, as at Samaria, or in a temple, as at Jerusalem; for Samaria in disobedience to the Law had chosen a site upon the mountain for worship, while the Jews regarded the temple founded by Solomon as the home of their religion, and the prejudices of both confined the all-embracing and illimitable God to the crest of a hill or the vault of a building. God is invisible, incomprehensible, immeasurable; the Lord said that the time had come when God should be worshipped neither on mountain nor in temple. For Spirit cannot be cabined or confined; it is omnipresent in space and time, and under all conditions present in its fulness. Therefore, He said, they are the true worshippers who shall worship in the Spirit and in truth. And these who are to worship God the Spirit in the Spirit shall have the One for the means, the Other for the object, of their reverence: for Each of the Two stands in a different relation to the worshipper. The words, God is Spirit, do not alter the fact that the Holy Spirit has a Name of His own, and that He is the Gift to us. The woman who confined God to hill or temple was told that God
contains all things and is self-contained: that He, the Invisible and Incomprehensible must be worshipper by invisible and incomprehensible means. The imparted gift and the object of reverence were clearly shewn when Christ taught that God, being Spirit, must be worshipped in the Spirit, and revealed what freedom and knowledge, what boundless scope for adoration, lay in this worship of God, the Spirit, in the Spirit.

32. The words of the Apostle are of like purport; For the Lord is Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. To make his meaning clear he has distinguished between the Spirit, Who exists, and Him Whose Spirit He is Proprietor and Property, He and Iris are different in sense. Thus when he says, The Lord is Spirit he reveals the infinity of God; when He adds, Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, he indicates Him Who belongs to God; for He is the Spirit of the Lord, and Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. The Apostle makes the statement not from any necessity of his own argument, but in the interests of clearness. For the Holy Ghost is everywhere One, enlightening all patriarchs and prophets and the whole company of the Law, inspiring John even in his mother’s womb, given in due time to the Apostles and other believers, that they might recognise the truth vouchsafed them.

33. Let us hear from our Lord’s own words what is the work of the Holy Ghost within us. He says, I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. For it is expedient for you that I go: if I go I will send you the Advocate. And again, I will ask the Father and He shall send you another Advocate, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth. He shall guide you into all truth, far He shall not speak from Himself, but whatsoever things He shall hear lie shall speak, and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me, far He shall take of Mine. These words were spoken to show how multitudes should enter the kingdom of heaven; they contain an assurance of the goodwill of the Giver, and of the mode and terms of the Gift. They tell how, because our feeble minds cannot comprehend the Father or the Son, our faith which finds God’s incarnation hard of credence shall be illumined by the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Bond of union and the Source of light.

34. The next step naturally is to listen to the Apostle’s account of the powers and functions of this Gift. He says, As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the children of God. For ye received not the Spirit of bondage again unto fear, but ye received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father; and again, For no man by the Spirit of God saith anathema to Jesus, and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit; and he adds, Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, and diversities of ministrations, but the same Lord, and diversities of workings, but the same God, Who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the enlightenment of the Spirit, to profit withal. Now to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith in the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings in the One Spirit, to another workings of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another kinds of tongues, to another interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh the One and same Spirit. Here we have a statement of the purpose and results of the Gift; and I cannot conceive what doubt can remain, after so clear a definition of His Origin, His action and His powers.
35. Let us therefore make use of this great benefit, and seek for personal experience of this most needful Gift. For the Apostle says, in words I have already cited, But we have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the the things that are given unto us by God. We receive Him, then, that we may know. Faculties of the human body, if denied their exercise, will lie dormant. The eye without light, natural or artificial, cannot fulfil its office; the ear will be ignorant of its function unless some voice or sound be heard; the nostrils unconscious of their purpose unless some scent be breathed. Not that the faculty will be absent, because it is never called into use, but that there will be no experience of its existence. So, too, the soul of man, unless through faith it have appropriated the gift of the Spirit, will have the innate faculty Of apprehending God, but be destitute of the light of knowledge, That Gift, which is in Christ, is One, yet offered, and offered fully, to all; denied to none, and given to each according to the measure of his willingness to receive; its stores the richer, the more earnest the desire to earn them. This gift is with us unto the end of the world, the solace of our waiting, the assurance, by the favours which He bestows, of the hope that shall be ours, the light of our minds, the sun of our souls. This Holy Spirit we must seek and must earn, and then hold fast by faith and obedience to the commands of God.

Book 3 (Back to the Top)

1. THE words of the Lord, I in the Father, and the Father in Me, confuse many minds, and not unnaturally, for the powers of human reason cannot provide them with any intelligible meaning. It seems impossible that one object should be both within and without another, or that (since it is laid down that the Beings of whom we are treating, though They do not dwell apart, retain their separate existence and condition) these Beings can reciprocally contain One Another, so that One should permanently envelope, and also be permanently enveloped by, the Other, whom yet He envelopes. This is a problem which the wit of man will never solve, nor will human research ever find an analogy for this condition of Divine existence. But what man cannot understand, God can be. I do not mean to say that the fact that this is an assertion made by God renders it at once intelligible to us. We must think for ourselves, and come to know the meaning of the words, I in the Father, and the Father in Me: but this will depend upon our success in gasping the truth that reasoning based upon Divine verities can establish its conclusions, even though they seem to contradict the laws of the universe.

2. In order to solve as easily as possible this most difficult problem, we must first master the knowledge which the Divine Scriptures give of Father and of Son, that so we may speak with more precision, as dealing with familiar and accustomed matters. The eternity of the Father, as we concluded after full discussion in the last Book, transcends space, and time, and appearance, and all the forms of human thought. He is without and within all things, He contains all and can be contained by none, is incapable of change by increase or diminution, invisible, incomprehensible, full, perfect, eternal, not deriving anything that He has from another, but, if ought be derived from Him, still complete and self-sufficing.

3. He therefore, the Unbegotten, before time was begot a Son from Himself; not from any pre-existent matter, for all things are through the Son; not from nothing, for the Son is from the
Father’s self; not by way of childbirth, for in God there is neither change nor void; not as a piece of Himself cut or torn off or stretched out, for God is passionless and bodiless, and only a possible and embodied being could so be treated, and, as the [Apostle says, in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Incomprehensibly, ineffably, before time or worlds, He begat the Only-begotten from His own unbegotten substance, bestowing through love and power His whole Divinity upon that Birth. Thus He is the Only-begotten, perfect, eternal Son of the unbegotten, perfect, eternal Father. But those properties which He has in consequence of the Body which He took, are the fruit of His goodwill toward our salvation. For He, being invisible and bodiless and incomprehensible, as the Son of God, took upon Him such a measure of matter and of lowliness as was needed to bring Him within the range of our understanding, and perception, and contemplation. It was a condescension to our feebleness rather than a surrender of His own proper attributes.

4. He, therefore, being the perfect Father’s perfect Son. the Only-begotten Offspring of the unbegotten God, who has received all from Him Who possesses all, being God from God, Spirit from Spirit, Light from Light, says boldly, The Father in Me, and I in the Father. For as the Father is Spirit, so is the Son Spirit; as the Father is God, so is the Son God; as the Father is Light, so is the Son Light. Thus those properties which are in the Father are the source of those wherewith the Son is endowed; that is, He is wholly Son of Him Who is wholly Father; not imported from without, for before the Son nothing was; not made from nothing, for the Son is from God; not a son partially, for the fulness of the Godhead is in the Son; not a Son in some respects, but in all; a Son according to the will of Him who had the power, after a manner which He only knows. What is in the Father is in the Son also; what is in the Unbegotten is in the Only-begotten also. The One is from the Other, and they Two are a Unity; not Two made One, yet One in the Other, for that which is in Both is the same. The Father is in the Son, for the Son is from Him; the Son is in the Father, because the Father is His sole Origin; the Only-begotten is in the Unbegotten, because He is the Only-begotten from the Unbegotten. Thus mutually Each is in the Other, for as all is perfect in the Unbegotten Father, so all is perfect in the Only-begotten Son. This is the Unity which is in Son and Father, this the power, this the love; our hope, and faith, and truth, and way, and life is not to dispute the Father’s powers or to depreciate the Son, but to reverence the mystery and majesty of His birth; to set the unbegotten Father above all rivalry, and count the Only-begotten Son as His equal in eternity and might, confessing concerning God the Son that He is from God.

5. Such powers are there in God; powers which the methods of our reason cannot comprehend, but of which our faith, on the sure evidence of His action, is convinced. We shall find instances of this action in the bodily sphere as well as in the spiritual, its manifestation taking, not the form of an analogy which might illustrate the Birth, but of a deed marvellous yet comprehensible. On the wedding day in Galilee water was made wine. Have we words to tell or senses to ascertain what methods produced the change by which the tastelessness of water disappeared, and was replaced by the full flavour of wine? It was not a mixing; it was a creation, and a creation which was not a beginning, but a transformation. A weaker liquid was
not obtained by admixture of a stronger element; an existing thing perished and a new thing came into being. The bridegroom was anxious. the household in confusion, the harmony of the marriage feast imperilled. Jesus is asked for help. He does not rise or busy Himself; He does the work without an effort. Water is poured into the vessels, wine drawn out in the cups. The evidence of the senses of the pourer contradicts that of the drawer. They who poured expect water to be drawn; they who draw think that wine must have been poured in. The intervening time cannot account for any gain or loss of character in the liquid. The mode of action baffles sight and sense, but the power of God is manifest in the result achieved.

6. In the case of the five loaves a miracle of the same type excites our wonder. By their increase five thousand men and countless women and children are saved from hunger; the method eludes our powers of observation. Five loaves are offered and broken; while the Apostles are dividing them a succession of new-created portions passes, they cannot tell how, through their hands. The loaf which they are dividing grows no smaller, yet their hands are continually full of the pieces. The swiftness of the process baffles sight; you follow with the eye a hand full of portions, and meantime you see that the contents of the other hand are not diminished, and all the while the heap of pieces grows. The carvers are busy at their task, the eaters are hard at work; the hungry are satisfied, and the fragments fill twelve baskets. Sight or sense cannot discover the mode of so noteworthy a miracle. What was not existent is created; what we see passes our understanding. Our only resource is faith in God’s omnipotence.

7. There is no deception in these miracles of God, no subtle pretence to please or to deceive. These works of the Son of God were done from no desire for self-display; He Whom countless myriads of angels serve never deluded man. What was there of ours that He could need, through Whom all that we have was created? Did He demand praise from us who now are heavy with sleep, now sated with lust, now laden with the guilt of riot and bloodshed, now drunken from revelling;–He Whom Archangels, and Dominions, and Principalities, and Powers, without sleep or cessation or sin, praise in heaven with everlasting and unwearied voice? They praise Him because He, the Image of the Invisible God, created all their host in Himself, made the worlds, established the heavens, appointed the stars, fixed the earth, laid the foundations of the deep; because in after time He was born, He conquered death, broke the gates of hell, won for Himself a people to be His fellow-heirs, lifted flesh from corruption up to the glory of eternity. There was nothing, then, that He might gain from us, that could induce Him to assume the splendour of these mysterious and inexplicable works, as though He needed our praise. But God foresaw how human sin and folly would be misled, and knew that disbelief would dare to pass its judgment even on the things of God, and therefore He vanquished presumption by tokens of His power which must give pause to our boldest.

8. For there are many of those wise men of the world whose wisdom is folly with God, who contradict our proclamation of God from God, True from True, Perfect from Perfect, One from One, as though we taught things impossible They pin their faith to certain conclusions which they have reached by process of logic;–Nothing can be born of one, far every birth requires two parents, and If this Son be born of One He has received a part of His Begetter: if He be a part, then Neither of the Two is perfect, for something is missing from Him from Whom the
Son issued, and there cannot be fulness in One Who consists of a portion of Another. Thus Neither is perfect, for the Begetter has lost His fulness, and the Begotten has not acquired it. This is that wisdom of the world which was foreseen by God even in the prophet’s days, and condemned through him in the words, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and reject the understanding of the prudent. And the apostle says: Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the inquirer of this world? Hath na God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For because in the wisdom of God he world through wisdom knew not God, it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews seek signs, and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews indeed a stumbling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

9. The Son of God, therefore, having the charge of mankind, was first made man, that men might believe on Him; that He might be to us a witness, sprung from ourselves, of things Divine, and preach to us, weak and carnal as we are, through the weakness of the flesh concerning God the Father, so fulfilling the Father’s will, even as He says, I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. It was not that He Himself was unwilling, but that He might manifest His obedience as the result of His Father’s will, for His own will is to do His Father’s. This is that will to carry out the Father’s will of which He testifies in the words: Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee; even as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that whatsoever Thou hast given Him, He should give it eternal life. And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send, Jesus Christ. I have glorified Thee upon earth, having accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was. I have manifested Thy Name unto the men whom Thou hast given Me. In words short and few He has revealed the whole task to which He was appointed and assigned. Yet those words, short and few as they are, are the true faith’s safeguard against every suggestion of the devil’s cunning. Let us briefly consider the force of each separate phrase.

10. He says, Father the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. He says that the hour, not the day nor the time, is come. An hour is a fraction of a day. What hour must this be? The hour, of course, of which lie speaks, to strengthen His disciples, at the time of His passion:–Lo, the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. This then is the hour in which He prays to be glorified by the Father, that He Himself may glorify the Father. But what does He mean? Does One who is about to give glory look to receive it? Does One who is about to confer honour make request for Himself? Is He in want of the very thing which He is about to repay? Here let the world’s philosophers, the wise men of Greece, beset our path, and spread their syllogistic nets to entangle the truth. Let them ask How? and Whence? and Why? When they can find no answer, let us tell them that it is because God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. That is the reason why we in our foolishness understand things incomprehensible to the world’s philosophers. The Lord had said, Father, the hour is come; He had revealed the hour of His passion, for these words were spoken at the
very moment; and then He added, Glorify Thy Son. But how was the Son to be glorified? He had been born of a virgin, from cradle and childhood He had grown to man’s estate, through sleep and hunger and thirst anti weariness and tears He had lived man’s life: even now He was to be spitted on, scourged, crucified And why? These things were ordained for our assurance that in Christ is pure man. But the shame of the cross is not ours; we are not sentenced to the scourge, nor defiled by spitting. The Father glorifies the Son; how? He is next nailed to the cross. Then what followed? The sun, instead of setting, fled. How so? It did not retire behind a cloud, but abandoned its appointed orbit, and all the elements of the world felt that same shock of the death of Christ. The stars in their courses, to avoid complicity in the crime, escaped by self-extinction from beholding the scene. What did the earth? It quivered beneath the burden of the Lord hanging on the tree, protesting that it was powerless to confine Him who was dying. Yet surely rock and stone will not refuse Him a resting-place. Yes, they are rent and cloven, and their strength fails. They must confess that the rock-hewn sepulchre cannot imprison the Body which awaits its burial.

11. And next? The centurion of the cohort, the guardian of the cross, cries out, Truly this was the Son of God. Creation is set free by the mediation of this Sin-offering; the very rocks lose their solidity and strength. They who had nailed Him to the cross confess that truly this is the Son of God. The outcome justifies the assertion. The Lord had said, Glorify Thy Son. He had asserted, by that word Thy, that He was God’s Son not in name only, but in nature. Multitudes of us are sons of God; He is Son in another sense. For He is God’s true and own Son, by origin and not by adoption, not by name only but in truth, born and not created. So, after He was glorified, that confession touched the truth; the centurion confessed Him the true Son of God, that no believer might doubt a fact which even the servant of His persecutors could not deny.

12. But perhaps some may suppose that He was destitute of that glory for which He prayed, and that His looking to be glorified by a Greater is evidence of want of power. Who, indeed, would deny that the Father is the greater; the Unbegotten greater than the Begotten, the Father than the Son, the Sender than the Sent, He that wills than He that obeys? He Himself shall be His own witness:–The Father is greater than I. It is a fact which we must recognise, but we must take heed lest with unskilled thinkers the majesty of the Father should obscure the glory of the Son. Such obscuration is forbidden by this same glory for which the Son prays; for the prayer, Father glorify Thy Son, is completed by, That the San may glorify Thee. Thus there is no lack of power in the Son, Who, when He has received this glory, will make His return for it in glory. But why, if He were not in want, did He make the prayer? No one makes request except for something which he needs. Or can it be that the Father too is in want? Or has He given His glory away so recklessly that He needs to have it returned Him by the Son? No; the One has never been in want, nor the Other needed to ask, and yet Each shall give to the Other. Thus the prayer for glory to be given and to be paid back is neither a robbery of the Father nor a depreciation of the Son, but a demonstration of the power of one Godhead resident in Both. The Son prays that He may be glorified by the Father; the Father deems it no humiliation to be glorified by the Son, The exchange of glory given and received proclaims the unity of power in Father and in Son.
13. We must next ascertain what and whence this glorifying is. God, I am sure, is subject to no change; His eternity admits not of defect or amendment, of gain or of loss. It is the character of Him alone, that what He is, He is from everlasting. What He from everlasting is, it is by His nature impossible that He should ever cease to be. How then can He receive glory, a thing which He fully possesses, and of which His store does not diminish; there being no fresh glory which He can obtain, and none that He has lost and can recover? We are brought to a standstill. But the Evangelist does not fail us, though our reason has displayed its helplessness. To tell us what return of glory it was that the Son should make to the Father, he gives the words: Even as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that whatsoever Thou hast given Him He may give it eternal life. And this is life eternal that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent. The Father, then, is glorified through the Son, by His being made known to us. And the glory was this, that the Son, being made flesh, received from Him power over all flesh, and the charge of restoring eternal life to us, ephemeral beings burdened with the body. Eternal life for us was the result not of work done, but of innate power; not by a new creation, but simply by knowledge of God, was the glory of that eternity to be acquired. Nothing was added to God’s glory; it had not decreased, and so could not be replenished. But He is glorified through the Son in the sight of us, ignorant, exiled, defiled, dwelling in hopeless death and lawless darkness; glorified inasmuch as the Son, by virtue of that power over all flesh which the Father gave Him, was to bestow on us eternal life. It is through this work of the Son that the Father is glorified. So when the Son received all things from the Father, the Father glorified Him; and conversely, when all things were made through the Son, He glorified the Father. The return of glory given lies herein, that all the glory which the Son has is the glory of the Father, since everything He has is the Father’s gift. For the glory of Him who executes a charge redounds to the glory of Him Who gave it, the glory of the Begotten to the glory of the Begetter.

14. But in what does eternity of life consist? His own words tell us:–That they way know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent. Is there any doubt or difficulty here, or any inconsistency? It is life to know the true God; but the bare knowledge of Him does not give it. What, then, does He add? And Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent. In Thee, the only true God, the Son pays the honour due to His Father; by the addition, And Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent, He associates Himself with the true Godhead. The believer in his confession draws no line between the Two, for his hope of life rests in Both, and indeed, the true God is inseparable from Him Whose Name follows in the creed. Therefore when we read, That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent, these terms of Sender and of Sent are not intended, under any semblance of distinction or discrimination, to convey a difference between the true Godhead of Father and of Son, but to be a guide to the devout confession of Them as Begetter and Begotten.

15. And so the Son glorifies the Father fully and finally in the words which follow, I have glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. All the Father’s praise is from the Son, for every praise bestowed upon the Son is praise of the Father, since all that He accomplished is what the Father had willed The Son of God is born as man; but the power of God is in the virgin-birth. The Son of God is seen as man; but God is
president in His human actions. The Son of God is nailed to the cross; but on the cross God conquers human death. Christ, the Son of God, dies; but all flesh is made alive in Christ. The Son of God is in hell; but man is carried back to heaven. In proportion to our praise of Christ for these His works, will be the praise we bring to Him from Whom Christ’s Godhead is. These are the ways in which the Father glorifies the Son on earth; and in return the Son reveals by works of power to the ignorance of the heathen and to the foolishness of the world, Him from Whom He is. This exchange of glory, given and received, implies no augmentation of the Godhead, but means the praises rendered for the knowledge granted to those who had lived in ignorance of God. What, indeed, could there be which the Father, from Whom are all things, did not richly possess? In what was the Son lacking, in Whom all the fulness of the Godhead had been pleased to dwell? The Father is glorified on earth because the work which He had commanded is finished.

16. Next let us see what this glory is which the Son expects to receive from the Father; and then our exposition will be complete. The sequel is, I have glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was. I have manifested Thy name unto men. It is, then, by the Son’s works that the Father is glorified, in that He is recognised as God, as Father of God time Only-begotten, Who for our salvation willed that His Son should be born as man, even of a virgin; that Son Whose whole life, consummated in the Passion, was consistent with the humiliation of the virgin birth. Thus, because the Son of God, all-perfect and horn from everlasting in the fulness of the Godhead, had now by incarnation become Man and was ready for His death, He prays that He may be glorified with God, even as He was glorifying His Father on the earth; for at that moment the powers of God were being glorified in the flesh before the eyes of a world that knew Him not. But what is this glory with the Father, for which He looks? It is, of course, that which He had with Him before the world was. He had the fulness of the Godhead; He has it still, for He is God’s Son. But He Who was the Son of God had become the Son of man also, for The Word was made flesh. He had not lost His former being, but He had become what He was not before; He had not abdicated His own position, yet He had taken ours; He prays that the nature which He had assumed may be promoted to the glory which He had never renounced. Therefore, since the Son is the Word, and the Word was made flesh, and the Word was God, and was in the beginning with God, and the Word was Son before the foundation of the world; this Son, now incarnate, prayed that flesh might be to the Father what the Son had been. He prayed that flesh, born in time, might receive the splendour of the everlasting glory, that the corruption of the flesh might be swallowed up, transformed into the power of God and the purity of the Spirit. It is His prayer to God, the Son’s confession of the Father, the entreaty of that flesh wherein all shall see Him on the Judgment-day, pierced and bearing the marks of the cross; of that flesh wherein His glory was foreshown upon the Mount, wherein He ascended to heaven and is set down at the right hand of God, wherein Paul saw Him, and Stephen paid Him worship.

17. The name Father has thus been revealed to men; the question arises, What is this Father’s own name? Yet surely the name of God has never been unknown. Moses heard it from the
bush, Genesis announces it at the beginning of the history of creation, the Law has proclaimed and the prophets extolled it, the history of the world has made mankind familiar with it; the very heathen have worshipped it under a veil of falsehood. Men have never been left in ignorance of the name of God. And yet they were, in very truth, in ignorance. For no man knows God unless He confess Him as Father, Father of the Only-begotten Son, and confess also the Son a Son by no partition or extension or procession, but born of Him, as Son of Father, ineffably and incomprehensibly, and retaining the fulness of that Godhead from which and in which He was born as true and infinite and perfect God. This is what the fulness of the Godhead means. If any of these things be lacking, there will not be that fulness which was pleased to dwell in Him. This is the message of the Son, His revelation to men in their ignorance. The Father is glorified through the Son when men recognise that, He is Father of a Son so Divine.

18. The Son, wishing to assure us of the truth of this, His Divine birth, has appointed His works to serve as an illustration, that from the ineffable power displayed in ineffable deeds we may learn the lesson of the ineffable birth. For instance, When water was made wine, and five loaves satisfied five thousand men, beside women and children, and twelve baskets were filled with the fragments, we see a fact though we cannot understand it; a deed is done though it bares our reason; the process cannot be followed, though the result is obvious. It is folly to intrude in the spirit of carping, when the matter into which we enquire is such that we cannot probe it to the bottom. For even as the Father is ineffable because He is Unbegotten, so is the Son ineffable because He is the Only-begotten, since the Begotten is the Image of the Unbegotten. Now it is by the use of our senses and of language that we have to form our conception of an image; and it must be by the same means that we form our idea of that which the image represents. But in this case we, whose faculties can deal only with visible and tangible things, are straining after the invisible, and striving to grasp the impalpable. Yet we take no shame to ourselves, we reproach ourselves with no irreverence, when we doubt and criticise the mysteries and powers of God. How is He the Son? Whence is He? What did the Father lose by His birth? Of what portion of the Father was He born? So we ask; yet all the while there has been confronting us the evidence of works done to assure us that God’s action is not limited by our power of comprehending His methods.

19. You ask what was the manner in which, as the Spirit teaches, the Son was born? I will put a question to you as to things corporal. I ask not in what manner He was born of a virgin; I ask only whether her flesh, in the course of bringing His flesh to readiness for birth, suffered any loss. Assuredly she did not conceive Him in the common way, or suffer the shame of human intercourse, in order to bear Him: yet she bore Him, complete in His human Body, without loss of her own completeness. Surely piety requires that we should regard as possible with God a thing which we see became possible through his power in the case of a human being.

20. But you, whoever you are that would seek into the unsearchable, and in all seriousness form an opinion upon the mysteries and powers of God;–I turn to you for counsel, and beg you to enlighten me, an unskilled and simple believer of all that God says, as to a circumstance which I am about to mention. I listen to the Lord’s words and, since I believe what is recorded, I
am sure that after His Resurrection He offered Himself repeatedly in the Body to the sight of multitudes of unbelievers. At any rate, He did so to Thomas who had protested that he would not believe unless he handled His wounds. His words are, Unless I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe. The Lord stoops to the level even of our feeble understanding; to satisfy the doubts of unbelieving minds He works a miracle of His invisible power. Do you, my critic of the ways of heaven, explain His action if you can. The disciples were in a closed room; they had met and held their assembly in secret since the Passion of the Lord. The Lord presents Himself to strengthen the faith of Thomas by meeting his challenge; He gives him His Body to feel, His wounds to handle. He, indeed, who would be recognised as having suffered wounds must needs produce the body in which those wounds were received. I ask at what point in the walls of that closed house the Lord bodily entered. The Apostle has recorded the circumstances with careful precision; Jesus came when the doors were shut, and stood in the midst. Did He penetrate through bricks and mortar, or through stout woodwork, substances whose very nature it is to bar progress? For there He stood in bodily presence; there was no suspicion of deceit. Let the eye of your mind follow His path as He enters; let your intellectual vision accompany Him as He passes into that closed dwelling. There is no breach in the walls, no door has been unbarred; yet lo, He stands in the midst. Whose might no barrier can resist. You are a critic of things invisible; I ask you to explain a visible event. Everything remains firm as it was; no body is capable of insinuating itself through the interstices of wood and stone. The Body of the Lord does not disperse itself, to come together again after a disappearance; yet whence comes He Who is standing in the midst? Your senses and your words are powerless to account for it; the fact is certain, but it lies beyond the region of human explanation. If, as you say, our account of the Divine birth is a lie, then prove that this account of the Lord’s entrance is a fiction. If we assume that an event did not happen, because we cannot discover how it was done, we make the limits of our understanding into the limits of reality. But the certainty of the evidence proves the falsehood of our contradiction. The Lord did stand in a closed house in the midst of the disciples; the Son was born of the Father. Deny not that He stood, because your puny wits cannot ascertain how He came there; renounce a disbelief in God the Only-begotten and perfect Son of God the Unbegotten and perfect Father, which is based only on the incapacity of sense and speech to comprehend the transcendent miracle of that birth.

21. Nay more, the whole constitution of nature would bear us out against the impiety of doubting the works and powers of God. And yet our disbelief tilts even against obvious truth; we strive in our fury to pluck even God from His throne. If we could, we would climb by bodily strength to heaven, would fling into confusion the ordered courses of sun and stars, would disarrange the ebb and flow of tides, check rivers at their source or make their waters flow backward, would shake the foundations of the world, in the utter irreverence of our rage against the paternal work of God. It is well that our bodily limitations confine us within more modest bounds. Assuredly, there is no concealment of the mischief we would do if we could. In one respect we are free; and so with blasphemous insolence we distort the truth and turn our weapons against the words of God.

22. The Son has said, Father, I have manifested Thy Name unto men. What reason is there for
denunciation or fury here? Do you deny the Father? Why, it was the primary purpose of the Son to enable us to know the Father. But in fact you do deny Him when, according to you, the Son was not born of Him. Yet why should He have the name of Son if He be, as others are, an arbitrary creation of God? I could feel awe of God as Creator of Christ as well as Founder of the universe; it were an exercise of power worthy of Him to be the Maker of Him Who made Archangels and Angels, things visible and things invisible, heaven and earth and the whole creation around us. But the work which the Lord came to do was not to enable you to recognise the omnipotence of God as Creator of all things, but to enable you to know Him as the Father of that Son Who addresses you. In heaven there are Powers beside Himself, Powers mighty and eternal; there is but one Only-begotten Son, and the difference between Him and them is not one of mere degree of might, but that they all were made through Him. Since He is the true and only Son, let us not make Him a bastard by asserting that He was made out of nothing. You hear the name Son; believe that He is the Son. You hear the name Father; fix it in your mind that He is the Father. Why surround these names with doubt and illwill and hostility? The things of God are provided with names which give a true indication of the realities; why force an arbitrary meaning upon their obvious sense Father and Son are spoken of; doubt not that the words mean what they say. The end and aim of the revelation of the Son is that you should know the Father. Why frustrate the labours of the Prophets, the Incarnation of the Word, the Virgin’s travail, the effect of miracles, the cross of Christ? It was all spent upon you, it is all offered to you, that through it all Father and Son may be manifest to you. And you replace the truth by a theory of arbitrary action, of creation or adoption. Turn your thoughts to the warfare, the conflict waged by Christ. He describes it thus:–Father, I have manifested Thy Name unto men. He does not say, Thou hast created the Creator of all the heavens, or Thou hast made the Maker of the whole earth. He says, Father, I have manifested Thy Name unto men. Accept your Saviour’s gift of knowledge. Be assured that there is a Father Who begot, a Son Who was born; born in the truth of His Nature of the Father, Who is. Remember that the revelation is not of the Father manifested as God, but of God manifested as the Father.

23. You hear the words, I and the Father are one. Why do you rend and tear the Son away from the Father? They are a unity: an absolute Existence having all things in perfect communion with that absolute Existence, from Whom He is. When you hear the Son saying, I and the Father are one, adjust your view of facts to the Persons; accept the statement which Begetter and Begotten make concerning Themselves. Believe that They are One, even as They are also Begetter and Begotten. Why deny the common nature? Why impugn the true Divinity? You hear again, The Father in Me, and I in the Father. That this is true of Father and of Son is demonstrated by the Son’s works. Our science cannot envelope body in body, or pour one into another, as water into wine; but we confess that in Both is equivalence of power and fulness of the Godhead. For the Son has received all things from the Father; He is the Likeness of God, the Image of His substance. The words, Image of His substance, discriminate between Christ and Him from Whom He is but only to establish Their distinct existence not to teach a difference of nature; and the meaning of Father in Son and Son in Father is that there is the perfect fulness of the Godhead in Both. The Father is not impaired by the Son’s existence, nor is the Son a mutilated fragment of the Father. An image implies its original; likeness is a relative term. Now nothing can be like God unless it has its source in Him; a perfect likeness can be reflected only
from that which it represents; an accurate resemblance forbids the assumption of any element of difference. Disturb not this likeness; make no separation where truth shews no variance, for He Who said, Let us make man after our image and likeness, by those words Our likeness revealed the existence of Beings, Each like the Other. Touch not handle not, pervert not. Hold fast the Names which teach the truth, hold fast the Son’s declaration of Himself. I would not have you flatter the Son with praises of your own invention; it is well with you if you be satisfied with the written word.

24. Again, we must not repose so blind a confidence in human intellect as to imagine that we have complete knowledge of the objects of our thought, or that the ultimate problem is solved as soon as we have formed a symmetrical and consistent theory. Finite minds cannot conceive the Infinite; a being dependent for its existence upon another cannot attain to perfect knowledge either of its Creator or of itself, for its consciousness of self is coloured by its circumstances, and bounds are set which its perception cannot pass. Its activity is not self-caused, but due to the Creator, and a being dependent on a Creator has perfect possession of none of its faculties, since its origin lies outside itself. Hence by an inexorable law it is folly for that being to say that it has perfect knowledge of any matter; its powers have limits which it cannot modify, and only while it is under the delusion that its petty bounds are coterminous with infinity can it make the empty boast of possessing wisdom. For of wisdom it is incapable, its knowledge being limited to the range of its perception, and sharing the impotence of its dependent existence. And therefore this masquerade of a finite nature boasting that it possesses the wisdom Which springs only from infinite knowledge earns the scorn and ridicule of the Apostle, who calls its wisdom folly. He says, For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel, not in the language of wisdom, lest the cross of Christ should be made void. For the word of the cross is foolishness to them that are perishing, but unto them that are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the understanding of the prudent I will reject. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the enquirer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, God decreed through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews indeed a stumbling-block and to Gentiles foolishness, but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the weakness of God is stronger than men, and the foolishness of God is wiser than men. Thus all unbelief is foolishness, for it takes such wisdom as its own finite perception can attain, and, measuring infinity by that petty scale, concludes that what it cannot understand must be impossible. Unbelief is the result of incapacity engaged in argument. Men are sure that an event never happened, because they have made up their minds that it could not happen.

25. Hence the Apostle, familiar with the narrow assumption of human thought that what it does not know is not truth, says that he does not speak in the language of knowledge, lest his preaching should be in vain. To save himself from being regarded as a preacher of foolishness he adds that the word of the cross is foolishness to them that perish, He knew that the unbelievers held that the only true knowledge was that which formed their own wisdom, and
that, since their wisdom was cognisant only of matters which lay within their narrow horizon, the other wisdom, which alone is Divine and perfect, seemed foolishness to them. Thus their foolishness actually consisted, in that feeble imagination which they mistook for wisdom. Hence it is that the very things which to them that perish are foolishness are the power of God to them that are saved; for these last never use their own inadequate faculties as a measure, but attribute to the Divine activities the omnipotence of heaven. God rejects the wisdom of the wise and the understanding of the prudent in this sense, that just because they recognise their own foolishness, salvation is granted to them that believe. Unbelievers pronounce the verdict of foolishness on everything that lies beyond their ken, while believers leave to the power and majesty of God the choice of the mysteries wherein salvation is bestowed. There is no foolishness in the things of God; the foolishness lies in that human wisdom which demands of God, as the condition of belief, signs and wisdom. It is the foolishness of the Jews to demand signs; they have a certain knowledge of the Name of God through long acquaintance with the Law, but the offence of the cross repels them. The foolishness of the Greeks is to demand wisdom; with Gentile folly and the philosophy of men they seek the reason why God was lifted up on the cross. And because, in consideration for the weakness of our mental powers, these things have been hidden in a mystery, this foolishness. of Jews and Greeks turns to unbelief; for they denounce, as unworthy of reasonable credence, truths which their mind is inherently incapable of comprehending. But, because the world’s wisdom was so foolish,—for previously through God’s wisdom it knew not God, that is, the splendour of the universe, and the wonderful order which He planned for His handiwork, taught it no reverence for its Creator—God was pleased through the preaching of foolishness to save them that believe, that is, through the faith of the cross to make everlasting life the lot of mortals; that so the self-confidence of human wisdom might be put to shame, and salvation found where men had thought that foolishness dwelt. For Christ, Who is foolishness to Gentiles, and offence to Jews, is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God; because what seems weak and foolish to human apprehension in the things of God transcends in true wisdom and might the thoughts and the powers of earth.

26. And therefore the action of God must not be canvassed by human faculties; the Creator must not be judged by those who are the work of His hands. We must clothe ourselves in foolishness that we may gain wisdom; not in the foolishness of hazardous conclusions, but in the foolishness of a modest sense of our own infirmity, that so the evidence of God’s power may teach us truths to which the arguments of earthly philosophy cannot attain. For when we are fully conscious of our own foolishness, and have felt the helplessness and destitution of our reason, then through the counsels of Divine Wisdom we shall be initiated into the wisdom of God; setting no bounds to boundless majesty and power, nor tying the Lord of nature down to nature’s laws; sure that for us the one true faith concerning God is that of which He is at once the Author and the Witness.

Book 4 (Back to the Top)

1. THE earlier books of this treatise, written some time ago, contain, I think, an invincible proof that we hold and profess the faith in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which is taught by the
Evangelists and Apostles, and that no commerce is possible between us and the heretics, inasmuch as they deny unconditionally, irrationally, and recklessly, the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet certain points remained which I have felt myself bound to include in this and the following books, in order to make our assurance of the faith even more certain by exposure of every one of their falsehoods and blasphemies. Accordingly, we will enquire first What are the dangers of their teaching, the risks involved by such irreverence; next, what principles they hold, and what arguments they advance against the apostolic faith to which we adhere, and by what sleight of language they impose upon the candor of their hearers; and lastly, by what method of comment they disarm the words of Scripture of their force and meaning.

2. We are well aware that neither the speech of men nor the analogy of human nature can give us a full insight into the things of God. The ineffable cannot submit to the bounds and limits of definition; that which is spiritual is distinct from every class or instance of bodily things. Yet, since our subject is that of heavenly natures, we must employ ordinary natures and ordinary speech as our means of expressing what our mind apprehends; a means no doubt unworthy of the majesty of God, but forced upon us by feebleness of our intellect, which can use only our own circumstances and our own words to convey to others our perceptions and our conclusions. This truth has been enforced already in the first book, but is now repeated in order that, in any analogies from human affairs which we adduce, we may not be supposed to think of God as resembling embodied natures, or to compare spiritual Beings with our passible selves, but rather be regarded as advancing the outward appearance of visible things as a clue to the inward meaning of things invisible.

3. For the heretics say that Christ is not from God, that is, that the Son is not born from the Father, and is God not by nature but by appointment; in other words, that He has received an adoption which consists in the giving of a name, being God’s Son in the sense in which many are sons of God; again, that Christ’s majesty is an evidence of God’s widespread bounty, He being God in the sense in which there are gods many; although they admit that in His adoption and naming as God a more liberal affection than in other cases was shewn, His adoption being the first in order of time, and He greater than other adopted sons, and first in rank among the creatures because of the greater splendour which accompanied His creation. Some add, by way of confessing the omnipotence of God, that He was created into God’s likeness, and that it was out of nothing that He, like other creatures, was raised up to be the Image of the eternal Creator, bidden at a word to spring from non-existence into being by the power of God, Who can frame out of nothing the likeness of Himself.

4. Moreover, they use their knowledge of the historical fact that bishops of a former time have taught that Father and Son are of one substance, to subvert the truth by the ingenious plea that this is a heretical notion. They say that this term ‘of one substance,’ in the Greek homoousion, is used to mean and express that the Father is the same as the Son; that is, that He extended Himself out of infinity into the Virgin, and took a body from her, and gave to Himself, in the body which He had taken, the name of Son. This is their first lie concerning the homoousion. Their next lie is that this word homoousion implies that Father and Son participate in something antecedent to Either and distinct from Both, and that a certain
imaginary substance, or ousia, anterior to all matter whatsoever, has existed heretofore and been divided and wholly distributed between the Two; which proves, they say, that Each of the Two is of a nature pro-existent to Himself, and Each identical in matter with the Other. And so they profess to condemn the confession of the homousion on the ground that term does not discriminate between Father and Son, and makes the Father subsequent in time to that matter which He has in common with the Son. And they have devised this third objection to the word homousion, that its meaning, as they explain it, is that the Son derives His origin from a partition of the Father’s substance, as though one object had been cut in two and He were the severed portion. The meaning of ‘one substance,’ they say, is that the part cut off from the whole continues to share the nature of that from which it has been severed; but God, being impossible, cannot be divided, for, if He must submit to be lessened by division. He is subject to change, and will be rendered imperfect if His perfect substance leave Him to reside in the severed portion.

5. They think also that they have a compendious refutation of Prophets, Evangelists and Apostles alike, in their assertion that the Son was born within time. They pronounce us illogical for saying that the Son has existed from everlasting; and, since they reject the possibility of His eternity, they are forced to believe that He was born at a point in time. For if He has not always existed, there was a time when He was not; and if there be a time when He was not, time was anterior to Him. He who has not existed eternally began to exist within time, while He Who is free from the limits of time is necessarily eternal. The reason they give for their rejection of the eternity of the Son is that His everlasting existence contradicts the faith in His birth; as though by confessing that He has existed eternally, we made His birth impossible.

6. What foolish and godless fears! What impious anxiety on God’s behalf! The meaning which they profess to detect in the word homousion, and in the assertion of the eternity of the Son, is detested, rejected, denounced by the Church. She confesses one God from Whom are all things; she confesses one Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom are all things; One from Whom, One through Whom; One the Source of all, One the Agent through Whom all were created. In the One from Whom are all things she recognises the Majesty which has no beginning, and in the One through Whom are all things she recognises a might coequal with His Source; for Both are jointly supreme in the work of creation and in rule over created things. In the Spirit she recognises God as Spirit, impossible and indivisible, for she has learnt from the Lord that Spirit has neither flesh nor bones; a warning to save her from supposing that God, being Spirit, could be burdened with bodily suffering and loss. She recognises one God, unborn from everlasting; she recognises also one Only-begotten Son of God. She confesses the Father eternal and without beginning; she confesses also that the Son’s beginning is from eternity. Not that He has no beginning, but that He is Son of the Father Who has none; not that He is self-originated, but that He is from Him Who is unbegotten from everlasting; born from eternity, receiving, that is, His birth from the eternity of the Father. Thus our faith is free from the guesswork of heretical perversity; it is expressed in fixed and published terms, though as yet no reasoned defence of our confession has been put forth. Still, lest any suspicion should linger around the sense in which the Fathers have used the word homousion and round our confession of the eternity of the Son, I have set down the proofs whereby we may be assured that the Son
abides ever in that substance wherein He was begotten from the Father, and that the birth of His Son has not diminished ought of that Substance wherein the Father was abiding; that holy men, inspired by the teaching of God, when they said that the Son is homoousios with the Father pointed to no such flaws or defects as I have mentioned. My purpose has been to counteract the impression that this ousia, this assertion that He is homoousios with the Father, is a negation of the nativity of the Only-begotten Son.

7. To assure ourselves of the needfulness of these two phrases, adopted and employed as the best of safeguards against the heretical rabble of that day, I think it best to reply to the obstinate misbelief of our present heretics, and refute their vain and pestilent teaching by the witness of the evangelists and apostles. They flatter themselves that they can furnish a proof for each of their propositions; they have, in fact, appended to each some passages or other from holy Writ; passages so grossly misinterpreted as to ensnare none but the illiterate by the semblance of truth with which perverted ingenuity has masked their explanation.

8. For they attempt, by praising the Godhead of the Father only, to deprive the Son of His Divinity, pleading that it is written, Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One, and that the Lord repeats this in His answer to the doctor of the Law who asked Him what was the greatest commandment in the Law;—Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One. Again, they say that Paul proclaims, For there is One God, and One Mediator between God and men. And furthermore, they insist that God alone is wise, in order to leave no wisdom for the Son, relying upon the words of the Apostle, Now to Him that is able to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through age-long times, but now is manifested through the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the eternal God Who is made known unto all nations unto obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory far ever and every. They argue also that He alone is true, for Isaiah says, They shall bless Thee, the true God, and the Lord Himself has borne witness in the Gospel, saying, And this is life eternal that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent. Again they reason that He alone is good, to leave no goodness for the Son, because it has been said through Him, There is none goad save One, even God; and that He alone has power, because Paul has said, Which in His own times He shall skew to us, Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords. And further, they profess themselves certain that in the Father there is no change nor turning, because He has said through the prophet, I am the Lord your God, and I am not changed, and the apostle James, With Whom there is no change; certain also that He is the righteous Judge, for it is written, God is the righteous Judge, strong and patient; that He cares for all, because the Lord has said, speaking of the birds, And your heavenly Father feedeth them, and, Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them falleth upon the ground without the will of your Father; but the very hairs of your head are numbered. They say that the Father has prescience of all things, as the blessed Susanna says, O eternal God, that knowest secrets, and knowest all things before they be; that He is incomprehensible, as it is written, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is the footstool of My feet. What house will
ye build Me, or what is the place of My rest? For these things hath My hand made, and all these things are mine; that He contains all things, as Paul bears witness, For in Him we live and move and have our being, and the psalmist, Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, and whither shall I fly from Thy face? If I climb up into heaven, Thou art there; if I go down to hell, Thou art present. If I take my wings before the light and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even thither Thy hand shall lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me; that He is without body, for it is written, For God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth; that He is immortal and invisible, as Paul says, Who only hath immortality, and dwelleth in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen nor can sees, and the Evangelist, No one hath seen God at any time, except the Only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father; that He alone abides eternally unborn, for it is written, I Am That I Am, and Thus shall thou say to the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you, and through Jeremiah, O Lord, Who art Lord.

9. Who can fail to observe that these statements are full of fraud and fallacy? Cleverly as issues have been confused and texts combined, malice and folly is the character indelibly imprinted upon this laborious effort of cunning and clumsiness. For instance, among their points of faith they have included this, that they confess the Father only to be unborn; as though any one on our side could suppose that He, Who begot Him through Whom are all things, derived His being from any external source. The very fact that He bears the name of Father reveals Him as the cause of His Son’s existence. That name of father gives no hint that He who bears it is Himself descended from another, while it tells us plainly from Whom it is that the Son is begotten. Let us therefore leave to the Father His own special and incommunicable property, confessing that in Him reside the eternal powers of an omnipotence without beginning. None, I am sure, can doubt that the reason why, in their confession of God the Father, certain attributes are dwelt upon as peculiarly and inalienably His own, is that He may be left in isolated possession of them. For when they say that He alone is true, alone is righteous, alone is wise, alone is invisible, alone is good, alone is mighty, alone is immortal, they are raising up this word alone as a barrier to cut off the Son from His share in these attributes. He Who is alone, they say, has no partner in His properties. But if we suppose that these attributes reside in the Father only, and not in the Son also, then we must believe that God the Son has neither truth nor wisdom; that He is a bodily being compact of visible and material elements, ill-disposed and feeble and void of immortality; for we exclude Him from all these attributes of which we make the Father the solitary Possessor.

10. We, however, who propose to discourse of that most perfect majesty and fullest Divinity which appertains to the Only-begotten Son of God, have no fear lest our readers should imagine that amplitude of phrase in speaking of the Son is a detraction from the glory of God the Father, as though every praise assigned to the Son had first been withdrawn from Him. For, on the contrary, the majesty of the Son is glory to the Father; the Source must be glorious from which He Who is worthy of such glory comes. The Son has nothing but by virtue of His birth; the Father shares all veneration received by that birthright. Thus the suggestion that we diminish the Father’s honour is put to silence, for all the glory which, as we shall teach, is inherent in the Son will be reflected back, to the increased glory of Him who has begotten a Son so great.
11. Now that we have exposed their plan of belittling the Son under cover of magnifying the Father, the next step is to listen to the exact terms in which they express their own belief concerning the Son. For, since we have to answer in succession each of their allegations and to display on the evidence of Holy Scripture the impiety of their doctrines, we must append, to what they say of the Father, the decisions which they bare put on record concerning the Son, that by a comparison of their confession of the Father with their confession of the Son we may follow a uniform order in our solution of the questions as they arise. They state as their verdict that the Son is not derived from any pre-existent matter, for through Him all things were created, nor yet begotten from God, for nothing can be withdrawn from God; but that He was made out of what was nonexistent, that is, that He is a perfect creature of God, though different from His other creatures. They argue that He is a creature, because it is written, The Lord hath created Me for a beginning of His ways; that He is the perfect handiwork of God, though different from His other works, they prove, as to the first point, by what Paul writes to the Hebrews, Being made so much belief than the angels, as He possesseth a more excellent name than they, and again, Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus Christ, who is faithful to Him that made Him. For their depreciation of the might and majesty and Godhead of the Son they rely chiefly on His own words, The Father is greater than I. But they admit that He is not one of the common herd of creatures on the evidence of All things were made through Him. And so they sum up the whole of their blasphemous teaching in these words which follow:—

12. “We confess One God, alone unmade, alone eternal, alone unoriginate, alone true, alone possessing immortality, alone good, alone mighty, Creator, Ordainer and Disposer of all things, unchangeable and unalterable, righteous and good, of the Law and the Prophets and the New Testament. We believe that this God gave birth to the Only-begotten Son before all worlds, through Whom He made the world and all things; that He gave birth to Him not in semblance, but in truth, following His own Will, so that He is unchangeable and unalterable, God’s perfect creature but not as one of His other creatures, His handiwork, but not as His Other works; not, as Valentinus maintained, that the Son is a development of the Father; nor, as Manichaeus has declared of the Son, a consubstantial part of the Father; nor, as Sabellius, who makes two out of one, Son and Father at once; nor, as Hieracas, a light from a light, or a lamp with two flames; nor as if He was previously in being and afterwards born or created afresh to be a Son, a notion often condemned by thyself, blessed Pope, publicly in the Church and in the assembly of the brethren. But, as we have affirmed, we believe that He was created by the will of God before times and worlds, and has His life and existence from the Father, Who gave Him to share His own glorious perfections. For, when the Father gave to Him the inheritance of all things, He did not thereby deprive Himself of attributes which are His without origination, He being the source of all things.

13. “So there are three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. God, for His part, is the cause of all things, utterly unoriginate and separate from all; while the Son, put forth by the Father outside time, and created and established before the worlds, did not exist before He was born, but, being born outside time before the worlds, came into being as the Only Son of the Only
Father. For He is neither eternal, nor co-eternal, nor co-uncreate with the Father, nor has He an existence collateral with the Father, as some say, who postulate two unborn principles. But God is before all things, as being indivisible and the beginning of all. Wherefore He is before the Son also, as indeed we have learnt from thee in thy public preaching. Inasmuch then as He hath His being from God, and His glorious perfections, and His life, and is entrusted with all things, for this reason God is His source, and hath rule over Him, as being His God, since He is before Him. As to such phrases as from Him, and from the womb, and I went out from the Father and am came, if they be understood to denote that the Father extends a part and, as it were, a development of that one substance, then the Father will be of a compound nature and divisible and changeable and corporeal, according to them; and thus, as far as their words go, the incorporeal God will be subjected to the properties of matter.”

14. Such is their error, such their pestilent teaching; to support it they borrow the words of Scripture, perverting its meaning and using the ignorance of men as their opportunity of gaining credence for their lies. Yet it is certainly by these same words of God that we must come to understand the things of God. For human feebleness cannot by any strength of its own attain to the knowledge of heavenly things; the faculties which deal with bodily matters can form no notion of the unseen world. Neither our created bodily substance, nor the reason given by God for the purposes of ordinary life, is capable of ascertaining and pronouncing upon the nature and work of God. Our wits cannot rise to the level of heavenly knowledge, our powers of perception lack the strength to apprehend that limitless might. We must believe God’s word concerning Himself, and humbly accept such insight as He vouchsafes to give. We must make our choice between rejecting His witness, as the heathen do, or else believing in Him as He is, and this in the only possible way, by thinking of Him in the aspect in which He presents Himself to us. Therefore let private judgment cease; let human reason refrain from passing barriers divinely set. In this spirit we eschew all blasphemous and reckless assertion concerning God, and cleave to the very letter of revelation. Each point in our enquiry shall be considered in the light of His instruction, Who is our theme; there shall be no stringing together of isolated phrases whose context is suppressed, to trick and misinform the unpractised listener. The meaning of words shall be ascertained by considering the circumstances under which they were spoken words must be explained by circumstances not circumstances forced into conformity will words. We, at any rate, will treat our subject completely; we will state both the circumstances under which words were spoken, and the true purport of the words. Each point shall be considered in orderly sequence.

15. Their starting-point is this; We confess, they say, One only God, because Moses says, Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One. But is this a truth which anyone has ever dared to doubt? Or was any believer ever known to confess otherwise than that there is One God from Whom are all things, One Majesty which has no birth, and that He is that unoriginated Power? Yet this fact of the Unity of God offers no chance for denying the Divinity of His Son. For Moses, or rather God through Moses, laid it down as His first commandment to that people, devoted both in Egypt and in the Desert to idols and the worship of imaginary gods, that they must believe in One God. There was truth and reason in the commandment, for God, from Whom are all things, is One. But let us see whether this Moses have not confessed that He, through Whom
are all things, is also God. God is not robbed, He is still God, if His Son share the Godhead. For
the case is that of God from God, of One from One, of God Who is One because God is from
Him. And conversely the Son is not less God because God the Father is One, for He is the Only-
begotten Son of God; not eternally unborn, so as to deprive the Father of His Oneness, nor yet
different from God, for He is born from Him. We must not doubt that He is God by virtue of
that birth from God which proves to us who believe that God is One; yet let us see whether
Moses, who announced to Israel, The Lord thy God is One, has also proclaimed the Godhead of
the Son. To make good our confession of the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ we must employ
the evidence of that same witness on whom the heretics rely for the confession of One Only
God, which they imagine to involve the denial of the Godhead of the Son.

16. Since, therefore, the words of the Apostle, One God the Father, from Whom are all things,
and one Jesus Christ, our Lord, through Whom are all things, form an accurate and complete
confession concerning God, let us see what Moses has to say of the beginning of the world. His
words are, And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water, and let it divide
the water from the water. And it was so, and God made the firmament and God divided the
water through the midst. Here, then, you have the God from Whom, and the God through
Whom. If you deny it, you must tell us through whom it was that God’s work in creation was
done, or else point for your explanation to an obedience in things yet uncreated, which, when
God said Let there be a firmament, impelled the firmament to establish itself. Such suggestions
are inconsistent with the clear sense of Scripture. For all things, as the Prophet says, were
made out of nothing; it was no transformation of existing things, but the creation into a perfect
form of the non-existent. Through whom? Hear the Evangelist: things were made through Him.
If you ask Who this is, the same Evangelist will tell you: In the beginning was the Word, and the
Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were
made through Him. If you are minded to combat the view that it was the Father Who said, Let
there be a firmament, the prophet will answer you: He spake, and they were made; He
commanded, and they were created. The recorded words, Let there be a firmament, reveal to
us that the Father spoke. But in the words which follow, And it was so, in the statement that
God did this thing, we must recognise the Person of the Agent. He spake, and they, were made;
the Scripture does not say that He willed it, and did it. He commanded, and they were created;
you observe that it does not say they came into existence, because it was His pleasure. In that
case there would be no office for a Mediator between God and the world which was awaiting
its creation. God, from Whom are all things, gives the order for creation which God, through
Whom are all things, executes. Under one and the same Name we confess Him Who gave and
Him Who fulfilled the command. If you dare to deny that God made is spoken of the Son, how
do you explain All things were made through Him? Or the Apostle's words, One resets Christ,
our Lord, through, Whom are all things? Or, He spake, and they were made? If these inspired
words succeed in convincing your stubborn mind, you will cease to regard that text, Hear, O
Israel, the lord Hey God is One, as a refusal of Divinity to the Son of God, since at the very
foundation of the world He Who spoke it proclaimed that His Son also is God. But let us see
what increase of profit we may draw from this distinction of God Who commands and God
Who executes. For though it is repugnant even to our natural reason to suppose that in the
words, He commanded, and they were made, one single and isolated Person is intended, yet,
for the avoidance of all doubts, we must expound the events which followed upon the creation of the world.

17. When the world was complete and its inhabitant was to be created, the words spoken concerning him were, Let Us make man after Our image and likeness. I ask you, Do you suppose that God spoke those words to Himself? Is it not obvious that He was addressing not Himself, but Another? If you reply that He was alone, then out of His own mouth He confutes you, for He says, Let Us make man after Our image and likeness. God has spoken to us through the Lawgiver in the way which is intelligible to us; that is, He makes us acquainted with His action by means of language, the faculty with which He has been pleased to endow us. There is, indeed, an indication of the Son of God through Whom all things were made, in the words, And God said, Let there be a firmament, and in, And God made the firmament, which follows: but lest we should think these words of God were wasted and meaningless, supposing that He issued to Himself the command of creation, and Himself obeyed it,—for what notion could be further from the thought of a solitary God than that of giving a verbal order to Himself, when nothing was necessary except an exertion of His will?—He determined to give us a more perfect assurance that these words refer to Another beside Himself. When He said, Let Us make man after Our image and likeness, His cation of a Partner demolishes the theory of His isolation. For an isolated being cannot be partner to himself; and again, the words, Let Us make, are inconsistent with solitude, while Our cannot be used except to a companion. Both words, Us and Our are inconsistent with the notion of a solitary God speaking to Himself, and equally inconsistent with that of the address being made to a stranger who has nothing in common with the Speaker. If you interpret the passage to mean that He is isolated, I ask you whether you suppose that He was speaking with Himself? If you do not understand that He was speaking with Himself, how can you assume that He was isolated? If He were isolated, we should find Him described as isolated; if He had a companion, then as not isolated. I and Mine would describe the former state; the latter is indicated by Us and Our.

18. Thus, when we read, Let Us make man after Our image and likeness, these two words Us and Our reveal that there is neither one isolated God, nor yet one God in two dissimilar Persons; and our confession must be framed in harmony with the second as well as with the first truth. For the words our image—not our images—prove that there is one nature possessed by Both But an argument from words is an insufficient proof; unless its result be confirmed by the evidence of facts; and accordingly it is written, And God made man; after the image of God made He him. If the words He spoke, I ask, were the soliloquy of an isolated God, what meaning shall we assign to this last statement? For in it I see a triple allusion, to the Maker, to the being made, and to the image. The being made is man; God made him, and made him in the image of God. If Genesis were speaking of an isolated God, it would certainly have been And made him after His own image. But since the book was foreshowing the Mystery of the Gospel, it spoke not of two Gods, but of God and God, for it speaks of man made through God in the image of God. Thus we find that God wrought man after an image and likeness common to Himself and to God; that the mention of an Agent forbids us to assume that He was isolated; and that the work, done after an image and likeness which was that of Both, proves that there is no difference in kind between the Godhead of the One and of the Other.
19. It may seem waste of time to bring forward further arguments, for truths concerning God gain no strength by repetition; a single statement suffices to establish them. Yet it is well for us to know all that has been revealed upon the subject, for though we are not responsible for the words of Scripture, yet we shall have to render an account for the sense we have assigned to them. One of the many commandments which God gave to Noah is, Whoso sheddeth man’s blood for his blood shall his life be shed, far after the image of God made 1 man. Here again is the distinction between likeness, creature, and Creator. God bears witness that He made man after the image of God. When He was about to make man, because He was speaking of Himself, yet not to Himself, God said, After our image; and again, after man was made, God made man after the image of God. It would have been no inaccuracy of language, had He said, addressing Himself, I have made man after My image, for He had shewn that the Persons are one in nature by, Let us make man after Our image. But for the more perfect removal of all doubt as to whether God be, or be not, a solitary Being, when He made man He made him, we are told, After the image of God.

20. If you still wish to assert that God the Father in solitude said these words to Himself, I can go with you as far as to admit the possibility that He might in solitude have spoken to Himself as if He were conversing with a companion, and that it is credible that He wished the words I have made man after the image of God to be equivalent to I have made man after My own image. But your own confession of faith will refute you. For you have confessed that all things are from the Father, but all through the Son; and the words, Let Us make man, shew that the Source from Whom are all things is He Who spoke thus, while God made him after the image of God clearly points to Him through Whom the work was done.

21. And furthermore, to make all self-deception unlawful, that Wisdom, which you have yourself confessed to be Christ, shall confront you with the words, When tare was establishing the fountains under the heaven, when He was making strong the foundations of the earth. I was with Him, setting them in order. It was I, over Whom He rejoiced. Moreover, I was daily rejoicing in His sight, all the while that He was rejoicing in the world that He had made, and in the sons of men. Every difficulty is removed; error itself must recognise the truth. There is with God Wisdom, begotten before the worlds; and not only present with Him, but setting in order, for She was with Him, setting them in order. Mark this work of setting in order, or arranging. The Father, by His commands, is the Cause; the Son, by His execution of the things commanded, sets in order. The distinction between the Persons is marked by the work assigned to Each. When it says

Let us make, creation is identified with the word of command; but when it is written, I was with Him, setting them in order, God reveals that He did not do the work in isolation. For He was rejoicing before Him, Who, He tells us, rejoiced in return; Moreover, I was daily rejoicing in His sight, all the while that He was rejoicing in the world that He had made, and in the sons of men. Wisdom has taught us the reason of Her joy. She rejoiced because of the joy of the Father, Who rejoices over the completion of the world and over the sons of men. For it is written, And God saw that they were good. She rejoices that God is well pleased with His work, which has
been made through Her, at His command. She avows that Her joy results from the Father’s gladness over the finished world and over the sons of men; over the sons of men, because in the one man Adam the whole human race had begun its course. Thus in the creation of the world there is no mere soliloquy of an isolated Father; His Wisdom is His partner in the work, and rejoices with Him when their conjoint labour ends.

22. I am aware that the full explanation of these words involves the discussion of many and weighty problems. I do not shirk them, but postpone them for the present, reserving their consideration for later stages of the enquiry. For the present I devote myself to that article of the blasphemers’ faith, or rather faithlessness, which asserts that Moses proclaims the solitude of God. We do not forget that the assertion is true in the sense that there is One God, from Whom are all things; but neither do we forget that this truth is no excuse for denying the Godhead of the Son, since Moses throughout the course of his writings clearly indicates the existence of God and God. We must examine how the history of God’s choice, and of the giving of the Law, proclaims God co-ordinate with God.

23. After God had often spoken with Abraham, Sarah was moved to wrath against Hagar, being jealous that she, the mistress, was barren, while her handmaid had conceived a son. Then, when Hagar had departed from her sight, the Spirit speaks thus concerning her, And the angel of the Lord said unto Hagar, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, and it shall not be numbered for multitude, and again, And she called the Name of the Lord that spake with her. Thou art God, Who hast seen me. It is the Angel of God Who speaks, and speaks of things far beyond the powers which a messenger, for that is the meaning of the word, could have. He says, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, and it shall not be numbered for multitude. The power of multiplying nations lies outside the ministry of an angel. Yet what says the Scripture of Him Who is called the Angel of God, yet speaks words which belong to God alone? And she called the Name of the Lord that spake with her, Thou art God, Who hast seen me. First He is the Angel of God; then He is the Lord, for She called the Name of the Lord; then, thirdly, He is God, for Thou art God, Who hast seen me. He Who is called the Angel of God is also Lord and God. The Son of God is also, according to the prophet, the Angel of great counsel. To discriminate clearly between the Persons, He is called the Angel of God; He Who is God from God is also the Angel of God. but, that He may have the honour which is His due, He is entitled also Lord and God.

24. In this passage the one Deity is first the Angel of God, and then, successively. Lord and God. But to Abraham He is God only. For when the distinction of Persons had first been made, as a safeguard against the delusion that God is a solitary Being, then His true and unqualified name could safely be uttered. And so it is written. And God said to Abraham, Behold Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as far Ishmael, behold. I have heard thee and have blessed him, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve nations shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. Is it possible to doubt that He Who was previously called the Angel of God is here, in the sequel, spoken of as God? In both instances He is
speaking of Ishmael; in both it is the same Person Who shall multiply him. To save us from supposing that this was a different Speaker from Him who had addressed Hagar, the Divine words expressly attest the identity, saying, And I have blessed him, and will multiply him. The blessing is repeated from a former occasion, for Hagar had already been addressed; the multiplication is promised for a future day, for this is God’s first word to Abraham concerning Ishmael. Now it is God Who speaks to Abraham; to Hagar the Angel of God had spoken. Thus God and the Angel of God are One; He Who is the Angel of God is also God the Son of God. He is called the Angel because He is the Angel of great counsel; but afterwards He is spoken of as Go I, lest we should suppose that He Who is God is only an angel. Let us now repeat the facts in order. The Angel of the Lord spoke to Hagar; He spoke also to Abraham as God. One Speaker addressed both. The blessing was given to Ishmael, and the promise that he should grow into a great people.

25. In another instance the Scripture reveals through Abraham that it was God Who spoke. He receives the further promise of a son, Isaac. Afterwards there appear to him three men. Abraham, though he sees three, worships One, and acknowledges Him as Lord. Three were standing before him, Scripture says, but he knew well Which it was that he must worship and confess. There was nothing in outward appearance to distinguish them, but by the eye of faith, the vision of the soul, he knew his Lord. Then the Scripture goes on, And He said unto him, I will certainly return unto thee at this time hereafter, and Sarah thy wife shall have a son; and afterwards the Lord said to Him, I will not conceal from Abraham My servant the things that I will do; and again, Moreover the Lord said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is filled up, and their sins are exceeding great. Then after long discourse, which for the sake of brevity shall be omitted, Abraham, distressed at the destruction which awaited the innocent as well as the guilty, said, In no wise wilt Thou, Who judgest the earth, execute this judgment. And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. Afterwards, when the warning to Lot, Abraham’s brother, was ended, the Scripture says, And the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and, after a while, And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and did unto Sarah as He had spoken, and Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And afterwards, when the handmaid with her son had been driven from Abraham’s house, and was dreading lest her child should die in the wilderness for want of water, the same Scripture says And the Lord God heard the voice of the lad, where he was, and the Angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What is it, Hagar? Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad from the place where he is. Arise, and take the lad and hold his hand, for I will make him a great nation.

26. What blind faithlessness it is, what dulness of an unbelieving heart, what headstrong impiety, to abide in ignorance of all this, or else to know and yet neglect it! Assuredly it is written for the very purpose that error or oblivion may not hinder the recognition of the truth. If, as we shall prove, it is impossible to escape knowledge of the facts, then it must be nothing less than blasphemy to deny them. This record begins with the speech of the Angel to Hagar, His promise to multiply Ishmael into a great nation and to give him a countless offspring. She listens, and by her confession reveals that He is Lord and God. The story begins with His
appearance as the Angel of God; at its termination He stands confessed as God Himself. Thus He Who, while He executes the ministry of declaring the great counsel is God’s Angel, is Himself in name and nature God. The name corresponds to the nature; the nature is not falsified to make it conform to the name. Again, God speaks to Abraham of this same matter; he is told that Ishmael has already received a blessing, and shall be increased into a nation; I have blessed him, God says. This is no change from the Person indicated before; He shews that it was He Who had already given the blessing. The Scripture has obviously been consistent throughout in its progress from mystery to clear revelation; it began with the Angel of God, and proceeds to reveal that it was God Himself Who had spoken in this same matter.

27. The course of the Divine narrative is accompanied by a progressive development of doctrine. In the passage which we have discussed God speaks to Abraham, and promises that Sarah shall bear a son. Afterwards three men stand by him; he worships One and acknowledges Him as Lord. After this worship and acknowledgment by Abraham, the One promises that He will return hereafter at the same season, and that then Sarah shall have her son. This One again is seen by Abraham in the guise of a man, and salutes him with the same promise. The change is one of name only; Abraham’s acknowledgment in each case is the same. It was a Man whom he saw, yet Abraham worshipped Him as Lord; he beheld, no doubt, in a mystery the coming Incarnation. Faith so strong has not missed its recognition; the Lord says in the Gospel, Your father Abraham rejoined to see My day; and he saw it, and was glade. To continue the history; the Man Whom he saw promised that He would return at the same season. Mark the fulfilment of the promise, remembering meanwhile that it was a Man Who made it. What says the Scripture? And the Lord visited Sarah. So this Man is the Lord, fulfilling His own promise. What follows next? And God did unto Sarah as He had said. The narrative calls His words those of a Man, relates that Sarah was visited by the Lord, proclaims that the result was the work of God. You are sure that it was a Man who spoke, for Abraham not only heard, but saw Him. Can you be less certain that He was God, when the same Scripture, which had called Him Man, confesses Him God? For its words are, And Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, and at the set time of which God had spoken to him. But it was the Man who had promised that He would come. Believe that He was nothing more than man; unless, in fact, He Who came was God and Lord. Connect the incidents. It was, confessedly, the Man who promised that He would come that Sarah might conceive and bear a son. And now accept instruction, and confess the faith; it was the Lord God Who came that she might conceive and bear. The Man made the promise in the power of God; by the same power God fulfilled the promise. Thus God reveals Himself both in word and deed. Next, two of the three men whom Abraham saw depart; He Who remains behind is Lord and God. And not only Lord and God, but also Judge, for Abraham stood before the Lord and said, In no wise shall Thou do this things, to slay the righteous with the wicked, for then the righteous shall be as the wicked. In no wise wilt Thou Who judgest the whole earth, execute this judgment. Thus by all his words Abraham instructs us in that faith, for which he was justified; he recognises the Lord from among the three, he worships Him only, and confesses that He is Lord and Judge.

28. Lest you fall into the error of supposing that this acknowledgment of the One was a payment of honor to all the three whom Abraham saw in company, mark the words of Lot
when he saw the two who had departed; And when Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; and he said, Behold, my lords, turn in to your servant’s house. Here the plural lords shews that this was nothing more than a vision of angels; in the other case the faithful patriarch pays the honour due to One only. Thus the sacred narrative makes it clear that two of the three were mere angels; it had previously proclaimed the One as Lord and God by the words, And the lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I then bear a child? But I am grown old. Is anything from God impossible? this season I will return to thee hereafter, and Sarah shall have a son. The Scripture is accurate and consistent; we detect no such confusion as the plural used of the One God and Lord, no Divine honours paid to the two angels. Lot, no doubt, calls them lords, while the Scripture calls them angels. The one is human reverence, the other literal truth.

29. And now there fails on Sodom and Gomorrah the vengeance of a righteous judgment. What can we learn from it for the purposes of our enquiry? The Lord rained brimstone and fire from the Lord. It is The Lord from the Lord; Scripture makes no distinction, by difference of name, between Their natures, but discriminates between Themselves. For we read in the Gospel, The Father judgeth no man, but hath given all judgment to the Son. Thus what the Lord gave, the Lord had received from the Lord.

30. You have now had evidence of God the Judge as Lord and Lord; learn next that there is the same joint ownership of name in the case of God and God. Jacob, when he fled through fear of his brother, saw in his dream a ladder resting upon the earth and reaching to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it, and the Lord resting above it, Who gave him all the blessings which He had bestowed upon Abraham and Isaac. At a later time God spoke to him thus: And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to the place Bethel, and dwell there, and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of thy brother. God demands honour for God, and makes it clear that demand is on behalf of Another than Himself. He who appeared to thee when than fleddest are His words: He guards carefully against any confusion of the Persons. It is God Who speaks, and God of Whom He speaks. Their majesty is asserted by the combination of Both under Their true Name of God, while the words plainly declare Their several existence.

31. Here again there occur to me considerations which must be taken into account in a complete treatment of the subject. But the order of defence must adapt itself to the order of attack, and I reserve these outstanding questions for discussion in the next book. For the present, in regard to God Who demanded honour for God, it will suffice for me to point out that He Who was the Angel of God, when He spoke with Hagar, was God and Lord when He spoke of the same matter with Abraham; that the Man Who spoke with Abraham was also God and Lord, while the two angels, who were seen with the Lord and whom He sent to Lot, are described by the prophet as angels, and nothing more. Nor was it to Abraham only that God appeared in human guise; He appeared as Man to Jacob also. And not only did He appear, but, so we are told, He wrestled; and not only did He wrestle, but He was vanquished by His adversary. Neither the time at my disposal, nor the subject, will allow me to discuss the typical meaning of this wrestling. It was certainly God Who wrestled, for Jacob prevailed against God,
and Israel saw God.

32. And now let us enquire whether elsewhere than in the case of Hagar the Angel of God has been discovered to be God Himself. He has been so discovered, and found to be not only God, but the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. For the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses from the bush; and Whose voice, think you, are we to suppose was heard? The voice of Him Who was seen, or of Another? There is no room for deception; the words of Scripture are clear: And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire from a bush, and again, The Lord called unto him from the bush, Moses, Moses, and he answered, What is it? And the Lord said, Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. And He said unto him, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, He who appeared in the bush speaks from the bush; the place of the vision and of the voice is one; He Who speaks is none other than He Who was seen. He Who is the Angel of God when the eye beholds Him is the Lord when the ear hears Him, and the Lord Whose voice is heard is recognised as the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. When He is styled the Angel of God, the fact is revealed that He is no self-contained and solitary Being: for He is the Angel of God. When He is designated Lord and God, He receives the full title which is due to His nature and His name. You have, then, in the Angel Who appeared from the bush, Him Who is Lord and God.

33. Continue your study of the witness borne by Moses; mark how diligently he seizes every opportunity of proclaiming the Lord and God. You take note of the passage, Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One. Note also the words of that Divine song of his; See, See, that I am the Lord, and there is no God beside Me. While God has been the Speaker throughout the poem, he ends with, Rejoice, ye heavens, together with Him and let all the sans of God praise Him. Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people, and let all the Angels of God do Him honour. God is to be glorified by the Angels of God, and He says, For I am the Lord, and there is no Gad beside Me. For He is God the Only-begotten, and the title ‘Only-begotten’ excludes all partnership in that character, just as the title ‘Unoriginate’ denies that there is, in that regard, any who shares the character of the Unoriginate Father. The Son is One from One. There is none unoriginate except God the Unoriginate, and so likewise there is none only-begotten except God the Only-begotten. They stand Each single and alone, being respectively the One Unoriginate and the One Only-begotten. And so They Two are One God, for between the One, and the One Who is His offspring there lies no gulf of difference of nature in the eternal Godhead. Therefore He must be worshipped by the sons of God and glorified by the angels of God. Honour and reverence is demanded for God from the sons and from the angels of God. Notice Who it is that shall receive this honour, and by whom it is to lie paid. It is God, and they are the sons and angels of God. And test you should imagine that honour is not demanded for God Who shares our nature, but that Moses is thinking here of reverence due to God the Father,—though, indeed, it is in the Son that the Father must be honoured—examine the words of the blessing bestowed by God upon Joseph, at the end of the same book. They are, And let the things that are well-pleasing to Him that appeared in the bush came upon the head and crown of Joseph. Thus God is to be worshipped by the sons of God; but God Who is Himself the Son of God. And God is to be reverenced by the angels of God; but God Who is Himself the Angel of God. For
God appeared from the bush as the Angel of God, and the prayer for Joseph is that he may receive such blessings as He shall please, He is none the less God because He is the Angel of God; and none the less the Angel of God because He is God. A clear indication is given of the Divine Persons; the line is definitely drawn between the Unbegotten and the Begotten. A revelation of the mysteries of heaven is granted, and we are taught not to dream of God as dwelling in solitude, when angels and sons of God shall worship Him, Who is God’s Angel and Its Son.

34. Let this be taken as our answer from the books of Moses, or rather as the answer of Moses himself. The heretics imagine that they can use his assertion of the Unity of God in disproof of the Divinity of God the Son; a blasphemy in defiance of the clear warning of their own witness, for whenever he confesses that God is One he never fails to teach the Son’s Divinity. Our next step must be to adduce the manifold utterance of the prophets concerning the same Son.

35. You know the words, Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One; would that you knew them aright! As you interpret them, I seek in vain for their sense. It is said in the Psalms, God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee. Impress upon the reader’s mind the distinction between the Anointer and the Anointed; discriminate between the Thee and the Thy: make it clear to Whom and of Whom the words are spoken. For this definite confession is the conclusion of the preceding passage, which runs thus; Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. And then he continues, Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee. Thus the God of the eternal kingdom, in reward for His love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, is anointed by His God. Surely some broad difference is drawn, some gap too wide for our mental span, between these names? No; the distinction of Persons is indicated by Thee and Thy, but nothing suggests a difference of nature. Thy points to the Author, Thee to Him Who is the Author’s offspring. For He is God from God, as these same words of the prophet declare, God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee. And His own words bear witness that there is no God anterior to God the Un-originate; Be ye My witnesses, and I am witness, saith the Lord God, and My Servant Whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe and understand that I am, and before? Me there is no other God, nor shall be after Me. Thus the majesty of Him that has no beginning is declared, and the glory of Him that is from the Unoriginate is safeguarded; for God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee. That word Thy declares His birth, yet does not contradict His nature; Thy God means that the Son was born from Him to share the Godhead. But the fact that the Father is God is no obstacle to the Son’s being God also, for God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee. Mention is made both of Father and of Son; the one title of God conveys the assurance that in character and majesty They are One.

36. But lest these words, For I am, and before Me there is no other God, nor shall be after Me, be made a handle for blasphemous presumption, as proving that the Son is not God, since after the God, Whom no God precedes, there follows no other God, the purpose of the passage must be considered. God is His own best interpreter, but His chosen Servant joins with Him to assure us that there is no God before Him, nor shall be after Him. His oxen witness concerning Himself is, indeed, sufficient, but He has added the witness of the Servant Whom He has
chosen. Thus we have the united testimony of the Two, that there is no God before Him; we accept the truth, because all things are from Him. We have Their witness also that there shall be no God after Him; but They do not deny that God has been born from Him in the past. Already there was the Servant speaking thus, and bearing witness to the Father; the Servant born in that tribe from which God’s elect was to spring. He sets forth also the same truth in the Gospels: Behold, My Servant Whom I have chosen, My Beloved in Whom My soul is well pleased. This is the sense, then, in which God says, There is no other God before Me, nor shall be after Me. He reveals the infinity of His eternal and unchanging majesty by this assertion that there is no God before or after Himself. But He gives His Servant a share both in the bearing of wireless and in the possession of the Name of God.

37. The fact is obvious from His own words. For He says to Hosea the prophet, I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, but will altogether be their enemy. But I will have mercy upon the children Judah, and will save them in the Lord their God. Here God the Father gives the name of God, without any ambiguity, to the Son, in Whom also He chose us before countless ages. Their God, He says, for while the Father, being Unoriginate, is independent of all, He has given us for an inheritance to His Son. In like manner we read, Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thine inheritance. None can be God to Him from Whom are all things, for He is eternal and has no beginning; but the Son has God, from Whom He was born, for His Father. Yet to us the Father is God and the Son is God; the Father reveals to us that the Son is our God, and the Son teaches that the Father is God over us. The point for us to remember is that in this passage the Father gives to the Son the name of God, the title of His own unoriginate majesty. But I have commented sufficiently on these words of Hosea.

38. Again, how clear is the declaration made by God the Father through Isaiah concerning our Lord! He says, For thus saith the Lord, the holy God of Israel, Who made the things to came, Ask me concerning your sons and your daughters, and concerning the works of My hands command ye Me. I have made the earth and man upon it, I have commanded all the stars, I have raised up a King with righteousness, and all His ways are straight. He shall build My city, and shall turn back the captivity of My people, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of Sabaoth. Egypt shall labour, and the merchandise of the Ethiopians and Sabeans. Men of stature shall come over unto Thee and shall be Thy servants, and shall follow after Thee, bound in chains, and shall worship Thee and make supplication unto Thee, for God is in Thee and there is no God beside Thee. For Thou art God, and we knew it not, O God of Israel, the Saviour. All that resist Him shall be ashamed and confounded, and shall walk in confusion. Is any opening left for gainsaying, or excuse for ignorance? If blasphemy continue, is it not in brazen defiance that it survives? God from Whom are all things, Who made all by His command, asserts that He is the Author of the universe, for, unless He had spoken, nothing had been created. He asserts that He has raised up a righteous King, who builds for Himself, that is, for God, a city, and turns back the captivity of His people, for no gift nor reward, for freely are we all saved. Next, He tells how after the labours of Egypt, and after the traffic of Ethiopians and Sabeans, men of stature shall come over to Him. How shall we understand these labours in Egypt, this traffic of Ethiopians and Sabeans? Let us call to mind how the Magi of the East worshipped and paid tribute to the Lord; let us estimate the weariness of that long
pilgrimage to Bethlehem of Judah. In the toilsome journey of the Magian princes we see the labours of Egypt to which the prophet alludes. For when the Magi executed, in their spurious, material way, the duty ordained for them by the power of God, the whole heathen world was offering in their person the deepest reverence of which its worship was capable. And these same Magi presented gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh from the merchandise of the Ethiopians and Sabeans; a thing foretold by another prophet, who has said, The Ethiopians shall full down before His face, and is enemies shall lick the dust. The Kings of Tharsis shall offer presents, the Kings of the Arabians and Sabeans shall bring gifts, and there shall be given to Him of the gold of Arabia? The Magi and their offerings stand for the labour of Egypt and for the merchandise of Ethiopians and Sabeans; the adoring Magi represent the heathen world, and offer the choicest gifts of the Gentiles to the Lord Whom they adore.

39. As for the men of stature who shall come over to Him and follow Him in chains, there is no doubt who they are. Turn to the Gospels; Peter, when he is to follow his Lord, is girded up. Read the Apostles: Paul, the servant of Christ, boasts of his bonds. Let us see whether this ‘prisoner of Jesus Christ’ conforms in his teaching to the prophecies uttered by God concerning God His Son. God hart said, They shall make supplication, for God is in Thee. Now mark and digest these words of the Apostle:–God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. And then the prophecy continues, And there is no God beside Thee. The Apostle promptly matches this with For there is one Jesus Christ our Lord, through Whom are all things. Obviously there can be none other but He, for He is One. The third prophetic statement is, Thou art God and we knew it not. But Paul, once the persecutor of the Church, says, Whose are the fathers, from Whom is Christ, Who is God over all. Such is to be the message of these men in chains; men of stature, indeed, they will be, and shall sit on twelve thrones to judge the tribes of Israel, and shall follow their Lord, witnesses to Him in teaching and in martyrdom.

40. Thus God is in God, and it is God in Whom God dwells. But how is There is no God beside Thee true, if God be within Him? Heretic! In support of your confession of a solitary Father you employ the words, There is no God beside Me; what sense can you assign to the solemn declaration of God the Father, There is no God beside Thee, if your explanation of There is no God beside Me be a denial of the Godhead of the Son? To whom, in that case, can God have said, There is no God beside Thee? You cannot suggest that this solitary Being said it to Himself. It was to the King Whom He summoned that the Lord said, by the mouth of the men of stature who worshipped and made supplication, For God is in Thee. The facts are inconsistent with solitude. In Thee implies that there was One present within range, if I may say so, of the Speaker’s voice. The complete sentence, God is in Thee, reveals not only God present, but also God abiding in Him Who is present. The words distinguish the Indweller from Him in Whom He dwells, but it is a distinction of Person only, not of character. God is in Him, and He, in Whom God is, is God. The residence of God cannot be within a nature strange and alien to His own. He abides in One Who is His own, born from Himself. God is in God, because God is from God. Far Than art God, and we knew it not, O God of Israel, the Saviour

41. My next book is devoted to the refutation of your denial that God is in God; for the prophet continues, All that resist Him shall be ashamed and confounded and shall walk in confusion.
This is God's sentence, passed upon your unbelief. You set yourself in opposition to Christ, and it is on His account that the Father's voice is raised in solemn reproof; for He, Whose Godhead you deny, is God. And you deny it under cloak of reverence for God, because He says, There is no other God beside Me. Submit to shame and confusion; the Unoriginate God has no need of the dignity you offer; He has never asked for this majesty of isolation which you attribute to Him. He repudiates your officious interpretation which would twist His words, There is no other God beside Me, into a denial of the Godhead of the Son Whom He begot from Himself. To frustrate your purpose of demolishing the Divinity of the Son by assigning the Godhead in some special sense to Himself, He rounds off the glories of the Only-begotten by the attribution of absolute Divinity:–And there is no God beside Thee. Why make distinctions between exact equivalents? Why separate what is perfectly matched? It is the peculiar characteristic of the Son of God that there is no God beside Him; the peculiar characteristic of God the Father that there is no God apart from Him. Use His words concerning Himself; confess Him in His own terms, and entreat Him as King; For God is in Thee, and there is no God beside Thee. For Thou art God, and we knew it not, O God of Israel, the Saviour. A confession couched in words so reverent is free from the taint of presumption: its terms can excite no repugnance. Above all, we must remember that to refuse it means shame and ignominy. Brood in thought over these words God; employ them in your confession of Him, and so escape the threatened shame. For if you deny the Divinity of the Son of God, you will not be augmenting the glory of God by adoring Him in lonely majesty; you will be slighting the Father by refusing to reverence the Son. In faith and veneration confess of the Unoriginate God that there is no God beside Him; claim for God the Only-begotten that apart from Him there is no God.

42. As you have listened already to Moses and Isaiah, so listen now to Jeremiah inculcating the same truth as they:–This is our God, and there shall be none other likened unto Him, Who hath found out all the way of knowledge, and hath given it unto Jacob His servant and to Israel His beloved. Afterward did He shew Himself upon earth and dwelt among men. For previously he had said, And He is Man, and Who shall know Him? Thus you have God seen on earth and dwelling among men. Now I ask you what sense you would assign to No one hath seen Gad at any time, save the Only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, when Jeremiah proclaims God seen on earth and dwelling among men? The Father confessedly cannot be seen except by the Son; Who then is This who was seen and dwelt among men? He must be our God, for He is God visible in human form, Whom men can handle. And take to heart the prophet’s words, There shall be none other likened to Him. If you ask how this can be, listen to the remainder of the sentence, lest you be tempted to deny to the Father His share of the confession. Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One. The whole passage is, There shall be none likened unto Him, Who hath found out all the way of knowledge, and hath given it unto Jacob His servant and to Israel His beloved. Afterward did He skew Himself upon earth and dwelt among men. For there is one Mediator between God and Men, Who is both God and Man; Mediator both in giving of the Law and in taking of our body. Therefore none other can be likened unto Him, for He is One, born from God into God, and the it was through Whom all things were created in heaven and earth, through Whom times and worlds were made. Everything, in fine, that exists owes its existence to His action. He it is that instructs Abraham, that speaks with Moses, that testifies to Israel, that abides in the prophets, that was born
through the Virgin from the Holy Ghost, that nails to the cross of His passion the powers that are our foes, that slays death in hell, that strengthens the assurance of our hope by His Resurrection, that destroys the corruption of human flesh by the glory of His Body. Therefore none shall be likened unto Him. For these are the peculiar powers of God the Only-begotten; He alone was born from God, the blissful Possessor of such great prerogatives. No second god can be likened unto Him, for He is God from God, not born from any alien being. There is nothing new or strange or modern created in Him. When Israel hears that its God is one, and that no second god is likened, that men may deem him God, to God Who is God’s Son, the revelation means that God the Father and God the Son are One altogether, not by confusion of Person but by unity of substance. For the prophet forbids us, because God the Son is God, to liken Him to some second deity.

Book 5 (Back to the Top)

1. OUR reply, in the previous books, to the mad and blasphemous doctrines of the heretics has led us with open eyes into the difficulty that our readers incur an equal danger whether we refute our opponents, or whether we forbear. For while unbelief with boisterous irreverence was thrusting upon us the unity of God, a unity which devout and reasonable faith cannot deny, the scrupulous soul was caught in the dilemma that, whether it asserted or denied the proposition, the danger of blasphemy was equally incurred. To human logic it may seem ridiculous and irrational to say that it can be impious to assert, and impious to deny, the same doctrine, since what it is godly to maintain it must be godless to dispute; if it serve a good purpose to demolish a statement, it may seem folly to dream that good can come from supporting it. But human logic is fallacy in the presence of the counsels of God, and folly when it would cope with the wisdom of heaven; its thoughts are fettered by its limitations, its philosophy confined by the feebleness of natural reason. It must be foolish in its own eyes before it can be wise unto God; that is, it must learn the poverty of its own faculties and seek after Divine wisdom. It must become wise, not by the standard of human philosophy, but of that which mounts to God, before it can enter into His wisdom, and its eyes be opened to the folly of the world. The heretics have ingeniously contrived that this folly, which passes for wisdom, shall be their engine. They employ the confession of One God, for which they appeal to the witness of the Law and the Gospels in the words, Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One. They are well aware of the risks involved, whether their assertion be met by contradiction or passed over in silence; and, whichever happens, they see an opening to promote their heresy. If sacred truth, pressed with a blasphemous intent, be met by silence, that silence is construed as consent; as a confession that, because God is One, therefore His Son is not God, and God abides in eternal solitude. If, on the other hand, the heresy involved in their bold argument be met by contradiction, this opposition is branded as a departure from the true Gospel faith, which states in precise terms the unity of God, or else they cast in the opponent’s teeth that he has fallen into the contrary heresy, which allows but one Person of Father and of Son. Such is the deadly artifice, wearing the aspect of an attractive innocence, which the world’s wisdom, which is folly with God, has forged to beguile us in this first article of their faith, which we can neither confess nor deny without risk of blasphemy. We walk between dangers on either hand; the unity of God may force us into a denial of the Godhead of His Son, or, if we confess that the
Father is God and the Son is God, we may be driven into the heresy of interpreting the unity of Father and of Son in the Sabellian sense. Thus their device of insisting upon the One God would either shut out the Second Person from the Godhead, or destroy the Unity by admitting Him as a second God, or else make the unity merely nominal. For unity, they would plead, excludes a Second; the existence of a Second is destructive of unity; and Two cannot be One.

2. But we who have attained this wisdom of God, which is folly to the world, and purpose, by means of the sound and saving profession of true faith in the Lord, to unmask the snake-like treachery of their teaching; we have so laid out the plan of our undertaking as to gain a vantage ground for the display of the truth without entangling ourselves in the dangers of heretical assertion. We carefully avoid either extreme; not denying that God is One, yet setting forth distinctly, on the evidence of the Lawgiver who proclaims the unity of God, the truth that there is God and God. We teach that it is by no confusion of the Two that God is One; we do not rend Him in pieces by preaching a plurality of Gods, nor yet do we profess a distinction only in name. But we present Him as God and God, postponing at present for fuller discussion hereafter the question of the Divine unity. For the Gospels tell us that Moses taught the truth when he proclaimed that God is One; and Moses by his proclamation of One God confirms the lesson of the Gospels, which tell of God and God.

Thus we do not contradict our authorities, but base our teaching upon them, proving that the revelation to Israel of the unity of God gives no sanction to the refusal of Divinity to the Son of God; since he who is our authority for asserting that there is One God is our authority also for confessing the Godhead of His Son.

3. And so the arrangement of our treatise follows closely the order of the objections raised. Since the next article of their blasphemous and dishonest confession is, We confess One true God, the whole of this second book is devoted to the question whether the Son of God be true God. For it is clear that the heretics have ingeniously contrived this arrangement of first naming One God and then One true God, in order to detach the Son from the name and nature of God; since the thought must suggest itself that, truth being inherent in the One God, it must be strictly confined to Him. And therefore, since it is clear beyond a doubt that Moses, when he proclaimed the unity of God, meant therein to assert the Divinity of the Son, let us return to the leading passages in which his teaching is conveyed, and enquire whether or no he wishes us to believe that the Son, Who, as he has taught us, is God, is also true God. It is clear that the truth, or genuineness, of a thing is a question of its nature and its powers. For instance, true wheat is that which grows to a head with the beard bristling round it, which is purged from the chaff and ground to flour, compounded into a loaf and taken for food, and renders the nature and the uses of bread. Thus natural powers are the evidence of truth; and let us see, by this test, whether He, Whom Moses calls God, be true God. We will defer for the present our discourse concerning this One God, Who is also true God, lest, if I fail at once to take up their challenge and uphold the One True God in the two Persons of Father and of Son, eager and anxious souls be oppressed by dangerous doubts.

4. And now, since we accept as common ground the fact that God recognises His Son as God, I
ask you: how does the creation of the world disprove our assertion that the Son is true God?
There is no doubt that all things are through the Son, for, in the Apostle’s words, All things are through Him, and in Him. If all things are through Him, and all were made out of noticing, and none otherwise than through Him, in what element of true Godhead is He defective, Who possesses both the nature and the power of God? Hebad at His disposal the powers of the Divine nature, to bring into being the non-existent and to create at His pleasure. For God saw that they were good.

5. When the Law says, And God said, Let there be a firmament, and then adds, And God made the firmament, it introduces no other distinction than that of Person. It indicates no difference of power or nature, and makes no change of name. Under the one title of God it reveals, first, the thought of Him Who spoke, and then the action of Him Who created. The language of the narrator says nothing to deprive Him of Divine nature and power; nay rather, how precisely does it inculcate His true Godhead. The power to give effect to the word of creation belongs only to that Nature with Whom to speak is the same as to fulfil. How then is He not true God, Who creates, if He is true God, Who commands? If the word spoken was truly Divine, the deed done was truly Divine also. God spoke, and God created; if it was true God Who spoke, He Who created was true God also; unless indeed, while the presence of true Godhead was displayed in the speech of the One, its absence was manifested in the action of the Other. Thus in the Son of God we behold the true Divine nature. He is God, He is Creator, He is Son of God, He is omnipotent. It is not merely that He can do whatever He will, for will is always the concomitant of power; but He can do also whatever is commanded Him. Absolute power is this, that its possessor can execute as Agent whatever His words as Speaker can express. When unlimited power of expression is combined with unlimited power of execution, then this creative power, commensurate with the commanding word, possesses the true nature of God. Titus the Son of God is not false God, nor God by adoption, nor God by gift of the name, but true God. Nothing would be gained by the statement of the arguments by which His true Godhead is opposed. His possession of the name and of the nature of God is conclusive proof. He, by Whom all things were made, is God. So much the creation of the world tells me about Him. He is God, equal with God in name; true God, equal with true God in power. The might of God is revealed to us in the creative word; the might of God is manifested also in the creative act. And now again I ask by what authority you deny, in your confession of Father and Son, the true Divine nature of Him Whose name reveals His power, Whose power proves His right to the Name.

6. My reader must bear in mind that I am silent about the current objections through no forgetfulness, and no distrust of my cause. For that constantly cited text, The Father is greater than I, and its cognate passages are perfectly familiar to me, and I have my interpretation of them ready, which makes them witness to the true Divine nature of the Son. But it serves my purpose best to adhere in reply to the order of attack, that our pious effort may follow close upon the progress of their impious scheme, and when we see them diverge into godless heresy we may at once obliterate the track of error. To this end we postpone to the end of our work the testimony of the Evangelists and Apostles, and join battle with the blasphemers for the present on the ground of the Law and the Prophets, silencing their crooked argument, based
on misinterpretation and deceit, by the very texts with which they strive to delude us. The sound method of demonstrating a truth is to expose the fallacy of the objections raised against it; and the disgrace of the deceiver is complete if his own lie be converted into an evidence for the truth. And, indeed, the universal experience of mankind has learned that falsehood and truth are incompatible, and cannot be reconciled or made coherent; that by their very nature they are among those opposites which are eternally repugnant, and can never combine or agree.

7. This being the case, I ask how a distinction can be made in the words, Let Us make man after Our own image and likeness between a true God and a false. The words express a meaning, the meaning is the outcome of thought; the thought is set in motion by truth. Let us follow the words back to their meaning, and learn from the meaning the thought, and from the thought attain to the underlying truth. Thy enquiry is, whether He to Whom the words Let Us make man after Our own image and likeness were spoken, was not thought of as true by Him Who spoke; for they undoubtedly express the feeling and thought of the Speaker. In saying Let Us make, He clearly indicates One in no discord with Himself, no alien or powerless Being, but One endowed with power to do the thing of which He speaks. His own words assure us that this is the sense in which we must understand that they were spoken.

8. To assure us still more fully of the true Godhead manifested in the nature and work of the Son, He, Who expressed His meaning in the words I have cited, shews that His thought was suggested by the true Divinity of Him to Whom He said, After Our own image and likeness. How is He falsely called God, to Whom the true God says, After Our own image and likeness? Our is inconsistent with isolation, and with difference either in purpose or in nature. Man is created, taking the words in their strict sense, in Their common image. Now there can be nothing common to the true and to the false. God, the Speaker, is speaking to God; man is being created in the image of Father and of Son. The Two are One in name and One in nature. It is only out image after which man is made. The time has not yet come for me to discuss this matter; hereafter I will explain what is this image of God the Father and of God the Son into which man was created. For the present we will stick to the question, was, or was not, He true God, to Whom the true God said, Let Us make man after Our own image and likeness? Separate, if you can, the true from the false elements in this image common to Both; in your heretical madness divide the indivisible. For They Two are One, of Whose one image and likeness man is the one copy.

9. But now let us continue our reading of this Scripture, to shew how the consistency of truth is unaffected by these dishonest objections. The next words are, And God made man; after the image of God made He him. The image is in common; God made man after the image of God. I would ask him who denies that God’s Son is true God, in what God’s image he supposes that God made man? He must bear constantly in mind that all things are through the Son; heretical ingenuity must not, for its own purposes, twist this passage into action on the part of the Father. If, therefore, man is created through God the Son after the image of God the Father, he is created also after the image of the Son; for all admit that the words After Our image and likeness were spoken to the Son. Thus His true Godhead is as explicitly asserted by the Divine
words as manifested in the Divine action; so that it is God Who moulds man into the image of God, Who reveals Himself as God, and, moreover, as true God. For His joint possession of the Divine image proves Him true God, while His creative action displays Him as God the Son.

10. What wild insanity of abandoned souls! What blind audacity of reckless blasphemy! You hear of God and God; you hear of Our image. Why suggest that One is, and One is not, true God? Why distinguish between God by nature and God in name? Why, under pretext of defending the faith, do you destroy the faith? Why struggle to pervert the revelation of One God, One true God, into a denial that God is One and true? Not yet will I stifle your insane efforts with the clear words of Evangelists and Prophets, in which Father and Son appear not as one Person, but as One in nature, and Each as true God. For the present the Law, unaided, annihilates you. Does the Law ever speak of One true God, and One not true? Does it ever speak of Either, except by the name of God, which is the true expression of Their nature? It speaks of God and God; it speaks also of God as One. Nay, it does more than so describe Them. It manifests Them as true God and true God, by the sure evidence of Their joint image. It begins by speaking of Them first by their strict name of God; then it attributes true Godhead to Both in common. For when man, Their creature, is created after the image of Both, sound reason forces the conclusion that Each of Them is true God.

11. But let us travel once more in our journey of instruction over the lessons taught in the holy Law of God. The Angel of God speaks to Hagar; and this same Angel is God. But perhaps His being the Angel of God means that He is not true God. For this title seems to indicate a lower nature y where the name points to a difference in kind, it is thought that true equality must be absent. The last book has already exposed the hollowness of this objection; the title of Angel informs us of His office, not of His nature. I have prophetic evidence for this explanation; Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flaming fire. That flaming fire is His ministers; that spirit which comes, His angels. These figures shew the nature and the power of His messengers, or angels, and of His ministers. This spirit is an angel, that flaming fire a minister, of God. Their nature adapts them for the function of messenger or minister. Thus the Law, or rather God through the Law, wishing to indicate God the Son as a Person, yet as bearing the same name with the Father, calls Him the Angel, that is, the Messenger, of God. The title Messenger proves that He has an office of His own; that His nature is truly Divine is proved when lie is called God. But this sequence, first Angel, then God, is in the order of revelation, not in Himself. For we confess Them Father and Son in the strictest sense, in such equality that the Only-begotten Son, by virtue of His birth, possesses true Divinity from the Unbegotten Father. This revelation of Them as Sender and as Sent is but another expression for Father and Son; not contradicting the true Divine nature of the Son, nor cancelling His possession of the Godhead as His birthright. For none can doubt that the Son by His birth partakes congenitally of the nature of His Author, in such wise that from the One there comes into being an indivisible Unity, because One is from One.

12. Faith burns with passionate ardour; the burden of silence is intolerable, and my thoughts imperiously demand an utterance. Already, in the preceding book I have departed from the intended method of my demonstration. I was denouncing that blasphemous sense in which the
heretics speak of One God, and expounding the passages in which Moses speaks of God and God. I hastened on with a precipitate, though devout, zeal to the true sense in which we hold the unity of God. And now again, wrapped up in the pursuit of another enquiry, I have suffered myself to wander from the course, and, while I was engaged upon the true Divinity of the Son, the ardour of my soul has hurried me on before the time to make the confession of true God as Father and as Son. But our own faith must wait its proper place in the treatise. This preliminary statement of it has been made as a safeguard for the reader; it shall be so developed and explained hereafter as to frustrate the schemes of the gainsayer.

13. To resume the argument; this title of office indicates no difference of nature, for He, Who is the Angel of God, is God. The test of His true Godhead shall be, whether or no His words and acts were those of God. He increases Ishmael into a great people, and promises that many nations shall bear his name. Is this, I ask, within an angel’s power? If not, and this is the power of God, why do you refuse true Divinity to Him Who, on your own confession, has the true power of God? Thus He possesses the true and perfect powers of the Divine nature. True God, in all the types in which He reveals Himself for the world’s salvation, is not, nor ever can be, other than true God.

14. Now first, I ask, what is the meaning of these terms, ‘true God’ and ‘not true God’? If any one says to me ‘This is fire, but not true fire; water, but not true water,’ I can attach no intelligible meaning to his words. What difference in kind can there be between one true specimen, and another true specimen, of the same class? If a thing be fire, it must be true fire; while its nature remains the same it cannot lose this character of true fire. Deprive water of its watery nature, and by so doing you destroy it as true water; let it remain water, and it will inevitably still be true water. The only way in which an object can lose its nature is by losing its existence; if it continue to exist it must be truly itself. If the Son of God is God, then He is true God; if He is not true God, then in no possible sense is He God at all. If He has not the nature, then He has no right to the name; if, on the contrary, the name which indicates the nature is His by inherent right, then it cannot be that He is destitute of that nature in its truest sense.

15. But perhaps it will be argued that, when the Angel of God is called God, He receives the name as a favour, through adoption, and has in consequence a nominal, not a true, Godhead. If He gave us an inadequate revelation of His Divine nature at the time when He was styled the Angel of God, judge whether He has not fully manifested His true Godhead under the name of a nature lower than the angelic. For a Man spoke to Abraham, and Abraham worshipped Him as God. Pestilent heretic! Abraham confessed Him, you deny Him, to be God. What hope is there for you, in your blasphemy, of the blessings promised to Abraham? He is Father of the Gentiles, but not for you; you cannot go forth from your regeneration to join the household of his seed, through the blessings given to his faith. You are no son, raised up to Abraham from the stones; you are a generation of vipers, an adversary of his belief. You are not the Israel of God, the heir of Abraham, justified by faith; for you have disbelieved God, while Abraham was justified and appointed to be the Father of the Gentiles through that faith wherein he worshipped the God Whose word he trusted. God it was Whom that blessed and faithful Patriarch worshipped then; and mark how truly He was God, to Whom, in His own words, all
things are possible. Is there any, but God alone, to Whom nothing is impossible? And He, to Whom all things are possible, does He fall short of true Divinity?

16. I ask further, Who is this God Who overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah? For the Lord rained from the Lord; was it not the true Lord from the true Lord? Have you any alternative to this Lord, and Lord? Or any other meaning for the terms, except that in Lord, and Lord, their Persons are distinguished? Bear in mind that Him Whom you have confessed as Alone true, you have also confessed as Alone the righteous Judge. Now mark that the Lord who rains from the Lord, and slays not the just with the unjust, and judges the whole earth, is both Lord and also righteous Judge, and also rains from the Lord. In the face of all this, I ask you Which it is that you describe as alone the righteous Judge. The Lord rains from the Lord; you will not deny that He Who rains from the Lord is the righteous, Judge, for Abraham, the Father of the Gentiles—but not of the unbelieving Gentiles—speaks thus: In no wise shall Thou do tills thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, for then shall the righteous be as the wicked. In no wise shall Thou, Who judgest the earth, execute this judgment. This God, then, the righteous Judge, is clearly also the true God. Blasphemer! Your own falsehood confutes you. Not yet do I bring forward the witness of the Gospels concerning God the Judge; the Law has told me that He is the Judge. You must deprive the Son of His judgeship before you can deprive Him of His true Divinity. You have solemnly confessed that He Who is the only righteous Judge is also the only true God; your own statements bind you to the admission that He Who is the righteous Judge is also true God. This Judge is the Lord, to Whom all things are possible, the Promiser of eternal blessings, Judge of righteous and of wicked. He is the God of Abraham, worshipped by him. Fool and blasphemer that you are, your shameless readiness of tongue must invent some new fallacy, if you are to prove that He is not true God.

17. His merciful and mysterious self-revelations are in no wise inconsistent with His true heavenly nature; and His faithful saints never fail to penetrate the guise He has assumed in order that faith may see Him. The types of the Law foreshew the mysteries of the Gospel; they enable the Patriarch to see and to believe what hereafter the Apostle is to gaze on and publish. For, since the Law is the shadow of things to come, the shadow that was seen was a true outline of the reality which cast it. God was seen and believed and worshipped as Man, Who was indeed to be born as Man in the fulness of time. He takes upon Him, to meet the Patriarch’s eye, a semblance which foreshadows the future truth. In that old day God was only seen, not born, as Man; in due time He was born, as well as seen. Familiarity with the human appearance, which He took that men might behold Him, was to prepare them for the time when He should, in very truth, be born as Man. Then it was that the shadow took substance, the semblance reality, the vision life. But God remained unchanged, whether He were seen in the appearance, or born in the reality, of manhood. The resemblance was perfect between Himself, after His birth, and Himself, as He had been seen in vision. As He was born, so He had appeared; as He had appeared, so was He born. But, since the time has not yet come for us to compare the Gospel account with that of the prophet Moses, let us pursue our chosen course through the pages of the Law. Hereafter we shall prove from the Gospels that it was the true Son of God Who was born as Man; for the present, we are shewing from the Law that it was true God, the Son of God, Who appeared to the Patriarchs in human form. For when One
appeared to Abraham as Man, He was worshipped as God and proclaimed as Judge; and when
the Lord rained from the Lord, beyond a doubt the Law tells us that the Lord rained from the
Lord in order to reveal to us the Father and the Son. Nor can we for a moment suppose that
when the Patriarch, with full knowledge, worshipped the Son as God, he was blind to the fact
that it was true God Whom he worshipped.

18. But godless unbelief finds it very hard to apprehend the true faith. Their capacity for
devotion has never been expanded by belief, and is too narrow to receive a full presentment of
the truth. Hence the unbelieving soul cannot grasp the great work done by God in being born
as Man to accomplish the salvation of mankind; in the work of its salvation it fails to see the
power of God. They think of the travail of His birth, the feebleness of infancy, the growth of
childhood, the attainment of maturity, of bodily suffering and of the Cross with which it ended,
and of the death upon the Cross; and all this conceals His true Godhead from their eyes. Yet He
had called into being all these capacities for Himself, as additions to His nature; capacities
which in His true Divine nature He had not possessed. Thus He acquired them without loss of
His true Divinity, and ceased not to be God when He became Man; when He, Who is God
eternally, became Man at a point in time. They cannot see an exercise of the true God’s power
in His becoming what He was not before, yet never ceasing to be His former Self. And yet there
would have been no acceptance of our feeble nature, had not He by the strength of His own
omnipotent nature, while remaining what He was, come to be what previously He was not.
What blindness of heresy, what foolish wisdom of the world, which cannot see that the
reproach of Christ is the power of God, the folly of faith the wisdom of God! So Christ in your
eyes is not God because He, Who was from eternity, was born, because the Unchangeable
grew with years, the Impassible suffered, the Living died, the Dead lives; because all His history
contradicts the common course of nature! Is not all this simply to say that He, being God, was
omnipotent? Not yet, ye holy and venerable Gospels, do I turn your pages, to prove from them
that Christ Jesus, amid these changes and sufferings, is God. For the Law is the forerunner of
the Gospels, and the Law must teach us that, when God clothed Himself in infirmity, He lost
not His Godhead. The types of the Law are our convincing assurance of the mysteries of the
Gospel faith.

19. Be with me now in thy faithful spirit, holy and blessed Patriarch Jacob, to combat the
poisonous hissings of the serpent of unbelief. Prevail once more in thy wrestling with the Man,
and, being the stronger, once more entreat His blessing. Why pray for what thou mightest
demand from thy weaker Opponent? Thy strong arm has vanquished Him Whose blessing thou
prayest. Thy bodily victory is in broad contrast to thy soul’s humility, thy deeds to thy thoughts.
It is a Man whom thou holdest powerless in thy strong grasp; but in thine eye this Man is true
God, and God not in name only, but in nature. It is not the blessing of a God by adoption that
thou dost claim, but the true God’s blessing. With Man thou strivest; but face to face thou
seest God. What thou seest with the bodily eye is different far from what thou beholdest with
the vision of faith. Thou hast felt Him to be weak Man; but thy soul has been saved because it
saw God in Him. When thou wast wrestling thou wast Jacob; thou art Israel now, through faith
in the blessing which thou didst claim. According to the flesh, the Man is thy inferior, for a type
of His passion in the flesh; but thou canst recognise God in that weak flesh, for a sign of His
blessing in the Spirit. The witness of the eye does not disturb thy faith; His feebleness does not
mislead thee into neglect of His blessing. Though He is Man, His humanity is no bar to His being
God, His Godhead no bar to His being true God; for, being God, He must indeed be true.

20. The Law in its progress still follows the sequence of the Gospel mystery, of which it is the
shadow; its types are a faithful anticipation of the truths taught by the Apostles. In the vision of
his dream the blessed Jacob saw God; this was the revelation of a mystery, not a bodily
manifestation. For there was shown to him the descent of angels by the ladder, and their
ascent to heaven, and God resting above the ladder; and the vision, as it was interpreted,
foretold that his dream should some day become a revealed truth. The Patriarch's words, The
house of God and the gate of heaven, skews us the scene of Iris vision; and then, after a long
account of what he did, the narrative proceeds thus: And God said unto Jacob, Arise, and go up
to the place Bethel, and dwell there: and make there a Sacrifice unto God, that appeared unto
thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau. If the faith of the Gospel has access through
God the Son to God the Father, and if it is only through God that God can be apprehended,
ellen shew us in what sense This is not true God, Who demands reverence for God, Who rests
above the heavenly ladder. What difference of nature separates the Two, when Both bear the
one name which indicates the one nature? It is God Who was seen; it is also God Who speaks
about God Who was seen. God cannot be apprehended except through God; even as also God
accepts no worship from us except through God. We could not understand that the One must
be reverenced, unless the Other had taught us reverence for Him; we could not have known
that the One is God, unless we had known the Godhead of the Other. The revelation of
mysteries holds its appointed course; it is by God that we are initiated into the worship of God.
And when one name, which tells of one nature, combines the Father with the Son, how can the
Son so fall beneath Himself as to be other than true God?

21. Human judgment must not pass its sentence upon God. Our nature is not such that it Can
lift itself by its own forces to the contemplation of heavenly things. We must learn from God
what we are to think of God; we have no source of knowledge but Himself. You may be as
carefully trained as you will in secular philosophy; you may have lived a life of righteousness.
All this will contribute to your mental satisfaction, but it will not help you to know God. Moses
was adopted as the son of the queen, and instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; he
had, moreover, out of loyalty to his race avenged the wrong of the Hebrew by slaying the
Egyptian, and yet he knew not the God Who had blessed his fathers. For when he left Egypt
through fear of the discovery of his deed, and was living as a shepherd in the land of Midian, he
saw a fire in the bush, and the bush unconsumed.

Then it was that he heard the voice of God, and asked His name, and learned His nature. Of all
this he could have known nothing except through God Himself. And we, in like manner, must
confine ourselves, in whatever we say of God, to the terms in which He has spoken to our
understanding concerning Himself.

22. It is the Angel of God Who appeared in the fire from the bush; and it is God Who spoke
from the bush amid the fire. He is manifested as Angel; that is His office, not His nature. The
name which expresses His nature is given you as God; for the Angel of God is God. But perhaps 
He is not true God. Is the God of Abraham, then, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, not true 
God? For the Angel Who speaks from the bush is their God eternally. And, lest you insinuate 
that the name is His only by adoption, it is the absolute God Who speaks to Moses. These are 
His words:—And the Lord said unto Moses, I Am that I Am; and He said, Thus shalt thou say 
unto the children of Israel, He that is hath sent me unto you. God's discourse began as the 
speech of the Angel, in order to reveal the mystery of human salvation in the Son. Next He 
appears as the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, that we may know 
the name which is His by nature. Finally it is the God that is Who sends Moses to Israel, that we 
may have full assurance that in the absolute sense He is God.

23. What further fictions can the futile folly of insane blasphemy devise? Do you still persist in 
your nightly sowing of tares, predestined to be burnt, among the pure wheat, when the 
knowledge of all the Patriarchs contradicts you? Nay more: if you believed Moses, you would 
believe also in God, the Son of God; unless perchance you deny that it was of Him that Moses 
spoke. If you propose to deny that, you must listen to the words of God:—For had ye believed 
Moses, ye would have believed Me also, far he wrote of Me. Moses, indeed, will refute you 
with the whole volume of the Law, ordained through angels, which he received by the hand of 
the Mediator. Enquire whether He, Who gave the Law, were not true God; for the Mediator 
was the Giver. And was it not to meet God that Moses led out the people to the Mount? Was it 
not God Who came down into the Mount? Or was it, perhaps, only by a fiction or an adoption, 
and not by right of nature, that He, Who did all this, bore the name of God? Mark the blare of 
the trumpets, the flashing of the torches, the clouds of smoke, as from a furnace, rolling over 
the mountain, the terror of conscious impotence on the part of man in the presence of God, 
the confession of the people, when they prayed Moses to be their spokesman, that at the voice 
of God they would die. Is He, in your judgment, not true God, when simple dread lest He 
should speak filled Israel with the fear of death? He Whose voice could not be borne by human 
weakness? In your eyes is He not God, because He addressed you through the weak faculties of 
a man, that you might hear, and live? Moses entered the Mount; in forty days and nights he 
gained the knowledge of the mysteries of heaven, and set it all in order according to the vision 
of the truth which was revealed to him there. From intercourse with God, Who spoke with him, 
he received the reflected splendour of that glory on which none may gaze? his corruptible 
countenance was transfigured into the likeness of the unapproachable light of Him, with 
Whom he was dwelling. Of this God he bears witness, of this God he speaks; he summons the 
angels of God to come and worship Him amid the gladness of the Gentiles, and prays that the 
blessings which please Him may descend upon the head of Joseph. In face of such evidence as 
this, dare any man say that He has nothing but the name of God, and deny His true Divinity?

24. This long discussion has, I believe, brought out the truth that no sound argument has ever 
been adduced in favour of a distinction between One Who is, and One Who is not, true God, in 
those passages where the Law speaks of God and God, of Lord and Lord. I have proved that 
these terms are inconsistent with difference between Them in name or in nature, and that we 
can use the name as a test of the nature, and the nature as a clue to the name. Thus I have 
shewn that the character, the power, the attributes, the name of God are inherent in Him
Whom the Law has called God. I have shewn also that the Law, gradually unfolding the Gospel mystery, reveals the Son as a Person by manifesting God as obedient, in the creation of the world, to the words of God, and in the formation of man making what is the joint image of God, and of God; and again, that in the judgment of the men of Sodom the Lord is Judge from the Lord; that, in the giving of blessings and ordaining of the mysteries of the Law, the Angel of God is God. Thus, in support of the saving confession of God as ever manifested in the Persons of Father and of Son, we have shewn how the Law teaches the true Godhead by the use of the strict name of God; for, while the Law states clearly that They are Two, it casts no shadow of doubt upon the true Godhead of either.

25. And now the time has come for us to put a stop to that cunning artifice of heresy, by which they pervert the devout and godly teachings of the Law into a support for their own godless delusion. They preface their denial of the Son of God with the words, Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One; and then, because their blasphemy would be refuted by the identity of name, since the Law speaks of God and God, they invoke the authority of the prophetic words, They shall bless Thee, the true God, to prove that the name is not used in the true sense. They argue that these words teach that God is One, and that God, the Son of God, has His name only and not His nature; and that therefore we must conclude that the true God is one Person only. But perhaps you imagine, fool, that we shall contradict these texts of yours, and so deny that there is one true God. Assuredly we do not contradict them by a confession conceived in your sense. Our faith receives them, our reason accepts them, our words declare them. We recognise One God, and Him true God. The name of God has no dangers for our confession, which proclaims that in the nature of the Son there is the One true God. Learn the meaning of your own words, recognise the One true God, and then you will be able to make a faithful confession of God, One and true. It is the words of our faith which you are turning into the instrument of your blasphemy, preserving the sound and perverting the sense. Masquerading in a foolish garb of imaginary wisdom, under cover of loyalty to truth you are the truth’s destroyer. You confess that God is One and true, on purpose to deny the truth which you confess. Your language claims a reputation for piety on the strength of its impiety, for truth on the strength of its falsehood. Your preaching of One true God leads up to a denial of Him. For you deny that the Son is true God, though you admit that He is God, but God in name only, not in nature. If His birth be in name, not in nature, then you are justified in denying His true right to the name; but if He be truly born as God, how then can He fail to be true God by virtue of His birth? Deny the fact, and you may deny the consequence; if you admit the fact, how can He be other than Himself? No being can alter its own essential nature. About His birth I shall speak presently; meantime I will refute your blasphemous falsehoods concerning His true Divine nature by the utterances of prophets. But I shall take care that in our assertion of the One true God I give no cover to the Sabellian heresy that the Father is one Person with the Son, and none to that slander against the Son’s true Godhead, which you evolve out of the unity of the One true God.

26. Blasphemy is incompatible with wisdom; where the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, is absent, no glimmer of intelligence survives. An instance of this is seen in the heretics’ citation of the prophet’s words, And they shall bless Thee, the true God, as evidence against the Godhead of the Son. First, we see here the folly, which clogs unbelief in the
misunderstanding or (if it were understood) in the suppression of the earlier part of the prophecy; and again we see it in their fraudulent interpolation of that one little word, not to be found in the book itself. This proceeding is as stupid as it is dishonest, since no one would trust them so far as to accept their reading without referring for corroboration to the prophetic text. For that text does not stand thus: They shall bless Thee, the true God, but thus: They shall bless the true God. There is no slight difference between Thee, the true God and The true Gad. If Thee be retained, the pronoun of the second person implies that Another is being addressed; if Thee be omitted, True God, the object of the sentence, is the Speaker.

27. To ensure that our explanation of the passage shall be complete and certain, I cite the words in full:—Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, they that serve Me shall eat, but ye shall be hungry, behold, they that serve Me shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty, behold, they that serve Me shall rejoice with gladness, but ye shall cry for sorrow of your heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. For ye shall leave your name for a rejoicing unto My chosen, but the Lord shall slay you. But My servants shall be called by a new name, which shall be blessed upon earth; and they shall bless the true God, and they that swear upon the earth shall swear by the true God. There is always a good reason for any departure from the accustomed modes of expression, but novelty is also made an opportunity for misinterpretation. The question here is, Why, when so many earlier prophecies have been uttered concerning God, and the name God, alone and without epithet, has sufficed hitherto to indicate the Divine majesty and nature, the Spirit of prophecy should now foretell through Isaiah that the true God was to be blessed, and that men should swear upon earth by the true God. There is always a good reason for any departure from the accustomed modes of expression, but novelty is also made an opportunity for misinterpretation. The question here is, Why, when so many earlier prophecies have been uttered concerning God, and the name God, alone and without epithet, has sufficed hitherto to indicate the Divine majesty and nature, the Spirit of prophecy should now foretell through Isaiah that the true God was to be blessed, and that men should swear upon earth by the true God. First, we must bear in mind that this discourse was spoken concerning times to come. Now, I ask, was not He, in the mind of the Jews, true God, Whom men used then to bless, and by whom they swore? The Jews, unaware of the typical meaning of their mysteries, and therefore ignorant of God the Son, worshipped God simply as God, and not as Father; for, if they had worshipped Him as Father, they would have worshipped the Son also. It was God, therefore, Whom they blessed and by Whom they swore. But the prophet testifies that it is trite God Who shall be blessed hereafter; calling Him true God, because the mysteriousness of His Incarnation was to blind the eyes of some to His true Godhead. When falsehood was to be published abroad, it was necessary that the truth should be clearly stated. And now let us review this passage, clause by clause.

28. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, they that serve Me shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, they that serve Me shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty. Note that one clause contains two different tenses, in order to teach truth concerning two different times; They that serve Me shall eat. Present piety is rewarded with a future prize, and similarly present godlessness shall suffer the penalty of future thirst and hunger. Then He adds, Behold, they that serve Me shall rejoice with gladness, but ye shall cry for sorrow of your heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. Here again, as before, there is a revelation for the future and for the present. They who serve now shall rejoice with gladness, while they who do not serve shall abide in crying and howling through sorrow of heart and vexation of spirit. He proceeds, For ye shall leave your name for a rejoicing unto My chosen, but the Lord shall slay you. These words, dealing with a future time, are addressed to the carnal Israel, which is taunted with the prospect of having to surrender its name to the chosen of God. What is this name? Israel, of course; for to
Israel the prophecy was addressed. And now I ask, What is Israel to-day? The Apostle gives the
answer:—They who are in the spirit, not in the letter, they who walk in the Law of Christ, are
the Israel of God.

29. Furthermore, we must form a conclusion why it is that the words cited above, Therefore
thus saith the Lord, are followed by But the Lord shall slay you, and as to the meaning of the
next sentence, But my servants shall be called by a new name, which shall be blessed upon
earth. There can be no doubt that both Therefore thus saith the
Lord, and afterwards But the Lord shall slay you, prove that it was the Lord Who both spoke,
and also purposed to slay, Who meant to reward His servants with that new name, Who was
well known to have spoken through the prophets and was to be the judge of the righteous and
of the wicked. And thus the remainder of this revelation of the mystery of the Gospel removes
all doubt concerning the Lord as Speaker and as Slayer. It continues:—But My servants shall be
called by a new name, which shall be blessed upon earth Here everything is in the future. What
then is this new name of a religion; a name which shall be blessed upon earth? If ever in past
ages there were a blessing upon the name Christian, it is not a new name. But if this hallowed
name of our devotion towards God be new, then this new title of Christian, awarded to our
faith, is that heavenly blessing which is our reward upon earth.

30. And now come words in perfect harmony with the inward assurance of our faith. He says,
And they shall bless the true God, and they that swear upon earth shall swear by the true God.
And indeed they who in God’s service have received the new name shall bless God; and
moreover the God by Whom they shall swear is the true God. What doubt is there as to Who
this true God is, by Whom men shall swear and Whom they shall bless, through Whom a new
and blessed name shall be given to them that serve Him? I have on my side, in opposition to
the blasphemous misrepresentations of heresy, the clear and definite evidence of the Church’s
faith; the witness of the new name which Thou, O Christ, hast given, of the blessed title which
Thou hast bestowed in reward of loyal service. It swears that Thou art true God. Every mouth,
O Christ, of them that believe tells that Thou art God. The faith of all believers swears that
Thou art God, confesses, proclaims, is inwardly assured, that Thou art true God.

31. And thus this passage of prophecy, taken with its whole context, clearly describe, as God
both Him Whom we serve for the new name’s sake, and Him through Whom the new name is
blessed upon earth. It tells us Who it is that is blessed as true God, and Who is sworn by as true
God. And this is the confession of faith made, in the fulness of time, by the Church in loyal
devotion to Christ her Lord. We can see how exactly the words of prophecy conform to the
truth, by their refraining from the insertion of that pronoun of the second person. Had the
words been Thee, the true God, then they might have been interpreted as spoken to another.
The true God can refer to none but the Speaker. The passage, taken by itself, shews to Whom
it refers; the preceding words, taken in connexion with it, declare Who the Speaker is Who
makes this confession of God. They are these:—I have appeared openly to them that asked not
for Me, and, I have been found of them that sought Me not. I said, Here am I, unto a nation
that called not an My name. I have spread out My hands all the day to an unbelieving and
gainsaying people. Could a dishonest attempt to suppress the truth be more completely exposed, or the Speaker be more distinctly revealed as true God, than here? Who, I demand, was it that appeared to them that asked not for Him, and was found of them that sought Him not? What nation is it that formerly called not on His name? Who is it that spread out His hands all the day to an unbelieving and gainsaying people? Compare with these words that holy and Divine Song of Deuteronomy, in which God, in His wrath against them that are no Gods, moves the unbelievers to jealousy against those that are no people and a foolish nation. Conclude for yourself, Who it is that makes Himself manifest to them that knew Him not; Who, though one people is His own, becomes the possession of strangers; Who it is that spreads out His hands before an unbelieving and gainsaying people, nailing to the cross the writing of the former sentence against us. For the same Spirit in the prophet, whom we are considering, proceeds thus in the course of this one prophecy, which is connected in argument as well as continous in utterance:But My servants shall be called by a new name, which shall be blessed upon earth, and they shall bless the true God, and they that swear upon the earth shall swear by the trite God.

32. If heresy, in its folly and wickedness, shall attempt to entice the simple-minded and uninstructed away from the true belief that these words were spoken in reference to God the Son, by reigning that they are an utterance of God the Father concerning Himself, it shall hear sentence passed upon the lie by the Apostle and Teacher of the Gentiles. He interprets all these prophecies as allusions to the passion of the Lord and to the times of Gospel faith, when he is reproving the unbelief of Israel, which will not recognise that the Lord is come in the flesh. His words are:–For whosoever shall have called upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? But how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they have been sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feel of them that proclaim peace, of them that proclaim good things. But all do not obey the Gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing through the word. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy against them that are no people, and against a foolish nation I will anger you. Moreover Esaias is bold, and saith, I appeared unto them that seek Me not, I was found by them that asked not after Me. But to Israel what saith He? All day long I have stretched forth My hands to a people that hearken not. Who art thou that hast mounted up through the successive heavens, knowing not whether thou wert in the body or out of the body, and canst explain more faithfully than he the words of the prophet? Who art thou that hast heard, and mayst not tell, the ineffable mysteries of the secret things of heaven, and hast proclaimed with greater assurance the knowledge granted thee by God for revelation? Who art thou that hast been fore-ordained to a full share of the Lord’s suffering on the Cross, and first has been caught up to Paradise and drawn nobler teaching from the Scriptures of God than this chosen vessel? If there be such a man, has he been ignorant that these are the deeds and words of the true G0d, proclaimed to us by His own true and chosen Apostle that we may recognise in Him their Author?
33. But it may be argued that the Apostle was not inspired by the Spirit of prophecy when he borrowed these prophetic words; that he was only interpreting at random the words of another man, and though, no doubt, everything the Apostle says of himself comes to him by revelation from Christ, yet his knowledge of the words of Isaiah is only derived from the book. I answer that in the beginning of that utterance in which it is said that the servants of the true God shall bless Him and swear by Him, we read this adoration by the prophet:—From everlasting we have not heard, nor have our eyes seen God, except Thee, and Thy works which Thou wilt do for them that await Thy mercy. Isaiah says that he has seen no God but Him. For he did actually see the glory of God, the mystery of Whose taking flesh from the Virgin he foretold. And if you, in your heresy, do not know that it was God the Only-begotten Whom the prophet saw in that glory, listen to the Evangelist:—These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him. The Apostle, the Evangelist, the Prophet combine to silence your objections. Isaiah did see God; even though it is written, No one hath seen God at any time, save the Only-begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father; He hath declared Him, it was God Whom the prophet saw. He gazed upon the Divine glory, and men were filled with envy at such honour vouchsafed to his prophetic greatness. For this was the reason why the Jews passed sentence of death upon him.

34. Thus the Only-begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, has told us of God, Whom no man has seen. Either disprove the fact that the Son has thus informed us, or else believe Him Who has been seen, Who appeared to them who knew Him not, and became the God of the Gentiles who called not upon Him and spread out His bands before a gainsaying people. And believe this also concerning Him, that they who serve Him are called by a new name, and that on earth men bless Him and swear by Him as true God. Prophecy tells, the Gospel confirms, the Apostle explains, the Church confesses, that He Who was seen is true God; but none venture to say that God the Father was seen. And yet the madness of heresy has run to such lengths that, while they pro-less to recognise this truth, they really deny it. They deny it by means of the newfangled and godless device of evading the truth, while making a studied pretence of adhesion to it. For when they confess one God, alone true and alone righteous, alone wise, alone unchangeable, alone immortal, alone mighty, they attach to Him a Son different in substance, not born from God to be God, but adopted through creation to be a Son, having the name of God not by nature, but as a title received by adoption; and thus they inevitably deprive the Son of all those attributes which they accumulate upon the Father in His lonely majesty.

35. The distorted mind of heresy is incapable of knowing and confessing the One true God; the sound faith and reason necessary for such confession is incompatible with unbelief. We must confess Father and Son before we can apprehend God as One awl true. When we have known the mysteries of man’s salvation, accomplished in us through the power of regeneration unto life in the Father and the Son, then we may hope to penetrate the mysteries of the Law and the Prophets. Godless ignorance of the teaching of Evangelists and Apostles cannot frame the thought of One true God. Out of the teaching of Evangelists and Apostles we shall present the
sound doctrine concerning Him, in accurate agreement with the faith of true believers. We shall present Him in such wise that the Only-begotten, Who is of the substance of the Father, shall be known as indivisible and inseparable in nature, not in Person. We shall set forth God as One, because God is from the nature of God. But we shall also establish this doctrine of the perfect unity of God upon the words of the Prophets, and make them the foundations of the Gospel structure, proving that there is One God, with one Divine nature, by the fact that God the Only-begotten is never classed apart as a second God. For throughout this book of our treatise we have followed the same course as in its predecessor; the same methods which proved there that the Son is God, have proved here that He is true God. I trust that our explanation of each passage has been so convincing that we have now manifested Him as true God as effectually as we formerly demonstrated His Godhead. The remainder of the book shall be devoted to the proof that He, Who is now recognised as true God, must not be regarded as a second God. Our disproof of the notion of a second God will further establish the unity; and this truth shall be displayed as not inconsistent with the personal existence of the Son, while yet it maintains the unity of nature in God and God.

36. The true method of our enquiry demands that we should begin with him, through whom God first manifested Himself to the world, that is, with Moses, by whose mouth God the Only-begotten thus declared Himself; See, see that I am God, and there is no God beside Me. That godless heresy must not assign these words to God, the unbegotten Father, is clear by the sense of the passage and by the evidence of the Apostle who, as we have already stated, has taught us to understand this whole discourse as spoken by God the Only-begotten. The Apostle also points out the words, Rejoice, 0 ye nations, with His people as those of the Son, and in corroboration further cites this:–And there shall be a root of Jesse, and One that shall arise to rule the nations; in Him shall the nations trust. Thus Moses by the words, Rejoice,

O ye nations, with His people indicates Him Who said, There is no Gad beside Me; and the Apostle refers the same words to our Lord Jesus Christ, God the Only-begotten, in Whose rising as a king from the root of Jesse, according to the flesh, the hope of the Gentiles rests. And therefore we must now consider the meaning of these words, that we, who know that they were spoken by Him, may ascertain in what sense He spoke them.

37. That true and absolute and perfect doctrine, which forms our faith, is the confession of God from God and God in God, by no bodily process but by Divine power, by no transfusion from nature into nature but through the secret and mighty working of the One nature; God from God, not by division or extension or emanation, but by the operation of a nature which brings into existence, by means of birth, a nature One with itself. The facts shall receive a fuller treatment in the next book, which is to be devoted to an exposition of the teaching of the Evangelists and Apostles; for the present we must maintain our assertion and belief by means of the Law and the Prophets. The nature with which God is born is necessarily the same as that of His Source. He cannot come into existence as other than God, since His origin is from none other than God. His nature is the same, not in the sense that the Begetter also was begotten—for then the Unbegotten, having been begotten, would not be Himself—but that the substance of the Begotten consists in all those elements which are summed up in the substance of the
Begetter, Who is His only Origin. Thus it is due to no external cause that His origin is from the One, and that His existence partakes the Unity; their is no novel element in Him, because His life is from the Living; no element absent, because the Living begot Him to partake His own life. Hence, in the generation of the Son, the incorporeal and unchangeable God begets, in accordance with His own nature, God incorporeal and unchangeable; and this perfect birth of incorporeal and unchangeable God from incorporeal and unchangeable God involves, as we see in the light of the revelation of God from God, no diminution of the Begetter’s substance. And so God the Only-begotten bears witness through the holy Moses; See, see that I am God, and there is no God beside Me. For there is no second Divine nature, and so there can be no God beside Him, since He is God, yet by the powers of His nature God is also in Him. And because He is God and God is in Him, there is no God beside Him; for God, than Whom there is no other Source of Deity, is in Him, and consequently there is within Him not only His own existence, but the Author of that existence.

38. This saving faith which we profess is sustained by the spirit of prophecy, speaking with one voice through many mouths, and never, through long and changing ages, bearing an uncertain witness to the truths of revelation. For instance, the words which, as we are told through Moses, were spoken by God the Only-begotten, are confirmed for our better instruction by the prophetic spirit, speaking this time through those men of stature,—For God is in Thee, and there is no God beside Thee. Thou art God, and we knew it not, O God Israel, the Saviour. Let heresy fling itself with its utmost effort of despair and rage against this declaration of a name and nature inseparably joined, and rend in twain, if its furious struggles can, a union perfect in title and in fact. God is in God and beside Him there is no God. Let heresy, if it can, divide the God within from the God within Whom He is, and classify, Each after His kind, the members of that mystic union. For when He says God is in Thee, He teaches that the true nature of God the Father is present in God the Son; for we must understand that it is the God Who is that is in Him. And when He adds, And there is no God beside Thee, He shews that outside Him there is no God, since God’s dwelling is within Himself. And the third assertion, Thou art God and we knew it not, sets forth for our instruction what must be the confession of the devout and believing soul. When it has learnt the mysteries of the Divine birth, and the name Emmanuel which the angel announced to Joseph, it must cry, Thou art God, and we knew it not, O God of Israel, the Saviour. It must recognise the subsistence of the Divine nature in Him, inasmuch as God is in God, and the nonexistence of any other God except the true. For, He being God and God being in Him, the delusion of another God, of what kind soever, must be surrendered. Such is the message of the prophet Isaiah; he bears witness to the indivisible and inseparable Godhead of Father and of Son.

39. Jeremiah also, a prophet equally inspired, has taught that God the Only-begotten is of a nature one with that of God the Father. His words are:—This is our God, and there shall be none other likened unto Him, hath found out all the way of knowledge, and hath given it unto Jacob His servant, and to Israel His beloved Afterward He was seen upon earth, and dwelt among men. Why try to transform the Son of God into a second God? Learn to recognise and to confess the One True God. No second God is likened to Christ, and so can claim to be God. He is God from God by nature and by birth, for the Source of His Godhead is God. And, again, He is
not a second God, for no other is likened unto Him; the truth that is in Him is nothing else than
the truth of God. Why link together, in pretended devotion to the unity of God, true and false,
base and genuine, unlike and unlike? The Father is God and the Son is God. God is in God;
beside Him there is no God, and none other is likened unto Him so as to be God. If in these Two
you shall recognise the Unity, instead of the solitude, of God, you will share the Church’s faith,
which confesses the Father in the Son. But if, in ignorance of the heavenly mystery, you insist
that God is One in order to enforce the doctrine of His isolation, then you are a stranger to the
knowledge of God, for you deny that God is in God.

Book 6 (Back to the Top)

1. It is with a full knowledge of the dangers and passions of the time that I have ventured to
attack this wild and godless heresy, which asserts that the Son of God is a creature. Multitudes
of Churches, in almost every province of the Roman Empire, have already caught the plague of
this deadly doctrine; error, persistently inculcated and falsely claiming to be the truth, has
become ingrained in minds which vainly imagine that they are loyal to the faith. I know how
hardly the will is moved to a thorough recantation, when zeal for a mistaken cause is
encouraged by the sense of numbers and confirmed by the sanction of general approval. A
multitude under delusion can only be approached with difficulty and danger. When the crowd
has gone astray, even though it know that it is in the wrong, it is ashamed to return. It claims
consideration for its numbers, and has the assurance to command that its folly shall be
accounted wisdom. It assumes that its size is evidence of the correctness of its opinions; and
thus a falsehood which has found general credence is boldly asserted to have established its
truth.

2. For my own part, it was not only the claim which my vocation has upon me, the duty of
diligently preaching the Gospel which, as a bishop, I owe to the Church, that has led me on. My
eagerness to write has increased with the increasing numbers endangered and enthralled by
this heretical theory. There was a rich prospect of joy in the thought of multitudes who might
be saved, if they could know the mysteries of the right faith in God, and abandon the
blasphemous principles of bureau folly, desert the heretics and surrender themselves to God; if
they would forsake the bait with which the fowler snares his prey, and soar aloft in freedom
and safety, following Christ as Leader, prophets as instructors, apostles as guides, and
accepting the perfect faith and sure salvation in the confession of Father and of Son. So would
they, in obedience to the words of the Lord, He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the
Father which hath sent Him, be setting themselves to honour the Father, through honour paid
to the Son.

3. For of late the infection of a mortal evil has gone abroad among mankind, whose ravages
have dealt destruction and death on every hand. The sudden desolation of cities smitten, with
their people in them, by earthquake to the ground, the terrible slaughter of recurring wars, the
widespread mortality of an irresistible pestilence, have never wrought such fatal mischief as
the progress of this heresy throughout the world. For God, unto Whom all the dead live,
destroys those only who are self-destroyed. From Him Who is to be the Judge of all, Whose
Majesty will temper with mercy the punishment allotted to the mistakes of ignorance, they who deny Him can expect not even judgment, but only denial.

4. For this mad heresy does deny; it denies the mystery of the true faith by means of statements borrowed from our confession, which it employs for its own godless ends. The confession of their misbelief, which I have already cited in an earlier book, begins thus:—“We confess one God, alone unmade, alone eternal, alone unoriginate, alone true, alone possessing immortality, alone good, alone mighty.” Thus they parade the opening words of our own confession, which runs, “One God, alone unmade and alone un-originate,” that this semblance of truth may serve as introduction to their blasphemous additions. For, after a multitude of words in which an equally insincere devotion to the Son is expressed, their confession continues, “God’s perfect creature, but not as one of His other creatures, His Handiwork, but not as His other works.” And again, after an interval in which true statements are occasionally interspersed in order to veil their impious purpose of alleging, as by sophistry they try to prove, that He came into existence out of nothing, they add, “He, created and established before the worlds, did not exist before He was born.” And lastly, as though every point of their false doctrine, that He is to be regarded neither as Son nor as God, were guarded impregnably against assault, they continue:—“As to such phrases as from Him, and from the womb, and I went out from the Father and am come, if they be understood to denote that the Father extends a part and, as it were, a development of that one substance, then the Father will be of a compound nature and divisible and changeable and corporeal, according to them; and thus, as far as their words go, the incorporeal God will be subjected to the properties of matter.” But, as we are now about to cover the whole ground once more, employing this time the language of the Gospels as our weapon against this most godless heresy, it has seemed best to repeat here, in the sixth book, the whole heretical document, though we have already given a full copy of it in the fourth, in order that our opponents may read it again, and compare it, point by point, with our reply, and so be forced, however reluctant and argumentative, by the clear teaching of the Evangelists and Apostles, to recognise the truth. The heretical confession is as follows:—

5. “We confess one God, alone unmade, alone eternal, alone unoriginate, alone possessing immortality, alone good, alone mighty, Creator, Ordainer and Disposer of all things, unchangeable and unalterable, righteous and good, of the Law and the Prophets and the New Testament. We believe that this God gave birth to the Only-begotten Son before all worlds, through Whom He made the world and all things, that He gave birth to Him not in semblance, but in truth, following His own will, so that He is unchangeable and unalterable, God’s perfect Creature, but not as one of His other creatures, His Handiwork, but not as His other works; not, as Valentinus maintained, that the Son is a development of the Father, nor, as Manichaeus has declared of the Son, a consubstantial part of the Father, nor, as Sabellius, who makes two out of One, Son and Father at once, nor, as Hieracas, a light from a light, or a lamp with two flames, nor, as if He was previously in being and afterwards born, or created afresh, to be a Son, a notion often condemned by thyself, blessed Pope, publicly in the Church, and in the assembly of the brethren. But, as we have affirmed, we believe that He was created by the will of God before times and worlds, and has His life and existence from the Father, Who gave Him to
share His own glorious perfections. For, when the Father gave to Him the inheritance of all things, He did not thereby deprive Himself of attributes which are His without origination, He being the source of all things.

6. “So there are three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. God, for His part, is the Cause of all things, utterly unoriginate and separate from all; while the Son, put forth by the Father outside time, and created and established before the worlds, did not exist before He was born, but, being born outside time before the worlds, came into being as the Only Son of the Only Father. For He is neither eternal, nor co-eternal, nor co-uncreate with the Father, nor has He an existence collateral with the Father, as some say who postulate two unborn principles. But God is before all things, as being indivisible and the beginning of all. Wherefore He is before the Son also, as indeed we have learnt from thee in thy public preaching. Inasmuch then as He has His being from God, and His glorious perfections, and His life, and is entrusted with all things, for this reason God is His Source. For He rules over Him, as being His God, since He is before Him. As to such phrases as from Him, and from the womb, and I went out from the Father and am come, if they be understood to denote that the Father extends a part and, as it were, a development of that one Substance, then the Father will be of a compound nature and divisible and changeable and corporeal, according to them; and thus, as far as their words go, the incorporeal God will be subjected to the properties of matter.”

7. Who can fail to see here the slimy windings of the serpent’s track: the coiled adder, with forces concentrated for the spring, concealing the deadly weapon of its poisonous fangs within its folds? Presently we shall stretch it out and examine it, and expose the venom of this hidden head. For their plan is first to impress with certain sound statements, and then to infuse the poison of their heresy. They speak us fair, in order to work us secret harm. Yet, amid all their specious professions, I nowhere hear God’s Son entitled God; I never hear sonship attributed to the Son. They say much about His having the name of Son, but nothing about His having the nature. That is kept out of sight, that He may seem to have no right even to the name. They make a show of unmasking other heresies to conceal the fact that they are heretics themselves. They strenuously assert that there is One only, One true God, to the end that they may strip the Son of God of His true and personal Divinity.

8. And therefore, although in the two last books I have proved from the teaching of the Law and Prophets that God and God, true God and true God, true God the Father and true God the Son, must be confessed as One true God, by unity of nature and not by confusion of Persons, yet, for the complete presentation of the faith, I must also adduce the teaching of the Evangelists and Apostles. I must show from them that true God, the Son of God, is not of a different, an alien nature from that of the Father, but possesses the same Divinity while having a distinct existence through a true birth. And, indeed, I cannot think that any soul exists so witless as to fancy that, although we know God’s self-revelations, yet we cannot understand them; that, if they can be understood, would not wish to understand, or would dream that human reason can devise improvements upon them. But before I begin to discuss the facts contained in these saving mysteries, I must first humble the pride with which these heretics rebuke the names of other heresies. I shall hold up to the light this ingenious cloak for their
own impiety. I shall shew that this very means of concealing the deadliness of their teaching
serves rather to reveal and betray it, and is a widely effectual warning of the true character of
this honeyed poison.

9. For instance, these heretics would have it that the Son of God is not from God; that God was
not born from God out of, and in, the nature of God. To this end, when they have solemnly
borne witness to “One God, alone true,” they refrain from adding “The Father.” And then, in
order to escape from confessing one true Godhead of Father and Son by a denial of the true
birth, they proceed, “Not, as Valentinus maintained, that the Son is a development of the
Father.” Thus they think to cast discredit upon the birth of God from God by calling it a
“development,” as though it were a form of the Valentinian heresy. For Valentinus was the
author of foul and foolish imaginations; beside the chief God, he invented a whole household
of deities and countless powers called aeons, and taught that our Lord Jesus Christ was a
development mysteriously brought about by a secret action of will. The faith of the Church, the
faith of the Evangelists and Apostles, knows nothing of this imaginary development, sprung
from the brain of a reckless and senseless dreamer. It knows nothing of the “Depth” and
“Silence” and the thrice ten aeons of Valentinus. It knows none but One God the Father, from
Whom are all things, and One Jesus Christ, our Lord, through Whom are all things, Who is God
born from God. But it occurred to them that He, in being born as God from God, neither
withdrew anything from the Divinity of His Author nor was Himself born other than God; that
He became God not by a new beginning of Deity but by birth from the existing God; and that
every birth appears, as far as human faculties can judge, to be a development, so that even
that birth might be regarded as a development. And these considerations have induced them
to make an attack upon the Valentinian heresy of development as a means of destroying faith
in the true birth of the Son. For the experience of common life leads worldly wisdom to
suppose that there is no great difference between a birth and a development. The mind of
man, dull and slow to grasp the things of God, needs to be constantly reminded of the
principle, which I have stated more than once, that analogies drawn from human experience
are not of perfect application to the mysteries of Divine power; that their only value is that this
comparison with material objects imparts to the spirit such a notion of heavenly things that we
may rise, as by a ladder of nature, to an apprehension of the majesty of God. But the birth of
God must not be judged by such development as takes place in human births. When One is
born from One, God born from God, the circumstances of human birth enable us to apprehend
the fact; but a birth which presupposes intercourse and conception and time and travail can
give us no clue to the Divine method. When we are told that God was born from God, we must
accept it as true that He was born, and be content with that. We shall, however, in the proper
place discourse of the truth of the Divine birth, as the Gospels and the Apostles set it forth. Our
present duty has been to expose this device of heretical ingenuity, this attack upon the true
birth of Christ, concealed under the form of an attack upon a so-called development.

10. And then, in continuation of this same fraudulent assault upon the faith, their confession
proceeds thus:—“Nor, as Manichaeus has declared of the Son, a consubstantial part of the
Father.” They have already denied that He is a development, in order to escape from the
admission of His birth; now they introduce, labelled with the name of Manichaeus, the
doctrine that the Son is a portion of the one Divine substance, and deny it, in order to subvert the belief in God from God. For Manichaeus, the furious adversary of the Law and Prophets, the strenuous champion of the devil's cause and blind worshipper of the sun, taught that That which was in the Virgin's womb was a portion of the one Divine substance, and that by the Son we must understand a certain piece of God's substance which was cut off, and made its appearance in the flesh. And so they make the most of this heresy that in the birth of the Son there was a division of the one substance and use it as a means of evading the doctrine of the birth of the Only-begotten, and the very name of the unity of substance. Because it is sheer blasphemy to speak of a birth re-suiting from division of the one substance they deny any birth; all forms of birth are joined in the condemnation which they pass upon the Manichaean notion of birth by severance. And again, they abolish the unity of substance, both name and thing, because the heretics hold that the unity is divisible; and deny that the Son is God from God, by refusing to believe that He is truly possessed of the Divine nature. Why does this mad heresy profess a fictitious reverence, a senseless anxiety? The faith of the Church does, as these insane propounders of error remind us, condemn Manichaeus, for she knows nothing of the Son as a portion. She knows Him as whole God from whole God, as One from One, not severed but born. She is assured that the birth of God involves neither impoverishment of the Begetter nor inferiority of the Begotten. If this be the Church's own imagining, reproach her with the follies of a wisdom falsely claimed; but if she have learned it from her Lord, confess that the Begotten knows the manner of His begetting. She has learnt from God the Only-begotten these truths, that Father and Son are One, and that in the Son the fulness of the Godhead dwells. And therefore she loathes this attribution to the Son of a portion of the one substance; and, because she knows that He was truly born of God, she worships the Son as rightful Possessor of true Divinity. But, for the present, let us defer our full answer to these several allegations, and hasten through the rest of their denunciations.

11. What follows is this:—“Nor, as Sabellius, who makes two out of One, Son and Father at once.” Sabellius holds this in wilful blindness to the revelation of the Evangelists and Apostles. But what we see here is not one heretic honestly denouncing other. It is the wish to leave no point of union between Father and Son that prompts them to reproach Sabellius with his division of an indivisible Person; a division which does not result in the birth of a second Person, but cuts the One Person into two parts, one of which enters the Virgin's womb. But we confess a birth; we reject this confusion of two Persons in One, while yet we cleave to the Divine unity. That is, we hold that God from God means unity of nature; for that Being, Who, by a true birth from God, became God, can draw His substance from no other source than the Divine. And since He continues to draw His being, as He drew it at first, from God, He must remain true God for ever; and hence They Two are One, for He, Who is God from God, has no other than the Divine nature, and no other than the Divine origin. But the reason why this blasphemous Sabellian confusion of two Persons into One is here condemned is that they wish to rob the Church of her true faith in Two Persons in One God. But now I must examine the remaining instances of this perverted ingenuity, to save myself from the reputation of a censorious judge of sincere enquirers, moved rather by dislike than genuine fear. I shall shew, by the terms with which they wind up their confession, what is the deadly conclusion which they have skilfully contrived shall be its inevitable issue.
12. Their next clause is:—“Nor, as Hieracas, a light from a light, or a lamp with two flames, nor as if He was previously in being, and afterwards born, or created afresh, to be a Son.” Hieracas ignores the birth of the Only-begotten, and, in complete unconsciousness of the meaning of the Gospel revelations, talks of two flames from one lamp. This symmetrical pair of flames, fed by the supply of oil contained in one bowl, is His illustration of the substance of Father and Son. It is as though that substance were something separate from Either Person, like the oil in the lamp, which is distinct from the two flames, though they depend upon it for their existence; or like the wick, of one material throughout and burning at both ends, which is distinct from the flames, yet provides them and connects them together. All this is a mere delusion of human folly, which has trusted to itself, and not to God, for knowledge. But the true faith asserts that God is born from God, as light from light, which pours itself forth without self-diminution, giving what it has yet having what it gave. It asserts that by His birth He was what He is, for as He is so was He born; that His birth was the gift of the existing Life, a gift which did not lessen the store from which it was taken; and that They Two are One, for He, from Whom He is born, is as Himself, and He that was born has neither another source nor another nature, for He is Light from Light. It is in order to draw men’s faith away from this, the true doctrine, that this lantern or lamp of Hieracas is cast in the teeth of those who confess Light from Light. Because the phrase has been used in an heretical sense, and condemned both now and in earlier days, they want to persuade us that there is no true sense in which it can be employed. Let heresy forthwith abandon these groundless fears, and refrain from claiming to be the protector of the Church’s faith on the score of a reputation for zeal earned so dishonestly. For we allow nothing bodily, nothing lifeless, to have a place among the attributes of God; whatever is God is perfect God. In Him is nothing but power, life, light, blessedness, Spirit. That nature contains no dull, material elements; being immutable, it has no incongruities within it. God, because He is God, is unchangeable; and the unchangeable God begat God. Their bond of union is not, like that of two flames, two wicks of one lamp, something outside Themselves. The birth of the Only-begotten Son from God is not a prolongation in space, but a begetting; not an extension, but Light from Light. For the unity of light with light is a unity of nature, not unbroken continuation.

13. And again, what a wonderful example of heretical ingenuity is this:—“Nor as if He were previously in being, and afterwards born or created afresh, to be a Son.” God, since He was born from God, was assuredly not born from nothing, nor from things non-existent. His birth was that of the eternally living nature. Yet, though He is God, He is not identical with the pre-existing God; God was born from God Who existed before Him; in, and by, His birth He partook of the nature of His Source. If we are speaking words of our own, all this is mere irreverence; but if, as we shall prove, God Himself has taught us how to speak, then the necessity is laid upon us of confessing the Divine birth in the sense revealed by God. And it is this unity of nature in Father and in Son, this ineffable mystery of the living birth, which the madness of heresy is struggling to banish from belief, when it says, “Nor as if He were previously in being, and afterwards born, or created afresh, to be a Son.” Now who is senseless enough to suppose that the Father ceased to be Himself; that the same Person Who had previously existed was afterwards born, or created afresh, to be the Son? That God disappeared, and that His
disappearance was followed by an emergence in birth, when, in fact, that birth is evidence of the continuous existence of its Author? Or who is so insane as to suppose that a Son can come into existence otherwise than through birth? Who so void of reason as to say that the birth of God resulted in anything else than in God being born? The abiding God was not born, but God was born from the abiding God; the nature bestowed in that birth was the very nature of the Begetter. And God by His birth, which was from God into God, received, because His was a true birth, not things new-created but things which were and are the permanent possession of God. Thus it is not the pre-existent God that was born; yet God was born, and began to exist, out of and with the properties of God. And thus we see how heresy, throughout this long prelude, has been treacherously leading up to this most blasphemous doctrine. Its object being to deny God the Only-begotten, it starts with what purports to be a defence of truth, to go on to the assertion that Christ is born not from God but out of nothing, and that His birth is due to the Divine counsel of creation from the non-existent.

14. And then again, after an interval designed to prepare us for what is coming, their heresy delivers this assault;—“While the Son, put forth outside time, and created and established before the worlds, did not exist before He was born.” This “He did not exist before He was born” is a form of words by which the heresy flatters itself that it gains two ends; support for its blasphemy, and a screen for itself if its doctrine be arraigned. A support for its blasphemy, because, if He did not exist before He was born, He cannot be of one nature with His eternal Origin. He must have His beginning out of nothing, if He have no powers but such as are coeval with His birth. And a screen for its heresy, for if this statement be condemned, it furnishes a ready answer. He that did exist, it will be said, could not be born; being in existence already, He could not possibly come into being by passing through the process of birth, for the very meaning of birth is the entry into existence of the being that is born. Fool and blasphemer! Who dreams of birth in the case of Him Who is the unborn and eternal? How can we think of God, Who is, being born, when being born implies the process of birth? It is the birth of God the Only-begotten from God His Father that you are striving to disprove, and it was your purpose to escape the confession of that truth by means of this “He did not exist before He was born;” the confession that God, from Whom the Son of God was born, did exist eternally, and that it is from His abiding nature that God the Son draws His existence through birth. If, then, the Son is born from God, you must confess that His is a birth of that abiding nature; not a birth of the pre-existing God, but a birth of God from God the pre-existent.

15. But the fiery zeal of this heresy is such that it cannot restrain itself from passionate outbreak. In its effort to prove, in conformity with its assertion that He did not exist before He was born, that the Son was born from the non-existent, that is, that He was not born from God the Father to be God the Son by a true and perfect birth, it winds up its confession by rising in rage and hatred to the highest pitch of possible blasphemy:—“As to such phrases as from Him, and from the womb, and I went out front the Father and am come, if they be understood to denote that the Father extends a part, and, as it were, a development of that one substance, then the Father will be of a compound nature and divisible and changeable and corporeal, according to them; and thus, as far as their words go, the incorporeal God will be subjected to the properties of matter.” The defence of the true faith against the falsehoods of heresy would
indeed be a task of toil and difficulty, if it were needful for us to follow the processes of thought as far as they have plunged into the depths of godlessness. Happily for our purpose it is shallowness of thought that has engendered their eagerness to blaspheme. And hence, while it is easy to refute, the folly, it is difficult to amend the fool, for he will neither think out right conclusions for himself, nor accept them when offered by another. Yet I trust that they who in pious ignorance, not in wilful folly bred of self-conceit, are enchained by error, will welcome correction. For our demonstration of the truth will afford convincing proof that heresy is nothing else than folly.

16. You said in your unreason, and you are still repeating to-day, ignorant that your wisdom is a defiance of God, “As to such phrases as from Him, and from the womb, and I went out from the Father and am come,” I ask you, Are these phrases, or are they not, words of God? They certainly are His; and, since they are spoken by God about Himself, we are bound to accept them exactly as they were spoken. Concerning the phrases themselves, and the precise force of each, we shall speak i in the proper place. For the present I will only put this question to the intelligence of every reader; When we see From Himself, are we to take it as equivalent to “From some one else,” or to “From nothing,” or are we to accept it as the truth? It is not “From some one else,” for it is From Himself; that is, His Godhead has no other source than God. It is not “From nothing,” for it is From Himself; a declaration of the nature from which His birth is. It is not “Himself,” but From Himself; a statement that They are related as Father and Son. And next, when the revelation From the womb is made, I ask whether we can possibly believe that He is born from nothing, when the truth of His birth is clearly indicated in terms borrowed from bodily functions. It is not because He has bodily members, that God records the generation of the Son in the words, I bore Thee from the womb before the morning star . He uses language which assists our understanding to assure us that His Only-begotten Son was ineffably born of His own true Godhead. His purpose is to educate the faculties of men up to the knowledge of the faith, by clothing Divine verities in words descriptive of human circumstances. Thus, when He says, From the womb, He is teaching us that His Only-begotten was, in the Divine sense, born, and did not come into existence by means of creation out of nothing. And lastly, when the Son said, I went forth from the Father and am come, did He leave it doubtful whether His Divinity were, or were not, derived from the Father? He went out from the Father; that is, He had a birth, and the Father, and no other, gave Him that birth. He bears witness that He, from Whom He declares that He came forth, is the Author of His being. The proof and interpretation of all this shall be given hereafter.

17. But meanwhile let us see what ground these men have for the confidence with which they forbid us to accept as true the utterances of God concerning Himself; utterances, the authenticity of which they do not deny. What more grievous insult could be flung by human folly and insolence at God’s self-revelation, than a condemnation of it, shewn in correction? For not even doubt and Criticism will satisfy them. What more grievous than this profane handling and disputing of the nature and power of God? Than the presumption of saying that, if the Son is from God, then God is changeable and corporeal, since He has extended or developed a part of Himself to be His Son? Whence this anxiety to prove the immutability of God? We confess the birth, we proclaim the Only-begotten, for so God has taught us. You, in
order to banish the birth and the Only-begotten from the faith of the Church, confront us with an unchangeable

God, incapable, by His nature, of extension or development. I could bring forward instances of birth, even in natures belonging to this world, which would refute this wretched delusion that every birth must be an extension. And I could save you from the error that a being can come into existence only at the cost of loss to that which begets it, for there are many examples of life transmitted, without bodily intercourse, from one living creature to another. But it would be impious to deal in evidences, when God has spoken; and the utmost excess of madness to deny His authority to give us a faith, when our worship is a confession that He alone can give us life. For if life comes through Him alone, must not He be the Author of the faith which is the condition of that life? And if we hold Him an untrustworthy witness concerning Himself, how can we be sure of the life which is His gift?

18. For you attribute, most godless of heretics, the birth of the Son to an act of creative will; you say that He is not born from God, but that He was created and came into existence by the choice of the Creator. And the unity of the Godhead, as you interpret it, will not allow Him to be God, for, since God remains One, the Son cannot retain His original nature in that state into which He has been born. He has been endowed, through creation, you say, with a substance different from the Divine, although, being in a sense the Only-begotten, He is superior to God’s other creatures and works. You say that He was raised up, that He in His turn might perform the task committed to Him of raising up the created world; but that His birth did not confer upon Him the Divine nature. He was born, according to you, in the sense that He came into existence out of nothing. You call Him a Son, not because He was born from God, but because He was created by God. For you call to mind that God has deemed even holy men worthy of this title, and you consider that it is assigned to the Son in exactly the same sense in which the words, I have said, Ye are Gods, and all of you sons of the Most High, were spoken; that is, that He bears the name through the Giver’s condescension, and not by right of nature. Thus, in your eyes, He is Son by adoption, God by gift of the title, Only-begotten by favour, First-born in date, in every sense a creature, in no sense God. For you hold that His generation was not a birth from God, in the natural sense, but the beginning of the life of a created substance.

19. And now, Almighty God, I first must pray Thee to forgive my excess of indignation, and permit me to address Thee; and next to grant me, dust and ashes as I am, yet bound in loyal devotion to Thyself, freedom of utterance in this debate. There was a time when I, poor wretch, was not; before my life and consciousness and personality began to exist. It is to Thy mercy that I owe my life; and I doubt not that Thou, in Thy goodness, didst give me my birth for my good, for Thou, Who hast no need of me, wouldst never have made the beginning of my life the beginning of evil. And then, when Thou hadst breathed into me the breath of life and endowed me with the power of thought, Thou didst instruct me in the knowledge of Thyself, by means of the sacred volumes given us through Thy servants Moses and the prophets. From them I learnt Thy revelation, that we must not worship Thee as a lonely God. For their pages taught me of God, not different from Thee in nature but One with Thee in mysterious unity of substance. I learnt that Thou art God in God, by no mingling or confusion but by Thy very
nature, since the Divinity which is Thyself dwells in Him Who is from Thee. But the true
doctrine of the perfect birth revealed that Thou, the Indwelt, and Thou, the Indweller, are not
One Person, yet that Thou dost dwell in Him Who is from Thee. And the voices of Evangelists
and Apostles repeat the lesson, and the very words which fell from the holy mouth of Thy
Only-begotten are recorded, telling how Thy Son, God the Only-begotten from Thee the
Unbegotten God, was born of the Virgin as man to fulfil the mystery of my salvation; holy Thou
dwellest in Him, by virtue of His true generation from Thyself, and He in Thee, because of the
nature given in His abiding birth from Thee.

20. What is this hopeless quagmire of error into which Thou hast plunged me? For I have learnt
all this and have come to believe it; this faith is so ingrained into my mind that I have neither
the power nor the wish to change it. Why this deception of an unhappy man, this ruin of a poor
wretch in body and soul, by deluding him with falsehoods concerning Thyself? After the Red
Sea had been divided, the splendour on the face of Moses, descending from the Mount,
deceived me. He had gazed, in Thy presence, upon all the mysteries of heaven, and I believed
his words, dictated by Thee, concerning Thyself. And David, the man that was found after Thine
own heart, has betrayed me to destruction, and Solomon, who was thought worthy of the gift
of Divine Wisdom, and Isaiah, who saw the Lord of Sabaoth and prophesied, and Jeremiah
consecrated in the womb, before he was fashioned, to be the prophet of nations to be rooted
out and planted in, and Ezekiel, the witness of the mystery of the Resurrection, and Daniel, the
man beloved, who had knowledge of times, and all the hallowed band of the Prophets; and
Matthew also, chosen to proclaim the whole mystery of the Gospel, first a publican, then an
Apostle, and John, the Lord’s familiar friend, and therefore worthy to reveal the deepest
secrets of heaven, and blessed Simon, who after his confession of the mystery was set to be
the foundation-stone of the Church, and received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and all
his companions who spoke by the Holy Ghost, and Paul, the chosen vessel, changed from
persecutor into Apostle, who, as a living man abode under the deep sea and ascended into the
third heaven, who was in Paradise before his martyrdom, whose martyrdom was the perfect
offering of a flawless faith; all have deceived me.

21. These are the men who have taught me the doctrines which I hold, and so deeply am I
impregnated with their teaching that no antidote can release me from their influence. Forgive
me, O God Almighty, my powerlessness to change, my willingness to die in this belief. These
propagators of blasphemy, for so they seem to me, are a product of these last times, too
modern to avail me. It is too late for them to correct the faith which I received from Thee.
Before I had ever heard their names, I had put my trust in Thee had received regeneration
from Thee and become Thine, as still I am. I know that Thou art omnipotent; I look not that
Thou shouldst reveal to me the mystery of that ineffable birth which is secret between Thyself
and Thy Only-begotten. Nothing is impossible with Thee, and I doubt not that in begetting Thy
Son Thou didst exert Thy full omnipotence. To doubt it would be to deny that Thou an
omnipotent. For my own birth teaches me that Thou art good, and therefore I am sure that in
the birth of Thine Only-begotten Thou didst grudge Him no good gift. I believe that all that is
Thine is His, and all that is His is Thine. The creation of the world is sufficient evidence to me
that Thou art wise; and I am sure that Thy Wisdom, Who is like Thee, must have been begotten
from Thyself. And Thou art One God, in very truth, in my eyes; I will never believe that in Him, Who is God from Thee, there is ought that is not Thine. Judge me in Him, if it be sin in me that, through Thy Son, I have trusted too well in Law and Prophets and Apostles.

22. But this wild talk must cease; the rhetoric of exposing heretical folly must give place to the drudgery of framing arguments. So, I trust, those among them who are capable of being saved will set their faces towards the true faith taught by the Evangelists and Apostles, and recognise Him Who is the true Son of God, not by adoption but by nature. For the plan of our reply must be that of first proving that He is the Son of God, and therefore fully endowed with that Divine nature in the possession of which His Sonship consists. For the chief aim of the heresy, which we are considering, is to deny that our Lord Jesus Christ is true God and truly the Son of God. Many evidences assure us that our Lord Jesus Christ is, and is revealed to be, God the Only-begotten, truly the Son of God. His Father bears witness to it, He Himself asserts it, the Apostles proclaim it, the faithful believe it, devils confess it, Jews deny it, the heathen at His passion recognised it. The name of God is given Him in the right of absolute ownership, not because He has been admitted to joint use with others of the title. Every work and word of Christ transcends the power of those who bear the title of sons; the foremost lesson that we learn from all that is most prominent in His life is that He is the Son of God, and that He does not hold the name of Son as a title shared with a widespread company of friends.

23. I will not weaken the evidence for this truth by intermixing words of my own. Let us hear the Father, when the baptism of Jesus Christ was accomplished, speaking, as often, concerning His Only-begotten, in order to save us from being misled by His visible body into a failure to recognise Him as the Son. His words are:–This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. Is the truth presented here with dim outlines? Is the proclamation made in uncertain tones? The promise of the Virgin birth brought by the angel from the Holy Ghost, the guiding star of the Magi, the reverence paid Him in His cradle, the majesty, attested by the Baptist, of Him Who condescended to be baptized; all these are deemed an insufficient witness to His glory. The Father Himself speaks from heaven, and His words are, This is My Son. What means this evidence, not of titles, but of pronouns? Titles may be appended to names at will; pronouns are a sure indication of the persons to whom they refer. And here we have, in This and My, the clearest of indications. Mark the true meaning aid the purpose of the words. You have read, I have begotten sons, and have raised them up; but you did not read there My sons, for He had begotten Himself those sons by division among the Gentiles, and from the people of His inheritance. And lest we should suppose that the name Son was given as an additional title to God the Only-begotten, to signify His share by adoption in some joint heritage, His true nature is expressed by the pronoun which gives the indubitable sense of ownership. I will allow you to interpret the word Son, if you will, as signifying that Christ is one of a number, if you can furnish an instance where it is said of another of that number, This is My Son. If, on the other hand, This is My Son be His peculiar designation, why accuse the Father, when He asserts His ownership, of making an unfounded claim? When He says This is My Son, may we not paraphrase His meaning thus:–“He has given to others the title of sons, but He Himself is My own Son; I have given the name to multitudes by adoption, but this Son is My very own. Seek
not for another lest you lose your faith that This is He. By gesture and by voice, by This, and My, and Son, I declare Him to you.” And now what reasonable excuse remains for lack of faith? This, and nothing less than this, it was that the Father’s voice proclaimed. He willed that we should not be left in ignorance of the nature of Him Who came to be baptized, that He might fulfil all righteousness; that by the voice of God we might recognise as the Son of God Him Who was visible as Man, to accomplish the mystery of our salvation.

24. And again, because the life of believers was involved in the confession of this faith,—for there is no other way to eternal life than the assurance that Jesus Christ, God the Only-begotten, is the Son of God—the Apostles heard once more the voice from heaven repeating the same message, in order to strengthen this life-giving belief, in negation of which is death. When the Lord, apparelled in splendour, was standing upon the Mountain, with Moses and Elias at His side, and the three Pillars of the churches who had been chosen as witnesses to the truth of the vision and the voice, the Father spoke thus from heaven:-This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased; hear Him. The glory which they saw was not sufficient attestation of His majesty; the voice proclaims, This is My Son. The Apostles cannot face the glory of God; mortal eyes grow dim in its presence. The trust of Peter and James and John fails them, and they are prostrate in fear. But this solemn declaration, spoken from the Father’s knowledge, comes to their relief; He is revealed as His Father’s own true Son. And over and above the witness of This and My to His true Sonship, the words are uttered, Hear Him. It is the witness of the Father from heaven, in confirmation of the witness borne by the Son on earth; for we are bidden to hear Him. Though this recognition by the Father of the Son removes all doubt, yet we are bidden also to accept the Son’s self-revelation. When the Father’s voice commands us to shew our obedience by hearing Him, we are ordered to repose an absolute confidence in the words of the Son. Since, therefore, the Father has manifested His will in this message to us to hear the Son, let us hear what it is that the Son has told us concerning Himself.

25. I can conceive of no man so destitute of ordinary-reason as to recognise in each of the Gospels confessions by the Son of the humiliation to which He has submitted in taking a body upon Him,—as for instance His words, often repeated, Father, glorify Me, and Ye shall see the Son of Man, and The Father is greater than I, and, more strongly, Now is My saul troubled exceedingly, and even this, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me “?” and many more, of which I shall speak in due time,—and yet, in the face of these constant expressions of His humility, to charge Him with presumption because He calls God His Father, as when He says, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up, or, Ye have made my Father’s house an house of merchandise. I can conceive of no one foolish enough to regard His assertion, consistently made, that God is His Father, not as the simple truth sincerely stated from certain knowledge, but as a bold and baseless claim. We cannot denounce this constantly professed humility as an insolent demand for the rights of another, a laying of hands on what is not His own, an appropriation of powers which only God can wield. Nor, when He calls Himself the Son, as in, For God sent not His Son into this world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved, and in, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? can we accuse Him of what would be an equal presumption with that of calling God His Father. But what else is it than such an accusation, if we allow to Jesus Christ the name of Son by adoption
only? Do we not charge Him, when He calls God His Father, with daring to make a baseless claim? The Father’s voice from heaven says Hear Him. I hear Him saying, Father I thank Thee, and Say ye that I blasphemed, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I may not believe these names, and assume that they mean what they assert, how am I to trust and to understand? No hint is given of an alternative meaning. The Father bears witness from heaven, This is My Son; the Son on His part speaks of My Father’s house, and My Father. The confession of that name gives salvation, when faith is demanded in the question, Dost thou believe an the Son of God? The pronoun My indicates that the noun which follows belongs to the speaker. What right, I demand, have you heretics to suppose it otherwise? You contradict the Father’s word the Son’s assertion; you empty language of its meaning, and distort the words of God into a sense they cannot bear. On you alone rests the guilt of this shameless blasphemy, that God has lied concerning Himself.

26. And thus, although nothing but a sincere belief that these names are truly significant,—that, when we read, This is My Son and My Father, the words really indicate Persons of Whom, and to Whom, they were spoken—can make them intelligible, yet, lest it be supposed that Son and Father are titles the one merely of adoption, the other merely of dignity, let us see what are the attributes attached, by the Son Himself, to His name of Son. He says, All things are delivered Me of My Father, and no one knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any the Father save the Son, and he to Whom the Son will reveal Him. Are the words of which we are speaking, This is My Son and My Father, consistent, or are they not, with No one knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any the Father save the Son? For it is only by witness mutually borne that the Son can be known through the Father, and the Father through the Son. We hear the voice from heaven; we hear also the words of the Son. We have as little excuse for not knowing the Son, as we have for not knowing the Father. All things are delivered unto Him; from this All there is no exception. If They possess an equal might; if They share an equal mutual knowledge, hidden from us; if these names of Father and Son express the relation between Them, then, I demand, are They not in truth what They are in name, wielders of the same omnipotence, shrouded in the same impenetrable mystery? God does not speak in order to deceive. The Fatherhood of the Father, the Sonship of the Son, are literal truths. And now learn how facts bear out the verities which these names reveal.

27. The Son speaks thus:—For the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works which I do, bear witness of Me that the Father hath sent Me; and the Father Himself which hath sent Me hath borne witness of Me. God the Only-begotten proves His Sonship by an appeal not only to the name, but to the power; the works which He does are evidence that He has been sent by the Father. What, I ask, is the fact which these works prove? That He was sent. That He was sent, is used as a proof of His sonlike obedience and of His Father’s authority: for the works which He does could not possibly be done by any other than Him Who is sent by the Father. Yet the evidence of His works fails to convince the unbelieving that the Father sent Him. For He proceeds, And the Father Himself which hath sent Me hath borne witness of Me; and ye have neither heard His voice nor seen His shape. What was this witness of the Father concerning Him? Turn over the pages of the Gospels and review their contents. Read us other of the attestations given by the Father beside those which we have heard.
already; This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased, and Than art My Son. John, who heard these words, needed them not, for He knew the truth already. It was for our instruction that the Father spoke. But this is not all. John in the wilderness was honoured with this revelation; the Apostles were not to be denied the same assurance. It came to them in the very same words, but with an addition which John did not receive. He had been a prophet from the womb, and needed not the commandment, Hear Him. Yes; I will hear Him, and will hear none but Him and His Apostle, who heard for my instruction. Even though the books contained no further witness, borne by the Father to the Son, than that He is the Son, I have, for confirmation of the truth, the evidence of His Father’s works which He does. What is this modern slander that His name is a gift by adoption, His Godhead a lie, His titles a pretence? We have the Father’s witness to His Sonship; by works, equal to the Father’s, the Son bears witness to His own equality with the Father. Why such blindness to His obvious possession of the true Sonship which He both claims and displays. It is not through condescending kindness on the part of God the Father that Christ bears the name of Son; not by holiness that He has earned the title, as many have won it by enduring hardness in confession of the faith. Such sonship is not of right; it is by a favour, worthy of Himself, that God bestows the title. But that which is indicated by This, and My, and Hear Him, is different in kind from the other. It is the true and real and genuine Sonship.

28. And indeed the Son never makes for Himself a lower claim than is contained in this designation, given Him by His Father. The Father’s words, This is My Son, reveal His nature; those which follow, Hear Him, are a summons to us to listen to the mystery and the faith which He came down from heaven to bring; to learn that, if we would be saved, our confession must be a copy of His teaching. And in like manner the Son Himself teaches us, in words of His own, that He was truly born and truly came;–Ye neither know Me, nor know ye whence I am, for I am not came of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, Whom ye know not, but I know Him, for I am from Him, and He hath sent Me . No man knows the Father; the Son often assures us of this. The reason why He says that none knows Him but Himself, is that He is from the Father. Is it, I ask, as the result of an act of creation, or of a genuine birth, that He is from Him? If it be an act of creation, then all created things are from God. How then is it that none of them know the Father, when the Son says that the reason why He has this knowledge is that He is from Him? If He be created, not born, we shall observe in Him a resemblance to other beings who are from God. Since all, on this supposition, are from God, why is He not as ignorant of the Father as are the others? But if this knowledge of the Father be peculiar to Him, Who is from the Father, must not this circumstance also, that He is from the Father, be peculiar to Him? That is, must He not be the true Son born from the nature of God? For the reason why He alone knows God is that He alone is from God. You observe, then, a knowledge, which is peculiar to Himself, resulting from a birth which also is peculiar to Himself. You recognise that it is not by an act of creative power, but through a true birth, that He is from the Father; and that this is why He alone knows the Father, Who is unknown to all other beings which are from Him.

29. But He immediately adds, For I am from Him, and He hath sent Me, to debar heresy from the violent assumption that His being from God dates from the time of His Advent. The Gospel
revelation of the mystery proceeds in a logical sequence; first He is born, then He is sent. Similarly, in the previous declaration, we were told of ignorance, first as to Who He is, and then as to whence He is. For the words, I am from Him, and He hath sent Me, contain two separate statements, as also do the words, Ye neither know Me, nor know ye whence I am. Every man is born in the flesh; yet does not universal consciousness make every man spring from God? How then can Christ assert that either He, or the source of His being, is unknown? He can only do so by assigning His immediate parentage to the ultimate Author of existence; and, when He has done this, He can demonstrate their ignorance of God by their ignorance of the fact that He is the Son of God. Let the victims of this wretched delusion reflect upon the words, Ye neither know Me, nor know ye whence I am. All things, they argue, are from nothing; they allow of no exception. They even dare to misrepresent God the Only-begotten as sprung from nothing. How can we explain this ignorance of Christ, and of the origin of Christ, on the part of the blasphemers? The very fact that, as the Scripture says, they know not whence He is, is an indication of that unknowable origin from which He springs. If we can say of a thing that it came into existence out of nothing, then we are not ignorant of its origin; we know that it was made out of nothing, and this is a piece of definite knowledge. Now He Who came is not the Author of His own being; but He Who sent Him is true, Whom the blasphemers know not. He it was Who sent Him; and they know not that He was the Sender. Thus the Sent is from the Sender; from Him Whom they know not as His Author. The reason why they know not Who Christ is, is that they know not from Whom He is. None can confess the Son who denies that He was born; none can understand that He was born who has formed the opinion that He is from nothing. And indeed He is so far from being made out of nothing, that the heretics cannot tell whence He is.

30. They are blankly ignorant who separate the Divine name from the Divine nature; ignorant, and content to be ignorant. But let them listen to the reproof which the Son inflicts upon unbelievers for their want of this knowledge, when the Jews said that God was their Father:—If God were your Father, ye would surely love Me; for I went forth from God, and am come; neither am I come of Myself, but He sent Me. The Son of God has here no word of blame for the devout confidence of those who combine the confession that He is true God, the Son of God, with their own claim to be God’s sons. What He is blaming is the insolence of the Jews in daring to claim God as their Father, when meanwhile they did not love Him, the Son:—If God were your Father, ye would surely love Me; for I went forth from God. All, who have God for their Father through faith, have Him for Father through that same faith whereby we confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. But to confess that He is the Son in a sense which covers the whole company of saints; to say, in effect, that He is one of the sons of God;—what faith is there in that? Are not all the rest, feeble created beings though they be, in that sense sons? In what does the eminence of a faith, which has confessed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, consist, if He, as one of a multitude of sons, have the name only, and not the nature, of the Son? This unbelief has no love for Christ; it is a mockery of the faith for these perverters of the truth to claim God as their Father. If He were their Father, they would love Christ because He had gone forth from God. And now I must enquire the meaning of this going forth from God. His going forth is obviously different from His coming, for the two are mentioned side by side in this passage, I went forth from God and am come. In order to elucidate the separate meanings
of I went forth from God and I am come, He immediately subjoins, Neither am I come of Myself, but He sent Me. He tells us that He is not the source of His own existence in the words, Neither am I come of Myself. In them He tells us that He has proceeded forth a second time from God, and has been sent by Him. But when He tells us that they who call God their Father must love Himself because He has gone forth from God, He makes His birth the reason for their love. Went forth carries back our thoughts to the incorporeal birth, for it is by love of Christ, Who was born from Him, that we must gain the right of devoutly claiming God for our Father. For when the Son says, He that hateth Me hateth My Father also, this My is the assertion of a relation to the Father which is shared by none. On the other hand, He condemns the man who claims God as his Father, and loves not the Son, as using a wrongful liberty with the Father’s name; since he who hates Him, the Son, must hate the Father also, and none can be devoted to the Father save those who love the Son. For the one and only reason which He gives for loving the Son is His origin from the Father. The Son, therefore, is from the Father, not by His Advent, but by His birth; and love for the Father is only possible to those who believe that the Son is from Him.

31. To this the Lord’s words bear witness;–I will not say unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and believe that I went forth from God, and am come from the Father into this world. A complete faith concerning the Son, which accepts and loves the truth that He went forth from God, has access to the Father without need of His intervention. The confession that the Son was born and sent from God wins for it direct audience and love from Him. Thus the narrative of His birth and coming must be taken in the strictest and most literal sense. I went forth from God, He says, conveying that His nature is exactly that which was given Him by His birth; for what being but God could go forth from God, that is, could enter upon existence by birth from Him? Then He continues, And am come from the Father into this world. To assure us that this going forth from God means birth from the Father, He tells us that He came from the Father into this world. The latter statement refers to His incarnation, the former to His nature. And again, His putting on record first the fact of His going forth from God, and then His coming from the Father, forbids us to identify the going with the coming. Coming from the Father, and going forth from God, are not synonymous; they might be paraphrased as ‘Birth’ and ‘Presence,’ and are as different in meaning as these. It is one thing to have gone forth from God, and entered by birth upon a substantial existence; another to have come from the Father into this world to accomplish the mysteries of our salvation.

32. In the order of our defence, as I have arranged it in my mind, this has seemed the most convenient place for proving that, thirdly, the Apostles believed our Lord Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, not merely in name but in nature, not by adoption but by birth.

It is true that there remain unmentioned many and most weighty words of God the Only-begotten concerning Himself, in which the truth of His Divine birth is set so clearly forth as to silence any whisper of objection. Yet since it would be unwise to burden the reader’s mind with an accumulation of evidence, and ample proof has been already given of the genuineness of His birth, I will hold back the remainder of His utterances till later stages of our enquiry. For we
have so arranged I the course of our argument that now, after hearing the Father’s witness and the Son’s self-revelation, we are to be instructed by the Apostles’ faith in the true and, as we must confess, the truly born Son of God. We must see whether they could find in the words of the Lord, I went forth from God, any other meaning than this, that there was in Him a birth of the Divine nature.

33. After many dark sayings, spoken in parables by Him Whom they already knew as the Christ foretold by Moses and the Prophets, Whom Nathanael had confessed as the Son of God and King of Israel, Who had Himself reproached Philip, in his question about the Father, for not perceiving, by the works which He did, that the Father was in Him and He in the Father; after He had already often taught them that He was sent from the Father; still, it was not till they had heard Him assert that He had gone forth from God that they confessed, in the words which immediately follow in the Gospel;–His disciples say unto Him, Now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now therefore we are sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee; by this we believe that Thou wentest forth from God. What was there so marvellous in this form of words, Went forth from God, which He had used? Had ye seen, O holy and blessed men, who for the reward of your faith have received the keys of the kingdom of heaven and power to bind and to loose in heaven and earth, works so great, so truly Divine, wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and do ye yet profess that it was not until He had first told you that He had gone forth from God that ye attained the knowledge of the truth? And yet ye had seen water at the marriage turned into the marriage wine; one nature becoming another nature, whether it were by change, or by development, or by creation. And your hands had broken up the five loaves into a meal for that great multitude, and when all were satisfied ye had found that twelve baskets were needed to contain the fragments of the loaves; a small quantity of matter, in the process of relieving hunger, had multiplied into a great quantity of matter of the same nature. And ye had seen withered hands recover their suppleness, the tongues of dumb men loosened into speech, the feet of the lame made swift to run, the eyes of the blind endowed with vision, and life restored to the dead. Lazarus, who stank already, had risen to his feet at a word. He was summoned from the tomb and instantly came forth, without a pause between the word and its fulfilment. He was standing before you, a living man, while yet the air was carrying the odour of death to your nostrils. I speak not of other exertions of His mighty, His Divine powers. And is it, in spite of all this, only after ye heard Him say, I went forth from God, that ye understood Who He is that had been sent from heaven? Is this the first time that the truth had been told you without a proverb? The first time that the powers of His nature made it manifest to you that He went forth from God? And this in spite of His silent scrutiny of the purposes of your will, of His needing not to ask you concerning anything as though He were ignorant, of His universal knowledge? For all these things, done in the power and in the nature of God, are evidence that He must have gone forth from God.

34. By this the holy Apostles did not understand that He had gone forth, in the sense of having been sent, from God. For they had often heard Him confess, in His earlier discourses, that He was sent; but what they hear now is the express statement that He had gone forth from God. This opens their eyes to perceive from His works His Divine nature. The fact that He had gone
forth from God makes clear to them His true Divinity, and so they say, Now therefore we are sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee; by this we believe that Thou wentest forth from God. The reason why they believe that He went forth from God is that He both can, and does, perform the works of God. Their perfect assurance of His Divine nature is the result of their knowledge, not that He is come from God, but that He did go forth from God. Accordingly we find that it is this truth, now heard for the first time, which clenches their faith. The Lord had made two statements; I went forth from God, and I am come from the Father into this world. One of these, I am come from the Father into this world, they had often heard, and it awakens no surprise. But their reply makes it manifest that they now believe and understand the other, that is, I went forth from God. Their answer, By this we believe that Thou wentest forth from God, is a response to it, and to it only; they do not add, ‘And art come from the Father into this world.’ The one statement is welcomed with a declaration of faith; the other is passed over in silence. The confession was wrung from them by the sudden presentation of a new truth, which convinced their reason and constrained them to avow their certainty. They knew already that He, like God, could do all things; but His birth, which accounted for that omnipotence, had not been revealed. They knew that He had been sent from God, but they knew not that He had gone forth from God. Now at last, taught by this utterance to understand the ineffable and perfect birth of the Son, they confess that He had spoken to them without a proverb.

35. For God is not born from God by the ordinary process of a human childbirth; this is no case of one being issuing from another by the exertion of natural forces. That birth is pure and perfect and stainless; indeed, we must call it rather a proceeding forth than a birth. For it is One from One; no partition, or withdrawing, or lessening, or efflux, or extension, or suffering of change, but the birth of living nature from living nature. It is God going forth from God, not a creature picked out to bear the name of God. His existence did not take its beginning out of nothing, but went forth from the Eternal; and this going forth is rightly entitled a birth, though it would be false to call it a beginning. For the proceeding forth of God from God is a thing entirely different from the coming into existence of a new substance. And though our apprehension of this truth, which is ineffable, cannot be defined in words, yet the teaching of the Son, as He reveals to us that He went forth from God, imparts to it the certainty of an assured faith.

36. A belief that the Son of God is Son in name only and not in nature, is not the faith of the Gospels and of the Apostles. If this be a mere title, to which adoption is His only claim; if He be not the Son in virtue of having proceeded forth from God, whence, I ask, was it that the blessed Simon Bar-Jona confessed to Him, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God? Because He shared with all mankind the power of being born as one of the sons of God through the sacrament of regeneration? If Christ be the Son of God only in this titular way, what was the revelation made to Peter, not by flesh and blood, but by the Father in heaven? What praise could he deserve for making a declaration which was universally applicable? What credit was due to Him for stating a fact of general knowledge? If He be Son by adoption, wherein lay the blessedness of Peter’s confession, which offered a tribute to the Son to which, in that case, He had no more title than any member of the company of saints? The Apostle’s
faith penetrates into a region closed to human reasoning. He had, no doubt, often heard, He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and He that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me. Hence he knew well that Christ had been sent; he had heard Him, Whom he knew to have been sent, making the declaration, All things are delivered unto Me of the Father, and no one knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any one the Father save the Son. What then is this truth, which the Father now reveals to Peter, which receives the praise of a blessed confession? It cannot have been that the names of ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ were novel to him; he had heard them often. Yet he speaks words which the tongue of man had never framed before:—Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. For though Christ, while dwelling in the body, had avowed Himself to be the Son of God, yet now for the first time the Apostle’s faith had recognised in Him the presence of the Divine nature. Peter is praised not merely for his tribute of adoration, but for his recognition of the mysterious truth; for confessing not Christ only, but Christ the Son of God. It would clearly have sufficed for a payment of reverence, had he said, Thou art the Christ, and nothing more. But it would have been a hollow confession, had Peter only hailed Him as Christ, without confessing Him the Son of God. And so his words Thou art declare that what is asserted of Him is strictly and exactly true to His nature. Next, the Father’s utterance, This is My Son, had revealed to Peter that he must confess Thou art the Son of God, for in the words This is, God the Revealer points Him out, and the response, Thou art, is the believer’s welcome to the truth. And this is the rock of confession whereon the Church is built. But the perceptive faculties of flesh and blood cannot attain to the recognition and confession of this truth. It is a mystery, Divinely revealed, that Christ must be not only named, but believed, the Son of God. Was it only the Divine name; was it not rather the Divine nature that was revealed to Peter? If it were the name, he had heard it often from the Lord, proclaiming Himself the Son of God. What honour, then, did he deserve for announcing the name? No; it was not the name; it was the nature, for the name had been repeatedly proclaimed.

37. This faith it is which is the foundation of the Church; through this faith the gates of hell cannot prevail against her. This is the faith which has the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatsoever this faith shall have loosed or bound on earth shall be loosed or bound in heaven. This faith is the Father’s gift by revelation; even the knowledge that we must not imagine a false Christ, a creature made out of nothing, but must confess Him the Son of God, truly possessed of the Divine nature. What blasphemous madness and pitiful folly is it, that will not heed the venerable age and faith of that blessed martyr, Peter himself, for whom the Father was prayed that his faith might not fail in temptation; who twice repeated the declaration of love for God that was demanded of him, and was grieved that he was tested by a third renewal of the question, as though it were a doubtful and wavering devotion, and then, because this third trial had cleansed him of his infirmities, had the reward of hearing the Lord’s commission, Feed My sheep, a third time repeated; who, when all the Apostles were silent, alone recognised by the Father’s revelation the Son of God, and won the pre-eminence of a glory beyond the reach of human frailty by his confession of his blissful faith! What are the conclusions forced upon us by the study of his words? He confessed that Christ is the Son of God; you, lying bishop of the new apostolate, thrust upon us your modern notion that Christ is a creature, made out of nothing. What violence is this, that so distorts the glorious words? The
very reason why he is blessed is that he confessed the Son of God. This is the Father’s revelation, this the foundation of the Church, this the assurance of her permanence. Hence has she the keys of the kingdom of heaven, hence judgment in heaven and judgment on earth. Through revelation Peter learnt the mystery hidden from the beginning of the world, proclaimed the faith, published the Divine nature, confessed the Son of God. He who would deny all this truth and confess Christ a creature, must first deny the apostleship of Peter, his faith, his blessedness, his episcopate, his martyrdom. And when he has done all this, he must learn that he has severed himself from Christ; for it was by confessing Him that Peter won these glories.

38. Do you think, wretched heretic of today, that Peter would have been the more blessed now, if he had said, ‘Thou art Christ, God’s perfect creature, His handiwork, though excelling all His other works. Thy beginning was from nothing, and through the goodness of God, Who alone is good, the name of Son has been given Thee by adoption, although in fact Thou wast not born from God?’ What answer, think you, would have been given to such words as these, when this same Peter’s reply to the announcement of the Passion, Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be, was rebuked with, Get thee behind Me, Satan, thou art an offence unto Me? Yet Peter could plead his human ignorance in extenuation of his guilt, for as yet the Father had not revealed all the mystery of the Passion; still, mere defect of faith was visited with this stern condemnation. Now, why was it that the Father did not reveal to Peter your true confession, this faith in an adopted creature? I fancy that God must have grudged him the knowledge of the truth; that He wanted to postpone it to a later age, and keep it as a novelty for your modern preachers. Yes; you may have a change of faith, if the keys of heaven are changed. You may have a change of faith, if there is a change in that Church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. You may have a change of faith, if there shall be a fresh apostolate, binding and loosing in heaven what it has bound and loosed on earth. You may have a change of faith, if another Christ the Son of God, beside the true Christ, shall be preached. But if that faith which confesses Christ as the Son of God, and that faith only, received in Peter’s person every accumulated blessing, then perforce the faith which proclaims Him a creature, made out of nothing, holds not the keys of the Church and is a stranger to the apostolic faith and power. It is neither the Church’s faith, nor is it Christ’s.

39. Let us therefore cite every example of a statement of the faith made by an Apostle. All of them, when they confess the Son of God, confess Him not as a nominal and adoptive Son, but as Son by possession of the Divine nature. They never degrade Him to the level of a creature, but assign Him the splendour of a true birth from God. Let John speak to us, while he is waiting, just as he is, for the coming of the Lord; John, who was left behind and appointed to a destiny hidden in the counsel of God, for he is not told that he shall not die, but only that he shall tarry. Let him speak to us in his own familiar voice:—No one hath seen God at any time, except the Only-begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father. It seemed to him that the name of Son did not set forth with sufficient distinctness His true Divinity, unless he gave an external support to the peculiar majesty of Christ by indicating the difference between Him and all others. Hence he not only calls Him the Son, but adds the further designation of the Only-begotten, and so cuts away the last prop from under this imaginary adoption. For the fact that
40. I defer the consideration of the words, which is in the bosom of the Father, to a more appropriate place. My present enquiry is into the sense of Only-begotten, and the claim upon us which that sense may make. And first let us see whether the word mean, as you assert, a perfect creature of God; Only-begotten being equivalent to perfect, and Son a synonym for creature. But John described the Only-begotten Son as God, not as a perfect creature. His words, Which is in the bosom of the Father, shew that he anticipated these blasphemous designations; and, indeed, he had heard his Lord say, For God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. God, Who loved the world, gave His Only-begotten Son as a manifest token of His love. If the evidence of His love be this, that He bestowed a creature upon creatures, gave a worldly being on the world’s behalf, granted one raised up from nothing for the redemption of objects equally raised up from nothing, this cheap and petty sacrifice is a poor assurance of His favour towards us. Gifts of price are the evidence of affection the greatness of the surrender of the greatness of the love. God, Who loved the world, gave not an adopted Son, but His own, His Only-begotten. Here is personal interest, true Sonship, sincerity; not creation, or adoption, or pretence. Herein is the proof of His love and affection, that He gave His own, His Only-begotten Son.

41. I appeal not now to any of the titles which are given to the Son; there is no loss in delay when it is the result of an embarrassing abundance of choice. My present argument is that a successful result implies a sufficient cause; some clear and cogent motive must underlie every effectual performance. And so the Evangelist has been obliged to reveal his motive in writing. Let us see what is the purpose which he confesses;–But these things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The one reason which he alleges for writing his Gospel is that all may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. If it be sufficient for salvation to believe that He is the Christ, why does he add The Son of God? But if the true faith be nothing less than the belief that Christ is not merely Christ, but Christ the Son of God, then assuredly the name of Son is not attached to Christ as a customary appendage due to adoption, seeing that it is essential to salvation. If then salvation consists in the confession of the name, must not the name express the truth? If the name express the truth, by what authority can He be called a creature? It is not the confession of a creature, but the confession of the Son, which shall give us salvation.

42. To believe, therefore, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is true salvation, is the acceptable service of an unfeigned faith. For we have no love within us towards God the Father except through faith in the Son. Let us hear Him speaking to us in the words of the Epistle;–Every one that loveth the Father loveth Him that is born from Him. What, I ask, is the meaning of being born from Him? Can it mean, perchance, being created by Him? Does the Evangelist lie in saying that He was born from God, while the heretic more correctly teaches that He was created? Let us all listen to the true character of this teacher of heresy. It is written, He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. What will you do now, champion of the creature, conjurer up of a novel Christ out of nothing? Hear the title which awaits you, if you
persist in your assertion. Or do you think that perhaps you may still describe the Father and the Son as Creator and Creature, and yet by an ingenious ambiguity of language escape being recognised as antichrist? If your confession embraces a Father in the true sense, and a Son in the true sense, then I am a slanderer, assailing you with a title of infamy which you have not deserved. But if in your confession all Christ’s attributes are spurious and nominal, and not His own, then learn from the Apostle the right description of such a faith as yours; and hear what is the true faith which believes in the Son. The words which follow are these;—He that denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath both the Son and the Father. He that denies the Son is destitute of the Father; he that confesses and has the Son has the Father also. What room is there here for adoptive names? Does not every word tell of the Divine nature? Learn how completely that nature is present.

43. John speaks thus;—For we know that the Son of God is came, and was incarnate for us, and suffered, and rose again from the dead and took us for Himself, and gave us a good understanding that we may know Him that is true, and may be in His true Son Jesus Christ. He is true and is life eternal and our resurrection. Wisdom doomed to an evil end, void of the Spirit of God, destined to possess the spirit and the name of Antichrist, blind to the truth that the Son of God came to fulfil the mystery of our salvation, and unworthy in that blindness to perceive the light of that sovereign knowledge! For this wisdom asserts that Jesus Christ is no true Son of God, but a creature of His, Who bears the Divine name by adoption. In what dark oracle of hidden knowledge was the secret learnt? To whose research do we owe this, the great discovery of the day? Were you he that lay upon the bosom of the Lord? You he to whom in the familiar intercourse of love He revealed the mystery? Was it you that alone followed Him to the foot of the Cross? And while He was charging you to receive Mary as your Mother, did He teach you this secret, as the token of His peculiar love for yourself? Or did you run to the Sepulchre, and reach it sooner even than Peter, and so gain this knowledge there? Or was it amid the throngs of angels, and sealed books whose clasps none can open, and manifold influences of the signs of heaven, and unknown songs of the eternal choirs, that the Lamb, your Guide, revealed to you this godly doctrine, that the Father is no Father, the Son no Son, nor nature, nor truth? For you transform all these into lies. The Apostle, by that most excellent knowledge that was granted him, speaks of the Son of God as true. You assert His creation, proclaim His adoption, deny His birth. While the true Son of God is eternal life and resurrection to us, for him, in whose eyes He is not true, there is neither eternal life nor resurrection. And this is the lesson taught by John, the disciple beloved of the Lord.

44. And the persecutor, who was converted to be an Apostle and a chosen vessel, delivers the very same message. What discourse is there of his which does not presuppose the confession of the Son? What Epistle of his that does not begin with a confession of that mysterious truth? When he says, We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, and, God sent His Son to be the likeness of the flesh of sin, and again, God is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, is any loophole left for heretical misrepresentation? His Son, Son of God; so we read, but nothing is said of His adoption, or of God’s creature. The name expresses the nature; He is God’s Son, and therefore the Sonship is true. The Apostle’s confession asserts the genuineness of the relation. I see not how the Divine nature of the Son could have been more
completely stated. That Chosen Vessel has proclaimed in no weak or wavering voice that Christ is the Son of Him Who, as we believe, is the Father. The Teacher of the Gentiles, the Apostle of Christ, has left us no uncertainty, no opening for error in his presentation of the doctrine. He is quite clear upon the Subject of children by adoption; of those who by faith attain so to be and so to be named. in his own words, For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. This is the name granted to us, who believe, through the sacrament of regeneration; our confession of the faith wins us this adoption. For our work done in obedience to the Spirit of God gives us the title of sons of God. Abba, Father, is the cry which we raise, not the expression of our essential nature. For that essential nature of ours is untouched by that tribute of the voice. It is one thing for God to be addressed as Father; another thing for Him to be the Father of His Son.

45. But now let us learn what is this faith concerning the Son of God, which the Apostle holds. For though there is no single discourse, among the many which he delivered concerning the Church's doctrine, in which he mentions the Father without also making confession of the Son, yet, in order to display the truth of the relation which that name conveys with the utmost definiteness of which human language is capable, he speaks thus:--What then? If God be for us, who can be against us? Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us. Can Son, by any remaining possibility, be a title received through adoption, when He is expressly called God's own Son? For the Apostle, wishing to make manifest the love of God towards us, uses a kind of comparison, to enable us to estimate how great that love is, when He says that it was His own Son Whom God did not spare. He suggests the thought that this was no sacrifice of an adopted Son, on behalf of those whom He purposed to adopt, of a creature for creatures, but of His Son for strangers, His own Son for those to whom He had willed to give a share in the name of sons. Seek out the full import of the term, that you may understand the extent of the love. Consider the meaning of own; mark the genuineness of the Sonship which it implies. For the Apostle now describes Him as God's own Son; previously he had often spoken of Him as God's Son, or Son of God. And though many manuscripts, through a want of apprehension on the part of the translators, read in this passage His Son, instead of His own, Son, yet the original Greek, the tongue in which the Apostle wrote, is more exactly rendered by His own than by His. And though the casual reader may discern no great difference between His own and His, yet the Apostle, who in all his other statements had spoken of His Son, which is, in the Greek, ton eautou uion , in this passage uses the words os ge tou idiou uion ouk efeisato , that is, Who spared not His own Son, expressly and emphatically indicating His true Divine nature, Previously he had declared that through the Spirit of adoption there are many sons; now his object is to point to God's own Son, God the Only-begotten.

46. This is no universal and inevitable error; they who deny the Son cannot lay the fault upon their ignorance, for ignorance of the truth which they deny is impossible. They describe the Son of God as a creature who came into being out of nothing. If the Father has never asserted this, nor the Son confirmed it, nor the Apostles proclaimed it, then the dating which prompts their allegation is bred not of ignorance, but of hatred for Christ. When the Father says of His Son, This is, and the Son of Himself, It is He that talketh with Thee, and when Peter confesses
Thou art, and John assures us, This is the true God, and Paul is never weary of proclaiming Him as God’s own Son, I can conceive of no other motive for this denial than hatred. The plea of want of familiarity with the subject cannot be urged in extenuation of their guilt. It is the suggestion of that Evil One, uttered now through these prophets and forerunners of his coming; he will utter it himself hereafter when he comes as Antichrist. He is using this novel engine of assault to shake us m our saving confession of the faith. His first object is to pluck from our hearts the confident assurance of the Divine nature of the Son; next, he would fill our minds with the notion of Christ’s adoption, and leave no room for the memory of His other claims. For they who hold that Christ is but a creature, must regard Christ as Antichrist, since a creature cannot be God’s own Son, and therefore He must lie in calling Himself the Son of God. Hence also they who deny that Christ is the Son of God must have Antichrist for their Christ.

47. What is the hope of which this futile passion of yours is in pursuit? What is the assurance of your salvation which emboldens you with blasphemous licence of tongue to maintain that Christ is a creature, and not a Son? It was your duty to know this mystery, from the Gospels, and to hold the knowledge fast. For though the Lord can do all things, yet He resolved that every one who prays for His effectual help must earn it by a true confession of Himself. Not, indeed, that the suppliant’s confession could augment the power of Him, Who is the Power of God; but the earning was to be the reward of faith. So, when He asked Martha, who was entreat ing Him for Lazarus, whether she believed that they who had believed in Him should not die eternally, her answer expressed the trust of her soul;—Yea, Lord, I believe that Than art the Christ, the Son of God, Who art come into this world. This confession is eternal life; this faith has immortality. Martha, praying for her brother’s life, was asked whether she believed this. She did so believe. What life does the denier expect, from whom does he hope to receive it, when this belief, and this only, is eternal life? For great is the mystery of this faith, and perfect the blessedness which is the fruit of this confession.

48. The Lord had given sight to a man blind from his birth; the, Lord of nature had removed a defect of nature. Because this blind man had been born for the glory of God, that God’s work might be made manifest in the work of Christ, the Lord did not delay till the man had given evidence of his faith by a confession of it. But though he knew not at the time Who it was that had bestowed the great gift of eyesight, yet afterwards he earned a knowledge of the faith. For it was not the dispelling of his blindness that won him eternal life. And so, when the man was already healed and had suffered ejection from the synagogue, the Lord put to him the question, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? This was to save him from the thought of loss, in exclusion from the synagogue, by the certainty that confession of the true faith had restored him to immortality. When the man, his soul still unenlightened, made answer, Who is He, Lord, that I may believe on Him? The Lord’s reply was, Thou hast bath seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. For He was minded to remove the ignorance of the man whose sight he had restored, and whom He was now enriching with the knowledge of so glorious a faith. Does the Lord demand from this man, as from others, who prayed Him to heal them, a confession of faith as the price of their recovery? Emphatically not. For the blind man could already see when he was thus addressed. The Lord asked the question in order to receive the answer, Lord, I believe. The faith which spoke in that answer was to receive not sight, but life. And now let us
examine carefully the force of the words. The Lord asks of the man, Dost thou believe an the Son of God? Surely, if a simple confession of Christ, leaving His nature in obscurity, were a complete expression of the faith, the terms of the question would have been, ‘Dost thou believe in Christ?’ But in days to come almost every heretic was to make a parade of that name, confessing Christ and yet denying that He is the Son; and therefore He demands, as the condition of faith, that we should believe in what is peculiar to Himself, that is, in His Divine Sonship. What is the profit of faith in the Son of God, if it be faith in a creature, when He requires of us faith in Christ, not the creature, but the Son, of God.

49. Did devils fail to understand the full meaning of this name of Son? For we are valuing the heretics at their true worth if we refute them no longer by the teaching of Apostles, but out of the mouth of devils. They cry, and cry often, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God most High? Truth wrung this confession from them against their will; their reluctant obedience is a witness to the force of the Divine nature within Him. When they fly from the bodies they have long possessed, it is His might that conquers them; their confession of His nature is an act of reverence. These transactions display Christ as the Son of God both in power and in name. Can you hear, amid all these cries of devils confessing Him, Christ once styled a creature, or God’s condescension in adopting Him once named?

50. If you will not learn Who Christ is from those that know Him, learn it at least from those that know Him not. So shall the confession, which their ignorance is forced to make, rebuke your blasphemy. The Jews did not recognise Christ, come in the body, though they knew that the true Christ must be the Son of God. And so, when they were employing false witnesses, without one word of truth in their testimony, against Him, their priest asked Him, Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? They knew not that in Him the mystery was fulfilled; they knew that the Divine nature was the condition of its fulfilment. They did not ask whether Christ be the Son of God; they asked whether He were Christ, the Son of God. They were wrong as to the Person, not as to the Sonship, of Christ. They did not doubt that Christ is the Son of God; and thus, while they asked whether He were the Christ, they asked without denying that the Christ is the Son of God. What, then, of your faith, which leads you to deny what even they, in their blindness, confessed? The perfect knowledge is this, to be assured that Christ, the Son of God, Who existed before the worlds, was also born of the Virgin. Even they, who know nothing of His birth from Mary, know that He is the Son of God. Mark the fellowship with Jewish wickedness in which your denial of the Divine Sonship has involved you! For they have put on record the reason of their condemnation:–And by our Law He aught to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. Is not this the same charge which you are blasphemously bringing against Him, that, while you pronounce Him a creature, He calls Himself the Son? He confesses Himself the Son, and they declare Him guilty of death: you too deny that He is the Son of God. What sentence do you pass upon Him? You have the same repugnance to His claim as had the Jews. You agree with their verdict; I want to know whether you will quarrel about the sentence. Your offence, in denying that He is the Son of God, is exactly the same as theirs, though their guilt is less, for they sinned in ignorance. They knew not that Christ was born of Mary, yet they never doubted that Christ must be the Son of God. You are perfectly aware of the fact that Christ was born of Mary, yet you refuse Him the name of Son of God. If they come
to the faith, there awaits them an un-imperilled salvation, because of their past ignorance. Every gate of safety is shut to you, because you persist in denying a truth which is obvious to you. For you are not ignorant that He is the Son of God; you know it so well that you allow Him the name as a title of adoption, and feign that He is a creature adorned, like others, with the right to call Himself a Son. You rob Him, as far as you can, of the Divine nature; if you could, you would rob Him of the Divine name as well. But, because you cannot, you divorce the name from the nature; He is called a Son, but He shall not be the true Son of God.

51. The confession of the Apostles, for whom by a word of command the raging wind and troubled sea were restored to calm, was an opportunity for you. You might have confessed, as they did, that He is God’s true Son; you might have borrowed their very words, Of a truth, this is the Son of God. But an evil spirit of madness is driving you on to shipwreck of your life; your reason is distracted and overwhelmed, like the ocean tormented by the fury of the storm.

52. If this witness of the voyagers seem conclusive to you because they were Apostles,—though to me it comes with the greater weight for the same reason, though it surprises me the less,—accept at any rate a corroboration given by the Gentiles. Hear how the soldier of the Roman cohort, one of the stern guard around the Cross, was humbled to the faith. The centurion sees the mighty workings of Christ’s power; and this is the witness borne by him:—Truly this was the Son of God. The truth was forced upon him, after Christ had given up the ghost, by the torn veil of the Temple, and the earth that shook, and the rocks that were rent, and the sepulchres that were opened, and the dead that rose. And it was the confession of an unbeliever. The deeds that were done convinced him that Christ’s nature was omnipotent; he names Him the Son of God, being assured of His true Divinity. So cogent was the proof, so strong the man’s conviction, that the force of truth conquered his will, and even he who had nailed Christ to the Cross was driven to confess that He is the Lord of eternal glory, truly the Son of God.

Book 7 (Back to the Top)

1. This is the seventh book of our treatise against the wild extravagance of modern heresy. In order of place it must follow its predecessors; in order of importance, as an exposition of the mysteries of the right faith, it precedes. and excels them all. I am well aware how hard and steep is the path of evangelical instruction up which we are mounting. The fears inspired by consciousness of my own incapacity are plucking me back, but the warmth of faith urges me on; the assaults of heresy heat my blood, and the dangers of the ignorant excite my compassion. I fear to speak, and yet I cannot be silent. A double dread subdues my spirit; it may be that speech, it may be that silence, will render me guilty of a desertion of the truth. For this cunning heresy has hedged itself round with marvellous devices of perverted ingenuity. First there is the semblance of devotion; then the language carefully chosen to lull the suspicions of a candid listener; and again, the accommodation of their views to secular philosophy; and finally, their withdrawing of attention from manifest truth by a pretended explanation of Divine methods. Their loud profession of the unity of God is a fraudulent imitation of the faith; their assertion that Christ is the Son of God a play upon words for the
delusion of their hearers; their saying that He did not exist before He was born a bid for the support of the world’s philosophers; their confession of God as incorporeal and immutable leads, by a display of fallacious logic, up to a denial of the birth of God from God. They turn our arguments against ourselves; the Church’s faith is made the engine of its own destruction. They have contrived to involve us in the perplexing position of an equal danger, whether we reason with them or whether we refrain. For they use the fact that we allow certain of their assumptions to pass unchallenged as an argument on behalf of those which we do contradict.

2. We call to mind that in the preceding books the reader has been urged to study the whole of that blasphemous manifesto, and mark how it is animated throughout by the one aim of propagating the belief that our Lord Jesus Christ is neither God, nor Son of God. Its authors argue that He is permitted to use the names of God and of Son by virtue of a certain adoption, though neither Godhead nor Sonship be His by nature. They use the fact, true in itself, that God is immutable and incorporeal, as an argument against the birth of the Son from Him. They value the truth, that God the Father is One, only as a weapon against our faith in the Godhead of Christ; pleading that an incorporeal nature cannot be rationally conceived as generating another, and that our faith in One God is inconsistent with the confession of God from God. But our earlier books have already refuted and foiled this argument of theirs by an appeal to the Law and the Prophets. Our defence has followed, step by step, the course of their attack. We have set forth God from God, and at the same time confessed One true God; shewing that this presentation of the faith neither falls short of the truth by ascribing singleness of Person to the One true God, nor adds to the faith by asserting the existence of a second Deity. For we confess neither an isolated God, nor yet two Gods. Thus, neither denying that God is One nor maintaining that He is alone, we hold the straight road of truth. Each Divine Person is in the Unity, yet no Person is the One God. Next, our purpose being to demonstrate the irrefragable truth of this mystery by the evidence of the Evangelists and Apostles, our first duty has been to make our readers acquainted with the nature, truly subsisting and truly born, of the Son of God; to demonstrate that He has no origin external to God, and was not created out of nothing, but is the Son, born from God. This is a truth which the evidence adduced in the last book has placed beyond all doubt. The assertion that He bears the name of Son by virtue of adoption has been put to silence, and He stands forth as a true Son by a true birth. Our present task is to prove from the Gospels that, because He is true Son, He is true God also. For unless He be true Son He cannot be true God, nor true God unless He be true Son.

3. Nothing is more harassing to human nature than the sense of impending danger. If calamities unknown or unanticipated befall us, we may need pity, yet we have been free from care; no load of anxiety has oppressed us. But he whose mind is full of possibilities of trouble suffers already a torment in his fear. I who now am venturing out to sea, am a mariner not unused to shipwreck, a traveller who knows by experience holy brigands lurk in the forests, an explorer of African deserts aware of the danger from scorpions and asps and basilisks. I enjoy no instant of relief from the knowledge and fear of present danger. Every heretic is on the watch, noting every word as it drops from my mouth. The whole progress of my argument is
infested with ambuscades and pitfalls and snares. It is not of the road, of its hardness or steepness, that I complain; I am following in the footsteps of the Apostles, not choosing my own path. My trouble is the constant peril, the constant dread, of wandering into some ambush, of stumbling into some pit, of being entangled in some net. My purpose is to proclaim the unity of God, in the sense of the Law and Prophets and Apostles. Sabellius is at hand, eager with cruel kindness to welcome me, on the strength of this unity, and swallow me up in his own destruction. If I withstand him, and deny that, in the Sabellian sense, God is One a fresh heresy is ready to receive me, pointing out that I teach the existence of two Gods. Again, if I undertake to tell holy the Son of God was born from Mary, Photinus, the Ebion of our day, will be prompt to twist this assertion of the truth into a confirmation of his lie. I need mention no other heresies save one; all the world knows that they are alien from the Church. It is one that has been often denounced, often rejected, yet it preys upon our vitals still. Galatia has reared a large brood of godless assertors of the unity of God. Alexandria has sown broadcast, over almost the whole world, her denial, which is an affirmation, of the doctrine of two Gods. Pannonia upholds her pestilent doctrine that the only birth of Jesus Christ was from the Virgin. And the Church, distracted by these rival faiths, is in danger of being led by means of truth into a rejection of truth. Doctrines are being forced upon her for godless ends, which, according to the use that is made of them, will either support or overthrow the faith. For instance, we cannot, as true believers, assert that God is One, if we mean by it that He is alone; for faith in a lonely God denies the Godhead of the Son. If, on the other hand, we assert, as we truly can, that the Son is God, we are in danger, so they fondly imagine, of deserting the truth that God is One. We are in peril on either hand; we may deny the unity or we may maintain the isolation. But it is a danger which has no terrors for the foolish things of the word. Our adversaries are blind to the fact that His assertion that He is not alone is consistent with unity; that though He is One He is not solitary.

4. But I trust that the Church, by the light of her doctrine, will so enlighten the world’s vain wisdom, that, even though it accept not the mystery of the faith, it will recognise that in our conflict with heretics we, and not they, are the true representatives of that mystery. For great is the force of truth; not only is it its own sufficient witness, but the more it is assailed the more evident it becomes; the daily shocks which it receives only increase its inherent stability. It is the peculiar property of the Church that when she is buffeted she is triumphant, when she is assaulted with argument she proves herself in the right, when she is deserted by her supporters she holds the field. It is her wish that all men should remain at her side and in her bosom; if it lay with her, none would become unworthy to abide under the shelter of that august mother, none would be cast out or suffered to depart from her calm retreat. But when heretics desert her or she expels them, the loss she endures, in that she cannot save them, is compensated by an increased assurance that she alone can offer bliss. This is a truth which the passionate zeal of rival heresies brings into the clearest prominence. The Church, ordained by the Lord and established by His Apostles, is one for all; but the frantic folly of discordant sects has severed them from her. And it is obvious that these dissensions concerning the faith result from a distorted mind, which twists the words of Scripture into conformity with its opinion, instead of adjusting that opinion to the words of Scripture. And thus, amid the clash of mutually destructive errors, the Church stands revealed not only by her own teaching, but by
that of her rivals. They are ranged, all of them, against her; and the very fact that she stands single and alone is her sufficient answer to their godless delusions. The hosts of heresy assemble themselves against her; each of them can defeat all the others, but not one can win a victory for itself. The only victory is the triumph which the Church celebrates over them all. Each heresy wields against its adversary some weapon already shattered, in another instance, by the Church’s condemnation. There is no point of union between them, and the outcome of their internecine struggles is the confirmation of the faith.

5. Sabellius sweeps away the birth of the Son, and then preaches the unity of God; but he does not doubt that the mighty Nature, which acted in the human Christ, was God. He shuts his eyes to the revealed mystery of the Sonship; the works done seem to him so marvellous that he cannot believe that He who performed them could undergo a true generation. When he hears the words, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also,” he jumps to the blasphemous conclusion of an inseparable and indistinguishable identity of nature in Father and Son, because he fails to see that the revelation of the birth is the mode in which Their unity of nature is manifested to us. For the fact that the Father is seen in the Son is a proof of the Son’s Divinity, not a disproof of His birth. Thus our knowledge of Each of Them is conditioned by our knowledge of the Other, for there is no difference of nature between them and, since in this respect they are One, a reverent study of the character of Either will give us a true insight into the nature of Both. For, indeed, it is certain that He, Who was in the form of God, must in His self-revelation present Himself to us in the exact aspect of the form of God. Again, this perverse and insane delusion derives a further encouragement from the words, “I and the Father are One.” From the fact of unity in the same nature they have impiously deduced a confusion of Persons; their interpretation, that the words signify a single Power, contradicts the tenour of the passage. For “I and the Father are One” does not indicate a solitary God. The use of the conjunction shews clearly that more than one Person is signified; and are requires a plurality of subject. Moreover, the One is not incompatible with a birth. Its sense is, that the Two Persons have the one nature in common. The One is inconsistent with difference; the are with identity.

6. Set our modern heresy in array against the delusion, equally wild, of Sabellius; let them make the best of their case. The new heretics will advance the passage. The Father is greater than I. Neglecting the mystery of the Divine birth, and the mystery of God’s emptying Himself and taking flesh, they will argue the inferiority of His nature from His assertion that the Father is the greater. They will plead against Sabellius that Christ is a Son, in so far as One can be a Son who is inferior to the Father and needs to ask for restoration to His glory, and fears to die and indeed did die. In reply Sabellius will adduce His deeds in evidence of His Divine nature; and while our novel heresy, to escape the admission of Christ’s true Sonship, will heartily agree with him that God is One, Sabellius will emphatically assert the same article of the faith, in the sense that no Son exists. The one side lays stress upon the action of the Son; the other urges that in that action God is manifest. The one will demonstrate the unity, the other disprove the identity. Sabellius will defend his position thus:—“The works that were done could have been done by no other nature than the Divine. Sins were remitted, the sick were healed, the lame ran, the blind saw, the dead lived. God alone has power for this. The words I and the Father are
One could only have been spoken from self-knowledge; no nature, outside the Father’s, could have uttered them. Why then suggest a second substance, and urge me to believe in a second God? These works are peculiar to God; the One God wrought them.” His adversaries, animated by a hatred, equally venomous, for the faith, will argue that the Son is unlike in nature to God the Father:—“You are ignorant of the mystery of your salvation. You must believe in a Son through Whom the worlds were made, through Whom man was fashioned, Who gave the Law through Angels, Who was born of Mary, Who was sent by the Father, was crucified, dead and buried, Who rose again from the dead and is at the right hand of God, Who is the Judge of quick and dead. Unto Him we must use again, we must confess Him, we must earn our place in His kingdom.” Each of the two enemies of the Church is fighting the Church’s battle. Sabellius displays Christ as God by the witness of the Divine nature manifested in His works; Sabellius’ antagonists confess Christ, on the evidence of the revealed faith, to be the Son of God.

7. Again, how glorious a victory for our faith is that in which Ebion in other words, Photinus—both wins the day and loses it! He castigates Sabellius for denying that the Son of God is Man, and in his turn has to submit to the reproaches of Arian fanatics for failing to see that this Man is the Son of God. Against Sabellius he calls the Gospels to his aid, with their evidence concerning the Son of Mary; Arius deprives him of this ally by proving that the Gospels make Christ something more than the Son of Mary; Sabellius denies that there is a Son of God; against him Photinus elevates man to the place of Son. Photinus will hear nothing of a Son born before the worlds; against him, Arius denies that the only birth of the Son of God was His human birth. Let them defeat one another to their hearts’ content, for every victory which each of them wins is balanced by a defeat. Our present adversaries are ranted in the matter of the Divine nature of the Son; Sabellius in the matter of the Son’s revealed existence; Photinus is convicted of ignorance, or else of falsehood, in his denial of the Son’s birth before the worlds. Meanwhile the Church, whose faith is based upon the teaching of Evangelists and Apostles, holds fast, against Sabellius, her assertion that the Son exists; against Arius, that He is God by nature; against Photinus, that He created the universe. And she is the more convinced of her faith, in that they cannot combine to contradict it. For Sabellius points to the works of Christ in proof of the Divinity of Him Who wrought them, though he knows not that the Son was their Author. The Arians grant Him the name of Son, though they confess not that the true nature of God dwelt in Him. Photinus maintains His manhood, though in maintaining it he forgets that Christ was born as God before the worlds. Thus, in their several assertions and denials, there are points in which each heresy is in the right in defence or attack; and the result of their conflicts is that the truth of our confession is brought into clearer light.

8. I felt that I must spare a little space to point this out. It has been from no love for amplification, but that it might serve as a warning. First, I wished to expose the vague and confused character of this crowd of heresies, whose mutual feuds turn, as we have seen, to our advantage. Secondly, in my warfare against the blasphemous doctrines of modern heresy; that is, in my task of proclaiming that both God the Father and God the Son are God,—in other words, that Father and Son are One in name, One in nature, One in the kind of Divinity which they possess,—I wished to shield myself from any charge which might be brought against me, either as an advocate of two Gods or of one lonely and isolated Deity. For in God the Father
and God the Son, as I have set them forth, no confusion of Persons can be detected; nor in my exposition of Their common nature can any difference between the Godhead of the One and of the Other be discerned. In the preceding book I have sufficiently refuted, by the witness of the Gospels, those who deny the subsistence of I God the Son by a true birth from God; my present duty is to shew that He, Who in the truth of His nature is Son of God, is also in the truth of His nature God. But this proof must not degenerate into the fatal profession of a solitary God, or of a second God. It shall manifest God as One yet not alone; but in its care to avoid the error of making Him lonely it shall not fall into the error of denying His unity.

9. Thus we have all these different assurances of the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ:—His name, His birth, His nature, His power, His own assertion. As to the name, I conceive that no doubt is possible. It is written, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. What reason can there be for suspecting that He is not what His name indicates? And does not this name clearly describe His nature? If a statement be contradicted, it must be for some reason. What reason, I demand, is there in this instance for denying that He is God? The name is given Him, plainly and distinctly, and unqualified by any incongruous addition which might raise a doubt. The Word, we read, which was made flesh, was none other than God. Here is no loophole for any such conjecture as that He has received this name as a favour or taken it upon Himself, so possessing a titular Godhead which is not His by nature.

10. Consider the other recorded instances in which this name was given by favour or assumed. To Moses it was said, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh. Does not this addition, to Pharaoh, account for the title? Did God impart to Moses the Divine nature? Did He not rather make Moses a god in the sight of Pharaoh, who was to be smitten with terror when Moses’ serpent swallowed the magic serpents and returned into a rod, when he drove back the venomous flies which he had called forth, when he stayed the hail by the same power wherewith he had summoned it, and made the locusts depart by the same might which had brought them; when in the wonders that he wrought the magicians saw the finger of God? That was the sense in which Moses was appointed to be god to Pharaoh; he was feared and entreated, he chastised and healed. It is one thing to be appointed a god; it is another thing to be God. He was made a god to Pharaoh; he had not that nature and that name wherein God consists. I call to mind another instance of the name being given as a title; that where it is written, I have said, Ye are gods. But this is obviously the granting of a favour. I have said proves that it is no definition, but only a description by One Who chooses to speak thus, A definition gives us knowledge of the object defined; a description depends on the arbitrary will of the speaker. When a speaker is manifestly conferring a title, that title has its origin only in the speaker’s words, not in the thing itself. The title is not the name which expresses its nature and kind.

11. But in this case the Word in very truth is God; the essence of the Godhead exists in the Word, and that essence is expressed in the Word’s name. For the name Word is inherent in the Son of God as a consequence of His mysterious birth, as are also the names Wisdom and Power. These, together with the substance which is His by a true birth, were called into existence to be the Son of God; yet, since they are the elements of God’s nature, they are still immanent in Him in undiminished extent, although they were born from Him to be His Son.
For, as we have said so often, the mystery which we preach is that of a Son Who owes His existence not to division but to birth. He is not a segment cut off, and so incomplete, but an Offspring born, and therefore perfect; for birth involves no diminution of the Begetter, and has the possibility of perfection for the Begotten. And therefore the titles of those substantive properties are applied to God the Only-begotten, for when He came into existence by birth it was they which constituted His perfection; and this although they did not thereby desert the Father, in Whom, by the immutability of His nature, they are eternally present. For instance, the Word is God the Only-begotten, and yet the Unbegotten Father is never without His Word. Not that the nature of the Son is that of a sound which is uttered. He is God from God, subsisting through a true birth; God’s own Son, born from the Father, indistinguishable from Him in nature, and therefore inseparable. This is the lesson which His title of the Word is meant to teach us. And in the same way Christ is the Wisdom and the Power of God; not that He is, as He is often regarded, the inward activity of the Father’s might or thought, but that His nature, possessing through birth a true substantial existence, is indicated by these names of inward forces. For an object, which has by birth an existence of its own, cannot be regarded as a property; a property is necessarily inherent in some being and can have no independent existence. But it was to save us from concluding that the Son is alien from the Divine nature of His Father that He, the Only-begotten from the eternal God His Father, born as God into a substantial existence of His own, has had Himself revealed to us under these names of properties, of which the Father, out of Whom He came into existence, has suffered no diminution. Thus He, being God, is nothing else than God. For when I hear the words, And the Word was God, they do not merely tell me that the Son was called God; they reveal to my understanding that He is God. In those previous instances, where Moses was called god and others were styled gods, there was the mere addition of a name by way of title. Here a solid essential truth is stated; The Word was God. That was indicates no accidental title, but an eternal reality, a permanent element of His existence, an inherent character of His nature.

12. And now let us See whether the confession of Thomas the Apostle, when he cried, My Lord and My God, corresponds with this assertion of the Evangelist. We see that he speaks of Him, Whom he confesses to be God, as My God. Now Thomas was undoubtedly familiar with those words of the Lord, Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One. How then could the faith of an Apostle become so oblivious of that primary command as to confess Christ as God, when life is conditional upon the confession of the Divine unity? It was because, in the light of the Resurrection, the whole mystery of the faith had become visible to the Apostle. He had often heard such words as, I and the Father are One, and, All things that the Father hath are Mine, and, I in the Father and the Father in Me; and now he can confess that the name of God expresses the nature of Christ, without peril to the faith. Without breach of loyalty to the One God, the Father, his devotion could now regard the Son of God as God, since he believed that everything contained in the nature of the Son was truly of the same nature with the Father. No longer need he fear that such a confession as his was the proclamation of a second God, a treason against the unity of the Divine nature; for it was not a second God Whom that perfect birth of the Godhead had brought into being. Thus it was with full knowledge of the mystery of the Gospel that Thomas confessed his Lord and his God. It was not a title of honour; it was a confession of nature. He believed that Christ was God in substance and in power. And the Lord,
in turn, shews that this act of worship was the expression not of mere reverence, but of faith, when He says, Because than hast seen, thou hast believed; blessed are they which have not seen, and have believed. For Thomas had seen before he believed. But, you ask, What was it that Thomas believed? That, beyond a doubt, which is expressed in his words, My Lord and my God. No nature but that of God could have risen by its own might from death to life; and it is this fact, that Christ is God, which was confessed by Thomas with the confidence of an assured faith. Shall we, then, dream that His name of God is not a substantial reality, when that name has been proclaimed by a faith based upon certain evidence? Surely a Son devoted to His Father, One Who did not His own will but the will of Him that sent Him, Who sought not His own glory but the glory of Him from Whom He came, would have rejected the adoration involved in such a name as destructive of that unity of God which had been the burden of His teaching. Yet, in fact, He confirms this assertion of the mysterious truth, made by the believing Apostle; He accepts as His own the name which belongs to the nature of the Father. And He teaches that they are blessed who, though they have not seen Him rise from the dead, yet have believed, on the assurance of the Resurrection, that He is God.

13. Thus the name which expresses His nature proves the truth of our confession of the faith. For the name, which indicates any single substance, points out also any other substance of the same kind; and, in this instance, there are not two substances but one substance, of the one kind. For the Son of God is God; this is the truth expressed in His name. The one name does not embrace two Gods; for the one name God is the name of one indivisible nature. For since the Father is God and the Son is God, and that name which is peculiar to the Divine nature is inherent in Each, therefore the Two are One. For the Son, though He subsists through a birth from the Divine nature, yet preserves the unity in His name; and this birth of the Son does not compel loyal believers to acknowledge two Gods, since our confession declares that Father and Son are One, both in nature and in name. Thus the Son of God has the Divine name as the result of His birth. Now the second step in our demonstration was to be that of shewing that it is by virtue of His birth that He is God. I have still to bring forward the evidence of the Apostles that the Divine name is used of Him in an exact sense; but for the present I purpose to continue our enquiry into the language of the Gospels.

14. And first I ask what new element, destructive of His Godhead, can have been imported by birth into the nature of the Son? Universal reason rejects the supposition that a being can become different in nature, by the process of birth, from the being to which its birth is due; although we recognise the possibility that from parents, different in kind, an offspring sharing the nature of both, yet diverse from either, may be propagated. The fact is familiar in the case of beasts, both tame and wild. But even in this case there is no real novelty; the new qualities already exist, concealed in the two different parental natures, and are only developed by the connexion. The birth of their joint offspring is not the cause of that offspring’s difference from its parents. The difference is a gift from them of various diversities, which are received and combined in one frame. When this is the case as to the transmission and reception even of bodily differences, is it not a form of madness to assert that the birth of God the Only-begotten was the birth from God of a nature inferior to Himself? For the giving of birth is a function of the true nature of the transmitter of life; and without the presence and action of that true
nature there can be no birth. The object of all this heat and passion is to prove that there was no birth, but a creation, of the Son of God; that the Divine nature is not His origin and that He does not possess that nature in His personal subsistence, but draws, from what was non-existent, a nature different in kind from the Divine. They are angry because He says, That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. For, since God is a Spirit, it is clear that in One born from Him there can be nothing alien or different from that Spirit from which He was born. Thus the birth of God constitutes Him perfect God. And hence also it is clear that we must not say that He began to exist, but only that He was born. For there is a sense in which beginning is different from birth. A thing which begins to exist either comes into existence out of nothing, or develops out of one state into another, ceasing to be what it was before; so, for instance, gold is formed out of earth, solids melt into liquids, cold changes to warmth, white to red, water breeds moving creatures, lifeless objects torn into living. In contrast to all this, the Son of God did not begin, out of nothing, to be God, but was born as God; nor had He an existence of another kind before the Divine. Thus He Who was born to be God had neither a beginning of His Godhead, nor yet a development up to it. His birth retained for Him that nature out of which He came into being; the Son of God, in His distinct existence, is what God is, and is nothing else.

15. Again, any one who is in doubt concerning this matter may gain from the Jews an accurate knowledge of Christ’s nature; or rather learn that He was truly born from the Gospel, where it is written, Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him because He not only broke the Sabbath, but said also that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God. This passage is unlike most others in not giving us the words spoken by the Jews, but the Apostle’s explanation of their motive in wishing to kill the Lord. We see that no plea of misapprehension can excuse the wickedness of these blasphemers; for we have the Apostle’s evidence that the true nature of Christ was fully revealed to them. They could speak of His birth:–He said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Was not His clearly a birth of nature from nature, when He published the equality of His nature by speaking of God, by name, as His own Father? Now it is manifest that equality consists in the absence of difference between those who are equal. Is it not also manifest that the result of birth must be a nature in which there is an absence of difference between Son and Father? And this is the only possible origin of true equality; birth can only bring into existence a nature equal to its origin. But again, we can no more hold that there is equality where there is confusion, than we can where there is diversity. Thus equality, as of the image, is incompatible with isolation and with diversity; for equality cannot dwell with difference, nor yet in solitude.

16. And now, although we have found the sense of Scripture, as we understand it, in harmony with the conclusions of ordinary reason, the two agreeing that equality is incompatible either with diversity or with isolation, yet we must seek a fresh support for Our contention from actual words of our Lord. For only so can we check that licence of arbitrary interpretation whereby these bold traducers of the faith would even venture to cavil at the Lord’s solemn self-revelation. His answer to the Jews was this:–He said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Was not His clearly a birth of nature from nature, when He published the equality of His nature by speaking of God, by name, as His own Father? Now it is manifest that equality consists in the absence of difference between those who are equal. Is it not also manifest that the result of birth must be a nature in which there is an absence of difference between Son and Father? And this is the only possible origin of true equality; birth can only bring into existence a nature equal to its origin. But again, we can no more hold that there is equality where there is confusion, than we can where there is difference. Thus equality, as of the image, is incompatible with isolation and with diversity; for equality cannot dwell with difference, nor yet in solitude.
Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath given all judgment to the Son, that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him. The course of our argument, as I had shaped it in my mind, required that each several point of the debate should be handled singly; that, since we had been taught that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God in name, in birth, in nature, in power, in self-revelation, our demonstration of the faith should establish each successive point in that order. But His birth is a barrier to such a treatment of the question; for a consideration of it includes a consideration of His name and nature and power and self-revelation. For His birth involves all these, and they are His by the fact that He is born. And thus our argument concerning His birth has taken such a course that it is impossible for us to keep these other matters back for separate discussion in their turn.

17. The chief reason why the Jews wished to kill the Lord was that, in calling God His Father, He had made Himself equal with God; and therefore He put His answer, in which He reproved their evil passion, into the form of an exposition of the whole mystery of our faith. For just before this, when He had healed the paralytic and they had passed their judgment upon Him that He was worthy of death for breaking the Sabbath, He had said, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Their jealousy had been inflamed to the utmost by the raising of Himself to the level of God which was involved in this use of the name of Father. And now He wishes to assert His birth and to reveal the powers of His nature, and so He says, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do. These opening words of His reply are aimed at that wicked zeal of the Jews, which hurried them on even to the desire of slaying Him. It is in reference to the charge of breaking the Sabbath that He says, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. He wished them to understand that His practice was justified by Divine authority; and He taught them by the same words that His work must be regarded as the work of the Father, Who was working in Him all that He wrought. And again, it was to subdue the jealousy awakened by His speaking of God as His Father that He uttered those words, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do. Lest this making of Himself equal to God, as having the name and nature of God’s Son, should withdraw men’s faith from the truth that He had been born, He says that the Son can do nothing but what He sees the Father do. Next, in confirmation of the saving harmony of truths in our confession of Father and of Son, He displays this nature which is His by birth; a nature which derives its power of action not from successive gifts of strength to do particular deeds, but from knowledge. He shews that this knowledge is not imparted by the Father’s performance of any bodily work, as a pattern, that the Son may imitate what the Father has previously done; but that, by the action of the Divine nature, He had come to share the subsistence of the Divine nature, or, in other words, had been born as Son from the Father. He told them that, because the power and the nature of God dwelt consciously within Him, it was impossible for Him to do anything which He had not seen the Father doing; that, since it is in the might of the Father that God the Only-begotten performs His works His liberty of action coincides in its range with His knowledge of the powers of the nature of God the Father; a nature inseparable from Himself, and lawfully owned by Him in virtue of His birth. For God sees
not after a bodily fashion, but possesses, by His nature, the vision of Omnipotence.

18. The next words are, For what things soever He—the Father—doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. This likewise is added to indicate His birth; whatsoever and same to indicate the true Divinity of His nature. Whatsoever and same make it impossible that there should be any actions of His that are different from or outside, the actions of the Father. Thus He, Whose nature has power to do all the same things as the Father, is included in the same nature with the Father. But when, in contrast with this, we read that all these same things are done by the Son likewise, the fact that the works are like those of Another is fatal to the supposition that He Who does them works in isolation. Thus the same things that the Father does are all done likewise by the Son. Here we have clear proof of His true birth, and at the same time a convincing attestation of the Mystery of our faith, which, with its foundation in the Unity of the nature of God, confesses that there resides in Father and Son an indivisible Divinity. For the Son does the same things as the Father, and does them likewise; while acting in like manner He does the same things. Two truths are combined in one proposition; that His works are done likewise proves His birth; that they are the same works proves His nature.

19. Thus the progressive revelation contained in our Lord’s reply is at one with the progressive statement of truth in the Church’s confession of faith. Neither of them divides the nature, and both declare the birth. For the next words of Christ are, For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth; and He will shew Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. Can there be any other purpose in this revelation of the manner in which God works, except that of inculcating the true birth; the faith in a subsisting Son born from the subsisting God, His Father? The only other explanation is that God the Only-begotten was so ignorant that He needed the instruction conveyed in this showing; but the reckless blasphemy of the suggestion makes this alternative impossible. For He, knowing, as He does, everything that He is taught, has no need of the teaching. And accordingly, after the words, The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth, we are next informed that all this shewing is for our instruction in the faith; that the Father and the Son may have their equal share in our confession, and we be saved, by this statement that the Father shews all that He does to the Son, from the delusion that the Son’s knowledge is imperfect. With this object He goes on to say, And He will shew Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. We see that the Son has full knowledge of the future works which the Father will shew Him hereafter. He knows that He will be shewn how, after His Father’s example, He is to give life to the dead. For He says that the Father will shew to the Son things at which they shall marvel; and at once proceeds to tell them what these things are; For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. The power is equal because the nature is one and the same. The shewing of the works is an aid, not to ignorance in Him, but to faith in us. It conveys to the Son no knowledge of things unknown, but it imparts to us the confidence to proclaim His birth, by assuring us that the Father has shewn to Him all
works that He Himself can do. The terms used in this Divine discourse have been chosen with the utmost deliberation, lest any vagueness of language should suggest a difference of nature between the Two. Christ says that the Father’s works were shewn Him, instead of saying that, to enable Him to perform them, a mighty nature was given Him. Hereby He wishes to reveal to us that this shewing was a substantive part of the process of His birth, since, simultaneously with that birth, there was imparted to Him by the Father’s love a knowledge of the works which the Father willed that He should do. And again, to save us from being led, by this declaration of the shewing, to suppose that the Son’s nature is ignorant and therefore different from the Father’s, He makes it clear that He already knows the things that are to be shewn Him. So far, indeed, is He from needing the authority of precedent to enable Him to act, that He is to give life to whom He will. To will implies a free nature, subsisting with power to choose in the blissful exercise of omnipotence.

20. And next, lest it should seem that to give life to whom He will is not within the power of One Who has been truly born, but is only the prerogative of ingenerate Omnipotence, He hastens to add, For the Father judgeth no man, but hath given all judgment to the Son. The statement that all judgment is given teaches both His birth and His Sonship; for only a nature which is altogether one with the Father’s could possess all things; and a Son can possess nothing, except by gift. But all judgment has been given Him for He quickens whom He will. Now we cannot suppose that judgment is taken away from the Father, although He does not exercise it; for the Son’s whole power of judgment proceeds from the Father’s, being a gift from Him. And there is no concealment of the reason why judgment has been given to the Son, for the words which follow are, But He hath given all judgment to the Son, that all men may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father Which hath sent Him. What possible excuse remains for doubt, or for the irreverence of denial? The reason for the gift of judgment is that the Son may receive an honour equal to that which is paid to the Father; and thus he who dishonours the Son is guilty of dishonouring the Father also. How, after this proof, can we imagine that the nature given Him by birth is different from the Father’s, when He is the Father’s equal in work, in power, in honour, in the punishment awarded to gainsayers? Thus this whole Divine reply is nothing else than an unfolding of the mystery of His birth. And the only distinction that it is right or possible to make between Father and Son is that the Latter was born; yet born in such a sense as to be One with His Father.

21. Thus the Father works hitherto and the Son works. In Father and Son you have the names which express Their nature in relation to Each other. Note also that it is the Divine nature, that through which God works, that is working here. And remember, lest you fall into the error of imagining that the operation of two unlike natures is here described, how it was said concerning the blind man, That the works of God may be made manifest in him, I must work the works of Him that sent Me. You see that in his case the work wrought by the Son is the Father’s work; and the Son’s work is God’s work. The remainder of the discourse which we are considering also deals with works; but my defence is at present only concerned with assigning the whole work to Both, and pointing out that They are at one in Their method of working, since the Son is employed upon that work which the Father does hitherto. The
sanction contained in this fact that, by virtue of His Divine birth, the Father is working with Him in all that He does, will save us from supposing that the Lord of the Sabbath was doing wrong in working on the Sabbath. His Sonship is not affected, for there is no confusion of His Divinity with the Father’s, and no negation of it; His Godhead is not affected, for His Divine nature is untouched. Their unity is not affected, for no difference is revealed to sever Them; and Their unity is not presented in such a light as to contradict Their distinct existence. First recognise the Sonship of the Son; The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do Here His birth is manifest; because of i. He can do nothing of Himself till He sees it bring done. He cannot be unbegotten, because He can do nothing of Himself; He has no power of initiation, and therefore He must have been born. But the fact that He can see the Father’s works proves that He has the comprehension which belongs to the conscious Possessor of Divinity. Next, mark that He does possess this true Divine nature;—For what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. And now that we have seen Him endowed with the powers of that nature, note how this results in unity, how one nature dwells in the Two;—That all men may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. And then, lest reflection on this unity entangle you in the delusion of a solitary and self-contained God, take to heart the mystery of the faith manifested in these words, He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father Which hath sent Him. The rage and cunning of heresy may do their worst; our position is impregnable. He is the Son, because He can do nothing of Himself; He is God, because, whatever the Father does, He does the same; They Two are One, because He is equal in honour to the Father and does the very same works; He is not the Father, because He is sent. So great is the wealth of mysterious truth contained in this one doctrine of the birth! It embraces His name, His nature, His power, His self-revelation; for everything conveyed to Him in His birth must be contained in that nature from which His birth is derived. Into His nature no element of any substance different in kind from that of His Author is introduced, for a nature which springs from one nature only must be entirely one with that nature which is its parent. An unity is that which, containing no discordant elements, is one in kind with itself; an unity constituted through birth cannot be solitary; for solitude can have but a single occupant, while an unity constituted through birth implies the conjunction of Two.

22. And furthermore, let His own Divine words bear witness to Himself. He says, They that are of My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all, and no man shall be able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand. I and the Father are one. What lethargy can blunt so utterly, the edge of our understanding as to render so precise a statement for one moment obscure to us? What proud sophistry can play such pranks with human docility as to persuade those, who have learnt from these words the knowledge of what God is that they must not recognise God in Him Whose Godhead was here revealed to them? Heresy ought either to bring forward other Gospels in support of its doctrine; or else, if our existing Gospels are the only documents which teach of God, why do they not believe the lessons taught? If they are the only source of knowledge, why not draw faith, as well as knowledge, from them? Yet now we find that their faith is held in defiance of their knowledge; and hence it is a faith rooted not in knowledge, but in sin; a faith of bold irreverence, instead of reverent humility, towards the truth confessedly known.
God the Only-begotten, as we have seen, fully assured of His own nature, reveals with the utmost precision of language the mystery of His birth. He reveals it, ineffable though it is, in such wise that we can believe and confess it; that we can understand that He was born and believe that He has the nature of God and is One with the Father, and One with Him in such a sense that God is not alone nor Son another name for Father, but that in very truth He is the Son. For, firstly, He assures us of the powers of His Divine nature, saying of His sheep, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. It is the utterance of conscious power, this confession of free and irresistible energy, that will allow no man to pluck His sheep from His hand. But more than this; not only has He the nature of God, but He would have us know that nature is His by birth from God, and hence He adds, That which the Father has given Me is greater than all. He makes no secret of His birth from the Father, for what He received from the Father He says is greater than all. And He Who received it, received it at His birth, not after His birth, and yet it came to Him from Another, for He received it. But He, Who received this gift from Another, forbids us to suppose that He Himself is different in kind from That Other, and does not eternally subsist with the same nature as that of Him Who gave the gift, by saying, No man shall be able to pluck them out of My, Father's hand. None can pluck them out of His hand, for He has received from His Father that which is greater than all things. What, then, means this contradictory assertion that none can pluck them from His Father's hand? It is the Son's hand which received them from the Father, the Father's hand which gave them to the Son: in what sense is it said that what cannot be plucked from the Son's hand cannot be plucked from the Father's hand? Hear, if you wish to know:—I and the Father are one. The Son's hand is the Father's hand. For the Divine nature does not deteriorate or cease to be the same in passing through birth: nor yet is this sameness a bar to our faith in the birth, for in that birth no alien element was admitted into His nature. And here He speaks of the Son's hand, which is the hand of the Father, that by a bodily similitude you may learn the power of the one Divine nature which is in Both; for the nature and the power of the Father is in the Son. And lastly, that in this mysterious truth of the birth you may discern the true and indistinguishable unity of the nature of God, the words were spoken, I and the Father are One. They were spoken that in this unity we might see neither difference nor solitude; for They are Two, and yet no second nature came into being through that true birth and generation.

23. There still remains, if I read them aright, the same desire in these maddened souls, though their opportunity for fulfilling it is lost. Their bitter hearts still cherish a longing for mischief which they can no longer hope to satisfy. The Lord is on His throne in heaven, and the furious hatred of heresy cannot drag Him, as the Jews did, to the Cross. But the spirit of unbelief is the same, though now it takes the form of rejecting His Godhead. They bid defiance to His words, though they cannot deny that He spoke them. They vent their hatred in blasphemy; instead of stones they shower abuse. If they could they would bring Him down from His throne to a second crucifixion. When the Jews were moved to wrath by the novelty of Christ's teaching we read, The Jews therefore took up stones to stone Him. He answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from the Father; far which of those works do ye stone Me? The Jews answered Him, For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God. I bid you, heretic, to recognise herein your own deeds, your own words. Be sure that you are their partner, for you have made their unbelief your pattern.
It was at the words, I and the Father are One, that the Jews took up stones. Their godless irritation at the revelation of that saving mystery hurried them on even to an attempt to slay. There is no one whom you can stone; but is your guilt in denying Him less than theirs? The will is the same, though it is frustrated by His throne in heaven. Nay, it is you that are more impious than the Jew. He lifted his stone against the Body, you lift yours against the Spirit; he as he thought, against man, you against God; he against a sojourner on earth, you against Him that sits upon the throne of majesty; he against One Whom he knew not, you against Him Whom you confess; he against the mortal Christ, you against the Judge of the universe. The Jew says, Being Man; you say, ‘Being a creature.’ You and he join in the cry, Makest Thyself God, with the same insolence of blasphemy. You deny that He is God begotten of God; you deny that He is the Son by a true birth; you deny that His words, I and the Father are One, contain the assertion of one and the same nature in Both. You foist upon us in His stead a modern, a strange, an alien god; you make Him God of another kind from the Father, or else not God at all, as not subsisting by a birth from God.

24. The mystery contained in those words, I and the Father are One, moves you to wrath. The Jew answered, Thou, being a man makest Thyself God; your blasphemy is a match for his:—‘Thou, being a creature, makest Thyself God.’ You say, in effect, ‘Thou art not a Son by birth, Thou art not God in truth; Thou art a creature, excelling all other creatures. But Thou wast not born to be God, for I refuse to believe that the incorporeal God gave birth to Thy nature. Thou and the Father are not One. Nay more. Thou art not the Son, Thou art not like God, Thou art not God.’ The Lord had His answer for the Jews; an answer that meets the case of your blasphemy even better than it met theirs:—Is it not written in the Law, I said, Ye are gods? If, therefore, He called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken, say ye of Me, Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into this world, that I have blasphemed, because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of the Father, believe Me not; but if I do, and ye will not believe Me, believe the works, that ye may know and be sure that the Father is in Me, and I in Him. The matter of this reply was dictated by that of the blasphemous attack upon Him. The accusation was that He, being a man, made Himself God. Their proof of this allegation was His own statement, I and the Father are One. He therefore sets Himself to prove that the Divine nature, which is His by birth, gives Him the right to assert that He and the Father are One. He begins by exposing the absurdity, as well as the insolence, of such a charge as that of making Himself God, though He was a man. The Law had conferred the title upon holy men; the word of God, from which there is no appeal, had given its sanction to the public use of the name. What blasphemy, then, could there be in the assumption of the title of Son of

God by Him Whom the Father had sanctified and sent into the world? The unalterable record of the Word of God has confirmed the title to those to whom the Law assigned it. There is an end, therefore, of the charge that He, being a man, makes Himself God, when the Law gives the name of gods to those who are confessedly men. And further, if other men may use this name without blasphemy, there can obviously be no blasphemy in its use by the Man Whom the Father has sanctified,—and note here that throughout this argument He calls Himself Man, for the Son of God is also Son of Man—since He excels the rest, who yet are guilty of no irreverence
in styling themselves gods. He excels them, in that He has been hallowed to be the Son, as the blessed Paul says, who teaches us of this sanctification:—Which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, Which was made of the seal of David according to the flesh, and was appointed to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of sanctification. Thus the accusation of blasphemy on His part, in making Himself God, falls to the ground. For the Word of God has conferred this name upon many men; and He, Who was sanctified and sent by the Father, did no more than proclaim Himself the Son of God.

25. There remains, I conceive, no possibility of doubt but that the words, I and the Father are One, were spoken with regard to the nature which is His by birth. The Jews had rebuked Him because by these words He, being a man, made Himself God. The coarse of His answer proves that, in this I and the Father are One, He did profess Himself the Son of God, first in name, then in nature, and lastly by birth. For I and Father are the names of substantive Beings; One is a declaration of Their nature, namely, that it is essentially the same in Both; are forbids us to confound Them together; are one, while forbidding confusion, teaches that the unity of the Two is the result of a birth. Now all this truth is drawn out from that name, the Son of God, which He being sanctified by the Father, bestows upon Himself; a name, His right to which is confirmed by His assertion, I and the Father are One. For birth cannot confer any nature upon the offspring other than that of the parent from whom that offspring is born.

26. Once more, God the Only-begotten has summed up for us, in words of His own, the whole revealed mystery of the faith. When He had given His answer to the charge that He, being a man, made Himself God, He determined to shew that His words, I and the Father are One, are a clear and necessary conclusion; and therefore He thus pursued His argument;—Ye say that I have blasphemed, because I said, I am the Son of God. If I do not the works of the Father, believe Me not; but if I do, and ye will not believe Me, believe the works, that ye may know and be sure that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father. After this, heresy that still persists in its course perpetrates a wilful outrage in conscious despair; the assertion of unbelief is deliberate shamelessness. They who make it take pride in folly and are dead to the faith, for it is not ignorance, but madness, to contradict this saying. The Lord had said, I and the Father are One; and the mystery of His birth, which He revealed, was the unity in nature of Father and Son. Again, when He was accused for claiming the Divine nature, He justified His claim by advancing a reason;—If I do not the works of the Father, believe Me not. We are not to believe His assertion that He is the Son of God, unless He does His Father’s works. Hence we see that His birth has given Him no new or alien nature, for His doing of the Father’s works is to be the reason why we must believe that He is the Son. What room is there here for adoption, or for leave to use the name, or for denial that He was born from the nature of God, when the proof that He is God’s Son is that He does the works which belong to the Father’s nature? No creature is equal or like to God, no nature external to His is comparable in might to Him; it is only the Son, born from Himself, Whom we can without blasphemy liken and equal to Him. Nothing outside Himself can be compared to God without insult to His august majesty. If any being, not born from God’s sell, can be discovered that is like Him and equal to Him in power, then God, in admitting a partner to share His throne, forfeits His pre-eminence. No longer is God One, for a second, indistinguishable from Himself, has arisen. On the other hand, there is
no insult in making His own true Son His equal. For then that which is like Him is His own; that which is compared with Him is born from Himself; the Power that can do His own works is not external to Him. Nay more, it is an actual heightening of His glory, that He has begotten Omnipotence, and yet not severed that Omnipotent nature from Himself. The Son performs the Father’s works, and on that ground demands that we should believe that He is God’s Son. This is no claim of mere arrogance; for He bases it upon His works, and bids us examine them. And He bears witness that these works are not His own, but His Father’s. He would not have our thoughts distracted by the splendour of the deeds from the evidence for His birth. And because the Jews could not penetrate the mystery of the Body which He had taken, the Humanity born of Mary, and recognise the Son of God, He appeals to His deeds for confirmation of His right to the name;—But if I do them, and ye will not believe Me, believe the works. First, He would not have them believe that He is the Son of God, except on the evidence of God’s works which He does. Next, if He does the works, yet seems unworthy, in His bodily humility, to bear the Divine name, He demands that they shall believe the works. Why should the mystery of His human birth hinder our recognition of His birth as God, when He that is Divinely born fulfils every Divine task by the agency of that Manhood which He has assumed? If we believe not the Man, for the works’ sake, when He tells us that He is the Son of God, let us believe the works when they, which are beyond a doubt the works of God, are manifestly wrought by the Son of God. For the Son of God possesses, in virtue of His birth, everything that is God’s; and therefore the Son’s work is the Father’s work because His birth has not excluded Him from that nature which is His source and wherein He abides, and because He has in Himself that nature to which He owes it that He exists eternally.

27. And so the Son, Who does the Father’s works and demands of us that, if we believe not Him, at least we believe His works, is bound to tell us what the point is as to which we are to believe the works. And He does tell us in the words which follow:—But if I do them, and ye will not believe Me, believe the works, that ye may know and be sure that the Father is in Me, and I in Him. It is the same truth as is contained in I am the Son of God, and I and the Father are One. This is the nature which is His by birth; this the mystery of the saving faith, that we must not divide the unity, nor separate the nature from the birth, but must confess that the living God was in truth born from the living God. God, Who is Life, is not a Being built up of various and lifeless portions; He is Power, and not compact of feeble elements, Light, intermingled with no shades of darkness, Spirit, that can harmonise with no incongruities. All that is within Him is One; what is Spirit is Light and Power and Life, and what is Life is Light and Power and Spirit. He Who says, I am, and I change not, can suffer neither change in detail nor transformation in kind. For these attributes, which I have named, are not attached to different portions of Him, but meet and unite, entirely and perfectly, in the whole being of the living God. He is the living God, the eternal Power of the living Divine nature; and that which is born from Him, according to the mysterious truth which He reveals, could not be other than living. For when He said, As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live through the Father, He taught that it is through the living Father that He has life in Himself. And, moreover, when He said, For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son also to have life in Himself, He bore witness that life, to the fullest extent, is His gift from the living God. Now if the living Son was born from the living Father, that birth took place without a new nature coming into existence. Nothing new
comes into existence when the Living is begotten by the Living; for life was not sought out from
the non-existent to receive birth; and Life, which receives its birth from Life, must needs,
because of that unity of nature and because of the mysterious event of that perfect and
ineffable birth, live always in Him that lives and have the life of the Living in Himself.

28. I call to mind that, at the beginning of our treatises, I gave the warning that human
analogies correspond imperfectly to their Divine counterparts, yet that our understanding
receives a real, if incomplete, enlightenment by comparing the latter with visible types. And
now I appeal to human experience in the matter of birth, whether the source of their children’s
being remain not within the parents. For though the lifeless and ignoble matter, which sets in
motion the beginnings of life, pass from one parent into the other, yet these retain their
respective natural forces. They have brought into existence a nature one with their own, and
therefore the begetter is bound up with the existence of the begotten; and the begotten,
receiving birth through a force transmitted, yet not lost, by the begetter, abides in that
begetter. This may suf-fice as a statement of what happens in a human birth. It is inadequate
as a parallel to the perfect birth of God the Only-begotten; for humanity is born in weakness
and from the union of two unlike natures, and maintained in life by a combination of lifeless
substances. Again, humanity does not enter at once into the exercise of its appointed life, and
never fully lives that life, being always encumbered with a multitude of members which decay
and are insensibly discarded. In God, on the other hand, the Divine life is lived in the fullest
sense, for God is Life; and from Life nothing that is not truly living can be born. And His birth is
not by way of emanation but results from an act of power. Thus, since God’s life is perfect in its
intensity, and since that which is born from Him is perfect in power, God has the power of
giving birth but not of suffering change. His nature is capable of increase, not of diminution, for
He continues in, and shares the life of, that Son to Whom He gave in birth a nature like to, and
inseparable from, His own. And that Son, the Living born from the Living, is not separated by
the event of His birth from the nature that begat Him.

29. Another analogy which casts some light upon the meaning of the faith is that of fire as
containing fire in itself and as abiding in fire. Fire contains the brightness of light, the heat
which is its essential nature, the property of destroying by combustion the flickering
inconstancy of flame. Yet all the while it is fire, and in all these manifestations there is but one
nature. Its weakness is that it is dependent for its existence upon inflammable matter, and that
it perishes with the matter on which it has lived. A comparison with fire gives us, in some
measure, an insight into the incomparable nature of God; it helps us to believe in the
properties of God that we find them, to a certain extent, present in an earthly element. I ask,
then, whether in fire derived from fire there is any division or separation. When one flame is
kindled from another, is the original nature cut off from the derived, so as not to abide in it?
Does it not rather follow on, and dwell in the second flame by a kind of increase, as it were by
birth? For no portion has been cut off from the nature of the first flame, and yet there is light
from light. Does not the first flame live on in the second, which owes its existence, though not
by division, to the first? Does not the second still dwell in the first, from which it was not cut
off; from which it went forth, retaining its unity with the substance to which its nature
belongs? Are not the two one, when it is physically impossible to derive light from light by
division, and logically impossible to distinguish between them in nature.

30. These illustrations, I repeat, must only be used as aids to apprehension of the faith, not as standards of comparison for the Divine majesty. Our method is that of using bodily instances as a clue to the invisible. Reverence and reason justify us in using such help, which we find used in God’s witness to Himself, while yet we do not aspire to find a parallel to the nature of God. But the minds of simple believers have been distressed by the mad heretical objection that it is wrong to accept a doctrine concerning God which needs, in order to become intelligible, the help of bodily analogies. And therefore, in accordance with that word of our Lord which we have already cited, That which is born of the flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit, we have thought it expedient, since God is Spirit, to give to these comparisons a certain place in our argument. By so doing we shall avert from God the charge that He has deceived us in using these analogies; shewing, as we have done, that such illustrations from the nature of His creatures enable us to grasp the meaning of God’s self-revelation to us.

31. We see how the living Son of the living Father, He Who is God from God, reveals the unity of the Divine nature, indissolubly One and the same, and the mystery of His birth in these words, I and the Father are One. Because the seeming arrogance of them engendered a prejudice against Him, He made it more clear that He had spoken in the conscious possession of Divinity by saying, Ye say that I have blasphemed because I said, I am the Son of God; thus shewing that the oneness of His nature with that of God was due to birth from God. And then, to clench their faith in His birth by a positive assertion, and to guard them, at the same time, from imagining that the birth involves a difference of nature, He crowns His argument with the words, Believe the works, that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father. Does His birth, as here revealed, display His Divinity as not His by nature, as not His own by right? Each is in the Other; the birth of the Son is from the Father only; no alien or unlike nature has been raised to Godhead and subsists as God. God from God, eternally abiding, owes His Godhead to none other than God. Import, if you see your opportunity, two gods into the Church’s faith; separate Son from Father as far as you can, consistently with the birth which you admit; yet still the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father, and this by no interchange of emanations but by the perfect birth of the living nature. Thus you cannot add together God the Father and God the Son, and count Them as two Gods, for They Two are One God. You cannot confuse Them together, for They Two are not One Person. And so the Apostolic faith rejects two gods; for it knows nothing of two Fathers or two Sons. In confessing the Father it confesses the Son; it believes in the Son in believing in the Father. For the name of Father involves that of Son, since without having a son none can be a father. Evidence of the existence of a son is proof that there has been a father, for a son cannot exist except from a father. When we confess that God is One we deny that He is single; for the Son is the complement of the Father, and to the Father the Son’s existence is due. But birth works no change in the Divine nature; both in Father and in Son that nature is true to its kind. And the right expression for us of this unity of nature is the confession that They, being Two by birth and generation, are One God, not one Person.

32. We will leave it to him to preach two Gods, who can preach One God without confessing the unity; he shall proclaim that God is solitary, who can deny that there are two Persons, Each
dwelling in the Other by the power of Their nature and the mystery of birth given and received. And that man may assign a different nature to Each of the Two, who is ignorant that the unity of Father and of Son is a revealed truth. Let the heretics blot out this record of the Son’s self-revelation in the Father and the Father in Me; then, and not till then, shall they assert that there are two Gods, or one God in loneliness. There is no hint of more natures than one in what we are told of Their possession of the one Divine nature. The truth that God is from God does not multiply God by two; the birth destroys the supposition of a lonely God. And again, because They are interdependent They form an unity; and that They are interdependent is proved by Their being One from One. For the One, in begetting the One, conferred upon Him nothing that was not His own; and the One, in being begotten, received from the One only what belongs to one. Thus the apostolic faith, in proclaiming the Father, will proclaim Him as One God, and in confessing the Son will confess Him as One God; since one and the same Divine nature exists in Both, and because, the Father being God and the Son being God, and the one name of God expressing the nature of Both, the term ‘One God’ signifies the Two. God from God, or God in God, does not mean that there are two Gods, for God abides, One from One, eternally with the one Divine nature and the one Divine name; nor does God dwindle down to a single Person, for One and One can never be in solitude.

33. The Lord has not left in doubt or obscurity the teaching conveyed in this great mystery; He has not abandoned us to lose our way in dim uncertainty. Listen to Him as He reveals the full knowledge of this faith to His Apostles;–I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but through Me. If ye know Me, ye know My Father also; and from henceforth ye shall know Him, and have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and ye have not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also. How sayest thou, Shew us the Rather? Dost than not believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth His works. Believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else believe for the very works’ sake. He Who is the Way leads us not into by-paths or trackless wastes: He Who is the Truth mocks us not with lies; He Who is the Life betrays us not into delusions which are death. He Himself has chosen these winning names to indicate the methods which He has appointed for our salvation. As the Way, He will guide us to the Truth; the Truth will establish us in the Life. And therefore it is all-important for us to know what is the mysterious mode, which He reveals, of attaining this life. No man cometh to the Rather but through Me. The way to the Father is through the Son. And now we must enquire whether this is to be by a course of obedience to His teaching, or by faith in His Godhead. For it is conceivable that our way to the Father may be through adherence to the Son’s teaching, rather than through believing that the Godhead of the Father dwells in the Son. And therefore let us, in the next place, seek out the true meaning of the instruction given us here. For it is not by cleaving to a preconceived opinion, but by studying the force of the words, that we shall enter into possession of this faith.

34. The words which follow those last cited are, If ye know Me, ye know My Father also. It is the Man, Jesus Christ, Whom they behold. How can a knowledge of Him be a knowledge of the
Father? For the Apostles see Him wearing the aspect of that human nature which belongs to Him; but God is not encumbered with body and flesh, and is incognisable by those who dwell in our weak and fleshly body. The answer is given by the Lord, Who asserts that under the flesh, which, in a mystery, He had taken, His Father’s nature dwells within Him. He sets the facts in their due order thus;—If ye know Me, ye know My Father also; and from henceforth ye shall know Him, and have seen Him. He makes a distinction between the time of sight, and the time of knowledge. He says that from henceforth they shall know Him Whom they had already seen; and so shall possess. from the time of this revelation on-war I. the knowledge of that nature, on which, in Him, they long had gazed.

35. But the novel sound of these words disturbed the Apostle Philip. A Man is before their eyes; this Man avows Himself the Son of God, and declares that when they have known Him they will know the Father. He tells them that they have seen the Father, and that, because they have seen Him, they shall know Him hereafter. This truth is too broad for the grasp of weak humanity; their faith fails in the presence of these paradoxes. Christ says that the Father has been seen already and shall now be known; and this, although sight, is knowledge. He says that if the Son has been known, the Father has been known also; and this though the Son has imparted knowledge of Himself through the bodily senses of sight and sound, while the Father’s nature, different altogether from that of the visible Man, which they know, could not be learnt from their knowledge of the nature of Him Whom they have seen. He has also often borne witness that no man has seen the Father. And so Philip broke forth, with the loyalty and confidence of an Apostle, with the request, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. He was not tampering with the faith; it was but a mistake made in ignorance. For the Lord had said that the Father had been seen already and henceforth should be known but the Apostle had not understood that He had been seen. Accordingly he did not deny that the Father had been seen, but asked to see Him. He did not ask that the Father should be unveiled to his bodily gaze, but that he might have such an indication as should enlighten him concerning the Father Who had been seen. For he had seen the Son under the aspect of Man, but cannot understand how he could thereby have seen the Father. His adding, And it sufficeth us, to the prayer, Lard, shew us the Father, reveals clearly that it was a mental, not a bodily vision of the Father which he desired. He did not refuse faith to the Lord’s words, but asked for such enlightenment to his mind as should enable him to believe; for the fact that the Lord had spoken was conclusive evidence to the Apostle that faith was his duty. The consideration which moved him to ask that the Father might be shewn, was that the Son had said that He had been seen, and should be known because He had been seen. There was no presumption in this prayer that He, Who had already been seen, should now be made manifest.

36. And therefore the Lord answered Philip thus;—Have I been so long time with you, and ye have not known Me, Philip? He rebukes the Apostle for defective knowledge of Himself; for previously He had said that when He was known the Father was known also. But what is the meaning of this complaint that for so long they had not known Him? It means this; that if they had known Him, they must have recognised in Him the Godhead which belongs to His Father’s nature. For His works were the peculiar works of God. He walked upon the waves, commanded the winds, manifestly, though none could tell how, changed the water into wine and multiplied
the loaves, put devils to flight, healed diseases, restored injured limbs and repaired the defects of nature, forgave sins and raised the dead to life. And all this He did while wearing flesh; and He accompanied the works with the assertion that He was the Son of God. Hence it is that He justly complains that they did not recognise in His mysterious human birth and life the action of the nature of God, performing these deeds through the Manhood which He had assumed.

37. And therefore the Lord reproached them that they had not known Him, though He had so long been doing these works, and answered their prayer that He would shew them the Father by saying, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also. He was not speaking of a bodily manifestation, of perception by the eye of flesh, but by that eye of which He had once spoken;—Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look an the fields; for they are white to harvest. The season of the year, the fields white to harvest are allusions equally incompatible with an earthly and visible prospect. He was bidding them lift the eyes of their understanding to contemplate the bliss of the final harvest. And so it is with His present words, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also. It was not the carnal body, which He had received by birth from the Virgin, that could manifest to them the image and likeness of God. The human aspect which He wore could be no aid towards the mental vision of the incorporeal God. But God was recognised in Christ, by such as recognised Christ as the Son on the evidence of the powers of His Divine nature; and a recognition of God the Son produces a recognition of God the Father. For the Son is in such a sense the Image, as to be One in kind with the Father, and yet to indicate that the Father is His Origin. Other images, made of metals or colours or other materials by various arts, reproduce the appearance of the objects which they represent. Yet can lifeless copies be put on a level with their living originals? Painted or carved or molten effigies with the nature which they imitate? The Son is not the Image of the Father after such a fashion as this; He is the living Image of the Living. The Son that is born of the Father has a nature in no wise different from His; and, because His nature is not different, He possesses the power of that nature which is the same as His own. The fact that He is the Image proves that God the Father is the Author of the birth of the Only-begotten, Who is Himself revealed as the Likeness and Image of the invisible God. And hence the likeness, which is joined in union with the Divine nature, is indelibly His, because the powers of that nature are inalienably His own.

38. Such is the meaning of this passage, Have I been so long time with you, and ye have not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also. How sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Dost thou not believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? It is only the Word of God, of Whom we men are enabled, in our discourse concerning Divine things, to reason. All else that belongs to the Godhead is dark and difficult, dangerous and obscure. If any man propose to express what is known in other words than those supplied by God, he must inevitably either display his own ignorance, or else leave his readers’ minds in utter perplexity. The Lord, when He was asked to shew the Father, said, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also. He that would alter this is an antichrist, he that would deny it is a Jew, he that is ignorant a Pagan. If we find ourselves in difficulty, let us lay the fault to our own reason; if God’s declaration seem involved in obscurity, let us assume that our want of faith is the cause. These words state with precision that God is not solitary, and yet that there are no
differences within the Divine nature. For the Father is seen in the Son, and this could be the case neither if He were a lonely Being, nor yet if He were unlike the Son. It is through the Son that the Father is seen: and this mystery which the Son reveals is that They are One God, but not one Person. What other meaning can you attach to this saying of the Lord’s, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also? This is no case of identity; the use of the conjunction also shews that the Father is named in addition to the Son. These words, The Father also, are incompatible with the notion of an isolated and single Person. No conclusion is possible but that the Father was made visible through the Son, because They are One and are alike in nature. And, lest our faith in this regard should be left in any doubt, the Lord proceeded, How safest thou, Shew us the Father? The Father had been seen in the Son; how then could men be ignorant of the Father? What need could there be for Him to be shewn?

39. Again, the unity of Begetter and Begotten, manifested in sameness of nature and true oneness of kind, proves that the Father was seen in His true nature. And this is shewn by the Lord’s next words, Believe not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? In no other words than these, which the Son has used, can the fact be state that Father and Son, being alike in nature, are inseparable. The Son, Who is the Way and the Truth and the Life, is not deceiving us by some theatrical transformation of names and aspects, when He, while wearing Manhood, styles Himself the Son of God. He is not falsely concealing the fact that He is God the Father; He is not a single Persons Who hides His features under a mask, that we may imagine that Two are present. He is not a solitary Being, now posing as His own Son, and again calling Himself the Father; tricking out one unchanging nature with varying names. Far removed from this is the plain honesty of the words. The Father is the Father, and the Son is the Son. But these names, and the realities which they represent, contain no innovation upon the Divine nature, nothing inconsistent, nothing alien. For the Divine nature, being true to itself, persists in being itself; that which is from God is God. The Divine birth imports neither diminution nor difference into the Godhead, for the Son is born into, and subsists with, a nature that is within the Divine nature and is like to it, and the Father sought out no alien element to be mingled in the nature of His Only-begotten Son, but endowed Him with all things that are His own, and this without loss to the Giver. And thus the Son is not destitute of the Divine nature, for, being God, He is from God and from none other; and He is not different from God, but is indeed nothing else than God, for that which is begotten from God is the Son, and the Son only, and the Divine nature, in receiving birth as a Son, has not forfeited its Divinity. Thus the Father is in the Son, the Son is in the Father, God is in God. And this is not by the combination of two harmonious, though different, kinds of being, nor by the incorporating power of an ampler substance exercised upon a lesser; for the properties of matter make it impossible that things which enclose others should also be enclosed by them. It is by the birth of living nature from living nature. The substance remains the same, birth causes no deterioration in the Divine nature; God is not born from God to be ought else than God. Herein is no innovation, no estrangement, no division. It is sin to believe that Father and Son are two Gods, sacrilege to assert that Father and Son are one solitary God, blasphemy to deny the unity, consisting in sameness of kind. of God from God.
40. Lest they, whose faith conforms to the Gospel, should regard this mystery as something vague and obscure, the Lord has expounded it in this order;—Dost thou not believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth His works. In what other words than these could, or can, the possession of the Divine nature by Father and Son be declared, consistently with prominence for the Son’s birth? When He says, The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself, He neither suppresses His personality, nor denies His Sonship, nor conceals the presence in Himself of His Father’s Divine nature. While speaking of Himself—and that He does so speak is proved by the pronoun I—He speaks as abiding in the Divine substance; while speaking not of Himself, He bears witness to the birth which took place in Him of God from God His Father. And He is inseparable and indistinguishable in unity of nature from the Father; for He speaks, though He speaks not of Himself. He Who speaks, though He speak not of Himself, necessarily exists, inasmuch as He speaks; and, inasmuch as He speaks not of Himself, He makes it manifest that His words are not His own. For He has added, But the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth His works. That the Father dwells in the Son proves that the Father is not isolated and alone; that the Father works through the Son proves that the Son is not an alien or a stranger. There cannot be one Person only, for He speaks not of Himself; and, conversely, They cannot be separate and divided when the One speaks through the voice of the Other. These words are the revelation of the mystery of Their unity. And again, They Two are not different One from the Other, seeing that by Their inherent nature Each is in the Other; and They are One, seeing that He, Who speaks, speaks not of Himself, and He, Who speaks not of Himself, yet does speak. And then, having taught that the Father both spoke and wrought in Him, the Son establishes this perfect unity as the rule of our faith;—But the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth His works. Believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else believe for the very works’ sake. The Father works in the Son; but the Son also works the works of His Father.

41. And so, lest we should believe and say that the Father works in the Son through His own omnipotent energy, and not through the Son’s possession, as His birthright, of the Divine nature, Christ says, Believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me. What means this, Believe Me? Clearly it refers back to the previous, Shew us the Father. Their faith—that faith which had demanded that the Father should be shewn—is confirmed by this command to believe. He was not satisfied with saying, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also. He goes further, and expands our knowledge, so that we can contemplate the Father in the Son, remembering meanwhile that the Son is in the Father. Thus He would save us from the error of imagining a reciprocal emanation of the One into the Other, by teaching Their unity in the One nature through birth given and received. The Lord would have us take Him at His word, lest our hold upon the faith be shaken by His condescension in assuming Humanity. If His flesh, His body, His passion seem to make His Godhead doubtful, let us at least believe, on the evidence of the works, that God is in God and God is flora God, and that They are One. For by the power of Their nature Each is in the Other. The Father loses nothing that is His because it is in the Son, and the Son receives His whole Sonship from the Father. Bodily natures are not created after such a fashion that they mutually contain each other, or possess the perfect unity of one
abiding nature. In their case it would be impossible that an Onlybegotten Son could exist eternally, inseparable from the true Divine nature of His Father. Yet this is the peculiar property of God the Only-begotten, this the faith revealed in the mystery of His true birth, this the work of the Spirit’s power, that to be, and to be in God, is for Christ the same thing; and that this being in God is not the presence of one thing within another, as a body inside another body, but that the life and subsistence of Christ is such that He is within the subsisting God, and within Him, yet having a subsistence of His own. For Each subsists in such wise as not to exist apart from the Other, since They are Two through birth given and received, and therefore only one Divine nature exists. This is the meaning of the words, I and the Father are One, and He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also, and I in the Father and the Father in Me. They tell us that the Son Who is born is not different or inferior to the Father; that His possession, by right of birth, of the Divine nature as Son of God, and therefore nothing else than God, is the supreme truth conveyed in the mysterious revelation of the One Godhead in Father and Son. And therefore the doctrine of the generation of the Only-begotten is guiltless of ditheism, for the Son of God, in being born into the Godhead, manifested in Himself the nature of God His Begetter.

Book 8 (Back to the Top)

1. THE Blessed Apostle Paul in laying down the form for appointing a bishop and creating by his instructions an entirely new type of member of the Church, has taught us in the following words the sum total of all the virtues perfected in him:–Holding fast the word according to the doctrine of faith that he may be able to exhort to sound doctrine and to convict gainsavers. For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers. For in this way he points out that the essentials of orderliness and morals are only profitable for good service in the priesthood if at the same time the qualities needful for knowing how to teach and preserve the faith are not lacking, for a man is not straightway made a good and useful priest by a merely innocent life or by a mere knowledge of preaching. For an innocent minister is profitable to himself alone unless he be instructed also; while he that is instructed has nothing to support his teaching unless he be innocent. For the words of the Apostle do not merely fit a man for his life in this world by precepts of honesty and uprightness, nor on the other hand do they educate in expertness of teaching a mere Scribe of the Synagogue for the expounding of the Law: but the Apostle is training a leader of the Church, perfected by the perfect accomplishment of: the greatest virtues, so that his life may be adorned by his teaching, and his teaching by his life. Accordingly he has provided Titus, the person to whom his words were addressed, with an injunction as to the perfect practice of religion to this effect:–In all things shewing thyself an ensample of good works, teaching with gravity sound words that cannot be condemned, that the adversary may be ashamed, having nothing disgraceful or evil to say of us. This teacher of the Gentiles and elect doctor of the Church, from his consciousness of Christ who spoke and dwelt within him, knew well that the infection of tainted speech would spread abroad, and that the corruption of pestilent doctrine would furiously rage against the sound form of faithful words, and infusing the poison of its own evil tenets into the inmost soul, would creep on with deep-seated mischief. For it is of these that he says, Whose word spreadeth like a cancer, tainting the health of the mind, invaded by it with a secret and stealthy contagion. For this
reason, he wished that there should be in the bishop the teaching of sound words, a good
conscience in the faith and expertness in exhortation to withstand wicked and false and wild
gainsayings. For there are many who pretend to the faith, but are not subject to the faith, and
rather set up a faith for themselves than receive that which is given, being puffed up with the
thoughts of human vanity, knowing the things they wish to know and unwilling to know the
things that are true; since it is a mark of true wisdom sometimes to know what we do not like.
However, this will-wisdom is followed by foolish preaching, for what is foolishly learnt must
needs be foolishly preached. Yet how great an evil to those who hear is foolish preaching,
when they are misled into foolish opinions by conceit of wisdom! And for this cause the
Apostle described them thus: There are many unruly, vain talkers and deceivers. Hence we
must utter our voice against arrogant wickedness and boastful arrogance and seductive
boastfulness,—yes, we must speak against such things through the soundness of our doctrine,
the truth of our faith, the sincerity of our preaching, so that we may have the purity of truth
and the truth of sound doctrine.

2. The reason why I have just mentioned this utterance of the Apostle is this; men of crooked
minds and false professions, void of hope and venomous of speech, lay upon me the necessity
of inveighing against them, because under the guise of religion they instil deadly doctrines,
infectious thoughts and corrupt desires into the simple minds of their hearers. And this they do
with an utter disregard of the true sense of the apostolic teaching, so that the Father is not a
Father, nor the Son, Son, nor the Faith, the Faith. In resisting their wild falsehoods, we have
extended the course of our reply so far, that after proving from the Law that God and God
were distinct and that very God was in very God, we then shewed from the teaching of
evangelists and apostles the perfect and true birth of the Only-begotten God; and lastly, we
pointed out in the due course of our argument that the Son of God is very God, and of a nature
identical with the Father’s, so that the faith of the Church should neither confess that God is
single nor that there are two Gods. For neither would the birth of God allow God to be solitary,
nor would a perfect birth allow different natures to be ascribed to two Gods. Now in refuting
their vain speaking we have a twofold object, first that we may teach what is holy and perfect
and sound, and, that our discourse should not by straying through any by-paths and crooked
ways, and struggling out of devious and winding tunnels, seem rather to search for the truth
than declare it. Our second object is that we should reveal to the conviction of all men the folly
and absurdity of those crafty arguments of their vain and deceitful opinions which are adapted
to a plausible show of seductive truth. For it is not enough for us to have pointed out what
things are good, unless they are understood to be absolutely good by our refutation of their
opposites.

3. But as it is the nature and endeavour of the good and wise to prepare themselves wholly for
securing either the reality or the opportunity of some precious hope lest their preparedness
should in some respects fall short of that which they look for,—so in like manner those who are
filled with the madness of heretical frenzy make it their chiefest. anxiety to labour with all the
ingenuity of their impiety against the truth of pious faith, in order that against those who are
religious they may establish their own irreligion; that they may surpass the hope of our life in
the hopelessness of their own, and that they may spend more thought over false than we
spend over true teaching. For against the pious assertions of our faith they have carefully devised such objections of their impious disbelief, as first to ask whether we believe in one God, next, whether Christ also be God, lastly, whether the Father is greater than the Son, in order that when they hear us confess that God is one they may use our reply to shew that Christ cannot be God. For they do not enquire concerning the Son whether He be God; all they wish for in asking questions about Christ is to prove that He is not a Son, that by entrapping men of simple faith they may through the belief in one God divert them from the belief in Christ as God, on the ground that God is no longer one if Christ also must be acknowledged as God. Again with what subtility of worldly wisdom do they contend when they say, If God is one, whosoever that other shall be shewn to be, he will not be God. For if there be another God He can no longer be one, since nature does not permit that where there is another there should be one only, or that where there is only one there should be another. Afterwards, when by the crafty cunning of this insidious argument they have misled those who are ready to believe and listen, they then apply this proposition (as if they could now establish it by an easier method), that Christ is God rather in name than in nature, because this generic name in Him can destroy in none that only true belief in one God: and they contend that through this the Father is greater than the Son, because, the natures being different, as there is but one God, the Father is greater from the essential character of His nature; and that the Other is only called Son while He is really a creature subsisting by the will of the Father, because He is less than the Father; and also that He is not God, because God being one does not admit of another God, since he who is less must necessarily be of a nature alien from that of the person who is greater. Again, how foolish they are in their attempts to lay down a law for God when they maintain that no birth can take place from one single being, because throughout the universe birth arises from the union of two; moreover, that the unchangeable God cannot accord from Himself birth to one who is born, because that which is changeless is incapable of addition, nor can the nature of a solitary and single being contain within itself the property of generation.

4. We, on the contrary, having by spiritual teaching arrived at the faith of the evangelists and apostles, and following after the hope of eternal blessedness by our confession of the Father and the Son, and having proved out of the Law the mystery of God and God, without overstepping the limits of our faith in one God, or failing to proclaim that Christ is God, have adopted this method of reply from the Gospels, that we declare the true nativity of Only-begotten God from God the Father, because that through this He was both very God and not alien from the nature of the One very God, and thus neither could His Godhead be denied nor Himself be described as another God, because while the birth made Him God, the nature within him of one God of God did not separate Him off as another God. And although our human reason led us to this conclusion, that the names of distinct natures could not meet together in the same nature, and not be one, where the essence of each did not differ in kind; nevertheless, it seemed good that we should prove this from the express sayings of our Lord, Who after frequently making known that the God of our faith and hope was One, in order to affirm the mystery of the One God, while declaring and proving His own Godhead, said, I and the Father are one; and, If ye had known Me, ye would have known My Father also; and, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also; and, Believe Me, that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father: or else believe for the very works’ sake. He has signified His own birth in the name
Father, and declares that in the knowledge of Himself the Father is known. He avows the unity of nature, when those who see Him see the Father. He bears witness that He is indivisible from the Father, when He dwells in the Father Who dwells in Him. He possesses the confidence of self-knowledge when He demands credit for His words from the operations of His power. And thus in this most blessed faith of the perfect birth, every error, as well that of two Gods as of a single God, is abolished, since They Who are one in essence are not one person, and He Who is not one person with HIM WHO IS, is yet so free from difference from Him that They Two are One God.

5. Now seeing that heretics cannot deny these things because they are so clearly stated and understood, they nevertheless pervert them by the most foolish and wicked lies so as afterwards to deny them. For the words of Christ, I and the Father are one, they endeavour to refer to a mere concord of unanimity, so that there may be in them a unity of will not of nature, that is, that they may be one not by essence of being, but by identity of will. And they apply to the support of their case the passage in the Acts of the Apostles, Now of the multitude of them that believed the heart and soul were one, in order to prove that a diversity of souls and hearts may be united into one heart and soul through a mere conformity of will. Or else they cite those words to the Corinthians, Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one, to shew that, since They are one in Their work for our salvation, and in the revelation of one mystery, Their unity is an unity of wills. Or again, they quote the prayer of our Lord for the salvation of the nations who should believe in Him: Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that shall believe on Me through their Word; that they all may be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us, to shew that since men cannot, so to speak, be fused back into God or themselves coalesce into one undistinguished mass, this oneness must arise from unity of will, while all perform actions pleasing to God, and unite one with another in the harmonious accord of their thoughts, and that thus it is not nature which makes them one, but will.

6. He clearly knows not wisdom who knows not God. And since Christ is Wisdom he must needs be beyond the pale of wisdom who knows not Christ or hates Him. As, for instance, they do who will have it that the Lord of Glory, and King of the Universe, and Only-begotten God is a creature of God and not His Son, and in addition to such foolish lies shew a still more foolish cleverness in the defence of their falsehood. For even putting aside for a little that essential character of unity which exists in God the Father and God the Son, they can be refuted out of the very passages which they adduce.

7. For as to those whose soul and heart were one, I ask whether they were one through faith in God? Yes, assuredly, through faith, for through this the soul and heart of all were one. Again I ask, is the faith one or is there a second faith? One undoubtedly, and that on the authority of the Apostle himself, who proclaims one faith even as one Lord, and one baptism, and one hope, and one God. If then it is through faith, that is, through the nature of one faith, that all are one, how is it that thou dost not understand a natural unity in the case of those who through the nature of one faith are one? For all were born again to innocence, to immortality, to the knowledge of God, to the faith of hope. And if these things cannot differ within
themselves because there is both one hope and one God, as also there is one Lord and one baptism of regeneration; if these things are one rather by agreement than by nature, ascribe a unity of will to those also who have been born again into them. If, however, they have been begotten again into the nature of one life and eternity, then, inasmuch as their soul and heart are one, the unity of will fails to account for their case who are one by regeneration into the same nature.

8. These are not our own conjectures which we offer, nor do we falsely put together any of these things in order to deceive the ears of our bearers by perverting the meaning of words; but holding fast the form of sound teaching we know and preach the things which are true. For the Apostle shews that this unity of the faithful arises from the nature of the sacraments when he writes to the Galatians. Fear as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There is neither few nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. That these are one amid so great diversities of race, condition, sex,—is it from an agreement of will or from the unity of the sacrament, since these have one baptism and have all put on one Christ? What, therefore, will a concord of minds avail here when they are one in that they have put on one Christ through the nature of one baptism?

9. Or, again, since he who plants and he who waters are one, are they not one because, being themselves born again in one baptism they form a ministry of one regenerating baptism? Do not they do the same thing? Are they not one in One? So they who are one through the same thing are one also by nature, not only by will, inasmuch as they themselves have been made the same thing and are ministers of the same thing and the same power.

10. Now the contradiction of fools always serves to prove their folly, because with regard to the faults which they contrive by the devices of an unwise or crooked understanding against the truth, while the latter remains unshaken and immovable the things which are opposed to it must needs be regarded as false and foolish. For heretics in their attempt to deceive others by the words, I and the Father are ones, that there might not be acknowledged in them the unity and like essence of deity, but only a oneness arising from mutual love and an agreement of wills—these heretics, I say, have brought forward an instance of that unity, as we have shewn above, even from the words of our Lord, That they all may be one, as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us. Every man is outside the promises of the Gospel who is outside the faith in them, and by the guilt of an evil understanding has lost all simple hope. For to know not what thou believest demands not so much excuse as a reward, for the greatest service of faith is to hope for that which thou knowest not. But it is the madness of most consummate wickedness either not to believe things which are understood or to have corrupted the sense in which one believes.

11. But although the wickedness of man can pervert his intellectual powers, nevertheless the words retain their meaning. Our Lord prays to His Father that those who shall believe in Him may be one, and as He is in the Father and the Father in Him, so all may be one in Them. Why dost thou bring in here an identity of mind, why a unity of soul and heart through agreement
of will? For there would have been no lack of suitable words for our Lord, if it were will that
made them one, to have prayed in this fashion,–Father, as We are one in will, so may they also
be one in will, that we may all be one through agreement. Or could it be that He Who is the
Word was unacquainted with the meaning of words? and that He Who is Truth knew not how
to speak the truth? and He Who is Wisdom went astray in foolish talk? and He Who is Power
was compassed about with such weakness that He could not speak what He wished to be
understood? He has clearly spoken the true and sincere mysteries of the faith of the Gospel.
And He has not only spoken that we may comprehend, He has also taught that we may believe,
saying, That they all may be one, as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be
in Us. For those first of all is the prayer of whom it is said, That they all may be one. Then the
promotion of unity is set forth by a pattern of unity, when He says, as Thou, Father, art in Me,
and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us, so that as the Father is in the Son and the Son in the
Father, so through the pattern of this unity all might be one in the Father and the Son.

12. But because it is proper to the Father alone and the Son that They should be one by nature
because God is from God, and the Only-begotten from the Unbegotten can subsist in no other
nature than that of His origin; so that He Who was begotten should exist in the substance of
His birth, and the birth should possess no other and different truth of deity than that from
which it issued; for our Lord has left us in no doubt as to our belief by asserting throughout the
whole of the discourse which follows the nature of this complete unity. For the next words are
these, That the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. Thus the world is to believe that
the Son has been sent by the Father because all who shall believe in Him will be one in the
Father and the Son. And how they will be so we are soon told,–And the glory which Than hast
given Me I have given unto them. Now I ask whether glory is identical with will, since will is an
emotion of the mind while glory is an ornament or embellishment of nature. So then it is the
 glory received from the Father that the Son hath given to all who shall believe in Him, and
certainly not will. Had this been given, faith would carry with it no required, for a necessity of
will attached to us would also impose faith upon us. However He has shewn what is effected by
the bestowal of the glory received, That they may be one, even as We are one. It is then with
this object that the received glory was bestowed, that all might be one. So now all are one in
 glory, because the glory given is none other than that which was received: nor has it been
given for any other cause than that all should be one. And since all are one through the glory
given to the Son and by the Son bestowed upon believers, I ask how can the Son be of a
different glory from the Father’s, since the glory of the Son brings all that believe into the unity
of the Father’s glory. Now it may be that the utterance of human hope in this case may be
somewhat immoderate, yet it will not be contrary to faith; for though to hope for this were
presumptuous, yet not to have believed it is sinful, for we have one and the same Author both
of our hope and of our faith. We will treat of this matter more clearly and at greater length in
its own place, as is fitting. Yet in the meantime it is easily seen from our present argument that
this hope of ours is neither vain nor presumptuous. So then through the glory received and
given all are one. I hold the faith and recognise the cause of the unity, but I do not yet
understand how it is that the glory given makes all one.

13. Now our Lord has not left the minds of His faithful followers in doubt, but has explained the
manner in which His nature operates, saying, That they may be one, as We are one: I in them
and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in one. Now I ask those who bring forward a unity
of will between Father and Son, whether Christ is in us to-day through verity of nature or
through agreement of will. For if in truth the Word has been made flesh and we in very truth
receive the Word made flesh as food from the Lord, are we not bound to believe that He
abides in us naturally, Who, born as a man, has assumed the nature of our flesh now
inseparable from Himself, and has conjoined the nature of His own flesh to the nature of the
eternal Godhead in the sacrament by which His flesh is communicated to us? For so are we all
one, because the Father is in Christ and Christ in us. Whosoever then shall deny that the Father
is in Christ naturally must first deny that either he is himself in Christ naturally, or Christ in him,
because the Father in Christ and

Christ in us make us one in Them. Hence, if indeed Christ has taken to Himself the flesh of our
body, and that Man Who was born froth Mary was induced Christ, and we indeed receive in a
mystery the flesh of His body—(and for this cause we shall be one, because the Father is in Him
and He in us), — how can a unity of will be maintained, seeing that the special property of
nature received through the sacrament is the sacrament of a perfect unity?

14. The words in which we speak of the things of God must be used in no mere human and
worldly sense, nor must the perverseness of an alien and impious interpretation be extorted
from the soundness of heavenly words by any violent and headstrong preaching. Let us read
what is written, let us understand what we read, and then fulfil the demands of a perfect faith.
For as to what we say concerning the reality of Christ’s nature within us, unless we have been
taught by Him, our words are foolish and impious. For He says Himself, My flesh is meat
indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth
in Me, and I in him. As to the verity of the flesh and blood there is no room left for doubt. For
now both from the declaration of the Lord Himself and our own faith, it is verily flesh and verily
blood. And these when eaten and drunk, bring it to pass that both we are in Christ and Christ in
us. Is not this true? Yet they who affirm that Christ Jesus is not truly God are welcome to find it
false. He therefore Himself is in us through the flesh and we in Him, whilst together with Him
our own selves are in God.

15. Now how it is that we are in Him through the sacrament of the flesh and blood bestowed
upon us, He Himself testifies, saying, And the world will no longer see Me, but ye shall see Me ;
because I live ye shall live also; because I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. If He
wished to indicate a mere unity of will, why did He set forth a kind of gradation and sequence
in the completion of the unity, unless it were that, since He was in the Father through the
nature of Deity, and we on the contrary in Him through His birth in the body, He would have us
believe that He is in us through the mystery of the sacraments? and thus there might be taught
a perfect unity through a Mediator, whilst, we abiding in Him, He abode in the Father, and as
abiding in the Father abode also in us; and so we might arrive at unity with tile Father, since in
Him Who dwells naturally in the Father by birth, we also dwell naturally, while He Himself
abides naturally in us also.
16. Again, how natural this unity is in us He has Himself testified on this wise,—He who eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him. For no man shall dwell in Him, save him in whom He dwells Himself, for the only flesh which He has taken to Himself is the flesh of those who have taken His. Now He had already taught before the sacrament of this perfect unity, saying, As the living Father sent Me, and I live through the Father, so he that eateth My flesh shall himself also live through Me. So then He lives through the Father, and as He lives through the Father in like manner we live through His flesh. For all comparison is chosen to shape our understanding, so that we may grasp the subject of which we treat by help of the analogy set before us. This is the cause of our life that we have Christ dwelling within our carnal selves through the flesh, and we shall live through Him in the same manner as He lives through the Father. if, then, we live naturally through Him according to the flesh, that is, have partaken of the nature of His flesh, must He not naturally have the Father within Himself according to the Spirit since He Himself lives through the Father? And He lives through the Father because His birth has not implanted in Him an alien and different nature inasmuch as His very being is from Him yet is not divided from Him by any barrier of an unlikeness of nature, for within Himself He has the Father through the birth in the power of the nature.

17. I have dwelt upon these facts because the heretics falsely maintain that the union between Father and Son is one of will only, and make use of the example of our own union with God, as though we were trailed to the Son and through the Son to the Father by mere obedience and a devout will, and none of the natural verity of communion were vouchsafed us through the sacrament of the Body and Blood; although the glory of the Son bestowed upon us through the Son abiding in us after the flesh, while we are united in Him corporeally and inseparably, bids us preach the mystery of the true and natural unity.

18. So we have made our reply to the folly of our violent opponents, merely to prove the emptiness of their falsehoods and so prevent them from misleading the unwary by the error of their vain and foolish statements. But the faith of the Gospel did not of necessity require our answer. The Lord prayed on our behalf for our union with God, but God keeps His own unity and abides in it. It is not through any mysterious appointment of God that they are one, but through a birth of nature, for God loses nothing in begetting Him from Himself. They are one, for the things which are not plucked out of His hand are not plucked out of the hand of the Father, for, when He is known, the Father is known, for, when He is seen, the Father is seen, for what He speaks the Father speaks as abiding in Him, for in His works the Father works, for He is in the Father and the Father in Him. This proceeds from no creation but from birth; it is not brought about by will but by power; it is no agreement of mind that speaks, it is nature; because to be created and to be born are not one and the same, any more than to will and to be able; neither is it the same thing to agree and to abide.

19. Thus we do not deny a unanimity between the Father and the Son,—for heretics are accustomed to utter this falsehood, that since we do not accept concord by itself as the bond of unity we declare Them to be at variance. But let them listen how it is that we do not deny such a unanimity. The Father and the Son are one in nature, honour, power, and the same nature cannot will things that are contrary. Moreover, let them listen to the testimony of the
Son as touching the unity of nature between Himself and the Father, for He says, When that advocate is come, Whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth Who proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me. The Advocate shall come and the Son shall send Him from the Father, and He is the Spirit of truth Who proceedeth from the Father. Let the whole following of heretics arouse the keenest powers of their wit; let them now seek for what lies they can tell to the unlearned, and declare what that is which the Son sends from the Father. He Who sends manifests His power in that which He sends. But as to that which He sends from the Father, how shall we regard it, as received or sent forth or begotten? For His words that He will send from the Father must imply one or other of these modes of sending. And He will send from the Father that Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father; He therefore cannot be the Recipient, since He is revealed as the Sender. It only remains to make sure of our conviction on the point, whether we are to believe an egress of a co-existent Being, or a procession of a Being begotten.

20. For the present I forbear to expose their licence of speculation, some of them holding that the Paraclete Spirit comes from the Father or from the Son. For our Lord has not left this in uncertainty, for after these same words He spoke thus,—I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak from Himself: but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, He shall receive of Mine and shall declare it unto you. Accordingly He receives from the Son, Who is both sent by Him, and proceeds from the Father. Now I ask whether to receive from the Son is the same thing as to proceed from the Father. But if one believes that there is a difference between receiving from the Son and proceeding from the Father, surely to receive from the Son and to receive from the Father will be regarded as one and the same thing. For our Lord Himself says, Because He shall receive of Mine and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, He shall receive of Mine and shall declare it unto you. That which He will receive,—whether it will be power, or excellence, or teaching,—the Son has said must be received from Him, and again He indicates that this same thing must be received from the Father. For when He says that all things whatsoever the Father hath are His, and that for this cause He declared that it must be received from His own, He teaches also that what is received from the Father is yet received from Himself, because all things that the Father hath are His. Such a unity admits no difference, nor does it make any difference from whom that is received, which given by the Father is described as given by the Son. Is a mere unity of will brought forward here also? All things which the Father hath are the Son’s, and all things which the Son hath are the Father’s. For He Himself saith, And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine. It is not yet the place to shew wily He spoke thus, For He shall receive of Mine: for this points to some subsequent time, when it is revealed that He shall receive. Now at any rate He says that He will receive of Himself, because all things that the Father had were His. Dissever if thou canst the unity of the nature, and introduce some necessary unlikeness through which the Son may not exist in unity of nature. For the Spirit of truth proceedeth from the Father and is sent from the Father by the Son. All things that the Father hath are the Son’s; and for this cause whatever He Who is to be sent...
shall receive, He shall receive from the Son, because all things that the Father hath are the Son’s. The nature in all respects maintains its law, and because Both are One that same Godhead is signified as existing in Both through generation and nativity; since the Son affirms that that which the Spirit of truth shall receive from the Father is to be given by Himself. So the frowardness of heretics must not be allowed an unchecked licence of impious beliefs, in refusing to acknowledge that this saying of the Lord,—that because all things which the Father hath are His, therefore the Spirit of truth shall receive of Him,—is to be referred to unity of nature.

21. Let us listen to that chosen vessel and teacher of the Gentiles, when he had already commended the faith of the people of Rome because of their understanding of the truth. For wishing to teach the unity of nature in the case of the Father and the Son, he speaks thus, But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God is in you. But if any have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. But if Christ is in you, the body indeed is dead through sin, but the Spirit is life through righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him Who raised up Christ from the dead dwelleth in you; He Who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, because of His Spirit Who dwelleth in you. We are all spiritual if the Spirit of God dwells in us. But this Spirit of God is also the Spirit of Christ, and though the Spirit of Christ is in us, yet His Spirit is also in us Who raised Christ from the dead, and He Who raised Christ from the dead shall quicken our mortal bodies also on account of His Spirit that dwelleth in us. We are quickened therefore on account of the Spirit of Christ that dwelleth in us, through Him Who raised Christ from the dead. And since the Spirit of Him Who raised Christ from the dead dwells in us, and yet the Spirit of Christ is in us, nevertheless the Spirit Which is in us cannot but be the Spirit of God. Separate, then, O heretic, the Spirit of Christ from the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ Who was raised from the dead from the Spirit of God Which raises Christ from the dead.

22. And now I ask whether thou thinkest that in the Spirit of God is signified a nature or a property belonging to a nature. For a nature is not identical with a thing belonging to it, just as neither is a man identical with what belongs to a man, nor fire with what belongs to fire itself, and in like manner God is not the same as that which belongs to God.

23. For I am aware that the Son of God is revealed under the title Spirit of God in order that we may understand the presence of the Father in Him, and that the term Spirit of God may be employed to indicate Either, and that this is shewn not only on the authority of prophets but of evangelists also, when it is said, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; therefore He hath anointed Me. And again, Behold My Servant Whom I have chosen, My beloved in Whom My soul is well pleased, I will put My Spirit upon Him. And when the Lord Himself bears witness of Himself, But if I in the Spirit of God cast out devils, then has the kingdom of God come upon you. For the passages seem without any doubt to denote either Father or Son, while they yet manifest the excellence of nature.

24. For I think that the expression ‘Spirit of God’ was used with respect to Each, lest we should
believe that the Son was present in the Father or the Father in the Son in a merely corporeal manner, that is, lest God might be thought to abide in one position and exist nowhere else apart from Himself. For a man or any other thing like him, when he is in one place, cannot be in another, because what is in one place is confined to the place where it is: his nature cannot allow him to be everywhere when he exists in some one position. But God is a living Force, of infinite power, present everywhere and nowhere absent, and manifests His whole self through His own, and signifies that His own are naught else than Himself, so that where they are He may be understood to be Himself. Yet we must not think that, after a corporeal fashion, when He is in one place He ceases to be everywhere, for through His own things He is still present in all places, while the things which are His are none other than His own self. Now these things have been said to make us understand what is meant by ‘nature.’

25. Now I think that it ought to be clearly understood that God the Father is denoted by the Spirit of God, because our Lord Jesus Christ declared that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him since He anoints Him and sends Him to preach the Gospel. For in Him is made manifest the excellence of the Father’s nature, disclosing that the Son partakes of His nature even when born in the flesh through the mystery of this spiritual unction, since after the birth ratified in. His baptism this intimation of His inherent Sonship was heard as a voice bore witness from Heaven:—Thou art My Son; this day have begotten Thee. For not even He Himself can be understood as resting upon Himself or coming to Himself from Heaven, or as bestowing on Himself the title of Son: but all this demonstration was for our faith, in order that under the mystery of a complete and true birth we should recognise that the unity of the nature dwells in the Son Who had begun to be also man. We have thus found that in the Spirit of God the Father is designated; but we understand that the Son is indicated in the same way, when He says: But if I in the Spirit of God cast out devils, then has the kingdom of God come upon you. That is, He shews clearly that He, by the power of His nature, casts out devils, which cannot be cast out save by the Spirit of God. The phrase ‘Spirit of God’ denotes also the Paraclete Spirit, and that not only on the testimony of prophets but also of apostles, when it is said:—This is that which was spoken through the Prophet, It shall come to pass on the last day, saith the Lord, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh, and their sans and their daughters shall prophesy And we learn that all this prophecy was fulfilled in the case of the Apostles, when, after the sending of the Holy Spirit, they all spoke with the tongues of the Gentiles.

26. Now we have of necessity set these things forth with this object, that in whatever direction the deception of heretics betakes itself, it might yet be kept in check by the boundaries and limits of the gospel truth. For Christ dwells in us, and where Christ dwells God dwells. And when the Spirit of Christ dwells in us, this indwelling means not that any other Spirit dwells in us than the Spirit of God. But if it is understood that Christ dwells in us through the Holy Spirit, we must yet recognise this Spirit of God as also the Spirit of Christ. And since the nature dwells in us as the nature of one substantive Being, we must regard the nature of the Son as identical with that of the Father, since the Holy Spirit Who is both the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God is proved to be a Being of one nature. I ask now, therefore, how can They fail to be one by nature? The Spirit of Truth proceeds from the Father, He is sent by the Son and
receives from the Son. But all things that the Father hath are the Son’s, and for this cause He Who receives from Him is the Spirit of God but at the same time the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit is a Being of the nature of the Son but the same Being is of the nature of the Father. He is the Spirit of Him Who raised Christ from the dead; but this is no other than the Spirit of Christ Who was so raised. The nature of Christ and of God must differ in some respect so as not to be the same, if it can be shewn that the Spirit which is of God is not the Spirit of Christ also.

27. But you, heretic, as you wildly rave and are driven about by the Spirit of your deadly doctrine the Apostle seizes and constrains, establishing Christ for us as the foundation of our faith, being well aware also of that saying of our Lord, If a man love Me, he will also keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. For by this He testified that while the Spirit of Christ abides in us the Spirit of God abides in us, and that the Spirit of Him that was raised from the dead differs not from the Spirit of Him that raised Him from the dead. For they come and dwell in us: and I ask whether they will come as alleges associated together and make Their abode, or in unity of nature? Nay, the teacher of the Gentiles contends that it is not two Spirits—the Spirits of God and of Christ—that are present in those who believe, but the Spirit of Christ which is also the Spirit of God. This is no joint indwelling, it is one indwelling: yet an indwelling under the mysterious semblance of a joint indwelling, for it is not the case that two Spirits indwell, nor is one that indwells different from the other. For there is in us the Spirit of God and there is also in us the Spirit of Christ, and when the Spirit of Christ is in us there is also in us the Spirit of God. And so since what is of God is also of Christ, and what is of Christ is also of God, Christ cannot be anything different from what God is. Christ, therefore, is God, one Spirit with God.

28. Now the Apostle asserts that those words in the Gospel, I and the Father are one, imply unity of nature and not a solitary single Being, as he writes to the Corinthians, Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man in the Spirit of God calleth Jesus anathema. Perceivest thou now, O heretic, in what spirit thou callest Christ a creature? For since they are under a curse who have served the creature more than the Creator—in affirming Christ to be a creature, learn what thou art, since thou knowest full well that the worship of the creature is accursed. And observe what follows, And no one can call Jesus Lord, but in the Holy Spirit. Dost thou perceive what is lacking to thee, when thou deniest Christ what is His own? If thou holdest that Christ is Lord through His Divine nature, thou hast the Holy Spirit. But if He be Lord merely by a name of adoption thou lackest the Holy Spirit, and art animated by a spirit of error: because no one can call Jesus Lord, but in the Holy Spirit. But when thou sayest that He is a creature rather than God, although thou styllest Him Lord, still thou dost not say that He is the Lord. For to thee He is Lord as one of a common class and by a familiar name, rather than by nature. Yet learn from Paul His nature.

29. For the Apostle goes on to say, Now there are diversities of gifts, but there is the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministrations but one and the same Lord; and there are diversities of workings but the same God, Who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for that which profiteth. In this passage before us we perceive a fourfold statement: in the diversity of gifts it is the same Spirit, in the diversity of ministrations
it is the very same Lord, in the diversity of workings it is the same God, and in the bestowal of that which is profitable there is a manifestation of the Spirit. And in order that the bestowal of what is profitable might be recognised in the manifestation of the Spirit, he continues: To one indeed is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith in the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing in the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

30. And indeed that which we called the fourth statement, that is the manifestation of the Spirit in the bestowal of what is profitable, has a clear meaning. For the Apostle has enumerated the profitable gifts through which this manifestation of the Spirit took place. Now in these diverse activities that Gift is set forth in no uncertain light of which our Lord had spoken to the apostles when He taught them not to depart from Jerusalem; but wait, said He, for the promise of the Father which ye heard from My lips: for John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, which ye shall also receive not many days hence. And again: But ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost cometh upon you; and ye shah be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. He bids them wait for the promise of the Father of which they had beard from His lips. We may be sure that here we have a reference to the Father’s same promise. Hence it is by these miraculous workings that the manifestation of the Spirit takes place. For the gift of the Spirit is manifest, where wisdom makes utterance and the words of life are heard, and where there is the knowledge that comes of God-given insight, lest after the fashion of beasts through ignorance of God we should fail to know the Author of our life; or by faith in God, lest by not believing the Gospel of God, we should be outside His Gospel; or by the gift of healings, that by the cure of diseases we should bear witness to His grace Who bestoweth these things; or by the working of miracles, that what we do may be understood to be the power of God, or by prophesy, that through our understanding of doctrine we might be known to be taught of God; or by discerning of spirits, that we should not be unable to tell whether any one speaks with a holy or a perverted spirit; or by kinds of tongues, that the speaking in tongues may be bestowed as a sign of the gift of the Holy Spirit; or by the interpretation of tongues, that the faith of those that hear may not be imperilled through ignorance, since the interpreter of a tongue explains the tongue to those who are ignorant of it. Thus in all these things distributed to each one to profit withal there is the manifestation of the Spirit, the gift of the Spirit being apparent through these marvellous advantages vestowed upon each.

31. Now the blessed Apostle Paul in revealing the secret of these heavenly mysteries, most difficult to human comprehension, has preserved a clear enunciation and a carefully worded caution in order to shew that these diverse gifts are given through the Spirit and in the Spirit (for to be given through the Spirit and in the Spirit is not the same thing), because the granting of a gift which is exercised in the Spirit is yet bestowed through the Spirit. But he sums up these diversities of gifts thus: Now all these things worketh one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one as He will. Now, therefore, I ask what Spirit works these things, dividing to each one according as He wills: is it He by Whom or He in Whom there is this distribution of gifts? But if
any one shall dare to say that it is the same Person which is indicated, the Apostle will refute so
faulty an opinion, for he says above, And there are diversities of workings, but the same God
Who worketh all things in all. So there is one Who distributes and another in Whom the
distribution is vouchsafed. Yet know that it is always God Who worketh all these things, but in
such a way that Christ works, and the Son in His working performs the Father’s work. And if in
the Holy Spirit thou confessest Jesus to be Lord, understand the force of that threefold
indication in the Apostle’s letter; forasmuch as in the diversities of gifts, it is the same Spirit,
and in the diversities of ministrations it is the same Lord, and in the diversities of workings it is
the same God; and again, one Spirit that worketh all things distributing to each according as He
will. And grasp the idea if thou canst that the Lord in the distribution of ministrations, and God
in the distribution of workings, are this one and the same Spirit Who both works and
distributes as He will; because in the distribution of gifts there is one Spirit, and the same Spirit
works and distributes.

32. But if this one Spirit of one Divinity, one in both God and Lord through the mystery of the
birth, does not please thee, then point out to me what Spirit both works and distributes these
diverse gifts to us, and in what Spirit He does this. But, thou must shew me nothing but what
accords with our faith, because the Apostle shews us Who is to be understood, saying, For as
the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are
one body, so also is Christ. He affirms that diversities of gifts come from one Lord Jesus Christ
Who is the body of all. Because after he had made known the Lord in ministration, and made
known also God in workings, he yet shews that one Spirit both works and distributes all these
things, distributing these varieties of His gracious gifts for the perfecting of one body.

33. Unless perchance we think that the Apostle did not keep to the principle of unity in that he
said, And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord, and there are diversities of
workings, but the same God. So that because he referred ministrations to the Lord and
workings to God, he does not appear to have understood one and the same Being in
ministrations and operations. Learn how these members which minister are also members
which work, when he says, Ye are the body of Christ, and of Him members indeed. For God
hath set same in the Church, first apostles, in whom is the word of wisdom; secondly prophets,
in whom is the gift of knowledge thirdly teachers, in whom is the doctrine of faith; next mighty
works, among which are the healing of diseases, the power to help,, governments by the
prophets, and gifts of either speaking or interpreting divers kinds of tongues. Clearly these are
the Church’s agents of ministry and work of whom the body of Christ consists; and God has
ordained them. But perhaps thou mainteinaest that they have not been ordained by Christ,
because it was God Who ordained them. But thou shall hear what the Apostle says himself:
Now to each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. And
again, He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens that He
might fill all things. And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some,
evangelists; and same, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of
ministering. Are not then the gifts of ministration Christ’s, while they are also the gifts of God?

34. But if impiety has assumed to itself that because he says, The same Lord and the same God,
they are not in unity of nature, I will support this interpretation with what you deem still stronger arguments. For the same Apostle says, But for us there is one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things, and we through Him. And again, One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is both through all, and in us all. By these words one God and one Lord it would seem that to God only is attributed, as to one God, the property of being God; since the property of oneness does not admit of partnership with another. Verily how rare and hard to attain are such spiritual gifts! How truly is the manifestation of the Spirit seen in the bestowal of such useful gifts! And with reason has this order in the distribution of graces been appointed, that the foremost should be the word of wisdom; for true it is, And no one can call Jesus Lord but in the Holy Spirit, because but through this word of wisdom Christ could not be understood to be Lord; that then there should follow next the word of understanding, that we might speak with understanding what we know, and might know the word of wisdom; and that the third gift should consist of faith, seeing that those leading and higher graces would be unprofitable gifts did we not believe that He is God. So that in the true sense of this greatest and most noble utterance of the Apostle no heretics possess either the word of wisdom or the word of knowledge or the faith of religion, inasmuch as wilful wickedness, being incapable of understanding, is void of knowledge of the word and of genuineness of faith. For no one utters what he does not know; nor can he believe that which he cannot utter; and thus when the Apostle preached one God, a proselyte as He was from the Law, and called to the gospel of Christ, he has attained to the confession of a perfect faith. And lest the simplicity of a seemingly unguarded statement might afford heretics any opportunity for denying through the preaching of one God the birth of the Son, the Apostle has set forth one God while indicating His peculiar attribute in these words, One God the Father, of Whom are all thing, and we in Him, in order that He Who is God might also be acknowledged as Father. Afterwards, inasmuch as this bare belief in one God the Father would not suffice for salvation, he added, And one, our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things, and we through Him, shewing that the purity of saving faith consists in the preaching of one God and one Lord, so that we might believe in one God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ. For he knew full well how our Lord had said, For this is the will of My Father, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on Him should have eternal life. But in fixing the order of the Church’s faith, and basing our faith upon the Father and the Son, he has uttered the mystery of that indivisible and indissoluble unity and faith in the words one God and one Lord.

35. First of all, then, O heretic that hast no part in the Spirit which spoke by the Apostle, learn thy folly. If thou wrongly employest the confession of one God to deny the Godhead of Christ, on the ground that where one God exists He must be regarded as solitary, and that to be One is characteristic and peculiar to Him Who is One,—what sense wilt thou assign to the statement that Jesus Christ is one Lord? For if, as thou assertest, the fact that the Father alone is God has not left to Christ the possibility of Godhead, it must needs be also according to thee that the fact of Christ being one Lord does not leave God the possibility of being Lord, seeing that thou wilt have it that to be One must be the essential property of Him Who is One. Hence if thou deniest that the one Lord Christ is also God, thou must needs deny that the one God the
Father is also Lord. And what will the greatness of God amount to if He be not Lord, and the power of the Lord if He be not God: since it(viz., the greatness or power) causes that to be God which is Lord, and makes that Lord which is God?

36. Now the Apostle, maintaining the true sense of the Lord’s saying, I and the Father are one, whilst He asserts that Both are One, signifies that Both are One not after the manner of the soleness of a single being, but in the unity of the Spirit; for one God the Father and one Christ the Lord, since Each is both Lord and God, do not yet admit in our creed either two Gods or two Lords. So then Each is one, and though one, neither is sole. We shall not be able to express the mystery of the faith except in the words of the Apostle. For there is one God and one Lord, and the fact that there is one God and one Lord proves that there is at once Lordship in God, and Godhead in the Lord. Thou canst not maintain a trojan of person, so making God single; nor yet canst thou divide the Spirit, so preventing the Two from being One. Nor in the one God and one Lord wilt thou be able to separate the power, so that He Who is Lord should not also be God, and He Who is God should not also be Lord. For the Apostle in the enunciation of the Names has taken care not to preach either two Gods or two Lords. And for this reason he has employed such a method of teaching as in the one Lord Christ to set forth also one God, and in the one God the Father to set forth also one Lord. And, not to misguide us into the blasphemy that God is solitary, which would destroy the birth of the Only-begotten God, he has confessed both Father and Christ.

37. Unless perchance the frenzy of utter desperation will venture to rush to such lengths that, inasmuch as the Apostle has called Christ Lord, no one ought to acknowledge Him as aught else save Lord, and that because He has the property of Lord He has not the true Godhead. But Paul knows full well that Christ is God, for he says, Whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ, Who is God over all. It is no creature here who is reckoned as God; nay, it is the God of things created Who is God over all.

38. Now that He Who is God over all is also Spirit inseparable from the Father, learn also from that very utterance of the Apostle, of which we are now speaking. For when he confessed one God the Father from Whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ through Whom are all things; what difference, I ask, dirt he intend by saying that all things are from God and that all things are through Christ? Can He possibly be regarded as of a nature and spirit separable from Himself, He from Whom and through Whom are all things? For all things have come into being through the Son out of nothing, and the Apostle has referred them to God the Father, From Whom are all things, but also to the Son, through Whom are all things. And I find here no difference, since by Each is exercised the same power. For if with regard to the subsistence of the universe it was an exact sufficient statement that things created are from God, what need was there to state that the things which are from God are through Christ, unless it be one and the same thing to be through Christ and from God? But as it has been ascribed to Each of Them that They are Lord and God in such wise that each title belongs to Both, so too from Whom and through Whom is here referred to Both; and this to shew the unity of Both, not to make known God’s singleness. The language of the Apostle affords no opening for wicked error, nor is his faith too exalted for careful statement. For he has guarded himself by those specially
appropriate words from being understood to mean two Gods or a solitary God: for while he rejects oneness of person he yet does not divide the unity of Godhead. For this from Whom are all things and through Whom are all things, although it did not posit a solitary Deity in the sole possession of majesty, must yet set forth One not different in efficiency, since from Whom are all things and through Whom are all things must signify an Author of the same nature engaged in the same work. He affirms, moreover, that Each is properly of the same nature. For after announcing the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God, and after asserting the mystery of His inscrutable judgments and avowing our ignorance of His ways past finding out, he has yet made use of the exercise of human faith, and rendered this homage to the depth of the unsearchable and inscrutable mysteries of heaven, for of Him and through Him and in Him are all things: to Him be glory for ever. Amen. He employs to indicate the one nature, that which cannot but be the work of one nature.

39. For whereas he has specially ascribed to God that all things are from Him, and he has assigned as a peculiar property to Christ, that all things are through Him, and it is now the glory of God that from Him and through Him and in Him are all things; and whereas the Spirit of God is the same as the Spirit of Christ, or whereas in the ministration of the Lord and in the working of God, one Spirit both works and divides, They cannot but be one Whose properties are those of one; since in the same Lord the Son, and in the same God the Father, one and the same Spirit distributing in the same Holy Spirit accomplishes all things. How worthy is this saint of the knowledge of exalted and heavenly mysteries, adopted and chosen to share in the secret things of God, preserving a due silence over things which may not be uttered, true apostle of Christ! How by the announcement of his clear teaching has he restrained the imaginations of human wilfulness, confessing, as he does, one God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ, so that meanwhile no one can either preach two Gods or one solitary God; although He Who is not one person cannot multiply into two Gods, nor on the other hand can They Who are not two Gods be understood to be one single person; while meantime the revelation of God as Father demonstrates the true nativity of Christ.

40. Thrust out now your quivering and hissing tongues, ye vipers of heresy, whether it be thou Sabellius or thou Photinus, or ye who now preach that the Only-begotten God is a creature. Whosoever denies the Son shall hear of one God the Father, because inasmuch as a father becomes a father only by having a son, this name Father necessarily connotes the existence of the Son. And again, let him who takes away from the Son the unity of an identical nature, acknowledge one Lord Jesus Christ. For unless through unity of the Spirit He is one Lord room will not be left for God the Father to be Lord. Again, let him who holds the Son to have become Son in time and by His Incarnation, learn that through Him are all things and we through Him, and that His timeless Infinity was creating all things before time was. And meanwhile let him read again that there is one hope of our calling, and one baptism, and one faith; if, after that, he oppose himself to the preaching of the Apostle, he, being accursed because he framed strange doctrines of his own device, is neither called nor baptized nor believing; because in one God the Father and in one Lord Jesus Christ there lies the one faith of one hope and baptism. And no alien doctrine can boast that it has a place among the truths which belong to one God and Lord and hope and
baptism and faith.

41. So then the one faith is, to confess the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father through the unity of an indivisible nature, not confused but inseparable, not intermingled but identical, not conjoined but coexisting, not incomplete but perfect. For there is birth not separation, there is a Son not an adoption; and He is God, not a creature. Neither is He a God of a different kind, but the Father and Son are one: for the nature was not altered by birth so as to be alien from the property of its original. So the Apostle holds the faith of the Son abiding in the Father and the Father in the Son when he proclaims that for him there is one God the Father and one Lord Christ, since in Christ the Lord there was also God, and in God the Father there was also Lord, and They Two are that unity which is God, and They Two are also that unity which is the Lord, for reason indicates that there must be something imperfect in God unless He be Lord, and in the Lord unless He were God. And so since Both are one, and Both are implied under either name, and neither exists apart from the unity, the Apostle has not gone beyond the preaching of the Gospel in his teaching, nor does Christ when He speaks in Paul differ from the words which He spoke while abiding in the world in bodily form.

42. For the Lord had said in the gospels, Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto life eternal, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for Him the Father, even God, hath sealed. They said therefore unto Him, What must we do that we may work the works of God? And He said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent. In setting forth the mystery of His Incarnation and His Godhead our Lord has also uttered the teaching of our faith and hope that we should work for food, not that which perisheth but that which abideth for ever; that we should remember that this food of eternity is given us by the Son of Man; that we should know the Son of Man as sealed by God the Father; that we should know that this is the work of God, even faith in Him Whom He has sent. And Who is it Whom the Father has sent? Even He Whom the Father has sealed. And Who is He Whom the Father has sealed? In truth, the Son of Man, even He who gives the food of eternal life. And further who are they to whom He gives it? They who shall work for the food that does not perish. Thus, then, the work for this food is at the same time the work of God, namely, to believe on Him Whom He has sent. But these words are uttered by the Son of Man. And how shall the Son of Man give the food of life eternal? Why, he knows not the mystery of his own salvation, who knows not that the Son of Man, bestowing food unto life eternal, has been sealed by God the Father. At this point I now ask in what sense are we to understand that the Son of Man has been sealed by God the Father?

43. Now we ought to recognise first of all that God has spoken not for Himself but for us, and that He has so far tempered the language of His utterance as to enable the weakness of our nature to grasp and understand it. For after being rebuked by the Jews for having made Himself the equal of God by professing to be the Son of God, He had answered that He Himself did all things that the Father did, and that He had received all judgment from the Father; moreover that He must be honoured even as the Father. And in all these things having before declared Himself Son, He had made Himself equal to the Father in honour, power and nature. Afterwards He had said that as the Father had life in Himself, so He had given the Son to have
life in Himself, wherein He signified that by virtue of the mystery of the birth He possessed the unity of the same nature. For when He says that He has what the Father has, He means that He has the Father’s self. For that God is not after human fashion of a composite being, so that in Him there is a difference of kind between Possessor and Possessed; but all that He is is life, a nature, that is, complete, absolute and infinite, not composed of dissimilar elements but with one life permeating the whole. And since this life was in such wise given as it was possessed, although the fact the it was given manifestly reveals the birth of the Recipient, it yet does not involve a difference of kind since the life given was such as was possessed.

44. Therefore after this manifold and precise revelation of the presence of the Father’s nature in Himself, He goes on to say, For Him hath the Father sealed, even God. It is the nature of a seal to exhibit the whole form of the figure graven upon it, and that an impression taken from it reproduces it in every respect; and since it receives the whole of that which is impressed, it displays also in itself wholly whoever has been impressed upon it. Yet this comparison is not adequate to exemplify the Divine birth, because in seals there is a matter, difference of nature, and an act of impression, whereby the likeness of stronger natures is impressed upon things of a more yielding nature. But the Only-begotten God, Who was also through the Mystery of our salvation the Son of Man, desiring to point out to us the likeness of His Father’s proper nature in Himself, said that He was sealed by God; because the Son of Man was about to give the food of eternal life, and that we thereby might perceive in Him the power of giving food unto eternity, in that He possessed within Himself all the fulness of His Father’s form, even of the God Who sealed Him: so that what God had sealed should display in itself none other than the form of the God Who sealed it. These things indeed the Lord spoke to the Jews, who could not receive His saying because of unbelief.

45. But in us the preacher of the Gospel by the Spirit of Christ Who spoke through him, instils the knowledge of this His proper nature when he says, Who, being in the form of God, thought it not a thing to grasp a that He was equal with God, but emplied Himself, taking the form of a servant. For He, Whom God had sealed, could be naught else than the form of God, and that which has been sealed in the form of God must needs present at the same time imaged forth within itself all that God possesses. And for this cause the Apostle taught that He Whom God sealed is God abiding in the form of God. For when about to speak of the Mystery of the batty assumed and born in Him, he says, He thought it not a thing to grasp at that He was equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. As regards His being in the form of God, by virtue of God’s seal upon Him, he still remained God. But inasmuch as He was to take the form of a servant and become obedient unto death, not grasping at His equality with God, He emptied Himself through obedience to take the form of a slave. And He emptied Himself of the form of God, that is, of that wherein He was equal with God–not that He regarded His equality with God as any encroachment,—although He was in the form of God and equal with God and sealed by God as God.

46. At this point I ask whether He Who abides as God in the form of God is a God of another kind, as we perceive in the case of seals in respect of the likenesses which stamp and those which are stamped, since a steel die impressed upon lead or a gem upon wax shapes the figure
cut in it or imprints that which stands in relief upon it. But if there be any one so foolish and senseless as to think that that, pertaining to Himself, which God fashions to be God, is aught but God, and that He Who is in the form of God is in any respect anything else save God after the mystery of His Incarnation and of His humility, made perfect through obedience even unto the death of the cross, he shall hear, by the confession of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth and of every tongue, that Jesus is in the glory of God the Father. If then, when His form had become that of a slave He abides in such glory, how, I ask, did He abide when in the form of God? Must not Christ the Spirit have been in the nature of God—for this is what is meant by ‘in the glory of God’—when Christ as Jesus, that is, born as man, exists in the glory of God the Father?

47. In all things the blessed Apostle preserves the unchangeable teaching of the Gospel faith. The Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed as God in such wise that neither does the Apostle’s faith, by calling Him a God of a different order, fall away to the confession of two Gods, nor by making God the Son inseparable from the Father does it leave an opening for the unholy doctrine of a single and solitary God. For when he says, in the form of God and in the glory of the Father the Apostle neither teaches that They differ one from another, nor allows us to think of Him as not existing. For He Who is in the form of God neither ends by becoming another God nor Himself loses His Godhead: for He cannot be severed from the form of God since He exists in it, nor is He, Who is in the form of God, not God Just as He Who is in the glory of God cannot be aught else than God, and, since He is God in the glory of God, cannot be proclaimed as another god and one different from the true God, seeing that by reason of the fact that He is in the glory of God He possesses naturally from Him in Whose glory He is, the property of divinity.

48. But there is no danger that the one faith will cease to be such through diversity in its preaching. The Evangelist had taught that our Lord said, He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father also. But has Paul, the teacher of the Gentiles, forgotten or kept back the meaning of the Lord’s words, when he says, Who is the image of the invisible God? I ask whether He is the visible likeness of the invisible God, and whether the infinite God can also be presented to view under the likeness of a finite form? For a likeness must needs repeat the form of that of which it is the likeness. Let those, however, who will have a nature of a different sort in the Son determine what sort of likeness of the invisible God they wish the Son to be. Is it a bodily likeness exposed to the gaze, and moving from place to place with human gait and motion? Nay, but let them remember that according to the Gospels and the Prophets both Christ is a Spirit and God is a Spirit. If they confine this Christ the Spirit within the bounds of shape and body, such a corporeal Christ will not be the likeness of the invisible God, nor will a finite limitation represent that which is infinite.

49. But, as it is, neither did the Lord leave us in doubt: He who hath seen Me, hath seen the Father also; nor was the Apostle silent as to His nature, Who is the image of the invisible God. For the Lord had said, If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not, teaching them to see the Father in Himself in that He did the works of the Father; that through perceiving the power of His nature they might understand the nature of that power which they perceived. Wherefore the Apostle proclaiming that this is the image of God, says, Who is the image of the
invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in Him were all things made in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him and in Him, and He is before all, and for Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church, Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell, and through Him all things should be reconciled to Him. So through the power of these works He is the image of God. For assuredly the Creator of things invisible is not compelled by any necessity inherent in His nature to be the visible image of the invisible God. And lest He should be regarded as the likeness of the form and not of the nature, He is styled the likeness of the invisible God in order that we may understand by His exercise of the powers (not the invisible attributes) of the Divine nature, that that nature is in Him.

50. He is accordingly the first-born of every creature because in Him all things were created. And lest any one should dare to refer to any other than Him the creation of all things in Himself, he says, All things have been created through Him and in Him, and He is before all, and far Him all things consist. All things then consist for Him Who is before all things, and in Whom are all things. Now this indeed describes the origin of created things. But concerning the dispensation by which He assumed our body, he adds, And He is the head of the body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead: that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell, and through Him all things should be reconciled to Him. The Apostle has assigned to the spiritual mysteries their material effects. For He Who is the image of the invisible God is Himself the head of His body, the Church, and He Who is the first-born of every creature is at the same time the beginning, the first born from the dead: that in all things He might have the pre-eminence, being for us the Body, while He is also the image of God, since He, Who is the first-born of created things, is at the same time the first-born for eternity; so that as to Him things spiritual, being created in the First-born, owe it that they abide, even so all things human also owe it to Him that in the First-born from the dead they are born again into eternity. For He is Himself the beginning, Who as Son is therefore the image, and because the image, is of God. Further He is the first-born of every created thing, possessing in Himself the origin of the universe: and again He is the head of His body, the Church, and the first-born from the dead, so that in all things He has the pre-eminence. And because all things consist for Him, in Him the fulness of the Godhead is pleased to dwell, for in Him all things are reconciled through Him to Him, through Whom all things were created in Himself.

51. Do you now perceive what it is to be the image of God? It means that all things are created in Him through Him. Whereas all things are created in Him, understand that He, Whose image He is, also creates all things in Him. And since all things which are created in Him are also created through Him, recognize that in Him Who is the image there is present the nature of Him, Whose image He is. For through Himself He creates the things which are created in Him, just as through Himself all things are reconciled in Him. Inasmuch as they are reconciled in Him, recognise in Him the nature of the Father’s unity, reconciling all things to Himself in Him. Inasmuch as all things are reconciled through Him, perceive Him reconciling to the Father in
Himself all things which He reconciled through Himself. For the same Apostle says, But all things are from God, Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Compare with this the whole mystery of the faith of the Gospel. For He Who is seen when Jesus is seen, Who works in His works, and speaks in His words, also reconciles in His reconciliation. And for this cause, in Him and through Him there is reconciliation, because the Father abiding in Him through a like nature restored the world to Himself by reconciliation through and in Him.

52. Thus God out of regard for human weakness has not set forth the faith in bare and uncertain statements. For although the authority of our Lord’s mere words of itself compelled their acceptance, He nevertheless has informed our reason by a revelation which explains their meaning, that we might learn to know His words, I and the Father are one, by means of that which was itself the cause of the unity in question. For in saying that the Father speaks in His words, and works through His working, and judges through His judgment, and is seen in His manifestation, and reconciles through His reconciliation, and abides in Him, while He in turn abides in the Father,—what more fitting words, I ask, could He have employed in His teaching to suit the faculties of our reason, that we might believe in Their unity, than those by which, through the truth of the birth and the unity of the nature, it is declared that whatever the Son did and said, the Father said and did in the Son? This says nothing of a nature foreign to Himself, or added by creation to God, or born into Godhead by a partition of God, but it betokens the divinity of One Who by a perfect birth is begotten perfect God, Who has so confident an assurance of His nature that He says, I in the Father and the Father in Me, and again, All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine. For nought of the Godhead is lacking in Him, in Whose working and speaking and manifestation God works and speaks and is beheld. They are not two Gods, Who in their working and words and manifestation put on a semblance of unity. Neither is He a solitary God. Who in the works and words and sight of God, Himself worked and spoke and was seen as God. The Church understands this. The Synagogue does not believe, philosophy does not know, that being One of One, Whole of Whole, God and Son, He has neither by His birth deprived the Father of His completeness, nor failed to possess the same completeness in Himself by right of His birth. And whosoever is caught in this folly of unbelief is a disciple either of the Jews or of the heathen.

53. Now that you may understand the saying of the Lord, when He said, All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine, learn the teaching and faith of the Apostle who said, Take heed lest any lead you astray through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world and not after Christ; for in Him dwelleth the fulness of Godhead bodily. That man is of the world and savours of the teaching of men and is the victim of philosophy, who does not know Christ to be the true God, who does not recognise in Him the fulness of Godhead. The mind of man knows only that which it understands, and the world’s powers of belief are limited, since it judges according to the laws of the material elements that that alone is possible which it can see or do. For the elements of the world have come into being out of nothing, but Christ’s continuity of existence did not begin in the non-existent, nor did He ever begin to exist, but He took from the beginning a beginning which is eternal. The elements of
the world are either without life, or have issued out of this stage into life, but Christ is life, born
to be living God from the living God. The elements of the world have been established by God,
but they are not God: Christ as God of God is Himself wholly all that God is. The elements of
the world, since they are within it, cannot possibly rise out of their condition and cease to be
within it, but Christ, while having God within Himself through the Mystery, is Himself in God.
The elements of the universe, generating from themselves creatures with a life like their own,
do indeed through the exercise of their bodily functions bestow upon them from their own
bodies the beginnings of life, but they are not themselves present as living beings in their
offspring, whereas in Christ all the fulness of the Godhead is present in bodily shape.

54. Now I ask, whose Godhead is it whereof the fulness dwells in Him? If it be not that of the
Father, what other God do you, misleading preacher of one God, thrust upon me as Him
Whose Godhead dwells fully in Christ? But if it be that of the Father, inform me how this
fulness dwells in Him in bodily fashion. If you hold that the Father abides in the Son in bodily
fashion, the Father, while dwelling in the Son, will not exist in Himself. If on the other hand,
and this is more true, the Godhead abiding in Him in bodily shape displays within Him the
verity of the nature of God from God, inasmuch as God is in Him, abiding neither through
condescension nor through will but by birth, true and wholly in bodily fulness according as He
is; and inasmuch as, in the whole compass of His being, He was born by His divine birth to be
God, and within the Godhead there is no difference or dissimilarity, except that in Christ He
dwells in bodily form, and yet whatever dwells in Him bodily is according to the fulness of
Godhead; why follow after the doctrines of men? Why cleave to the teaching of empty
falsehoods? Why talk of ‘agreement’ or ‘harmony of will’ or ‘a creature?’ The fulness of
Godhead dwells in Christ bodily.

55. The Apostle has herein held fast to the canon of his faith, by teaching that the fulness of
the Godhead dwelt in Christ bodily; and this, in order that the teaching of the faith might not
degenerate into an unholy profession of a oneness of Persons or sinful frenzy break forth into
the belief of two different natures. For the fulness of Godhead which dwells in Christ in bodily
fashion is neither solitary nor separable; for the fulness in bodily form does not admit any
partition from the other bodily fulness, and the indwelling Godhead cannot be regarded as also
the dwelling-place of the Godhead. And Christ is so constituted that the fulness of Godhead
dwells in Him in bodily fashion, and that this fulness must be held one in nature with Christ. Lay
hands on every chance that offers for your quibbles, sharpen the points of your blasphemous
wit. Name, at least, the imaginary being whose fulness of Godhead it is which dwells in Christ in
bodily fashion. For He is Christ, and there is dwelling in Him in bodily fashion the fulness of
Godhead.

56. And if you would know what it is to ‘dwell in bodily fashion,’ understand what it is to speak
in one that speaks, to be seen in one who is seen, to work in one who works, to be God in God,
whole of whole, one of one; and thus learn what is meant by the fulness of God in bodily
shape. Remember, too, that the Apostle does not keep silence on the question, whose
Godhead it is, which dwells fully in Christ in bodily fashion, for he says, For the invisible things
of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that
are made, even His everlasting power and divinity. So it is His Godhead that dwells in Christ in bodily fashion, not partially but wholly, not parcelwise but in fulness; and so dwelling that the Two are one, and so one, that the One Who is God does not differ from the Other Who is God: Both so equally divine, as a perfect birth engendered perfect God. And the birth exists thus in its perfection, because the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in God born of God.

Book 9 (Back to the Top)

1. IN the last book we treated of the indistinguishable nature of God the Father and God the Son, and demonstrated that the words, I and the Father are One, go to prove not a solitary God, but a unity of the Godhead unbroken by the birth of the Son: for God can be born only of God, and He that is born God of God must be all that God is. We reviewed, although not exhaustively, yet enough to make our meaning clear, the sayings of our Lord and the Apostles, which teach the inseparable nature and power of the Father and the Son; and we came to the passage in the teaching of the Apostle, where he says, Take heed lest there shall be any one that leadeth you astray through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. We pointed out that here the words, in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, prove Him true and perfect God of His Father’s nature, neither severing Him from, nor identifying Him with, the Father. On the one hand we are taught that, since the incorporeal God dwelt in Him bodily, the Son as God begotten of God is in natural unity with the Father: and on the other hand, if God dwelt in Christ, this proves the birth of the personal Christ in Whom He dwell. We have thus, it seems to me, more than answered the irreverence of those who refer to a unity or agreement of will such words of the Lord as, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father, or, The Father is in Me and I in the Father, or, I and the Father are One, or, All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine. Not daring to deny the words themselves, these false teachers, in the mask of religion, corrupt the sense of the words. For instance, it is true that where the unity of nature is proclaimed the agreement of will cannot be denied; but in order to set aside that unity which follows from the birth, they profess merely a relationship of mutual harmony. But the blessed Apostle, after many indubitable statements of the real truth, cuts short their rash and profane assertions, by saying, in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, for by the bodily indwelling of the incorporeal God in Christ is taught the strict unity of Their nature. It is, therefore, not a matter of words, but a real truth that the Son was not alone, but the Father abode in Him: and not only abode, but also worked and spoke: not only worked and spoke, but also manifested Himself in Him. Through the Mystery of the birth the Son’s power is the power of the Father, His authority the Father’s authority, His nature the Father’s nature. By His birth the Son possesses the nature of the Father: as the Father’s image, He reproduces from the Father all that is in the Father, because He is the reality as well as the image of the Father, for a perfect birth produces a perfect image, and the fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Him indicates the truth of His nature.

2. All this is indeed as it is: He, Who is by nature God of God, must possess the nature of His origin, which God possesses, and the indistinguishable unity of a living nature cannot be divided by the birth of a living nature. Yet nevertheless the heretics, under cover of the saving
confession of the Gospel faith, are stealing on to the subversion of the truth: for by forcing their own interpretations on words uttered with other meanings and intentions, they are robbing the Son of His natural unity. Thus to deny the Son of God, they quote the authority of His own words, Why callest than Me good? None is good, save one, God. These words, they say, proclaim the Oneness of God: anything else, therefore, which shares the name of God, cannot possess the nature of God, for God is One. And from His words, This is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, they attempt to establish the theory that Christ is called God by a mere title, not as being very God. Further, to exclude Him from the proper nature of the true God, they quote, The Son can do nothing of Himself except that which He hath seen the Father do. They use also the text, The Father is greater than I. Finally, when they repeat the words, Of that day and that hour knoweth no one, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only, as though they were the absolute renunciation of His claim to divinity, they boast that they have overthrown the faith of the Church. The birth, they say, cannot raise to equality the nature which the limitation of ignorance degrades. The Father’s omniscience and the Son’s ignorance reveal unlikeness in the Divinity, for God must be ignorant of nothing, and the ignorant cannot be compared with the omniscient. All these passages they neither understand rationally, nor distinguish as to their occasions, nor apprehend in the light of the Gospel mysteries, nor realize in the strict meaning of the words and so they impugn the divine nature of Christ with crude and insensate rashness, quoting single detached utterances to catch the ears of the unwary, and keeping back either the sequel which explains or the incidents which prompted them, though the meaning of words must be sought in the context before or after them.

3. We will offer later an explanation of these texts in the words of the Gospels and Epistles themselves. But first we hold it right to remind the members of our common faith, that the knowledge of the Eternal is presented in the same confession which gives eternal life. He does not, he cannot know his own life, who is ignorant that Christ Jesus was very God, as He was very man. It is equally perilous, whether we deny that Christ Jesus was God the Spirit, or that He was flesh of our body: Every one therefore who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven. So said the Word made flesh; so taught the man Jesus Christ, the Lord of majesty, constituted Mediator in His own person for the salvation of the Church, and being in that very mystery of Mediatorship between men and God, Himself one Person, both man and God. For He, being of two natures united for that Mediatorship, is the full reality of each nature; while abiding in each, He is wanting in neither; He does not cease to be God because He becomes man, nor fail to be mall because He remains for ever God. This is the true faith for human blessedness, to preach at once the Godhead and the manhood, to confess the Word and the flesh, neither forgetting the God, because He is man, nor ignoring the flesh, because He is the Word.

4. It is contrary to our experience of nature, that He should be born man and still remain God; bill it accords with the tenor of our expectation, that being born man, He still remained God, for when the higher nature is born into the lower, it is credible that the lower should also be born into the higher. And, indeed, according to the laws and habits of nature, the working of
our expectation even anticipates the divine mystery. For in every tiling that is born, nature has the capacity for increase, but has no power of decrease. Look at the trees, the crops, the cattle. Regard man himself, the possessor of reason. He always expands by growth, he does not contract by decrease; nor does he ever lose the self into which he has grown. He wastes indeed with age, or is cut off by death; he undergoes change by lapse of time, or reaches the end allotted to the constitution of life, yet it is not in his power to cease to be what he is; I mean that he cannot make a new self by decrease from his old self, that is, become a child again from an old man. So the necessity of perpetual increase, which is imposed on our nature by natural law, leads us on good grounds to expect its promotion into a higher nature, since its increase is according to, and its decrease contrary to, nature. It was God alone Who could become something other than before, and yet not cease to be what He had ever been; Who could shrink within the limits of womb, cradle, anti infancy, yet not depart from the power of God. This is a mystery, not for Himself, but for us. The assumption of our nature was no advancement for God, but His willingness to lower Himself is our promotion, for He did not resign His divinity but conferred divinity on man.

5. The Only-begotten God, therefore, when He was born man of the Virgin, and in the fulness of time was about in His own person to raise humanity to divinity, always maintained this form of the Gospel teaching. He taught, namely, to believe Him the Son of God, and exhorted to preach Him the Son of Man; man saying and doing all that belongs to God; God saying and doing all that belongs to man. Yet never did He speak without signifying by the twofold aspect of these very utterances both His manhood and His divinity. Though He proclaimed one God the Father, He declared Himself to be in the nature of the one God, by the truth of His generation. Yet in His office as Son and His condition as man, He subjected Himself to God the Father, since everything that is born must refer itself back to its author, and all flesh must confess itself weak before God. Here, accordingly, the heretics find opportunity to deceive the simple and ignorant. These words, uttered in His human character, they falsely refer to the weakness of His divine nature; and because He was one and the same Person in all His utterances, they claim that He spoke always of His entire self.

6. We do not deny that all the sayings which are preserved of His, refer to His nature. But, if Jesus Christ be man and God, neither God for the first time, when He became man, nor then ceasing to be God, nor after He became Man in God less than perfect man and perfect God, then the mystery of His words must be one and the same with that of His nature. When according to the time indicated, we disconnect His divinity from humanity, then let us also disconnect His language as God from the language of man; when we confess Him God and man at the same time, let us distinguish at the same time its words as God and His words as man; when after His manhood and Godhead, we recognise again the time when His whole manhood is wholly God, let us refer to that time all that is revealed concerning it. It is one thing, that He was God before He was man, another, that He was man and God, and another, that after being man and God, He was perfect man and perfect God. Do not then confuse the times and natures in the mystery of the dispensation, for according to the attributes of His different natures, He must speak of Himself in relation to the mystery of His humanity, in one way before His birth, in another while He was yet to die, and in another as eternal.
7. For our sake, therefore, Jesus Christ, retaining all these attributes, and being born man in our body, spoke after the fashion of our nature without concealing that divinity belonged to His own nature. In His birth, His passion, and His death, He passed through all the circumstances of our nature, but He bore them all by the power of His own. He was Himself the cause of His birth, He willed to suffer what He could not suffer, He died though He lives for ever. Yet God did all this not merely through man, for He was born of Himself, He suffered of His own free will, and died of Himself. He did it also as man, for He was really born, suffered and died. These were the mysteries of the secret counsels of heaven, determined before the world was made. The Only-begotten God was to become man of His own will, and man was to abide eternally in God. God was to suffer of His own will, that the malice of the devil, working in the weakness of human infirmity, might not confirm the law of sin in us, since God had assumed our weakness. God was to die of His own will, that no power, after that the immortal God had constrained Himself within the law of death, might raise up its head against Him, or put forth the natural strength which He bad created in it. Thus God was born to take us into Himself, suffered to justify us, and died to avenge us; for our manhood abides for ever in Him, the weakness of our infirmity is united with His strength, and the spiritual powers of iniquity and wickedness are subdued in the triumph of our flesh, since God died through the flesh.

8. The Apostle, who knew this mystery, and had received the knowledge of the faith through the Lord Himself, was not unmindful, that neither the world, nor mankind, nor philosophy could contain Him, for he writes, Take heed, lest there shall be any one that leadeth you astray through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Jesus Christ, for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him ye are made full, Who is the head of all principalities and powers. After the announcement that in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, follows immediately the mystery of our assumption, in the words, in Him ye are made full. As the fulness of the Godhead is in Him, so we are made full in Him. The Apostle says not merely ye are made full, but, in Him ye are made full; for all who are, or shall be, regenerated through the hope of faith to life eternal, abide even now in the body of Christ; and afterwards they shall be made full no longer in Him, but in themselves, at the time of which the Apostle says, Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory. Now, therefore, we are made full in Him, that is, by the assumption of His flesh, for in Him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Nor has this our hope a light authority in Him. Our fulness in Him constitutes His headship and principality over all power, as it is written, That in His name every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things below, and every tongue confess that fester is Lord in the glory of God life Father. Jesus shall be confessed in the glory of God the Father, born in man, yet now no longer abiding in the infirmity of our body. but in the glory of God. Every tongue shall confess this. But though all things in heaven and earth shall bow the knee to Him, yet herein He is head of all principalities and powers, that to Him the whole universe shall bow the knee in submission, in Whom we are made full, Who through the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily, shall be confessed in the glory of God the Father.
9. But after the announcement of the mystery of Christ’s nature, and our assumption, that is, the fulness of Godhead abiding in Christ, and ourselves made full in Him by His birth as man, the Apostle continues the dispensation of human salvation in the words. In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the stripping off of the body of the flesh, but with the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. We are circumcised not with a fleshly circumcision but with the circumcision of Christ, that is, we are born again into a new man; for, being buried with Him in His baptism, we must die to the old man, because the regeneration of baptism has the force of resurrection. The circumcision of Christ does not mean the putting off of foreskins, but to die entirely with Him, and by that death to live henceforth entirely to Him. For we rise again in Him through faith in God, Who raised Him from the dead; wherefore we must believe in God, by Whose Working Christ was raised from the dead, for our faith rises again in and with Christ.

10. Then is completed the entire mystery of the assumed manhood, And you being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you I say, did He quicken together with Him, having, forgiven you all your trespasses, blotting out the bond written in ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us; and He hath taken it out of the way, nailing a to the cross, and having put off from Himself His flesh, He hath made a shew of powers, triumphing over them in Himself. The worldly man cannot receive the faith of the Apostle, nor can any language but that of the Apostle explain his meaning. God raised Christ from the dead; Christ in Whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. But He quickened us also together with Him, forgiving us our sins, blotting out the bond of the law of sin, which through the ordinances made aforetime was against us, taking it out of the way, and fixing it to His cross, stripping Himself of His flesh by the law of death, holding up the powers to shew, and triumphing over them in Himself. Concerning the powers and how He triumphed over them in Himself, and held them up to shew, and the bond which he blotted out, and the life which He gave us, we have already spoken. But who can understand or express this mystery? The working of God raises Christ from the dead; the same working of God quickens us together with Christ, forgives our sins, blots out the bond, and fixes it to the cross; He puts off from Himself His flesh, holds up the powers to shew, and triumphs over them in Himself. We have the working of God raising Christ from the dead, and we have Christ working in Himself the very things which God works in Him, for it was Christ who died, stripping from Himself His flesh. Hold fast then to Christ the man, raised from the dead by God, and hold fast to Christ the God, working out our salvation when He was yet to die. God works in Christ, but it is Christ Who strips from Himself His flesh and dies. It was Christ who died, and Christ Who worked with the power of God before His death, yet it was the working of God which raised the dead Christ, and it was none other who raised Christ from the dead but Christ Himself, Who worked before His death, and put off His flesh to die.

11. Do you understand already the Mysteries of the Apostle’s Faith? Do you think to know Christ already? Tell me, then, Who is it Who strips from Himself His flesh, and what is that flesh stripped off? I see two thoughts expressed by the Apostle, the flesh stripped off, and Him Who strips it off: and then I hear of Christ raised from the dead by the working of God. If it is Christ
Who is raised from the dead, and God Who raises Him; Who, pray, strips from Himself the flesh? Who raises Christ from the dead, and quickens us with Him? If the dead Christ be not the same as the flesh stripped off, tell me the name of the flesh stripped off, and expound me the nature of Him Who strips it off. I find that Christ the God, Who was raised from the dead, is the same as He Who stripped from Himself His flesh, and that flesh, the same as Christ Who was raised from the dead; then I see Him holding principalities and powers up to shew, and triumphing in Himself. Do you understand this triumphing in Himself? Do you perceive that the flesh stripped off, and He Who strips it off, are not different from one another? He triumphs in Himself, that is in that flesh which He stripped from Himself. Do you see that thus are proclaimed His humanity and His divinity, that death is attributed to the man, and the quickening of the flesh to the God, though He Who dies and He Who raises the dead to life are not two, but one Person? The flesh stripped off is the dead Christ: He Who raises Christ from the dead is the same Christ Who stripped from Himself the flesh. See His divine nature in the power to raise again, and recognise in His death the dispensation of His manhood. And though either function is performed by its proper nature, yet remember that He Who died, and raised to life, was one, Christ Jesus.

12. I remember that the Apostle often refers to God the Father as raising Christ from the dead; but he is not inconsistent with himself or at variance with the Gospel faith, for the Lord Himself says:–Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one shall take it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command have I received from the Father: and again, when asked to shew a sign concerning Himself, that they night believe in Him, He says of the Temple of His body, Detroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up. By the power to take His soul again and to raise the Temple up, He declares Himself God, and the Resurrection His own work: yet He refers all to the authority of His Father's command. This is not contrary to the meaning of the Apostle, when He proclaims Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, thus referring all the magnificence of His work to the glory of the Father: for whatever Christ does, the power and the wisdom of God does: and whatever the power and the wisdom of God does, without doubt God Himself does, Whose power and wisdom Christ is. So Christ was raised from the dead by the working of God; for He Himself worked the works of God the Father with a nature indistinguishable from God’s. And our faith in the Resurrection rests on the God Who raised Christ from the dead.

13. It is this preaching of the double aspect of Christ’s Person which the blessed Apostle emphasises. He points out in Christ His human infirmity, and His divine power and nature. Thus to the Corinthians he writes, For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth through the power of God, attributing His death to human infirmity, but His life to divine power: and again to the Romans, For the death, that He died unto sin, He died once: but the life, that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Even so reckon ye yourselves also to he dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus, ascribing His death to sin, that is, to our body, but His life to God, Whose nature it is to live We ought, therefore, he says, to die to our body, that we may live to God in Christ Jesus, Who after the assumption of our body of sin, lives now wholly unto God, uniting the nature He shared with us with the participation of divine immortality.
14. I have been compelled to dwell briefly on this, lest we should forget our Lord Jesus Christ is being treated of as a Person of two natures, since He, Who was abiding in the form of God, took the form of a servant, in which He was obedient even unto death. The obedience of death has nothing to do with the form of God, just as the form of God is not inherent in the form of a servant. Yet through the Mystery of the Gospel Dispensation the same Person is in the form of a servant and in the form of God, though it is not the same thing to take the form of a servant and to be abiding in the form of God; nor could He Who was abiding in the form of God, take the form of a servant without emptying Himself, since the combination of the two forms would be incongruous. Yet it was not another and a different Person Who emptied Himself and Who took the form of a servant. To take anything cannot be predicated of some one who is not, for he only can take who exists. The emptying of the form does not then imply the abolition of the nature: He emptied Himself, but did not lose His self: He took a new form, but remained what He was. Again, whether emptying or taking, He was the same Person: there is, therefore, a mystery, in that He emptied Himself, and took the form of a servant, but He does not come to an end, so as to cease to exist in emptying Himself, and to be non-existent when He took. The emptying availed to bring about the taking of the servant’s form, but not to prevent Christ, Who was in the form of God, from continuing to be Christ, for it was in very deed Christ Who took the form of a servant. When He emptied Himself to become Christ the man, while continuing to be Christ the Spirit, the changing of His bodily fashion, and the assumption of another nature in His body, did not put an end to the nature of His eternal divinity, for He was one and the same Christ when He changed His fashion, and when He assumed our nature.

15. We have now expounded the Dispensation of the Mysteries, through which the heretics deceive certain of the unlearned into ascribing to infirmity in the divinity, what Christ said and did through His assumed human nature, and attributing to the form of God what is appropriate only to the form of the servant. Let us pass on, then, to answer their statements in detail. We can always safely distinguish the two kinds of utterances, since the only true faith lies in the confession of Jesus Christ as Word and flesh, that is, God and Man. The heretics consider it necessary to deny that our Lord Jesus Christ by virtue of His nature was divine, because He said, Why callest thou Me good? None is good save one, God. Now a satisfactory answer must stand in direct relation to the matter of enquiry, for only in that case will it furnish a reply to the question put. At the outset, then, I would ask these misinterpreters, “Do you think that the Lord resented being called good?” Would He rather have been called bad, as seems to be signified by the words, Why callest thou Me good? I do not think any one is so unreasonable as to ascribe to Him a confession of wickedness, when it was He Who said, Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. He says He is meek and lowly: can we believe that He was angry because He was called good? The two propositions are inconsistent. He Who witnesses to His own goodness would not repudiate the name of Good. Plainly, then, He was not angry because He was called good: and if we cannot believe that He resented being called good, we must ask what was said of Him which He did resent.
16. Let us see, then, how the questioner styled Him, beside calling Him good. He said, Good Master, what good thing shall I do? adding to the title of “good” that of master. If Christ then did not chide because He was called good, it must have been because He was called “good Master.” Further the manner of His reproof shews that it was the disbelief of the questioner, rather than the name of master, or of good, which He resented. A youth, who provides himself upon the observance of the law, but did not know the end of the law, which is Christ, who thought himself justified by works, without perceiving that Christ came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to those who believe that the law cannot save through the faith of justification, questioned the Lord of the law, tile Only-begotten God, as though He were a teacher of the common precepts and the writings of the law. But the Lord, abhorring this declaration of irreverent unbelief, which addresses Him as a teacher of the law, answered, Why callest thou Me good? and to shew how we may know, and call Him good, He added, None is good, save one, God, not repudiating the name of good, if it be given to Him as God.

17. Then, as a proof that He resents the name “good master,” on the ground of the unbelief, which addresses Him as a man, He replies to the vain-glorious youth, and his boast that he had fulfilled the law, One thing thou lackest; go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me. There is no shrinking from the title of “good” in the promise of heavenly treasures, no reluctance to be regarded as “master” in the offer to lead the way to perfect blessedness. But there is reproof of the unbelief which draws an earthly opinion of Him from the teaching, that goodness belongs to God alone. To signify that He is both good and God, He exercises the functions of goodness, opening the heavenly treasures, and offering Himself as guide to them. All the homage offered to Him as man He repudiates, but he does not disown that which He paid to God; for at the moment when He confesses that the one God is good, His words and actions are those of the power and the goodness and the nature of the one God.

18. That He did not shrink from the title of good, or decline the office of master, but resented the unbelief which perceived no more in Him than body and flesh, may be proved from the difference of His language, when the apostles confessed Him their Master, Ye call Me Master, and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am; and on another occasion, Be yet not called masters, far Christ is your Master. From the faithful, to whom He is master, He accepts the title with words of praise, but here He rejects the name “good master,” when He is not acknowledged to be the Lord and the Christ, and pronounces the one God alone good, but without distinguishing Himself from God, for He calls Himself Lord, and Christ, and guide to the heavenly treasures.

19. The Lord always maintained this definition of the faith of the Church, which consists in teaching that there is one God the Father, but without separating Himself from the mystery of the one God, for He declared Himself, by the nature which is His by birth, neither a second God, nor the sole God. Since the nature of the One God is in Him, He cannot be God of a different kind from Him; His birth requires that, being Son, it should be with a perfect Sonship.
So He can neither be separated from God nor merged in God. Hence He speaks in words deliberately chosen, so that whatever He claims for the Father, He signifies in modest language to be appropriate to Himself also. Take as an instance the command, Believe in God, and believe also in Me. He is identified with God in honour; how, pray, can He be separated from His nature? He says, Believe in Me also, just as He said Believe in God. Do not the words in Me signify His nature? Separate the two natures, but you must separate also the two beliefs. If it be life, that we should believe in God without Christ, strip Christ of the name and qualities of God. But if perfect life is given to those who believe in God, only when they believe in Christ also, let the careful reader ponder the meaning of the saying, Believe in God, and believe in Me also, for these words, uniting faith in Him with faith in God, unite His nature to God’s. He enjoins first of all the duty of belief in God, but adds to it the command that we should believe in Himself also; which implies that He is God, since they who believe in God must also believe in Him. Yet He excludes the suggestion of a unity contrary to religion, for the exhortation Believe in God, believe in Me also, forbids us to think of Him as alone in solitude.

20. In many, nay almost all His discourses, He offers the explanation of this mystery, never separating Himself from the divine unity, when He confesses God the Father, and never characterising God as single and solitary, when He places Himself in unity with Him. But nowhere does He more plainly teach the mystery of His unity and His birth than when He says, But the witness which I have is greater than that of John, for the works which the Father hath given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me, and the Father which sent Me, He hath borne witness of Me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. And ye have not His word abiding in you, for Whom He sent, Him ye believe not How can the Father be truly said to have borne witness of the Son, when neither He Himself was seen, nor His voice heard? Yet I remember that a voice was heard from Heaven, which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I have been well pleased; hear ye Him. How can it be said that they did not hear the voice of God, when the voice which they heard itself asserted that it was the Father’s voice? But perhaps the dwellers in Jerusalem had not heard what John had heard in the solitude of the desert. We must ask, then, “How did the Father bear witness in Jerusalem?” It is no longer the witness given to John, who heard the voice from heaven, but a witness greater than that of John. What that witness is He goes on to say, The works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works which I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me. We must admit the authority of the testimony, for no one, except the Son sent of the Father, could do such works. His works are therefore His testimony. But what follows? And the Father, which sent Me, He hath borne witness of Me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form, and ye have not His word abiding in you. Are they blameless, in that they did not know the testimony of the Father, Who was never heard or seen amongst them, and Whose word was not abiding in them? No, for they cannot plead that His testimony was hidden from them; as Christ says, the testimony of His works is the testimony of the Father concerning Him. His works testify of Him that He was sent of the Father; but the testimony of these works is the Father’s testimony; since, therefore, the working of the Son is the Father’s testimony, it follows of necessity that the same nature was operative in Christ, by which the Father testifies of Him. So Christ, Who works the works, and the Father Who testifies through them, are revealed as possessing one inseparable nature
through the birth, for the operation of Christ is signified to be itself the testimony of God concerning Him.

21. They are not, therefore, acquitted of blame for not recognising the testimony; for the works of Christ are the Father’s testimony concerning Him. Nor can they plead ignorance of the testimony on the ground that they had not heard the voice of the Testifier, nor seen His form, nor had His word abiding in them. For immediately after the words, Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form, and ye have not His word abiding in you, He points out why the voice was not heard, nor the form seen, and the word did not abide in them, though the Father had testified concerning Him: For Whom He sent, Him ye believe not; that is, if they had believed Him, they would have heard the voice of God, and seen the form of God, and His word would have been in them, since through the unity of Their nature the Father is heard and manifested and possessed in the Son. Is He not also the expression of the Father, since He was sent from Him? Does He distinguish Himself by any difference of nature from the Father, when He says that the Father, testifying of Him, was neither heard, nor seen, nor understood, because they did not believe in Him, Whom the Father sent? The Only-begotten God does not, therefore, separate Himself from God when He confesses God the Father; but, proclaiming by the word “Father” His relationship to God. He includes Himself in the honour due to God.

22. For, in this very same discourse in which He pronounces that His works testify of Him that He was sent of the Father, and asserts that the Father testifies of Him, that He was sent from Him, He says, The honour of Him, Who alone is God, ye seek not. This is not, however, a bare statement, without any previous preparation for the belief in His unity with the Father. Hear what precedes it, Ye will not come to Me that ye may have life. I receive not glory from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in yourselves. I am come in My Father’s name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in His name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive glory, from men, and the glory of Him, Who alone is God, ye seek not He disdains the glory of men, for glory should rather be sought of God. It is the mark of unbelievers to receive glory of one another: for what glory can man give to man? He says He knows that the love of God is not in them, and pronounces, as the cause, that they do not receive Him coming in His name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive glory, from men, and the glory of Him, Who alone is God, ye seek not He disdains the glory of men, for glory should rather be sought of God. It is the mark of unbelievers to receive glory of one another: for what glory can man give to man? He says He knows that the love of God is not in them, and pronounces, as the cause, that they do not receive Him coming in His Father’s name. “Coming in His Father’s name:” what does that mean but “coming in the name of God?” Is it not because they rejected Him Who came in the name of God, that the love of God is not in them? Is it not implied that He has the nature of God, when He says, Ye will not come to Me that ye may have life. Hear what He said of Himself in the same discourse, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they there hear shall live. He comes in the name of the Father: that is, He is not Himself the Father, yet is in the same divine nature as the Father: for as Son and God it is natural for Him to come in the name of the Father. Then, another coming in the same name they will receive: but he is one from whom men will expect glory, and to whom they will give glory in return, though he will feign to have come in the name of the Father. By this, doubtless, is signified the Antichrist, glorying in his false use of the Father’s name. Him they will glorify, and will be glorified of him: but the glory of Him, Who alone is God, they will not seek.
23. They have not the love of God in them, He says, because they rejected Him coming in the name of the Father, but accepted another, who came in the same name, and received glory of one another, but neglected the glory of Him, Who is the only true God. Is it possible to think that He separates Himself from the glory of the only God, when He gives as the reason why they seek not the glory of the only God, that they receive Antichrist, and Himself they will not receive? To reject Him is to neglect the glory of the only God; is not, then, His glory the glory of the only God, if to receive Him steadfastly was to seek the glory of the only God? This very discourse is our witness: for at its beginning we read, That all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which sent Him. It is only things of the same nature that are equal in honour; equality of honour denotes that there is no separation between the honoured. But with the revelation of the birth is combined, the demand for equality of honour. Since the Son is to be honoured as the Father', and since they seek not the honour of Him, Who is the only God, He is not excluded from the honour of the only God, for His honour is one and the same as that of God: just as He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father also, so he who seeks not the honour of the only God, seeks not the honour of Christ also. Accordingly the honour of Christ is inseparable from the honour of God. By His words, when the news of Lazarus' sickness was brought to Him, He illustrates the complete identification of Father and Son in honour: This sickness is not unto death, but far the glory of God, that the Son of Man may be glorified through him Lazarus dies for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through him. Is there any doubt that the glory of the Son of God is the glory of God, when the death of Lazarus, which is glorious to God, glorifies the Son of God? Thus Christ is declared to be one in nature with God the Father through His birth, since the sickness of Lazarus is for the glory of God, and at the same time the Mystery of the faith is not violated, for the Son of God is to be glorified through Lazarus. The Son of God is to be regarded as God, yet He is none the less to be confessed also Son of God: for by glorifying God through Lazarus, the Son of God is glorified.

24. By the mystery of the divine nature we are forbidden to separate the birth of the living Son from His living Father. The Son of God suffers no such change of kind, that the truth of His Father's nature does not abide in Him. For even where, by the confession of one God only, He seems to disclaim for Himself the nature of God by the term “only,” nevertheless, without destroying the belief in one God, He places Himself in the unity of the Father's nature. Thus, when the Scribe asked Him, which is the chief commandment of the law, He answered, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy spirit, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it, Than shall love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. They think that He severs Himself from the nature and worship of the One God when He pronounces as the chief commandment, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and does not even make Himself the object of worship in the second commandment, since the law bids us to love our neighbour, as it bids us to believe in one God. Nor must we pass over the answer of the Scribe, Of a truth thou hast well said, that God is one, and there is none other but He: and to love Him with all the heart, and all the strength and all the soul, and to love his neighbour as himself, this is greater than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. The answer of the Scribe seems to accord with the words of the
Lord, for He too proclaims the innermost and inmost love of one God, and professes the love of one’s neighbour as real as the love of self, and places love of God and love of one’s neighbour above all the burnt offerings of sacrifices. But let us see what follows.

25. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of Gads. What is the meaning of such moderate praise? Believe in one God, and love Him with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy heart, and love thy neighbour as thyself; if this be the faith which makes man perfect for the Kingdom of God, why is not the Scribe already within, instead of not far from the Kingdom of Heaven? It is in another strain that He grants the Kingdom of Heaven to those who clothe the naked, feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, and visit the sick and the prisoner, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; or rewards the poor in spirit, Blessed are the poor in spirit: far theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Their gain is perfect, their possession complete, their inheritance of the kingdom prepared for them is secured. But was this young man’s confession short of theirs? His ideal of duty raises love of neighbour to the level of love of self; what more did he want to attain to the perfection of good conduct? To be occasionally charitable, and ready to help, is not perfect love; but perfect love has fulfilled the whole duty of charity, when a man leaves no debt to his neighbour unpaid, but gives him as much as he gives himself. But the Scribe was debarred from perfection, because he did not know the mystery which had been accomplished. He received, indeed, the praise of the Lord for his profession of faith, he heard the reply that he was not far from the kingdom, but he was not put in actual possession of the blessed hope. His course, though ignorant, was favourable; he put the love of God before all things, and charity towards his neighbour on a level with love of self. And when he ranked the love of God even higher than charity towards his neighbour, he broke through the law of burnt offerings and sacrifices; and that was not far from the mystery of the Gospel.

26. We may perceive also, from the words of our Lord Himself, why He said, Thou art not far from the Kingdom of Heaven, rather than, Thou shall be in the Kingdom of Heaven. Then follows: And no man after that durst ask Him any question. And Jesus answered and said, as He taught in the Temple, How say the Scribes that the Christ is the Son of David? David himself saith in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou an My right hand, till I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet (Ps. cx. 1). David himself calleth Him Lord, and whence is He his Son? The Scribe is not far from the Kingdom of God when he confesses one God, Who is to be loved above all things. But his own statement of the law is a reproach to him that the mystery of the law has escaped him, that he does not know Christ the Lord, the Son of God, by the nature of His birth to be included in the confession of the one God. The confession of one God according to the law seemed to leave no room for the Son of God in the mystery of the one Lord; so He asks the Scribe, how he can call Christ the Son of David, when David calls Him his Lord, since it is against the order of nature that the son of so great a Patriarch should be also his Lord. He would bid the Scribe, who regards Him only in respect of His flesh, and His birth from Mary, the daughter of David, to remember that, in respect of His Spirit, He is David’s Lord rather than his son; that the words, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, do not sever Christ from the mystery of the One Lord, since so great a Patriarch and Prophet calls Him
his Lord, as the Son begotten of the Lord before the morning star. He does not pass over the law, or forget that none other is to be confessed Lord, but without violating the faith of the law, He teaches that He is Lord, in that He had His being by the mystery of a natural birth from the substance of the incorporeal God. He is one, born of one, and the nature of the one Lord has made Him by nature Lord.

27. What room is any longer left for doubt? The Lord Himself proclaiming that the chief commandment of the law is to confess and love the one Lord, proves Himself to be Lord not by words of His own, but by the Prophet’s testimony, always signifying, however, that He is Lord, because He is the Son of God. By virtue of His birth He abides in the mystery of the one God, for the birth transmitting with it, as it did, the nature of God is not the issuing forth of another God with a different nature; and, because the generation is real, neither is the Father degraded from being Lord, nor is the Son born less than Lord. The Father retains His authority, the Son obtains His nature. God the Father is one Lord, but the Only-begotten God the Lord is not separated from the One, since He derives His nature as Lord from the one Lord. Thus by the law Christ teaches that there is one Lord; by the witness of the prophets He proves Himself Lord also.

28. May the faith of the Gospel ever profit thus by the rash contentions of the ungodly to defend itself with the weapons of their attack, and conquering with the arms prepared for its destruction, prove that the words of the one Spirit are the doctrine of the one faith! For Christ is none other than. He is preached, namely the true God, and abiding in the glory of the one true God. Just as He proclaims Himself Lord out of the law, even when He seems to deny the fact, so in the Gospels He proves Himself the true God, even when He appears to confess the opposite. To escape the acknowledgment that He is the true God, the heretics plead that He said, And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God. and Him Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ. When He says, Thee, the only true God, they think He excludes Himself from the reality of God by the restriction of solitariness; for the only true God cannot be understood except as a solitary God. It is true the Apostolic faith does not suffer us to believe in two true Gods, for nothing which is foreign to the nature of the one God can be put on equality with the truth of that nature; and there is more than one God in the reality of the one God, if there exists outside the nature of the only true God a true God of another kind, not possessing by virtue of His birth the same nature with Him.

29. But by these very words He proclaims Himself plainly to be true God in the nature of the only true God. To understand this, let our answer proceed from statements which He made previously, though the connection is unbroken right down to these words. We can then establish the faith step by step, and let the confidence of our freedom rest at last on the summit of our argument, the true Godhead of Christ. There comes first the mystery of His words, He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father ; and, Do ye not believe Me that ! am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I say unto you, I speak not from Myself; but the Father abiding in Me, Himself doeth His works. Believe Me that I and in the Father and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works’ sake. At the close of this discourse, teeming with deep mysteries, follows the reply of the disciples, Now know we that Thou
knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God. They perceived in Him the nature of God by the divine powers which He exercised; for to know all things, and to read the thoughts of the heart belongs to the Son, not to the mere messenger of God. They confessed, therefore, that He was come from God, because the power of the divine nature was in Him.

30. The Lord praised their understanding, and answered not that He was sent from, but that He was come out from, God, signifying by the words “come out from” the great fact of His birth from the incorporeal God. He had already proclaimed the birth in the same language, when He said, Ye love Me, and believe that I came out from the Father, and came from the Father into this world. He had come from the Father into this world, because He had come out from God. To shew that He signifies His birth by the coming out, He adds that He has come from the Father; and since He had come out from God, because He had come from the Father, that “coming out,” followed, as it is, by the confession of the Father’s name, is simply and solely the birth. To the Apostles, then, as understanding this mystery of His coming out, He continues, Ye believe now, Behold the hour cometh, yea is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. He would shew that the “coming out” is not a separation from God the Father, but a birth, which by His being born continues in Him the nature of God the Father, and therefore He adds that He is not alone, but the Father is with Him; in power, that is, and unity of nature, for the Father was abiding in Him, speaking in His words, and working in His works. Lastly to shew the reason of this whole discourse, He adds, These things I have spoken to you, that in Me ye may have peace. In this world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, for I have overcame the worlds. He has spoken these things unto them, that in Him they may abide in peace, not torn asunder by the passion of dissension over debates about the faith. He was left alone, but was not alone, for He had come out from God, and God was still in Him, from Whom He had come out. Therefore he bade them, when they were harassed in the world, to wait for His promises, for since He had come out from God, and God was still in Him, He had conquered the world.

31. Then, finally, to express in words the whole Mystery, He raised His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come: glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. Even as Thou gavest Him authority over all flesh, that, whatsoever Thou hast given Him, to them He should give eternal life. Do you call Him weak because He asks to be glorified? So be it, if He does not ask to be glorified in order that He may Himself glorify Him by Whom He is glorified. Of the receiving and giving of glory we have spoken in another book, and it would be superfluous to go over the question again. But of this at least we are certain, that He prays for glory in order that the Father may be glorified by granting it. But perhaps He is weak in that He receives power over all flesh. And indeed the receiving of power might be a sign of weakness if He were not able to give to those whom He receives life eternal. Yet the very fact of receiving is used to prove inferiority of nature. It might, if Christ were not true God by birth as truly as is the Unbegotten. But if the receiving of power signifies neither more nor less than the Birth, by which He received all that He has, that gift does not degrade the Begotten, because it makes Him perfectly and entirely what God is. God Unbegotten brought God Only-begotten to a
perfect birth of divine blessedness: it is, then, the mystery of the Father to be the Author of the Birth, but it is no degradation to the Son to be made the perfect image of His Author by a real birth. ‘The giving of power over all flesh, and this, in order that to all flesh might be given eternal life, postulates the Fatherhood of the Giver and the Divinity of the Receiver: for by giving is signified that the One is the Father, and in receiving the power to give eternal life, the Other remains God the Son. All power is therefore natural and congenital to the Son of God; and though it is given, that does not separate Him from His Author, for that which is given is the property of His Author, power to bestow eternal life. to change the corruptible into the incorruptible. The Father gave all, the Son received all; as is plain from His words, All things, whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine. He is not speaking here of species of created things, and processes of material change, but He unfolds to us the glory of the blessed and perfect Divinity, and teaches us that God is here manifested as the sum of His attributes, His power, His eternity. His providence, His authority; not that we should think that He possesses these as something extraneous to Himself, but that by these His qualities He Himself has been expressed in terms partly comprehensible by our sense. The Only-be-gotten, therefore, taught that He had all that the Father has, and that the Holy Spirit should receive of Him: as He says, All things, whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine; therefore I said, He shall take of Mine. All that the Father hath are His, delivered and received: but these gifts do not degrade His divinity, since they give Him the same attributes as the Father.

32. These are the steps by which He advances the knowledge of Himself. He teaches that He is come out from the Father, proclaims that the Father is with Him, and testifies that He has conquered the world. He is to be glorified of the Father, and will glorify Him: He will use the power He has received, to give to all flesh eternal life. Then hear the crowning point, which concludes the whole series, And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ. Learn, heretic, to confess, if you cannot believe, the faith which gives eternal life. Separate, if you can, Christ from God, the Son from the Father, God over all from the true God, the One from the Only: if, as you say, eternal life is to believe in one only true God without Jesus Christ. But if there is no eternal life in a confession of the only true God, which separates Christ from Him, how, pray, can Christ be separated from the true God for our faith, when He is not separable for our salvation?

33. I know that laboured solutions of difficult questions do not find favour with the reader, but it will perhaps be to the advantage of the faith if I permit myself to postpone for a time the exposition of the full truth, and wrestle against the heretics with these wents of the Gospel. You hear the statement of the Lord, This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ. What is it, pray, which suggests to you that Christ is not the true God? No further indication is given to shew you what you should think of Christ. There is nothing but Jesus Christ: not Son of Man, as He generally called Himself: not Son of God, as He often declared Himself: not the living bread which cometh down from Heaven, as He repeated to the scandal of many. He says, Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ, omitting all His usual names and titles, natural and assumed. Hence, if the confession of the only true God, and at Jesus Christ, gives us eternal life, without doubt the name Jesus Christ has here the full sense of that of God.
34. But perhaps by saying, Thee the only, Christ severs Himself from communion and unity with God. Yes, but after the words, Thee the only true God, does He not immediately continue, and Him Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ? I appeal to the sense of the reader: what must we believe Christ to be, when we are commanded to believe in Him also, as well as the Father the only true God? Or, perhaps, if the Father is the only true God, there is no room for Christ to be God. It might be so, if, because there is one God the Father, Christ were not the one Lord. The fact that God the Father is one, leaves Christ none the less the one Lord: and similarly the Father’s one true Godhead makes Christ none the less true God: for we can only obtain eternal life if we believe in Christ, as well as in the only true God.

35. Come, heretic, what will your fatuous doctrine instruct us to believe of Christ; Christ, Who dispenses eternal life, Who is glorified of, and glorifies, the Father, Who overcame the world, Who, deserted, is not alone, but has the Father with Him, Who came out from God, and came from the Father? He is born with such divine powers; what of the nature and reality of God will you allow Him? It is in vain that we believe in the only true God the Father, unless we believe also in Him, Whom He sent, even Jesus Christ. Why do you hesitate? Tell us, what is Christ to be confessed? You deny what has been written: what is left, but to believe what has not been written? O unhappy wilfulness! O falsehood striving against the truth! Christ is united in belief and confession with the only true God the Father: what faith is it, pray, to deny Him to be true God, and to call Him a creature, when it is no faith to believe in the only true God without Christ? But you are narrow, heretic, and unable to receive the Holy Spirit. The sense of the heavenly words escapes you; stung with the asp’s poison of error, you forget that Christ is to be confessed true God in the faith of the only true God, if we would obtain eternal life.

36. But the faith of the Church, while confessing the only true God the Father, confesses Christ also. It does not confess Christ true God without the Father the only true God; nor the Father the only true God without Christ. It confesses Christ true God, because it confesses the Father the only true God. Thus the fact that God the Father is the only true God constitutes Christ also true God. The Only-begotten God suffered no change of nature by His natural birth: and He Who, according to the nature of His divine origin was born God from the living God, is, by the truth of that nature, inalienable from the only true God. Thus there follows from the true divine nature its necessary result, that the outcome of true divinity must be a true birth, and that the one God could not produce from Himself a God of a second kind. The mystery of God consists neither in simplicity, nor in multiplicity: for neither is there another God, Who springs from God with qualities of His own nature, nor does God remain as a single Person, for the true birth of the Son teaches us to confess Him as Father. The begotten God did not, therefore, lose the qualities of His nature: He possesses the natural power of Him, Whose nature He retains in Himself by a natural birth. The divinity in Him is not changed, or degenerate, for if His birth had brought with it any defect, it would more justly cast upon the Nature, through which He came into being, the reflection of having failed to implant in its offspring the properties of itself. The change would not degrade the Son, Who had passed into a new substance by birth, but the Father, Who had been unable to maintain the constancy of His nature in the birth of the Son, and had brought forth something external and foreign to Himself.
37. But, as we have often said, the inadequacy of human ideas has no corresponding inadequacy in the unity of God the Father and God the Son: as though there were extension, or series, or flux, like a spring pouring forth its stream from the source, or a tree supporting its branch on the stem, or fire giving out its heat into space. In these cases we have expansion without any separation: the parts are bound together and do not exist of themselves, but the heat is in the fire, the branch in the tree, the stream in the spring. So the thing itself alone has an independent existence; the one does not pass into the other, for the tree and the branch are one and the same, as also the fire and the heat, the spring and the stream. But the Only-begotten God is God, subsisting by virtue of a perfect and ineffable birth, true Scion of the Unbegotten God, incorporeal offspring of an incorporeal nature, living and true God of living and true God, God of a nature inseparable from God. The fact of birth does not make Him God with a different nature, nor did the generation, which produced His substance, change its nature in kind.

38. Put in the dispensation of the flesh which He assumed, and through the obedience whereby He emptied Himself of the form of God, Christ, born man, took to Himself a new nature, not by loss of virtue or nature but by change of fashion. He emptied Himself of the form of God and took the form of a servant, when He was born. But the Fathers nature, with which He was in natural unity, was not affected by this assumption of flesh; while Christ, though abiding in the virtue of His nature, yet in respect of the humanity assumed in this temporal change, lost together with the form of God the unity with the divine nature also. But the Incarnation is summed up in this, that the whole Son, that is, His manhood as well as His divinity, was permitted by the Father’s gracious favour to continue in the unity of the Father’s nature, and retained not only the powers of the divine nature, but also that nature’s self. For the object to be gained was that man might become God. But the assumed manhood could not in any wise abide in the unity of God, unless, through unity with God, it attained to unity with the nature of God. Then, since God the Word was in the nature of God, the Word made flesh would in its turn also be in the nature of God. Thus, if the flesh were united to the glory of the Word, the man Jesus Christ could abide in the glory of God the Father, and the Word made flesh could be restored to the unity of the Father’s nature, even as regards His manhood, since the assumed flesh had obtained the glory of the Word. Therefore the Father must reinstate the Word in His unity, that the offspring of His nature might again return to be glorified in Himself: for the unity had been infringed by the new dispensation, and could only be restored perfect as before if the Father glorified with Himself the flesh assumed by the Son.

39. For this reason, having already so well prepared their minds for the understanding of this belief, the Lord follows up the words, And this is eternal life, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ, with a reference to the obedience displayed in His incarnation I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And then, that we might know the reward of His obedience, and the secret purpose of the whole divine plan, He continued, And now, O Father, glorify Thou slate with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was. Does any one deny that Christ remained in the nature of God or believe Him separable
and distinct from the only true God? Let him tell us what is the meaning of this prayer. And
now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self. For what purpose should the Father glorify
Him with His own self? What is the signification of these words? What follows from their
signification? The Father neither stood in need of glory, nor had He emptied Himself of the
form of His glory. How should He glorify the Son with His own self, and with that glory which
He had with Him before the world was made? And what is the sense of which He had with
Him? Christ does not say, “The glory which I had before the world was made, when I was with
Thee,” but, The glory which I had with Thee. When I was with Thee would signify, “when I
dwelt by Thy side:” but which I had with Thee teaches the Mystery of His nature. Further,
Glorify Me with Thyself is not the same as “Glorify Me.” He does not ask merely that He may be
glorified, that He may have some special glory of His own, but prays that He may be glorified of
the Father with Himself. The Father was to glorify Him with Himself, that He might abide in
unity with Him as before, since the unity with the Father’s glory had left Him through the
obedience of the Incarnation. And this means that the glorifying should reinstate Him in that
nature, with which He was united by the Mystery of His divine birth; that He might be glorified
of the Father with Himself; that He should resume all that He had had with the Father before;
that the assumption of the servant’s form should not estrange from Him the nature of the
form of God, but that God should glorify in Himself the form of the servant, that it might
become for ever the form of God, since He, Who had before abode in the form of God, was
now in the form of a servant. and since the form of a servant was to be glorified in the form of
God, it was to be glorified in Him in Whose form the fashion of the servant’s form was to be
honoured.

40. But these words of the Lord are not new, or attested now for the first time in the teaching
of the Gospels, for He testified to this very mystery of God the Father glorifying the Son with
Himself by the noble joy at the fulfilment of His hope, with which He rejoiced at the very
moment when Judas went forth to betray Him. Filled with joy that His purpose was now to be
fully accomplished. He said, Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him. If God
is glorified in Him, He hath glorified Him in Himself, and straightway hath He glorified Him. How
can we whose souls are burdened with bodies of clay, whose minds are polluted and stained
with foul consciousness of sin, be so puffed up as to judge of His divine claim? How can we set
up ourselves to criticise His heavenly nature, rebelling against God with our unhallowed and
blasphemous disputations? The Lord enunciated the faith of the Gospel in the simplest words
that could be found, and fitted His discourses to our understanding, so far as the weakness of
our nature allowed Him, without saying anything unworthy of the majesty of His own nature.
The signification of His opening words cannot, I think, be doubted, Now is the Son of Man
glorified; that is, all the glory which He obtains is not for the Word but for His flesh: not for the
birth of His Godhead, but for the dispensation of His manhood born into the world. What then,
may I ask, is the meaning of what follows, And God is glorified in Him? I hear that God is
glorified in Him, in the Son of Man, that is: tell me, then, is the Son of Man the same as
the Son of God? And since the Son of Man is not one and the Son of God another, but He Who
is Son of God is Himself also Son of Man, Who, pray, is the God Who is glorified in this Son of
Man, Who is also Son of God?
41. So God is glorified in the Son of Man, Who is also Son of God. Let us see, then, what is this third clause which is added, If God is glorified in Him, God hath also glorified Him in Himself. What, pray, is this secret mystery? God, in the glorified Son of Man, glorifies a glorified God in Himself The glory of God is in the Son of Man, and the glory of God is in the glory of the Son of Man. God glorifies in Himself, but man is not glorified through himself. Again the God Who is glorified in the man, though He receives the glory, yet is Himself none other than God. But since in the glorifying of the Son of Man, the God, Who glorifies, glorifies God in Himself, I recognise that the glory of Christ’s nature is taken into the glory of that nature which glorifies His nature. God does not glorify Himself; but He glorifies in Himself God glorified in man. And this “glorifies in Himself,” though it is not a glorifying of Himself, yet means that He took the nature, which He glorified, into the glory of His own nature Since the God, Who glorifies the God glorified in man, glorifies Him in Himself, He proves that the God Whom He glorifies is in Himself, for He glorifies Him in Himself. Come, heretic, whoever you be, produce the inextricable objections of your tortuous doctrine; though they bind themselves in their own tangles, yet, marshal them as you will, we shall not be in danger of sticking in their snares. The Son of Man is glorified; God is glorified in Him; God glorifies in Himself Him, Who is glorified in the man. It is not the same that the Son of Man is glorified, as that God is glorified in the Son of Man, or that God glorifies in Himself Him, Who is glorified in the man. Express in the terms of your unholy belief, what you mean by God being glorified in the Son of Man. It must certainly be either Christ Who is glorified in the flesh, or the Father Who is glorified in Christ. If it is Christ Christ is manifestly God, Who is glorified in the flesh. If it is the Father, we are face to face with the mystery of the unity, since the Father is glorified in the Son. Thus, if you allow it to be Christ, despite yourself you confess Him God; if you understand it of God the Father, you cannot deny the nature of God the Father in Christ. Let this be enough concerning the glorified Son of Man and God glorified in Him. But when we consider that God glorifies in Himself God, Who is glorified in the Son of Man, by what loophole, pray, can your profane doctrine escape from the confession that Christ is very God according to the verity of His nature? God glorifies in Himself Christ, Who was born a man; is Christ then outside Him, when He glorifies Him in Himself? He restores to Christ in Himself the glory which He had with Himself, and now that the servant’s form, which He assumed, is in turn assumed into the form of God, God Who is glorified in man is glorified in Himself; He was in God’s self before the dispensation, by which He emptied Himself, and now He is united with God’s self, both in the form of the servant, and in the nature belonging to His birth. For His birth did not make Him God of a new and foreign nature, but by generation He was made natural Son of a natural Father. After His human birth, when He is glorified in His manhood, He shines again with the glory of His own nature; the Father glorifies Him in Himself, when He is assumed into the glory of His Father’s nature, of which He had emptied Himself in the dispensation.

42. The words of the Apostle’s faith are a barrier against your reckless and frenzied profanity, which forbids you to turn the freedom of speculation into licence, and wander into error. Every tongue, he says, shall confess that Jesus is Lord in the glory of God the Father. The Father has glorified Him in Himself, therefore He must be confessed in the glory of the Father. And if He is to be confessed in the Father’s glory, and the Father has glorified Him in Himself, is He not
plainly all that His Father is, since the Father has glorified Him in Himself and He is to be confessed in the Father’s glory? He is now not merely in the glory of God, but in the glory of God the Father. The Father glorifies Him, not with a glory from without, but in Himself. By taking Him back into that glory, which belongs to Himself, and which He had with Him before, the Father glorifies Him with Himself and in Himself. Therefore this confession is inseparable from Christ even in the humiliation of His manhood, as He says, And this is eternal life, that they should know Thee, the only true God, Him, Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ; for firstly there is no life eternal in the confession of God the Father without Jesus Christ, and secondly Christ is glorified in the Father. Eternal life is precisely this, to know the only true God and Him, Whom He sent, even Jesus Christ; deny that Christ is true God, if you can have life by believing in God without Him. As for the truth that God the Father is the only true God let this be untrue of the God Christ, unless Christ’s glory is wholly in the only true God the Father. For if the Father glorifies Him in Himself, and the Father is the only true God, Christ is not outside the only true God, since the Father, Who is the only true God, glorifies in Himself Christ, Who is raised into the glory of God. And in that He is glorified by the only true God in Himself, He is not estranged from the only true God, for He is glorified by the true God in Himself, the only God.

43. But perhaps the godless unbeliever meets the pious believer with the assertion that we cannot understand of the true God a confession of powerlessness, such as, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He hath seen the Father doing. If the twofold angers of the Jews had not demanded a twofold answer, it would indeed have been a confession of weakness, that the Son could do nothing of Himself, except what He had seen the Father doing. But Christ was answering in the same sentence the double charge of the Jews, who accused Him of violating the Sabbath, and of making Himself equal with God by calling God His Father. Do you think, then, that by fixing attention upon the form of His reply you can withdraw it for the substance? We have already treated of this passage in another book; yet as the exposition of the faith gains rather than loses by repetition, let us ponder once more on the words, since the occasion demands it of us.

44. Hear how the necessity for the reply arose:– And for this cause did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He did these things on the Sabbath. Their anger was so kindled against Him, that they desired to kill Him, because He did His works on the Sabbath. But let us see also what the Lord answered, My Father worketh even until now, and I work. Tell us, heretic, what is that work of the Father; since through the Son, and in the Son, are all things, visible and invisible? You, who are wise beyond the Gospels, have doubtless obtained from some other secret source of learning the knowledge of the Father’s work, to reveal Him to us. But the Father works in the Son, as the Son Himself says, The words that I say unto you, I speak not from Myself, but the Father who abideth in Me, He doeth His works. Do you grasp the meaning of the words, My Father worketh even until now? He speaks that we may recognise in Him the power of the Father’s nature employing the nature, which has that power, to work on the Sabbath. The Father works in Him while He works; without doubt, then, He works along with the working of the Father, and therefore He says, My Father worketh even until now, that this present work of His words and actions may be regarded as the working of
the Father’s nature in Himself. This worketh even until now identifies the time with the moment of speaking, and therefore we must regard Him as referring to that very work of the Father’s which He was then doing, for it implies the working of the Father at the very time of His words. And lest the Faith, being restricted to a knowledge of the Father only, should fair of the hope of eternal life, He adds at once, And I work; that is, what the Father worketh even until now, the Son also worketh. Thus He expounds the whole of the faith; for the work which is now, belongs to the present time; and if the Father works, and the Son works, no union exists between them, which merges them into a single Person. But the wrath of the bystanders is now redoubled. Hear what follows, For this cause, therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but because He called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. Allow me here to repeat that, by the judgment of the Evangelist and by common consent of mankind, the Son is in equality with the Father’s nature; and that equality cannot exist except by identity of nature. The begotten cannot derive what it is save from its source and the thing generated cannot be foreign to that which generates it, since from that alone has it come to be what it is. Let us see, then, what the Lord replied to this double outburst of wrath, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He hath seen the Father doing: for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner.

45. Unless we regard these words as an integral part of His statement, we do them violence by forcing upon them an arbitrary and unbelieving interpretation. But if His answer refers to the grounds of their anger, our faith expresses rightly what He meant to teach, and the perversity of the ungodly is left without support for its profane delusion. Let us see then whether this reply is suitable to an accusation of working on the Sabbath. The Son can do nothing, of Himself, but what He hath seen the Father doing. He has said just above, My Father worketh even until now, and I work. If by virtue of the authority of the Father’s nature within Him, all that He works, He works with the Father in Him, and the Father works even until now on the Sabbath, then the Son, Who pleads the authority of the Father’s working, is acquitted of blame.

For the words, can do nothing, refer not to strength but to authority; He can do nothing of Himself, except what He has seen. Now, to have seen does not confer the power to do, and therefore He is not weak, if He can do nothing without having seen, but His authority is shewn to depend on seeing. Again the words, unless He hath seen, signify the consciousness derived from seeing, as when He says to the Apostles, Behold I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are already unto harvest. With the consciousness that the Father’s nature is abiding in Him, and working in Him when He works, to forestall the idea that the Lord of the Sabbath has violated the Sabbath, He pronounces that, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He hath seen the Father doing. And thus He demonstrates that His every action springs from His consciousness of the nature working within Him; when He works on the Sabbath, the Father worketh even until now on the Sabbath. In what follows, however, He refers to the second cause of their indignation, For what things soever He doeth, the Son doeth in like manner? Is it false that, what things soever the Father doeth, the Son doeth in like manner? Does the Son of God admit a distinction between the Father’s power and working and
His own? Does He shrink from claiming the equality of homage befitting an equal in power and nature? If He does, disdain His weakness, and degrade Him from equality of nature with the Father but He Himself says only a little later, That all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which sent Him. Discover, if you can, the inferiority, when Both are equal in honour; make out the weakness, when Both work with the same power.

46. Why do you misrepresent the occasion of the reply in order to detract from His divinity? To the working on the Sabbath He answers that He can do nothing of Himself, but what He hath seen the Father doing: to demonstrate His equality, He professes to do what things soever the Father doeth. Enforce your charge of weakness, by His answer concerning the Sabbath, if you can disprove that what things soever the Father doeth, the Son doeth in like manner. But if what things soever includes all things without exception; in what is He found weak, when there is nothing that the Father doeth, which He cannot also do? Where is His claim to equality refuted by any episode of weakness, when one and the same honour is demanded for Him and for the Father? If Both have the same power in operation, and both claim the same reverence in worship, I cannot understand what dishonour of inferiority can exist, since Father and Son possess the same power of operation, and equality of honour.

47. Although we have treated this passage as the facts themselves explain it, yet to prove that the Lord’s words, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He hath seen the Father doing, so far from supporting this unholy degradation of His nature, testify to His conscious possession of the nature of the Father, by Whose authority He worked on the Sabbath, let us shew them that we can produce another saying of the Lord, which bears upon the question, I do nothing of Myself, but as the Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me: He hath not left Me alone, for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him. Do you feel what is implied in the words, The Son can do nothing, but what He hath seen the Father doing? Or what a mystery is contained in the saying, I can do nothing of myself, and He hath not left me alone, far I do always the things that are pleasing to Him? He does nothing of Himself, because the Father abides in Him; can you reconcile with this the fact that the Father does not leave Him, because He does the things which are pleasing to Him? Your interpretation, heretic, sets up a contradiction between these two statements, that He does nothing of Himself, unless taught of the Father abiding in Him, and that the Father abides in Him, because He does always the things which are pleasing to Him. For if the Father’s abiding in Him means that He does nothing of Himself, how could He have deserved that the Father should abide in Him, by doing always the things which are pleasing to the Father. It is no merit, not to do of oneself what one does. Conversely, how are the Son’s deeds pleasing to the Father, if the Father Himself, abiding in the Son, be their Author? Impiety, thou art in a sore strait; the well-armed piety of the faith hath hemmed thee in. The Son is either an Agent, or He is not. If He is not an Agent, how does He please by his acts? If He is an Agent, in what sense are deeds, done not of Himself, His own? On the one hand, He must have done the things which are pleasing; on the other, it is no merit to have done, yet not of oneself, what one does.

48. But, my opponent, the unity of Their nature is such, that the several action of
Each implies the conoint action of Both, and Their joint activity a several activity of Each. Conceive the Son acting, and the Father acting through Him. He acts not of Himself, for we have to explain how the Father abides in Him. He acts in His own Person, for in accordance with His birth as the Son, He does Himself what is pleasing. His acting not of Himself would prove Him weak, were it not the case that He so acts that what He does is pleasing to the Father. But He would not be in the unity of the divine nature, if the deeds which He does, and wherein He pleases, were not His own, and He were merely prompted to action by the Father abiding in Him. The Father then in abiding in Him, teaches Him, and the Son in acting, acts not of Himself; while, on the other hand, the Son, though not acting of Himself, acts Himself, for what He does is pleasing. Thus is the unity of Their nature retained in Their action, for the One, though He acts Himself, does not act of Himself, while the Other, Who has abstained from action, is yet active.

49. Connect with this that saying, which you lay hold of to support the imputation of infirmity, All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out; for I am come down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of the Father that sent Me. But, perhaps you say, the Son has no freedom of will: the weakness of His nature subjects Him to necessity, and He is denied free-will, and subjected to necessity that He may not reject those who are given to Him and come from the Father. Nor was the Lord content to demonstrate the mystery of the Unity by His action in not rejecting those who are given to Him, nor seeking to do His own will instead of the will of Him that sent Him, but when the Jews, after the repetition of the words, Him that sent Me, began to murmur, He confirms our interpretation by saying, Every one who heareth from the Father and learneth, cometh unto Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is from God, He hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in Me hath eternal life. Now, tell me first, where has the Father been heard, and where has He taught His hearers? No one hath heard Him Whom no one has ever seen? He that has heard from the Father, comes to the Son: and he that has heard the teaching of the Son, has heard the teaching of the Father’s nature, for its properties are revealed in the Son. When, therefore, we hear the Son teaching, we must understand that we are hearing the teaching of the Father. No one hath seen the Father, yet he who comes to the Son, hears and learns from the Father to come: it is manifest, therefore, that the Father teaches through the words of the Son, and, though seen of none, speaks to us in the manifestation of the Son, because the Son, by virtue of His perfect birth, possesses all the properties of His Father’s nature. The Only-begotten God desiring, therefore, to testify of the Father’s authority, yet inculcating His own unity with the Father’s nature, does not cast out those who are given to Him of the Father, or work His own will instead of the will of Him that sent Him: not that the does not will what He does, or is not Himself heard when He teaches; but in order that He may reveal Him Who sent Him, and Himself the Sent, under the aspect of one indistinguishable nature, He shews all that He wills, and says, and does, to be the will and works of the Father.

50. But He proves abundantly that His will is free by the words, As the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will. When the equality of
Father and Son in power and honour is indicated, then the freedom of the Son’s will is made manifest: when Their unity is demonstrated, His conformity to the Father’s will is signified, for what the Father wills, the Son does. But to do is something more than to obey a will: the latter would imply external necessity, while to do another’s will requires unity with him, being an act of volition. In doing the will of the Father the Son teaches that through the identity of Their nature His will is the same in nature with the Father’s, since all that He does is the Father’s will. The Son plainly wills all that the Father wills, for wills of the same nature cannot dissent from one another. It is the will of the Father which is revealed in the words, For this is the will of My Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son and believeth in Him, should have eternal life, and that I should raise Him up at the last day. Hear now, whether the will of the Son is discordant with the Father’s, when He says, Father, those whom Thou hast given Me, I will that where I am they also may be with Me. Here is no doubt that the Son wills: for while the Father wills that those who believe in the Son should have eternal life, the Son wills that the believer should be where He is. For is it not eternal life to dwell together with Christ? And does He not grant to the believer in Him all perfection of blessing when He says, No one hath known the Son save the Father, neither hath any known the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him? Has He not freedom of will, when He wills to impart to us the knowledge of the Father’s mystery? Is not His will so free that He can bestow on whom He will the knowledge of Himself and His Father? Thus Father and Son are manifestly joint Possessors of a nature common to Both through birth and common through unity: for the Son is free of will, but what He does willingly is an act of the Father’s will.

51. He who has not grasped the manifest truths of the faith, obviously cannot have an understanding of its mysteries; because he has not the doctrine of the Gospel he is an alien to the hope of the Gospel. We must confess the Father to be in the Son and the Son in the Father, by unity of nature, by might of power, as equal in honour as Begetter and Begotten. But, perhaps you say, the witness of our Lord Himself is contrary to this declaration, for He says, The Father is greater than I. Is this, heretic, the weapon of your profanity? Are these the arms of your frenzy? Has it escaped you, that the Church does not admit two Unbegotten, or confess two Fathers? Have you forgotten the Incarnation of the Mediator, with the birth, the cradle, the childhood, the passion, the cross and the death belonging to it? When you were born again, did you not confess the Son of God, born of Mary? If the Son of God, of Whom these things are true, says, The Father is greater than I, can you be ignorant that the Incarnation for your salvation was an emptying of the form of God, and that the Father, unaffected by this assumption of human conditions, abode in the blessed eternity of His own incorrupt nature without taking our flesh? We confess that the Only-begotten God, while He abode in the form of God, abode in the nature of God, but we do not at once reabsorb into the substance of the divine unity His unity bearing the form of a servant. Nor do we teach that the Father is in the Son, as if He entered into Him bodily; but that the nature which was begotten by the Father of the same kind as His own, possessed by nature the nature which begot it: and that this nature, abiding in the form of the nature which begot it, took the form of human nature and weakness. Christ possessed all that was proper to His nature: but the form of God had departed from Him, for by emptying Himself of it. He had taken the form of a servant. The divine nature had not ceased to be, but still abiding in Him, it had taken upon itself the humility of earthly birth,
and was exercising its proper power in the fashion of the humility it assumed. So God, born of
God, being found as man in the form of a servant, but acting as God in His miracles, was at
once God as His deeds proved, and yet man, for He was found in the fashion of man

52. Therefore, in the discourse we have expounded above, He had borne witness to the unity
of His nature with the Father’s: He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father also: The Father is
in Me, and I in the Father. These two passages perfectly agree, since Both Persons are of equal
nature; to behold the Son is the same as to behold the Father; that the One abides in the One
shows that They are inseparable And. lest they should misunderstand Him, as though when
they beheld His body, they beheld the Father in Him, He had added, Believe Me, that I am in
the Father and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works’ sake. His power
belonged to His nature, and His working was the exercise of that power; in the exercise of that
power, then, they might recognise in Him the unity with the Father’s nature. In proportion as
any one recognised Him to be God in the power of His nature, he would come to know God the
Father, present in that mighty nature. The Son, Who is equal with the Father, shewed by His
works that the Father could be seen in Him: in order that we, perceiving in the Son a nature
like the Father’s in its power, might know that in Father and Son there is no distinction of
nature.

53. So the Only-begotten God, just before He finished His work in the flesh, and completed the
mystery of taking the servant’s form, in order to establish our faith, thus speaks, Ye heard how
I said unto you, I go away, and I came unto you. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I go
unto the Father; for the Father is greater than I. He has already, in an earlier part of this very
discourse unfolded in all its aspects the teaching of His divine nature: can we, then, on the
strength of this confession deprive the Son of that equality, which His true birth has perfected
in Him? Or is it an indignity to the Only-begotten God, that the Unbegotten God is His Father,
seeing that His Only-begotten birth from the Unbegotten gives Him the Only-begotten nature?
He is not the source of His own being, nor did He, being Himself non-existent, bring to pass His
own birth out of nothing; but, existing as a living nature and from a living nature, He possesses
the power of that nature, and declares the authority of that nature, by bearing witness to His
honour, and in His honour to the grace belonging to the birth He received. He pays to the
Father the tribute of obedience to the will of Him Who sent Him, but the obedience of humility
does not dissolve the unity of His nature: He becomes obedient unto death, but, after death,
He is above every name.

54. But if His equality is doubted because the Name is given Him after He put off the form of
God, we dishonour Him by ignoring the mystery of the humility which He assumed. The birth of
His humanity brought to Him a new nature, and His form was changed in His humility, by the
assumption of a servant’s form, but now the giving of the Name restores to Him equality of
form. Ask yourself what it is, which is given. If the gift be something pertaining to God, the
grant to the receiving nature does not impair the divinity of the giving nature. Again, the
words, And gave Him the Name, involve a mystery in the giving, but the giving of the Name
does not make it another name. To Jesus is given, that to Him, Every knee shall bow of things in
heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is
Lord in the glory of God the Father. The honour is given Him that He should be confessed in the glory of God the Father. Do you hear Him say, The Father is greater than I? Know Him also, of Whom it is said in reward of His obedience, And gave unto Him the Name which is above every name; hear Him Who said, I and the Father are one; He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father also; I am in the Father, and the Father in Me. Consider the honour of the confession which is granted Him, that Jesus is Lord in the glory of God the Father. When, then, is the Father greater than the Son? Surely, when He gives Him the Name above every name. And on the other hand, when is it that the Son and the Father are one? Surely, when every tongue confesses that Jesus is Lord in the glory of God the Father. If, then, the Father is greater through His authority to give, is the Son less through the confession of receiving? The Giver is greater: but the Receiver is not less, for to Him it is given to be one with the Giver. If it is not given to Jesus to be confessed in the glory of God the Father, He is less than the Father. But if it is given Him to be in that glory, in which the Father is, we see in the prerogative of giving, that the Giver is greater, and in the confession of the gift, that the Two are One. The Father is, therefore, greater than the Son: for manifestly the is greater, Who makes another to be all that He Himself is, Who imparts to the Son by the mystery of the birth the image of His own unbegotten nature, Who begets Him from Himself into His own form, and restores Him again from the form of a servant to the form of God, Whose work it is that Christ, born God according to the Spirit in the glory of the Father, but now Jesus Christ dead in the flesh, should be once more God in the glory of the Father. When, therefore, Christ says that He is going to the Father, He reveals the reason why they should rejoice if they loved Him, because the Father is greater than He.

55. After the explanation that love is the source of this joy, because love rejoices that Jesus is to be confessed in the glory of God the Father, He next expresses His claim to receive back that glory, in the words, For the prince of this world cometh, and he hath nothing in Me. The prince of this world hath nothing in Him: for being found in fashion as a man, He dwelt in the likeness of the flesh of sin, yet apart from the sin of the flesh, and in the flesh condemned sin by sin. Then, giving obedience to the Father’s command as His only motive, He adds, But that the world may know that I love the Father, even as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go hence. In His zeal to do the Father’s commandment, He rises and hastens to complete the mystery of His bodily passion. But the next moment He unfolds the mystery of His assumption of flesh. Through this assumption we are in Him, as the branches in the vinestock; and unless He had become the Vine. we could have borne no good fruit. He exhorts us to abide in Himself, through faith in His assumed body, that, since the Word has been made flesh, we may be in the nature of His flesh, as the branches are in the Vine. He separates the form of the Father’s majesty from the humiliation of the assumed flesh by calling Himself the Vine, the source of unity for all the branches, and the Father the careful Husbandman, Who prunes away its useless and barren branches to be burnt in the fire. In the words, He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father also, and The words that I say unto you, I speak not of Myself, but the Father abiding in Me, He do the His works, and Believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me, He reveals the truth of His birth and the mystery of His Incarnation. He then continues the thread of His
discourse, until He comes to the saying, The Father is greater than I; and after this, to complete the meaning of these words, He hastens to add the illustration of the husbandman, the vine, and the branches, which directs our notice to His submission to bodily humiliation. He says that, because the Father is greater than Himself, He is going to the Father, and that love should rejoice, that He is going to the Father, that is, to receive back His glory from the Father: with Him, and in Him, to be glorified not with a brand-new honour, but with the old, not with some strange honour but with that which He had with Him before. If then Christ shall not enter into Him with glory, to abide in the glory of God, you may disparage His nature: but if the glory which He receives is the proof of His Godhead, recognise that it as Giver of this proof that the Father is the greater.

56. Why do you distort the Incarnation into a blasphemy? Why pervert the mystery of salvation into a weapon of destruction? The Father, Who glorifies the Son, is greater: The Son, Who is glorified in the Father, is not less. How can He be less, when He is in the glory of God the Father? And how can the Father not be greater? The Father therefore is greater, because He is Father: but the Son, because He is Son, is not less. By the birth of the Son the Father is constituted greater: the nature that is His by birth, does not suffer the Son to be less. The Father is greater, for the Son prays Him to render glory to manhood He has assumed. The Son is not less, for He receives back His glory with the Father. Thus are consummated at once the mystery of the Birth, and the dispensation of the Incarnation. The Father, as Father, and as glorifying Him Who now is Son of Man, is greater: Father and Son are one, in that the Son, born of the Father, after assuming an earthly body is taken back to the glory of the Father.

57. The birth, therefore, does not constitute His nature inferior, for He is in the form of God, as being born of God. And though by their very signification, ‘Unbegotten’ and ‘Begotten’ seem to be opposed, yet the Begotten cannot be excluded from the nature of the Unbegotten, for there is none other from whom He could derive His substance. He does not indeed share in the supreme majesty of being unbegotten: but He has received from the Unbegotten God the nature of divinity. Thus faith confesses the eternity of the Only-begotten God, though it can give no meaning to begetting or beginning in His case. His nature forbids us to say that He ever began to be, for His birth lies beyond the beginnings of time. But while we confess Him existent before all ages, we do not hesitate to pronounce Him born in timeless eternity, for we believe His birth, though we know it never had a beginning.

58 Seeking to disparage His nature, the heretics lay hold of such sayings as, The Father is greater than I, or, But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only. It is turned to a reproach against the Only-begotten God that He did not know the day and the hour: that, though God, born of God, He is not in the perfection of divine nature, since He is subjected to the limitation of ignorance; that is, an external force stronger than Himself, triumphing, as it were, over His weakness, makes Him captive to this infirmity. And, indeed, it is with an apparent right to claim that this confession is inevitable, that the heretics, in their frenzy, would drive us to such a blasphemous interpretation. The words are those of the Lord Himself, and what, it may be asked, could be more unholy than to corrupt His express assertion by our attempt to explain it away.
59. But, before we investigate the meaning and occasion of these words, let us first appear to the judgment of common sense. Is it credible, that He, Who stands to all things as the Author of their present and future, should not know all things? If all things are through and in Christ, and in such a way through Christ that they are also in Him, must not that, which is both in Him and through Him, be also in His knowledge, when that knowledge, by virtue of a nature which cannot be nescient, habitually apprehends what is neither in, nor through Him? But that which derives from Him alone its origin, and has in Him alone the efficient cause of its present state and future development, can that be beyond the ken of His nature, through which is effected, and in which is contained, all that it is and shall be? Jesus Christ knows the thoughts of the mind, as it is now, stirred by present motives, and as it will be to-morrow, aroused by the impulse of future desires. Hear the witness of the Evangelist, For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray Him. By its virtue His nature could perceive the unborn future, and foresee the awakening of passions yet dormant in the mind: do you believe that it did not know what is through itself, and within itself? He is Lord of all that belongs to others, is He not Lord of His own? Remember what is written of Him, All things have been created through Him, and in Him: and He is before all things: or again, For it was the good pleasure of the Father, that in Him should all the fulness dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, all fulness is in Him, all things were made through Him, and are reconciled in Him, and for that day of reconciliation we wait expectant; did He not, then, know it, when its time was in His hands, and fixed by His mystery, for it is the day of His coming, of which the Apostle wrote, When Christ, Who is your life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory. No one is ignorant of that which is through himself and within himself: shall Christ come, and does He not know the day of His coming? It is His day, for the same Apostle says, The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night: can we believe, then, that He did not know it? Human natures, so far as in them lies, foresee what they determine to do: knowledge of the end desired accompanies the desire to act: does not He Who is born God, know what is in, and through, Himself? The times are through Him, the day is in His hand, for the future is constituted through Him, and the Dispensation of His coming is in His power: is His understanding so dull, that the sense of His torpid nature does not tell Him what He has Himself determined? Is He like the brute and the beast, which, animated by no reason or foresight, not even conscious of acting but driven to and fro by the impulse of irrational desire, proceed to their end with fortuitous and uncertain course?

60. But, again, how can we believe that the Lord of glory, because He was able not to know the day of His own coming, was of a discordant and imperfect nature, subject to the necessity of coming, but ignorant of the day of His coming? This would make God weaker than the power of ignorance, which took from Him the prerogative of knowledge. Then, too, how we redouble occasions of blasphemy, if we impute not only infirmity to Christ, but also defect to God the Father, saying that He defrauded of foreknowledge of this day the Only-begotten God, the Son of His love, and in malice denied Him certainty concerning the future consummation: suffered Him to know the day and hour of His passion, but withheld from Him the day of His power, and the hour of His glory among His Saints: took from Him the knowledge of His blessedness, while
He granted Him prescience of His death? The trembling conscience of man dare not presume
to think thus of God, or ascribe to Him such taint of human fickleness, that the Father should
deny anything to the Son, or the Son, Who was born as God, should possess an imperfect
knowledge.

61. But God can never be anything but love, or anything but the Father: and He, Who loves,
does not envy; He Who is Father, is wholly and entirely Father. This name admits of no
compromise: no one can be partly father, and partly not. A father is father in respect of his
whole personality; all that he is present in the child, for paternity by piecemeal is impossible:
not that paternity extends to self-generation, but that a father is altogether father in all his
qualities, to the offsprings born of him. According to the constitution of human bodies, which
are made of dissimilar elements, and composed of various parts, the father must be father of
the whole, since a perfect birth hands on to the child all the different elements and parts,
which are in the father. The father is, therefore, father of all that is his; the birth proceeds
fronth the whole of himself, and constitutes the whole of the child. God, however, has no body,
but simple essence: no parts, but an all-embracing whole: nothing quickened, but everything
living. God is therefore all life, and all one, not compounded of parts, but perfect in His
simplicity, and, as the Father, must be Father to His begotten in all that He Himself is, for the
perfect birth of the Son makes Him perfect Father in all that He has. So, if He is proper Father
to the Son the Son must possess all the properties of the Father. Yet how can this be, if the Son
has not the quality of prescience, if there is anything from His Author, which is wanting in His
birth? To say that there is one of God’s properties which He has not, is almost equivalent to
saying that He has none of them. And what is proper to God, if not the knowledge of the
future, a vision, which embraces the invisible and unborn world, and has within its scope that
which is not yet, but is to be?

62. Moreover Paul, the teacher of the Gentiles, forestalls the impious falsehood, that the Only-
begotten God was partially nescient. Listen to his words, Being instructed in love, unto all
riches of the fulness of understanding, unto knowledge of the mystery of God, even Christ, in
Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. God, even Christ, is the mystery,
and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him. But a portion is one thing,
the whole another: a part is not the same as all, nor can all be called a part. If the Son does not
know the day, all the treasures of knowledge are not in Him; but He has all the treasures of
knowledge in Him, therefore He is not ignorant of the day. But we must remember that those
treasures of knowledge were hidden in Him, though not, because hidden, therefore wanting.
As in God, they are in Him: as in the mystery, they are hidden. But Christ, the mystery of God,
in Whom are all the treasures of knowledge hidden, is not Himself hidden from our eyes and
minds. Since then He is Himself the mystery, let us see whether He is ignorant when He does
not know. If elsewhere His profession of ignorance does not imply that He does not know, here
also it will be wrong to call Him ignorant, if He does not know. In Him are hidden all the
treasures of knowledge, and so His ignorance is an economy rather than ignorance. Thus we
can assign a reason for His ignorance, without the assumption that He did not know.

63. Whenever God says that He does not know, He professes ignorance indeed, but is not
under the defect of ignorance. It is not because of the infirmity of ignorance that He does not know, but because it is not yet the time to speak, or the divine Plan to act. Thus He says to Abraham, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is full, and their sin is very grievous. Therefore I will go down now, and see if they have done altogether according to the cry of it: and if not, I will know. Here we perceive God not knowing that which notwithstanding He knows. He knows that their sins are very grievous, but He comes down again to see whether they have done altogether, and to know if they have not. We observe, then, that He is not ignorant, although He does not know, but that, when the time comes for action, He knows. This knowledge is not, therefore, a change from ignorance, but the coming of the fulness of time. He waits still to know, but we cannot suppose that He does not know: therefore His not knowing what He knows, and His knowing what He does not know, is nothing else than a divine economy in word and deed.

64. We cannot, then, doubt that the knowledge of God depends on the occasion and not on any change on His part: by the occasion being meant the occasion, not of obtaining but of declaring knowledge, as we learn from His words to Abraham, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, far now I know that thou fearest thy God, and hast not withheld thy beloved son, for My sake. God knows now, but that now I know is a profession of previous ignorance: yet it is not true, that until now God did not know the faith of Abraham, for it is written, Abraham believed in God, and it was counted to him for righteousness, and therefore this now I know marks the time when Abraham received this testimony, not when God began to know. Abraham had proved, by the sacrifice of his son, the love he bore to God, and God knew it at the time He spoke: but as we cannot suppose that He did not know before, we must for this reason suppose that He took knowledge of it then because He spoke.

By way of example, we have chosen, for our consideration this passage out of many in the Old Testament, which treat of, the knowledge of God, in order to skew that when God does not know, the cause lies, not in His ignorance, but in the occasion.

65. We find our Lord in the Gospels knowing, yet not knowing, many things. Thus He does not know the workers of iniquity, who glory in their mighty works and in His name, for He says to them, Then will swear, I never knew you; depart from all ye that work iniquity. He declares with an oath even, that He does not know them, but nevertheless He knows them to be workers of iniquity. He does not know them, not because He does not know, but because by the iniquity of their deeds they are unworthy of His knowledge, and He even confirms His denial with the sanctity of an oath. By the virtue of His nature He could not be ignorant, by the mystery of His will He refused to know. Again the Unbegotten God does not know the foolish virgins; He is ignorant of those who were too careless to have their oil ready, when He entered the chamber of His glorious coming. They come and implore, and so far from not knowing them, He cries, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. Their coming and their prayer compel Him to recognize them, but His profession of ignorance refers to His will, not to His nature they are unworthy to be known of Him to Whom nothing is unknown. Hence, in order that we should not impute His ignorance to infirmity, He says immediately to the Apostles, Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour. When He bids them watch, for they know not the day or the hour, He
points out that He knew not the virgins, because through sleep and neglect they had no oil, and therefore were unworthy to enter into His chamber.

66. The Lord Jesus Christ, then, Who searcheth the heart and the reins, has no weakness in His nature, that He should not know, for, as we perceive, even the fact of His ignorance proceeds from the omniscience of His nature. Yet if any there be, who impute to Him ignorance, let them tremble, lest He Who knows their thoughts should say to them, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? The All-knowing, though not ignorant of thoughts and deeds, sometimes enquires as if He were, as for instance when He asks the woman who it was that touched the hem of His garment, or the Apostles, why they quarrelled among themselves, or the mourners, where the sepulchre of Lazarus was: but His ignorance was not ignorance, except in words. It is against reason that He should know from afar the death and burial of Lazarus, but not the place of his sepulchre: that He should read the thoughts of the mind, and not recognise the faith of the woman: that He should not need to ask concerning anything, yet be ignorant of the dissension of the Apostles. But He, Who knows all things, sometimes by a practice of economy professes ignorance, even though He is not ignorant. Thus, in the case of Abraham, God concealed His knowledge for a time: in that of the foolish virgins and the workers of iniquity, He refused to recognise the unworthy: in the mystery of the Son of Man, His asking, as if ignorant, expressed His humanity. He accommodated Himself to the reality of His birth in the flesh in everything to which the weakness of our nature is subject, not in such wise that He became weak in His divine nature, but that God, born man, assumed the weaknesses of humanity, yet without thereby reducing His unchangeable nature to a weak nature, for the unchangeable nature was that wherein He mysteriously assumed flesh. He, Who was God is man, but, being man, has not ceased to remain God. Conducting Himself then as one born man, and proving Himself such, though remaining God the Word, He often uses the language of man (though God, speaking as God, makes frequent use of human terms), and does not know that which it is not yet time to declare, or which is not deserving of His recognition.

67. We can now understand why He said that He knew not the day. If we believe Him to have been really ignorant, we contradict the Apostle, who says, In Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. There is knowledge which is hidden in Him, and because it has to be hidden, it must sometimes for this purpose be professed as ignorance, for once declared, it will no longer be secret. In order, therefore, that the knowledge may remain hidden, He declares that He does not know. But if He does not know, in order that the knowledge may remain hidden, this ignorance is not due to His nature, which is omniscient, for He is ignorant solely in order that it may be hidden. Nor is it hard to see why the knowledge of the day is hidden. He exhorts us to watch continually with unrelaxing faith, and withholds from us the security of certain knowledge, that our minds may be kept on the stretch by the uncertainty of suspense, and while they hasten towards and continually look for the day of His coming, may always watch in hope; and that, though we know the time must come, its very uncertainty may make us careful and vigilant. Thus the Lord says, Therefore be ye also ready, for ye know not what hour the Son of Man shall come; and again, Blessed is that servant whom His lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing. The ignorance is, therefore, a means not to delude, but to encourage in perseverance. It is no loss to be denied a knowledge which it is an advantage not
to have, for the security of knowledge might breed negligence of the faith, which now is concealed, while the uncertainty of expectation keeps us continually prepared, even as the master of the house, with the fear of loss before his eyes, watches and guards against the dreaded coming of the thief, who chooses the time of sleep for his work.

68. Manifestly, therefore, the ignorance of God is not ignorance but a mystery: in the economy of His actions and words and manifestations, He does not know and at the same time He knows, or knows and at the same time does not know. But we must ask, whether it may not be through the Son’s infirmity that He knows not what the Father knows. He could perhaps read the thoughts of the human heart, because His stronger nature can unite itself with a weaker in all its movement’s, and by the force of its power, as it were, pass through and through the feeble nature. But a weaker nature is powerless to penetrate a stronger: light things may be penetrated by heavy, rare by dense, liquid by solid, but the heavy are impenetrable to the light, the dense to the rare, and the solid to the liquid: the strong are not exposed to the weak, but the weak are penetrated by the strong. Therefore, the heretics say, the Son knew not the thoughts of the Father, because, being Himself weak, He could not approach the more powerful and enter into Him, or pass through Him.

69. Should any one presume, not merely to speak thus of the Only-begotten God in the rashness of his tongue, but even to think so in the wickedness of his heart, let him hear what the Apostle thought of the Holy Ghost, from the words he wrote to the Corinthians, But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, which are in him, save the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the things which are in God, none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But let us cast aside these empty illustrations of material things, and measure God born of God, Spirit of Spirit, by His own powers and not by earthly conditions. Let us measure Him not by our own senses, but by His divine claims. Let us believe Him Who said, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also. Let us not forget that He said, Believe, if only by My works, that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father, and again, I and the Father are one. If the names which correspond to realities, when intelligibly used, impart to us any true information, then He Who is seen in Another by the eye of understanding is not different in nature from that Other; not different in kind, since He abides in the Father, and the Father in Him; not separate, since Both are One. Perceive their unity in the indivisibility of their nature, and apprehend the mystery of that indivisible nature by regarding the One as the mirror of the Other. But remember that He is the mirror, not as the image reflected by the splendour of a nature outside Himself, but as being a living nature, indistinguishable from the Father’s living nature, derived wholly from the whole of His Father’s, having the Father’s in Him because He is the Only begotten, and abiding in the Father, because He is God.

70. The heretics cannot deny that the Lord used these words to signify the mystery His birth, but they attempt to escape from them by referring them to a harmony of will. They make the unity of God the Father and God the Son not one of divinity, but merely of will: as if the divine teaching were poor in expression and the Lord could not have said, I and the Father are one in will; or as if those words could have the same meaning as I and the Father are one; or as if He
meant, He that hath seen My will, hath seen the will of My Father also, but, being unskilled statement, tried to express that idea in the words, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also: or as if the divine vocabulary did not contain the terms, The will of My Father is in Me, and My will is in the Father, but this thought could be expressed by I the Father and the Father in Me. All this is nauseous and irreverent nonsense; common sense condemns the judgment of such silly fancies, as that the Lord could not say what He wanted, or did not say what He said. True, we find Him speaking in parables and allegories, but it is a different thing to strengthen one’s words with illustrations, or satisfy the dignity of the subject with the help of suggestive proverbs, or adapt one’s language to the needs of the moment. But this passage concerning the unity, of which we are speaking, does not allow us to look for the meaning outside the plain sound of the words. If Father and Son are one, in the sense that They are one in will, and if separable natures cannot be one in will, because their diversity of kind and nature must draw them into diversities of will and judgment, how can They be one in will. not being one in knowledge? There can be no unity of will between ignorance and knowledge. Omniscience and nescience are opposites, and opposites cannot be of the same will.

71. But perhaps it may be held to confirm the Son in His confession of ignorance that He says the Father alone knows. But unless He had plainly said that the Father alone knows, it would have been a matter of the greatest danger for our understanding, since we might have thought that He Himself did not know. For, since His ignorance is due to the economy of hidden knowledge, and not to a nature capable of ignorance, now that He says the Father alone knows, we cannot believe that He does not know; for, as we said above, God’s knowledge is not the discovery of what He did not know, but its declaration. The fact that the Father alone knows, is no proof that the Son ignorant: He says that He does not know, that others may not know: that the Father alone knows, to shew that He Himself also knows. If we say that God came to know the love of Abraham, when He ceased to conceal His knowledge, it follows that only because He did not conceal it from the Son, can the Father be said to know the day, for God does not learn by sudden perception, but declares His knowledge with the occasion. If, then, the Son according to the mystery does not know the day, that He may not reveal it: on the other hand, only by the fact that He has revealed it can the Father be proved to know the day.

72. Far be it from us to imagine vicissitudes of bodily change in the Father and Son, as though the Father sometimes spoke to the Son, and sometimes was silent. We remember, indeed, that a voice was sometimes uttered from heaven for us, that the power of the Father’s words might confirm for us the mystery of the Son, as the Lord says, This voice hath not come from Heaven for My sake but for your sakes. But the divine nature can dispense with the various combinations necessary for human functions, the motion of the tongue, the adjustment of the mouth, the forcing of the breath, and the vibration of the air. God is a simple Being: we must understand Him by devotion, and confess Him by reverence. He is to be worshipped, not pursued by our senses, for a conditioned and weak nature cannot grasp with the guesses of its imagination the mystery of an infinite and omnipotent nature. In God is no variability, no parts, as of a composite divinity, that in Him will should follow inaction, speech silence, or work rest, or that He should not will, without passing from some other mental state to volition, or speak,
without breaking the silence with His voice, or act, without going forth to labour. He is not subject to the laws of nature, for nature has received its law from Him: He never suffers weakness or change when He acts, for His power is boundless, as the Lord said, Father, all things are possible unto Thee. He can do more than human sense can conceive. The Lord does not deprive even Himself of the quality of omnipotence, for He says, What things soever the Father doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner. Nothing is difficult, when there is no weakness; for only a power which is weak to effect, knows the need of effort. The cause of difficulty is the weakness of the motive force; a force of limitless power rises above the conditions of impotence.

73. We have established this point to exclude the idea that after silence God spoke to the Son, or after ignorance the Son began to know. To reach our intelligence terms must be used applicable to our own nature: thus we do not understand communication except by word of mouth, or comprehend the opposite of nescience except as knowledge. Thus the Son does not know the day for the reason that He does not reveal it: the Father, He says, alone knows it for the reason that He reveals it to the Son alone. But, as we have said, Christ is conscious of no such natural impediments as an ignorance which must be removed before He can come to know, or a knowledge which is not His before the Father begins to speak. He declares the unity of His nature, as the only-begotten, with the Father, by the unmistakable words, All things whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine. There is no mention here of coming into possession: it is one tiring, to be the Possessor of things external to Him; another, to be self-contained and self-existent. The former is to possess heaven and earth and the universe, the latter to be able to describe Himself by His own properties, which are His, not as something external and subject, but as something of which He Himself subsists. When He says, therefore, that all things which the Father has, are His, He alludes to the divine nature, and not to a joint ownership of gifts bestowed. For referring to His words that the Holy Spirit should take of His, He says, All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine, therefore said I, He shall take of Mine: that is, the Holy Spirit takes of His, but takes also of the Father’s: and if He receives of the Father’s, He receives also of His. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, and does not receive of a creature, but teaches us that He receives all these gifts, because they are all God’s. All things that belong to the Father are the Spirit’s; but we must not think that whatever He received of the Son, He did not receive of the Father also; for all that the Father hath belongs equally to the Son.

74. So the nature of Christ needed no change, or question, or answer, that it should advance from ignorance to knowledge, or ask of One Who had continued in silence, and wait to receive His answer: but, abiding perfectly in mysterious unity with Him, it received of God its whole being as it derived from Him its origin. And, further, it received all that belonged to the whole being of God, namely, His knowledge and His will. What the Father knows, the Son does not learn by question and answer; what the Father wills, the Son does not will by command. Since all that the Father has, is His, it is the property of His nature to will and know, exactly as the Father wills and knows. But to prove His birth He often expounds the doctrine of His Person, as when He says, I came not to do Mine own will, but, the will of Him that sent Me. He does the Father’s will, not His own, and by the will of Him that sent Me, He means His Father. But that He Himself wills the same, is unmistakeably declared in the words, Father, those whom Thou
hast given Me, I will, that, where also may be with Me. The Father wills that we should be with Christ, in Whom, according to the Apostle, He chose us before the foundation of the world, and the Son wills the same, namely that we should be with Him. His will is, therefore, the same in nature as the Father’s will, though to make plain the fact of the birth it is distinguished from the Father’s.

75. The Son is ignorant, then, of nothing which the Father knows, nor does it follow because the Father alone knows, that the Son does not know. Father and Son abide in unity of nature, and the ignorance of the Son belongs to the divine Plan of silence seeing that in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. This the Lord Himself testified, when He answered the question of the Apostles concerning the times, It is not yours to know times or moments, which the Father hath set within His own authority. The knowledge is denied them, and not only that, but the anxiety to learn is forbidden, because it is not theirs to know these times. Yet now that He is risen, they ask again, though their question on the former occasion had been met with the reply, that not even the Son knew. They cannot possibly have understood literally that the Son did not know, for they ask Him again as though He did know. They perceived in the mystery of His ignorance a divine Plan of silence, and now, after His resurrection, they renew the question, thinking that the time has come to speak. And the Son no longer denies that He knows, but tells them that it is not theirs to know, because the Father has set it within His own authority. If then, the Apostles attributed it to the divine Plan, and not to weakness, that the Son did not know the day, shall we say that the Son knew not the day for the simple reason that He was not God? Remember, God the Father set the day within His own authority, and the Son, when asked before, replied that He did not know, but now, no longer denying His knowledge, replies that it is theirs not to know, for the Father has set the times not in His own knowledge, but in His own authority. The day and the moment are included in the word ‘times’: can it be, then, that He, Who was to restore Israel to its kingdom, did not Himself know the day and the moment of that restoration? He instructs us to see an evidence of His birth in this exclusive prerogative of the Father, yet He does not deny that He knows: and while He proclaims that the possession of this knowledge is withheld from ourselves, He asserts that it belongs to the mystery of the Father’s authority.

We must not therefore think, because He said He did not know the day and the moment, that the Son did not know. As man He wept, and slept, and sorrowed, but God is incapable of tears, or fear, or sleep. According to the weakness of His flesh He shed tears, slept, hungered, thirsted, was weary, and feared, yet without impairing the reality of His Only-begotten nature; equally so must we refer to His human nature, the words that He knew not the day or the hour.

Book 10 (Back to the Top)

1. It is manifest that there is nothing which men have ever said which is not liable to opposition. Where the will dissents the mind also dissents: under the bias of opposing judgment it joins battle, and denies the assertions to which it objects. Though every word we
say be incontrovertible if gauged by the standard of truth, yet so long as men think or feel
differently, the truth is always exposed, to the cavils of opponents, because they attack, under
the delusion of error or prejudice, the truth they misunderstand or dislike. For decisions once
formed cling with excessive obstinacy: and the passion of controversy cannot be driven from
the course it has taken, when the will is not subject to the reason. Enquiry after truth gives way
to the search for proofs of what we wish to believe; desire is paramount over truth. Then the
theories we concoct build themselves on names rather than things the logic of truth gives place
to the logic of prejudice: a logic which the will adjusts to defend its fancies, not one which
stimulates the will through the understanding of truth by the reason. From these defects of
partisan spirit arise all controversies between opposing theories. Then follows an obstinate
battle between truth asserting itself, and prejudice defending itself: truth maintains its ground
and prejudice resists. But if desire had not forestalled reason: if the understanding of the truth
had moved us to desire what was true: instead of trying to set up our desires as doctrines, we
should let our doctrines dictate our desires; there would be no contradiction of the truth, for
every one would begin by desiring what was true, not by defending the truth of that which he
desired.

2. Not unmindful of this sin of wilfulness, the Apostle, writing to Timothy, after many
injunctions to bear witness to the faith and to preach the word, adds, For the time will come
when they will not endure sound doctrine, but having itching ears will heap up teachers to
themselves after their own lusts, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside
unto fables. For when their unhallowed zeal shall drive them beyond the endurance of sound
document, they will heap up teachers for their lusts, that is, construct schemes of doctrine to
suit their own desires, not wishing to be taught, but getting together teachers who will tell
them what they wish: that the crowd of teachers whom they have ferreted out and gathered
gether, may satisfy them with the doctrines of their own tumultuous desires. And if these
madmen in their godless folly do not know with what spirit they reject the sound, and yearn
after the corrupt doctrine, let them hear the words of the same Apostle to the same Timothy,
But the Spirit saith expressly that in the last days some shall away from the faith, giving heed to
seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils through the hypocrisy of lying talk. What advancement
of doctrine is it to discover what one fancies, and not what one ought to learn? Or what piety
in doctrine is it not to desire what one ought to learn, but to heap up doctrine after our
desires? But this is what the promptings of seducing spirits supply. They confirm the falsehoods
of pretended godliness, for a canting hypocrisy always succeeds to defection from the faith: so
that at least in word the reverence is retained, which the conscience has lost. Even that
pretended piety they make impious by all manner of lies, violating by schemes of false doctrine
the sacredness of the faith: for they pile up doctrines to suit their desires, and not according to
the faith of the Gospel. They delight, with an uncontrollable pleasure, to have their itching ears
tickled by the novelty of their favourite preaching; they estrange themselves utterly from the
hearing of the truth, and surrender themselves entirely to fables: so that their incapacity for
either speaking or understanding the truth invests their discourse with what is, to them, a
semblance of truth.

3. We have clearly fallen on the evil times prophesied by the Apostle; for nowadays teachers
are sought after who preach not God but a creature. And men are more zealous for what they
themselves desire, than for what the sound faith teaches. So far have their itching ears stirred
them to listen to what they desire, that for the moment that preaching alone rules among their
crowd of doctors which estranges the Only-begotten God from the power and nature of God
the Father, and makes Him in our faith either a God of the second order, or not a God at all; in
either case a damning profession of impiety, whether one profess two Gods by making
different grades of divinity; or else deny divinity altogether to Him Who drew His nature by
birth from God. Such doctrines please those whose ears are estranged from the hearing of the
truth and turned to fables, while the hearing of this our sound faith is not endured, and is
driven bodily into exile with its preachers.

4. But though many may heap up teachers according to their desires, and banish sound
document, yet from the company of the Saints the preaching of truth can never be exiled. From
our exile we shall speak by these our writings, and the Word of God which cannot be bound
will run unhindered, warning us of this time which the Apostle prophesied. For when men
shew themselves impatient of the true message, and heap up teachers according to their own
human desires, we can no longer doubt about the times, but know that while the preachers of
sound doctrine are banished truth is banished too. We do not complain of the times: we
rejoice rather, that iniquity has revealed itself in this our exile, when, unable to endure the
truth, it banishes the preachers of sound doctrine, that it may heap up for itself teachers after
its own desires. We glory in our exile, and rejoice in the Lord that in our person the Apostle’s
prophecy should be fulfilled.

5. In the earlier books, then, while maintaining the profession of a faith, I trust, sincere, and a
truth uncorrupted, we arranged the method of our answer throughout, so that (though such
are our limitations, that human language can never be safe from exception) no one could
contradict us without an open profession of godlessness. For so completely have we
demonstrated the true meaning of those texts which they cunningly filch from the Gospels and
appropriate for their own teaching, that if any one denies it, he cannot escape on the plea of
ignorance, but is condemned out of his own mouth of godlessness. Further, we have, according
to the gift of the Holy Ghost, so cautiously proceeded throughout in our proof of the faith, that
no charge could possibly be trumped up against us. For it is their way to fill the ears of the
unwary with declarations that we deny the birth of Christ, when we preach the unity of the
Godhead; and they say that by the text, I and the Father are one, we confess that God is
solitary: thus, according to them, we say that the Unbegotten God descended into the Virgin,
and was born man, and that He refers the opening word ‘I’ to the dispensation of His flesh, but
adds to it the proof of His divinity, And the Father, as being the Father of Himself as man; and
further, that, consisting of two Persons, human and divine, He said of Himself, We are one.

6. But we have always maintained the birth existing out of time: we have taught that God the
Son is God of the same nature with God the Father, not co-equal with the Unbegotten, for He
was not Himself Unbegotten, but, as the Only-begotten, not unequal because begotten; that
the Two are One, not by the giving of a double name to one Person, but by a true begetting
and being begotten; that neither are there two Gods, different in kind, in our faith, nor is God
solitary because He is one, in the sense in which we confess the mystery of the Only-begotten God: but that the Son is both indicated in the name of, and exists in, the Father, Whose name and Whose nature are in Him, while the Father by His name implies, and abides in, the Son, since a son cannot be spoken of, or exist, except as born of a father. Further, we say that He is the living copy of the living nature, the impression of the divine seal upon the divine nature, so undistinguished from God in power and kind, that neither His works nor His words nor His form are other than the Father’s: but that, since the image by nature possesses the nature of its author, the Author also has worked and spoken and appeared through His natural image.

7. But by the side of this timeless and ineffable generation of the Only-begotten, which transcends the perception of human understanding, we taught as well the mystery of God born to be man from the womb of the Virgin, shewing how according to the plan of the Incarnation, when He emptied Himself of the form of God and took the form of a servant, the weakness of the assumed humanity did not weaken the divine nature, but that Divine power was imparted to humanity without the virtue of divinity being lost in the human form. For when God was born to be man the purpose was not that the Godhead should be lost, but that, the Godhead remaining, man should be born to be God. Thus Emmanuel is His name, which is God with us, that God might not be lowered to the level of man, but man raised to that of God. Nor, when He asks that lie may be glorified, is it in any way a glorifying of His divine nature, but of the lower nature He assumed: for He asks for that glory which He had with God before the world was made.

8. As we are answering all, even their most insensate statements, we come now to the discussion of the unknown hour. Now, I even if, as they say, the Son had not known it, this could give no ground for an attack upon His Godhead as the Only-begotten. It was not in the nature of things that His birth should avail to put His beginning back, until it was equivalent to the existence which is unbegotten, and had no beginning; and the Farther reserves as His prerogative, to demonstrate His authority as the Unbegotten, the fixing of this still undetermined day. Nor may we conclude that in His Person there is any defect in that nature which contained by right of birth all the fulness of that nature which a perfect birth could impart. Nor again could the ignorance of day and hour be imputed in the Only-begotten God to a lower degree of Divinity. It is to demonstrate against the Sabellian heretics that the Father’s authority is without birth or beginning, that this prerogative of unbegotten authority is not granted to the Son. But if, as we have maintained, when He said that He knew not the day, He kept silence not from ignorance, but in accordance with the Divine Plan, all occasion for irreverent declarations must be removed, and the blasphemous teachings of heresy thwarted, that the truth of the Gospel may be illustrated by the very words which seem to obscure it.

9. Thus the greater number of them will not allow Him to have the impossible nature of God because He feared His Passion and shewed Himself weak by submitting to suffering. They assert that He Who feared and felt pain could not enjoy that confidence of power which is above fear, or that incorruption of spirit which is not conscious of suffering: but, being of a nature lower than God the Father, He trembled with fear at human suffering, and groaned before the violence of bodily pain. These impious assertions are based on the words, My soul is
sorrowful event unto death, and Father if it be possible let this cup pass away from He, and also, My God, My God, why hast Than forsaken He? to which they also add, Father into Thy hands I commend My Spirit. All these words of our holy faith they appropriate to the use of their unholy blasphemy: that He feared, Who was sorrowful, and even prayed that the cup might be taken away from Him; that He felt pain, because He complained that God had deserted Him in His suffering; that He was infirm, because He commended His Spirit to the Father. His doubts and anxieties preclude us, they say, from assigning to Him that likeness to God which would belong to a nature equal to God as being born His Only-begotten. He proclaims His own weakness and inferiority by the prayer to remove the cup, by the complaint of desertion and the commending of His Spirit.

10. Now first of all, before we shew from these very texts, that He was subject to no infirmity of fear or sorrow on His own account, let us ask, “What can we find for Him to fear, that the dread of an unendurable pain should have seized Him?” The objects of His fear, which they allege, are, I suppose, suffering and death. Now I ask those who are of this opinion, “Can we reasonably suppose that He feared death, Who drove away the terrors of death from His Apostles, exhorting them to the glory of martyrdom with the words, He that doth not take his crass and follow after Me is not worth of Me; and, He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that hath last his life far My sake shall find it? If to die for Him is life, what pain can we think He had to suffer in the mystery of death, Who rewards with life those who die for Him? Could death make Him fear what could be done to the body, when He exhorted the disciples, Pear not those which kill the body?

II. Further, what terror had the pain of death for Him, to Whom death was an act of His own free will? In the human race death is brought on either by an attack upon the body of an external enemy, such as fever wound, accident or fall: or our bodily nature is overcome by age, and yields to death. But the Only-begotten God, Who had the power of laying down His life, and of taking it up again, after the drought of vinegar, having borne witness that His work of human suffering was finished, in order to accomplish in Himself the mystery of death, bowed His head and gave up His Spirit. If it has been granted to our mortal nature of its own will to breathe its last breath, and seek rest in death; if the buffeted soul may depart, without the breaking up of the body, and the spirit burst forth and flee away, without being as it were violated in its own home by the breaking and piercing and crushing of limbs; then fear of death might seize the Lord of life; if, that is, when He gave up the ghost and died, His death were not an exercise of His own free will. But if He died of His own will, and through His own will gave back His Spirit, death had no terror; because it was in His own power.

12. But perchance with the fearfulness of human ignorance, He feared the very power of death, which He possessed; so, though He died of His own accord, He feared because He was to die. If any think so, let them ask “To which was death terrible, to His Spirit or to His body?” If to His body, are they ignorant that the Holy One should not see corruption, that within three days He was to revive the temple of His body? But if death was terrible to His Spirit, should Christ fear the abyss of hell, while Lazarus was rejoicing in Abraham’s bosom? It is foolish and absurd, that He should fear death, Who could lay down His soul, and take it up again, Who, to
fulfil the mystery of human life, was about to die of His own free will. He cannot fear death. Whose power and purpose in dying is to die but for a moment: fear is incompatible with willingness to die, and the power to live again, for both of these rob death of his terrors.

13. But was it perhaps the physical pain of hanging on the cross, or the rough cords with which He was bound, or the cruel wounds, where the nails were driven in, that dismayed Him? Let us see of what body the Man Jesus was, that pain should dwell in His crucified, bound, and pierced body.

14. The nature of our bodies is such, that when endued with life and feeling by conjunction with a sentient soul, they become something more than inert, insensate matter. They feel when touched, suffer when pricked, shiver with cold, feet pleasure in warmth, waste with hunger, and grow fat with food. By a certain transfusion of the soul, which supports and penetrates them, they feel pleasure or pain according to the surrounding circumstances. When the body is pricked or pierced, it is the soul which pervades it that is conscious, and suffers pain. For instance a flesh-wound is felt even to the bone, while the fingers feel nothing when we cut the nails which protrude from the flesh. And if through some disease a limb becomes withered, it loses the feeling of living flesh: it can be cut or burnt, it feels no pain whatever, because the soul is no longer mingled with it. Also when through some grave necessity part of the body must be cut away, the soul can be lulled to sleep by drugs, which overcome the pain, and produce in the mind a death-like forgetfulness of its power of sense. Then limbs can be cut off without pain: the flesh is dead to all feeling, and does not heed the deep thrust of the knife, because the soul within it is asleep. It is, therefore, because the body lives by admixture with a weak soul, that it is subject to the weakness of pain.

15. If the Man Jesus Christ began His bodily life with the same beginning as our body and soul, if He were not, as God, the immediate Author of His own body and soul alike, when He was fashioned in the likeness and form of man, and born as man, then we may suppose that He felt the pain of our body; since by His beginning, a conception like ours, He had a body animated with a soul like our own. But if through His own act He took to Himself flesh from the Virgin, and likewise by His own act joined a soul to the body thus conceived, then the nature of His suffering must have corresponded with the nature of His body and soul. For when He emptied Himself of the form of God and received the form of a servant when the Son of God was born also Son of Man, without losing His own self and power, God the Word formed the perfect living Man. For how was the Son of God born Son of Man, how did He receive the form of a servant, still remaining in the forth of God, unless (God the Word being able of Himself to take flesh from the Virgin and to give that flesh a soul, for the redemption of our soul and body), the Man Christ Jesus was born perfect, and made in the form of a servant by the assumption of the body, which the Virgin conceived? For the Virgin conceived, what she conceived, from the Holy Ghost alone, and though for His birth in the flesh she supplied from herself that element, which women always contribute to the seed planted in them, still Jesus Christ was not formed by an ordinary human conception. In His birth, the cause of which was transmitted solely by the Holy Ghost, His mother performed the same part as in all human conceptions: but by virtue of His origin He never ceased to be God.
16. This deep and beautiful mystery of His assumption of manhood the Lord Himself reveals in the words, No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven. ‘Descended from heaven’ refers to His origin from the Spirit: for though Mary contributed to His growth in the womb and birth all that is natural to her sex, His body did not owe to her its origin. The ‘Son of Man’ refers to the birth of the flesh conceived in the Virgin; ‘Who is in heaven’ implies the power of His eternal nature: an infinite nature, which could not restrict itself to the limits of the body, of which it was itself the source and base. By the virtue of the Spirit and the power of God the Word, though He abode in the form of a servant, He was ever present as Lord of all, within and beyond the circle of heaven and earth. So He descended from heaven and is the Son of Man, yet is in heaven: for the Word made flesh did not cease to be the Word. As the Word, He is in heaven, as flesh He is the Son of Man. As Word made flesh, He is at once from heaven, and Son of Man, and in heaven, for the power of the Word, abiding eternally without body, was present still in the heaven He had left: to Him and to none other the flesh owed its origin. So the Word made flesh, though He was flesh, yet never ceased to be the Word.

17. The blessed Apostle also perfectly describes this mystery of the ineffable birth of Christ’s body in the words, The first man was from the soil of the ground, the second man from heaven. Calling Him ‘Man’ he expresses His birth from the Virgin, who in the exercise of her office as mother, performed the duties of her sex in the conception and birth of man. And when he says, The second man from heaven he testifies His origin from the Holy Ghost, Who came upon the Virgin. As He is then man, and from heaven, this Man was born of the Virgin, and conceived of the Holy Ghost. So speaks the Apostle.

18. Again the Lord Himself revealing this mystery of His birth, speaks thus: I am the living bread Who have descended from Heaven: if any one shall eat of My bread he shall live far ever: calling Himself the Bread since He is the origin of His own body. Further, that it may not be thought the Word left His own virtue and nature for the flesh, He says again that it is His bread; since He is the bread which descends from heaven, His body cannot be regarded as sprung from human conception, because it is shewn to be from heaven. And His language concerning His bread is an assertion that the Word took a body, for He adds, Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in you. Hence, inasmuch as the Being Who is Son of Man descended also as bread from heaven, by the ‘Bread descending from heaven’ and by the ‘Flesh and Blood of the Son of Man’ must be understood His assumption of the flesh, conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin.

19. Being, then, Man with this body, Jesus Christ is both the Son of God and Son of Man, Who emptied Himself of the form of God, and received the form of a servant. There is not one Son of Man and another Son of God; nor one in the form of God, and another born perfect man in the form of a servant: so that, as by the nature determined for us by God, the Author of our being, man is born with body and soul, so likewise Jesus Christ, by His own power, is God and Man with flesh and soul, possessing in Himself whole and perfect manhood, and whole and perfect Godhead.
20. Yet many, with the art by which they seek to prove their heresy, are wont to delude the ears of the unlearned with the error, that as the body and soul of Adam both sinned, so the Lord must have taken the soul and body of Adam from the Virgin, and that it was not the whole Man that she conceived from the Holy Ghost. If they had understood the mystery of the Incarnation, these men would have understood at the same time the mystery that the Son of Man is also Son of God. As if in receiving so much from the Virgin, He received from her His soul also; whereas though flesh is always born of flesh, every soul is the direct work of God.

21. With a view to deprive of substantive divinity the Only-begotten God, Who was God the Word with God in the beginning, they make Him merely the utterance of the voice of God. The Son is related to God His Father, they say, as the words to the speaker. They are trying to creep into the position, that it was not God the eternal Word, abiding in the form of God, Who was born as Christ the Man, Whose life therefore springs from a human origin, not from the mystery of a spiritual conception; that He was not God the Word, making Himself man by birth from the Virgin, but the Word of God dwelling in Jesus as the spirit of prophecy dwelt in the prophets. They accuse us of saying that Christ was born man with body and soul different from ours. But we preach the Word made flesh Christ emptying Himself of the form of God and taking the form of a servant, perfect according to the fashion of human form, born a man after the likeness of ourselves: that being true Son of God, He is indeed true Son of Man, neither the less Man because born of God, nor the less God because Man born of God.

22. But as He by His own act assumed a body from the Virgin, so He assumed from Himself a soul; though even in ordinary human birth the soul is never derived from the parents. If, then, the Virgin received from God alone the flesh which she conceived, far more certain is it that the soul of that body can have come from God alone. If, too, the same Christ be the Son of Man, Who is also the Son of God (for the whole Son of Man is the whole Son of God), how ridiculous is it to preach besides the Son of God, the Word made flesh, another I know not whom, inspired, like a prophet, by God the Word; whereas our Lord Jesus Christ is both Son of Man and Son of God. Yet because His soul was sorrowful unto death, and because He had the power to lay down His soul and the power to take it up again, they want to derive it from some alien source, and not from the Holy Ghost, the Author of His body’s conception: for God the Word became man without departing from the mystery of His own nature. He was born also not to be at one time two separate beings, but that it might be made plain, that He Who was God before He was Man, now that He has taken humanity, is God and Man. How could Jesus Christ, the Son of God, have been born of Mary, except by the Word becoming flesh: that is by the Son of God, though in the form of God, taking the form of a slave? When He Who was in the form of God took the form of a slave, two contraries were brought together. Thus it was just as true, that He received the form of a slave, as that He remained in the form of God. The use of the one word ‘form’ to describe both natures compels us to recognise that He truly possessed both. He is in the form of a servant, Who is also in the form of God. And though He is the latter by His eternal nature, and the former in accordance with the divine Plan of Grace, the word has its true significance equally in both cases, because He is both: as truly in the form of God as in the form of Man. Just as to take the form of a servant is none other than to be
born a man, so to be in the form of God is none other than to be God: and we confess Him as one and the same Person, not by loss of the Godhead, but by assumption of the manhood: in the form of God through His divine nature, in the form of man from His conception by the Holy Ghost, being found in fashion as a man. That is why after His birth as Jesus Christ, His suffering, death, and burial, He also rose again. We cannot separate Him from Himself in all these diverse mysteries, so that He should be no longer Christ; for Christ, Who took the form of a servant, was none other than He Who was in the form of God: He Who died was the same as He Who was born: He Who rose again as He Who died; He Who is in heaven as He Who rose again; lastly, He Who is in heaven as He Who before descended from heaven.

23. So the Man Jesus Christ, Only-begotten God, as flesh and as Word at the same time Son of Man and Son of God, without ceasing to be Himself, that is, God, took true humanity after the likeness of our humanity. But when, in this humanity, He was struck with blows, or smitten with wounds, or bound with ropes, or lifted on high, He felt the force of suffering, but without its pain. Thus a dart passing through water, or piercing a flame, or wounding the air, infects all that it is its nature to do: it passes through, it pierces, it wounds; but all this is without effect on the thing it strikes; since it is against the order of nature to make a hole in water, or pierce flame, or wound the air, though it is the nature of a dart to make holes, to pierce and to wound. So our Lord Jesus Christ suffered blows, hanging, crucifixion and death: but the suffering which attacked the body of the Lord, without ceasing to be suffering, had not the natural effect of suffering. It exercised its function of punishment with all its violence; but the body of Christ by its virtue suffered the violence of the punishment, without its consciousness. True, the body of the Lord would have been capable of feeling pain like our natures, if our bodies possessed the power of treading on the waters, and walking over the waves without weighing them down by our tread or forcing them apart by the pressure of our steps, if we could pass through solid substances, and the barred doors were no obstacle to us. But, as only the body of our Lord could be borne up by the power of His soul in the waters, could walk upon the waves, and pass through walls, how can we judge of the flesh conceived of the Holy Ghost on the analogy of a human body? That flesh, that is, that Bread, is from Heaven; that humanity is from God. He had a body to suffer, and He suffered: but He had not a nature which could feel pain. For His body possessed a unique nature of its own; it was transformed into heavenly glory on the Mount, it put fevers to flight by its touch, it gave new eyesight by its spittle.

24. It may perhaps be said, ‘We find Him giving way to weeping, to hunger and thirst: must we not suppose Him liable to all the other affections of human nature?’ But if we do not understand the mystery of His tears, hunger, and thirst, let us remember that He Who wept also raised the dead to life: that He did not weep for the death of Lazarus, but rejoiced; that He Who thirsted, gave from Himself rivers of living water. He could not be parched with thirst, if He was able to give the thirsty drink. Again, He Who hungered could condemn the tree which offered no fruit for His hunger: but how could His nature be overcome by hunger if He could strike the green tree barren by His word? And if, beside the mystery of weeping, hunger and thirst, the flesh He assumed, that is His entire manhood, was exposed to our weaknesses: even then it was not left to suffer from their indignities. His weeping was not for Himself; His thirst needed no water to quench it; His hunger no food to stay it. It is never said that the Lord ate or
drank or wept when He was hungry, or thirsty, or sorrowful. He conformed to the habits of the body to prove the reality of His own body, to satisfy the custom of human bodies by doing as our nature does. When He ate and drank, it was a concession, not to His own necessities, but to our habits.

25. For Christ had indeed a body, but unique, as befitted His origin. He did not come into existence through the passions incident to human conception: He came into the form of our body by an act of His own power. He bore our collective humanity in the form of a servant, but He was free from the sins and imperfections of the human body: that we might be in Him, because He was born of the Virgin, and yet our faults might not be in Him, because He is the source of His own humanity, born as man but not born under the defects of human conception. It is this mystery of His birth which the Apostle upholds and demonstrates, when he says, He humbled Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of a man and being formed in fashion as a man: that is, in that He took the form of a servant, He was born in the form of a man: in that He was made in the likeness of a man, and formed in fashion as a man, the appearance and reality of His body testified His humanity, yet, though He was formed in fashion as a man, He knew not what sin was. For His conception was in the likeness of our nature, not in the possession of our faults. For lest the words, He took the form of a servant, might be understood of a natural birth, the Apostle adds, made in the likeness of a man, and formed in fashion as a man. The truth of His birth is thus prevented from suggesting the defects incident to our weak natures, since the form of a servant implies the reality of His birth, and found in fashion as a man, the likeness of our nature. He was of Himself born man through the Virgin, and found in the likeness of our degenerate body of sin: as the Apostle testifies in his letter to the Romans, For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, condemned sin of sin. He was not found in the fashion of a man: but found in fashion as a man: nor was His flesh the flesh of sin, but the likeness of the flesh of sin. Thus the fashion of flesh implies the truth of His birth, and the likeness of the flesh of sin removes Him from the imperfections of human weakness. So the Man Jesus Christ as man was truly born, as Christ had no sin in His nature: for, on His human side, He was born, and could not but be a man; on His divine side, He could never cease to be Christ. Since then Jesus Christ was man, He submitted as man to a human birth: yet as Christ He was free from the infirmity of our degenerate race.

26. The Apostles’ belief prepares us for the understanding of this mystery; when it testifies that Jesus Christ was found in fashion as a man and was sent in the likeness of the flesh of sin. For being fashioned as a man, He is in the form of a servant, but not in the imperfections of a servant’s nature; and being in the likeness of the flesh of sin, the Word is indeed flesh, but is in the likeness of the flesh of sin and not the flesh of sin itself. In like manner Jesus Christ being man is indeed human, but even thus cannot be aught else but Christ, born as man by the birth of His body, but not human in defects, as He was not human in origin. The Word made flesh could not but be the flesh that He was made; yet He remained always the Word, though He was made flesh. As the Word made flesh could not vacate the nature of His Source, so by virtue of the origin of His nature He could not but remain the Word: but at the same time we must believe that the Word is that flesh which He was made; always, however, with the reserve, that
when He dwelt among us, the flesh was not the Word, but was the flesh of the Word dwelling in the flesh.

Though we have proved this, still we will see whether in the whole range of suffering, which He endured, we can anywhere detect in our Lord the weakness of bodily pain. We will put off for a time the discussion of the passages on the strength of which heresy has attributed fear to our Lord; now let us turn to the facts themselves: for His words cannot signify fear if His actions display confidence.

27. Do you suppose, heretic, that the Lord of glory feared to suffer? Why, when Peter made this error through ignorance, did He not call him ‘Satan’ and a ‘stumbling-block? Thus was Peter, who deprecated the mystery of the Passion, established in the faith by so sharp a rebuke from the lips of the gentle Christ, Whom not flesh and blood, but the Father in Heaven had revealed to him.

What phantom hope are you chasing when you deny that Christ is God, and attribute to Him fear of suffering? He afraid, Who went forth to meet the armed bands of His captors? Weakness in His body, at Whose approach the pursuers reeled and broke their ranks and fell prone, unable to endure His Majesty as He offered Himself to their chains? What weakness could enthral His body, Whose nature had such power?

28. But perhaps He feared the pain of wounds. Say then, What terror had the thrust of the nail for Him Who merely by His touch restored the ear that was cut off? You who assert the weakness of the Lord, explain this work of power at the moment when His flesh was weak and suffering. Peter drew his sword and smote: the High Priest’s servant stood there, lopped of his ear. How was the flesh of the ear restored from the bare wound by the touch of Christ? Amidst the flowing blood, and the wound left by the cleaving sword, when the body was so maimed, whence sprang forth an ear which was not there? Whence came that which did not exist before? Whence was restored that which was wanting? Did the hand, which created an ear, feel the pain of the nails? He prevented another from feeling the pain of a wound: did He feel it Himself? His touch could restore the flesh that was cut off; was He sorrowful because He feared the piercing of His own flesh? And if the body of Christ had this virtue, dare we allege infirmity in that nature, whose natural force could counteract all the natural infirmities of man?

29. But, perhaps, in their misguided and impious perversity, they infer His weakness from the fact that His soul was sorrowful unto death. It is not yet the time to blame you, heretic, for misunderstanding the passage. For the present I will only ask you, Why do you forget that when Judas went forth to betray Him, He said, Now is the Son of Man glorified? If suffering was to glorify Him, how could the fear of it have made Him sorrowful? How, unless He was so void of reason, that He feared to suffer when suffering was to glorify Him?

30. But perhaps He may be thought to have feared to the extent that He prayed that the cup might be removed from Him: Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee: remove this cup
from Me. To take the narrowest ground of argument, might you not have refuted for yourself
this dull impiety by your own reading of the words, Put up thy sword into its sheath: the cup
which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it? Could fear induce Him to pray for the
removal from Him of that which, in His zeal for the Divine Plan, He was hastening to fulfil? To
say He shrank from the suffering He desired is not consistent. You allow that He suffered
willingly: would it not be more reverent to confess that you had misunderstood this passage,
than to rush with blasphemous and headlong folly to the assertion that He prayed to escape
suffering, though you allow that He suffered willingly?

31. Yet, I suppose, you will arm yourself also for your godless contention with these words of
the Lord, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Perhaps you think that after the
disgrace of the cross, the favour of His Father's help departed from Him, and hence His cry that
He was left alone in His weakness. But if you regard the contempt, the weakness, the cross of
Christ as a disgrace, you should remember His words, Verily I say unto you, From henceforth ye
shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of
Heaven.

32. Where, pray, can you see fear in His Passion? Where weakness? Or pain? Or dishonour? Do
the godless say He feared? But He proclaimed with His own lips His willingness to suffer. Do
they maintain that He was weak? He revealed His power, when His pursuers were stricken with
panic and dared not face Him. Do they contend that He felt the pain of the wounds in His
flesh? But He shewed, when He restored the wounded flesh of the ear, that, though He was
flesh, He did not feel the pain of fleshly wounds. The hand which touched the wounded ear
belonged to His body: yet that hand created an ear out of a wound: how then can that be the
hand of a body which was subject to weakness?

33. But, they say, the cross was a dishonour to Him; yet it is because of the cross that we can
now see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, that He Who was born man of the
womb of the Virgin has returned in His Majesty with the clouds of heaven. Your irreverence
blinds you to the natural relations of cause and event: not only does the spirit of godlessness
and error, with which you are filled, hide from your understanding the mystery of faith, but the
obtuseness of heresy drags you below the level of ordinary human intelligence. For it stands to
reason that whatever we fear, we avoid: that a weak nature is a prey to terror by its very
feebleness: that whatever feels pain possesses a nature always liable to pain: that whatever
dishonours is always a degradation. On what reasonable principle, then, do you hold that our
Lord Jesus Christ feared that towards which He pressed: or awed the brave, yet trembled
Himself with weakness: or stopped the pain of wounds, yet felt the pain of His own: or was
dishonoured by the degradation of the cross, yet through the cross sat down by God on high,
and returned to His Kingdom?

34. But perhaps you think your impiety has still an opportunity left to see in the words, Father,
into Thy hands I commend My Spirits, a proof that He feared the descent into the lower world,
and even the necessity of death. But when you read these words and could not understand
them, would it not have been better to say nothing, or to pray devoutly to be shewn their
meaning, than to go astray with such barefaced assertions, too mad with your own folly to perceive the truth? Could you believe that He feared the depths of the abyss, the scorching flames, or the pit of avenging punishment, when you listen to His words to the thief on the cross, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shall thou be with Me in Paradise? Such a nature with such power could not be shut up within the confines of the nether world, nor even subjected to fear of it. When He descended to Hades, He was never absent from Paradise (just as He was always in Heaven when He was preaching on earth as the Son of Man), but promised His martyr a home there, and held out to him the transports of perfect happiness. Bodily fear cannot touch Him Who reaches indeed down as far as Hades, but by the power of His nature is present in all things everywhere. As little can the abyss of Hell and the terrors of death lay hold upon the nature which rules the world, boundless in the freedom of its spiritual power, confident of the raptures of Paradise; for the Lord Who was to descend to Hades, was also to dwell in Paradise. Separate, if you can, from His indivisible nature a part which could fear punishment: send the one part of Christ to Hades to suffer pain, the other, you must leave in Paradise to reign: for the thief says, Remember me when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom. It was the groan he heard, I suppose, when the nails pierced the hands of our Lord, which provoked in him this blessed confession of faith: he learnt the Kingdom of Christ from His weakened and stricken body! He begs that Christ will remember him when He comes in His Kingdom: you say that Christ feared as He hung dying upon the cross. The Lord promises him, To-day, shalt thou be with Me in Paradise; you would subject Christ to Hades and fear of punishment. Your faith has the opposite expectation. The thief confessed Christ in His Kingdom as He hung on the cross, and was rewarded with Paradise from the cross: you who impute to Christ the pain of punishment and the fear of death, will fail of Paradise and His Kingdom.

35. We have now seen the power that lay in the acts and words of Christ. We have incontestably proved that His body did not share the infirmity of a natural body, because its power could expel the infirmities of the body that when He suffered, suffering laid hold of His body, but did not inflict upon it the nature of pain: and this because, though the form of our body was in the Lord, yet He by virtue of His origin was not in the body of our weakness and imperfection. He was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin, who performed the office of her sex, but did not receive the seed of His conception from man. She brought forth a body, but one conceived of the Holy Ghost; a body possessing inherent reality, but with no infirmity in its nature. That body was truly and indeed body, because it was born of the Virgin: but it was above the weakness of our body, because it had its beginning in a spiritual conception.

36. But even now that we have proved what was the faith of the Apostle, the heretics think to meet it by the text, My soul is sorrowful even. unto death. These words, they say, prove the consciousness of natural infirmity which made Christ begin to be sorrowful. Now, first, I appeal to common intelligence: what do we mean by sorrowful unto death? It cannot signify the same as ‘to be sorrowful because of death:’ for where there is sorrow because of death, it is the death that is the cause of the sadness. But a sadness even to death implies that death is the finish, not the cause, of the sadness. If then He was sorrowful even to death, not because of death, we must enquire, whence came His sadness? He was sorrowful, not for a certain time,
or for a period which human ignorance could not determine, but even unto death. So far from His sadness being caused by His death, it was removed by it.

37. That we may understand what was the cause of His sadness, let us see what precedes and follows this confession of sadness: for in the Passover supper our Lord completely signified the whole mystery of His Passion and our faith. After He had said that they should all be offended in Him, but promised that He would go before them into Galilee, Peter protested that though all the rest should be offended, he would remain faithful and not be offended. But the Lord knowing by His Divine Nature what should come to pass, answered that Peter would deny Him thrice: that we might know from Peter how the others were offended, since even he lapsed into so great peril to his faith by the triple denial. After that, He took Peter, James and John, chosen, the first two to be His martyrs, John to be strengthened for the proclamation of the Gospel, and declared that He was sorrowful unto death. Then He went before, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. He prays that the cup may pass from Him, when it was certainly already before Him: for even then was being fulfilled that pouting forth of His blood of the New Testament for the sins of many. He does not pray that it may not be with Him; but that it may pass away from Him. Then He prays that His will may not be done, and wills that what He wishes to be effected, may not be granted Him. For He says, Yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt: signifying by His spontaneous prayer for the cup’s removal His fellowship with human anxiety, yet associating Himself with the decree of the Will which He shares inseparably with the Father. To shew, moreover, that He does not pray for Himself, and that He seeks only a conditional fulfilment of what He desires and prays for, He prefaces the whole of this request with the words, My Father, if it is possible. Is there anything for the Father the possibility of which is uncertain? But if nothing is impossible to the Father, we can see on what depends this condition, if it is possible: for this prayer is immediately followed by the words, And He came to His disciples and findeth sleeping, and saith to Peter, Could ye not watch one hour with Me? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: for the spirit indeed is willing, but the fresh is weak. Is the cause of this sadness and this prayer any longer doubtful? He bids them watch and pray with Him for this purpose, that they may not enter into temptation; for the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. They were under the promise made in the constancy of faithful souls not to be offended, yet, through weakness of the flesh, they were to be offended. It is not, therefore, for Himself that He is sorrowful and prays: it is for those whom He exhorts to watchfulness and prayer, lest He cup of suffering should be their lot: lest that cup which He prays may pass away from Him, should abide with them.

38. And the reason He prayed that the cup might be removed from Him, if that were possible, was that, though with God nothing is impossible, as Christ Himself says, Father, all things are possible to Thee, yet for man it is, impossible to withstand the fear of suffering, and only by trial can faith be proved. Wherefore, as Man He prays for men that the cup may pass away, but as God from God, His will is in unison with the Father’s effectual will. He teaches what He meant by If it is possible, in His words to Peter Lo, Satan hath sought you that He might sift you as wheat: but f have prayed for thee that thy faith may not fail. The cup of the Lord’s Passion was to be a trial for there all, and He prays the Father for Peter that his faith may not fail: that
when he denied through weakness, at least he might not fail t of penitential sorrow, for repentance would mean that faith survived.

39. The Lord was sorrowful then unto death s because in presence of the death, the earthquake, the darkened day, the rent veil, the opened graves, and the resurrection of the dead, the faith of the disciples would need to be established which had been so shaken by the terror of the night arrest, the scourging, the striking, the spitting upon, the crown of thorns, the bearing of the cross, and all the insults of the Passion, but most of all by the condemnation to the accursed cross. Knowing that all this would be at an end after His Passion, He was sad unto death. He knew, too, that the cup could not pass away unless He drank it, for He said, My Father, this cup cannot pass from Me unless I drink it: Thy will be done: that is, with the completion of His Passion, the fear of the cup would pass away which could not pass away unless He drank it: the end of that fear would follow only when His Passion was completed and terror destroyed, because after His death, the stumbling-block of the disciples’ weakness would be removed by the glory of His power.

40. Although by His words, Thy will be done, He surrendered the Apostles to the decision of His Father’s will, in regard to the offence of the cup, that is, of His Passion, still He repeated His prayer a second and a third time. After that He said, Sleep on now, and take your rest. It is not without the consciousness of some secret reason that He Who had reproached them for their sleep, now bade them sleep on, add take their rest. Luke is thought to have given us the meaning of this command. After He had told us how Satan had sought to sift the Apostles as it were wheat, and how the Lord had been entreated that the faith of Peter might not fails, he adds that the Lord prayed earnestly, and then that an angel stood by Him comforting Him, and as the angel stood by Him, He prayed the more earnestly, so that the sweat poured from His hotly in drops of blood. The Angel was sent, then, to watch over the Apostles, and when the Lord was comforted by him, so that He no longer sorrowed for them, He said, without fear of sadness, Sleep on now, and take your rest. Matthew and Mark are silent about the angel, and the request of the devil: but after the sorrowfulness of His soul, the reproach of the sleepers, and the prayer that the cup may be taken away, there must be some good reason for the command to the sleepers which follows; unless we assume that He Who was about to leave them, and Himself had received comfort from the Angel sent to Him, meant to abandon them to their sleep, soon to be arrested and kept in durance.

41. We must not indeed pass over the fact hat in many manuscripts, both Latin and Greek, nothing is said of the angel’s coming or the Bloody Sweat. But while we suspend judgment, whether this is an omission, where it is wanting, or an interpolation, where it is found (for the discordance of the copies leaves the question uncertain), let not the heretics encourage themselves that herein lies a confirmation of His weakness, that He needed the help and comfort of an angel. Let them remember the Creator of the angels needs not the support of His creatures. Moreover His comforting must be explained in the same way as His sorrow. He was sorrowful for us, that is, on our account; He must also have been comforted for us, that is, on our account. If He sorrowed concerning us, He was comforted concerning us. The object of His comfort is the saint as that of His sadness. Nor let any one dare to impute the Sweat to a
weakness, for it is contrary to nature to sweat blood. It was no infirmity, for His power reversed the law of nature. The bloody sweat does not for one moment support the heresy of weakness, while it establishes against the heresy which invents an apparent body, the reality all His body. Since, then, His fear was concerning us, and His prayer on our behalf, we are forced to the conclusion that all this happened on our account, for whom He feared, and for whom He prayed.

42. Again the Gospels fill up what is lacking in one another: we learn some things from one, some from another, and so on, because all are the proclamation of the same spirit. Thus John, who especially brings out the working of spiritual causes in the Gospel, preserves this prayer of the Lord for the Apostles, which all the others passed over: how He prayed, namely, Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name. ... while I was them I kept them in Thy Name: those whom Thou gavest Me I have kept. That prayer was not for Himself but for His Apostles; nor was He sorrowful for Himself, since He bids them pray that they be not tempted; nor is the angel sent to Him, for He could summon down from Heaven, if He would, twelve thousand angels; nor did He fear because of death when He was troubled unto death. Again, He does not pray that the cup may pass over Himself, but that it may pass away from Himself, though before it could pass away He must have drunk it. But, further, ‘to pass away’ does not mean merely ‘to leave the place,’ but ‘not to exist any more at all’: which is shewn in the language of the Gospels and Epistles: for example, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not perish: also the Apostle says, Behold the old things are passed away; they are become new. And again, The fashion of this world shall pass away. The cup, therefore, of which He prays to the Father, cannot pass away unless it be drunk; and when He prays, He prays for those whom He preserved, so long as He was with them, whom He now hands over to the Father to preserve. Now that He is about to accomplish the mystery of death He begs the Father to guard them. The presence of the angel who was sent to Him (if this explanation be true) is not of doubtful significance. Jesus shewed His certainty that the prayer was answered when, at its close, He bade the disciples sleep on. The effect of this prayer and the security which prompted the command, ‘sleep on,’ is noticed by the Evangelist in the course of the Passion, when he says of the Apostles just before they escaped from the hands of the pursuers, That the word might be fulfilled which He had spoken, Of those whom Thou hast given Me I lost not one of them. He fulfils Himself the petition of His prayer, and they are all safe; but He asks that those whom He has preserved the Father will now preserve in His own Name. And they are preserved: the faith of Peter does not fail: it cowered, but repentance followed immediately.

43. Combine the Lord’s prayer in John, the request of the devil in Luke, the sorrowfulness unto death, and the protest against sleep, followed by the command, Sleep on, in Matthew and Mark, and all difficulty disappears. The prayer in John, in which He commends the Apostles to His Father, explains the cause of His sorrowfulness, and the prayer that the cup may pass away. It is not from Himself that the Lord prays the suffering may be taken away. He beseeches the Father to preserve the disciples during His coming passion. In the same way, the prayer against Satan in St. Luke explains the confidence with which He permitted the sleep He had just forbidden.
44. There was, then, no place for human anxiety and trepidation in that nature, which was more than human. It was superior to the ills of earthly flesh; a body not sprung from earthly elements, although His origin as Son of Man was due to the mystery of the conception by the Holy Ghost. The power of the Most High imparted its power to the booty which the Virgin bare from the conception of the Holy Ghost. The animated body derives its conscious existence from association with a soul, which is diffused throughout it, and quickens it to perceive pains inflicted from without. Thus the soul, warned by the happy glow of its own heavenly faith and hope, soars above its own origin in the beginnings of an earthly body, and raises that body to union with itself in thought and spirit, so that it ceases to feel the suffering of that which, all the while, it suffers. Why need we then say more about the nature of the Lord’s body, that of the Son of Man Who came down from heaven? Even earthly bodies can sometimes be made indifferent to the natural necessities of pain and fear.

45. Did the Jewish children fear the flames blazing up with the fuel cast upon them in the fiery furnace at Babylon? Did the terror of that terrible fire prevail over their nature, conceived though it was like ours? Did they feel pain, when the flames surrounded them? Perhaps, however, you may say they felt no pain, because they were not burnt: the flames were deprived of their burning nature. To be sure it is natural to the body to fear burning, and to be burnt by fire. But through the spirit of faith their earthly bodies (that is, bodies which had their origin according to the principles of natural birth) could neither be burnt nor made afraid. What, therefore, in the case of men was a violation of the order of nature, produced by faith in God, cannot be judged in God’s case natural, but as an activity of the Spirit commencing with His earthly origin. The children were bound in the midst of the fire; they had no fear as they mounted the blazing pile: they felt not the flame as they prayed: though in the midst of the furnace, they could not be burnt. Both the fire and their bodies lost their proper natures; the one did not burn, the others were not burnt. Yet in all other respects, both fire and bodies retained their natures: for the bystanders were consumed, and the ministers of punishment were themselves punished. Impious heretic you will have it that Christ suffered pain from the piercing of the nails, that He felt the bitterness of the wound, when they were driven through His hands: why, pray, did not the children fear the flames? Why did they suffer no pain? What was the nature in their bodies, which overcame that of fire? In the zeal of their faith and the glory of a blessed martyrdora they forgot to fear the terrible; should Christ be sorrowful from fear of the cross, Christ, Who even if He had been conceived with our sinful origin, would have been still God upon the cross, Who was to judge the world and reign for ever and ever? Could He forget such a reward, and tremble with the anxiety of dishonourable fear?

46. Daniel, whose meat was the scanty portion of a prophet, did not fear the lions’ den. The Apostles rejoiced in suffering and death for the Name of Christ. To Paul his sacrifice was the crown of righteousness. The Martyrs sang hymns as they offered their necks to the executioner, and climbed with psalms the blazing logs piled for them. The consciousness of faith takes away the weakness of nature, transforms the bodily senses that they feel no pain, and so the body is strengthened by the fixed purpose of the soul, and feels nothing except the impulse of its enthusiasm. The suffering which the mind despises in its desire of glory, the body does not feel, so long as the soul invigorates it. It is, then, a natural effect in man, that the zeal
of the soul glowing for glory should make him unconscious of suffering, heedless of wounds, and regardless of death. But Jesus Christ the Lord of glory, the hem of Whose garment can heal, Whose spittle and word can create; for the than with the withered hand at His command stretched it forth whole, he who was born blind felt no more the defect of his birth, and the smitten ear was made sound as the other; dare we think of His pierced body in that pain and weakness, from which the spirit of faith in Him rescued the glorious and blessed Martyrs?

47. The Only-begotten God, then, suffered in His person the attacks of all the infirmities to which we are subject; but He suffered them in the power of His own nature, just as He was born in the power of His own nature, for at His birth He did not lose His omnipotent nature by being born. Though born under human conditions, He was not so conceived: His birth was surrounded by human circumstances, but His origin went beyond them. He suffered then in His body alter the manner of our infirm body, yet bore the sufferings of our body in the power of His own body. To this article of our faith the prophet bears witness when he says, He beareth our sins and grieveth for us: and we esteemed Him stricken, smitten, and afflicted: He was wounded for our transgressions and made weak for our sins. It is then a mistaken opinion of human judgment, which thinks He felt pain because He suffered. He bore our sins, that is, He assumed our body of sin, but was Himself sinless. He was sent in the likeness of the flesh of sin, bearing sin indeed in His flesh but our sin. So too He felt pain for us, but not with our senses; He was found in fashion as a man, with a body which could feel pain, but His nature could not feel pain; for, though His fashion was that of a man, His origin was not human, but He was born by conception of the Holy Ghost.

For the reasons mentioned, He was esteemed ‘stricken, smitten and afflicted.’ He took the form of a servant: and ‘man born of a Virgin’ conveys to us the idea of One Whose nature felt pain when He suffered. But though He was wounded it was ‘for our transgressions.’ The wound was not the wound of His own transgressions: the suffering not a suffering for Himself. He was not born man for His own sake, nor did He transgress in His own action. The Apostle explains the principle of the Divine Plan when he says, We beseech you through Christ to be reconciled to God. Him, Who knew no sin, He made to be sin on our behalf. To condemn sin through sin in the flesh, He Who knew no sin was Himself made sin; that is, by means of the flesh to condemn sin in the flesh, He became flesh on our behalf but knew not flesh: and therefore was wounded because of our transgressions.

48. Again, the Apostle knows nothing in Christ about fear of pain. When He wishes to speak of the dispensation of the Passion, He includes it in the mystery of Christ’s Divinity. Forgiving us all our trespasses, blotting out the band written in ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us: taking it away, and nailing it to the cross; stripping off from Himself His flesh, He made a shew of principalities and towers openly triumphing over them in Himself. Was that the power, think you, to yield to the wound of the nail, to wince under the piercing blow, to convert itself into a nature that can feel pain? Yet the Apostle, who speaks as the mouthpiece of Christ, relating the work of our salvation through the Lord, describes the death of Christ as ‘stripping off from Himself His flesh, boldly putting to shame the powers and triumphing over them in Himself.’ If His passion was a necessity of nature and not the free gift of your salvation:
if the cross was merely the suffering of wounds, and not the fixing upon Himself of the decree of death made out against you: if His dying was a violence done by death, and not the stripping off of the flesh by the power of God: lastly, if His death itself was anything but a dishonouring of powers, an act of boldness, a triumph: then ascribe to Him infirmity, because He was therein subject to necessity and nature, to force, to If ear and disgrace. But if it is the exact opposite in the mystery of the Passion, as it was preached to us, who, pray, can be so senseless as to repudiate the faith taught by the Apostles, to reverse all feelings of religion, to distort into the dishonourable charge of natural weakness, what was an act of free-will, a mystery, a display of power and boldness, a triumph? And what a triumph it was, when He offered Himself to those who sought to crucify Him, and they could not endure His presence: when He stood under sentence of death, Who shortly was to sit on the right hand of power: when He prayed for His persecutors while the nails were driven through Him: when He completed the mystery as He drained the draught of vinegar; when He was numbered among the transgressors and meanwhile granted Paradise: that when He was lifted on the tree, the earth quaked: when He hung on the cross, sun and day were put to flight: that He left His own body, yet cubed life back to the bodies of others: was buffed a corpse and rose again God: as man suffered all weaknesses for our sakes, as God triumphed in them all.

49. There is still, the heretics say, another serious and far reaching confession of weakness, all the more so because it is in the mouth of the Lord Himself, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? They construe this into the expression of a bitter complaint, that He was deserted and given over to weakness. But what a violent interpretation of an irreligious mind! how repugnant to the whole tenor of our Lord’s words! He hastened to the death, which was to glorify Him, and after which He was to sit on the right hand of power; with all those blessed expectations could He fear death, and therefore complain that His God had betrayed Him to its necessity, when it was the entrance to eternal blessedness?

50. Further their heretical ingenuity presses on in the path prepared by their own godlessness, even to the entire absorption of God the Word into the human soul, and consequent denial that Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, was the same as the Son of God. So either God the Word ceased to be Himself while He performed the function of a soul in giving life to a body, or the man who was born was not the Christ at all, but the Word dwelt in him, as the Spirit dwelt in the prophets.

These absurd and perverse errors have grown in boldness and godlessness till they assert that Jesus Christ was not Christ until He was born of Mary. He Who was born was not a pre-existent Being, but began at that moment to exist.

Hence follows also the error that God the Word, as it were some part of the Divine power extending itself in unbroken continuation, dwelt within that man who received from Mary the beginning of his being, and endowed him with the power of Divine working: though that man lived and moved by the nature of his own soul.

51. Through this subtle and mischievous doctrine they are drawn into the error that God the
Word became soul to the body, His nature by self-humiliation working the change upon itself, and thus the Word ceased to be God; or else, that the Man Jesus, in the poverty and remoteness from God of His nature, was animated only by the life and motion of His own human soul, wherein the Word of God, that is, as it were, the might of His uttered voice, resided. Thus the way is opened for all manner of irreverent theorising: the sum of which is, either that God the Word was merged in the soul and ceased to be God: or that Christ had no existence before His birth from Mary, since Jesus Christ, a mere man of ordinary body and soul, began to exist only at His human birth and was raised to the level of the Power, which worked within Him, by the extraneous force of the Divine Word extending itself into Him. Then when God the Word, after this extension, was withdrawn, He cried, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? or at least when the divine nature of the Word once more gave place within Him to a human soul, He Who had hitherto relied on His Father’s help, now separated from it, and abandoned to death, bemoaned His solitude and chid His deserter. Thus in every way arises a deadly danger of error in belief, whether it be thought that the cry of complaint denotes a weakness of nature in God the Word, or that God the Word was not pre-existent because the birth of Jesus Christ from Mary was the beginning of His being.

52. Amid these irreverent and ill-grounded theories the faith of the Church, inspired by the teaching of the Apostles, has recognised a birth of Christ, but no beginning. It knows of the dispensation, but of no division: it refuses to make a separation in Jesus Christ; whereby Jesus is one and Christ another; nor does it distinguish the Son of Man from the Son of God, lest perhaps the Son of God be not regarded as Son of Man also. It does not absorb the Son of God in the Son of Man; nor does it by a tripartite belief tear asunder Christ, Whose coat woven from the top throughout was not parted, dividing Jesus Christ into the Word, a body and a soul; nor, on the other hand, does it absorb the Word in body and soul. To it He is perfectly God the Word, and perfectly Christ the Man. To this alone we hold fast in the mystery of our confession, namely, the faith that Christ is none other than Jesus, and the doctrine that Jesus is none other than Christ.

53. I am not ignorant how much the grandeur of the divine mystery baffles our weak understanding, so that language can scarcely express it, or reason define it, or thought even embrace it. The Apostle, knowing that the most difficult task for an earthly nature is to apprehend, unaided, God’s mode of action (for then our judgment were keener to discern than God is mighty to effect), writes to his true son according to the faith, who had received the Holy Scripture from his childhood, As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, the which minister questionings, rattler than the edification of God which is in faith. He bids him forbear to handle wordy genealogies and fables, which minister endless questionings. The edification of God, he says, is in faith: he limits human reverence to the faithful worship of the Almighty, and does not suffer our weakness to strain itself in the attempt to see what only dazzles the eye. If we look at the brightness of the sun, the sight is strained and weakened: and sometimes when we scrutinise with too curious gaze the source of the shining light, the eyes lose their natural power, and the sense of sight is even destroyed. Thus it happens that through trying to see too much we see nothing at all.
What must we then expect in the case of God, the Sun of Righteousness? Will not foolishness be their reward, who would be over wise? Will not dull and brainless stupor usurp the place of the burning light of intelligence? A lower nature cannot understand the principle of a higher: nor can Heaven’s mode of thought be revealed to human conception, for whatever is within the range of a limited consciousness, is itself limited. The divine power exceeds therefore the capacity of the human mind. If the limited strains itself to reach so far, it becomes even feeblener than before. It loses what certainty it had: instead of seeing heavenly things it is only blinded by them. No mind can fully comprehend the divine: it punishes the obstinacy of the curious by depriving them of their power. Would we look at the sun we must remove as much of his brilliancy as we need, in order to see him: if not, by expecting too much, we fall short of the possible. In the same way we can only hope to understand the purposes of Heaven, so far as is permitted. We must expect only what He grants to our apprehension: if we attempt to go beyond the limit of His indulgence, it is withdrawn altogether. There is that in God which we can perceive: it is visible to all if we are content with the possible. Just as with the sun we can see something, if we are content to see what can be seen, but if we strain beyond the possible we lose all: so is it with the nature of God. There is that which we can understand if we are content with understanding what we can: but aim beyond your powers and you will lose even the power of attaining what was within your reach.

54. The mystery of that other timeless birth I will not yet touch upon: its treatment demands an ampler space than this. For the present I will speak of the Incarnation only. Tell me, I pray, ye who pry into secrets of Heaven, the mystery of Christ born of a Virgin and His nature; whence will you explain that He was conceived and born of a Virgin? What was the physical cause of His origin according to your disputations? How was He formed within His mother’s womb? Whence His body and His humanity?

And lastly, what does it mean that the Son of Man descended from heaven Who remained in heaven? It is not possible by the laws of bodies for the same object to remain and to descend: the one is the change of downward motion; the other the stillness of being at rest. The Infant wails but is in Heaven: the Boy grows but remains ever the immeasurable God. By what perception of human understanding can we comprehend that He ascended where He was before, and He descended Who remained in heaven? The Lord says, What if ye should behold the Son of Man ascending thither where He was before? The Son of Man ascends where He was before: can sense apprehend this? The Son of Man descends from heaven, Who is in heaven: can reason cope with this? The Word was made flesh: can words express this? The Word becomes flesh, that is, God becomes Man: the Man is in heaven: the God is from heaven. He ascends Who descended: but He descends and yet does not descend. He is as He ever was, yet He was not ever what He is. We pass in review the causes, but we cannot explain the manner: we perceive the manner, and we cannot understand the causes. Yet if we understand Christ Jesus even thus, we shall know Him: if we seek to understand Him further we shall not know Him at all.

55. Again, how great a mystery of word and act it is that Christ wept, that His eyes filled with tears from the anguish of His mind. Whence came this defect in His soul that sorrow should
wring tears from His body? What bitter fate, what unendurable pain, could move to a flood of
tears the Son of Man Who descended from heaven? Again, what was it in Him which wept?
God the Word? or His human soul? For though weeping is a bodily function, the body is but a
servant; tears are, as it were, the sweat of the agonised soul. Again, what was the cause of His
weeping? Did He owe to Jerusalem the debt of His tears, Jerusalem, the godless parricide,
whom no suffering could requite for the slaughter of Apostles and Prophets, and the murder of
her Lord Himself? He might weep for the disasters and death which befall mankind: but could
He grieve for the fall of that doomed and desperate race? What, I ask, was this mystery of
weeping? His soul wept for sorrow; was not it the soul which sent forth the Prophets? Which
would so often have gathered the chickens together under the shadow of His wings? But God
the Word cannot grieve, nor can the Spirit weep: nor could His soul possibly do anything before
the body existed. Yet we cannot doubt that Jesus Christ truly wept.

56. No less real were the tears He shed for Lazarus. The first question here is, What was there
to weep for in the case of Lazarus? Not his death, for that was not unto death, but for the glory
of God: for the Lord says, That sickness is not unto death, but far the glory of God, that the Son
of God may be honoured through him. The death which was the cause of God’s being glorified
could not bring sorrow and tears. Nor was there any occasion for tears in His absence from
Lazarus at the time of his death. He says plainly, Lazarus is dead, and I rejoice for your sakes
that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe. His absence then, which aided the
Apostles’ belief, was not the cause of His sorrow: for with the knowledge of Divine
omniscience, He declared the death of the sick man from afar. We can find, then, no necessity
for tears, yet He wept. And again I ask, To whom must we ascribe the weeping? To God, or the
soul, or the body? The body, of itself, has no tears except those it sheds at the command of the
sorrowing soul. Far less can God have wept, for He was to be glorified in Lazarus. Nor is it
reason to say His soul recalled Lazarus from the tomb: can a soul linked to a body, by the
power of its command, call another soul back to the dead hotly from which it has departed?
Can He grieve Who is about to be glorified? Can He weep Who is about to restore the dead to
life? Tears are not for Him Who is about to give life, or grief for Him Who is about to receive
glory. Yet He Who wept and grieved was also the Giver of life.

57. If there are many points which we treat scantily it is not because we have nothing to say, or
do not know what has already been said; our purpose is, by abstaining from too laborious a
process of argument, to render the results as attractive as possible to the reader. We know the
deeds and words of our Lord, yet we know them not: we are not ignorant of them, yet they
cannot be understood. The facts are real, but the power behind them is a mystery. We will
prove this from His own words, For thus reason doth the Father love Me, because I lay down
My life that I may take it up again. No one taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have
power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again. This commandment received I from
the Father. He lays down His life of Himself, but I ask who lays it down? We confess without
hesitation, that Christ is God the Word: but on the other hand, we know that the Son of Man
was composed of a soul and a body: compare the angel’s words to Joseph, Arise and take the
child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead who sought the soul of
the child. Whose soul is it? His body’s, or God’s? If His body’s, what power has the body to lay
down the soul, when it is only by the working of the soul that it is quickened into life? Again, how could the body, which apart from the soul is inert and dead, receive a command from the Father? But if, on the other hand, any man suppose that God the Word laid aside His soul, that He might take it up again, he must prove that God the Word died, that is, remained without life and feeling like a dead body, and took up His soul again to be quickened once more into life by it.

58. But, further, no one who is endued with reason can impute to God a soul; though it is written in many places that the soul of God hates sabbaths and new moons: and also that it delights in certain things. But this is merely a conventional expression to be understood in the same way as when God is spoken of as possessing body, with hands, and eyes, and fingers, and arms, and heart. As the Lord said, A Spirit hath not flesh and bones: He then Who is, and changeth not, cannot have the limbs and parts of a tangible body. He is a simple and blessed nature, a single, complete, all-embracing Whole. God is therefore not quickened into life, like bodies, by the action of an indwelling soul, but is Himself His own life.

59. How does He then lay down His soul, or take it up again? What is the meaning of this command He received? God could not lay it down that is, die, or take it up again, that is, come to life. But neither did the body receive the command to take it up again; it could not do so of itself, for He said of the Temple of His body, Destroy this temple and after three days I will raise it up. Thus it is God Who raises up the temple of His body. And Who lays down His soul to take it again? The body does not take it up again of itself: it is raised up by God. That which is raised up again must have been dead, and that which is living does not lay down its soul. God then was neither dead nor buried: and yet He said, In that she has poured this ointment upon My body she did it for My burial. In that it was poured upon His body it was done for His burial: but the His is not the same as Him. It is quite another use of the pronoun when we say, ‘it was done for the burial of Him,’ and when we say, ‘His body was anointed:’ nor is the sense the same in ‘His body was buried,’ and ‘He was buried.’

60. To grasp this divine mystery we must see the God in Him without ignoring the Man; and the Man without ignoring the God. We must not divide Jesus Christ, for the Word was made flesh: yet we must not call Him buried, though we know He raised Himself again: must not doubt His resurrection, though we dare not deny He was buried. Jesus Christ was buried, for He died: He died, and even cried out at the moment of death, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Yet He, Who uttered these words, said also: Verily I say unto thee, This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise, and He Who promised Paradise to the thief cried aloud, Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit; and having said this He gave up the Ghost.

61. Ye who trisect Christ into the Word, the soul and the body, or degrade the whole Christ, even God the Word, into a single member of our race, unfold to us this mystery of great godliness which was manifested in the flesh. What Spirit did Christ give up? Who commended His Spirit into the hands of His Father? Who was to be in Paradise that same day? Who complained that He was deserted of God? The cry of the deserted betokens the weakness of the dying: the promise of Paradise the sovereign power of the living God. To commend His
Spirit denoted confidence: to give up His Spirit implied His departure by death. Who then, I demand, was it Who died? Surely He Who gave up His Spirit? but Who gave up His Spirit? Certainly He Who commended it to His Father. And if He Who commended His Spirit is the same as He Who gave it up and died, was it the body which commended its soul, or God Who commended the body’s soul? I say ‘soul,’ because there is no doubt it is frequently synonymous with ‘spirit,’ as might be gathered merely from the language here: Jesus gave up His ‘Spirit’ when He was on the point of death. If, therefore, you hold the conviction that the body commended the soul, that the perishable commended the living, the corruptible the eternal, that which was to be raised again, that which abides unchanged, then, since He Who commended His Spirit to the Father was also to be in Paradise with the thief that same day, I would fain know if, while the sepulchre received Him, He was abiding in heaven, or if He was abiding in heaven, when He cried out that God had deserted Him.

62. It is one and the same Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, Who expresses Himself in all these utterances, Who is man when He says He is abandoned to death: yet while man still rules in Paradise as God, and though reigning in Paradise, as Son of God commends His Spirit to His Father, as Son of Man gives up to death the Spirit He commended to the Father. Why do we then view as a disgrace that which is a mystery? We see Him complaining that He is left to die, because He is Man: we see Him, as He dies, declaring that He reigned in Paradise, because He is God. Why should we harp, to support our irreverence, on what He said to make us understand His death, and keep back what He proclaimed to demonstrate His immortality? The words and the voice are equally His, when He complains of desertion, and when He declares His rule: by what method of heretical logic do we split up our belief and deny that He Who died was at the same time He Who rules? Did He not testify both equally of Himself, when He commended His Spirit, and when He gave it up? But if He is the same, Who commended His Spirit, and gave it up, if He dies when ruling and rides when dead: then the mystery of the Son of God and Son of Man means that He is One, Who dying reigns, and reigning dies.

63. Stand aside then, all godless unbelievers, for whom the divine mystery is too great, who do not know that Christ wept not for Himself but for us, to prove the reality of His assumed manhood by yielding to the emotion common to humanity: who do not perceive that Christ died not for Himself, but for our life, to renew human life by the death of the deathless God: who cannot reconcile the complaint of the deserted with the confidence of the Ruler: who would teach us that because He reigns as God and complains that He is dying, we have here a dead man and the reigning God. For He Who dies is none other than He Who reigns, He Who commends His spirit than He Who gives it up: He Who was buried, rose again: ascending or descending He is altogether one.

64. Listen to the teaching of the Apostle and see in it a faith instructed not by the understanding of the flesh but by the gift of the Spirit. The Greeks seek after wisdom, he says, and the Jews ask for a sign; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ Jesus, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Is Christ divided here so that Jesus the crucified is one, and Christ, the power and wisdom of God, another? This is to the Jews a stumbling-block
and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but to us Christ Jesus is the power of God, and the wisdom of God: wisdom, however, not known of the world, nor understood by a secular philosophy. Hear the same blessed Apostle when he declares that it has not been understood, We speak the wisdom of God, which hath been hidden in a mystery, which God foreordained before the world for our glory: which none of the rulers of this world has known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. Does not the Apostle know that this wisdom of God is hidden in a mystery, and cannot be known of the rulers of this world? Does he divide Christ into a Lord of Glory and a crucified Jesus? Nay, rather, he contradicts this most foolish and impious idea with the words, For I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

65. The Apostle knew nothing else, and he determined to know nothing else: we men of feebler wit, and feebler faith, split up, divide and double Jesus Christ, constituting ourselves judges of the unknown, and blaspheming the hidden mystery. For us Christ crucified is one, Christ the wisdom of God another: Christ Who was buried different from Christ Who descended from Heaven: the Son of Man not at the same time also Son of God. We teach that which we do not understand: we seek to refute that which we cannot grasp. We men improve upon the revelation of God: we are not content to say with the Apostle, Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus, that died, yea, rather, that was raised from the dead, Who is at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession far us. Is He Who intercedes for us other than He Who is at the right hand of God? Is not He Who is at the right hand of God the very same Who rose again? Is He Who rose again other than He Who died? He Who died than He Who condemns us? Lastly, is not He Who condemns us also God Who justifies us? Distinguish, if you can, Christ our accuser from God our defender, Christ Who died from Christ Who condemns, Christ sitting at the right hand of God and praying for us from Christ Who died. Whether, therefore, dead or buried, descended into Hades or ascended into Heaven, all is one and the same Christ: as the Apostle says, Now this ‘He ascended’ what is it, but that He also descended to the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens, that He may fill all things. How far then shall we push our babbling ignorance and blasphemy, professing to explain what is hidden in the mystery of God? He that descended is the same also that ascended. Can we longer doubt that the Man Christ Jesus rose from the dead, ascended above the heavens and is at the right hand of God? We cannot say His body descended into Hades, which lay in the grave. If then He Who descended is one with Him, Who ascended; if His body did not go down into Hades, yet really arose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, what remains, except to believe in the secret mystery, which is hidden from the world and the rulers of this age, and to confess that, ascending or descending, He is but One, one Jesus Christ for us, Son of God and Son of Man, God the Word and Man in the flesh, Who suffered, died, was buried, rose again, was received into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God: Who possesses in His one single self, according to the Divine Plan and nature, in the form of God and in the form of a servant, the Human and Divine without separation or division.

66. So the Apostle moulding our ignorant and haphazard ideas into conformity with truth says of this mystery of the faith, For He was crucified through weakness but He liveth through the
power of God. Preaching the Son of Man and Son of God, Man through the Divine Plan, God through His eternal nature, he says, that He Who was crucified through weakness is He Who lives through the power of God. His weakness arises from the form of a servant, His nature remains because of the form of God. He took the form of a servant, though He was in form of God: therefore there can be no doubt as to the mystery according to which He both suffered and lived. There existed in Him both weakness to suffer, and power of God to give life: and hence He Who suffered and lived cannot be more than One, or other than Himself.

67. The Only-begotten God suffered indeed all that men can suffer: but let us express ourselves in the words anti faith of the Apostle. He says, For I delivered unto you first of all how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. This is no unsupported statement of his own, which might lead to error, but a warning to us to confess that Christ died and rose after a real manner, not a nominal, since the fact is certified by the full weight of Scripture authority; and that we must understand His death in that exact sense in which Scripture declares it. In his regard for the perplexities and scruples of the weak and sensitive believer, he adds these solemn concluding words, according to the Scriptures, to his proclamation of the death and the resurrection. He would not have us grow weaker, driven about by every wind of vain doctrine, or vexed by empty subtleties and false doubts: he would summon faith to return, before it were shipwrecked, to the haven of piety, believing and confessing the death and the resurrection. He used His power as God against the tree which bore no fruit, when He had no loath Christ suffered: but according to the Scriptures, He was about to sit at the right hand of Power. He complained that He was abandoned to die: but according to the Scriptures, at the same moment He received in His kingdom in Paradise the thief who confessed Him. He died: but according to the Scriptures, He rose again and sits at the right hand of God. In the belief of this mystery there is life: this confession resists all attack.

68. The Apostle is careful to leave no room for doubt: we cannot say, “Christ was born, suffered, was dead and buried, and rose again but how, by what power, by what division of parts of Himself? Who wept? Who rejoiced? Who complained? Who descended? and Who ascended?” He rests the merits of faith entirely on the confession of unquestioning reverence. The righteousness, he says, which is of faith saith thus, Say not in thy heart, Who hath ascended into heaven, that is, to bring Christ down: or Who hath descended into the abyss: that is, to bring Christ up from the dead? But what saith the Scripture? Thy word is nigh, in thy mouth; that is, the word of faith which we preach: because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God hath raised Him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Faith perfects the righteous man: as it is written, Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Did Abraham impugn
the word of God, when he was promised the inheritance of the Gentiles, and an abiding posterity as many as the sand or the stars for multitude? To the reverent faith, which trusts implicitly on the omnipotence of God, the limits of human weakness are no barrier. Despising all that is feeble and earthly in itself, it believes the divine promise, even though it exceeds the possibilities of human nature. It knows that the laws which govern man are no hindrance to the power of God, Who is as bountiful in the performance as He is gracious in the promise. Nothing is more righteous than Faith. For as in human conduct it is equity and self-restraint that receive our approval, so in the case of God, what is more righteous for man than to ascribe omnipotence to Him, Whose Power He perceives to be without limits?

69. The Apostle then looking in us for the righteousness which is of Faith, cuts at the root of incredulous doubt and godless unbelief. He forbids us to admit into our hearts the cares of anxious thought, and points to the authority of the Prophet’s words, Say not in thy heart, Who hath ascended into heaven? Then He completes the thought of the Prophet’s words with the addition, That is to bring Christ down. The perception of the human mind cannot attain to the knowledge of the divine: but neither can a reverent faith doubt the works of God. Christ needed no human help, that any one should ascend into heaven to bring Him down from His blessed Home to His earthly body. It was no external force which drove Him down to the earth. We must believe that He came, even as He did come: it is true religion to confess Jesus Christ not brought down, but descending. The mystery both of the time and the method of His coming, belongs to Him alone. We may not think because He came but recently, that therefore He must have been brought down, nor that His coming in time depended upon another, who brought Him down.

Nor does the Apostle give room for unbelief in the other direction. He quotes at once the words of the Prophet, Or Who hath descended into the abyss, and adds immediately the explanation, That is to bring Christ back from the dead. He is free to return into heaven, Who was free to descend to the earth. All hesitation and doubt is then removed. Faith reveals what omnipotence plans: history relates the effect, God Almighty was the cause.

70. But there is demanded from us an unwavering certainty. The Apostle expounding the whole secret of the Scripture passes on, Thy word is nigh, in thy mouth and in thy heart. The words of our confession must not be tardy or deliberately vague: there must be no interval between heart and lips, lest what ought to be the confession of true reverence become a subterfuge of infidelity. The word must be near us, and within us; no delay between the heart and the lips; a faith of conviction as well as of words. Heart and lips must be in harmony, and reveal in thought and utterance a religion which does not waver. Here too, as before, the Apostle adds the explanation of the Prophet’s words, That is the word of Faith, which we preach; because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Piety consists in rejecting doubt, righteousness in believing, salvation in confessing. Trifle not with ambiguities, be not stirred up to vain babblings, do not debate in any way the powers of God, or impose limits upon His might, cease searching again and again for the causes of unsearchable mysteries: confess rather that Jesus is the Lord, and believe that God raised Him from the
dead; herein is salvation. What folly is it to depreciate the nature and character of Christ, when this alone is salvation, to know that He is the Lord. Again, what an error of human vanity to quarrel about His resurrection, when it is enough for eternal life to believe that God raised Him up. In simplicity then is faith, in faith righteousness, and in confession true godliness. For God does not call us to the blessed life through arduous investigations. He does not tempt us with the varied arts of rhetoric. The way to eternally is plain and easy; believe that Jesus was raised from the dead by God and confess that He is the Lord. Let no one therefore wrest into an occasion for impiety, what was said because of our ignorance. It had to be proved to us, that Jesus Christ died, that we might live in Him.

71. If then He said, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me, and Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit, that we might be sure that He did die, was not this, in His care for our faith, rather a scattering of our doubts, than a confession of His weakness? When He was about to restore Lazarus, He prayed to the Father: but what need had He of prayer, Who said, Father, I thank Thee, that Thou hast heard Me; and I know that Thou hearest Me always, but because of the multitude I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me? He prayed then for us, that we may know Him to be the Son; the words of prayer availed Him nothing, but He said them for the advancement of our faith. He was not in want of help, but we of teaching. Again He prayed to be glorified; and immediately was heard from heaven the voice of God the Father glorifying Him: but when they wondered at the voice, He said, This voice hath not come for My sake, but for your sakes. The Father is besought for us, He speaks for us: may all this lead us to believe and confess! The answer of the Glorifier is granted not to the prayer for glory, but to the ignorance of the bystanders: must we not then regard the complaint of suffering, when He found His greatest joy in suffering, as intended for the building up of our faith? Christ prayed for His persecutors, because they knew not what they did. He promised Paradise from the cross, because He is God the King. He rejoiced upon the cross, that all was finished when He drank the vinegar, because He had fulfilled all prophecy before He died. He was born for us, suffered for us, died for us, rose again for us. This alone is necessary for our salvation, to confess the Son of God risen from the dead: why then should we die in this state of godless unbelief? If Christ, ever secure of His divinity, made clear to us His death, Himself indifferent to death, yet dying to assure that it was true humanity that He had assumed: why should we use this very confession of the Son of God that for us He became Son of Man and died as the chief weapon to deny His divinity?

Book 11 (Back to the Top)

1. The Apostle in his letter to the Ephesians, reviewing in its manifold aspects the full and perfect mystery of the Gospel, mingles with other instructions in the knowledge of God the following: As ye also were called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, and through all, and in us all. He does not leave us in the vague and misleading paths of an indefinite teaching, or abandon us to the shifting fancies of imagination, but limits the unimpeded license of intellect and desire by the appointment of restraining barriers. He gives us no opportunity to be wise beyond what he preached, but defines in exact and precise language the faith fixed for all time, that there may be no excuse for instability of
belief. He declares one faith, as he preaches one Lord, and pronounces one baptism, as he declares one faith of one Lord, that as there is one faith of one Lord, so there may be one baptism of one faith in one Lord. And since the whole mystery of the baptism and the faith is not only in one Lord, but also in one God, he completes the consummation of our hope by the confession of one God. The one baptism and the one faith are of one God, as they are of one Lord. Lord and God are each one, not by union of person but by distinction of properties: for, on the one hand, it is the property of Each to be one, whether of the Father in His Fatherhood, or of the Son in His Sonship, and on the other hand, that property of individuality, which Each possesses, constitutes for Each the mystery of His union with the Other. Thus the one Lord Christ cannot take away from God the Father His Lordship, or the one God the Father deny to the one Lord Christ His Godhead. If, because God is one, Christ is not also by nature divine, then we cannot allow that the one God is Lord, because there is one Lord Christ: that is, on the supposition that by their ‘oneness’ is signified not the mystery, but an exclusive unity. So there is one baptism and one faith of one Lord, as of one God.

2. But how can it be any longer one faith, if it does not steadfastly and sincerely confess one Lord and one God the Father: and how can the faith which is not one faith confess one Lord and one God the Father? Further, how can the faith be one, when its preachers are so at variance? One comes teaching that the Lord Jesus Christ, being in the weakness of our nature, groaned with anguish when the nails pierced His hands, that He lost the virtue of His own power and nature, and shrank shuddering from the death which threatened Him. Another even denies the cardinal doctrine of the Generation and pronounces Him a creature. Another will call Him, but not think Him, God on the ground that religion allows us to speak of more Gods than One, but He, Whom we recognise as God, must be conscious of sharing the divine nature. Again, how can Christ the Lord be one, when some say that as God He feels no pain, others make Him weak and fearful: to some He is God in name, to others God in nature: to some the Son by Generation, to others the Son by appellation? And if this is so, how can God the Father be one in the faith, when to some He is Father by His authority, to others Father by generation, in the sense that God is Father of the universe?

And yet, who will deny that whatever is not the one faith, is not faith at all? For in the one faith there is one Lord Christ, and God the Father is one. But the one Lord Jesus Christ is not one in the truth of the confession, as well as in name, unless He is Son, unless He is God, unless He is unchangeable, unless His Sonship and His Godhead have been eternally present in Him. He who preaches Christ other than He is, that is, other than Son and God, preaches another Christ. Nor is he in the one faith of the one baptism, for in the teaching of the Apostle the one faith is the faith of that one baptism, in which the one Lord is Christ, the Son of God Who is also God.

3. Yet it cannot be denied that Christ was Christ. It cannot be that He was incognisable to mankind. The books of the prophets have set their seal upon Him: the fulness of the times, which waxes daily, witnesses of Him: by the working of wonders the tombs of Apostles and Martyrs proclaim Him: the power of His name reveals Him: the unclean spirits confess Him, and the devils howling in their torment call aloud His name. In all we see the dispensation of His power. But our faith must preach Him as He is, namely, one Lord not in name but in confession,
in one faith of one baptism: for on our faith in one Lord Christ depends our confession of one God the Father.

4. But these teachers of a new Christ, who deny to Him all that is His, preach another Lord Christ as well as another God the Father. The One is not the Begetter but the Creator, the Other not begotten, but created. Christ is therefore not very God, because He is not God by birth, and faith cannot recognise a Father in God, because there is no generation to constitute Him Father. They glorify God the Father indeed, as is His right and due, when they predicate of Him a nature unapproachable, invisible, inviolable, ineffable, and infinite, endued with omniscience and omnipotence, instinct with love, moving in all and permeating all, immanent and transcendent, sentient in all sentient existence. But when they proceed to ascribe to Him the unique glory of being alone good, alone omnipotent, alone immortal, who does not feel that this pious praise aims to exclude the Lord Jesus Christ from the blessedness, which by the reservation ‘alone’ is restricted to the glory of God? Does it not leave Christ in sinfulness and weakness and death, while the Father reigns in solitary perfection? Does it not deny in Christ a natural origin from God the Father, in the fear lest He should be thought to inherit by a birth, which bestows upon the Begotten the same virtue of nature as the Begetter, a blessedness natural to God the Father alone?

5. Unlearned in the teaching of the Gospels and Apostles, they extol the glory of God the Father, not, however, with the sincerity of a devout believer, but with the cunning of impiety, to wrest from it an argument for their wicked heresy. Nothing, they say, can be compared with His nature: therefore the Only-begotten God is excluded from the comparison, because He possesses a lower and weaker nature. And this they say of God, the living image of the living God, the perfect form of His blessed nature, the only-begotten offspring of His unbegotten substance; Who is not truly the image of God unless He possesses the perfect glory of the Father’s blessedness: and reproduces in its exactitude the likeness of His whole nature. But if the Only-begotten God is the image of the Unbegotten God, the verity of that perfect and supreme nature resides in Him and makes Him the image of the very God. Is the Father omnipotent? The weak Son is not the image of omnipotence. Is He good? The Son, Whose divinity is of a lower stamp, does not reflect in His sinful nature the image of goodness. Is He incorporeal? The Son, Whose very spirit is confined to the limits of a body, is not in the forth of the Incorporeal. Is He ineffable? The Son, Whom language can define, Whose nature the tongue can describe, is not the image of the Ineffable. Is He the true God? The Son possesses only a fictitious divinity, and the false cannot be the image of the True. The Apostle, however, does not ascribe to Christ a portion of the image, or a part of the form, but pronounces Him unreservedly the image of the invisible God and the form of God. And how could He declare more expressly the divine nature of the Son of God, than by saying that Christ is the image of the invisible God even in respect of His invisibility: for if the substance of Christ were discernible how could He be the image of an invisible nature?

6. But, as we pointed out in the former books, they seize the Dispensation of the assumed manhood as a pretext to dishonour His divinity, and distort the Mystery of our salvation into an occasion of blasphemy. Had they held fast the faith of the Apostle, they would neither have
forgotten that He, Who was in the form of God, took the form of a servant, nor made use of
the servant’s forth to dishonour the form of God (for the form of God includes the fulness of
divinity), but they would have noted, reasonably and reverently, the distinction of occasions s
and mysteries, without dishonouring the divinity, or being misled by the Incarnation of Christ.
But now, when we have, I am convinced, proved everything to the utmost, and pointed out the
power of the divine nature underlying the birth of the assumed body, there is no longer room
for doubt. He Who was at once man and the Only-begotten God performed all things by the
power of God, and in the power of God accomplished all things through a true human nature.
As begotten of God He possessed the nature of divine omnipotence, as born of the Virgin He
had a perfect and entire humanity. Though He had a real body, He subsisted in the nature of
God, and though He subsisted in the nature of God, He abode in a real body.

7. In our reply we have followed Him to the moment of His glorious death, and taking one by
one the statements of their unhallowed doctrine, we have refuted them from the teaching of
the Gospels and the Apostle. But even after His glorious resurrection there are certain things
which they have made bold to construe as proofs of the weakness of a lower nature, and to
these we must now reply. Let us adopt once more our usual method of drawing out from the
words themselves their true signification, that so we may discover the truth precisely where
they think to overthrow it. For the Lord spoke in simple words for our instruction in the faith,
and His words cannot need support or comment from foreign and irrelevant sayings.

8. Among their other sins the heretics often employ as an argument the words of the Lord, I
ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God. His Father is also their
Father, His God their God; therefore He is not in the nature of God, for He pronounces God the
Father of others as of Himself, and His unique Sonship ceases when He shares with others the
nature and the origin which make Him Son and God. But let them add further the words of the
Apostle, But when He saith All things are put in subjection, He is excepted Who did subject all
things unto Him. And when all things have been subjected unto Him, then shall He Himself be
subjected unto Him that did subject all things unto Himself, that God may be all in all, whereby,
since they regard that subjection as a proof of weakness, they may dispossess Him of the virtue
of His Father’s nature, because His natural infirmity subjected Him to the dominion of a
stronger nature. And after that, let them adopt their very strongest position and their
impregnable defence, before which the truth of the Divine birth is to he demolished; namely,
that if He is subjected, He is not God; if His God and Father is ours also, He shares all in
common with creatures, and therefore is Himself also a creature: created of God and not
begotten, since the creature has its substance out of nothing, but the begotten possesses the
nature of its author.

9. Falsehood is always infamous, for the liar throwing off the bridle of shame dares to gainsay
the truth, or else at times he hides behind some veil of pretext, that he may appear to defend
with modesty what is shameless in intention. But in this case, when they sacrilegiously use the
Scriptures to degrade the dignity of our Lord, there is no room for the blush or the false
excuse; for there are occasions when even pardon accorded to ignorance is refused, and wilful
misconstruction is exposed in its naked profanity. Let us postpone for a moment the exposition
of this passage in the Gospel, and ask them first whether they have forgotten the preaching of the Apostle, who said, Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory. Who is so dull that he cannot comprehend that the mystery of godliness is simply the Dispensation of the flesh assumed by the Lord? At the outset then, he who does not agree in this confession is not in the faith of God. For the Apostle leaves no doubt that all must confess that the hidden secret of our salvation is not the dishonour of God, but the mystery of great godliness, and a mystery no longer kept from our eyes, but manifested in the flesh; no longer weak through the nature of flesh, but justified in the Spirit. And so by the justification of the Spirit is removed from our faith the idea of fleshly weakness; through the manifestation of the flesh is revealed that which was secret, and in the unknown cause of that which was secret is contained the only confession, the confession of the mystery of great godliness. This is the whole system of the faith set forth by the Apostle in its proper order. From godliness proceeds the mystery, from the mystery the manifestation in the flesh, from the manifestation in the flesh the justification in the Spirit: for the mystery of godliness which was manifested in the flesh, to be truly a mystery, was manifested in the flesh through the justification of the Spirit. Again, we must not forget what manner of justification in the Spirit is this manifestation in the flesh: for the mystery which was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, and believed on in this world, this same mystery was received up in glory. Thus is it in every way a mystery of great godliness, when it is manifested in the flesh, when it is justified in the Spirit, when it is seen of angels, when it is preached among the nations, when it is believed on in the world, and when it is received up in glory. The preaching follows the seeing, and the believing the preaching, and the consummation of all is the receiving up in glory: for the assumption into glory is the mystery of great godliness, and by faith in the Dispensation we are prepared to be received up, and to be conformed to the glory of the Lord. The assumption of flesh is therefore also the mystery of great godliness, for through the assumption of flesh the mystery was manifested in the flesh. But we must believe that the manifestation in the flesh also is this same mystery of great godliness, for His manifestation in the flesh is His justification in the Spirit, and His assumption into glory. And now what room does our faith leave for any to think that the secret of the Dispensation of godliness is the enfeebling of the divinity, when through the assumption of glory is to be confessed the mystery of great godliness? What was ‘infirmity’ is now the ‘mystery:’ what was ‘necessity’ becomes ‘godliness.’ And now let us turn to the meaning of the Evangelist’s words, that the secret of our salvation and our glory may not be converted into an occasion of blasphemy.

10. You credit with the weight of irresistible authority, heretic, that saying of the Lord, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God. The same Father, you say, is His Father and ours, the same God His God and ours. He partakes, therefore, of our weakness, for in the possession of the same Father we are not inferior as sons, and in the service of the same God we are equal as servants. Since, then, we are of created origin and a servant’s nature, but have a common Father and God with Him, He is in common with our nature a creature and a servant. So runs this infatuated and unhallowed teaching. It produces also the words of the Prophet, Thy God hath anointed Thee, O God, to prove that Christ does not partake of that
glorious nature which belongs to God, since the God Who anoints Him is preferred before Him as His God.

11. We do not know Christ the God unless we know God the Begotten. But to be born God is to belong to the nature of God, for the name Begotten signifies indeed the manner of His origin, but does not make Him different in kind from the Begetter. And if so, the Begotten owes indeed to His Author the source of His being, but is not dispossessed of the nature of that Author, for the birth of God can arise but from one origin, and have but one nature. If its origin is not from God, it is not a birth; if it is anything but a birth, Christ is not God. But He is God of God, and therefore God the Father stands to God the Son as God of His birth and Father of His nature, for the birth of God is from God, and in the specific nature of God.

12. See in all that He said, how carefully the Lord tempers the pious acknowledgment of His debt, so that neither the confession of the birth could be held to reflect upon His divinity, nor His reverent obedience to infringe upon His sovereign nature. He does not withhold the homage due from Him as the Begotten, Who owed to His Author His very existence, but He manifests by His confident bearing the consciousness of participation in that nature, which belongs to Him by virtue of the origin whereby He was born as God. Take, for instance, the words, He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father also, and, The wards that I say, I speak not from Myself. He does not speak from Himself: therefore He receives from His Author that which He says. But if any have seen Him, they have seen the Father also: they are conscious, by this evidence, given to shew that God is in Him, that a nature, one in kind with that of God, was born from God to subsist as God. Take again the words, That which the Father hath given unto Me, is greater than all, and, I and the Father are one. To say that the Father gave, is a confession that He received His origin: but the unity of Himself with the Father is a property of His nature derived from that origin. Take another instance, He hath given all judgment unto the Son, that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He acknowledges that the judgment is given to Him, and therefore He does not put His birth in the background: but He claims equal honour with the Father, and therefore He does not resign His nature. Yet another example, I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me, and, The Father is greater than I. The One is in the Other: recognise, then, the divinity of God, the Begotten of God: the Father is greater than He: perceive, then, His acknowledgment of the Father’s authority. In the same way He says, The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He hath seen the Father doing: for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner. He doeth nothing of Himself: that is, in accordance with His birth the Father prompts His actions: yet what things soever the Father doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner; that is, He subsists as nothing less than God, and by the Father’s omnipotent nature residing in Him, can do all that God the Father does. All is uttered in agreement with His unity of Spirit with the Father, and the properties of that nature, which He possesses by virtue of His birth. That birth, which brought Him into being, constituted Him divine, and His being reveals the consciousness of that divine nature. God the Son confesses God His Father, because He was born of Him; but also, because He was born, He inherits the whole nature of God.

13. So the Dispensation of the great and godly mystery makes Him, Who was already Father of
the divine Son, also His Lord in the created form which He assumed, for He, Who was in the
form of God, was found also in the form of a servant. Yet He was not a servant, for according to
the Spirit He was God the Son of God. Every one will agree also that there is no servant where
there is no lord. God is indeed Father in the Generation of the Only-begotten God, but only in
the case that the Other is a servant can we call Him Lord as well as Father. The Son was not at
the first a servant by nature, but afterwards began to be by nature something which He was
not before. Thus the Father is Lord on the same grounds as the Son is servant. By the
Dispensation of His nature the Son had a Lord, when He made Himself a servant by the
assumption of manhood.

14. Being, then, in the form of a servant, Jesus Christ, Who before was in the form of God, said
as a man, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God. He was speaking
as a servant to servants: how can we then dissociate the words from Christ the servant, and
transfer them to that nature, which had nothing of the servant in it? For He Who abode in the
form of God took upon Him the form of a servant, this form being the indispensable condition
of His fellowship as a servant with servants. It is in this sense that God is His Father and the
Father of men, His God and the God of servants. Jesus Christ was speaking as a man in the form
of a servant to men and servants; what difficulty is there then in the idea, that in His human
aspect the Father is His Father as ours, in His servant’s nature God is His God as all men’s?

15. These, then, are the words with which He prefaces the message, Go unto My brethren, and
say to them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God. I ask, Are
they to be understood as His brethren with reference to the form of God or to the form of a
servant? And has our flesh kinship with Him in regard to the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in
Him, that we should be reckoned His brothers in respect of His divinity? No, for the Spirit of
prophecy recognises clearly in what respect we are the brethren of the Only-begotten God. It is
as a worm, which is born without the ordinary process of conception, or else comes up into the world,
already living, from the depths of the earth, He speaks here in manifestation of the fact that He
had assumed flesh and also brought it up, living, from Hades. Throughout the Psalm He is
foretelling by the Spirit of prophecy the mysteries of His Passion: it is therefore in respect of
the Dispensation, in which He suffered, that He has brethren. The Apostle also recognises the
mystery of this brotherhood, for he calls Him not only the firstborn from the dead, but also the
firstborn among many brethren. Christ is the Firstborn among many brethren in the same
sense in which He is Firstborn from the dead: and as the mystery of death concerns His body,
so the mystery of brotherhood also refers to His flesh. Thus God has brethren according to His
flesh, for the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us: but the Only-begotten Son, unique as
the Only-begotten, has no brethren.

16. By assuming flesh, however, He acquired our nature in our totality, and became all that we
are, but did not lose that which He was before. Both before by His heavenly origin, and now by
His earthly constitution, God is His Father. By His earthly constitution God is His Father, since all
things are from God the Father, and God is Father to all things, since from Him and in Him are
all things. But to the Only-begotten God, God is Father, not only because the Word became
flesh; His Fatherhood extends also to Him Who was, as God the Word, with God in the
beginning. Thus, when the Word became flesh, God was His Father both by the birth of God
the Word, and by the constitution of His flesh: for God is the Father of all flesh, though not in
the same way that He is Father to God the Word. But God the Word, though He did not cease
to be God, really did become flesh: and while He thus dwelt He was still truly the Word, just as
when the Word became flesh He was still truly God as well as man. For to ‘dwell’ can only be
said of one who abides in something: and to become flesh’ of one who is born. He dwelt
among us; that is, He assumed our flesh. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us; that is,
He was God in the reality of our body. If Christ Jesus, the man according to the flesh, robbed
God the Word of the divine nature, or was not according to the mystery of godliness also God
the Word, then it reduces His nature to our level that God is His Father, and our Father, His
God and our God. But if God the Word, when He became the man Christ Jesus, did not cease to
be God the Word, then God is at the same time His Father and ours, His God and ours, only in
respect of that nature, by which the Word is our brother, and the message to His brethren, I
ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God, is not that of the Only-
begotten God the Word, but of the Word made flesh.

17. The Apostle here speaks in carefully guarded words, which by their definiteness can give no
occasion to the ungodly. We have seen that the Evangelist makes the Lord use the word
‘Brethren’ in the preface to the message, thus signifying that the whole message, being
addressed to His brethren, refers to His fellowship in that nature which makes Him their
brother. Thus he makes manifest that the mystery of godliness, which is here proclaimed, is no
degradation of His divinity. The community with Him, by which God is our Father and His, our
God and His, exists in regard to the Dispensation of the flesh: we are counted His brethren,
because He was born into the body. No one disputes that God the Father is also the God of our
Lord Jesus Christ, but this reverent confession offers no occasion for irreverence. God is His
God but not as possessing a different order of divinity from His. He was begotten God of the
Father, and born a servant by the Dispensation: and so God is His Father because He is God of
God, and God is His God, because He is flesh of the Virgin. All this the Apostle confirms in one
short and decisive sentence, Making mention of you in my prayers that the God of our Lord
Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation. When he
speaks of Him as Jesus Christ, he mentions His God: when his theme is the glory of Christ, he
calls God His Father. To Christ, as having glory, God is Father: to Christ, as being Jesus, God is
God. For the angel, when speaking of Christ the Lord, Who should be born of Mary, calls Him
by the name ‘Jesus:’ but to the prophets Christ the Lord is ‘Spirit.’ The Apostle’s words in this
passage seem to many, on account of the Latin, somewhat obscure, for Latin has no articles,
which the beautiful and logical usage of Greek employs. The Greek runs, o Qeos tou K uriou
hmsou X r stou , o pathr ths doxhs , which we might translate into Latin, if the usage of the
article were permitted, ‘Ille Deus illius Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ille pater illius claritatis’ (The
God of the Lord [of us] Jesus Christ, the Father of the glory). In this form ‘The God of the Jesus
Christ,’ and ‘the Father of the glory,’ the sentence expresses, so far as we can comprehend
them, certain truths of His nature. Where the glory of Christ is concerned, God is His Father;
where Christ is Jesus, there the Father is His God. In the Dispensation by which He is a servant,
He has as God Him Whom, in the glory by which He is God, He has as Father.
18. Time and the lapse of ages make no difference to a Spirit. Christ is one and the same Christ, whether in the body, or abiding by the Spirit in the prophets. Speaking through the mouth of the holy Patriarch David, He says, Thy God, O God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows, which refers to no less a mystery than the Dispensation of His assumption of flesh. He, Who now sends the message to His brethren that their Father is His Father, and their God His God, announced Himself then as anointed by His God above His fellows. No one is fellow to the Only-begotten Christ, God the Word: but we know that we are His fellows by the assumption which made Him flesh. That anointing did not exalt the blessed and incorruptible Begotten Who abides in the nature of God, but it established the mystery of His body, and sanctified the manhood which He assumed. To this the Apostle Peter witnesses, Of a truth in this city were they gathered together against Thy holy Son Jesus, Whom Thou didst anoint: and on another occasion, Ye know that the saying was published through all Judaea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached: even Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power. Jesus was anointed, therefore, that the mystery of the regeneration of flesh might be accomplished. Nor are we left in doubt how He was thus anointed with the Spirit of God and with power, when we listen to the Father’s voice, as it spoke when He came up out of the Jordan, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Thus is testified the sanctification of His flesh, and in this testimony we must recognise His anointing with the power of the Spirit.

19. But the Word was God, and with God in the beginning, and therefore the anointing could neither be related nor explained, if it referred to that nature, of which we are told nothing, except that it was in the beginning. And in fact He Who was God had no need to anoint Himself with the Spirit and power of God, when He was Himself the Spirit and power of God. So He, being God, was anointed by His God above His fellows. And, although there were many Christs (i.e. anointed persons) according to the Law before the Dispensation of the flesh, yet Christ, Who was anointed above His fellows, came after them, for He was preferred above His anointed fellows. Accordingly, the words of the prophecy bring out the fact that the anointing took place in time, and comparatively late in time. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity: therefore Thy God, O God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. Now, a fact which follows later upon other facts, cannot be dated before them. That a reward be deserved postulates as a prior condition the existence of one who can deserve it, for merit earned implies that there has been one capable of acquiring it. If, therefore, we attribute the birth of the Only-begotten God to this anointing, which is His reward for loving righteousness and hating iniquity, we shall be regarding Him not as born, but as promoted by unction, to be the Only-begotten God. But then we imply that He advanced with gradual progress and promotion to perfect divinity, and that He was not born God, but afterwards for His merit anointed God. Thus we shall make Christ as God Himself conditioned, whereas He is the final cause of all conditions; and what becomes then of the Apostle’s words, All things are through Him and in Him, and He is before all, and in Him all things consist? The Lord Jesus Christ was not deified because of anything, or by means of anything, but was born God: God by origin, not promoted to divinity for any cause after His birth, but as the Son; and one in kind with God because begotten of Him. His anointing then, though it is the result of a cause, did
not enhance that in Him, which could not be made more perfect. It concerned that part of Him which was to be made perfect through the perfection of the Mystery: that is, our manhood was sanctified in Christ by unction. If then the prophet here also teaches us the dispensation of the servant, for which Christ is anointed by His God above His fellows, and that because He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, then surely the words of the prophet must refer to that nature in Christ, by which He has fellows through His assumption of flesh. Can we doubt this when we note how carefully the Spirit of prophecy chooses His words? God is anointed by His God; that is, in His own nature He is God, but in the dispensation of the anointing God is His God. God is anointed: but tell me, is that Word anointed, Who was God in the beginning? Manifestly not, for the anointing comes after His divine birth. It was then not the begotten Word, God with God in the beginning, Who was anointed, but that nature in God which came to Him through the dispensation later than His divinity: and when His God anointed Him, He anointed in Him the whole nature of the servant, which He assumed in the mystery of His flesh.

20. Let no one then defile with his godless interpretations the mystery of great godliness which was manifested in the flesh, or reckon himself equal to the Only-begotten in respect of His divine substance. Let Him be our brother and our fellow, inasmuch as the Word made flesh dwelt among us, inasmuch as the man Jesus Christ is Mediator between God and man. Let Him, after the manner of servants, have a common Father and a common God with us, and as anointed above His fellows, let Him be of the same nature as His anointed fellows, though His be an unction of special privilege. In the mystery of the Mediatorship let Him be at once very man and very God, Himself God of God, but having a common Father and God with us in that community by which He is our brother.

21. But perhaps that subjection, that delivering of the kingdom, and lastly that end betoken the dissolution of His nature, or the loss of His power, or the enfeebling of His divinity. Many argue thus: Christ is included in the common subjection of all to God, and by the condition of subjection loses His divinity: He surrenders His Kingdom, therefore He is no longer King: the end which overtakes Him entails as its consequence the loss of His power.

22. It will not be out of place here if we review the full meaning of the Apostle’s teaching upon this subject. Let us take, then, each single sentence and expound it, that we may grasp the entire Mystery by comprehending it in its fulness. The words of the Apostle are, For since by man came death by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ are all made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have emptied all authority and all power. For He must reign until He put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be conquered is death. But when He saith, All things are put in subjection, He is excepted Who did subject all things unto Him. But when all things have been subjected to Him, then shall He also Himself be subjected to Him, that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all.

23. The Apostle who was chosen not of then nor through man, but through Jesus Christ, to be the teacher of the Gentiles, expounds in language as express as he can command the secrets of
the heavenly Dispensations. He who had been caught up into the third heaven and had heard unspeakable words, reveals to the perception of human understanding as much as human nature can receive. But he does not forget that there are things which cannot be understood in the moment of hearing. The infirmity of man needs time to review before the true and perfect tribunal of the mind, that which is poured indiscriminately into the ears. Comprehension follows the spoken words more slowly than hearing, for it is the ear which hears, but the reason which understands, though it is God Who reveals the inner meaning to those who seek it. We learn this from the words written among many other exhortations to Timothy, the disciple instructed from a babe in the Holy Scriptures by the glorious faith of his grandmother and mother: Understand what I say, for the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things. The exhortation to understand is prompted by the difficulty of understanding. But God’s gift of understanding is the reward of faith, for through faith the infirmity of sense is recompensed with the gift of revelation. Timothy, that ‘man of God’ as the Apostle witnesses of him, Paul’s true child in the faith, is exhorted to understand because the Lord will give him understanding in all things: let us, therefore, knowing that the Lord will grant us understanding in all things, remember that the Apostle exhorts us also to understand.

24. And if, by an error incident to human nature, we be clinging to some preconception of our own, let us not reject the advance in knowledge through the gift of revelation. If we have hitherto used only our own judgment, let that not make us ashamed to change its decisions for the better. Guiding this advance wisely and carefully, the same blessed Apostle writes to the Philippians, Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall Gad reveal unto you. Only, wherein we have hastened, in that same let us walk. Reason cannot anticipate with preconceptions the revelation of God. For the Apostle has here shewn us wherein consists the wisdom of those who have the perfect wisdom, and for those who are otherwise minded, he awaits the revelation of God, that they may obtain the perfect wisdom. If any, then, have otherwise conceived this profound dispensation of the hidden knowledge, anti if that which we offer them is in any respect more right or better approved, let them not be ashamed to receive the perfect wisdom, as the Apostle advises, through the revelation of God, and if they hate to abide in untruth let them not love ignorance more. If to them, who had another wisdom, God has revealed this also, the Apostle exhorts them to hasten on the road in which they have started, to cast aside the notions of their former ignorance, and obtain the revelation of perfect understanding by the path into which they have eagerly entered. Let us, therefore, keep on in the path along which we have hastened: or, if the error of our wandering steps has delayed our eager haste, let us, notwithstanding, start again through the revelation of God towards the goal of our desire, and not turn our feet from the path. We have hastened towards Christ Jesus the Lord of Glory, the King of the eternal ages, in Whom are restored all things in Heaven and in earth, by Whom all things consist, in Whom and with Whom we shall abide for ever. So long as we walk in this path we have the perfect wisdom: and if we have another wisdom, God will reveal to us what is the perfect wisdom. Let us, then, examine in the light of the Apostle’s faith the mystery of the words before us: and let our treatment be, as it always has been, a refutation from the actual truth of the Apostle’s confession of every interpretation, which they would profanely foist upon his words.
25. Three assertions are here disputed, which, in the order in which the Apostle makes them, are first the end, then the delivering, and lastly the subjection. The object is to prove that Christ ceases to exist at the end, that He loses His kingdom, when He delivers it up, that He strips Himself of the divine nature, when He is subjected to God.

26. At the outset take note that this is not the order of the Apostle’s teaching, for in that order the surrender of the Kingdom is first, then the subjection, and lastly the end. But every cause is itself the result of its particular cause, so that, in every chain of causation, each cause, itself producing a result, has inevitably its underlying antecedent. Thus the end will come, but when He has delivered the Kingdom to God. He will deliver the Kingdom, but when He has abolished all authority and power. He will abolish all authority and power, because He must reign. He will reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. He will put all enemies under His feet, because God has subjected everything under His feet. God has so subjected them as to make death the last enemy to be conquered by Him. Then, when all things are subjected unto God. except Him Who subjected all things unto Him, He too will be subjected unto Him, Who subjects all to Himself. But the cause of the subjection is none other than that God may be all in all; and therefore the end is that God is all in all.

27. Before going any further we must now enquire whether the end is a dissolution, or the delivering a forfeiture, or the subjection an enfeebling of Christ. And if we find that these are contraries, which cannot be connected as causes and effects, we shall be able to understand the words in the true sense in which they were spoken.

28. Christ is the end of the law; but, tell me, is He come to destroy it or to fulfil it? And if Christ, the end of the law, does not destroy it, but fulfils it (as He says, I am come not to destroy the law but fulfil it), is not the end of the law, so far from being its dissolution, the very opposite, namely its final perfection? All things are advancing towards an end, but that end is a condition of rest in the perfection, which is the goal of their advance, and not their abolition. Further, all things exist for the sake of the end, but the end itself is not the means to anything beyond: it is an ultimate, all-embracing whole, which rests in itself. And because it is self-contained, and works for no other time or object than itself, the goal is always that to which our hopes are directed. Therefore the Lord exhorts us to wait with patient and reverent faith until the end comes: Blessed is He that endureth to the end. It is not a blessed dissolution, which awaits us, nor is non-existence the fruit, and annihilation the appointed reward of faith: but the end is the final attainment of the promised blessedness, and they are blessed who endure until the goal of perfect happiness is reached, when the expectation of faithful hope has no object beyond. Their end is to abide with unbroken rest in that condition, towards which they are pressing. Similarly, as a deterrent, the Apostle warns us of the end of the wicked, Whose end is perdition, ...... but our expectation is in heaven. Suppose then we interpret the end as a dissolution, we are forced to acknowledge that, since there is an end for the blessed and for the wicked, the issue levels the godly with the ungodly, for the appointed end of both is a common annihilation. What of our expectation in heaven, if for us as well as for the wicked the end is a cessation of being? But even if there remains for the saints an expectation.
for the wicked there waits the end they have deserved, we cannot conceive that end as a final dissolution. What punishment would it be for the wicked to be beyond the feeling of avenging torments, because the capability of suffering has been removed by dissolution? The end is, therefore, a culminating and irrevocable condition which awaits us, reserved for the blessed and prepared for the wicked.

29. We can therefore no longer doubt that by the end is meant an ultimate and final condition and not a dissolution. We shall have something more to say upon this subject, when we come to the explanation of this passage, but for the present this is enough to make our meaning clear. Let us, therefore, turn now to the delivering of the Kingdom, and see whether it means a surrender of rule, whether the Son by delivering ceases to possess that which He delivers to the Father. If this is what the wicked contend in their unreasoning infatuation, they must allow that the Father, by delivering, lost all, when He delivered all to the Son, if delivery implies the surrender of that which is delivered. For the Lord said, All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father, and again, All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and earth. If, therefore, to deliver is to yield possession, the Father no longer possessed that which He delivered. But if the Father did not cease to possess that which He delivered, neither does the Son surrender that which He delivers. Therefore, if He did not lose by the delivering that which He delivered, we must recognise that only the Dispensation explains how the Father still possesses what He delivered, and the Son does not forfeit what He gave.

30. As to the subjection, there are other facts which come to the help of our faith, and prevent us from putting an indignity on Christ upon this score, but above all this passage contains its own defence. First, however, I appeal to common reason: is the subjection still to be understood as the subordination of servitude to lordship, weakness to power, meanness to honour, qualities the opposite of one another? Is the Son in this manner subjected to the Father by the distinction of a different nature? If, indeed, we would think so, we shall find in the Apostle’s words a preventive for such errors of the imagination. When all things are subjected to Him, says He, then must He be subjected to Him, Who subjects all things to Himself; and by this ‘then’ he means to denote the temporal Dispensation. For if we put any other construction on the subjection, Christ, though then to be subjected, is not subjected now, and thus we make Him an insolent and impious rebel, whom the necessity of time, breaking as it were and subduing His profane and overweening pride, will reduce to a tardy obedience. But what does He Himself say? I am not come to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me: and again, Therefore hath the Father loved Me because I do all things that are pleasing unto Him: and, Father, Thy will be done. Or hear the Apostle, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death. Although He humbled Himself, His nature knew no humiliation: though He was obedient, it was a voluntary obedience, for He became obedient by humiliating Himself. The Only-begotten God humbled Himself, and obeyed His Father even to the death of the Cross: but as what, as man or as God, is He to be subjected to the Father, when all things have been subjected to Him? Of a truth this subjection is no sign of a fresh obedience, but the Dispensation of the Mystery, for the allegiance is eternal, the subjection an event within time. The subjection is then in its signification simply a demonstration of the Mystery.
31. What that is must be understood in view of this same hope of our faith. We cannot be ignorant that the Lord Jesus Christ rose again from the dead, and sits at the right hand of God, for we have also the witness of the Apostle, According to the working of the strength of His might, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come, and put all things in subjection under His feet. The language of the Apostle, as befits the power of God, speaks of the future as already past: for that which is to be wrought by the completion of time already exists in Christ, in Whom is all fulness, and ‘future’ refers only to the temporal order of the Dispensation, not to a new development. Thus, God has put all things under His feet, though they are still to be subjected. By their subjection, conceived as already past, is expressed the immutable power of Christ: by their subjection, as future, is signified their consummation at the end of the ages as the result of the fulness of time.

32. The meaning of the abolishing of every power which is against Him is not obscure. The prince of the air, the power of spiritual wickedness, shall be delivered to eternal destruction, as Christ says, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which My Father hath prepared far the devil and his angels. The abolishing is not the same as the subjecting. To abolish the power of the enemy is to sweep away for ever his prerogative of power, so that by the abolition of his power is brought to an end the rule of his kingdom. Of this the Lord testifies when He says, My kingdom is not of this world: as He had once before testified that the ruler of that kingdom is the prince of this world, whose power shall be destroyed by the abolition of the rule of His kingdom. A subjection, on the other hand, which implies obedience and allegiance, is a proof of submission and mutability.

33. So when their authority is abolished, His enemies shall be subjected: and so subjected, that He shall subject them to Himself. Moreover He shall so subject them to Himself, that God shall subject them to Him. Was the Apostle ignorant, think you, of the force of these words in the Gospel, No one cometh to Me, except the Father draw Him to Me which stand side by side with those other words, No one cometh unto the Father but by Me: just as in this Epistle Christ subjects His enemies to Himself, yet God subjects them to Him, and He witnesses throughout this, his work of subjection, that God is working in Him? Except through Him there is no approach to the Father, but there is also no approach to Him, unless the Father draw us. Understanding Him to be the Son of God, we recognise in Him the true nature of the Father. Hence, when we learn to know the Son, God the Father calls us: when we believe the Son, God the Father receives us; for our recognition and knowledge of the Father is in the Son, Who shews us in Himself God the Father, Who draws us, if we be devout, by His fatherly love into a mutual bond with His Son. So then the Father draws us, when, as the first condition, He is acknowledged Father: but no one comes to the Father except through the Son, because we cannot know the Father, unless faith in the Son is active in us, since we cannot approach the Father in worship, unless we first adore the Son, while if we know the Son, the Father draws us to eternal life and receives us. But each result is the work of the Son, for by the preaching of the Father, Whom the Son preaches, the Father brings us to the Son, and the Son leads us to
the Father. The statement of this Mystery was necessary for the more perfect understanding of the present passage, to shew that through the Son the Father draws us and receives us; that we might understand the two aspects, the Son subjecting all to Himself, and the Father subjecting all to Him. Through the birth the nature of God is abiding in the Son, and does that which He Himself does. What He does God does, but what God does in Him, He Himself does: in the sense that where He acts Himself we must believe the Son of God acts; and where God acts, we must perceive the properties of the Father’s nature existing in Him as the Son.

34. When authorities and powers are abolished, His enemies shall be subjected under His feet. The same Apostle tells who are these enemies, As touching the Gospel they are enemies for your sakes, but as touching the election they are beloved far the fathers’ sake. We remember that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; let us remember also that, because they are beloved for the fathers’ sake, they are reserved for the subjection, as the Apostle says, I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved, even as it is written, There shall come out of Sion a Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: and this is the covenant firm Me to them, when I have taken away their sins. So His enemies shall be subjected under His feet.

35. But we must not forget what follows the subjection, namely, Last of all is death conquered by Him. This victory over death is nothing else than the resurrection from the dead: for when the corruption of death is stayed, the quickened and now heavenly nature is made eternal, as it is written, For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in strife. O death, where is thy sting? O death, where is thy strife? In the subjection of His enemies death is Conquered; and, death conquered, life immortal follows. The Apostle tells us also of the special reward attained by this subjection which is made perfect by the subjection of belief: Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the works of His power, whereby He is able to subject all things to Himself. There is then another subjection, which consists in a transition from one nature to another, for our nature ceases, so far as its present character is concerned, and is subjected to Him, into Whose form it passes. But by ‘ceasing’ is implied not an end of being, but a promotion into something higher. Thus our nature by being merged into the image of the other nature which it receives, becomes subjected through the imposition of a new form.

36. Hence the Apostle, to make his explanation of this Mystery complete, after saying that death is the last enemy to be conquered, adds: But when He saith, rill things are put in subjection except Him, Who did subject all things to Him, then must He be subjected to Him, that did subject all things to Him, that God may be all in all. The first step of the Mystery is that all things are subjected to Him: then He is subjected to Him, Who subjects all things to Himself. As we are subjected to the glory of the rule of His body, so He also, reigning in the glory of His body, is by the same Mystery in turn subjected to Him, Who subjects all things to Himself. And we are subjected to the glory of His body, that we may share that splendour with which He
reigns in the body, since we shall be conformed to His body.

37. Nor are the Gospels silent concerning the glory of His present reigning body. It is written that the Lord said, Verily, I say unto you, there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom. And it came to pass, after six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter and James and John His brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And Jesus was transfigured before them, and His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became as snow Thus was shewn to the Apostles the glory of the body of Christ coming into His Kingdom: for in the fashion of His glorious Transfiguration, the Lord stood revealed in the splendour of His reigning body.

38. He promised also to the Apostles the participation in this His glory. So shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather together out of His Kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and He shall send them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Were their natural and bodily ears closed to the hearing of the words, that the Lord should need to admonish them to hear? Yet the Lord, hinting at the knowledge of the Mystery, commands them to listen to the doctrine of the faith. In the end of the world all things that cause stumbling shall be removed from His Kingdom. We see the Lord then reigning in the splendour of His body, until the things that cause stumbling are removed. And we see ourselves, in consequence, conformed to the glory of His body in the Kingdom of the Father, shining as with the splendour of the sun, the splendour in which He shewed the fashion of His Kingdom to the Apostles, when He was transfigured on the mountain.

39. He shall deliver the Kingdom to God the Father, not in the sense that He resigns His power by the delivering, but that we, being conformed to the glory of His body, shall form the Kingdom of God. It is not said, He shall deliver up His Kingdom, but, He shall deliver up the Kingdom, that is, deliver up to God us who have been made the Kingdom by the glorifying of His body. He shall deliver us into the Kingdom, as it is said in the Gospel, Came, re blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. The just shall shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father, and the Son shall deliver to the Father, as His Kingdom, those whom He has called into His Kingdom, to whom also He has promised the blessedness of this Mystery, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shah see God. While He reigns, He shall remove all things that cause stumbling, and then the just shall shine as the sun in the Kingdom of the Father. Afterwards He shall deliver the Kingdom to the Father, and those whom He has handed to the Father, as the Kingdom, shall see God. He Himself witnesses to the Apostles what manner of Kingdom this is: The Kingdom of God is within you. Thus it is as King that He shall deliver up the Kingdom, and if any ask Who it is that delivers up the Kingdom, let him hear, Christ is risen from the dead, the firstfruits of them that sleep; since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. All that is said on the point before us concerns the Mystery of the body, since Christ is the firstfruits of the dead. Let us gather also from the words of the Apostle by what Mystery Christ rose from the dead: Remember that Christ hath risen from the dead, of the seed of David. Here he teaches that the death and
resurrection are due only to the Dispensation by which Christ was flesh.

40. In His body, the same body though now made glorious, He reigns until the authorities are abolished, death conquered, and His enemies subdued. This distinction is carefully preserved by the Apostle: the authorities and powers are abolished, the enemies are subjected. Then, when they are subjected, He, that is the Lord, shall be subjected to Him that subjecteth all things to Himself, that God may be all in all, the nature of the Father’s divinity imposing itself upon the nature of our body which was assumed. It is thus that God shall be all in all: according to the Dispensation He becomes by His Godhead and His manhood the Mediator between men and God, and so by the Dispensation He acquires the nature of flesh, and by the subjection shall obtain the nature of God in all things, so as to be God not in part, but wholly and entirely. The end of the subjection is then simply that God may be all in all, that no trace of the nature of His earthly body may remain in Him. Although before this time the two were combined within Him, He must now become God only; not, however, by casting off the body, but by translating it through subjection; not by losing it through dissolutions, but by transfiguring it in glory: adding humanity to His divinity, not divesting Himself of divinity by His humanity. And He is subjected, not that He may cease to be, but that God may be all in all, having, in the mystery of the subjection, to continue to be that which He no longer is, not having by dissolution to be robbed of Himself, that is, to be deprived of His being.

41. We have a sufficient and sacred guarantee for this belief in the authority of the Apostle. Through the Dispensation, and within time, the Lord Jesus Christ, the firstfruits of them that sleep, is to be subjected, that God may be all in all, and this subjection is not the debasement of His divinity, but the promotion of His assumed nature, for He Who is God and Man is now altogether God. But some may think that, when we say He was both glorified in the body whilst reigning in the body, and is hereafter to be subjected that God may be all in all, our belief finds no support for itself in the Gospels nor yet in the Epistles. We will, therefore, produce testimony of our faith, not only from the words of the Apostle, but also from our Lord’s mouth. We will shew that Christ said first with His own lips what He afterwards said by the mouth of Paul.

42. Does He not reveal to His Apostles the Dispensation of this glory by the express signification of the words, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God hath been glorified in Him, Gad hath glorified Him in Himself, and straightway hath He glorified Him. In the words, Now is the Son of Man honoured, and God is honoured in Him, we have first the glory of the Son of Man, then the glory of God in the Son of Man. So there is first signified the glory of the body, which it borrows from its association with the divine nature: and then follows the promotion to a fuller glory derived from an addition to the glory of the body. If God hath been honoured in Him, God hath honoured Him in Himself, and straightway hath God honoured Him. God has glorified Him in Himself, because He has already been glorified in Him. God was glorified in Him: this refers to the glory of the body, for by this glory is expressed in a human body the glory of God, in the glory of the Son of Man is seen the divine glory. God was glorified in Him, and therefore hath God glorified Him in Himself: that is, by His promotion to the Godhead, whose glory was increased in Him, God has glorified Him in Himself. Already
before this He was reigning in the glory which springs from the divine glory: from henceforth, however, He is Himself to pass into the divine glory. God hath glorified Him in Himself: that is, in that nature by which God is what He is. That God may be all in all: that His whole being, leaving behind the Dispensation by which He is man, may be eternally transformed into divinity. Nor is the time of this hidden from us: And God hath glorified Him in Himself, and straightway hath He glorified Him. At the moment when Judas arose to betray Him, He signified as present the glory which He would obtain after His Passion through the Resurrection, but assigned to the future the glory with which God would glorify Him with Himself. The glory of God is seen in Him in the power of the Resurrection, but He Himself, out of the Dispensation of subjection, will be taken eternally into the glory of God, that is, into God, the all in all.

43. But what absurd folly is it of the heretics to regard as unattainable for God that goal to which man hopes to attain, to imply that He is powerless to effect in Himself that which He is mighty to effect in us. It is not the language of reason or common sense to say that God is bound by some necessity of His nature to consult our happiness, but cannot bestow the like blessings upon Himself. God does not, indeed, need any further blessedness, for His nature and power stand fast in their eternal perfection. But although in the Dispensation, that mystery of great godliness, He Who is God became man, He is not powerless to make Himself again entirely God, for without doubt He will transform us also into that which as yet we are not. The final sequel of man’s life and death is the resurrection: the assured reward of our warfare is immortality and incorruption, not the ceaseless persistence of everlasting punishment, but the unbroken enjoyment anti happiness of eternal glory. These bodies of earthly origin shall be exalted to the fashion of a higher nature, and conformed to the glory of the Lord’s body. But what then of God found in the form of a servant? Though already, while still in the form of a servant, glorified in the body, shall He not be also conformed to God? Shall He bestow upon us the form of His glorified body, and yet be able to do for His own body nothing more than He does for Himself in common with us? For the most part the heretics interpret the words, Then shall He be subjected to Him that did subject all things to Himself, that God may be all in all, as if they meant that the Son is to be subjected to God the Father, in order that by the subjection of the Son, God the Father may be all in all. But is there still lacking in God some perfection which He is to obtain by the subjection of the Son? Can they believe that God does not already possess that final accession of blessed divinity, because it is said that by the coming of the fulness of time He shall be made all in all?

44. To me, who hold that God cannot be known except by devotion, even to answer such objections seems no less unholy than to support them. What presumption to suppose that words can adequately describe His nature, when thought is often too deep for words, and His nature transcends even the conceptions of thought! What blasphemy even to discuss whether anything is lacking in God, whether He is Himself full, or it remains for Him to be fuller than His fulness! If God, Who is Himself the source of His own eternal divinity, were capable of progress, that He should be greater to-day than yesterday, He could never reach the time when nothing would be wanting to Him, for the nature to which advance is still possible must always in its progress leave some ground ahead still untrodden: if it be subject to the law of progress,
though always progressing it must always be susceptible of further progress. But to Him, Who abides in perfect fulness, Who for ever is, there is no fulness left by which He can be made more full, for perfect fulness cannot receive an accession of further fulness. And this is the attitude of thought in which reverence contemplates God, namely, that nothing is wanting to Him, that He is full.

45. But the Apostle does not neglect to say with what manner of confession we should bear witness of God. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out! Far who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him? For of Him, and through Him, and in Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever and ever. No earthly mind can define God, no understanding can penetrate with its perception to sound the depth of His wisdom. His judgments defy the searching scrutiny of His creatures: the trackless paths of His knowledge baffle the zeal of all pursuers. His ways are plunged in the depths of incomprehensibility: nothing can be fathomed or traced to the end in the things of God. No one has ever been taught to know His mind, no one besides Himself ever permitted to share His counsel. But all this applies to us men only, and not to Him, through Whom are all things, the Angel of mighty Counsel, Who said, Na one knoweth the Son save the Father: neither doth arty one know the Father save the Son, and him to whom the Son hath willed to reveal Him. It is to curb our own feeble intellect, when it strains itself to fathom the depth of the divine nature with its descriptions and definitions, that we must re-echo the language of the Apostle's exclamation, lest we should attempt by rash conjecture to snatch from God more than He has been pleased to reveal to us.

46. It is a recognised axiom of natural philosophy, that nothing falls within the scope of the senses unless it is subjected to their observation, as for instance an object placed before the eyes, or an event posterior to the birth of human sense and intelligence. The former we can see and handle, and therefore the mind is qualified to pass a verdict upon it, since it can be examined by the senses of touch and sight. The latter, which is an event in time, produced or constituted since the origin of man, falls within the limits in which the discerning sense may claim to pass judgment, since it is not prior in time to our perception and reason. For our sight cannot perceive the invisible, since it only distinguishes, the seen; our reason cannot project itself into the time when it was not, because it can only judge of that, to which it is prior in time. And even within these limits, the infirmity which is bound up with its nature robs it of absolutely certain knowledge of the sequence of cause and effect. How much less then can it go back behind the time when it had its origin, and comprehend with its perception things which existed before it in the realms of eternity?

47. The Apostle then recognised that nothing can fall within our knowledge, except it be posterior in time to the faculty of sense. Accordingly when he had asserted the depth of the wisdom of God, the infinity of His inscrutable judgments, the secret of His un-searchable ways, the mystery of His unfathomable mind, the incomprehensibility of His uncommunicated counsel, he continued, For who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? Far of Him, and through Him, and in Him are all things. The eternal God is neither
subject to limitation, nor did human reason and intelligence exercise their functions before He had His being. His whole being is therefore a depth, which we can neither examine nor penetrate. We say His whole being, not to define it as limited, but to understand it in its unlimited boundlessness: because of no one has He received His being, no antecedent giver can claim service from Him in return for a gift bestowed: for of Him and through Him and in Him are all things. He does not lack things that are of Him and through Him and in Him. The Source and Maker of all, Who contains all, Who is beyond all, does not need that which is within Him, the Creator His creatures, the Possessor His possessions. Nothing is prior to Him, nothing derived from any other than Him, nothing beyond Him. What element of fulness is still lacking in God, which time will supply to make Him all in all? Whence can He receive it, if outside Him is nothing, and while nothing is outside Him, He is eternally Himself? And if He is eternally Himself, and there is nothing outside Him, with what increase shall He be made full, by what addition shall He be made other than He is? Did He not say, I am and I change not? What possibility is there of change in Him? What scope for progress? What is prior to eternity? What more divine than God? The subjection of the Son will not therefore make God to be all in all, nor will any cause perfect Him, from Whom and through Whom and in Whom are all causes. He remains God as He ever was, and He needs nothing further, for what He is, He is eternally of Himself and for Himself.

48. But neither is it necessary for the Only-begotten God that He should change. He is God, and that is the name of full and perfect divinity. For, as we said before, the meaning of the repeated glorifying, and the cause of the subjection is that God may be all in all: but it is a Mystery, not a necessity, that God is to be all in all. Christ abode in the form of God when He assumed the form of a servant, not being subjected to change, but emptying Himself; hiding within Himself, and remaining master of Himself though He was emptied. He constrained Himself even to the form and fashion of a man, lest the weakness of the assumed humility should not be able to endure the immeasurable power of His nature. His unbounded might contracted itself, until it could fulfil the duty of obedience even to the endurance of the body to which it was yoked. But since He was self-contained even when He emptied Himself, His authority suffered no diminution, for in the humiliation of the emptying He exercised within Himself the power of that authority which was emptied.

49. It is therefore for the promotion of us, the assumed humanity, that God shall be all in all. He Who was found in the form of a servant, though He was in the form of God, is now again to be confessed in the glory of God the Father: that is, without doubt He dwells in the form of God, in Whose glory He is to be confessed. All is therefore a dispensation only, and not a change of His nature; for He abides still in Him, in Whom He ever was. But there intervenes a new nature, which began in Him with His human birth, and so all that He obtains is on behalf of that nature which before was not God, since after the Mystery of the Dispensation God is all in all. It is, therefore, we who are the gainers, we who are promoted, for we shall be conformed to the glory of the body of God. Further the Only-begotten God, despite His human birth, is nothing less than God, Who is all in all. That subjection of the body, by which all that is fleshly in Him, is swallowed up into the spiritual nature, will make Him to be God and all in all, since He is Man also as well as God; and His humanity which advances towards this goal is ours also.
We shall be promoted to a glory conformable to that of Him Who became Man for us, being renewed unto the knowledge of God, and created again in the image of the Creator, as the Apostle says, Having put off the old man with his doings, and put on the new man, which is being renewed unto the knowledge of God, after the image of Him that created him. Thus is man made the perfect image of God. For, being conformed to the glory of the body of God, he is exalted to the image of the Creator, after the pattern assigned to the first man. Leaving sin and the old man behind, he is made a new man unto the knowledge of God, and arrives at the perfection of his constitution, since through the knowledge of his God he becomes the perfect image of God. Through godliness he is promoted to immortality, through immortality he shall live for ever as the image of his Creator.

Book 12 (Back to the Top)

1. At length, with the Holy Ghost speeding our way, we are approaching the safe, calm harbour of a firm faith. We are in the position of men, long tossed about by sea and wind, to whom it very often happens, that while great heaped-up waves delay them for a time around the coasts near the ports, at last that very surge of the vast and dreadful billows drives them on into a trusty, well-known anchorage. And this, I hope, will befall us, as we struggle in this twelfth book against the storm of heresy; so that while we venture out trusty bark therein upon the wave of this grievous impiety, this very wave may bring us to the haven of rest for which we long. For while all are driven about by the uncertain wind of doctrine, there is panic here and danger there, and then again there often is even shipwreck, because it is maintained on prophetic authority that God Only-begotten is a creature—so that to Him there belongs not birth but creation, because it has been said in the character of Wisdom, The Lord created Me as the beginning of His ways.

This is the greatest billow in the storm they raise, this is the big wave of the whirling tempest: yet when we have faced it, and it has broken without damage to our ship, it will speed us forward even to the all-safe harbour of the shore for which we long.

2. Yet we do not rest, like sailors, on uncertain or on idle hopes: whom, as they shape their course to their wish, and not by assured knowledge, at times the shifting, fickle winds forsake or drive from their course. But we have by our side the unfailing Spirit of faith, abiding with us by the gift of the Only-begotten God, and leading us to smooth waters in an unwavering course. For we recognise the Lord Christ as no creature, for indeed He is none such; nor as something that has been made, since He is Himself the Lord of all things that are made; but we know Him to be God, God the true generation of God the Father. All we indeed, as His goodness has thought fit, have been named and adopted as sons of God: but He is to God the Father the one, true Son, and the true and perfect birth, which abides only in the knowledge of the Father and the Son. But this only, and this alone, is our religion, to confess Him as the Son not adopted but born, not chosen but begotten. For we do not speak of Him either as made, or as not born; since we neither compare the Creator to His creatures, nor falsely speak of birth without begetting. He does not exist of Himself, Who exists through birth; nor is He not born, Who is the Son; nor can He, Who is the Son, come to exist otherwise than by being born,
because He is the Son.

3. Moreover no one doubts that the assertions of impiety always contradict and resist the assertions of religious faith; and that that cannot be piously held now which is already condemned as impiously conceived; as, for instance, the discrepancy and variance which these new correctors of the apostolic faith maintain between the Spirit of the Evangelists and that of Prophets; or their assertion that the Prophets prophesied one thing and the Evangelists preached another, since Solomon calls upon us to adore a creature, while Paul convicts those who serve a creature. And certainly these two texts do not seem to agree together, according to the blasphemous theory, whereby the Apostle, who was trained by the law, and separated by divine appointment, and spoke through Christ speaking in him, either was ignorant of the prophecy, or was not ignorant but contradicted it; and thus did not know Christ to be a creature when he named Him the Creator; and forbade the worship of a creature, warning us that the Creator alone is to be served, and saying, Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and served the creature, passing by the Creator Who is blessed far ever and ever.

4. Does Christ, Who is God, speaking in Paul, fail to refute this impiety of falsehood? Does He fail to condemn this lying perversion of truth? For through the Lord Christ all things were created; and therefore it is His proper name that He should be the Creator. Does not both the reality and the title of His creative power belong to Him? Melchisedec is our witness, thus declaring God to be Creator of heaven and earth: Blessed be Abraham of God most high, Who created heaven and earth. The prophet Hosea also is witness, saying, I am the Lord thy God, that establish the heavens and create the earth, Whose hands have created all the host of heaven. Peter too is witness, writing thus, Committing your souls as to a faithful Creator. Why do we apply the name of the work to the Maker of that work? Why do we give the same name to God and to our fellowmen? He is our Creator, He is the Creator of all the heavenly host.

5. Since by the faith of the Apostles and Evangelists these statements are referred in their meaning to the Son, through Whom all things were made, how shall He be made equal to the very works of His hands and be in the same category of nature as all other things? In the first place our human intelligence repudiates this statement that the Creator is a creature; since creation comes to exist by means of the Creator. But if He is a creature, He is both subject to corruption and exposed to the suspense of waiting, and is subjected to bondage. For the same blessed Apostle Paul says: For the long expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was subject to vanity, not of its own will, but on account of Him Who has made it subject in hope. Because also the creature itself shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. If, therefore, Christ is a creature, it must needs be that He is in uncertainty, hoping always with a tedious expectation, and that His long expectation, rather than ours, is waiting, and that while He waits He is subjected to vanity, and is subjected through a subjection due to necessity, not of His own will. But since He is subjected not of His own will, He must needs be also a bondservant; moreover since tie is a bondservant He must needs also be dwelling in a corruptible nature. For the
Apostle teaches that all these things belong to the creature, and that, when it shall be freed from these through a long expectation, it will shine with a glory proper to man. But what a thoughtless and impious assertion about God is this, to imagine Him exposed, through the insults which the creature bears, to such mockeries as that He should hope and serve, and be under compulsion and receive recognition, and be freed hereafter into a condition which is ours, not His; while really it is of His gift that we make our little progress.

6. But our impiety, by the licence of this forbidden language, waxes apace with yet deeper faithlessness; asserting that since the Son is a creature it is bound to maintain that the Father also does not differ from a creature. For Christ, remaining in the form of God, took the form of a servant; and if He is a creature Who is in the form of God, God can never be separate from the creature, because there is a creature in the form of God. But to be in the form of God can only be understood to mean, remaining in the nature of God whence also God is a creature, because there is a creature with His nature. But He Who was in the form of God, did not grasp at being equal with God, because from equality with God, that is, from the form of God, He descended into the form of a servant. But He could not descend from God into man, except by emptying Himself, as God, of the form of God. But when He emptied Himself, He was not effaced, so as not to be; since then He would have become other in kind than He had been. For neither did He, Who emptied Himself within Himself, cease to be Himself; since the power of His might remains even in the power of emptying Himself; and the transition into the form of a servant does not mean the loss of the nature of God, since to have put off the form of God is nothing less than a mighty act of divine power.

7. But to be in this way in the form of God is nothing else than to be equal with God: so that equality of honour is owed to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is in the form of God, as He Himself says, That all men may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father Who sent Him. There is never a difference between things which does not also imply a different degree of honour. The same objects deserve the same reverence; for otherwise the highest honour will be unworthily bestowed on those which are inferior, or with insult to the superior the inferior will be made equal to them in honour. But if the Son, regarded as a creation rather than a birth, be treated with a reverence equal to that paid the Father, then we grant no special meed of honour to the Father, since we charge ourselves with only such reverence towards Him as is shewn to a creature. But since He is equal to God the Father, inasmuch as He is born as God from Him, He is also equal to Him in honour, for He is a Son and not a creature.

8. This again is a notable utterance of the Father concerning Him: From the womb, before the morning star I begat Thee. Here, as we have often said already, nothing derogatory to God is implied in the concession to our weakness of understanding; as though, because He said that He begot Him from the womb, He were therefore composed of inner and outer parts, which unite to form His members, and owed ills being to the same causes within time to which earthly bodies owe theirs; when in fact He Whose existence is due to no natural necessities, free and perfect, and eternal Lord of all nature, in explanation of the true character of the birth of His Only-begotten, points to power of His own unchangeable nature. For though Spirit be
born of Spirit (consistently, be it remembered, with the true character of Spirit, through which it is also Spirit), nevertheless its only cause for being born lies within those perfect and unchangeable causes. And though it is from a perfect and unchangeable cause that it is born, it must needs be born from that cause, in accordance with the true character of that cause. Now the necessary process of human birth is conditioned by the causes which operate upon the womb. But as God is not made up of parts, but is unchangeable as being Spirit, for God is Spirit, He is subject to no natural necessity working within Him. But since He was telling us of the birth of Spirit from Spirit, He instructed our understanding by an example from causes which work among us: not to give an example of the manner of birth, but to declare the fact of generation; not that the example might prove Him subject to necessity, but that it might enlighten our mind. If, therefore, God Only-begotten is a created being, what meaning is there in a revelation which uses the common facts of human birth to indicate that He was divinely generated?

9. For often by means of these members of our bodies, God illustrates for us the method of His own operations, enlightening our intelligence by using terms commonly understood: as when He says, Whose hands created all the host of heaven; or again, The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous; or again, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart. Now by the heart is denoted the desire, to which David was well-pleasing through the uprightness of his character; and knowledge of the whole universe, whereby nothing is beyond God’s ken, is expressed under the term ‘eyes;’ and His creative activity, whereby nothing exists which is not of God, is understood by the name of ‘hands.’ Therefore as God wills and foresees and does everything, and even in the use of terms denoting bodily action must be understood to have no need of the assistance of a body; surely, now, in the statement that He begat from the womb, the idea is brought forward not of a human origin produced by a bodily act, but of a birth which must be understood as spiritual, since in the other cases where members are spoken of, this is done to represent to us other active powers in God.

10. Therefore since heart is put for desire, and eyes for sight, and hands for work achieved,—and yet, without in any way being made up of parts, God desires and foresees and acts, these same operations being expressed by the words heart, and eyes, and hand,—is not the meaning of the phrase that He begat from the womb an assertion of the reality of the birth? Not that He begat the Son from His womb, just as neither does He act by means of a hand, nor see by means of eyes, nor desire by means of a heart. But since by the employment of these terms it is made clear that He really acts and sees and wills everything, so from the word ‘womb’ it is clear that He really begot from Himself Him Whom He begat; not that he made use of a womb, but that He purposed to express reality. Just in the same way He does not trill or see or act through bodily faculties, but uses the names of these members in order that through the services performed by corporeal forces we may understand the power of forces which are not corporeal.

11. Now the constitution of human society does not allow, nor indeed do the words of our Lord’s teaching permit, that the disciple should be above his master, or the slave rule over his lord; because, in these contrasted positions, subordination to knowledge is the fitting state of
ignorance, and unconditional submission the appointed lot of servitude. And since it is the common judgment of all that this is so, whose rashness now shall induce us to say or think that God is a creature, or that the Son has been made? For nowhere do we find that our Master and Lord spoke thus of Himself to His servants and disciples, or that He taught that His birth was a creation or a making. Moreover, the Father never bore witness to Him as being aught else but a Son, nor did the Son profess that God was aught else than His own true Father, assuredly affirming that He was born, not made nor created, as He says, Every one that loveth the Father, loveth also the Son Who is born of Him.

12. On the other hand His works in creation are acts of making and not a birth through generation. For the heaven is not a son, neither is the earth a son, nor is the world a birth; for of these it is said, All things were made through Him; and by the prophet, The heavens are the works of Thy hands; and by the same prophet, Neglect not the works of Thy hands. Is the picture a son of the painter, or the sword a son of the smith or the house a son of the architect? These are the works of their making: but He alone is the Son of the Father Who is born of the Father.

13. And we indeed are sons of God, but sons because the Son has made us such. For we were once sons of wrath, but have been made sons of God through the Spirit of adoption, and have earned that title by favour, not by right of birth. And since everything that is made, before it was made, was not, so we, although we were not sons, have been made what we are. For formerly we were not sons: but after we have earned the name we are such. Moreover, we have not been born, but made; not begotten, but purchased. For God purchased a people for Himself, and by this act begot them. But we never learn that God begot sons in the strict sense of the term. For He does not say, “I have begotten and brought up My sons,” but only, I have begotten and brought up sons.

14. Yet perchance inasmuch as He says, My firstborn Son Israel, some one will interpret the fact that He said, My firstborn, so as to deprive the Son of the characteristic property of birth; as though, because God also applied to Israel the epithet Mine, the adoption of those who have been made sons was misrepresented as though it were an actual birth, and therefore the phrase used of Him, This is My beloved Son, is not solely applicable to the birth of God, since the epithet My is (so it is asserted) shared with those who clearly were not born sons. But that they were not really born, although they are said to have been born, is shewn even from that passage where it is said, A people which shall be born, whom the Lord hath made.

15. Therefore the people of Israel is born, in such wise that it is made; nor do we take the assertion that it is born as contradictory to the fact that it is made. For it is a son by adoption, not by generation; nor is this its true character, but its title. For although the words. My firstborn are written of it; there is yet a great and wide difference between My beloved Son, and My firstborn son. For where there is birth, there we see, My beloved Son; but where there is a choice from among the nations, and adoption through an act of will, there is My firstborn son. Here the people is God’s, in regard to its character as firstborn; in the former ease the fact that He is God’s, relates to His character as a Son. Again, in a case of birth the father’s
ownership comes first, and then his love; in a case of adoption the primary fact is that the son is made a firstborn, and then comes the ownership. Thus to Israel, adopted for a son out of all the peoples of the earth, properly belonged the character of a firstborn; but to Him alone, Who is born God, properly belongs the character of a Son. Accordingly there is no true and complete birth where sonship is imputed rather than real: since it is not doubtful that that people, which is born into a state of sonship, is also made. But since it would not have been what it is now become, and inasmuch as its birth is but a name for its being made, it has no true birth, since it was something else before it was born. And for this reason it was not before it was born, that is, before it was made, because that which is a son from among the nations was a nation before it was a son: and accordingly it is not truly a son, because it was not always a son. But God Only-begotten was neither at any time not a Son, nor was He anything before He was a Son, nor is He Himself anything except a Son. And so He Who is always a Son, has rendered it impossible for us to think of Him that there was a time when He was not.

16. For indeed human births involve a previous non-existence, because, as a first reason, all are born from those, all of whom formerly were not. For although each one who is born has his origin from one who has been, nevertheless that very parent, from whom he is born, was not before he was born. Again, as a second reason, he who is born, is born after that he was not, for time existed before he was born. For if he is born to-day, in the time which was yesterday, he was not; and he has come into a state of being from a state of not being; and our reason enforces that that which is born to-day did not exist yesterday. And so it remains that his birth, by virtue of which he is, took place after a state of non-existence; since necessarily today implies the previous existence of yesterday, so that it is true of it that there was a time when it was not. And these facts hold good of the origin of everything relating to man: all receive a beginning, previously to which they had not been: firstly, as we have explained, in respect of time, and then in respect of cause And in respect of time indeed there is no doubt that things which now begin to be, formerly were not; and this is true also in respect of cause, since it is certain that their existence is not derived from a cause within themselves. For think over all the causes of beginnings, and direct your understanding to their antecedents: you will find that nothing began by self-causation, since nothing is born by the free act of the parent, but all things are created what they are through the power of God. Whence also it is a natural property of each class of things by virtue of actual heredity, that it once was not and then began to be, beginning after time began, and existing within time. And while all existing things have an origin later than that of time, their causes also, in their turn, were once nonexistent, being born from things which once were not. Even Adam, the first parent of the human race, was formed from the earth, which was made out of nothing, and after time, that is to say, after the heaven and earth, and the day and the sun, moon and stars, and he had no first beginning in being born, and began to be when he once had not been.

17. But for God Only-begotten, Who is preceded by no antecedent time, the possibility is excluded that at some time He was not, since that “some time” thus becomes prior to Him; and again, the assertion that He was not involves the potion of time: whence time will not begin to be after Him, but He Himself will begin to be after time, and, inasmuch as He was not before He was born, the very period when He was not will take precedence of Him. Further, He Who is
born from Him Who really is, cannot be understood to have been born from that which was not: since He Who really is, is the cause of His existing, and His birth cannot have its origin in that which is not. And therefore since in His case it is not true either in regard of time that He ever was not, or in regard of the Father, that is, the Author of His being, that He has come into existence out of nothing, He has left no possibility with regard to Himself either of His having been born out of nothing, or of His not having existed before He was born.

18. Now I am not ignorant that most of those, whose mind being dulled by impiety does not accept the mystery of God, or who through the strong influence of a hostile spirit are ready to manifest, under the cover of reverence, a marl passion for disparaging God, are wont to make strange assertions in the ears of simple-minded men. They assert that since we say that the Son always has been, and that He never has been anything which He has not always been, we are therefore declaring that He is without birth, inasmuch as He always has been; since, according to the workings of human reason, that which always has existed cannot possibly have been born: since (so they urge) the cause of a thing being born, is that something, which was not, may come into existence, while the coming into existence of something which was not, means nothing else, according to the judgment of common sense, than its being born. They may add those arguments, subtle enough and pleasant to hear;—“If He was born, He began to be; at the time when He began to be, He was not: and when He was not, it cannot be that He was.” By such proofs let them maintain that it is the language of reasonable piety to say, “He was not before He was born: because in order that He might come to be, One Who was not, not One Who was, was born. Nor did He Who was, require a birth, although He WhO was not was born, to the end that He might come to be.”

19. Now, first of all, men professing a devout knowledge of divine things, in matters where the truth preached by Evangelists and Apostles shewed the way, ought to have laid aside the intricate questions of a crafty philosophy, and rather to have followed after the faith which rests in God: because the sophistry of a syllogistical question easily disarms a weak understanding of the protection of its faith, since treacherous assertion lures on the guileless defender, who tries to support his case by enquiry into facts, till at last it robs him, by means of his own enquiry, of his certainty; so that the answerer no longer retains in his consciousness a truth which by his admission he has surrendered. For what answer accommodates itself so well to the questioner’s purpose, as the admission on our part, when we are asked, “Does anything exist before it is born?” that that which is born, did not previously exist? For it is contrary both to nature and to necessary reason that a thing which already exists should be born: since a thing must needs be born in order that it may come to be, and not because it already existed. But when we have made this concession, because it is rightly made, we lose the certainty of our faith, and being ensnared we fall in with their impious and unchristian designs.

20. But the blessed Apostle Paul, taking precaution against this, as we have often shewn, warned us to be on our guard, saying: Take heed lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ, in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Therefore we must be on our guard against philosophy, and methods which rest upon traditions of men we
must not so much avoid as refute. Any concession that we make must imply not that we are
out-argued but that we are confused, for it is right that we, who declare that Christ is the
power of God and the wisdom of God, should not flee from the doctrines of men, but rather
overthrow them; and we must restrain and instruct the simple-minded lest they be spoiled by
these teachers. For since God can do all things, and in His wisdom can do all things wisely, for
neither is His purpose unarmed with power nor His power unguided by purpose, it behoves
those who proclaim Christ to the world, to face the irreverent and faulty doctrines of the world
with the knowledge imparted by that wise Omnipotence, according to the saying of the blessed
Apostle: For our weapons are not carnal but powerful for God, for the casting down of
strongholds, casting down reasonings and every high thing which is exalted against the
knowledge of God. The Apostle did not leave us a faith which was bare and devoid of reason;
for although a bare faith may be most mighty to salvation, nevertheless, unless it is trained by
teaching, while it will have indeed a secure retreat to withdraw to in the midst of foes, it will
yet be unable to maintain a safe and strong position for resistance. Its position will be like that
which a camp affords to a weak force after a flight; not like the undismayed courage of men
who have a camp to hold. Therefore we must beat down the insolent arguments which are
raised against God, and destroy the fastnesses of fallacious reasoning, and crush cunning
intellects which hit themselves up to impiety, with weapons not carnal but spiritual, not with
earthly, learning but with heavenly wisdom; so that in proportion as divine things differ from
human, so may the philosophy of heaven surpass the rivalry of earth.

21. Accordingly let misbelief abandon its efforts; let it not think, because it does not
understand, that we deny a truth which, in fact, we alone rightly understand and believe. For
while we declare in so many words that He was born, nevertheless we do not assert that He
was ever not born. For it is not the same thing to be not born and to be born: since the latter
term expresses origin derived from some other, the former origin derived from none. And it is
one thing to exist always, as the Eternal, without any source of being, and another to be co-
eternal with a Father, having Him for the Source of being. For where a father is the source of
being, there also is birth; and further, where the Source of being is eternal, the birth also is
eternal: for since birth comes from the source of being, birth which comes from an eternal
Source of being must be eternal. Now everything which always exists, is also eternal. But
nevertheless, not everything which is eternal is also not born; since that which is born from
evertnity has eternally the character of having been born; but that which is not born is
ingenerate as well as eternal. But if that which has been born from the Eternal is not born
eternal, it will follow that the Father also is not an eternal Source of being. Therefore if any
measure of eternity is wanting to Him Who has been born of the eternal Father, clearly the
very same measure is wanting to the Author of His being; since what belongs in an infinite
degree to Him Who begets, belongs in an infinite degree to Him also Who is born. For neither
reason nor intelligence allows of any interval between the birth of God the Son and the
generation by God the Father; since the generation consists in the birth, and the birth in the
generation. Thus each of these events coincides exactly with the other; neither took place
unless both took place. Therefore that which owes its existence to both these events cannot be
eternal unless they both are eternal; since neither of the two correlatives, apart from the
other, has any reality, because it is impossible for one to exist without the other.
22. But some one, who cannot receive this divine mystery, will say, “Everything which has been born, once was not; since it was born in order that it might come into existence.”

23. But does any one doubt that all human beings that have been born, at one time were not? It is, however, one thing to be born of some one who once was not, and another to be born of One Who always is. For every state of infancy, since previously it had no existence, began from some point of time. And tiffs again, growing up into childhood, still later urges on youth to fatherhood. Yet the man was not always a father, for he advanced to youth through boyhood, and to boyhood through original infancy. Therefore he who was not always a father, also did not always beget: but where the Father is eternal, the Son also is eternal. And so if you hold, whether by argument or by instinct, that God, in the mystery of our knowledge of Whom one property is that He is Father, was not always the Father of the begotten Son, you hold also, as a matter of understanding and of knowledge, that the Son, Who was begotten, did not always exist. But if the property of fatherhood be co-eternal with the Father, then necessarily also the property of sonship must be co-eternal with the Son. And how will it square with our language or our understanding to maintain that He was not before He was born, Whose property it is that He always was what He has been born.

24. And so God Only-begotten, containing in Himself the form and image of the invisible God, in all things which are properties of God the Father is equal to Him by virtue of the fulness of true Godhead in Himself. For, as we have shewn in the former books, in respect of power and veneration He is as mighty and as worthy of honour as the Father: so also, inasmuch as the Father is always Father, He too, inasmuch as He is the Son, possesses the like property of being always the Son. For according to the words spoken to Moses, He Who is, hath sent Me unto you, we obtain the unambiguous conception that absolute being belongs to God; since that which is, cannot be thought of or spoken of as not being. For being and not being are contraries, nor can these mutually exclusive descriptions be simultaneously true of one and the same object: for while the one is present, the other must be absent. Therefore, where anything is, neither conception nor language will admit of its not being. When our thoughts are turned backwards, and are continually carried back further and further to understand the nature of Him Who is, this sole fact about Him, that He is, remains ever prior to our thoughts; since that quality, which is infinitely present in God, always withdraws itself from the backward gaze of our thoughts, though they reach back to an infinite distance. The result is that the backward straining of our thoughts can never grasp anything prior to God's property of absolute existence; since nothing presents itself, to enable us to understand the nature of God, even though we go on seeking to eternity, save always the fact that God always is. That then which has both been declared about God by Moses, that of which our human intelligence can give no further explanation; that very quality the Gospels testify to be a property of God Only-begotten; since in the beginning was the Word, and since the Word was with God, and since He was the true Light, and since God Only-begotten is in the bosom of the Father, and since Jesus Christ is God over all.

25. Therefore He was, and He is, since He is from Him Who always is what He is. But to be from
Him, that is to say, to be from the Father, is birth. Moreover, to be always from Him, Who always is, is eternity; but this eternity is derived not from Himself, but from the Eternal. And from the Eternal nothing can spring but what is eternal: for if the Offspring is not eternal, then neither is the Father, Who is the source of generation, eternal. Now since it is the special characteristic of His being that His Father always exists, and that He is always His Son, and since eternity is expressed in the name HE THAT IS, therefore, since He possesses absolute being, He possesses also eternal being. Moreover, no one doubts that generation implies birth, and that birth points to one existing from that time forth, and not to one who does not continue. Furthermore, there can be no doubt that no one who already was in existence could be born. For no cause of birth can accrue to Him, Who of Himself continues eternal. But God Only-begotten, Who is the Wisdom of God, and the Power and the Word of God, since He was born, bears witness to the Father as the source of His being. Since He was born of One, Who eternally exists, He was not born of nothing. Since He was born before times eternal, His birth must necessarily be prior to all thought. There is no room for the verbal quibble, “He was not, before He was born.” For if He is within the range of our thought, in the sense that He was not before He was born, then both our thought and time are prior to His birth; since everything which once was not, is within the compass of thought and time, by the very meaning of the assertion that it once was not, which separates off, within time, a period when it did not exist. But He is from the Eternal, and yet has always been; He is not ingenerate, yet never was non-existent: since to have always been transcends time, and to have been born is birth.

26. And so we confess that God Only-begotten was born, but born before times eternal: since we must make our confession within such limits as the express preaching of Apostles and Prophets assigns to us; though at the same time human thought cannot grasp any intelligible idea of birth out of time, since it is inconsistent with the nature of earthly beings that any of them should be born before all times. But when we make this assertion, how can we reconcile with it, as part of the same doctrine, the contradictory statement that before His birth He was not, when according to the Apostle He is God Only-begotten before times eternal? If, therefore, the belief that He was born before times eternal is not only the reasonable conclusion of human intelligence, but the confession of thoughtful faith, then, since birth implies some author of being, and what surpasses all time is eternal, and whatever is born before times eternal transcends earthly perception, we are certainly exalting by impious self-will a notion of human reason, if we maintain in a carnal sense that before He was born He was not, since He is born eternal, beyond human perception or carnal intelligence. And again, whatever transcends time is eternal.

27. For we can embrace all time in imagination or knowledge, since we know that what is now to-day, did not exist yesterday, because what was yesterday is not now; and on the other hand what is now, is only now and was not also yesterday. And by imagination we can so span the past that we have no doubt that before some city was founded, there existed a time in which that city had not been founded. Since, therefore, all time is the sphere of knowledge or imagination, we judge of it by the perceptions of human reason; hence we are considered to have reasonably asserted about anything, “It was not, before it was born,” since antecedent time is prior to the origin of every single thing. But on the other hand, since in things of God,
that is to say, in regard to the birth of God, there is nothing that is not before time eternal: it is illogical to use of Him the phrase “before He was born,” or to suppose that He Who possesses before times eternal the eternal promise, is merely (in the language of the blessed Apostle) in hope of eternal life, which God Who cannot lie has promised before times eternal, or to say that once He was not. For reason rejects the notion that He began to exist after anything, Who, so we must confess, existed before times eternal.

28. We may grant that for anything to be born before times eternal is not the way of human nature, nor a matter which we can understand; and yet in this we believe God’s declarations about Himself. How then does the infidelity of our own day assert, according to the conceptions of human intelligence, that that had no existence before it was born, which the Apostolic faith tells us was, in some manner inconceivable to the human understanding, always born, or in other words existed before times eternal? For what is born before time is always born; since that which exists before time eternal, always exists. But what has always been born, cannot at any time have had no existence; since non-existence at a given time is directly contrary to eternity of existence. Moreover, existing always excludes the idea of not having existed always. And the idea of not having existed always being excluded by the postulate that He has always been born, we cannot conceive the supposition that He did not exist before He was born. For it is obvious that He Who was born before times eternal, has always been born, although we can forth no positive conception of anything having been born before all time. For if we must confess (as is clearly necessary) that He has been born before every creature, whether invisible or corporeal, and before all ages and times eternal, and before all perception, Who always exists through the very fact that He has been so born;—then by no manner of thought can it be conceived that before He was born, He did not exist; since He Who has been born before times eternal, is prior to all thought, and we can never think that once He did not exist, when we have to confess that He always exists.

29. But our opponent cunningly anticipates us with this carping objection. “If,” be urges, “it is inconceivable that He did not exist before He was born, it must be conceivable that One Who already existed was born.”

30. I will ask this objector in reply, whether he remembers my calling Him anything else than born, and whether I did not say that existence before times eternal and birth have the same meaning in the case of Him that was, For the birth of One already existing is not really birth, but a self-wrought change through birth, and the eternal existence of One Who is born means that in His birth He is prior to any conception of time, and that there is no tooth for the mind to suppose that at any time He was unborn. And so an eternal birth before times eternal is not the same as existence before being born. But to have been born always before times eternal excludes the possibility of having had no existence be fore birth.

31. Again, this same fact excludes the possibility of saying that He existed before He was born; because He Who transcends perception transcends it in every respect. For if the notion of being born, though always existing, transcends thought, it is equally impossible that the notion that He did not exist before He was born should be a subject of thought. And so, since we must
confess that to have been always born means for us nothing beyond the fact of birth, the question whether He did or did not exist before He was born cannot be determined under our conditions of thought; since this one fact that He was born before times eternal ever eludes the grasp of our thought. So He was born and yet has always existed; He Who does not allow anything else to be understood or said about Him than that He was born. For since He is prior to time itself within which thought exists (since time eternal is previous to thought), He debars thought from determining concerning Him, whether He was or was not before He was born; since existence before birth is incompatible with the idea of birth, and previous non-existence involves the idea of time. Therefore, while the infinity of times eternal is fatal to any explanation involving the idea of time—that is to say, to the notion that He did not exist; His birth equally forbids any that is inconsistent with it,—that is to say, the notion that He existed before He was born. For if the question of His existence or His non-existence can be determined under our conditions of thought, then the birth itself must be after time; for He Who does not always exist must, of necessity, have begun to be after some given point of time.

32. Therefore the conclusion reached by faith and argument and thought is that the Lord Jesus both was born and always existed: since if the mind survey the past in search of knowledge concerning the Son, this one fact and nothing else, will be constantly present to the enquirer’s perception, that He was born and always existed. As therefore it is a property of God the Father to exist without birth, so also it must belong to the Son to exist always through birth. But birth can declare nothing except that there is a Father and the title Father nothing else except that there is a birth. For neither those names nor the nature of the case, will allow of any intermediate position. For either He was not always a Father, unless there was always also a Son; or if He was always a Father, there was always also a Son; since whatever period of time is denied to the Son, to make His sonship non-eternal, just so much the Father lacks of having been always a Father: so that although He was always God, nevertheless He cannot have been also a Father for the same infinity during which He is God.

33. Now the declarations of impiety even go so far as not only to ascribe to the Son birth in time, but also generation in time to the Father; because the process of generation and the birth take place within one period.

34. But, heretic, do you consider it pious and devout to confess that God indeed always existed, yet was not always Father? For if it is pious for you to think so, you must then condemn Paul of impiety, when he says that the Son existed before times eternal: you must also accuse Wisdom itself, when it bears witness concerning itself that it was founded before the ages: for it was present with the Father when He was preparing the heaven. But in order that you may assign to God a beginning of His being a Father, first determine the starting-point at which the times must have begun. For if they had a beginning, the Apostle is a liar for declaring them to be eternal. For you all are accustomed to reckon the times from the creation of the sun and the moon, since it is written of them, And let them be far signs and for times and for years. But He Who is before the heaven, which in your view is even before time, is also before the ages. Nor is He merely before the ages, but also before the generations of generations which precede the ages. Why do you limit things divine and infinite by what is
perishable and earthly and narrow? With regard to Christ, Paul knows of nothing except an eternity of times. Wisdom does not say that it is after anything, but before everything. In your judgment the times were established by the sun and the moon; but David shews that Christ remains before the sun, saying, His is name is before the sun. And lest you should think that the things of God began with the formation of this universe, he says again, And for generations of generations before the moon. These great men counted worthy of prophetic inspiration look down upon time: every opening is barred whereby human perception might penetrate behind the birth, which transcends times eternal. Yet let the faith of a devout imagination accept this as limit of its speculations, remembering that the Lord Jesus Christ, God Only-begotten, is born in a manner to be acknowledged as a perfect birth, and in the reverence paid to His divinity, not forgetting that He is eternal.

35. But we are accused of lying, and together with us the doctrine preached by the Apostle is attacked, because while it confesses the birth, it asserts the eternity of that birth: the result being that, while the birth bears witness to an Author of being, the assertion of eternity in the mystery of the divine birth transgresses the limits of human thought. For there is brought forward against us the declaration of Wisdom concerning itself, when it taught that it was created in these words The Lord created Me for the beginning of His ways.

36. And, O wretched heretic! you turn the weapons granted to the Church against the Synagogue, against belief in the Church’s preaching, and distort against the common salvation of all the sure meaning of a saving doctrine. For you maintain by these words that Christ is a creature, instead of silencing the Jew, who denies that Christ was God before eternal ages, and that His power is active in all the working and teaching of God, by these words of the living Wisdom! For Wisdom has in this passage asserted that it had been created for the beginning of the ways of God and for His works from the commencement of the ages, lest perchance it might be supposed that it did not subsist before Mary; yet has not employed this word ‘created’ in order to signify that its birth was a creation, since it was created for the beginning of God’s ways and for His works. Nay rather lest any one should suppose that this beginning of the ways, which is indeed the starting-point for the human knowledge of things divine, was meant to subordinate an infinite birth to conditions of time, Wisdom declared itself established before the ages. For, since it is one thing to be created for the beginning of the ways and for the works of God, and another to be established before the ages, the establishing was intended to be understood as prior to the creation; and the very fact of its being established for God’s works before the ages was intended to point to the mystery of the creation; since the establishing is before the ages, but the creation for the beginning of the ways and for the works of God is after the commencement of the ages.

37. But now, test the terms ‘creation’ and ‘establishing’ should be an obstacle to belief in the divine birth, these words follow, Before He made the earth, before He made firm the mountains, before all the hills He begat Me. Thus He is begotten before the earth, Who is established before the ages; and not only before the earth, but also before the mountains and hills. And indeed in these expressions, since Wisdom speaks of itself, more is meant than is said. For all objects which are used to convey the idea of infinity must be of such a kind as to be
subsequent in point of time to no single thing and to no class of things. But things existing in
time cannot possibly be fitted to indicate eternity; because, from the very fact that they are
posterior to other things, they are incapable of suggesting the thought of infinity as a
beginning, themselves having their own beginning in time. For what wonder is it, that God
should have begotten the Lord Christ before the earth, when the origin of the angels is found
to be prior to the creation of the earth? Or why should He, Who was said to be begotten
before the earth, be also declared to be born before the mountains, and not only before the
mountains but also before the hills; the hills being mentioned, as an afterthought, after the
mountains, and reason requiring that there should be a world before mountains could exist?
For such reasons it cannot be supposed that these words were used merely in order that He
might be understood to exist prior to hills and mountains and earth, Who surpasses by the
eternity of His own infinity things which are themselves prior to earth and mountains and hills.

38. But this divine discourse has not left our understandings unenlightened, since it explains
the reason of the phrase in what follows:—God made the regions, both the uninhabitable parts
and the heights which are inhabited under the heaven. When He was preparing the heaven, I
was with Him; and when He was setting apart His own seat. When above the winds He made
the clouds huge in the upper air, and when He placed securely the springs under the heaven,
and when He made firm the foundations of the earth, I was by Him, joining all things together.
What period in time is here? Or how far are the conceptions of human intelligence allowed to
reach beyond the infinite birth of God Only-begotten? By means of things whose creation we
can conceive in our mind, it is not possible to understand the generation of Him, Who is prior
to all these things; and hence we cannot maintain that He came, indeed, first in time, yet was
not infinite, inasmuch as the only privilege bestowed upon Him was a birth prior to things
temporal. For in that case, since they, by their constitution, are subject to the conditions of
time, He, though prior to them all, would be equally subject to conditions of time, because
their creation within time would define the time of His birth, namely that He was born before
then; for that which is antecedent to temporal things stands in the same relation to time as
they.

39. But the voice of God, our instruction in true wisdom, speaks what is perfect, and expresses
the absolute truth, when it teaches that itself is prior not merely to things of time, but even to
things infinite. For when the heaven was being prepared, it was present with God. Is the
preparation of the heaven an act of God within time; so that an impulse of thought suddenly
surprised His mind, as though it had been previously dull and inert. and after the fashion of
men He sought for materials and instruments for fashioning the heaven? Nay, the prophet’s
conception of the working of God is far different, when He says, By the word of the Lord were
the heavens established, and all their power by the breath of His mouth. Yet the heavens
needed the command of God, that they might be established; for their arrangement and
excellence in this firm unshaken constitution, which they display, did not arise from the
blending and commingling of some kind of matter, but from the breath of the mouth of God.
What then does it mean, that Wisdom begotten of God was present with Him, when He was
preparing the heaven? For neither does the creation of heaven consist in a preparation of
material, nor does it consist with the nature of God to linger over preliminary thoughts
concerning His work. For everything, which there is in created things, was always with God: for although these things in respect of their creation have a beginning, nevertheless they have no beginning in respect of the knowledge and power of God. And here the prophet is our witness, saying, O God, Who hast made all things which shall be. For although things future, in so far as they are to be created, are still to be made, yet to God, with Whom there is nothing new or sudden in creation they have already been made; since there is a dispensation of times for their creation, and in the prescient working of the divine power they have already been made. Here, therefore, Wisdom, in teaching that it was born before the ages, teaches that it is not merely prior to things which have been created, but is even co-eternal with what is eternal, to wit, with the preparation of the heaven, and the setting apart of the abode of God. For this abode was not set apart at the time when it was actually made, for setting apart and fashioning an abode are different things. Nor again was the heaven formed at the time when it was (ideally) prepared, for Wisdom was with God both when He prepared and when He set apart the heaven. And afterwards it was fashioning the heaven by the side of God Who formed it: it proves its eternity by its presence with Him as He prepares; it reveals its functions, when it fashions by the side of God Who forms. Therefore, in the passage before us it said that it was begotten even before the earth and mountains and hills, because it meant to teach that it was present at the preparation of the heaven; in order that it might shew that, even when the heaven was being prepared, this work was already finished in the counsel of God, for to Him there is nothing new.

40. For the preparation for creation is perpetual and eternal: nor was the frame of this universe actually made by isolated acts of thought, in the sense that first the heaven was thought of, and afterwards there came into God’s mind a thought anti plan concerning the earth; that He thought of each part singly, so that first the earth was spread out as a plain, and then through better counsels was made to rise up in mountains, and yet again was diversified with hills, and in the fourth place was also made habitable even in the heights; that so the heaven was prepared an I the abode of God set apart, and huge clouds in the upper air held the exhalations caught up by the winds; then afterwards sure springs began to run under the heaven, and, last of all, the earth was made firm with strong foundations. For Wisdom declares that it is prior to all these things. But since all things under the heaven were made through God, and Christ was present at the fashioning of the heaven, and preceded even the eternity of the heaven which was prepared, this fact does not allow us to think in respect to God of disconnected thoughts on details, since the whole preparation of these things is co-eternal with God. For although, as Moses teaches, each act of creation had its proper order;—the making the firmament solid, the laying bare of the dry land, the gathering together of the sea, the ordering of the stars, the generation by the waters and the earth when they brought forth living creatures out of themselves; yet the creation of the heaven and earth and other elements is not separated by the slightest interval in God’s working, since their preparation had been completed in like infinity of eternity in the counsel of God.

41. Thus, though Christ was present in God with these infinite and eternal decrees, He has granted to us nothing more than a knowledge of the fact of His birth; in order that, just as an apprehension of the birth is the means which leads to faith in God, so also the knowledge of
the eternity of His birth might avail to sustain piety; since neither reason nor experience allow us to speak of any but an eternal Son as proceeding from a Father Who is eternal.

42. But perhaps the word ‘creation,’ and its employment of Him, disturbs us. Certainly the word ‘creation’ would disturb us, if birth before the ages and creation for the beginning of the ways of God and for His works were not affirmed of Him. For birth cannot be understood to denote creation, since the birth precedes causation, but the creation takes place through causation. For before the preparation of the heaven and before the commencement of the ages was He established, Who was created for the beginning of the ways of God and for His works. Is it possible that to be created for the beginning of the ways of God and for His works, means the same as to be born before all things? No: one of these ideas relates to time employed in action, but the other bears a sense which has no relation to time.

43. Or perhaps you wish the assertion that He was created for the works to be understood in the sense that He was created on account of the works; in other words that Christ was created for the sake of performing the works. In that case He exists as a servant and a builder of the universe, and was not born the Lord of Glory; He was created for the service of forming the ages, and was not always the beloved Son and the King of the ages. But, although the general understanding of Christians contradicts this impious thought of yours, recognising that it is one thing to be created for the beginning of the ways of God and for His works, and another to be born before the ages, yet this very same passage thwarts your purpose of falsely asserting that the Lord Christ was created, on account of the formation of the universe, since it shews that God the Father is the Maker and Former of the universe, and shews it convincingly, since Christ Himself was present fashioning by the side of Him Who was forming all things. But, while all Scripture was designed to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Creator of the universe, Wisdom, to destroy all occasion for impiety, has here declared that though God the Father was the Constructor of the universe, yet itself was not absent from Him while constructing it, since it was present with Him even when He was preparing it beforehand, and that when the Father formed the universe, Wisdom also was fashioning it by the side of Him Who formed it, and was present with Him even when He prepared it. Whence Wisdom would have us understand that it was not created on account of God’s works, by the very fact that it had been present at the eternal preparation of works yet to be, and proves Scripture not to be false, by the fact that it fashioned the universe by the side of God when He formed it.

44. Learn at last, heretic, from the revelation of Catholic teaching, what is the meaning of the saying that Christ was created for the beginning of the ways of God and for His works; and be taught by the words of Wisdom itself the folly of your impious dulness. For thus it begins: If I shall declare unto you the things which are done every day, I will remember to recount those things which are from of old. For Wisdom had said before, You, O men, I entreat, and I utter my voice to the sons of men. O ye simple, understand subtilty, moreover ye unlearned, apply your heart; and again, Through Me kings reign, and mighty men decree justice. Through Me princes are magnified, and through Me despot possesses the earth; and again, I walk in the ways of equity, and move in the midst of the paths of justice; that I may divide substance to those that love Me, and fill their treasures with good things. Wisdom is not silent about its daily
work. And firstly entreating all men, it advises the simple to understand subtilty, and the unlearned to apply their heart, in order that a zealous and diligent reader may ponder the different and separate meanings of the words. And so it teaches that by its methods and ordinances all success, all attainment of knowledge or fame or wealth, is achieved: it shews that within itself are contained the reigns of kings and the prudence of the mighty, and the famous works of princes, and the justice of despots who possess the earth; that it moreover does not mingle with wicked deeds and has no part in acts of injustice; and that all this is done by Wisdom in order that, by taking part in every work of equity and justice, it may supply to those that love it, a wealth of eternal goods anti incorruptible treasures. Therefore Wisdom, after declaring that it will relate the things which are done every day, promises that it will also be mindful to recount the things which are from of old. And now what blindness is it, to think that things were performed before the beginning of the ages, which are expressly declared to date merely from the beginning of the ages! For every work among those which date from the beginning of the ages is itself posterior to that beginning: but on the contrary, things which are before the beginning of the ages, precede the ordering of the ages, which are later than they. And so Wisdom, after declaring that it is mindful to speak of the things which date from the beginning of the ages, says, The Lord created Me for the beginning of His ways for His works, by these words denoting things performed from the date of the beginning of the ages. Thus Wisdom’s teaching concerns not a generation declared to precede the ages, but a dispensation which began with the ages themselves.

45. We must also enquire what is the meaning of the saying that God, born before the ages, was again created for the beginning of the ways of God and for His works. This surely is said because where there is a birth before the commencement of the ages, there is the eternity of an endless generation: but where the same birth is represented as a creation from the commencement of the ages, for the ways of God and for His works, it is applied as the creative cause to the works and to the ways. And first, since Christ is Wisdom, we must see whether He is Himself the beginning of the way of the works of God. Of this, I think, there is no doubt; for He says, I am the way, and, No man cometh to the Father except through Me. A way is the guide of those who go, the course marked out for those who hasten, the safeguard of the ignorant, a teacher, so to speak, of things unknown and longed for. Therefore He is created for the beginning of the ways, for the works of God; because He is the Way and leads men to the Father. But we must seek for the purpose of this creation, which is from the commencement of the ages. For it is also the mystery of the last dispensation, wherein Christ was again created in bodily form, and declared that He was the way of the works of God. Again, He was created for the ways of God from the commencement of the ages, when, subjecting Himself to the visible form of a creature, He took the form of a created being.

46. And so let us see for what ways of God, and for what works of God, Wisdom was created from the commencement of the ages, though born of God before all ages. Adam heard the voice of One walking in Paradise. Do you think that His approach could have been heard, had He not assumed the guise of a created being? Is not the fact, that He was heard as He walked, proof that He was present in a created form? I do not ask in what guise He spoke to Cain and Abel and Noah, and in what guise He was near to Enoch also, blessing him. An Angel speaks to
Hagar, and certainly He is also God. Has He the same form, when He appears like an Angel, as He has in that nature, by virtue of which He is God? Certainly the form of an Angel is revealed, where afterwards mention is made of the nature of God. But why should I speak of an Angel? He comes as a man to Abraham. Under the guise of a man, in the shape of that created being, is not Christ present in that nature, which He possesses as being also God? A man speaks, and is present in the body, and is nourished by food; and yet God is adored. Surely He Who was an Angel is now also man, in order to save us from the assumption that any of these diverse aspects of one state, that of the creature, is His natural form as God. Again, He comes to Jacob in human shape, and even grasps him for wrestling; and He takes hold with His hands, and struggles with His limbs, and bends His flanks, and adopts every movement and gesture of ours. But again He is revealed, this time to Moses, and as a fire; in order that you might learn to believe that this created nature was to provide Him with an outward guise, not to embody the reality of His nature. He possessed, at that moment, the power of burning, but He did not assume the destructive property which is inherent in the nature of fire, for the fire evidently burned and yet the bush was not injured.

47. Glance over the whole course of time, and realist in what guise He appeared to Joshua the son of Nun, a prophet bearing His name, or to Isaiah, who relates that he saw Him, as the Gospel also bears witness, or to Ezekiel, who was admitted even to knowledge of the Resurrection, or to Daniel, who confesses the Son of Man in the eternal kingdom of the ages, or to all the rest to whom He presented Himself in the form of various created beings, for the ways of God and for the works of God, that is to say, to teach us to know God, and to profit our eternal state. Why does this method, expressly designed for human salvation, bring about at the present time such an impious attack upon His eternal birth? The creation, of which you speak, dates from the commencement of the ages; but His birth is without end, and before the ages. Maintain by all means that we are doing violence to words, if a Prophet, or the Lord, or an Apostle, or any oracle whatever has described by the name of creation the birth of His eternal divinity. In all these manifestations God, Who is a consuming fire, is present, as created, in such a manner that He could lay aside the created form by the same power by which He assumed it, being able to destroy again that which had come into existence merely that it might be looked upon.

48. But that blessed and true birth of the flesh conceived within the Virgin the Apostle has named both a creating and a making, for then there was born both the nature and form of our created being. And without doubt in his view this name belongs to Christ’s true birth as a man, since he says, But when the fulness of the time came, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, in order that He might redeem those who are under the law, that we might obtain the adoption of sons. And so He is God’s own Son, Who is made in human form and of human origin; nor is He only made but also created, as it is said: Even as the truth is in Jesus, that ye put away according to your former manner of life, that old man, which becomes corrupt according to the lusts of deceit. However, be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put ye on that new man, which is created according God. So the new man is to be put on Who has been created according to God. For He Who was Son of God was born also Son Man. This was not the birth of the divinity, but the creating of the flesh; the new Man taking the title of
the race, and being created according to God Who was born before the ages. And how the new
man was created according to God, he explains in what follows, adding, in righteousness, and
in holiness, and in truth. For there was no guile in Him; and He has been made unto us
righteousness and sanctification, and is Himself the Truth. This, then, is the Christ, created a
new man according to God, Whom we put on.

49. If, then, Wisdom, in saying that it was mindful of the things which have been performed
since the beginning of the ages, said that it was created for the works of God and for the ways
of God; and yet, while saying that it was created, taught that it was established before the
ages, lest we should suppose that the mystery of that created form, so variously and frequently
assumed, involved some change in its nature;—for although the firmness with which it was
established would not allow of any disturbance that could overthrow it, yet, lest the
establishment might seem to mean something less than birth, Wisdom declared itself to be
begotten before all things:—if this is so, why is the term ‘creation’ now applied to the birth of
that which was both begotten before all things, and also established before the ages? Because
that which was established before the ages was created anew from the commencement of the
ages for the beginning of the ways of God and for His works. In this sense must we understand
the difference between creation from the commencement of the ages and that birth which
precedes the ages and all things. Impiety at least has not this excuse, that it can plead error as
the cause of its profanity.

50. For although the weakness of the understanding might hinder the perceptions of a man
devoutly disposed, so that, even after this explanation, he might fail to grasp the meaning of
“creation,” nevertheless, even the letter of the Apostle’s saying, when he applies the term
“making” to a true birth, should have sufficed for a sincere, if not intelligent, belief, that the
term “creation” was designed to conduce to a belief in generation. For when the Apostle was
minded to assert the birth of One from one Parent, that is to say, the birth of the Lord from a
virgin without a conception due to human passions, he clearly had a definite purpose in calling
Him “made of a woman,” Whom he knew and had frequently asserted to have been born. He
desired that the ‘birth’ should point to the reality of the generation, and the ‘making’ should
testify to the birth of One from one Parent; because the term ‘making’ excludes the idea of a
conception by means of human intercourse, it being expressly stated that He was made of a
virgin, though it is equally certain that He was born and not made. But see, heretic, how
impious you are. No sentence of prophet, or evangelist, or apostle has said that Jesus Christ
was created from God, rather than born from Him: yet you deny the birth. and assert the
creation, but not according to the Apostle’s meaning, when he said that He was made, lest
there should be any doubt that He was born as One from one Parent. You make your assertion
in a most impious sense, implying that God did not derive His being by way of birth conveying
nature; although a creature would rather have come into being out of nothing. This is the
primary infection in your unhappy mind, not that you term birth a creating, but that you adapt
your faith to the idea of creation instead of birth. And yet while it would mark a poor intellect,
still it would not mark a man entirely undevout, if you had called Christ created, in order that
men might recognise His impossible birth from God, as being that of One from One.
51. But none of these phrases does a firm apostolic faith permit. For it knows in what dispensation of time Christ was created, and in what eternity of times He was born. Moreover, He was born God of God, and the divinity of His true birth and perfect generation is not doubtful. For in relation to God we acknowledge only two modes of being, birth and eternity: birth, moreover, not after anything, but before all things, so that birth only bears witness to a Source of being, and does not predicate any incongruity between the offspring and the Source of being. Still, by common admission, this birth, because it is from God, implies a secondary position in respect to the Source of being, and yet cannot be separated from that Source, since any attempt of thought to pass beyond acceptance of the fact of birth, must also necessarily penetrate the mystery of the generation. And so this is the only pious language to use about God: to know Him as Father, and with Him to know also Him, Who is the Son born of Him. Nor assuredly are we taught anything concerning God, except that He is the Father of God the Only-begotten and the Creator. So let not human weakness overreach itself; and let it make this only confession, in which alone lies its salvation— that, before the mystery of the Incarnation, it is ever assured, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, of this one fact that He had been born.

52. For my part, so long as I shall have the power by means of this Spirit Whom Thou hast granted me, Holy Father, Almighty God, I will confess Thee to be not only eternally God, but also eternally Father. Nor will I ever break out into such folly and impiety, as to make myself the judge of Thy omnipotence and Thy mysteries, nor shall this weak understanding arrogantly seek for more than that devout belief in Thy infinitude and faith in Thy eternity, which have been taught me. I will not assert that Thou wast ever without Thy Wisdom, and Thy Power, and Thy Word, without God Only-begotten, my Lord Jesus Christ. The weak and imperfect language, to which our nature is limited, does not dominate my thoughts concerning Thee, so that my poverty of utterance should choke faith into silence. For although we have a word and wisdom and power of our own, the product of our free inward activity, yet Thine is the absolute generation of perfect God, Who is Thy Word and Wisdom and Power; so that He can never be separated from Thee, Who in these names of Thy eternal properties is shewn to be born of Thee. Yet His birth is only so far shewn as to make manifest the fact that Thou art the Source of His being; yet sufficiently to confirm our belief in His infinity, inasmuch as it is related that He was born before times eternal.

53. For in human affairs Thou hast set before us many things of such a sort, that though we do not know their cause, yet the effect is not unknown; and reverence inculcates faith, where ignorance is inherent in our nature. Thus when I raised to Thy heaven these feeble eyes of mine, my certainty regarding it was limited to the fact that it is Thine. For seeing therein these orbits where the stars are fixed, and their annual revolutions, and the Pleiades and the Great Bear and the Morning Star, each having their varied duties in the service which is appointed them, I recognise Thy presence, O God, in these things whereof I cannot gain any clear understanding. And when I view the marvellous swellings of Thy sea, I know that I have failed to comprehend not merely the origin of the waters but even the movements of this changeful expanse; yet I grasp at faith in some reasonable cause, although it is one that I cannot see, and fail not to recognise Thee in these things also, which I do not know. Furthermore, when in
thought I turn to the earth, which by the power of hidden agencies causes to decay all the seeds which it receives, quickens them when decayed, multiplies them when quickened, and makes them strong when multiplied; in all these changes I find nothing which my mind can understand, yet my ignorance helps towards recognising Thee, for though I know nothing of the nature that waits on me, I recognise Thee by actual experience of the advantages I possess. Moreover, though I do not know myself, yet I perceive so much that I marvel at Thee the more because I am ignorant of myself. For without understanding it, I perceive a certain motion or order or life in my mind when it exercises its powers; and this very perception I owe to Thee, for though Thou denyest the power of understanding my natural first beginning, yet Thou givest that of perceiving nature with its charms. And since in what concerns myself I recognise Thee, ignorant as I am, so recognising Thee I will not in what concerns Thee cherish a feeble faith in Thy omnipotence, because I do not understand. My thoughts shall not attempt to grasp and master the origin of Thy Only-begotten Son, nor shall my faculties strain to reach beyond the truth that He is my Creator and my God.

54. His birth is before times eternal. If anything exist which precedes eternity, it will be something which, when eternity is comprehended, still eludes comprehension. And this something is Thine, and is Thy Only-begotten; no portion, nor extension, nor any empty name devised to suit some theory of Thy mode of action. He is the Son, a Son born of Thee, God the Father, Himself true God, begotten by Thee in the unity of Thy nature, and meet to be acknowledged after Thee, and yet with Thee, since Thou art the eternal Author of His eternal origin. For since He is from Thee, He is second to Thee; yet since He is Thine, Thou art not to be separated from Him. For we must never assert that Thou didst once exist without Thy Son, lest we should be reproaching Thee either with imperfection, as then unable to generate, or with superfluousness after the generation. And so the exact meaning for us of the eternal generation is that we know Thee to be the eternal Father of Thy Only-begotten Son, Who was born of Thee before times eternal.

55. But, for my part, I cannot be content by the service of my faith and voice, to deny that my Lord and my God, Thy Only-begotten, Jesus Christ, is a creature; I must also deny that this name of ‘creature’ belongs to Thy Holy Spirit, seeing that He proceeds from Thee and is sent through Him, so great is my reverence for everything that is Thine. Nor, because I know that Thou alone art unborn and that the Only-begotten is born of Thee, will I refuse to say that the Holy Spirit was begotten, or assert that He was ever created. I fear the blasphemies which would be insinuated against Thee by such use of this title ‘creature,’ which I share with the other beings brought into being by Thee. Thy Holy Spirit, as the Apostle says, searches and knows Thy deep things, and as Intercessor for me speaks to Thee words I could not utter; and shall I express or rather dishonour, by the title ‘creature,’ the power of His nature, which subsists eternally, derived from Thee through Thine Only-begotten? Nothing, except want belongs to Thee, penetrates into Thee; nor can the agency of a power foreign and strange to Thee measure the depth of Thy boundless majesty. To Thee belongs whatever enters into Thee; nor is anything strange to Thee, which dwells in Thee through its searching power.

56. But I cannot describe Him, Whose pleas for me I cannot describe. As in the revelation that
Thy Only-begotten was born of Thee before times eternal, when we cease to struggle with ambiguities of language and difficulties of thought, the one certainty of His birth remains; so I hold fast in my consciousness the truth that Thy Holy Spirit is from Thee and through Him, although I cannot by my intellect comprehend it. For in Thy spiritual things I am dull, as Thy Only-begotten says, Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born anew. The Spirit breathes where it will, and thou hearest the voice of it; but dost not know whence it comes or whither it goes. So is every one who is born of water and of the Holy Spirit. Though I hold a belief in my regeneration, I hold it in ignorance; I possess the reality, though I comprehend it not. For my own consciousness had no part in causing this new birth, which is manifest in its effects. Moreover the Spirit has no limits; He speaks when He will, and what He will, and where He will. Since, then, the cause of His coming and going is unknown, though the watcher is conscious of the fact, shall I count the nature of the Spirit among created things, and limit Him by fixing the time of His origin? Thy servant John says, indeed, that all things were made through the Son, Who as God the Word was in the beginning, O God, with Thee. Again, Paul recounts all things as created in Him, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. And, while he declared that everything was created in Christ and through Christ, he thought, with respect to the Holy Spirit, that the description was sufficient, when he called Him Thy Spirit. With these men, peculiarly Thine elect, I will think in these matters; just as, after their example, I will say nothing beyond my comprehension about Thy Only-begotten, but simply declare that He was born, so also after their example I will not trespass beyond that which human intellect can know about Thy Holy Spirit, but simply declare that He is Thy Spirit. May my lot be no useless strife of words, but the unwavering confession of an unhesitating faith!

57. Keep, I pray Thee, this my pious faith undefiled, and even till my spirit departs, grant that this may be the utterance of my convictions: so that I may ever hold fast that which I professed in the creed of my regeneration, when I was baptized in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Let me, in short, adore Thee our Father, and Thy Son together with Thee; let me win the favour of Thy Holy Spirit, Who is from Thee, through Thy Only-begotten. For I have a convincing Witness to my faith, Who says, Father, all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, even my Lord Jesus Christ, abiding in Thee, and from Thee, and with Thee, for ever God: Who is blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

A work in progress.....