Saint Augustines City of God and Christian Doctrine part 02

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THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

EDITED BY

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PROFESSOR IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK.

IN CONNECTION WITH A NUMBER OF PATRISTIC SCHOLARS OF EUROPE AND

AMERICA.

VOLUME II

ST. AUGUSTIN'S:

CITY OF GOD and CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

T&T CLARK

EDINBURGH

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Editor's Preface

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The "City of God" is the masterpiece of the greatest genius among the

Latin Fathers, and the best known and most read of his works, except

the "Confessions." It embodies the results of thirteen years of

intellectual labor and study (from A.D. 413-426). It is a vindication

of Christianity against the attacks of the heathen in view of the

sacking of the city of Rome by the barbarians, at a time when the old

Gr�co-Roman civilization was approaching its downfall, and a new

Christian civilization was beginning to rise on its ruins. It is the

first attempt at a philosophy of history, under the aspect of two rival

cities or communities,--the eternal city of God and the perishing city

of the world.

This was the only philosophy of history known throughout Europe during

the middle ages; it was adopted and reproduced in its essential

features by Bossuet, Ozanam, Frederick Schlegel, and other Catholic

writers, and has recently been officially endorsed, as it were, by the

scholarly Pope Leo XIII. in his encyclical letter on the Christian

Constitution of States (Immortale Dei, Nov. 1, 1885); for the Pope says

that Augustin in his De Civitate Dei, "set forth so clearly the

efficacy of Christian wisdom and the way in which it is bound up with

the well-being of States, that he seems not only to have pleaded the

cause of the Christians of his own time, but to have triumphantly

refuted the false charges [against Christianity] for ever." [1]

"The City of God" is also highly appreciated by Protestant writers as

Waterland, Milman, Neander, Bindemann, Pressens�, Flint (The Philosophy

of History, 1874, pp. 17 sqq.) and Fairbairn, (The City of God, London,

2nd ed., 1886, pp. 348 sqq.). Even the skeptical Gibbon, who had no

sympathy whatever with the religion and theology of Augustin, concedes

to this work at least "the merit of a magnificent design, vigorously,

and not unskillfully executed." (Decline and Fall, Ch. xxviii. note,

in Harper's ed., vol. III., 271.)

It would be unfair to judge "The City of God" by the standard of modern

exegetical and historical scholarship. Augustin's interpretations of

Scripture, although usually ingenious and often profound, are as often

fanciful, and lack the sure foundation of a knowledge of the original

languages; for he knew very little Greek and no Hebrew, and had to

depend on the Latin version; he was even prejudiced at first against

Jerome's revision of the very defective Itala, fearing, in his

solicitude for the weak and timid brethren, that more harm than good

might be the result of this great and necessary improvement. His

learning was confined to biblical and Roman literature and the systems

of Greek philosophy. He often wastes arguments on absurd opinions, and

some of his own opinions strike us as childish and obsolete. He

confines the Kingdom of God to the narrow limits of the Jewish

theocracy and the visible Catholic Church. He could, indeed, not deny

the truths in Greek philosophy; but he derived them from the Jewish

Scriptures, and adopted the impossible hypothesis of Ambrose that Plato

became acquainted with the prophet Jeremiah in Egypt (comp. De Doctr.

Christ. II. 28), though afterwards he corrected it (Retract. II. 4).

He does not sufficiently appreciate the natural virtues, the ways of

Divine providence and the working of His Spirit outside of the chosen

race; and under the influence of the ascetic spirit which then

prevailed in the Church, in justifiable opposition to the surrounding

moral corruption of heathenism, he even degrades secular history and

secular life, in the state and the family, which are likewise ordained

of God. In some respects he forms the opposite extreme to Origen, the

greatest genius among the Greek fathers. Both assume a universal fall

from original holiness. But Augustin dates it from one act of

disobedience,--the historic fall of Adam, in whom the whole race was

germinally included; while Origen goes back to a pre-historic fall of

each individual soul, making each responsible for the abuse of

freedom. Augustin proceeds to a special election of a people of God

from the corrupt and condemned mass; he follows their history in two

antagonistic lines, and ends in the dualistic contrast of an eternal

heaven for the elect and an eternal hell for the reprobate, including

among the latter even unbaptized infants (horribile dictu!), who never

committed an actual transgression; while Origen leads all fallen

creatures, men and angels, by a slow and gradual process of amendment

and correction, under the ever-widening influence of redeeming mercy,

during the lapse of countless ages, back to God, some outstripping

others and tending by a swifter course towards perfection, until the

last enemy is finally reached and death itself is destroyed, that "God

may be all in all." Within the limits of the Jewish theocracy and

Catholic Christianity Augustin admits the idea of historical

development or a gradual progress from a lower to higher grades of

knowledge, yet always in harmony with Catholic truth. He would not

allow revolutions and radical changes or different types of

Christianity. "The best thinking" (says Dr. Flint, in his Philosophy

of History in Europe, I. 40), "at once the most judicious and liberal,

among those who are called the Christian fathers, on the subject of the

progress of Christianity as an organization and system, is that of St.

Augustin, as elaborated and applied by Vincent of Lerins in his

Commonitorium,' where we find substantially the same conception of the

development of the Church and Christian doctrine, which, within the

present century, De Maistre has made celebrated in France, M�hler in

Germany, and Newman in England. Its main defect is that it places in

the Church an authority other than, and virtually higher than,

Scripture and reason, to determine what is true and false in the

development of doctrine."

With all its defects the candid reader will be much instructed and

edified by "the City of God," and find more to admire than to censure

in this immortal work of sanctified genius and learning.

The present translation, the first accurate and readable one in the

English language, was prepared by the accomplished editor of the Works

of Aurelius Augustin, published by T. and T. Clark of Edinburgh. [2]

I urged Dr. Dods by letter and in person to re-edit it for this

Patristic Series with such changes and additions as he might wish to

make, but he declined, partly from want of leisure, and partly for a

reason which I must state in his own language. "I thought," he writes

in a letter to me of Nov. 23, 1886, that "the book could not fail to be

improved by passing under your own supervision. In editing it for

Clark's Series, I translated the greater part of it with my own hand

and carefully revised the parts translated by others. I was very much

gratified to hear that you meant to adopt it into your Series; and the

best reward of my labor on it is that now with your additional notes

and improvements, it is likely to find a wider circulation than it

could otherwise have had."

But in this expectation the reader will be disappointed. The

translation is far better than I could have made it, and it would have

been presumption on my part to attempt to improve it. The notes, too,

are all to the point and leave little to be desired. I have only added

a few. Besides the Latin original, I have compared also the German

translation of Ulrich Uhl (Des heiligen Kirchenvaters Augustinus zwei

und zwanzig B�cher �ber den Gottesstaat) in the Catholic "Bibliothek

der Kirchenv�ter," edited by Dr. Thalhofer, but I found nothing in the

occasional foot-notes which is better than those of Dr. Dods. The

present edition, therefore, is little more than a careful reproduction

of that of my esteemed Scotch friend, who deserves the undivided credit

of making this famous work of the Bishop of Hippo accessible to the

English reader.

I have included in this volume the four books of St. Augustin On

Christian Doctrine. [3] It is the first and best patristic work on

biblical Hermeneutics, and continued for a thousand years, together

with the Prefaces of Jerome, to be the chief exegetical guide.

Although it is superseded as a scientific work by modern Hermeneutics

and Critical Introductions to the Old and New Testaments, it is not

surpassed for originality, depth and spiritual insight.

The translation was prepared by the Rev. Professor J. F.Shaw, of

Londonderry, and is likewise all that can be desired. I have enlarged

the introductory note and added a table of contents.

Philip Schaff.

New York, December 10, 1886.

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[1] "Augustinus pr�sertim in Civitate Dei'virtutem Christian�

sapienti�, qua parte necessitudinem habet cum republica, tanto in

lumine collocavit, ut non tam pro Christianis sui temporis dixisse

caussam quam de criminibus falsis perpetuum triumphum egisse

videatur." I quote from the Paris edition of the Acta Leonis

Pap�XIII., 1886, p. 284.

[2] An older translation appeared under the title: Of the citie of

God, with the learned comments of Jo. Lodovicus Vives, Englished first

by J. H., and now in this second edition compared with the Latin

original, and in very many places corrected and amended, London, 1620.

The Oxford Library of the Fathers does not include the City of God nor

Christian Doctrine. In French there are, it seems, no less than eight

independent translations of the Civitas Dei, the best by Emile Saisset,

with introduction and notes, Paris, 1855, 4 vols. gr. in 18. Moreau's

translation includes the Latin original, Paris, 1846 and 1854, in 3

vols. The Latin text alone is found in the 7th vol. of the Benedictine

edition (1685). A handy (stereotyped) edition was published by C.

Tauchnitz, Lipsi�, 1825, in 2 vols.; another by Jos. Strange, Coloni�,

1850, in 2 vols.

[3] "De Doctrina Christiana libri quatuor", included in the third vol.

(1680) of the Benedictine edition at the head of the exegetical works.

A separate edition was published by Car. Herm. Bruder, ed. stereotypa,

Lips. (Tauchnitz), 1838. A German translation (Vier B�cher �ber die

christliche Lehre) by Remigius Storf was published at Kempten, 1877, in

Thalhofer's "Bibliothek der Kirchenv�ter."

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The City of God

translated by

Rev. Marcus Dods, D.D.

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Translator's Preface.

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"Rome having been stormed and sacked by the Goths under Alaric their

king, [4] the worshippers of false gods, or pagans, as we commonly call

them, made an attempt to attribute this calamity to the Christian

religion, and began to blaspheme the true God with even more than their

wonted bitterness and acerbity. It was this which kindled my zeal for

the house of God, and prompted me to undertake the defence of the city

of God against the charges and misrepresentations of its assailants.

This work was in my hands for several years, owing to the interruptions

occasioned by many other affairs which had a prior claim on my

attention, and which I could not defer. However, this great

undertaking was at last completed in twenty-two books. Of these, the

first five refute those who fancy that the polytheistic worship is

necessary in order to secure worldly prosperity, and that all these

overwhelming calamities have befallen us in consequence of its

prohibition. In the following five books I address myself to those who

admit that such calamities have at all times attended, and will at all

times attend, the human race, and that they constantly recur in forms

more or less disastrous, varying only in the scenes, occasions, and

persons on whom they light, but, while admitting this, maintain that

the worship of the gods is advantageous for the life to come. In these

ten books, then, I refute these two opinions, which are as groundless

as they are antagonistic to the Christian religion.

"But that no one might have occasion to say, that though I had refuted

the tenets of other men, I had omitted to establish my own, I devote to

this object the second part of this work, which comprises twelve books,

although I have not scrupled, as occasion offered, either to advance my

own opinions in the first ten books, or to demolish the arguments of my

opponents in the last twelve. Of these twelve books, the first four

contain an account of the origin of these two cities--the city of God,

and the city of the world. The second four treat of their history or

progress; the third and last four, of their deserved destinies. And

so, though all these twenty-two books refer to both cities, yet I have

named them after the better city, and called them The City of God."

Such is the account given by Augustin himself [5] of the occasion and

plan of this his greatest work. But in addition to this explicit

information, we learn from the correspondence [6] of Augustin, that it

was due to the importunity of his friend Marcellinus that this defence

of Christianity extended beyond the limits of a few letters. Shortly

before the fall of Rome, Marcellinus had been sent to Africa by the

Emperor Honorius to arrange a settlement of the differences between the

Donatists and the Catholics. This brought him into contact not only

with Augustin, but with Volusian, the proconsul of Africa, and a man of

rare intelligence and candor. Finding that Volusian, though as yet a

pagan, took an interest in the Christian religion, Marcellinus set his

heart on converting him to the true faith. The details of the

subsequent significant intercourse between the learned and courtly

bishop and the two imperial statesmen, are unfortunately almost

entirely lost to us; but the impression conveyed by the extant

correspondence is, that Marcellinus was the means of bringing his two

friends into communication with one another. The first overture was on

Augustin's part, in the shape of a simple and manly request that

Volusian would carefully peruse the Scriptures, accompanied by a frank

offer to do his best to solve any difficulties that might arise from

such a course of inquiry. Volusian accordingly enters into

correspondence with Augustin; and in order to illustrate the kind of

difficulties experienced by men in his position, he gives some graphic

notes of a conversation in which he had recently taken part at a

gathering of some of his friends. The difficulty to which most weight

is attached in this letter, is the apparent impossibility of believing

in the Incarnation. But a letter which Marcellinus immediately

despatched to Augustin, urging him to reply to Volusian at large,

brought the intelligence that the difficulties and objections to

Christianity were thus limited merely out of a courteous regard to the

preciousness of the bishop's time, and the vast number of his

engagements. This letter, in short, brought out the important fact,

that a removal of speculative doubts would not suffice for the

conversion of such men as Volusian, whose life was one with the life of

the empire. Their difficulties were rather political, historical, and

social. They could not see how the reception of the Christian rule of

life was compat ible with the interests of Rome as the mistress of the

world. [7] And thus Augustin was led to take a more distinct and

wider view of the whole relation which Christianity bore to the old

state of things,--moral, political, philosophical, and religious,--and

was gradually drawn on to undertake the elaborate work now presented to

the English reader, and which may more appropriately than any other of

his writings be called his masterpiece [8] or life-work. It was begun

the very year of Marcellinus' death, a.d. 413, and was issued in

detached portions from time to time, until its completion in the year

426. It thus occupied the maturest years of Augustin's life--from his

fifty-ninth to his seventy-second year. [9]

From this brief sketch, it will be seen that though the accompanying

work is essentially an Apology, the Apologetic of Augustin can be no

mere rehabilitation of the somewhat threadbare, if not effete,

arguments of Justin and Tertullian. [10] In fact, as Augustin

considered what was required of him,--to expound the Christian faith,

and justify it to enlightened men: to distinguish it from, and show

its superiority to, all those forms of truth, philosophical or popular,

which were then striving for the mastery, or at least for

standing-room; to set before the world's eye a vision of glory that

might win the regard even of men who were dazzled by the fascinating

splendor of a world-wide empire,--he recognized that a task was laid

before him to which even his powers might prove unequal,--a task

certainly which would afford ample scope for his learning, dialectic,

philosophical grasp and acumen, eloquence, and faculty of exposition.

But it is the occasion of this great Apology which invests it at once

with grandeur and vitality. After more than eleven hundred years of

steady and triumphant progress, Rome had been taken and sacked. It is

difficult for us to appreciate, impossible to overestimate, the shock

which was thus communicated from centre to circumference of the whole

known world. It was generally believed, not only by the heathen, but

also by many of the most liberal-minded of the Christians, that the

destruction of Rome would be the prelude to the destruction of the

world. [11] Even Jerome, who might have been supposed to be

embittered against the proud mistress of the world by her inhospitality

to himself, cannot conceal his profound emotion on hearing of her

fall. "A terrible rumor," he says, "reaches me from the West telling

of Rome besieged, bought for gold, besieged again, life and property

perishing together. My voice falters, sobs stifle the words I dictate;

for she is a captive, that city which enthralled the world." [12]

Augustin is never so theatrical as Jerome in the expression of his

feeling, but he is equally explicit in lamenting the fall of Rome as a

great calamity: and while he does not scruple to ascribe her recent

disgrace to the profligate manners, the effeminacy, and the pride of

her citizens, he is not without hope that, by a return to the simple,

hardy, and honorable mode of life which characterized the early Romans,

she may still be restored to much of her former prosperity. [13] But

as Augustin contemplates the ruins of Rome's greatness, and feels in

common with all the world at this crisis, the instability of the

strongest governments, the insufficiency of the most authoritative

statesmanship, there hovers over these ruins the splendid vision of the

city of God "coming down out of heaven, adorned as a bride for her

husband." The old social system is crumbling away on all sides, but in

its place he seems to see a pure Christendom arising. He sees that

human history and human destiny are not wholly identified with the

history of any earthly power--not though it be as cosmopolitan as the

empire of Rome. [14] He directs the attention of men to the fact that

there is another kingdom on earth,--a city which hath foundations,

whose builder and maker is God. He teaches men to take profounder

views of history, and shows them how from the first the city of God, or

community of God's people, has lived alongside of the kingdoms of this

world and their glory, and has been silently increasing, "crescit

occulto velut arbor �vo." He demonstrates that the superior morality,

the true doctrine, the heavenly origin of this city, ensure it success;

and over against this, he depicts the silly or contradictory

theorizings of the pagan philosophers, and the unhinged morals of the

people, and puts it to all candid men to say, whether in the presence

of so manifestly sufficient a cause for Rome's downfall, there is room

for imputing it to the spread of Christianity. He traces the

antagonism of these two grand communities of rational creatures back to

their first divergence in the fall of the angels, and down to the

consummation of all things in the last judgment and eternal destination

of the good end evil. In other words, the city of God is "the first

real effort to produce a philosophy of history," [15] to exhibit

historical events in connection with their true causes, and in their

real sequence. This plan of the work is not only a great conception,

but it is accompanied with many practical advantages; the chief of

which is, that it admits, and even requires, a full treatment of those

doctrines of our faith that are more directly historical,--the

doctrines of creation, the fall, the incarnation, the connection

between the Old and New Testaments, and the doctrine of "the last

things." [16]

The effect produced by this great work it is impossible to determine

with accuracy. Beugnot, with an absoluteness which we should condemn

as presumption in any less competent authority, declares that its

effect can only have been very slight. [17] Probably its effect would

be silent and slow; telling first upon cultivated minds, and only

indirectly upon the people. Certainly its effect must have been

weakened by the interrupted manner of its publication. It is an easier

task to estimate its intrinsic value. But on this also patristic and

literary authorities widely differ. Dupin admits that it is very

pleasant reading, owing to the surprising variety of matters which are

introduced to illustrate and forward the argument, but censures the

author for discussing very useless questions, and for adducing reasons

which could satisfy no one who was not already convinced. [18] Huet

also speaks of the book as "un amas confus d'excellents materiaux;

c'est de l'or en barre et en lingots." [19] L'Abb� Flottes censures

these opinions as unjust, and cites with approbation the unqualified

eulogy of Pressens�. [20] But probably the popularity of the book is

its best justification. This popularity may be measured by the

circumstance that, between the year 1467 and the end of the fifteenth

century, no fewer than twenty editions were called for, that is to say,

a fresh edition every eighteen months. [21] And in the interesting

series of letters that passed between Ludovicus Vives and Erasmus, who

had engaged him to write a commentary on the City of God for his

edition of Augustin's works, we find Vives pleading for a separate

edition of this work, on the plea that, of all the writings of

Augustin, it was almost the only one read by patristic students, and

might therefore naturally be expected to have a much wider circulation.

[22]

If it were asked to what this popularity is due, we should be disposed

to attribute it mainly to the great variety of ideas, opinions, and

facts that are here brought before the reader's mind. Its importance

as a contribution to the history of opinion cannot be overrated. We

find in it not only indications or explicit enouncement of the author's

own views upon almost every important topic which occupied his

thoughts, but also a compendious exhibition of the ideas which most

powerfully influenced the life at that age. It thus becomes, as

Poujoulat says, "comme l'encyclop�die du cinqui�me si�cle." All that

is valuable, together with much indeed that is not so, in the religion

and philosophy of the classical nations of antiquity, is reviewed. And

on some branches of these subjects it has, in the judgment of one well

qualified to judge, "preserved more than the whole surviving Latin

literature." It is true we are sometimes wearied by the too elaborate

refutation of opinions which to a modern mind seem self-evident

absurdities; but if these opinions were actually prevalent in the fifth

century, the historical inquirer will not quarrel with the form in

which his information is conveyed, nor will commit the absurdity of

attributing to Augustin the foolishness of these opinions, but rather

the credit of exploding them. That Augustin is a well-informed and

impartial critic, is evinced by the courteousness and candor which he

uniformly displays to his opponents, by the respect he won from the

heathen themselves, and by his own early life. The most rigorous

criticism has found him at fault regarding matters of fact only in some

very rare instances, which can be easily accounted for. His learning

would not indeed stand comparison with what is accounted such in our

day: his life was too busy, and too devoted to the poor and to the

spiritually necessitous, to admit of any extraordinary acquisition. He

had access to no literature but the Latin; or at least he had only

sufficient Greek to enable him to refer to Greek authors on points of

importance, and not enough to enable him to read their writings with

ease and pleasure. [23] But he had a profound knowledge of his own

time, and a familiar acquaintance not only with the Latin poets, but

with many other authors, some of whose writings are now lost to us,

save the fragments preserved through his quotations.

But the interest attaching to the City of God is not merely

historical. It is the earnestness and ability with which he develops

his own philosophical and theological views which gradually fascinate

the reader, and make him see why the world has set this among the few

greatest books of all time. The fundamental lines of the Augustinian

theology are here laid down in a comprehensive and interesting form.

Never was thought so abstract expressed in language so popular. He

handles metaphysical problems with the unembarrassed ease of Plato,

with all Cicero's accuracy and acuteness, and more than Cicero's

profundity. He is never more at home than when exposing the

incompetency of Neoplatonism, or demonstrating the harmony of Christian

doctrine and true philosophy. And though there are in the City of God,

as in all ancient books, things that seem to us childish and barren,

there are also the most surprising anticipations of modern

speculation. There is an earnest grappling with those problems which

are continually re-opened because they underlie man's relation to God

and the spiritual world,--the problems which are not peculiar to any

one century. As we read these animated discussions,

"The fourteen centuries fall away

Between us and the Afric saint,

And at his side we urge, to-day,

The immemorial quest and old complaint.

No outward sign to us is given,

From sea or earth comes no reply;

Hushed as the warm Numidian heaven,

He vainly questioned bends our frozen sky."

It is true, the style of the book is not all that could be desired:

there are passages which can possess an interest only to the

antiquarian; there are others with nothing to redeem them but the glow

of their eloquence; there are many repetitions; there is an occasional

use of arguments "plus ingenieux que solides," as M. Saisset says.

Augustin's great admirer, Erasmus, does not scruple to call him a

writer "obscur�, subtilitatis et parum amoen� prolixitatis; [24] but

"the toil of penetrating the apparent obscurities will be rewarded by

finding a real wealth of insight and enlightenment." Some who have

read the opening chapters of the City of God, may have considered it

would be a waste of time to proceed; but no one, we are persuaded, ever

regretted reading it all. The book has its faults; but it effectually

introduces us to the most influential of theologians, and the greatest

popular teacher; to a genius that cannot nod for many lines together;

to a reasoner whose dialectic is more formidable, more keen and

sifting, than that of Socrates or Aquinas; to a saint whose ardent and

genuine devotional feeling bursts up through the severest

argumentation; to a man whose kindliness and wit, universal sympathies

and breadth of intelligence, lend piquancy and vitality to the most

abstract dissertation.

The propriety of publishing a translation of so choice a specimen of

ancient literature needs no defence. As Poujoulat very sensibly

remarks, there are not a great many men now-a-days who will read a work

in Latin of twenty-two books. Perhaps there are fewer still who ought

to do so. With our busy neighbors in France, this work has been a

prime favorite for 400 years. There may be said to be eight

independent translations of it into the French tongue, though some of

these are in part merely revisions. One of these translations has gone

through as many as four editions. The most recent is that which forms

part of the Nisard series; but the best, so far as we have seen, is

that of the accomplished Professor of Philosophy in the College of

France, Emile Saisset. This translation is indeed all that can be

desired: here and there an omission occurs, and about one or two

renderings a difference of opinion may exist; but the exceeding

felicity and spirit of the whole show it to have been a labor of love,

the fond homage of a disciple proud of his master. The preface of M.

Saisset is one of the most valuable contributions ever made to the

understanding of Augustin's philosophy. [25]

Of English translations there has been an unaccountable poverty. Only

one exists, [26] and this so exceptionally bad, so unlike the racy

translations of the seventeenth century in general, so inaccurate, and

so frequently unintelligible, that it is not impossible it may have

done something towards giving the English public a distaste for the

book itself. That the present translation also might be improved, we

know; that many men were fitter for the task, on the score of

scholarship, we are very sensible; but that any one would have executed

it with intenser affection and veneration for the author, we are not

prepared to admit. A few notes have been added where it appeared to be

necessary. Some are original, some from the Benedictine Augustin, and

the rest from the elaborate commentary of Vives. [27]

Marcus Dods.

Glasgow, 1871.

[On the back of the title pages to vols. I. and II. of the Edinburgh

edition, Dr. Dods indicates his associates in the work of translation

and annotation as follows:

"Books IV., XVII. and XVIII. have been translated by the Rev. George

Wilson, Glenluce; Books V., VI., VII. and VIII. by the Rev. J. J.

Smith."]

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[4] A.D. 410.

[5] Retractations, ii. 43.

[6] Letters, 132-8.

[7] See some admirable remarks on this subject in the useful work of

Beugnot, Histoire de la Destruction du Paganisme, ii. 83 et sqq.

[8] As Waterland (iv. 760) does call it, adding that it is "his most

learned, most correct, and most elaborate work."

[9] For proof, see the Benedictine Preface.

[10] "Hitherto the Apologies had been framed to meet particular

exigencies: they were either brief and pregnant statements of the

Christian doctrines; refutations of prevalent calumnies; invectives

against the follies and crimes of Paganism; or confutations of

anti-Christian works like those of Celsus, Porphyry, or Julian, closely

following their course of argument, and rarely expanding into general

and comprehensive views of the great conflict."--Milman, History of

Christianity, iii. c. 10. We are not acquainted with any more complete

preface to the City of God than is contained in the two or three pages

which Milman has devoted to this subject.

[11] See the interesting remarks of Lactantius, Instit. vii. 25.

[12] ^ "H�ret vox et singultus intercipiunt verba dictantis. Capitur

urbs qu�totum cepit orbem."--Jerome, iv. 783.

[13] See below, iv. 7.

[14] This is well brought out by Merivale, Conversion of the Roman

Empire, p. 145, etc.

[15] Ozanam, History of Civilisation in the Fifth Century (Eng.

trans.), ii. 160.

[16] Abstracts of the work at greater or less length are given by

Dupin, Bindemann, B�hringer, Poujoulat, Ozanam, and others.

[17] His words are: "Plus on examine la Cit� de Dieu, plus on reste

convaincu que cet ouvrage d�t exercea tres-peu d'influence sur l'esprit

des paiens" (ii. 122.); and this though he thinks one cannot but be

struck with the grandeur of the ideas it contains.

[18] History of Ecclesiastical Writers, i. 406.

[19] Huetiana, p. 24.

[20] Flottes, Etudes sur S. Augustin (Paris, 1861), pp. 154-6, one of

the most accurate and interesting even of French monographs on

theological writers.

[21] These editions will be found detailed in the second volume of

Schoenemann's Bibliotheca Pat.

[22] His words (in Ep. vi.) are quite worth quoting: "Cura rogo te, ut

excudantur aliquot centena exemplarium istius operis a reliquo

Augustini corpore separata; nam multi erunt studiosi qui Augustinum

totum emere vel nollent, vel non poterunt, quia non egebunt, seu quia

tantum pecuni�non habebunt. Scio enim fere a deditis studiis istis

elegantioribus pr�ter hoc Augustini opus nullum fere aliud legi ejusdem

autoris."

[23] The fullest and fairest discussion of the very simple yet never

settled question of Augustin's learning will be found in Nourrisson's

Philosophie de S. Augustin, ii. 92-100. [Comp. the first vol. of this

Nicene Library, p. 9.--P.S.]

[24] Erasmi Epistoloe xx. 2.

[25] A large part of it has been translated in Saisset's Pantheism

(Clark, Edinburgh).

[26] By J. H., published in 1610, and again in 1620, with Vives'

commentary.

[27] As the letters of Vives are not in every library, we give his

comico-pathetic account of the result of his Augustinian labors on his

health: "Ex quo Augustinum perfeci, nunquam valui ex sententia;

proxim� vero hebdomade et hac, fracto corpore cuncto, et nervis

lassitudine quadam et debilitate dejectis, in caput decem turres

incumbere mihi videntur incidendo pondere, ac mole intolerabili; isti

sunt fructus studiorum, et merces pulcherrimi laboris; quid labor et

benefacta juvant?"

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The City of God.

Book I.

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Argument--Augustin censures the pagans, who attributed the calamities

of the world, and especially the recent sack of Rome by the Goths, to

the Christian religion, and its prohibition of the worship of the

gods. He speaks of the blessings and ills of life, which then, as

always, happened to good and bad men alike. Finally, he rebukes the

shamelessness of those who cast up to the Christians that their women

had been violated by the soldiers.

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Preface, Explaining His Design in Undertaking This Work.

The glorious city of God [28] is my theme in this work, which you, my

dearest son Marcellinus, [29] suggested, and which is due to you by my

promise. I have undertaken its defence against those who prefer their

own gods to the Founder of this city,--a city surpassingly glorious,

whether we view it as it still lives by faith in this fleeting course

of time, and sojourns as a stranger in the midst of the ungodly, or as

it shall dwell in the fixed stability of its eternal seat, which it now

with patience waits for, expecting until "righteousness shall return

unto judgment," [30] and it obtain, by virtue of its excellence, final

victory and perfect peace. A great work this, and an arduous; but God

is my helper. For I am aware what ability is requisite to persuade the

proud how great is the virtue of humility, which raises us, not by a

quite human arrogance, but by a divine grace, above all earthly

dignities that totter on this shifting scene. For the King and Founder

of this city of which we speak, has in Scripture uttered to His people

a dictum of the divine law in these words: "God resisteth the proud,

but giveth grace unto the humble." [31] But this, which is God's

prerogative, the inflated ambition of a proud spirit also affects, and

dearly loves that this be numbered among its attributes, to

"Show pity to the humbled soul,

And crush the sons of pride." [32]

And therefore, as the plan of this work we have undertaken requires,

and as occasion offers, we must speak also of the earthly city, which,

though it be mistress of the nations, is itself ruled by its lust of

rule.

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[28] [Augustin uses the term civitas Dei (polis theou) of the church

universal as a commonwealth and community founded and governed by God.

It is applied in the Bible to Jerusalem or the church of the Old

Covenant (Ps. xl. 6, 4; xlviii. 1, 8; lxxxvii. 3), and to the heavenly

Jerusalem or the church perfect (Heb. xi. 10, 16; xii. 22; Rev. iii.

12; xxi. 2; xxii. 14, 19). Augustin comprehends under the term the

whole Kingdom of God under the Jewish and Christian dispensation both

in its militant and triumphant state, and contrasts it with the

perishing kingdoms of this world. His work treats of both, but he

calls it, a meliore, The City of God.--P.S.]

[29] [Marcellinus was a friend of Augustin, and urged him to write this

work. He was commissioned by the Emperior Honorius to convene a

conference of Catholic and schismatic Donatist bishops in the summer of

411, and conceded the victory to the Catholics; but on account of his

rigor in executing the laws against the Donatists, he fell a victim to

their revenge, and was honored by a place among the martyrs. See the

Letters of Augustin, 133, 136, 138, 139, 143, 151, the notes in this

ed., vol. I., 470 and 505, and the Translator's Preface --P.S.]

[30] Ps. xciv. 15, rendered otherwise in Eng. ver. [In the Revised

Vers.: "Judgment shall return unto righteousness." In Old Testament

quotations, Augustin, being ignorant of Hebrew, had to rely on the

imperfect Latin version of his day, and was at first even opposed to

the revision of Jerome.--P.S.]

[31] Jas. iv. 6 and 1 Pet. v. 5.

[32] Virgil, �neid, vi. 854. [Parcere subjectis et debellare

superbos.--P.S.]

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Chapter 1.--Of the Adversaries of the Name of Christ, Whom the

Barbarians for Christ's Sake Spared When They Stormed the City.

For to this earthly city belong the enemies against whom I have to

defend the city of God. Many of them, indeed, being reclaimed from

their ungodly error, have become sufficiently creditable citizens of

this city; but many are so inflamed with hatred against it, and are so

ungrateful to its Redeemer for His signal benefits, as to forget that

they would now be unable to utter a single word to its prejudice, had

they not found in its sacred places, as they fled from the enemy's

steel, that life in which they now boast themselves. [33] Are not

those very Romans, who were spared by the barbarians through their

respect for Christ, become enemies to the name of Christ? The

reliquaries of the martyrs and the churches of the apostles bear

witness to this; for in the sack of the city they were open sanctuary

for all who fled to them, whether Christian or Pagan. To their very

threshold the blood-thirsty enemy raged; there his murderous fury owned

a limit. Thither did such of the enemy as had any pity convey those to

whom they had given quarter, lest any less mercifully disposed might

fall upon them. And, indeed, when even those murderers who everywhere

else showed themselves pitiless came to those spots where that was

forbidden which the license of war permitted in every other place,

their furious rage for slaughter was bridled, and their eagerness to

take prisoners was quenched. Thus escaped multitudes who now reproach

the Christian religion, and impute to Christ the ills that have

befallen their city; but the preservation of their own life--a boon

which they owe to the respect entertained for Christ by the

barbarians--they attribute not to our Christ, but to their own good

luck. They ought rather, had they any right perceptions, to attribute

the severities and hardships inflicted by their enemies, to that divine

providence which is wont to reform the depraved manners of men by

chastisement, and which exercises with similar afflictions the

righteous and praiseworthy,--either translating them, when they have

passed through the trial, to a better world, or detaining them still on

earth for ulterior purposes. And they ought to attribute it to the

spirit of these Christian times, that, contrary to the custom of war,

these bloodthirsty barbarians spared them, and spared them for Christ's

sake, whether this mercy was actually shown in promiscuous places, or

in those places specially dedicated to Christ's name, and of which the

very largest were selected as sanctuaries, that full scope might thus

be given to the expansive compassion which desired that a large

multitude might find shelter there. Therefore ought they to give God

thanks, and with sincere confession flee for refuge to His name, that

so they may escape the punishment of eternal fire--they who with lying

lips took upon them this name, that they might escape the punishment of

present destruction. For of those whom you see insolently and

shamelessly insulting the servants of Christ, there are numbers who

would not have escaped that destruction and slaughter had they not

pretended that they themselves were Christ's servants. Yet now, in

ungrateful pride and most impious madness, and at the risk of being

punished in everlasting darkness, they perversely oppose that name

under which they fraudulently protected themselves for the sake of

enjoying the light of this brief life.

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[33] [Aug. refers to the sacking of the city of Rome by the West-Gothic

King Alaric, 410. He was the most humane of the barbaric invaders and

conquerors of Rome, and had embraced Arian Christianity (probably from

the teaching of Ulphilas, the Arian bishop and translator of the

Bible). He spared the Catholic Christians.--For particulars see

Gibbon's Decline and Fall, and Millman's Latin Christianity.--P.S.]

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Chapter 2.--That It is Quite Contrary to the Usage of War, that the

Victors Should Spare the Vanquished for the Sake of Their Gods.

There are histories of numberless wars, both before the building of

Rome and since its rise and the extension of its dominion; let these be

read, and let one instance be cited in which, when a city had been

taken by foreigners, the victors spared those who were found to have

fled for sanctuary to the temples of their gods; [34] or one instance

in which a barbarian general gave orders that none should be put to the

sword who had been found in this or that temple. Did not �neas see

"Dying Priam at the shrine,

Staining the hearth he made divine?" [35]

Did not Diomede and Ulysses

"Drag with red hands, the sentry slain,

Her fateful image from your fane,

Her chaste locks touch, and stain with gore

The virgin coronal she wore?" [36]

Neither is that true which follows, that

"Thenceforth the tide of fortune changed,

And Greece grew weak." [37]

For after this they conquered and destroyed Troy with fire and sword;

after this they beheaded Priam as he fled to the altars. Neither did

Troy perish because it lost Minerva. For what had Minerva herself

first lost, that she should perish? Her guards perhaps? No doubt;

just her guards. For as soon as they were slain, she could be stolen.

It was not, in fact, the men who were preserved by the image, but the

image by the men. How, then, was she invoked to defend the city and

the citizens, she who could not defend her own defenders?

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[34] The Benedictines remind us that Alexander and Xenophon, at least

on some occasions, did so.

[35] Virgil, �neid, ii. 501-2. The renderings of Virgil are from

Conington.

[36] Ibid.. ii. 166.

[37] Ibid.

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Chapter 3.--That the Romans Did Not Show Their Usual Sagacity When They

Trusted that They Would Be Benefited by the Gods Who Had Been Unable to

Defend Troy.

And these be the gods to whose protecting care the Romans were

delighted to entrust their city! O too, too piteous mistake! And they

are enraged at us when we speak thus about their gods, though, so far

from being enraged at their own writers, they part with money to learn

what they say; and, indeed, the very teachers of these authors are

reckoned worthy of a salary from the public purse, and of other

honors. There is Virgil, who is read by boys, in order that this great

poet, this most famous and approved of all poets, may impregnate their

virgin minds, and may not readily be forgotten by them, according to

that saying of Horace,

"The fresh cask long keeps its first tang." [38]

Well, in this Virgil, I say, Juno is introduced as hostile to the

Trojans, and stirring up �olus, the king of the winds, against them in

the words,

"A race I hate now ploughs the sea,

Transporting Troy to Italy,

And home-gods conquered" [39] ...

And ought prudent men to have entrusted the defence of Rome to these

conquered gods? But it will be said, this was only the saying of Juno,

who, like an angry woman, did not know what she was saying. What,

then, says �neas himself,--�neas who is so often designated "pious?"

Does he not say,

"Lo! Panthus, 'scaped from death by flight,

Priest of Apollo on the height,

His conquered gods with trembling hands

He bears, and shelter swift demands?" [40]

Is it not clear that the gods (whom he does not scruple to call

"conquered") were rather entrusted to �neas than he to them, when it is

said to him,

"The gods of her domestic shrines

Your country to your care consigns?" [41]

If, then, Virgil says that the gods were such as these, and were

conquered, and that when conquered they could not escape except under

the protection of a man, what a madness is it to suppose that Rome had

been wisely entrusted to these guardians, and could not have been taken

unless it had lost them! Indeed, to worship conquered gods as

protectors and champions, what is this but to worship, not good

divinities, but evil omens? [42] Would it not be wiser to believe,

not that Rome would never have fallen into so great a calamity had not

they first perished, but rather that they would have perished long

since had not Rome preserved them as long as she could? For who does

not see, when he thinks of it, what a foolish assumption it is that

they could not be vanquished under vanquished defenders, and that they

only perished because they had lost their guardian gods, when, indeed,

the only cause of their perishing was that they chose for their

protectors gods condemned to perish? The poets, therefore, when they

composed and sang these things about the conquered gods, had no

intention to invent falsehoods, but uttered, as honest men, what the

truth extorted from them. This, however, will be carefully and

copiously discussed in another and more fitting place. Meanwhile I

will briefly, and to the best of my ability, explain what I meant to

say about these ungrateful men who blasphemously impute to Christ the

calamities which they deservedly suffer in consequence of their own

wicked ways, while that which is for Christ's sake spared them in spite

of their wickedness they do not even take the trouble to notice; and in

their mad and blasphemous insolence, they use against His name those

very lips wherewith they falsely claimed that same name that their

lives might be spared. In the places consecrated to Christ, where for

His sake no enemy would injure them, they restrained their tongues that

they might be safe and protected; but no sooner do they emerge from

these sanctuaries, than they unbridle these tongues to hurl against Him

curses full of hate.

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[38] Horace, Ep. I. ii. 69.

[39] �neid, i. 71.

[40] Ibid, ii. 319.

[41] Ibid. 293.

[42] Non numina bona, sed omina mala.

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Chapter 4.--Of the Asylum of Juno in Troy, Which Saved No One from the

Greeks; And of the Churches of the Apostles, Which Protected from the

Barbarians All Who Fled to Them.

Troy itself, the mother of the Roman people, was not able, as I have

said, to protect its own citizens in the sacred places of their gods

from the fire and sword of the Greeks, though the Greeks worshipped the

same gods. Not only so, but

"Phoenix and Ulysses fell

In the void courts by Juno's cell

Were set the spoils to keep;

Snatched from the burning shrines away,

There Ilium's mighty treasure lay,

Rich altars, bowls of massy gold,

And captive raiment, rudely rolled

In one promiscuous heap;

While boys and matrons, wild with fear,

In long array were standing near." [43]

In other words, the place consecrated to so great a goddess was

chosen, not that from it none might be led out a captive, but that in

it all the captives might be immured. Compare now this "asylum"--the

asylum not of an ordinary god, not of one of the rank and file of gods,

but of Jove's own sister and wife, the queen of all the gods--with the

churches built in memory of the apostles. Into it were collected the

spoils rescued from the blazing temples and snatched from the gods, not

that they might be restored to the vanquished, but divided among the

victors; while into these was carried back, with the most religious

observance and respect, everything which belonged to them, even though

found elsewhere. There liberty was lost; here preserved. There

bondage was strict; here strictly excluded. Into that temple men were

driven to become the chattels of their enemies, now lording it over

them; into these churches men were led by their relenting foes, that

they might be at liberty. In fine, the gentle [44] Greeks appropriated

that temple of Juno to the purposes of their own avarice and pride;

while these churches of Christ were chosen even by the savage

barbarians as the fit scenes for humility and mercy. But perhaps,

after all, the Greeks did in that victory of theirs spare the temples

of those gods whom they worshipped in common with the Trojans, and did

not dare to put to the sword or make captive the wretched and

vanquished Trojans who fled thither; and perhaps Virgil, in the manner

of poets, has depicted what never really happened? But there is no

question that he depicted the usual custom of an enemy when sacking a

city.

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[43] Virgil, �neid. ii. 761.

[44] Though levis was the word usually employed to signify the

inconstancy of the Greeks, it is evidently here used, in opposition to

immanis of the following clause, to indicate that the Greeks were more

civilized than the barbarians, and not relentless, but, as we say,

easily moved.

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Chapter 5.--C�sar's Statement Regarding the Universal Custom of an

Enemy When Sacking a City.

Even C�sar himself gives us positive testimony regarding this custom;

for, in his deliverance in the senate about the conspirators, he says

(as Sallust, a historian of distinguished veracity, writes [45] ) "that

virgins and boys are violated, children torn from the embrace of their

parents, matrons subjected to whatever should be the pleasure of the

conquerors, temples and houses plundered, slaughter and burning rife;

in fine, all things filled with arms, corpses, blood, and wailing." If

he had not mentioned temples here, we might suppose that enemies were

in the habit of sparing the dwellings of the gods. And the Roman

temples were in danger of these disasters, not from foreign foes, but

from Catiline and his associates, the most noble senators and citizens

of Rome. But these, it may be said, were abandoned men, and the

parricides of their fatherland.

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[45] De Conj. Cat. c. 51.

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Chapter 6.--That Not Even the Romans, When They Took Cities, Spared the

Conquered in Their Temples.

Why, then, need our argument take note of the many nations who have

waged wars with one another, and have nowhere spared the conquered in

the temples of their gods? Let us look at the practice of the Romans

themselves; let us, I say, recall and review the Romans, whose chief

praise it has been "to spare the vanquished and subdue the proud," and

that they preferred "rather to forgive than to revenge an injury;" [46]

and among so many and great cities which they have stormed, taken, and

overthrown for the extension of their dominion, let us be told what

temples they were accustomed to exempt, so that whoever took refuge in

them was free. Or have they really done this, and has the fact been

suppressed by the historians of these events? Is it to be believed,

that men who sought out with the greatest eagerness points they could

praise, would omit those which, in their own estimation, are the most

signal proofs of piety? Marcus Marcellus, a distinguished Roman, who

took Syracuse, a most splendidly adorned city, is reported to have

bewailed its coming ruin, and to have shed his own tears over it before

he spilt its blood. He took steps also to preserve the chastity even

of his enemy. For before he gave orders for the storming of the city,

he issued an edict forbidding the violation of any free person. Yet

the city was sacked according to the custom of war; nor do we anywhere

read, that even by so chaste and gentle a commander orders were given

that no one should be injured who had fled to this or that temple. And

this certainly would by no means have been omitted, when neither his

weeping nor his edict preservative of chastity could be passed in

silence. Fabius, the conqueror of the city of Tarentum, is praised for

abstaining from making booty of the images. For when his secretary

proposed the question to him, what he wished done with the statues of

the gods, which had been taken in large numbers, he veiled his

moderation under a joke. For he asked of what sort they were; and when

they reported to him that there were not only many large images, but

some of them armed, "Oh," says he, "let us leave with the Tarentines

their angry gods." Seeing, then, that the writers of Roman history

could not pass in silence, neither the weeping of the one general nor

the laughing of the other, neither the chaste pity of the one nor the

facetious moderation of the other, on what occasion would it be

omitted, if, for the honor of any of their enemy's gods, they had shown

this particular form of leniency, that in any temple slaughter or

captivity was prohibited?

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[46] Sallust, Cat. Conj. ix.

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Chapter 7.--That the Cruelties Which Occurred in the Sack of Rome Were

in Accordance with the Custom of War, Whereas the Acts of Clemency

Resulted from the Influence of Christ's Name.

All the spoiling, then, which Rome was exposed to in the recent

calamity--all the slaughter, plundering, burning, and misery--was the

result of the custom of war. But what was novel, was that savage

barbarians showed themselves in so gentle a guise, that the largest

churches were chosen and set apart for the purpose of being filled with

the people to whom quarter was given, and that in them none were slain,

from them none forcibly dragged; that into them many were led by their

relenting enemies to be set at liberty, and that from them none were

led into slavery by merciless foes. Whoever does not see that this is

to be attributed to the name of Christ, and to the Christian temper, is

blind; whoever sees this, and gives no praise, is ungrateful; whoever

hinders any one from praising it, is mad. Far be it from any prudent

man to impute this clemency to the barbarians. Their fierce and bloody

minds were awed, and bridled, and marvellously tempered by Him who so

long before said by His prophet, "I will visit their transgression with

the rod, and their iniquities with stripes; nevertheless my

loving-kindness will I not utterly take from them." [47]

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[47] Ps. lxxxix. 32.

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Chapter 8.--Of the Advantages and Disadvantages Which Often

Indiscriminately Accrue to Good and Wicked Men.

Will some one say, Why, then, was this divine compassion extended even

to the ungodly and ungrateful? Why, but because it was the mercy of

Him who daily "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and

sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." [48] For though some of

these men, taking thought of this, repent of their wickedness and

reform, some, as the apostle says, "despising the riches of His

goodness and long-suffering, after their hardness and impenitent heart,

treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath and

revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every

man according to his deeds:" [49] nevertheless does the patience of God

still invite the wicked to repentance, even as the scourge of God

educates the good to patience. And so, too, does the mercy of God

embrace the good that it may cherish them, as the severity of God

arrests the wicked to punish them. To the divine providence it has

seemed good to prepare in the world to come for the righteous good

things, which the unrighteous shall not enjoy; and for the wicked evil

things, by which the good shall not be tormented. But as for the good

things of this life, and its ills, God has willed that these should be

common to both; that we might not too eagerly covet the things which

wicked men are seen equally to enjoy, nor shrink with an unseemly fear

from the ills which even good men often suffer.

There is, too, a very great difference in the purpose served both by

those events which we call adverse and those called prosperous. For

the good man is neither uplifted with the good things of time, nor

broken by its ills; but the wicked man, because he is corrupted by this

world's happiness, feels himself punished by its unhappiness. [50]

Yet often, even in the present distribution of temporal things, does

God plainly evince His own interference. For if every sin were now

visited with manifest punishment, nothing would seem to be reserved for

the final judgment; on the other hand, if no sin received now a plainly

divine punishment, it would be concluded that there is no divine

providence at all. And so of the good things of this life: if God did

not by a very visible liberality confer these on some of those persons

who ask for them, we should say that these good things were not at His

disposal; and if He gave them to all who sought them, we should suppose

that such were the only rewards of His service; and such a service

would make us not godly, but greedy rather, and covetous. Wherefore,

though good and bad men suffer alike, we must not suppose that there is

no difference between the men themselves, because there is no

difference in what they both suffer. For even in the likeness of the

sufferings, there remains an unlikeness in the sufferers; and though

exposed to the same anguish, virtue and vice are not the same thing.

For as the same fire causes gold to glow brightly, and chaff to smoke;

and under the same flail the straw is beaten small, while the grain is

cleansed; and as the lees are not mixed with the oil, though squeezed

out of the vat by the same pressure, so the same violence of affliction

proves, purges, clarifies the good, but damns, ruins, exterminates the

wicked. And thus it is that in the same affliction the wicked detest

God and blaspheme, while the good pray and praise. So material a

difference does it make, not what ills are suffered, but what kind of

man suffers them. For, stirred up with the same movement, mud exhales

a horrible stench, and ointment emits a fragrant odor.

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[48] Matt. v. 45.

[49] Rom. ii. 4.

[50] So Cyprian (Contra Demetrianum) says: P�nam de adversis mundi

ille sentit, cui et loetitia et gloria omnis in mundo est.

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Chapter 9.--Of the Reasons for Administering Correction to Bad and Good

Together.

What, then, have the Christians suffered in that calamitous period,

which would not profit every one who duly and faithfully considered the

following circumstances? First of all, they must humbly consider those

very sins which have provoked God to fill the world with such terrible

disasters; for although they be far from the excesses of wicked,

immoral, and ungodly men, yet they do not judge themselves so clean

removed from all faults as to be too good to suffer for these even

temporal ills. For every man, however laudably he lives, yet yields in

some points to the lust of the flesh. Though he do not fall into gross

enormity of wickedness, and abandoned viciousness, and abominable

profanity, yet he slips into some sins, either rarely or so much the

more frequently as the sins seem of less account. But not to mention

this, where can we readily find a man who holds in fit and just

estimation those persons on account of whose revolting pride, luxury,

and avarice, and cursed iniquities and impiety, God now smites the

earth as His predictions threatened? Where is the man who lives with

them in the style in which it becomes us to live with them? For often

we wickedly blind ourselves to the occasions of teaching and

admonishing them, sometimes even of reprimanding and chiding them,

either because we shrink from the labor or are ashamed to offend them,

or because we fear to lose good friendships, lest this should stand in

the way of our advancement, or injure us in some worldly matter, which

either our covetous disposition desires to obtain, or our weakness

shrinks from losing. So that, although the conduct of wicked men is

distasteful to the good, and therefore they do not fall with them into

that damnation which in the next life awaits such persons, yet, because

they spare their damnable sins through fear, therefore, even though

their own sins be slight and venial, they are justly scourged with the

wicked in this world, though in eternity they quite escape punishment.

Justly, when God afflicts them in common with the wicked, do they find

this life bitter, through love of whose sweetness they declined to be

bitter to these sinners.

If any one forbears to reprove and find fault with those who are doing

wrong, because he seeks a more seasonable opportunity, or because he

fears they may be made worse by his rebuke, or that other weak persons

may be disheartened from endeavoring to lead a good and pious life, and

may be driven from the faith; this man's omission seems to be

occasioned not by covetousness, but by a charitable consideration. But

what is blame-worthy is, that they who themselves revolt from the

conduct of the wicked, and live in quite another fashion, yet spare

those faults in other men which they ought to reprehend and wean them

from; and spare them because they fear to give offence, lest they

should injure their interests in those things which good men may

innocently and legitimately use,--though they use them more greedily

than becomes persons who are strangers in this world, and profess the

hope of a heavenly country. For not only the weaker brethren who enjoy

married life, and have children (or desire to have them), and own

houses and establishments, whom the apostle addresses in the churches,

warning and instructing them how they should live, both the wives with

their husbands, and the husbands with their wives, the children with

their parents, and parents with their children, and servants with their

masters, and masters with their servants,--not only do these weaker

brethren gladly obtain and grudgingly lose many earthly and temporal

things on account of which they dare not offend men whose polluted and

wicked life greatly displeases them; but those also who live at a

higher level, who are not entangled in the meshes of married life, but

use meagre food and raiment, do often take thought of their own safety

and good name, and abstain from finding fault with the wicked, because

they fear their wiles and violence. And although they do not fear them

to such an extent as to be drawn to the commission of like iniquities,

nay, not by any threats or violence soever; yet those very deeds which

they refuse to share in the commission of they often decline to find

fault with, when possibly they might by finding fault prevent their

commission. They abstain from interference, because they fear that, if

it fail of good effect, their own safety or reputation may be damaged

or destroyed; not because they see that their preservation and good

name are needful, that they may be able to influence those who need

their instruction, but rather because they weakly relish the flattery

and respect of men, and fear the judgments of the people, and the pain

or death of the body; that is to say, their non-intervention is the

result of selfishness, and not of love.

Accordingly this seems to me to be one principal reason why the good

are chastised along with the wicked, when God is pleased to visit with

temporal punishments the profligate manners of a community. They are

punished together, not because they have spent an equally corrupt life,

but because the good as well as the wicked, though not equally with

them, love this present life; while they ought to hold it cheap, that

the wicked, being admonished and reformed by their example, might lay

hold of life eternal. And if they will not be the companions of the

good in seeking life everlasting, they should be loved as enemies, and

be dealt with patiently. For so long as they live, it remains

uncertain whether they may not come to a better mind. These selfish

persons have more cause to fear than those to whom it was said through

the prophet, "He is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood will I

require at the watchman's hand." [51] For watchmen or overseers of

the people are appointed in churches, that they may unsparingly rebuke

sin. Nor is that man guiltless of the sin we speak of, who, though he

be not a watchman, yet sees in the conduct of those with whom the

relationships of this life bring him into contact, many things that

should be blamed, and yet overlooks them, fearing to give offence, and

lose such worldly blessings as may legitimately be desired, but which

he too eagerly grasps. Then, lastly, there is another reason why the

good are afflicted with temporal calamities--the reason which Job's

case exemplifies: that the human spirit may be proved, and that it may

be manifested with what fortitude of pious trust, and with how

unmercenary a love, it cleaves to God. [52]

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[51] Ezek. xxxiii. 6.

[52] Compare with this chapter the first homily of Chrysostom to the

people of Antioch.

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Chapter 10.--That the Saints Lose Nothing in Losing Temporal Goods.

These are the considerations which one must keep in view, that he may

answer the question whether any evil happens to the faithful and godly

which cannot be turned to profit. Or shall we say that the question is

needless, and that the apostle is vaporing when he says, "We know that

all things work together for good to them that love God?" [53]

They lost all they had. Their faith? Their godliness? The

possessions of the hidden man of the heart, which in the sight of God

are of great price? [54] Did they lose these? For these are the

wealth of Christians, to whom the wealthy apostle said, "Godliness with

contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and

it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment,

let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into

temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which

drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the

root of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from

the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." [55]

They, then, who lost their worldly all in the sack of Rome, if they

owned their possessions as they had been taught by the apostle, who

himself was poor without, but rich within,--that is to say, if they

used the world as not using it,--could say in the words of Job, heavily

tried, but not overcome: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and

naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken

away; as it pleased the Lord, so has it come to pass: blessed be the

name of the Lord." [56] Like a good servant, Job counted the will of

his Lord his great possession, by obedience to which his soul was

enriched; nor did it grieve him to lose, while yet living, those goods

which he must shortly leave at his death. But as to those feebler

spirits who, though they cannot be said to prefer earthly possessions

to Christ, do yet cleave to them with a somewhat immoderate attachment,

they have discovered by the pain of losing these things how much they

were sinning in loving them. For their grief is of their own making;

in the words of the apostle quoted above, "they have pierced themselves

through with many sorrows." For it was well that they who had so long

despised these verbal admonitions should receive the teaching of

experience. For when the apostle says, "They that will be rich fall

into temptation," and so on, what he blames in riches is not the

possession of them, but the desire of them. For elsewhere he says,

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded,

nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us

richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in

good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in

store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that

they may lay hold on eternal life." [57] They who were making such a

use of their property have been consoled for light losses by great

gains, and have had more pleasure in those possessions which they have

securely laid past, by freely giving them away, than grief in those

which they entirely lost by an anxious and selfish hoarding of them.

For nothing could perish on earth save what they would be ashamed to

carry away from earth. Our Lord's injunction runs, "Lay not up for

yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and

where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves

treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and

where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure

is, there will your heart be also." [58] And they who have listened

to this injunction have proved in the time of tribulation how well they

were advised in not despising this most trustworthy teacher, and most

faithful and mighty guardian of their treasure. For if many were glad

that their treasure was stored in places which the enemy chanced not to

light upon, how much better founded was the joy of those who, by the

counsel of their God, had fled with their treasure to a citadel which

no enemy can possibly reach! Thus our Paulinus, bishop of Nola, [59]

who voluntarily abandoned vast wealth and became quite poor, though

abundantly rich in holiness, when the barbarians sacked Nola, and took

him prisoner, used silently to pray, as he afterwards told me, "O Lord,

let me not be troubled for gold and silver, for where all my treasure

is Thou knowest." For all his treasure was where he had been taught to

hide and store it by Him who had also foretold that these calamities

would happen in the world. Consequently those persons who obeyed their

Lord when He warned them where and how to lay up treasure, did not lose

even their earthly possessions in the invasion of the barbarians; while

those who are now repenting that they did not obey Him have learnt the

right use of earthly goods, if not by the wisdom which would have

prevented their loss, at least by the experience which follows it.

But some good and Christian men have been put to the torture, that they

might be forced to deliver up their goods to the enemy. They could

indeed neither deliver nor lose that good which made themselves good.

If, however, they preferred torture to the surrender of the mammon of

iniquity, then I say they were not good men. Rather they should have

been reminded that, if they suffered so severely for the sake of money,

they should endure all torment, if need be, for Christ's sake; that

they might be taught to love Him rather who enriches with eternal

felicity all who suffer for Him, and not silver and gold, for which it

was pitiable to suffer, whether they preserved it by telling a lie or

lost it by telling the truth. For under these tortures no one lost

Christ by confessing Him, no one preserved wealth save by denying its

existence. So that possibly the torture which taught them that they

should set their affections on a possession they could not lose, was

more useful than those possessions which, without any useful fruit at

all, disquieted and tormented their anxious owners. But then we are

reminded that some were tortured who had no wealth to surrender, but

who were not believed when they said so. These too, however, had

perhaps some craving for wealth, and were not willingly poor with a

holy resignation; and to such it had to be made plain, that not the

actual possession alone, but also the desire of wealth, deserved such

excruciating pains. And even if they were destitute of any hidden

stores of gold and silver, because they were living in hopes of a

better life,--I know not indeed if any such person was tortured on the

supposition that he had wealth; but if so, then certainly in

confessing, when put to the question, a holy poverty, he confessed

Christ. And though it was scarcely to be expected that the barbarians

should believe him, yet no confessor of a holy poverty could be

tortured without receiving a heavenly reward.

Again, they say that the long famine laid many a Christian low. But

this, too, the faithful turned to good uses by a pious endurance of

it. For those whom famine killed outright it rescued from the ills of

this life, as a kindly disease would have done; and those who were only

hunger-bitten were taught to live more sparingly, and inured to longer

fasts.

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[53] Rom. viii. 28.

[54] 1 Pet. iii. 4.

[55] l Tim. vi. 6-10.

[56] Job i. 21.

[57] 1 Tim. vi. 17-19.

[58] Matt. vi. 19-21.

[59] Paulinus was a native of Bordeaux, and both by inheritance and

marriage acquired great wealth, which, after his conversion in his

thirty-sixth year, he distributed to the poor. He became bishop of

Nola in A.D. 409, being then in his fifty-sixth year. Nola was taken

by Alaric shortly after the sack of Rome.

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Chapter 11.--Of the End of This Life, Whether It is Material that It Be

Long Delayed.

But, it is added, many Christians were slaughtered, and were put to

death in a hideous variety of cruel ways. Well, if this be hard to

bear, it is assuredly the common lot of all who are born into this

life. Of this at least I am certain, that no one has ever died who was

not destined to die some time. Now the end of life puts the longest

life on a par with the shortest. For of two things which have alike

ceased to be, the one is not better, the other worse--the one greater,

the other less. [60] And of what consequence is it what kind of death

puts an end to life, since he who has died once is not forced to go

through the same ordeal a second time? And as in the daily casualties

of life every man is, as it were, threatened with numberless deaths, so

long as it remains uncertain which of them is his fate, I would ask

whether it is not better to suffer one and die, than to live in fear of

all? I am not unaware of the poor-spirited fear which prompts us to

choose rather to live long in fear of so many deaths, than to die once

and so escape them all; but the weak and cowardly shrinking of the

flesh is one thing, and the well-considered and reasonable persuasion

of the soul quite another. That death is not to be judged an evil

which is the end of a good life; for death becomes evil only by the

retribution which follows it. They, then, who are destined to die,

need not be careful to inquire what death they are to die, but into

what place death will usher them. And since Christians are well aware

that the death of the godly pauper whose sores the dogs licked was far

better than of the wicked rich man who lay in purple and fine linen,

what harm could these terrific deaths do to the dead who had lived

well?

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[60] Much of a kindred nature might be gathered from the Stoics.

Antoninus says (ii. 14): "Though thou shouldest be going to live 3000

years, and as many times 10,000 years, still remember that no man loses

any other life than this which he now lives, nor lives any other than

this which he now loses. The longest and the shortest are thus brought

to the same."

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Chapter 12.--Of the Burial of the Dead: that the Denial of It to

Christians Does Them No Injury. [61]

Further still, we are reminded that in such a carnage as then occurred,

the bodies could not even be buried. But godly confidence is not

appalled by so ill-omened a circumstance; for the faithful bear in mind

that assurance has been given that not a hair of their head shall

perish, and that, therefore, though they even be devoured by beasts,

their blessed resurrection will not hereby be hindered. The Truth

would nowise have said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not

able to kill the soul," [62] if anything whatever that an enemy could

do to the body of the slain could be detrimental to the future life.

Or will some one perhaps take so absurd a position as to contend that

those who kill the body are not to be feared before death, and lest

they kill the body, but after death, lest they deprive it of burial?

If this be so, then that is false which Christ says, "Be not afraid of

them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do;"

[63] for it seems they can do great injury to the dead body. Far be it

from us to suppose that the Truth can be thus false. They who kill the

body are said "to do something," because the deathblow is felt, the

body still having sensation; but after that, they have no more that

they can do, for in the slain body there is no sensation. And so there

are indeed many bodies of Christians lying unburied; but no one has

separated them from heaven, nor from that earth which is all filled

with the presence of Him who knows whence He will raise again what He

created. It is said, indeed, in the Psalm: "The dead bodies of Thy

servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the

flesh of Thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have

they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury

them." [64] But this was said rather to exhibit the cruelty of those

who did these things, than the misery of those who suffered them. To

the eyes of men this appears a harsh and doleful lot, yet "precious in

the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." [65] Wherefore all

these last offices and ceremonies that concern the dead, the careful

funeral arrangements, and the equipment of the tomb, and the pomp of

obsequies, are rather the solace of the living than the comfort of the

dead. If a costly burial does any good to a wicked man, a squalid

burial, or none at all, may harm the godly. His crowd of domestics

furnished the purple-clad Dives with a funeral gorgeous in the eye of

man; but in the sight of God that was a more sumptuous funeral which

the ulcerous pauper received at the hands of the angels, who did not

carry him out to a marble tomb, but bore him aloft to Abraham's bosom.

The men against whom I have undertaken to defend the city of God laugh

at all this. But even their own philosophers [66] have despised a

careful burial; and often whole armies have fought and fallen for their

earthly country without caring to inquire whether they would be left

exposed on the field of battle, or become the food of wild beasts. Of

this noble disregard of sepulture poetry has well said: "He who has no

tomb has the sky for his vault." [67] How much less ought they to

insult over the unburied bodies of Christians, to whom it has been

promised that the flesh itself shall be restored, and the body formed

anew, all the members of it being gathered not only from the earth, but

from the most secret recesses of any other of the elements in which the

dead bodies of men have lain hid!

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[61] Augustin expresses himself more fully on this subject in his

tract, De cura pro mortuis gerenda.

[62] Matt. x. 28.

[63] Luke xii. 4.

[64] Ps. lxxix. 2, 3.

[65] Ps. cxvi. 15.

[66] Diogenes especially, and his followers. See also Seneca, De

Tranq. c. 14, and Epist. 92; and in Cicero's Tusc. Disp. i. 43, the

answer of Theodorus, the Cyrenian philosopher, to Lysimachus, who

threatened him with the cross: "Threaten that to your courtiers; it is

of no consequence to Theodorus whether he rot in the earth or in the

air."

[67] Lucan, Pharsalia, vii. 819, of those whom C�sar forbade to be

buried after the battle of Pharsalia.

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Chapter 13.--Reasons for Burying the Bodies of the Saints.

Nevertheless the bodies of the dead are not on this account to be

despised and left unburied; least of all the bodies of the righteous

and faithful, which have been used by the Holy Spirit as His organs and

instruments for all good works. For if the dress of a father, or his

ring, or anything he wore, be precious to his children, in proportion

to the love they bore him, with how much more reason ought we to care

for the bodies of those we love, which they wore far more closely and

intimately than any clothing! For the body is not an extraneous

ornament or aid, but a part of man's very nature. And therefore to the

righteous of ancient times the last offices were piously rendered, and

sepulchres provided for them, and obsequies celebrated; [68] and they

themselves, while yet alive, gave commandment to their sons about the

burial, and, on occasion, even about the removal of their bodies to

some favorite place. [69] And Tobit, according to the angel's

testimony, is commended, and is said to have pleased God by burying the

dead. [70] Our Lord Himself, too, though He was to rise again the

third day, applauds, and commends to our applause, the good work of the

religious woman who poured precious ointment over His limbs, and did it

against His burial. [71] And the Gospel speaks with commendation of

those who were careful to take down His body from the cross, and wrap

it lovingly in costly cerements, and see to its burial. [72] These

instances certainly do not prove that corpses have any feeling; but

they show that God's providence extends even to the bodies of the dead,

and that such pious offices are pleasing to Him, as cherishing faith in

the resurrection. And we may also draw from them this wholesome

lesson, that if God does not forget even any kind office which loving

care pays to the unconscious dead, much more does He reward the charity

we exercise towards the living. Other things, indeed, which the holy

patriarchs said of the burial and removal of their bodies, they meant

to be taken in a prophetic sense; but of these we need not here speak

at large, what we have already said being sufficient. But if the want

of those things which are necessary for the support of the living, as

food and clothing, though painful and trying, does not break down the

fortitude and virtuous endurance of good men, nor eradicate piety from

their souls, but rather renders it more fruitful, how much less can the

absence of the funeral, and of the other customary attentions paid to

the dead, render those wretched who are already reposing in the hidden

abodes of the blessed! Consequently, though in the sack of Rome and of

other towns the dead bodies of the Christians were deprived of these

last offices, this is neither the fault of the living, for they could

not render them; nor an infliction to the dead, for they cannot feel

the loss.

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[68] Gen. xxv. 9, xxxv. 29, etc.

[69] Gen. xlvii. 29, l. 24.

[70] Tob. xii. 12.

[71] Matt. xxvi. 10-13.

[72] John xix. 38.

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Chapter 14.--Of the Captivity of the Saints, and that Divine

Consolation Never Failed Them Therein.

But, say they, many Christians were even led away captive. This indeed

were a most pitiable fate, if they could be led away to any place where

they could not find their God. But for this calamity also sacred

Scripture affords great consolation. The three youths [73] were

captives; Daniel was a captive; so were other prophets: and God, the

comforter, did not fail them. And in like manner He has not failed His

own people in the power of a nation which, though barbarous, is yet

human,--He who did not abandon the prophet [74] in the belly of a

monster. These things, indeed, are turned to ridicule rather than

credited by those with whom we are debating; though they believe what

they read in their own books, that Arion of Methymna, the famous

lyrist, [75] when he was thrown overboard, was received on a dolphin's

back and carried to land. But that story of ours about the prophet

Jonah is far more incredible,--more incredible because more marvellous,

and more marvellous because a greater exhibition of power.

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[73] Dan. iii.

[74] Jonah.

[75] "Second to none," as he is called by Herodotus, who first of all

tells his well-known story (Clio. 23, 24).

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Chapter 15.--Of Regulus, in Whom We Have an Example of the Voluntary

Endurance of Captivity for the Sake of Religion; Which Yet Did Not

Profit Him, Though He Was a Worshipper of the Gods.

But among their own famous men they have a very noble example of the

voluntary endurance of captivity in obedience to a religious scruple.

Marcus Attilius Regulus, a Roman general, was a prisoner in the hands

of the Carthaginians. But they, being more anxious to exchange their

prisoners with the Romans than to keep them, sent Regulus as a special

envoy with their own embassadors to negotiate this exchange, but bound

him first with an oath, that if he failed to accomplish their wish, he

would return to Carthage. He went and persuaded the senate to the

opposite course, because he believed it was not for the advantage of

the Roman republic to make an exchange of prisoners. After he had thus

exerted his influence, the Romans did not compel him to return to the

enemy; but what he had sworn he voluntarily performed. But the

Carthaginians put him to death with refined, elaborate, and horrible

tortures. They shut him up in a narrow box, in which he was compelled

to stand, and in which finely sharpened nails were fixed all round

about him, so that he could not lean upon any part of it without

intense pain; and so they killed him by depriving him of sleep. [76]

With justice, indeed, do they applaud the virtue which rose superior to

so frightful a fate. However, the gods he swore by were those who are

now supposed to avenge the prohibition of their worship, by inflicting

these present calamities on the human race. But if these gods, who

were worshipped specially in this behalf, that they might confer

happiness in this life, either willed or permitted these punishments to

be inflicted on one who kept his oath to them, what more cruel

punishment could they in their anger have inflicted on a perjured

person? But why may I not draw from my reasoning a double inference?

Regulus certainly had such reverence for the gods, that for his oath's

sake he would neither remain in his own land nor go elsewhere, but

without hesitation returned to his bitterest enemies. If he thought

that this course would be advantageous with respect to this present

life, he was certainly much deceived, for it brought his life to a

frightful termination. By his own example, in fact, he taught that the

gods do not secure the temporal happiness of their worshippers; since

he himself, who was devoted to their worship, as both conquered in

battle and taken prisoner, and then, because he refused to act in

violation of the oath he had sworn by them, was tortured and put to

death by a new, and hitherto unheard of, and all too horrible kind of

punishment. And on the supposition that the worshippers of the gods

are rewarded by felicity in the life to come, why, then, do they

calumniate the influence of Christianity? why do they assert that this

disaster has overtaken the city because it has ceased to worship its

gods, since, worship them as assiduously as it may, it may yet be as

unfortunate as Regulus was? Or will some one carry so wonderful a

blindness to the extent of wildly attempting, in the face of the

evident truth, to contend that though one man might be unfortunate,

though a worshipper of the gods, yet a whole city could not be so?

That is to say, the power of their gods is better adapted to preserve

multitudes than individuals,--as if a multitude were not composed of

individuals.

But if they say that M. Regulus, even while a prisoner and enduring

these bodily torments, might yet enjoy the blessedness of a virtuous

soul, [77] then let them recognize that true virtue by which a city

also may be blessed. For the blessedness of a community and of an

individual flow from the same source; for a community is nothing else

than a harmonious collection of individuals. So that I am not

concerned meantime to discuss what kind of virtue Regulus possessed;

enough, that by his very noble example they are forced to own that the

gods are to be worshipped not for the sake of bodily comforts or

external advantages; for he preferred to lose all such things rather

than offend the gods by whom he had sworn. But what can we make of men

who glory in having such a citizen, but dread having a city like him?

If they do not dread this, then let them acknowledge that some such

calamity as befell Regulus may also befall a community, though they be

worshipping their gods as diligently as he; and let them no longer

throw the blame of their misfortunes on Christianity. But as our

present concern is with those Christians who were taken prisoners, let

those who take occasion from this calamity to revile our most wholesome

religion in a fashion not less imprudent than impudent, consider this

and hold their peace; for if it was no reproach to their gods that a

most punctilious worshipper of theirs should, for the sake of keeping

his oath to them, be deprived of his native land without hope of

finding another, and fall into the hands of his enemies, and be put to

death by a long-drawn and exquisite torture, much less ought the

Christian name to be charged with the captivity of those who believe in

its power, since they, in confident expectation of a heavenly country,

know that they are pilgrims even in their own homes.

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[76] Augustin here uses the words of Cicero ("vigilando peremerunt"),

who refers to Regulus, in Pisonem. c 19. Aulus Gellius, quoting Tubero

and Tuditanus (vi. 4), adds some further particulars regarding these

tortures.

[77] As the Stoics generally would affirm.

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Chapter 16.--Of the Violation of the Consecrated and Other Christian

Virgins, to Which They Were Subjected in Captivity and to Which Their

Own Will Gave No Consent; And Whether This Contaminated Their Souls.

But they fancy they bring a conclusive charge against Christianity,

when they aggravate the horror of captivity by adding that not only

wives and unmarried maidens, but even consecrated virgins, were

violated. But truly, with respect to this, it is not Christian faith,

nor piety, nor even the virtue of chastity, which is hemmed into any

difficulty; the only difficulty is so to treat the subject as to

satisfy at once modesty and reason. And in discussing it we shall not

be so careful to reply to our accusers as to comfort our friends. Let

this, therefore, in the first place, be laid down as an unassailable

position, that the virtue which makes the life good has its throne in

the soul, and thence rules the members of the body, which becomes holy

in virtue of the holiness of the will; and that while the will remains

firm and unshaken, nothing that another person does with the body, or

upon the body, is any fault of the person who suffers it, so long as he

cannot escape it without sin. But as not only pain may be inflicted,

but lust gratified on the body of another, whenever anything of this

latter kind takes place, shame invades even a thoroughly pure spirit

from which modesty has not departed,--shame, lest that act which could

not be suffered without some sensual pleasure, should be believed to

have been committed also with some assent of the will.

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Chapter 17.--Of Suicide Committed Through Fear of Punishment or

Dishonor.

And consequently, even if some of these virgins killed themselves to

avoid such disgrace, who that has any human feeling would refuse to

forgive them? And as for those who would not put an end to their

lives, lest they might seem to escape the crime of another by a sin of

their own, he who lays this to their charge as a great wickedness is

himself not guiltless of the fault of folly. For if it is not lawful

to take the law into our own hands, and slay even a guilty person,

whose death no public sentence has warranted, then certainly he who

kills himself is a homicide, and so much the guiltier of his own death,

as he was more innocent of that offence for which he doomed himself to

die. Do we justly execrate the deed of Judas, and does truth itself

pronounce that by hanging himself he rather aggravated than expiated

the guilt of that most iniquitous betrayal, since, by despairing of

God's mercy in his sorrow that wrought death, he left to himself no

place for a healing penitence? How much more ought he to abstain from

laying violent hands on himself who has done nothing worthy of such a

punishment! For Judas, when he killed himself, killed a wicked man;

but he passed from this life chargeable not only with the death of

Christ, but with his own: for though he killed himself on account of

his crime, his killing himself was another crime. Why, then, should a

man who has done no ill do ill to himself, and by killing himself kill

the innocent to escape another's guilty act, and perpetrate upon

himself a sin of his own, that the sin of another may not be

perpetrated on him?

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Chapter 18.--Of the Violence Which May Be Done to the Body by Another's

Lust, While the Mind Remains Inviolate.

But is there a fear that even another's lust may pollute the violated?

It will not pollute, if it be another's: if it pollute, it is not

another's, but is shared also by the polluted. But since purity is a

virtue of the soul, and has for its companion virtue, the fortitude

which will rather endure all ills than consent to evil; and since no

one, however magnanimous and pure, has always the disposal of his own

body, but can control only the consent and refusal of his will, what

sane man can suppose that, if his body be seized and forcibly made use

of to satisfy the lust of another, he thereby loses his purity? For if

purity can be thus destroyed, then assuredly purity is no virtue of the

soul; nor can it be numbered among those good things by which the life

is made good, but among the good things of the body, in the same

category as strength, beauty, sound and unbroken health, and, in short,

all such good things as may be diminished without at all diminishing

the goodness and rectitude of our life. But if purity be nothing

better than these, why should the body be perilled that it may be

preserved? If, on the other hand, it belongs to the soul, then not

even when the body is violated is it lost. Nay more, the virtue of

holy continence, when it resists the uncleanness of carnal lust,

sanctifies even the body, and therefore when this continence remains

unsubdued, even the sanctity of the body is preserved, because the will

to use it holily remains, and, so far as lies in the body itself, the

power also.

For the sanctity of the body does not consist in the integrity of its

members, nor in their exemption from all touch; for they are exposed to

various accidents which do violence to and wound them, and the surgeons

who administer relief often perform operations that sicken the

spectator. A midwife, suppose, has (whether maliciously or

accidentally, or through unskillfulness) destroyed the virginity of

some girl, while endeavoring to ascertain it: I suppose no one is so

foolish as to believe that, by this destruction of the integrity of one

organ, the virgin has lost anything even of her bodily sanctity. And

thus, so long as the soul keeps this firmness of purpose which

sanctifies even the body, the violence done by another's lust makes no

impression on this bodily sanctity, which is preserved intact by one's

own persistent continence. Suppose a virgin violates the oath she has

sworn to God, and goes to meet her seducer with the intention of

yielding to him, shall we say that as she goes she is possessed even of

bodily sanctity, when already she has lost and destroyed that sanctity

of soul which sanctifies the body? Far be it from us to so misapply

words. Let us rather draw this conclusion, that while the sanctity of

the soul remains even when the body is violated, the sanctity of the

body is not lost; and that, in like manner, the sanctity of the body is

lost when the sanctity of the soul is violated, though the body itself

remains intact. And therefore a woman who has been violated by the sin

of another, and without any consent of her own, has no cause to put

herself to death; much less has she cause to commit suicide in order to

avoid such violation, for in that case she commits certain homicide to

prevent a crime which is uncertain as yet, and not her own.

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Chapter 19.--Of Lucretia, Who Put an End to Her Life Because of the

Outrage Done Her.

This, then, is our position, and it seems sufficiently lucid. We

maintain that when a woman is violated while her soul admits no consent

to the iniquity, but remains inviolably chaste, the sin is not hers,

but his who violates her. But do they against whom we have to defend

not only the souls, but the sacred bodies too of these outraged

Christian captives,--do they, perhaps, dare to dispute our position?

But all know how loudly they extol the purity of Lucretia, that noble

matron of ancient Rome. When King Tarquin's son had violated her body,

she made known the wickedness of this young profligate to her husband

Collatinus, and to Brutus her kinsman, men of high rank and full of

courage, and bound them by an oath to avenge it. Then, heart-sick, and

unable to bear the shame, she put an end to her life. What shall we

call her? An adulteress, or chaste? There is no question which she

was. Not more happily than truly did a declaimer say of this sad

occurrence: "Here was a marvel: there were two, and only one

committed adultery." Most forcibly and truly spoken. For this

declaimer, seeing in the union of the two bodies the foul lust of the

one, and the chaste will of the other, and giving heed not to the

contact of the bodily members, but to the wide diversity of their

souls, says: "There were two, but the adultery was committed only by

one."

But how is it, that she who was no partner to the crime bears the

heavier punishment of the two? For the adulterer was only banished

along with his father; she suffered the extreme penalty. If that was

not impurity by which she was unwillingly ravished, then this is not

justice by which she, being chaste, is punished. To you I appeal, ye

laws and judges of Rome. Even after the perpetration of great

enormities, you do not suffer the criminal to be slain untried. If,

then, one were to bring to your bar this case, and were to prove to you

that a woman not only untried, but chaste and innocent, had been

killed, would you not visit the murderer with punishment proportionably

severe? This crime was committed by Lucretia; that Lucretia so

celebrated and lauded slew the innocent, chaste, outraged Lucretia.

Pronounce sentence. But if you cannot, because there does not appear

any one whom you can punish, why do you extol with such unmeasured

laudation her who slew an innocent and chaste woman? Assuredly you

will find it impossible to defend her before the judges of the realms

below, if they be such as your poets are fond of representing them; for

she is among those

"Who guiltless sent themselves to doom,

And all for loathing of the day,

In madness threw their lives away."

And if she with the others wishes to return,

"Fate bars the way: around their keep

The slow unlovely waters creep,

And bind with ninefold chain." [78]

Or perhaps she is not there, because she slew herself conscious of

guilt, not of innocence? She herself alone knows her reason; but what

if she was betrayed by the pleasure of the act, and gave some consent

to Sextus, though so violently abusing her, and then was so affected

with remorse, that she thought death alone could expiate her sin? Even

though this were the case, she ought still to have held her hand from

suicide, if she could with her false gods have accomplished a fruitful

repentance. However, if such were the state of the case, and if it

were false that there were two, but one only committed adultery; if the

truth were that both were involved in it, one by open assault, the

other by secret consent, then she did not kill an innocent woman; and

therefore her erudite defenders may maintain that she is not among that

class of the dwellers below "who guiltless sent themselves to doom."

But this case of Lucretia is in such a dilemma, that if you extenuate

the homicide, you confirm the adultery: if you acquit her of adultery,

you make the charge of homicide heavier; and there is no way out of the

dilemma, when one asks, If she was adulterous, why praise her? if

chaste, why slay her?

Nevertheless, for our purpose of refuting those who are unable to

comprehend what true sanctity is, and who therefore insult over our

outraged Christian women, it is enough that in the instance of this

noble Roman matron it was said in her praise, "There were two, but the

adultery was the crime of only one." For Lucretia was confidently

believed to be superior to the contamination of any consenting thought

to the adultery. And accordingly, since she killed herself for being

subjected to an outrage in which she had no guilty part, it is obvious

that this act of hers was prompted not by the love of purity, but by

the overwhelming burden of her shame. She was ashamed that so foul a

crime had been perpetrated upon her, though without her abetting; and

this matron, with the Roman love of glory in her veins, was seized with

a proud dread that, if she continued to live, it would be supposed she

willingly did not resent the wrong that had been done her. She could

not exhibit to men her conscience but she judged that her

self-inflicted punishment would testify her state of mind; and she

burned with shame at the thought that her patient endurance of the foul

affront that another had done her, should be construed into complicity

with him. Not such was the decision of the Christian women who

suffered as she did, and yet survive. They declined to avenge upon

themselves the guilt of others, and so add crimes of their own to those

crimes in which they had no share. For this they would have done had

their shame driven them to homicide, as the lust of their enemies had

driven them to adultery. Within their own souls, in the witness of

their own conscience, they enjoy the glory of chastity. In the sight

of God, too, they are esteemed pure, and this contents them; they ask

no more: it suffices them to have opportunity of doing good, and they

decline to evade the distress of human suspicion, lest they thereby

deviate from the divine law.

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[78] Virgil, �neid, vi. 434.

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Chapter 20.--That Christians Have No Authority for Committing Suicide

in Any Circumstances Whatever.

It is not without significance, that in no passage of the holy

canonical books there can be found either divine precept or permission

to take away our own life, whether for the sake of entering on the

enjoyment of immortality, or of shunning, or ridding ourselves of

anything whatever. Nay, the law, rightly interpreted, even prohibits

suicide, where it says, "Thou shalt not kill." This is proved

especially by the omission of the words "thy neighbor," which are

inserted when false witness is forbidden: "Thou shalt not bear false

witness against thy neighbor." Nor yet should any one on this account

suppose he has not broken this commandment if he has borne false

witness only against himself. For the love of our neighbor is

regulated by the love of ourselves, as it is written, "Thou shalt love

thy neighbor as thyself." If, then, he who makes false statements

about himself is not less guilty of bearing false witness than if he

had made them to the injury of his neighbor; although in the

commandment prohibiting false witness only his neighbor is mentioned,

and persons taking no pains to understand it might suppose that a man

was allowed to be a false witness to his own hurt; how much greater

reason have we to understand that a man may not kill himself, since in

the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," there is no limitation added

nor any exception made in favor of any one, and least of all in favor

of him on whom the command is laid! And so some attempt to extend this

command even to beasts and cattle, as if it forbade us to take life

from any creature. But if so, why not extend it also to the plants,

and all that is rooted in and nourished by the earth? For though this

class of creatures have no sensation, yet they also are said to live,

and consequently they can die; and therefore, if violence be done them,

can be killed. So, too, the apostle, when speaking of the seeds of

such things as these, says, "That which thou sowest is not quickened

except it die;" and in the Psalm it is said, "He killed their vines

with hail." Must we therefore reckon it a breaking of this

commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," to pull a flower? Are we thus

insanely to countenance the foolish error of the Manich�ans? Putting

aside, then, these ravings, if, when we say, Thou shalt not kill, we do

not understand this of the plants, since they have no sensation, nor of

the irrational animals that fly, swim, walk, or creep, since they are

dissociated from us by their want of reason, and are therefore by the

just appointment of the Creator subjected to us to kill or keep alive

for our own uses; if so, then it remains that we understand that

commandment simply of man. The commandment is, "Thou shall not kill

man;" therefore neither another nor yourself, for he who kills himself

still kills nothing else than man.

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Chapter 21.--Of the Cases in Which We May Put Men to Death Without

Incurring the Guilt of Murder.

However, there are some exceptions made by the divine authority to its

own law, that men may not be put to death. These exceptions are of two

kinds, being justified either by a general law, or by a special

commission granted for a time to some individual. And in this latter

case, he to whom authority is delegated, and who is but the sword in

the hand of him who uses it, is not himself responsible for the death

he deals. And, accordingly, they who have waged war in obedience to

the divine command, or in conformity with His laws, have represented in

their persons the public justice or the wisdom of government, and in

this capacity have put to death wicked men; such persons have by no

means violated the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Abraham indeed

was not merely deemed guiltless of cruelty, but was even applauded for

his piety, because he was ready to slay his son in obedience to God,

not to his own passion. And it is reasonably enough made a question,

whether we are to esteem it to have been in compliance with a command

of God that Jephthah killed his daughter, because she met him when he

had vowed that he would sacrifice to God whatever first met him as he

returned victorious from battle. Samson, too, who drew down the house

on himself and his foes together, is justified only on this ground,

that the Spirit who wrought wonders by him had given him secret

instructions to do this. With the exception, then, of these two

classes of cases, which are justified either by a just law that applies

generally, or by a special intimation from God Himself, the fountain of

all justice, whoever kills a man, either himself or another, is

implicated in the guilt of murder.

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Chapter 22.--That Suicide Can Never Be Prompted by Magnanimity.

But they who have laid violent hands on themselves are perhaps to be

admired for their greatness of soul, though they cannot be applauded

for the soundness of their judgment. However, if you look at the

matter more closely, you will scarcely call it greatness of soul, which

prompts a man to kill himself rather than bear up against some

hardships of fortune, or sins in which he is not implicated. Is it not

rather proof of a feeble mind, to be unable to bear either the pains of

bodily servitude or the foolish opinion of the vulgar? And is not that

to be pronounced the greater mind, which rather faces than flees the

ills of life, and which, in comparison of the light and purity of

conscience, holds in small esteem the judgment of men, and specially of

the vulgar, which is frequently involved in a mist of error? And,

therefore, if suicide is to be esteemed a magnanimous act, none can

take higher rank for magnanimity than that Cleombrotus, who (as the

story goes), when he had read Plato's book in which he treats of the

immortality of the soul, threw himself from a wall, and so passed from

this life to that which he believed to be better. For he was not hard

pressed by calamity, nor by any accusation, false or true, which he

could not very well have lived down; there was, in short, no motive but

only magnanimity urging him to seek death, and break away from the

sweet detention of this life. And yet that this was a magnanimous

rather than a justifiable action, Plato himself, whom he had read,

would have told him; for he would certainly have been forward to

commit, or at least to recommend suicide, had not the same bright

intellect which saw that the soul was immortal, discerned also that to

seek immortality by suicide was to be prohibited rather than

encouraged.

Again, it is said many have killed themselves to prevent an enemy doing

so. But we are not inquiring whether it has been done, but whether it

ought to have been done. Sound judgment is to be preferred even to

examples, and indeed examples harmonize with the voice of reason; but

not all examples, but those only which are distinguished by their

piety, and are proportionately worthy of imitation. For suicide we

cannot cite the example of patriarchs, prophets, or apostles; though

our Lord Jesus Christ, when He admonished them to flee from city to

city if they were persecuted, might very well have taken that occasion

to advise them to lay violent hands on themselves, and so escape their

persecutors. But seeing He did not do this, nor proposed this mode of

departing this life, though He were addressing His own friends for whom

He had promised to prepare everlasting mansions, it is obvious that

such examples as are produced from the "nations that forget God," give

no warrant of imitation to the worshippers of the one true God.

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Chapter 23.--What We are to Think of the Example of Cato, Who Slew

Himself Because Unable to Endure C�sar's Victory.

Besides Lucretia, of whom enough has already been said, our advocates

of suicide have some difficulty in finding any other prescriptive

example, unless it be that of Cato, who killed himself at Utica. His

example is appealed to, not because he was the only man who did so, but

because he was so esteemed as a learned and excellent man, that it

could plausibly be maintained that what he did was and is a good thing

to do. But of this action of his, what can I say but that his own

friends, enlightened men as he, prudently dissuaded him, and therefore

judged his act to be that of a feeble rather than a strong spirit, and

dictated not by honorable feeling forestalling shame, but by weakness

shrinking from hardships? Indeed, Cato condemns himself by the advice

he gave to his dearly loved son. For if it was a disgrace to live

under C�sar's rule, why did the father urge the son to this disgrace,

by encouraging him to trust absolutely to C�sar's generosity? Why did

he not persuade him to die along with himself? If Torquatus was

applauded for putting his son to death, when contrary to orders he had

engaged, and engaged successfully, with the enemy, why did conquered

Cato spare his conquered son, though he did not spare himself? Was it

more disgraceful to be a victor contrary to orders, than to submit to a

victor contrary to the received ideas of honor? Cato, then, cannot

have deemed it to be shameful to live under C�sar's rule; for had he

done so, the father's sword would have delivered his son from this

disgrace. The truth is, that his son, whom he both hoped and desired

would be spared by C�sar, was not more loved by him than C�sar was

envied the glory of pardoning him (as indeed C�sar himself is reported

to have said [79] ); or if envy is too strong a word, let us say he was

ashamed that this glory should be his.

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[79] Plutarch's Life of Cato, 72.

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Chapter 24.--That in that Virtue in Which Regulus Excels Cato,

Christians are Pre-Eminently Distinguished.

Our opponents are offended at our preferring to Cato the saintly Job,

who endured dreadful evils in his body rather than deliver himself from

all torment by self-inflicted death; or other saints, of whom it is

recorded in our authoritative and trustworthy books that they bore

captivity and the oppression of their enemies rather than commit

suicide. But their own books authorize us to prefer to Marcus Cato,

Marcus Regulus. For Cato had never conquered C�sar; and when conquered

by him, disdained to submit himself to him, and that he might escape

this submission put himself to death. Regulus, on the contrary, had

formerly conquered the Carthaginians, and in command of the army of

Rome had won for the Roman republic a victory which no citizen could

bewail, and which the enemy himself was constrained to admire; yet

afterwards, when he in his turn was defeated by them, he preferred to

be their captive rather than to put himself beyond their reach by

suicide. Patient under the domination of the Carthaginians, and

constant in his love of the Romans, he neither deprived the one of his

conquered body, nor the other of his unconquered spirit. Neither was

it love of life that prevented him from killing himself. This was

plainly enough indicated by his unhesitatingly returning, on account of

his promise and oath, to the same enemies whom he had more grievously

provoked by his words in the senate than even by his arms in battle.

Having such a contempt of life, and preferring to end it by whatever

torments excited enemies might contrive, rather than terminate it by

his own hand, he could not more distinctly have declared how great a

crime he judged suicide to be. Among all their famous and remarkable

citizens, the Romans have no better man to boast of than this, who was

neither corrupted by prosperity, for he remained a very poor man after

winning such victories; nor broken by adversity, for he returned

intrepidly to the most miserable end. But if the bravest and most

renowned heroes, who had but an earthly country to defend, and who,

though they had but false gods, yet rendered them a true worship, and

carefully kept their oath to them; if these men, who by the custom and

right of war put conquered enemies to the sword, yet shrank from

putting an end to their own lives even when conquered by their enemies;

if, though they had no fear at all of death, they would yet rather

suffer slavery than commit suicide, how much rather must Christians,

the worshippers of the true God, the aspirants to a heavenly

citizenship, shrink from this act, if in God's providence they have

been for a season delivered into the hands of their enemies to prove or

to correct them! And certainly, Christians subjected to this

humiliating condition will not be deserted by the Most High, who for

their sakes humbled Himself. Neither should they forget that they are

bound by no laws of war, nor military orders, to put even a conquered

enemy to the sword; and if a man may not put to death the enemy who has

sinned, or may yet sin against him, who is so infatuated as to maintain

that he may kill himself because an enemy has sinned, or is going to

sin, against him?

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Chapter 25.--That We Should Not Endeavor By Sin to Obviate Sin.

But, we are told, there is ground to fear that, when the body is

subjected to the enemy's lust, the insidious pleasure of sense may

entice the soul to consent to the sin, and steps must be taken to

prevent so disastrous a result. And is not suicide the proper mode of

preventing not only the enemy's sin, but the sin of the Christian so

allured? Now, in the first place, the soul which is led by God and His

wisdom, rather than by bodily concupiscence, will certainly never

consent to the desire aroused in its own flesh by another's lust. And,

at all events, if it be true, as the truth plainly declares, that

suicide is a detestable and damnable wickedness, who is such a fool as

to say, Let us sin now, that we may obviate a possible future sin; let

us now commit murder, lest we perhaps afterwards should commit

adultery? If we are so controlled by iniquity that innocence is out of

the question, and we can at best but make a choice of sins, is not a

future and uncertain adultery preferable to a present and certain

murder? Is it not better to commit a wickedness which penitence may

heal, than a crime which leaves no place for healing contrition? I say

this for the sake of those men or women who fear they may be enticed

into consenting to their violator's lust, and think they should lay

violent hands on themselves, and so prevent, not another's sin, but

their own. But far be it from the mind of a Christian confiding in

God, and resting in the hope of His aid; far be it, I say, from such a

mind to yield a shameful consent to pleasures of the flesh, howsoever

presented. And if that lustful disobedience, which still dwells in our

mortal members, follows its own law irrespective of our will, surely

its motions in the body of one who rebels against them are as blameless

as its motions in the body of one who sleeps.

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Chapter 26.--That in Certain Peculiar Cases the Examples of the Saints

are Not to Be Followed.

But, they say, in the time of persecution some holy women escaped those

who menaced them with outrage, by casting themselves into rivers which

they knew would drown them; and having died in this manner, they are

venerated in the church catholic as martyrs. Of such persons I do not

presume to speak rashly. I cannot tell whether there may not have been

vouchsafed to the church some divine authority, proved by trustworthy

evidences, for so honoring their memory: it may be that it is so. It

may be they were not deceived by human judgment, but prompted by divine

wisdom, to their act of self-destruction. We know that this was the

case with Samson. And when God enjoins any act, and intimates by plain

evidence that He has enjoined it, who will call obedience criminal?

Who will accuse so religious a submission? But then every man is not

justified in sacrificing his son to God, because Abraham was

commendable in so doing. The soldier who has slain a man in obedience

to the authority under which he is lawfully commissioned, is not

accused of murder by any law of his state; nay, if he has not slain

him, it is then he is accused of treason to the state, and of despising

the law. But if he has been acting on his own authority, and at his

own impulse, he has in this case incurred the crime of shedding human

blood. And thus he is punished for doing without orders the very thing

he is punished for neglecting to do when he has been ordered. If the

commands of a general make so great a difference, shall the commands of

God make none? He, then, who knows it is unlawful to kill himself, may

nevertheless do so if he is ordered by Him whose commands we may not

neglect. Only let him be very sure that the divine command has been

signified. As for us, we can become privy to the secrets of conscience

only in so far as these are disclosed to us, and so far only do we

judge: "No one knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man

which is in him." [80] But this we affirm, this we maintain, this we

every way pronounce to be right, that no man ought to inflict on

himself voluntary death, for this is to escape the ills of time by

plunging into those of eternity; that no man ought to do so on account

of another man's sins, for this were to escape a guilt which could not

pollute him, by incurring great guilt of his own; that no man ought to

do so on account of his own past sins, for he has all the more need of

this life that these sins may be healed by repentance; that no man

should put an end to this life to obtain that better life we look for

after death, for those who die by their own hand have no better life

after death.

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[80] 1 Cor. ii. 11.

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Chapter 27.--Whether Voluntary Death Should Be Sought in Order to Avoid

Sin.

There remains one reason for suicide which I mentioned before, and

which is thought a sound one,--namely, to prevent one's falling into

sin either through the blandishments of pleasure or the violence of

pain. If this reason were a good one, then we should be impelled to

exhort men at once to destroy themselves, as soon as they have been

washed in the laver of regeneration, and have received the forgiveness

of all sin. Then is the time to escape all future sin, when all past

sin is blotted out. And if this escape be lawfully secured by suicide,

why not then specially? Why does any baptized person hold his hand

from taking his own life? Why does any person who is freed from the

hazards of this life again expose himself to them, when he has power so

easily to rid himself of them all, and when it is written, "He who

loveth danger shall fall into it?" [81] Why does he love, or at least

face, so many serious dangers, by remaining in this life from which he

may legitimately depart? But is any one so blinded and twisted in his

moral nature, and so far astray from the truth, as to think that,

though a man ought to make away with himself for fear of being led into

sin by the oppression of one man, his master, he ought yet to live, and

so expose himself to the hourly temptations of this world, both to all

those evils which the oppression of one master involves, and to

numberless other miseries in which this life inevitably implicates us?

What reason, then, is there for our consuming time in those

exhortations by which we seek to animate the baptized, either to

virginal chastity, or vidual continence, or matrimonial fidelity, when

we have so much more simple and compendious a method of deliverance

from sin, by persuading those who are fresh from baptism to put an end

to their lives, and so pass to their Lord pure and well-conditioned?

If any one thinks that such persuasion should be attempted, I say not

he is foolish, but mad. With what face, then, can he say to any man,

"Kill yourself, lest to your small sins you add a heinous sin, while

you live under an unchaste master, whose conduct is that of a

barbarian?" How can he say this, if he cannot without wickedness say,

"Kill yourself, now that you are washed from all your sins, lest you

fall again into similar or even aggravated sins, while you live in a

world which has such power to allure by its unclean pleasures, to

torment by its horrible cruelties, to overcome by its errors and

terrors?" It is wicked to say this; it is therefore wicked to kill

oneself. For if there could be any just cause of suicide, this were

so. And since not even this is so, there is none.

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[81] Ecclus. iii. 27.

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Chapter 28.--By What Judgment of God the Enemy Was Permitted to Indulge

His Lust on the Bodies of Continent Christians.

Let not your life, then, be a burden to you, ye faithful servants of

Christ, though your chastity was made the sport of your enemies. You

have a grand and true consolation, if you maintain a good conscience,

and know that you did not consent to the sins of those who were

permitted to commit sinful outrage upon you. And if you should ask why

this permission was granted, indeed it is a deep providence of the

Creator and Governor of the world; and "unsearchable are His judgments,

and His ways past finding out." [82] Nevertheless, faithfully

interrogate your own souls, whether ye have not been unduly puffed up

by your integrity, and continence, and chastity; and whether ye have

not been so desirous of the human praise that is accorded to these

virtues, that ye have envied some who possessed them. I, for my part,

do not know your hearts, and therefore I make no accusation; I do not

even hear what your hearts answer when you question them. And yet, if

they answer that it is as I have supposed it might be, do not marvel

that you have lost that by which you can win men's praise, and retain

that which cannot be exhibited to men. If you did not consent to sin,

it was because God added His aid to His grace that it might not be

lost, and because shame before men succeeded to human glory that it

might not be loved. But in both respects even the faint-hearted among

you have a consolation, approved by the one experience, chastened by

the other; justified by the one, corrected by the other. As to those

whose hearts, when interrogated, reply that they have never been proud

of the virtue of virginity, widowhood, or matrimonial chastity, but,

condescending to those of low estate, rejoiced with trembling in these

gifts of God, and that they have never envied any one the like

excellences of sanctity and purity, but rose superior to human

applause, which is wont to be abundant in proportion to the rarity of

the virtue applauded, and rather desired that their own number be

increased, than that by the smallness of their numbers each of them

should be conspicuous;--even such faithful women, I say, must not

complain that permission was given to the barbarians so grossly to

outrage them; nor must they allow themselves to believe that God

overlooked their character when He permitted acts which no one with

impunity commits. For some most flagrant and wicked desires are

allowed free play at present by the secret judgment of God, and are

reserved to the public and final judgment. Moreover, it is possible

that those Christian women, who are unconscious of any undue pride on

account of their virtuous chastity, whereby they sinlessly suffered the

violence of their captors, had yet some lurking infirmity which might

have betrayed them into a proud and contemptuous bearing, had they not

been subjected to the humiliation that befell them in the taking of the

city. As, therefore, some men were removed by death, that no

wickedness might change their disposition, so these women were outraged

lest prosperity should corrupt their modesty. Neither those women

then, who were already puffed up by the circumstance that they were

still virgins, nor those who might have been so puffed up had they not

been exposed to the violence of the enemy, lost their chastity, but

rather gained humility; the former were saved from pride already

cherished, the latter from pride that would shortly have grown upon

them.

We must further notice that some of those sufferers may have conceived

that continence is a bodily good, and abides so long as the body is

inviolate, and did not understand that the purity both of the body and

the soul rests on the steadfastness of the will strengthened by God's

grace, and cannot be forcibly taken from an unwilling person. From

this error they are probably now delivered. For when they reflect how

conscientiously they served God, and when they settle again to the firm

persuasion that He can in nowise desert those who so serve Him, and so

invoke His aid and when they consider, what they cannot doubt, how

pleasing to Him is chastity, they are shut up to the conclusion that He

could never have permitted these disasters to befall His saints, if by

them that saintliness could be destroyed which He Himself had bestowed

upon them, and delights to see in them.

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[82] Rom. xi. 33.

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Chapter 29.--What the Servants of Christ Should Say in Reply to the

Unbelievers Who Cast in Their Teeth that Christ Did Not Rescue Them

from the Fury of Their Enemies.

The whole family of God, most high and most true, has therefore a

consolation of its own,--a consolation which cannot deceive, and which

has in it a surer hope than the tottering and falling affairs of earth

can afford. They will not refuse the discipline of this temporal life,

in which they are schooled for life eternal; nor will they lament their

experience of it, for the good things of earth they use as pilgrims who

are not detained by them, and its ills either prove or improve them.

As for those who insult over them in their trials, and when ills befall

them say, "Where is thy God?" [83] we may ask them where their gods are

when they suffer the very calamities for the sake of avoiding which

they worship their gods, or maintain they ought to be worshipped; for

the family of Christ is furnished with its reply: our God is

everywhere present, wholly everywhere; not confined to any place. He

can be present unperceived, and be absent without moving; when He

exposes us to adversities, it is either to prove our perfections or

correct our imperfections; and in return for our patient endurance of

the sufferings of time, He reserves for us an everlasting reward. But

who are you, that we should deign to speak with you even about your own

gods, much less about our God, who is "to be feared above all gods?

For all the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the

heavens." [84]

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[83] Ps. xlii. 10.

[84] Ps. xcvi. 4, 5.

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Chapter 30.--That Those Who Complain of Christianity Really Desire to

Live Without Restraint in Shameful Luxury.

If the famous Scipio Nasica were now alive, who was once your pontiff,

and was unanimously chosen by the senate, when, in the panic created by

the Punic war, they sought for the best citizen to entertain the

Phrygian goddess, he would curb this shamelessness of yours, though you

would perhaps scarcely dare to look upon the countenance of such a

man. For why in your calamities do you complain of Christianity,

unless because you desire to enjoy your luxurious license unrestrained,

and to lead an abandoned and profligate life without the interruption

of any uneasiness or disaster? For certainly your desire for peace,

and prosperity, and plenty is not prompted by any purpose of using

these blessings honestly, that is to say, with moderation, sobriety,

temperance, and piety; for your purpose rather is to run riot in an

endless variety of sottish pleasures, and thus to generate from your

prosperity a moral pestilence which will prove a thousandfold more

disastrous than the fiercest enemies. It was such a calamity as this

that Scipio, your chief pontiff, your best man in the judgment of the

whole senate, feared when he refused to agree to the destruction of

Carthage, Rome's rival and opposed Cato, who advised its destruction.

He feared security, that enemy of weak minds, and he perceived that a

wholesome fear would be a fit guardian for the citizens. And he was

not mistaken; the event proved how wisely he had spoken. For when

Carthage was destroyed, and the Roman republic delivered from its great

cause of anxiety, a crowd of disastrous evils forthwith resulted from

the prosperous condition of things. First concord was weakened, and

destroyed by fierce and bloody seditions; then followed, by a

concatenation of baleful causes, civil wars, which brought in their

train such massacres, such bloodshed, such lawless and cruel

proscription and plunder, that those Romans who, in the days of their

virtue, had expected injury only at the hands of their enemies, now

that their virtue was lost, suffered greater cruelties at the hands of

their fellow-citizens. The lust of rule, which with other vices

existed among the Romans in more unmitigated intensity than among any

other people, after it had taken possession of the more powerful few,

subdued under its yoke the rest, worn and wearied.

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Chapter 31.--By What Steps the Passion for Governing Increased Among

the Romans.

For at what stage would that passion rest when once it has lodged in a

proud spirit, until by a succession of advances it has reached even the

throne. And to obtain such advances nothing avails but unscrupulous

ambition. But unscrupulous ambition has nothing to work upon, save in

a nation corrupted by avarice and luxury. Moreover, a people becomes

avaricious and luxurious by prosperity; and it was this which that very

prudent man Nasica was endeavouring to avoid when he opposed the

destruction of the greatest, strongest, wealthiest city of Rome's

enemy. He thought that thus fear would act as a curb on lust, and that

lust being curbed would not run riot in luxury, and that luxury being

prevented avarice would be at an end; and that these vices being

banished, virtue would flourish and increase the great profit of the

state; and liberty, the fit companion of virtue, would abide

unfettered. For similar reasons, and animated by the same considerate

patriotism, that same chief pontiff of yours--I still refer to him who

was adjudged Rome's best man without one dissentient voice--threw cold

water on the proposal of the senate to build a circle of seats round

the theatre, and in a very weighty speech warned them against allowing

the luxurious manners of Greece to sap the Roman manliness, and

persuaded them not to yield to the enervating and emasculating

influence of foreign licentiousness. So authoritative and forcible

were his words, that the senate was moved to prohibit the use even of

those benches which hitherto had been customarily brought to the

theatre for the temporary use of the citizens. [85] How eagerly would

such a man as this have banished from Rome the scenic exhibitions

themselves, had he dared to oppose the authority of those whom he

supposed to be gods! For he did not know that they were malicious

devils; or if he did, he supposed they should rather be propitiated

than despised. For there had not yet been revealed to the Gentiles the

heavenly doctrine which should purify their hearts by faith, and

transform their natural disposition by humble godliness, and turn them

from the service of proud devils to seek the things that are in heaven,

or even above the heavens.

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[85] Originally the spectators had to stand, and now (according to

Livy, Ep.. xlviii.) the old custom was restored.

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Chapter 32.--Of the Establishment of Scenic Entertainments.

Know then, ye who are ignorant of this, and ye who feign ignorance be

reminded, while you murmur against Him who has freed you from such

rulers, that the scenic games, exhibitions of shameless folly and

license, were established at Rome, not by men's vicious cravings, but

by the appointment of your gods. Much more pardonably might you have

rendered divine honors to Scipio than to such gods as these. The gods

were not so moral as their pontiff. But give me now your attention, if

your mind, inebriated by its deep potations of error, can take in any

sober truth. The gods enjoined that games be exhibited in their honor

to stay a physical pestilence; their pontiff prohibited the theatre

from being constructed, to prevent a moral pestilence. If, then, there

remains in you sufficient mental enlightenment to prefer the soul to

the body, choose whom you will worship. Besides, though the pestilence

was stayed, this was not because the voluptuous madness of stage-plays

had taken possession of a warlike people hitherto accustomed only to

the games of the circus; but these astute and wicked spirits,

foreseeing that in due course the pestilence would shortly cease, took

occasion to infect, not the bodies, but the morals of their

worshippers, with a far more serious disease. And in this pestilence

these gods find great enjoyment, because it benighted the minds of men

with so gross a darkness and dishonored them with so foul a deformity,

that even quite recently (will posterity be able to credit it?) some of

those who fled from the sack of Rome and found refuge in Carthage, were

so infected with this disease, that day after day they seemed to

contend with one another who should most madly run after the actors in

the theatres.

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Chapter 33.--That the Overthrow of Rome Has Not Corrected the Vices of

the Romans.

Oh infatuated men, what is this blindness, or rather madness, which

possesses you? How is it that while, as we hear, even the eastern

nations are bewailing your ruin, and while powerful states in the most

remote parts of the earth are mourning your fall as a public calamity,

ye yourselves should be crowding to the theatres, should be pouring

into them and filling them; and, in short, be playing a madder part now

than ever before? This was the foul plague-spot, this the wreck of

virtue and honor that Scipio sought to preserve you from when he

prohibited the construction of theatres; this was his reason for

desiring that you might still have an enemy to fear, seeing as he did

how easily prosperity would corrupt and destroy you. He did not

consider that republic flourishing whose walls stand, but whose morals

are in ruins. But the seductions of evil-minded devils had more

influence with you than the precautions of prudent men. Hence the

injuries you do, you will not permit to be imputed to you: but the

injuries you suffer, you impute to Christianity. Depraved by good

fortune, and not chastened by adversity, what you desire in the

restoration of a peaceful and secure state, is not the tranquillity of

the commonwealth, but the impunity of your own vicious luxury. Scipio

wished you to be hard pressed by an enemy, that you might not abandon

yourselves to luxurious manners; but so abandoned are you, that not

even when crushed by the enemy is your luxury repressed. You have

missed the profit of your calamity; you have been made most wretched,

and have remained most profligate.

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Chapter 34.--Of God's Clemency in Moderating the Ruin of the City.

And that you are yet alive is due to God, who spares you that you may

be admonished to repent and reform your lives. It is He who has

permitted you, ungrateful as you are, to escape the sword of the enemy,

by calling yourselves His servants, or by finding asylum in the sacred

places of the martyrs.

It is said that Romulus and Remus, in order to increase the population

of the city they founded, opened a sanctuary in which every man might

find asylum and absolution of all crime,--a remarkable foreshadowing of

what has recently occurred in honor of Christ. The destroyers of Rome

followed the example of its founders. But it was not greatly to their

credit that the latter, for the sake of increasing the number of their

citizens, did that which the former have done, lest the number of their

enemies should be diminished.

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Chapter 35.--Of the Sons of the Church Who are Hidden Among the Wicked,

and of False Christians Within the Church.

Let these and similar answers (if any fuller and fitter answers can be

found) be given to their enemies by the redeemed family of the Lord

Christ, and by the pilgrim city of King Christ. But let this city bear

in mind, that among her enemies lie hid those who are destined to be

fellow-citizens, that she may not think it a fruitless labor to bear

what they inflict as enemies until they become confessors of the

faith. So, too, as long as she is a stranger in the world, the city of

God has in her communion, and bound to her by the sacraments, some who

shall not eternally dwell in the lot of the saints. Of these, some are

not now recognized; others declare themselves, and do not hesitate to

make common cause with our enemies in murmuring against God, whose

sacramental badge they wear. These men you may to-day see thronging

the churches with us, to-morrow crowding the theatres with the

godless. But we have the less reason to despair of the reclamation

even of such persons, if among our most declared enemies there are now

some, unknown to themselves, who are destined to become our friends.

In truth, these two cities are entangled together in this world, and

intermixed until the last judgment effects their separation. I now

proceed to speak, as God shall help me, of the rise, progress, and end

of these two cities; and what I write, I write for the glory of the

city of God, that, being placed in comparison with the other, it may

shine with a brighter lustre.

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Chapter 36.--What Subjects are to Be Handled in the Following

Discourse.

But I have still some things to say in confutation of those who refer

the disasters of the Roman republic to our religion, because it

prohibits the offering of sacrifices to the gods. For this end I must

recount all, or as many as may seem sufficient, of the disasters which

befell that city and its subject provinces, before these sacrifices

were prohibited; for all these disasters they would doubtless have

attributed to us, if at that time our religion had shed its light upon

them, and had prohibited their sacrifices. I must then go on to show

what social well-being the true God, in whose hand are all kingdoms,

vouchsafed to grant to them that their empire might increase. I must

show why He did so, and how their false gods, instead of at all aiding

them, greatly injured them by guile and deceit. And, lastly, I must

meet those who, when on this point convinced and confuted by

irrefragable proofs, endeavor to maintain that they worship the gods,

not hoping for the present advantages of this life, but for those which

are to be enjoyed after death. And this, if I am not mistaken, will be

the most difficult part of my task, and will be worthy of the loftiest

argument; for we must then enter the lists with the philosophers, not

the mere common herd of philosophers, but the most renowned, who in

many points agree with ourselves, as regarding the immortality of the

soul, and that the true God created the world, and by His providence

rules all He has created. But as they differ from us on other points,

we must not shrink from the task of exposing their errors, that, having

refuted the gainsaying of the wicked with such ability as God may

vouchsafe, we may assert the city of God, and true piety, and the

worship of God, to which alone the promise of true and everlasting

felicity is attached. Here, then, let us conclude, that we may enter

on these subjects in a fresh book.

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Book II.

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Argument--In this book Augustin reviews those calamities which the

Romans suffered before the time of Christ, and while the worship of the

false gods was universally practised; and demonstrates that, far from

being preserved from misfortune by the gods, the Romans have been by

them overwhelmed with the only, or at least the greatest, of all

calamities--the corruption of manners, and the vices of the soul.

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Chapter 1.--Of the Limits Which Must Be Put to the Necessity of

Replying to an Adversary.

If the feeble mind of man did not presume to resist the clear evidence

of truth, but yielded its infirmity to wholesome doctrines, as to a

health-giving medicine, until it obtained from God, by its faith and

piety, the grace needed to heal it, they who have just ideas, and

express them in suitable language, would need to use no long discourse

to refute the errors of empty conjecture. But this mental infirmity is

now more prevalent and hurtful than ever, to such an extent that even

after the truth has been as fully demonstrated as man can prove it to

man, they hold for the very truth their own unreasonable fancies,

either on account of their great blindness, which prevents them from

seeing what is plainly set before them, or on account of their

opinionative obstinacy, which prevents them from acknowledging the

force of what they do see. There therefore frequently arises a

necessity of speaking more fully on those points which are already

clear, that we may, as it were, present them not to the eye, but even

to the touch, so that they may be felt even by those who close their

eyes against them. And yet to what end shall we ever bring our

discussions, or what bounds can be set to our discourse, if we proceed

on the principle that we must always reply to those who reply to us?

For those who are either unable to understand our arguments, or are so

hardened by the habit of contradiction, that though they understand

they cannot yield to them, reply to us, and, as it is written, "speak

hard things," [86] and are incorrigibly vain. Now, if we were to

propose to confute their objections as often as they with brazen face

chose to disregard our arguments, and so often as they could by any

means contradict our statements, you see how endless, and fruitless,

and painful a task we should be undertaking. And therefore I do not

wish my writings to be judged even by you, my son Marcellinus, nor by

any of those others at whose service this work of mine is freely and in

all Christian charity put, if at least you intend always to require a

reply to every exception which you hear taken to what you read in it;

for so you would become like those silly women of whom the apostle says

that they are "always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge

of the truth." [87]

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[86] Ps. xciv. 4.

[87] 2 Tim. iii. 7.

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Chapter 2.--Recapitulation of the Contents of the First Book.

In the foregoing book, having begun to speak of the city of God, to

which I have resolved, Heaven helping me, to consecrate the whole of

this work, it was my first endeavor to reply to those who attribute the

wars by which the world is being devastated, and especially the recent

sack of Rome by the barbarians, to the religion of Christ, which

prohibits the offering of abominable sacrifices to devils. I have

shown that they ought rather to attribute it to Christ, that for His

name's sake the barbarians, in contravention of all custom and law of

war, threw open as sanctuaries the largest churches, and in many

instances showed such reverence to Christ, that not only His genuine

servants, but even those who in their terror feigned themselves to be

so, were exempted from all those hardships which by the custom of war

may lawfully be inflicted. Then out of this there arose the question,

why wicked and ungrateful men were permitted to share in these

benefits; and why, too, the hardships and calamities of war were

inflicted on the godly as well as on the ungodly. And in giving a

suitably full answer to this large question, I occupied some

considerable space, partly that I might relieve the anxieties which

disturb many when they observe that the blessings of God, and the

common and daily human casualties, fall to the lot of bad men and good

without distinction; but mainly that I might minister some consolation

to those holy and chaste women who were outraged by the enemy, in such

a way as to shock their modesty, though not to sully their purity, and

that I might preserve them from being ashamed of life, though they have

no guilt to be ashamed of. And then I briefly spoke against those who

with a most shameless wantonness insult over those poor Christians who

were subjected to those calamities, and especially over those

broken-hearted and humiliated, though chaste and holy women; these

fellows themselves being most depraved and unmanly profligates, quite

degenerate from the genuine Romans, whose famous deeds are abundantly

recorded in history, and everywhere celebrated, but who have found in

their descendants the greatest enemies of their glory. In truth, Rome,

which was founded and increased by the labors of these ancient heroes,

was more shamefully ruined by their descendants, while its walls were

still standing, than it is now by the razing of them. For in this ruin

there fell stones and timbers; but in the ruin those profligates

effected, there fell, not the mural, but the moral bulwarks and

ornaments of the city, and their hearts burned with passions more

destructive than the flames which consumed their houses. Thus I

brought my first book to a close. And now I go on to speak of those

calamities which that city itself, or its subject provinces, have

suffered since its foundation; all of which they would equally have

attributed to the Christian religion, if at that early period the

doctrine of the gospel against their false and deceiving gods had been

as largely and freely proclaimed as now.

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Chapter 3.--That We Need Only to Read History in Order to See What

Calamities the Romans Suffered Before the Religion of Christ Began to

Compete with the Worship of the Gods.

But remember that, in recounting these things, I have still to address

myself to ignorant men; so ignorant, indeed, as to give birth to the

common saying, "Drought and Christianity go hand in hand." [88] There

are indeed some among them who are thoroughly well-educated men, and

have a taste for history, in which the things I speak of are open to

their observation; but in order to irritate the uneducated masses

against us, they feign ignorance of these events, and do what they can

to make the vulgar believe that those disasters, which in certain

places and at certain times uniformly befall mankind, are the result of

Christianity, which is being everywhere diffused, and is possessed of a

renown and brilliancy which quite eclipse their own gods. [89] Let

them then, along with us, call to mind with what various and repeated

disasters the prosperity of Rome was blighted, before ever Christ had

come in the flesh, and before His name had been blazoned among the

nations with that glory which they vainly grudge. Let them, if they

can, defend their gods in this article, since they maintain that they

worship them in order to be preserved from these disasters, which they

now impute to us if they suffer in the least degree. For why did these

gods permit the disasters I am to speak of to fall on their worshippers

before the preaching of Christ's name offended them, and put an end to

their sacrifices?

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[88] Pluvia defit, causa Christiani. Similar accusations and similar

replies may be seen in the celebrated passage of Tertullian's Apol. c.

40, and in the eloquent exordium of Arnobius, C. Gentes.

[89] Augustin is supposed to refer to Symmachus, who similarly accused

the Christians in his address to the Emperor Valentinianus in the year

384. At Augustin's request, Paulus Orosius wrote his history in

confutation of Symmachus' charges.

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Chapter 4.--That the Worshippers of the Gods Never Received from Them

Any Healthy Moral Precepts, and that in Celebrating Their Worship All

Sorts of Impurities Were Practiced.

First of all, we would ask why their gods took no steps to improve the

morals of their worshippers. That the true God should neglect those

who did not seek His help, that was but justice; but why did those

gods, from whose worship ungrateful men are now complaining that they

are prohibited, issue no laws which might have guided their devotees to

a virtuous life? Surely it was but just, that such care as men showed

to the worship of the gods, the gods on their part should have to the

conduct of men. But, it is replied, it is by his own will a man goes

astray. Who denies it? But none the less was it incumbent on these

gods, who were men's guardians, to publish in plain terms the laws of a

good life, and not to conceal them from their worshippers. It was

their part to send prophets to reach and convict such as broke these

laws, and publicly to proclaim the punishments which await evil-doers,

and the rewards which may be looked for by those that do well. Did

ever the walls of any of their temples echo to any such warning voice?

I myself, when I was a young man, used sometimes to go to the

sacrilegious entertainments and spectacles; I saw the priests raving in

religious excitement, and heard the choristers; I took pleasure in the

shameful games which were celebrated in honor of gods and goddesses, of

the virgin Coelestis, [90] and Berecynthia, [91] the mother of all the

gods. And on the holy day consecrated to her purification, there were

sung before her couch productions so obscene and filthy for the ear--I

do not say of the mother of the gods, but of the mother of any senator

or honest man--nay, so impure, that not even the mother of the

foul-mouthed players themselves could have formed one of the audience.

For natural reverence for parents is a bond which the most abandoned

cannot ignore. And, accordingly, the lewd actions and filthy words

with which these players honored the mother of the gods, in presence of

a vast assemblage and audience of both sexes, they could not for very

shame have rehearsed at home in presence of their own mothers. And the

crowds that were gathered from all quarters by curiosity, offended

modesty must, I should suppose, have scattered in the confusion of

shame. If these are sacred rites, what is sacrilege? If this is

purification, what is pollution? This festivity was called the Tables,

[92] as if a banquet were being given at which unclean devils might

find suitable refreshment. For it is not difficult to see what kind of

spirits they must be who are delighted with such obscenities, unless,

indeed, a man be blinded by these evil spirits passing themselves off

under the name of gods, and either disbelieves in their existence, or

leads such a life as prompts him rather to propitiate and fear them

than the true God.

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[90] Tertullian (Apol. c. 24) mentions Coelestis as specially

worshipped in Africa. Augustin mentions her again in the 26th chapter

of this book, and in other parts of his works.

[91] Berecynthia is one of the many names of Rhea or Cybele. Livy

(xxix. 11) relates that the image of Cybele was brought to Rome the day

before the ides of April, which was accordingly dedicated as her

feast-day. The image, it seems, had to be washed in the stream Almon,

a tributary of the Tiber, before being placed in the temple of Victory;

and each year, as the festival returned, the washing was repeated with

much pomp at the same spot. Hence Lucan's line (i. 600), Et lotam

parvo revocant Almone Cybelen, and the elegant verses of Ovid. Fast.

iv. 337 et seq.

[92] Fercula, dishes or courses.

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Chapter 5.--Of the Obscenities Practiced in Honor of the Mother of the

Gods.

In this matter I would prefer to have as my assessors in judgment, not

those men who rather take pleasure in these infamous customs than take

pains to put an end to them, but that same Scipio Nasica who was chosen

by the senate as the citizen most worthy to receive in his hands the

image of that demon Cybele, and convey it into the city. He would tell

us whether he would be proud to see his own mother so highly esteemed

by the state as to have divine honors adjudged to her; as the Greeks

and Romans and other nations have decreed divine honors to men who had

been of material service to them, and have believed that their mortal

benefactors were thus made immortal, and enrolled among the gods. [93]

Surely he would desire that his mother should enjoy such felicity

were it possible. But if we proceeded to ask him whether, among the

honors paid to her, he would wish such shameful rites as these to be

celebrated, would he not at once exclaim that he would rather his

mother lay stone-dead, than survive as a goddess to lend her ear to

these obscenities? Is it possible that he who was of so severe a

morality, that he used his influence as a Roman senator to prevent the

building of a theatre in that city dedicated to the manly virtues,

would wish his mother to be propitiated as a goddess with words which

would have brought the blush to her cheek when a Roman matron? Could

he possibly believe that the modesty of an estimable woman would be so

transformed by her promotion to divinity, that she would suffer herself

to be invoked and celebrated in terms so gross and immodest, that if

she had heard the like while alive upon earth, and had listened without

stopping her ears and hurrying from the spot, her relatives, her

husband, and her children would have blushed for her? Therefore, the

mother of the gods being such a character as the most profligate man

would be ashamed to have for his mother, and meaning to enthral the

minds of the Romans, demanded for her service their best citizen, not

to ripen him still more in virtue by her helpful counsel, but to

entangle him by her deceit, like her of whom it is written, "The

adulteress will hunt for the precious soul." [94] Her intent was to

puff up this high- souled man by an apparently divine testimony to his

excellence, in order that he might rely upon his own eminence in

virtue, and make no further efforts after true piety and religion,

without which natural genius, however brilliant, vapors into pride and

comes to nothing. For what but a guileful purpose could that goddess

demand the best man seeing that in her own sacred festivals she

requires such obscenities as the best men would be covered with shame

to hear at their own tables?

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[93] See Cicero, De Nat. Deor, ii. 24.

[94] Prov. vi. 26.

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Chapter 6.--That the Gods of the Pagans Never Inculcated Holiness of

Life.

This is the reason why those divinities quite neglected the lives and

morals of the cities and nations who worshipped them, and threw no

dreadful prohibition in their way to hinder them from becoming utterly

corrupt, and to preserve them from those terrible and detestable evils

which visit not harvests and vintages, not house and possessions, not

the body which is subject to the soul, but the soul itself, the spirit

that rules the whole man. If there was any such prohibition, let it be

produced, let it be proved. They will tell us that purity and probity

were inculcated upon those who were initiated in the mysteries of

religion, and that secret incitements to virtue were whispered in the

ear of the �lite; but this is an idle boast. Let them show or name to

us the places which were at any time consecrated to assemblages in

which, instead of the obscene songs and licentious acting of players,

instead of the celebration of those most filthy and shameless Fugalia

[95] (well called Fugalia, since they banish modesty and right

feeling), the people were commanded in the name of the gods to restrain

avarice, bridle impurity, and conquer ambition; where, in short, they

might learn in that school which Persius vehemently lashes them to,

when he says: "Be taught, ye abandoned creatures, and ascertain the

causes of things; what we are, and for what end we are born; what is

the law of our success in life; and by what art we may turn the goal

without making shipwreck; what limit we should put to our wealth, what

we may lawfully desire, and what uses filthy lucre serves; how much we

should bestow upon our country and our family; learn, in short, what

God meant thee to be, and what place He has ordered you to fill." [96]

Let them name to us the places where such instructions were wont to

be communicated from the gods, and where the people who worshipped them

were accustomed to resort to hear them, as we can point to our churches

built for this purpose in every land where the Christian religion is

received.

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[95] Fugalia. Vives is uncertain to what feast Augustin refers.

Censorinus understands him to refer to a feast celebrating the

expulsion of the kings from Rome. This feast, however (celebrated on

the 24th of February), was commonly called Regifugium.

[96] Persius, Sat. iii. 66-72.

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Chapter 7.--That the Suggestions of Philosophers are Precluded from

Having Any Moral Effect, Because They Have Not the Authority Which

Belongs to Divine Instruction, and Because Man's Natural Bias to Evil

Induces Him Rather to Follow the Examples of the Gods Than to Obey the

Precepts of Men.

But will they perhaps remind us of the schools of the philosophers, and

their disputations? In the first place, these belong not to Rome, but

to Greece; and even if we yield to them that they are now Roman,

because Greece itself has become a Roman province, still the teachings

of the philosophers are not the commandments of the gods, but the

discoveries of men, who, at the prompting of their own speculative

ability, made efforts to discover the hidden laws of nature, and the

right and wrong in ethics, and in dialectic what was consequent

according to the rules of logic, and what was inconsequent and

erroneous. And some of them, by God's help, made great discoveries;

but when left to themselves they were betrayed by human infirmity, and

fell into mistakes. And this was ordered by divine providence, that

their pride might be restrained, and that by their example it might be

pointed out that it is humility which has access to the highest

regions. But of this we shall have more to say, if the Lord God of

truth permit, in its own place. [97] However, if the philosophers

have made any discoveries which are sufficient to guide men to virtue

and blessedness, would it not have been greater justice to vote divine

honors to them? Were it not more accordant with every virtuous

sentiment to read Plato's writings in a "Temple of Plato," than to be

present in the temples of devils to witness the priests of Cybele [98]

mutilating themselves, the effeminate being consecrated, the raving

fanatics cutting themselves, and whatever other cruel or shameful, or

shamefully cruel or cruelly shameful, ceremony is enjoined by the

ritual of such gods as these? Were it not a more suitable education,

and more likely to prompt the youth to virtue, if they heard public

recitals of the laws of the gods, instead of the vain laudation of the

customs and laws of their ancestors? Certainly all the worshippers of

the Roman gods, when once they are possessed by what Persius calls "the

burning poison of lust," [99] prefer to witness the deeds of Jupiter

rather than to hear what Plato taught or Cato censured. Hence the

young profligate in Terence, when he sees on the wall a fresco

representing the fabled descent of Jupiter into the lap of Dana� in the

form of a golden shower, accepts this as authoritative precedent for

his own licentiousness, and boasts that he is an imitator of God. "And

what God?" he says. "He who with His thunder shakes the loftiest

temples. And was I, a poor creature compared to Him, to make bones of

it? No; I did it, and with all my heart." [100]

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[97] See below, books viii.-xii.

[98] ^ "Galli," the castrated priests of Cybele, who were named after

the river Gallus, in Phrygia, the water of which was supposed to

intoxicate or madden those who drank it. According to Vitruvius (viii.

3), there was a similar fountain in Paphlagonia. Apuleius (Golden Ass,

viii.) gives a graphic and humorous description of the dress, dancing

and imposture of these priests; mentioning, among other things, that

they lashed themselves with whips and cut themselves with knives till

the ground was wet with blood.

[99] Persius, Sat. iii. 37.

[100] Ter. Eun. iii. 5. 36; and cf. the similar allusion in Aristoph.

Clouds, 1033-4. It may be added that the argument of this chapter was

largely used by the wiser of the heathen themselves. Dionysius Hal.

(ii. 20) and Seneca (De Brev Vit. c. xvi.) make the very same

complaint; and it will be remembered that his adoption of this

reasoning was one of the grounds on which Euripides was suspected of

atheism.

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Chapter 8.--That the Theatrical Exhibitions Publishing the Shameful

Actions of the Gods, Propitiated Rather Than Offended Them.

But, some one will interpose, these are the fables of poets, not the

deliverances of the gods themselves. Well, I have no mind to arbitrate

between the lewdness of theatrical entertainments and of mystic rites;

only this I say, and history bears me out in making the assertion, that

those same entertainments, in which the fictions of poets are the main

attraction, were not introduced in the festivals of the gods by the

ignorant devotion of the Romans, but that the gods themselves gave the

most urgent commands to this effect, and indeed extorted from the

Romans these solemnities and celebrations in their honor. I touched on

this in the preceding book, and mentioned that dramatic entertainments

were first inaugurated at Rome on occasion of a pestilence, and by

authority of the pontiff. And what man is there who is not more likely

to adopt, for the regulation of his own life, the examples that are

represented in plays which have a divine sanction, rather than the

precepts written and promulgated with no more than human authority? If

the poets gave a false representation of Jove in describing him as

adulterous, then it were to be expected that the chaste gods should in

anger avenge so wicked a fiction, in place of encouraging the games

which circulated it. Of these plays, the most inoffensive are comedies

and tragedies, that is to say, the dramas which poets write for the

stage, and which, though they often handle impure subjects, yet do so

without the filthiness of language which characterizes many other

performances; and it is these dramas which boys are obliged by their

seniors to read and learn as a part of what is called a liberal and

gentlemanly education. [101]

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[101] This sentence recalls Augustin's own experience as a boy, which

he bewails in his Confessions.

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Chapter 9.--That the Poetical License Which the Greeks, in Obedience to

Their Gods, Allowed, Was Restrained by the Ancient Romans.

The opinion of the ancient Romans on this matter is attested by Cicero

in his work De Republica, in which Scipio, one of the interlocutors,

says, "The lewdness of comedy could never have been suffered by

audiences, unless the customs of society had previously sanctioned the

same lewdness." And in the earlier days the Greeks preserved a certain

reasonableness in their license, and made it a law, that whatever

comedy wished to say of any one, it must say it of him by name. And so

in the same work of Cicero's, Scipio says, "Whom has it not aspersed?

Nay, whom has it not worried? Whom has it spared? Allow that it may

assail demagogues and factions, men injurious to the commonwealth--a

Cleon, a Cleophon, a Hyperbolus. That is tolerable, though it had been

more seemly for the public censor to brand such men, than for a poet to

lampoon them; but to blacken the fame of Pericles with scurrilous

verse, after he had with the utmost dignity presided over their state

alike in war and in peace, was as unworthy of a poet, as if our own

Plautus or N�vius were to bring Publius and Cneius Scipio on the comic

stage, or as if C�cilius were to caricature Cato." And then a little

after he goes on: "Though our Twelve Tables attached the penalty of

death only to a very few offences, yet among these few this was one:

if any man should have sung a pasquinade, or have composed a satire

calculated to bring infamy or disgrace on another person. Wisely

decreed. For it is by the decisions of magistrates, and by a

well-informed justice, that our lives ought to be judged, and not by

the flighty fancies of poets; neither ought we to be exposed to hear

calumnies, save where we have the liberty of replying, and defending

ourselves before an adequate tribunal." This much I have judged it

advisable to quote from the fourth book of Cicero's De Republica; and I

have made the quotation word for word, with the exception of some words

omitted, and some slightly transposed, for the sake of giving the sense

more readily. And certainly the extract is pertinent to the matter I

am endeavoring to explain. Cicero makes some further remarks, and

concludes the passage by showing that the ancient Romans did not permit

any living man to be either praised or blamed on the stage. But the

Greeks, as I said, though not so moral, were more logical in allowing

this license which the Romans forbade; for they saw that their gods

approved and enjoyed the scurrilous language of low comedy when

directed not only against men, but even against themselves; and this,

whether the infamous actions imputed to them were the fictions of

poets, or were their actual iniquities commemorated and acted in the

theatres. And would that the spectators had judged them worthy only of

laughter, and not of imitation! Manifestly it had been a stretch of

pride to spare the good name of the leading men and the common

citizens, when the very deities did not grudge that their own

reputation should be blemished.

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Chapter 10.--That the Devils, in Suffering Either False or True Crimes

to Be Laid to Their Charge, Meant to Do Men a Mischief.

It is alleged, in excuse of this practice, that the stories told of the

gods are not true, but false, and mere inventions, but this only makes

matters worse, if we form our estimate by the morality our religion

teaches; and if we consider the malice of the devils, what more wily

and astute artifice could they practise upon men? When a slander is

uttered against a leading statesman of upright and useful life, is it

not reprehensible in proportion to its untruth and groundlessness?

What punishment, then, shall be sufficient when the gods are the

objects of so wicked and outrageous an injustice? But the devils, whom

these men repute gods, are content that even iniquities they are

guiltless of should be ascribed to them, so long as they may entangle

men's minds in the meshes of these opinions, and draw them on along

with themselves to their predestinated punishment: whether such things

were actually committed by the men whom these devils, delighting in

human infatuation, cause to be worshipped as gods, and in whose stead

they, by a thousand malign and deceitful artifices, substitute

themselves, and so receive worship; or whether, though they were really

the crimes of men, these wicked spirits gladly allowed them to be

attributed to higher beings, that there might seem to be conveyed from

heaven itself a sufficient sanction for the perpetration of shameful

wickedness. The Greeks, therefore, seeing the character of the gods

they served, thought that the poets should certainly not refrain from

showing up human vices on the stage, either because they desired to be

like their gods in this, or because they were afraid that, if they

required for themselves a more unblemished reputation than they

asserted for the gods, they might provoke them to anger.

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Chapter 11.--That the Greeks Admitted Players to Offices of State, on

the Ground that Men Who Pleased the Gods Should Not Be Contemptuously

Treated by Their Fellows.

It was a part of this same reasonableness of the Greeks which induced

them to bestow upon the actors of these same plays no inconsiderable

civic honors. In the above-mentioned book of the De Republica, it is

mentioned that Aeschines, a very eloquent Athenian, who had been a

tragic actor in his youth, became a statesman, and that the Athenians

again and again sent another tragedian, Aristodemus, as their

plenipotentiary to Philip. For they judged it unbecoming to condemn

and treat as infamous persons those who were the chief actors in the

scenic entertainments which they saw to be so pleasing to the gods. No

doubt this was immoral of the Greeks, but there can be as little doubt

they acted in conformity with the character of their gods; for how

could they have presumed to protect the conduct of the citizens from

being cut to pieces by the tongues of poets and players, who were

allowed, and even enjoined by the gods, to tear their divine reputation

to tatters? And how could they hold in contempt the men who acted in

the theatres those dramas which, as they had ascertained, gave pleasure

to the gods whom they worshipped? Nay, how could they but grant to

them the highest civic honors? On what plea could they honor the

priests who offered for them acceptable sacrifices to the gods, if they

branded with infamy the actors who in behalf of the people gave to the

gods that pleasure or honour which they demanded, and which, according

to the account of the priests, they were angry at not receiving.

Labeo, [102] whose learning makes him an authority on such points, is

of opinion that the distinction between good and evil deities should

find expression in a difference of worship; that the evil should be

propitiated by bloody sacrifices and doleful rites, but the good with a

joyful and pleasant observance, as, e.g. (as he says himself), with

plays, festivals, and banquets. [103] All this we shall, with God's

help, hereafter discuss. At present, and speaking to the subject on

hand, whether all kinds of offerings are made indiscriminately to all

the gods, as if all were good (and it is an unseemly thing to conceive

that there are evil gods; but these gods of the pagans are all evil,

because they are not gods, but evil spirits), or whether, as Labeo

thinks, a distinction is made between the offerings presented to the

different gods the Greeks are equally justified in honoring alike the

priests by whom the sacrifices are offered, and the players by whom the

dramas are acted, that they may not be open to the charge of doing an

injury to all their gods, if the plays are pleasing to all of them, or

(which were still worse) to their good gods, if the plays are relished

only by them.

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[102] Labeo, a jurist of the time of Augustus, learned in law and

antiquities, and the author of several works much prized by his own and

some succeeding ages. The two articles in Smith's Dictionary on

Antistius and Cornelius Labeo should be read.

[103] Lectisternia, feasts in which the images of the gods were laid on

pillows in the streets, and all kinds of food set before them.

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Chapter 12.--That the Romans, by Refusing to the Poets the Same License

in Respect of Men Which They Allowed Them in the Case of the Gods,

Showed a More Delicate Sensitiveness Regarding Themselves than

Regarding the Gods.

The Romans, however, as Scipio boasts in that same discussion, declined

having their conduct and good name subjected to the assaults and

slanders of the poets, and went so far as to make it a capital crime if

any one should dare to compose such verses. This was a very honorable

course to pursue, so far as they themselves were concerned, but in

respect of the gods it was proud and irreligious: for they knew that

the gods not only tolerated, but relished, being lashed by the

injurious expressions of the poets, and yet they themselves would not

suffer this same handling; and what their ritual prescribed as

acceptable to the gods, their law prohibited as injurious to

themselves. How then, Scipio, do you praise the Romans for refusing

this license to the poets, so that no citizen could be calumniated,

while you know that the gods were not included under this protection?

Do you count your senate-house worthy of so much higher a regard than

the Capitol? Is the one city of Rome more valuable in your eyes than

the whole heaven of gods, that you prohibit your poets from uttering

any injurious words against a citizen, though they may with impunity

cast what imputations they please upon the gods, without the

interference of senator, censor, prince, or pontiff? It was, forsooth,

intolerable that Plautus or N�vus should attack Publius and Cneius

Scipio, insufferable that C�cilius should lampoon Cato; but quite

proper that your Terence should encourage youthful lust by the wicked

example of supreme Jove.

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Chapter 13.--That the Romans Should Have Understood that Gods Who

Desired to Be Worshipped in Licentious Entertainments Were Unworthy of

Divine Honor.

But Scipio, were he alive, would possibly reply: "How could we attach

a penalty to that which the gods themselves have consecrated? For the

theatrical entertainments in which such things are said, and acted, and

performed, were introduced into Roman society by the gods, who ordered

that they should be dedicated and exhibited in their honor." But was

not this, then, the plainest proof that they were no true gods, nor in

any respect worthy of receiving divine honours from the republic?

Suppose they had required that in their honor the citizens of Rome

should be held up to ridicule, every Roman would have resented the

hateful proposal. How then, I would ask, can they be esteemed worthy

of worship, when they propose that their own crimes be used as material

for celebrating their praises? Does not this artifice expose them, and

prove that they are detestable devils? Thus the Romans, though they

were superstitious enough to serve as gods those who made no secret of

their desire to be worshipped in licentious plays, yet had sufficient

regard to their hereditary dignity and virtue, to prompt them to refuse

to players any such rewards as the Greeks accorded them. On this point

we have this testimony of Scipio, recorded in Cicero: "They [the

Romans] considered comedy and all theatrical performances as

disgraceful, and therefore not only debarred players from offices and

honors open to ordinary citizens, but also decreed that their names

should be branded by the censor, and erased from the roll of their

tribe." An excellent decree, and another testimony to the sagacity of

Rome; but I could wish their prudence had been more thorough-going and

consistent. For when I hear that if any Roman citizen chose the stage

as his profession, he not only closed to himself every laudable career,

but even became an outcast from his own tribe, I cannot but exclaim:

This is the true Roman spirit, this is worthy of a state jealous of its

reputation. But then some one interrupts my rapture, by inquiring with

what consistency players are debarred from all honors, while plays are

counted among the honors due to the gods? For a long while the virtue

of Rome was uncontaminated by theatrical exhibitions; [104] and if they

had been adopted for the sake of gratifying the taste of the citizens,

they would have been introduced hand in hand with the relaxation of

manners. But the fact is, that it was the gods who demanded that they

should be exhibited to gratify them. With what justice, then, is the

player excommunicated by whom God is worshipped? On what pretext can

you at once adore him who exacts, and brand him who acts these plays?

This, then, is the controversy in which the Greeks and Romans are

engaged. The Greeks think they justly honor players, because they

worship the gods who demand plays; the Romans, on the other hand, do

not suffer an actor to disgrace by his name his own plebeian tribe, far

less the senatorial order. And the whole of this discussion may be

summed up in the following syllogism. The Greeks give us the major

premise: If such gods are to be worshipped, then certainly such men

may be honored. The Romans add the minor: But such men must by no

means be honoured. The Christians draw the conclusion: Therefore such

gods must by no means be worshipped.

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[104] According to Livy (vii. 2), theatrical exhibitions were

introduced in the year 392 a.u.c. Before that time, he says, there had

only been the games of the circus. The Romans sent to Etruria for

players, who were called histriones, hister being the Tuscan word for a

player. Other particulars are added by Livy.

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Chapter 14.--That Plato, Who Excluded Poets from a Well-Ordered City,

Was Better Than These Gods Who Desire to Be Honoured by Theatrical

Plays.

We have still to inquire why the poets who write the plays, and who by

the law of the twelve tables are prohibited from injuring the good name

of the citizens, are reckoned more estimable than the actors, though

they so shamefully asperse the character of the gods? Is it right that

the actors of these poetical and God-dishonoring effusions be branded,

while their authors are honored? Must we not here award the palm to a

Greek, Plato, who, in framing his ideal republic, [105] conceived that

poets should be banished from the city as enemies of the state? He

could not brook that the gods be brought into disrepute, nor that the

minds of the citizens be depraved and besotted, by the fictions of the

poets. Compare now human nature as you see it in Plato, expelling

poets from the city that the citizens be uninjured, with the divine

nature as you see it in these gods exacting plays in their own honor.

Plato strove, though unsuccessfully, to persuade the light-minded and

lascivious Greeks to abstain from so much as writing such plays; the

gods used their authority to extort the acting of the same from the

dignified and sober-minded Romans. And not content with having them

acted, they had them dedicated to themselves, consecrated to

themselves, solemnly celebrated in their own honor. To which, then,

would it be more becoming in a state to decree divine honors,--to

Plato, who prohibited these wicked and licentious plays, or to the

demons who delighted in blinding men to the truth of what Plato

unsuccessfully sought to inculcate?

This philosopher, Plato, has been elevated by Labeo to the rank of a

demigod, and set thus upon a level with such as Hercules and Romulus.

Labeo ranks demigods higher than heroes, but both he counts among the

deities. But I have no doubt that he thinks this man whom he reckons a

demigod worthy of greater respect not only than the heroes, but also

than the gods themselves. The laws of the Romans and the speculations

of Plato have this resemblance, that the latter pronounce a wholesale

condemnation of poetical fictions, while the former restrain the

license of satire, at least so far as men are the objects of it. Plato

will not suffer poets even to dwell in his city: the laws of Rome

prohibit actors from being enrolled as citizens; and if they had not

feared to offend the gods who had asked the services of the players,

they would in all likelihood have banished them altogether. It is

obvious, therefore, that the Romans could not receive, nor reasonably

expect to receive, laws for the regulation of their conduct from their

gods, since the laws they themselves enacted far surpassed and put to

shame the morality of the gods. The gods demand stageplays in their

own honor; the Romans exclude the players from all civic honors; [106]

the former commanded that they should be celebrated by the scenic

representation of their own disgrace; the latter commanded that no poet

should dare to blemish the reputation of any citizen. But that demigod

Plato resisted the lust of such gods as these, and showed the Romans

what their genius had left incomplete; for he absolutely excluded poets

from his ideal state, whether they composed fictions with no regard to

truth, or set the worst possible examples before wretched men under the

guise of divine actions. We for our part, indeed, reckon Plato neither

a god nor a demigod; we would not even compare him to any of God's holy

angels; nor to the truth-speaking prophets, nor to any of the apostles

or martyrs of Christ, nay, not to any faithful Christian man. The

reason of this opinion of ours we will, God prospering us, render in

its own place. Nevertheless, since they wish him to be considered a

demigod, we think he certainly is more entitled to that rank, and is

every way superior, if not to Hercules and Romulus (though no historian

could ever narrate nor any poet sing of him that he had killed his

brother, or committed any crime), yet certainly to Priapus, or a

Cynocephalus, [107] or the Fever, [108] --divinities whom the Romans

have partly received from foreigners, and partly consecrated by

home-grown rites. How, then, could gods such as these be expected to

promulgate good and wholesome laws, either for the prevention of moral

and social evils, or for their eradication where they had already

sprung up?--gods who used their influence even to sow and cherish

profligacy, by appointing that deeds truly or falsely ascribed to them

should be published to the people by means of theatrical exhibitions,

and by thus gratuitously fanning the flame of human lust with the

breath of a seemingly divine approbation. In vain does Cicero,

speaking of poets, exclaim against this state of things in these

words: "When the plaudits and acclamation of the people, who sit as

infallible judges, are won by the poets, what darkness benights the

mind, what fears invade, what passions inflame it!" [109]

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[105] See the Republic, book iii.

[106] Comp. Tertullian, De Spectac. c. 22.

[107] The Egyptian gods represented with dogs' heads, called by Lucan

(viii. 832) semicanes deos.

[108] The Fever had, according to Vives, three altars in Rome. See

Cicero, De Nat. Deor. iii. 25, and �lian, Var. Hist. xii. 11.

[109] Cicero, De Republica, v. Compare the third Tusculan Qu�st. c.

ii.

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Chapter 15.--That It Was Vanity, Not Reason, Which Created Some of the

Roman Gods.

But is it not manifest that vanity rather than reason regulated the

choice of some of their false gods? This Plato, whom they reckon a

demigod, and who used all his eloquence to preserve men from the most

dangerous spiritual calamities, has yet not been counted worthy even of

a little shrine; but Romulus, because they can call him their own, they

have esteemed more highly than many gods, though their secret doctrine

can allow him the rank only of a demigod. To him they allotted a

flamen, that is to say, a priest of a class so highly esteemed in their

religion (distinguished, too, by their conical mitres), that for only

three of their gods were flamens appointed,--the Flamen Dialis for

Jupiter, Martialis for Mars, and Quirinalis for Romulus (for when the

ardor of his fellow-citizens had given Romulus a seat among the gods,

they gave him this new name Quirinus). And thus by this honor Romulus

has been preferred to Neptune and Pluto, Jupiter's brothers, and to

Saturn himself, their father. They have assigned the same priesthood

to serve him as to serve Jove; and in giving Mars (the reputed father

of Romulus) the same honor, is this not rather for Romulus' sake than

to honor Mars?

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Chapter 16.--That If the Gods Had Really Possessed Any Regard for

Righteousness, the Romans Should Have Received Good Laws from Them,

Instead of Having to Borrow Them from Other Nations.

Moreover, if the Romans had been able to receive a rule of life from

their gods, they would not have borrowed Solon's laws from the

Athenians, as they did some years after Rome was founded; and yet they

did not keep them as they received them, but endeavored to improve and

amend them. [110] Although Lycurgus pretended that he was authorized

by Apollo to give laws to the Lacedemonians, the sensible Romans did

not choose to believe this, and were not induced to borrow laws from

Sparta. Numa Pompilius, who succeeded Romulus in the kingdom, is said

to have framed some laws, which, however, were not sufficient for the

regulation of civic affairs. Among these regulations were many

pertaining to religious observances, and yet he is not reported to have

received even these from the gods. With respect, then, to moral evils,

evils of life and conduct,--evils which are so mighty, that, according

to the wisest pagans, [111] by them states are ruined while their

cities stand uninjured,--their gods made not the smallest provision for

preserving their worshippers from these evils, but, on the contrary,

took special pains to increase them, as we have previously endeavored

to prove.

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[110] In the year a.u. 299, three ambassadors were sent from Rome to

Athens to copy Solon's laws, and acquire information about the

institutions of Greece. On their return the Decemviri were appointed

to draw up a code; and finally, after some tragic interruptions, the

celebrated twelve tables were accepted as the fundamental statutes of

Roman law (fons universi publici privatique juris). These were graven

on brass, and hung up for public information. Livy, iii. 31-34.

[111] Possibly he refers to Plautus' Persa, iv. 4. 11-14.

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Chapter 17.--Of the Rape of the Sabine Women, and Other Iniquities

Perpetrated in Rome's Palmiest Days.

But possibly we are to find the reason for this neglect of the Romans

by their gods, in the saying of Sallust, that "equity and virtue

prevailed among the Romans not more by force of laws than of nature."

[112] I presume it is to this inborn equity and goodness of

disposition we are to ascribe the rape of the Sabine women. What,

indeed, could be more equitable and virtuous, than to carry off by

force, as each man was fit, and without their parents' consent, girls

who were strangers and guests, and who had been decoyed and entrapped

by the pretence of a spectacle! If the Sabines were wrong to deny

their daughters when the Romans asked for them, was it not a greater

wrong in the Romans to carry them off after that denial? The Romans

might more justly have waged war against the neighboring nation for

having refused their daughters in marriage when they first sought them,

than for having demanded them back when they had stolen them. War

should have been proclaimed at first; it was then that Mars should have

helped his warlike son, that he might by force of arms avenge the

injury done him by the refusal of marriage, and might also thus win the

women he desired. There might have been some appearance of "right of

war" in a victor carrying off, in virtue of this right, the virgins who

had been without any show of right denied him; whereas there was no

"right of peace" entitling him to carry off those who were not given to

him, and to wage an unjust war with their justly enraged parents. One

happy circumstance was indeed connected with this act of violence,

viz., that though it was commemorated by the games of the circus, yet

even this did not constitute it a precedent in the city or realm of

Rome. If one would find fault with the results of this act, it must

rather be on the ground that the Romans made Romulus a god in spite of

his perpetrating this iniquity; for one cannot reproach them with

making this deed any kind of precedent for the rape of women.

Again, I presume it was due to this natural equity and virtue, that

after the expulsion of King Tarquin, whose son had violated Lucretia,

Junius Brutus the consul forced Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus,

Lucretia's husband and his own colleague, a good and innocent man, to

resign his office and go into banishment, on the one sole charge that

he was of the name and blood of the Tarquins. This injustice was

perpetrated with the approval, or at least connivance, of the people,

who had themselves raised to the consular office both Collatinus and

Brutus. Another instance of this equity and virtue is found in their

treatment of Marcus Camillus. This eminent man, after he had rapidly

conquered the Veians, at that time the most formidable of Rome's

enemies, and who had maintained a ten years' war, in which the Roman

army had suffered the usual calamities attendant on bad generalship,

after he had restored security to Rome, which had begun to tremble for

its safety, and after he had taken the wealthiest city of the enemy,

had charges brought against him by the malice of those that envied his

success, and by the insolence of the tribunes of the people; and seeing

that the city bore him no gratitude for preserving it, and that he

would certainly be condemned, he went into exile, and even in his

absence was fined 10,000 asses. Shortly after, however, his ungrateful

country had again to seek his protection from the Gauls. But I cannot

now mention all the shameful and iniquitous acts with which Rome was

agitated, when the aristocracy attempted to subject the people, and the

people resented their encroachments, and the advocates of either party

were actuated rather by the love of victory than by any equitable or

virtuous consideration.

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[112] Sallust, Cat. Con. ix. Compare the similar saying of Tacitus

regarding the chastity of the Germans: Plusque ibi boni mores valent,

quam alibi bon� leges (Germ. xix.).

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Chapter 18.--What the History of Sallust Reveals Regarding the Life of

the Romans, Either When Straitened by Anxiety or Relaxed in Security.

I will therefore pause, and adduce the testimony of Sallust himself,

whose words in praise of the Romans (that "equity and virtue prevailed

among them not more by force of laws than of nature") have given

occasion to this discussion. He was referring to that period

immediately after the expulsion of the kings, in which the city became

great in an incredibly short space of time. And yet this same writer

acknowledges in the first book of his history, in the very exordium of

his work, that even at that time, when a very brief interval had

elapsed after the government had passed from kings to consuls, the more

powerful men began to act unjustly, and occasioned the defection of the

people from the patricians, and other disorders in the city. For after

Sallust had stated that the Romans enjoyed greater harmony and a purer

state of society between the second and third Punic wars than at any

other time, and that the cause of this was not their love of good

order, but their fear lest the peace they had with Carthage might be

broken (this also, as we mentioned, Nasica contemplated when he opposed

the destruction of Carthage, for he supposed that fear would tend to

repress wickedness, and to preserve wholesome ways of living), he then

goes on to say: "Yet, after the destruction of Carthage, discord,

avarice, ambition, and the other vices which are commonly generated by

prosperity, more than ever increased." If they "increased," and that

"more than ever," then already they had appeared, and had been

increasing. And so Sallust adds this reason for what he said. "For,"

he says, "the oppressive measures of the powerful, and the consequent

secessions of the plebs from the patricians, and other civil

dissensions, had existed from the first, and affairs were administered

with equity and well-tempered justice for no longer a period than the

short time after the expulsion of the kings, while the city was

occupied with the serious Tuscan war and Tarquin's vengeance." You see

how, even in that brief period after the expulsion of the kings, fear,

he acknowledges, was the cause of the interval of equity and good

order. They were afraid, in fact, of the war which Tarquin waged

against them, after he had been driven from the throne and the city,

and had allied himself with the Tuscans. But observe what he adds:

"After that, the patricians treated the people as their slaves,

ordering them to be scourged or beheaded just as the kings had done,

driving them from their holdings, and harshly tyrannizing over those

who had no property to lose. The people, overwhelmed by these

oppressive measures, and most of all by exorbitant usury, and obliged

to contribute both money and personal service to the constant wars, at

length took arms and seceded to Mount Aventine and Mount Sacer, and

thus obtained for themselves tribunes and protective laws. But it was

only the second Punic war that put an end on both sides to discord and

strife." You see what kind of men the Romans were, even so early as a

few years after the expulsion of the kings; and it is of these men he

says, that "equity and virtue prevailed among them not more by force of

law than of nature."

Now, if these were the days in which the Roman republic shows fairest

and best, what are we to say or think of the succeeding age, when, to

use the words of the same historian, "changing little by little from

the fair and virtuous city it was, it became utterly wicked and

dissolute?" This was, as he mentions, after the destruction of

Carthage. Sallust's brief sum and sketch of this period may be read in

his own history, in which he shows how the profligate manners which

were propagated by prosperity resulted at last even in civil wars. He

says: "And from this time the primitive manners, instead of undergoing

an insensible alteration as hitherto they had done, were swept away as

by a torrent: the young men were so depraved by luxury and avarice,

that it may justly be said that no father had a son who could either

preserve his own patrimony, or keep his hands off other men's."

Sallust adds a number of particulars about the vices of Sylla, and the

debased condition of the republic in general; and other writers make

similar observations, though in much less striking language.

However, I suppose you now see, or at least any one who gives his

attention has the means of seeing, in what a sink of iniquity that city

was plunged before the advent of our heavenly King. For these things

happened not only before Christ had begun to teach, but before He was

even born of the Virgin. If, then, they dare not impute to their gods

the grievous evils of those former times, more tolerable before the

destruction of Carthage, but intolerable and dreadful after it,

although it was the gods who by their malign craft instilled into the

minds of men the conceptions from which such dreadful vices branched

out on all sides, why do they impute these present calamities to

Christ, who teaches life-giving truth, and forbids us to worship false

and deceitful gods, and who, abominating and condemning with His divine

authority those wicked and hurtful lusts of men, gradually withdraws

His own people from a world that is corrupted by these vices, and is

falling into ruins, to make of them an eternal city, whose glory rests

not on the acclamations of vanity, but on the judgment of truth?

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Chapter 19.--Of the Corruption Which Had Grown Upon the Roman Republic

Before Christ Abolished the Worship of the Gods.

Here, then, is this Roman republic, "which has changed little by little

from the fair and virtuous city it was, and has become utterly wicked

and dissolute." It is not I who am the first to say this, but their

own authors, from whom we learned it for a fee, and who wrote it long

before the coming of Christ. You see how, before the coming of Christ,

and after the destruction of Carthage, "the primitive manners, instead

of undergoing insensible alteration, as hitherto they had done, were

swept away as by a torrent; and how depraved by luxury and avarice the

youth were." Let them now, on their part, read to us any laws given by

their gods to the Roman people, and directed against luxury and

avarice. And would that they had only been silent on the subjects of

chastity and modesty, and had not demanded from the people indecent and

shameful practices, to which they lent a pernicious patronage by their

so-called divinity. Let them read our commandments in the Prophets,

Gospels, Acts of the Apostles or Epistles; let them peruse the large

number of precepts against avarice and luxury which are everywhere read

to the congregations that meet for this purpose, and which strike the

ear, not with the uncertain sound of a philosophical discussion, but

with the thunder of God's own oracle pealing from the clouds. And yet

they do not impute to their gods the luxury and avarice, the cruel and

dissolute manners, that had rendered the republic utterly wicked and

corrupt, even before the coming of Christ; but whatever affliction

their pride and effeminacy have exposed them to in these latter days,

they furiously impute to our religion. If the kings of the earth and

all their subjects, if all princes and judges of the earth, if young

men and maidens, old and young, every age, and both sexes; if they whom

the Baptist addressed, the publicans and the soldiers, were all

together to hearken to and observe the precepts of the Christian

religion regarding a just and virtuous life, then should the republic

adorn the whole earth with its own felicity, and attain in life

everlasting to the pinnacle of kingly glory. But because this man

listens and that man scoffs, and most are enamored of the blandishments

of vice rather than the wholesome severity of virtue, the people of

Christ, whatever be their condition--whether they be kings, princes,

judges, soldiers, or provincials, rich or poor, bond or free, male or

female--are enjoined to endure this earthly republic, wicked and

dissolute as it is, that so they may by this endurance win for

themselves an eminent place in that most holy and august assembly of

angels and republic of heaven, in which the will of God is the law.

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Chapter 20.--Of the Kind of Happiness and Life Truly Delighted in by

Those Who Inveigh Against the Christian Religion.

But the worshippers and admirers of these gods delight in imitating

their scandalous iniquities, and are nowise concerned that the republic

be less depraved and licentious. Only let it remain undefeated, they

say, only let it flourish and abound in resources; let it be glorious

by its victories, or still better, secure in peace; and what matters it

to us? This is our concern, that every man be able to increase his

wealth so as to supply his daily prodigalities, and so that the

powerful may subject the weak for their own purposes. Let the poor

court the rich for a living, and that under their protection they may

enjoy a sluggish tranquillity; and let the rich abuse the poor as their

dependants, to minister to their pride. Let the people applaud not

those who protect their interests, but those who provide them with

pleasure. Let no severe duty be commanded, no impurity forbidden. Let

kings estimate their prosperity, not by the righteousness, but by the

servility of their subjects. Let the provinces stand loyal to the

kings, not as moral guides, but as lords of their possessions and

purveyors of their pleasures; not with a hearty reverence, but a

crooked and servile fear. Let the laws take cognizance rather of the

injury done to another man's property, than of that done to one's own

person. If a man be a nuisance to his neighbor, or injure his

property, family, or person, let him be actionable; but in his own

affairs let everyone with impunity do what he will in company with his

own family, and with those who willingly join him. Let there be a

plentiful supply of public prostitutes for every one who wishes to use

them, but specially for those who are too poor to keep one for their

private use. Let there be erected houses of the largest and most

ornate description: in these let there be provided the most sumptuous

banquets, where every one who pleases may, by day or night, play,

drink, vomit, [113] dissipate. Let there be everywhere heard the

rustling of dancers, the loud, immodest laughter of the theatre; let a

succession of the most cruel and the most voluptuous pleasures maintain

a perpetual excitement. If such happiness is distasteful to any, let

him be branded as a public enemy; and if any attempt to modify or put

an end to it let him be silenced, banished, put an end to. Let these

be reckoned the true gods, who procure for the people this condition of

things, and preserve it when once possessed. Let them be worshipped as

they wish; let them demand whatever games they please, from or with

their own worshippers; only let them secure that such felicity be not

imperilled by foe, plague, or disaster of any kind. What sane man

would compare a republic such as this, I will not say to the Roman

empire, but to the palace of Sardanapalus, the ancient king who was so

abandoned to pleasures, that he caused it to be inscribed on his tomb,

that now that he was dead, he possessed only those things which he had

swallowed and consumed by his appetites while alive? If these men had

such a king as this, who, while self-indulgent, should lay no severe

restraint on them, they would more enthusiastically consecrate to him a

temple and a flamen than the ancient Romans did to Romulus.

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[113] The same collocation of words is used by Cicero with reference to

the well-known mode of renewing the appetite in use among the Romans.

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Chapter 21.--Cicero's Opinion of the Roman Republic.

But if our adversaries do not care how foully and disgracefully the

Roman republic be stained by corrupt practices, so long only as it

holds together and continues in being, and if they therefore pooh-pooh

the testimony of Sallust to its "utterly wicked and profligate"

condition, what will they make of Cicero's statement, that even in his

time it had become entirely extinct, and that there remained extant no

Roman republic at all? He introduces Scipio (the Scipio who had

destroyed Carthage) discussing the republic, at a time when already

there were presentiments of its speedy ruin by that corruption which

Sallust describes. In fact, at the time when the discussion took

place, one of the Gracchi, who, according to Sallust, was the first

great instigator of seditions, had already been put to death. His

death, indeed, is mentioned in the same book. Now Scipio, at the end

of the second book, says: "As among the different sounds which proceed

from lyres, flutes, and the human voice, there must be maintained a

certain harmony which a cultivated ear cannot endure to hear disturbed

or jarring, but which may be elicited in full and absolute concord by

the modulation even of voices very unlike one another; so, where reason

is allowed to modulate the diverse elements of the state, there is

obtained a perfect concord from the upper, lower, and middle classes as

from various sounds; and what musicians call harmony in singing, is

concord in matters of state, which is the strictest bond and best

security of any republic, and which by no ingenuity can be retained

where justice has become extinct." Then, when he had expatiated

somewhat more fully, and had more copiously illustrated the benefits of

its presence and the ruinous effects of its absence upon a state,

Pilus, one of the company present at the discussion, struck in and

demanded that the question should be more thoroughly sifted, and that

the subject of justice should be freely discussed for the sake of

ascertaining what truth there was in the maxim which was then becoming

daily more current, that "the republic cannot be governed without

injustice." Scipio expressed his willingness to have this maxim

discussed and sifted, and gave it as his opinion that it was baseless,

and that no progress could be made in discussing the republic unless it

was established, not only that this maxim, that "the republic cannot be

governed without injustice," was false, but also that the truth is,

that it cannot be governed without the most absolute justice. And the

discussion of this question, being deferred till the next day, is

carried on in the third book with great animation. For Pilus himself

undertook to defend the position that the republic cannot be governed

without injustice, at the same time being at special pains to clear

himself of any real participation in that opinion. He advocated with

great keenness the cause of injustice against justice, and endeavored

by plausible reasons and examples to demonstrate that the former is

beneficial, the latter useless, to the republic. Then, at the request

of the company, L�lius attempted to defend justice, and strained every

nerve to prove that nothing is so hurtful to a state as injustice; and

that without justice a republic can neither be governed, nor even

continue to exist.

When this question has been handled to the satisfaction of the company,

Scipio reverts to the original thread of discourse, and repeats with

commendation his own brief definition of a republic, that it is the

weal of the people. "The people" he defines as being not every

assemblage or mob, but an assemblage associated by a common

acknowledgment of law, and by a community of interests. Then he shows

the use of definition in debate; and from these definitions of his own

he gathers that a republic, or "weal of the people," then exists only

when it is well and justly governed, whether by a monarch, or an

aristocracy, or by the whole people. But when the monarch is unjust,

or, as the Greeks say, a tyrant; or the aristocrats are unjust, and

form a faction; or the people themselves are unjust, and become, as

Scipio for want of a better name calls them, themselves the tyrant,

then the republic is not only blemished (as had been proved the day

before), but by legitimate deduction from those definitions, it

altogether ceases to be. For it could not be the people's weal when a

tyrant factiously lorded it over the state; neither would the people be

any longer a people if it were unjust, since it would no longer answer

the definition of a people--"an assemblage associated by a common

acknowledgment of law, and by a community of interests."

When, therefore, the Roman republic was such as Sallust described it,

it was not "utterly wicked and profligate," as he says, but had

altogether ceased to exist, if we are to admit the reasoning of that

debate maintained on the subject of the republic by its best

representatives. Tully himself, too, speaking not in the person of

Scipio or any one else, but uttering his own sentiments, uses the

following language in the beginning of the fifth book, after quoting a

line from the poet Ennius, in which he said, "Rome's severe morality

and her citizens are her safeguard." "This verse," says Cicero, "seems

to me to have all the sententious truthfulness of an oracle. For

neither would the citizens have availed without the morality of the

community, nor would the morality of the commons without outstanding

men have availed either to establish or so long to maintain in vigor so

grand a republic with so wide and just an empire. Accordingly, before

our day, the hereditary usages formed our foremost men, and they on

their part retained the usages and institutions of their fathers. But

our age, receiving the republic as a chef-d'oeuvre of another age which

has already begun to grow old, has not merely neglected to restore the

colors of the original, but has not even been at the pains to preserve

so much as the general outline and most outstanding features. For what

survives of that primitive morality which the poet called Rome's

safeguard? It is so obsolete and forgotten, that, far from practising

it, one does not even know it. And of the citizens what shall I say?

Morality has perished through poverty of great men; a poverty for which

we must not only assign a reason, but for the guilt of which we must

answer as criminals charged with a capital crime. For it is through

our vices, and not by any mishap, that we retain only the name of a

republic, and have long since lost the reality."

This is the confession of Cicero, long indeed after the death of

Africanus, whom he introduced as an interlocutor in his work De

Republica, but still before the coming of Christ. Yet, if the

disasters he bewails had been lamented after the Christian religion had

been diffused, and had begun to prevail, is there a man of our

adversaries who would not have thought that they were to be imputed to

the Christians? Why, then, did their gods not take steps then to

prevent the decay and extinction of that republic, over the loss of

which Cicero, long before Christ had come in the flesh, sings so

lugubrious a dirge? Its admirers have need to inquire whether, even in

the days of primitive men and morals, true justice flourished in it; or

was it not perhaps even then, to use the casual expression of Cicero,

rather a colored painting than the living reality? But, if God will,

we shall consider this elsewhere. For I mean in its own place to show

that--according to the definitions in which Cicero himself, using

Scipio as his mouthpiece, briefly propounded what a republic is, and

what a people is, and according to many testimonies, both of his own

lips and of those who took part in that same debate--Rome never was a

republic, because true justice had never a place in it. But accepting

the more feasible definitions of a republic, I grant there was a

republic of a certain kind, and certainly much better administered by

the more ancient Romans than by their modern representatives. But the

fact is, true justice has no existence save in that republic whose

founder and ruler is Christ, if at least any choose to call this a

republic; and indeed we cannot deny that it is the people's weal. But

if perchance this name, which has become familiar in other connections,

be considered alien to our common parlance, we may at all events say

that in this city is true justice; the city of which Holy Scripture

says, "Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God."

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Chapter 22.--That the Roman Gods Never Took Any Steps to Prevent the

Republic from Being Ruined by Immorality.

But what is relevant to the present question is this, that however

admirable our adversaries say the republic was or is, it is certain

that by the testimony of their own most learned writers it had become,

long before the coming of Christ, utterly wicked and dissolute, and

indeed had no existence, but had been destroyed by profligacy. To

prevent this, surely these guardian gods ought to have given precepts

of morals and a rule of life to the people by whom they were worshipped

in so many temples, with so great a variety of priests and sacrifices,

with such numberless and diverse rites, so many festal solemnities, so

many celebrations of magnificent games. But in all this the demons

only looked after their own interest, and cared not at all how their

worshippers lived, or rather were at pains to induce them to lead an

abandoned life, so long as they paid these tributes to their honor, and

regarded them with fear. If any one denies this, let him produce, let

him point to, let him read the laws which the gods had given against

sedition, and which the Gracchi transgressed when they threw everything

into confusion; or those Marius, and Cinna, and Carbo broke when they

involved their country in civil wars, most iniquitous and unjustifiable

in their causes, cruelly conducted, and yet more cruelly terminated; or

those which Sylla scorned, whose life, character, and deeds, as

described by Sallust and other historians, are the abhorrence of all

mankind. Who will deny that at that time the republic had become

extinct?

Possibly they will be bold enough to suggest in defence of the gods,

that they abandoned the city on account of the profligacy of the

citizens, according to the lines of Virgil:

"Gone from each fane, each sacred shrine,

Are those who made this realm divine." [114]

But, firstly, if it be so, then they cannot complain against the

Christian religion, as if it were that which gave offence to the gods

and caused them to abandon Rome, since the Roman immorality had long

ago driven from the altars of the city a cloud of little gods, like as

many flies. And yet where was this host of divinities, when, long

before the corruption of the primitive morality, Rome was taken and

burnt by the Gauls? Perhaps they were present, but asleep? For at

that time the whole city fell into the hands of the enemy, with the

single exception of the Capitoline hill; and this too would have been

taken, had not--the watchful geese aroused the sleeping gods! And this

gave occasion to the festival of the goose, in which Rome sank nearly

to the superstition of the Egyptians, who worship beasts and birds.

But of these adventitious evils which are inflicted by hostile armies

or by some disaster, and which attach rather to the body than the soul,

I am not meanwhile disputing. At present I speak of the decay of

morality, which at first almost imperceptibly lost its brilliant hue,

but afterwards was wholly obliterated, was swept away as by a torrent,

and involved the republic in such disastrous ruin, that though the

houses and walls remained standing the leading writers do not scruple

to say that the republic was destroyed. Now, the departure of the gods

"from each fane, each sacred shrine," and their abandonment of the city

to destruction, was an act of justice, if their laws inculcating

justice and a moral life had been held in contempt by that city. But

what kind of gods were these, pray, who declined to live with a people

who worshipped them, and whose corrupt life they had done nothing to

reform?

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[114] �neid, ii. 351-2.

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Chapter 23.--That the Vicissitudes of This Life are Dependent Not on

the Favor or Hostility of Demons, But on the Will of the True God.

But, further, is it not obvious that the gods have abetted the

fulfilment of men's desires, instead of authoritatively bridling them?

For Marius, a low-born and self-made man, who ruthlessly provoked and

conducted civil wars, was so effectually aided by them, that he was

seven times consul, and died full of years in his seventh consulship,

escaping the hands of Sylla, who immediately afterwards came into

power. Why, then, did they not also aid him, so as to restrain him

from so many enormities? For if it is said that the gods had no hand

in his success, this is no trivial admission that a man can attain the

dearly coveted felicity of this life even though his own gods be not

propitious; that men can be loaded with the gifts of fortune as Marius

was, can enjoy health, power, wealth, honours, dignity, length of days,

though the gods be hostile to him; and that, on the other hand, men can

be tormented as Regulus was, with captivity, bondage, destitution,

watchings, pain, and cruel death, though the gods be his friends. To

concede this is to make a compendious confession that the gods are

useless, and their worship superfluous. If the gods have taught the

people rather what goes clean counter to the virtues of the soul, and

that integrity of life which meets a reward after death; if even in

respect of temporal and transitory blessings they neither hurt those

whom they hate nor profit whom they love, why are they worshipped, why

are they invoked with such eager homage? Why do men murmur in

difficult and sad emergencies, as if the gods had retired in anger? and

why, on their account, is the Christian religion injured by the most

unworthy calumnies? If in temporal matters they have power either for

good or for evil, why did they stand by Marius, the worst of Rome's

citizens, and abandon Regulus, the best? Does this not prove

themselves to be most unjust and wicked? And even if it be supposed

that for this very reason they are the rather to be feared and

worshipped, this is a mistake; for we do not read that Regulus

worshipped them less assiduously than Marius. Neither is it apparent

that a wicked life is to be chosen, on the ground that the gods are

supposed to have favored Marius more than Regulus. For Metellus, the

most highly esteemed of all the Romans, who had five sons in the

consulship, was prosperous even in this life; and Catiline, the worst

of men, reduced to poverty and defeated in the war his own guilt had

aroused, lived and perished miserably. Real and secure felicity is the

peculiar possession of those who worship that God by whom alone it can

be conferred.

It is thus apparent, that when the republic was being destroyed by

profligate manners, its gods did nothing to hinder its destruction by

the direction or correction of its manners, but rather accelerated its

destruction by increasing the demoralization and corruption that

already existed. They need not pretend that their goodness was shocked

by the iniquity of the city, and that they withdrew in anger. For they

were there, sure enough; they are detected, convicted: they were

equally unable to break silence so as to guide others, and to keep

silence so as to conceal themselves. I do not dwell on the fact that

the inhabitants of Minturn� took pity on Marius, and commended him to

the goddess Marica in her grove, that she might give him success in all

things, and that from the abyss of despair in which he then lay he

forthwith returned unhurt to Rome, and entered the city the ruthless

leader of a ruthless army; and they who wish to know how bloody was his

victory, how unlike a citizen, and how much more relentlessly than any

foreign foe he acted, let them read the histories. But this, as I

said, I do not dwell upon; nor do I attribute the bloody bliss of

Marius to, I know not what Minturnian goddess [Marica], but rather to

the secret providence of God, that the mouths of our adversaries might

be shut, and that they who are not led by passion, but by prudent

consideration of events, might be delivered from error. And even if

the demons have any power in these matters, they have only that power

which the secret decree of the Almighty allots to them, in order that

we may not set too great store by earthly prosperity, seeing it is

oftentimes vouchsafed even to wicked men like Marius; and that we may

not, on the other hand, regard it as an evil, since we see that many

good and pious worshippers of the one true God are, in spite of the

demons pre-eminently successful; and, finally, that we may not suppose

that these unclean spirits are either to be propitiated or feared for

the sake of earthly blessings or calamities: for as wicked men on

earth cannot do all they would, so neither can these demons, but only

in so far as they are permitted by the decree of Him whose judgments

are fully comprehensible, justly reprehensible by none.

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Chapter 24.--Of the Deeds of Sylla, in Which the Demons Boasted that He

Had Their Help.

It is certain that Sylla--whose rule was so cruel that, in comparison

with it, the preceding state of things which he came to avenge was

regretted--when first he advanced towards Rome to give battle to

Marius, found the auspices so favourable when he sacrificed, that,

according to Livy's account, the augur Postumius expressed his

willingness to lose his head if Sylla did not, with the help of the

gods, accomplish what he designed. The gods, you see, had not departed

from "every fane and sacred shrine," since they were still predicting

the issue of these affairs, and yet were taking no steps to correct

Sylla himself. Their presages promised him great prosperity but no

threatenings of theirs subdued his evil passions. And then, when he

was in Asia conducting the war against Mithridates, a message from

Jupiter was delivered to him by Lucius Titius, to the effect that he

would conquer Mithridates; and so it came to pass. And afterwards,

when he was meditating a return to Rome for the purpose of avenging in

the blood of the citizens injuries done to himself and his friends, a

second message from Jupiter was delivered to him by a soldier of the

sixth legion, to the effect that it was he who had predicted the

victory over Mithridates, and that now he promised to give him power to

recover the republic from his enemies, though with great bloodshed.

Sylla at once inquired of the soldier what form had appeared to him;

and, on his reply, recognized that it was the same as Jupiter had

formerly employed to convey to him the assurance regarding the victory

over Mithridates. How, then, can the gods be justified in this matter

for the care they took to predict these shadowy successes, and for

their negligence in correcting Sylla, and restraining him from stirring

up a civil war so lamentable and atrocious, that it not merely

disfigured, but extinguished, the republic? The truth is, as I have

often said, and as Scripture informs us, and as the facts themselves

sufficiently indicate, the demons are found to look after their own

ends only, that they may be regarded and worshipped as gods, and that

men may be induced to offer to them a worship which associates them

with their crimes, and involves them in one common wickedness and

judgment of God.

Afterwards, when Sylla had come to Tarentum, and had sacrificed there,

he saw on the head of the victim's liver the likeness of a golden

crown. Thereupon the same soothsayer Postumius interpreted this to

signify a signal victory, and ordered that he only should eat of the

entrails. A little afterwards, the slave of a certain Lucius Pontius

cried out, "I am Bellona's messenger; the victory is yours, Sylla!"

Then he added that the Capitol should be burned. As soon as he had

uttered this prediction he left the camp, but returned the following

day more excited than ever, and shouted, "The Capitol is fired!" And

fired indeed it was. This it was easy for a demon both to foresee and

quickly to announce. But observe, as relevant to our subject, what

kind of gods they are under whom these men desire to live, who

blaspheme the Saviour that delivers the wills of the faithful from the

dominion of devils. The man cried out in prophetic rapture, "The

victory is yours, Sylla!" And to certify that he spoke by a divine

spirit, he predicted also an event which was shortly to happen, and

which indeed did fall out, in a place from which he in whom this spirit

was speaking was far distant. But he never cried, "Forbear thy

villanies, Sylla!"--the villanies which were committed at Rome by that

victor to whom a golden crown on the calf's liver had been shown as the

divine evidence of his victory. If such signs as this were customarily

sent by just gods, and not by wicked demons, then certainly the

entrails he consulted should rather have given Sylla intimation of the

cruel disasters that were to befall the city and himself. For that

victory was not so conducive to his exaltation to power, as it was

fatal to his ambition; for by it he became so insatiable in his

desires, and was rendered so arrogant and reckless by prosperity, that

he may be said rather to have inflicted a moral destruction on himself

than corporal destruction on his enemies. But these truely woeful and

deplorable calamities the gods gave him no previous hint of, neither by

entrails, augury, dream, nor prediction. For they feared his amendment

more than his defeat. Yea, they took good care that this glorious

conqueror of his own fellow-citizens should be conquered and led

captive by his own infamous vices, and should thus be the more

submissive slave of the demons themselves.

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Chapter 25.--How Powerfully the Evil Spirits Incite Men to Wicked

Actions, by Giving Them the Quasi-Divine Authority of Their Example.

Now, who does not hereby comprehend,--unless he has preferred to

imitate such gods rather than by divine grace to withdraw himself from

their fellowship,--who does not see how eagerly these evil spirits

strive by their example to lend, as it were, divine authority to

crime? Is not this proved by the fact that they were seen in a wide

plain in Campania rehearsing among themselves the battle which shortly

after took place there with great bloodshed between the armies of

Rome? For at first there were heard loud crashing noises, and

afterwards many reported that they had seen for some days together two

armies engaged. And when this battle ceased, they found the ground all

indented with just such footprints of men and horses as a great

conflict would leave. If, then, the deities were veritably fighting

with one another, the civil wars of men are sufficiently justified;

yet, by the way, let it be observed that such pugnacious gods must be

very wicked or very wretched. If, however, it was but a sham-fight,

what did they intend by this, but that the civil wars of the Romans

should seem no wickedness, but an imitation of the gods? For already

the civil wars had begun; and before this, some lamentable battles and

execrable massacres had occurred. Already many had been moved by the

story of the soldier, who, on stripping the spoils of his slain foe,

recognized in the stripped corpse his own brother, and, with deep

curses on civil wars, slew himself there and then on his brother's

body. To disguise the bitterness of such tragedies, and kindle

increasing ardor in this monstrous warfare, these malign demons, who

were reputed and worshipped as gods, fell upon this plan of revealing

themselves in a state of civil war, that no compunction for

fellow-citizens might cause the Romans to shrink from such battles, but

that the human criminality might be justified by the divine example.

By a like craft, too, did these evil spirits command that scenic

entertainments, of which I have already spoken, should be instituted

and dedicated to them. And in these entertainments the poetical

compositions and actions of the drama ascribed such iniquities to the

gods, that every one might safely imitate them, whether he believed the

gods had actually done such things, or, not believing this, yet

perceived that they most eagerly desired to be represented as having

done them. And that no one might suppose, that in representing the

gods as fighting with one another, the poets had slandered them, and

imputed to them unworthy actions, the gods themselves, to complete the

deception, confirmed the compositions of the poets by exhibiting their

own battles to the eyes of men, not only through actions in the

theatres, but in their own persons on the actual field.

We have been forced to bring forward these facts, because their authors

have not scrupled to say and to write that the Roman republic had

already been ruined by the depraved moral habits of the citizens, and

had ceased to exist before the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now

this ruin they do not impute to their own gods, though they impute to

our Christ the evils of this life, which cannot ruin good men, be they

alive or dead. And this they do, though our Christ has issued so many

precepts inculcating virtue and restraining vice; while their own gods

have done nothing whatever to preserve that republic that served them,

and to restrain it from ruin by such precepts, but have rather hastened

its destruction, by corrupting its morality through their pestilent

example. No one, I fancy, will now be bold enough to say that the

republic was then ruined because of the departure of the gods "from

each fane, each sacred shrine," as if they were the friends of virtue,

and were offended by the vices of men. No, there are too many presages

from entrails, auguries, soothsayings, whereby they boastingly

proclaimed themselves prescient of future events and controllers of the

fortune of war,--all which prove them to have been present. And had

they been indeed absent the Romans would never in these civil wars have

been so far transported by their own passions as they were by the

instigations of these gods.

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Chapter 26.--That the Demons Gave in Secret Certain Obscure

Instructions in Morals, While in Public Their Own Solemnities

Inculcated All Wickedness.

Seeing that this is so,--seeing that the filthy and cruel deeds, the

disgraceful and criminal actions of the gods, whether real or feigned,

were at their own request published, and were consecrated, and

dedicated in their honor as sacred and stated solemnities; seeing they

vowed vengeance on those who refused to exhibit them to the eyes of

all, that they might be proposed as deeds worthy of imitation, why is

it that these same demons, who by taking pleasure in such obscenities,

acknowledge themselves to be unclean spirits, and by delighting in

their own villanies and iniquities, real or imaginary, and by

requesting from the immodest, and extorting from the modest, the

celebration of these licentious acts, proclaim themselves instigators

to a criminal and lewd life;--why, I ask, are they represented as

giving some good moral precepts to a few of their own elect, initiated

in the secrecy of their shrines? If it be so, this very thing only

serves further to demonstrate the malicious craft of these pestilent

spirits. For so great is the influence of probity and chastity, that

all men, or almost all men, are moved by the praise of these virtues;

nor is any man so depraved by vice, but he hath some feeling of honor

left in him. So that, unless the devil sometimes transformed himself,

as Scripture says, into an angel of light, [115] he could not compass

his deceitful purpose. Accordingly, in public, a bold impurity fills

the ear of the people with noisy clamor; in private, a feigned chastity

speaks in scarce audible whispers to a few: an open stage is provided

for shameful things, but on the praiseworthy the curtain falls: grace

hides disgrace flaunts: a wicked deed draws an overflowing house, a

virtuous speech finds scarce a hearer, as though purity were to be

blushed at, impurity boasted of. Where else can such confusion reign,

but in devils' temples? Where, but in the haunts of deceit? For the

secret precepts are given as a sop to the virtuous, who are few in

number; the wicked examples are exhibited to encourage the vicious, who

are countless.

Where and when those initiated in the mysteries of Coelestis received

any good instructions, we know not. What we do know is, that before

her shrine, in which her image is set, and amidst a vast crowd

gathering from all quarters, and standing closely packed together, we

were intensely interested spectators of the games which were going on,

and saw, as we pleased to turn the eye, on this side a grand display of

harlots, on the other the virgin goddess; we saw this virgin worshipped

with prayer and with obscene rites. There we saw no shame-faced mimes,

no actress over-burdened with modesty; all that the obscene rites

demanded was fully complied with. We were plainly shown what was

pleasing to the virgin deity, and the matron who witnessed the

spectacle returned home from the temple a wiser woman. Some, indeed,

of the more prudent women turned their faces from the immodest

movements of the players, and learned the art of wickedness by a

furtive regard. For they were restrained, by the modest demeanor due

to men, from looking boldly at the immodest gestures; but much more

were they restrained from condemning with chaste heart the sacred rites

of her whom they adored. And yet this licentiousness--which, if

practised in one's home, could only be done there in secret--was

practised as a public lesson in the temple; and if any modesty remained

in men, it was occupied in marvelling that wickedness which men could

not unrestrainedly commit should be part of the religious teaching of

the gods, and that to omit its exhibition should incur the anger of the

gods. What spirit can that be, which by a hidden inspiration stirs

men's corruption, and goads them to adultery, and feeds on the

full-fledged iniquity, unless it be the same that finds pleasure in

such religious ceremonies, sets in the temples images of devils, and

loves to see in play the images of vices; that whispers in secret some

righteous sayings to deceive the few who are good, and scatters in

public invitations to profligacy, to gain possession of the millions

who are wicked?

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[115] 2 Cor. xi. 14.

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Chapter 27.--That the Obscenities of Those Plays Which the Romans

Consecrated in Order to Propitiate Their Gods, Contributed Largely to

the Overthrow of Public Order.

Cicero, a weighty man, and a philosopher in his way, when about to be

made edile, wished the citizens to understand [116] that, among the

other duties of his magistracy, he must propitiate Flora by the

celebration of games. And these games are reckoned devout in

proportion to their lewdness. In another place, [117] and when he was

now consul, and the state in great peril, he says that games had been

celebrated for ten days together, and that nothing had been omitted

which could pacify the gods: as if it had not been more satisfactory

to irritate the gods by temperance, than to pacify them by debauchery;

and to provoke their hate by honest living, than soothe it by such

unseemly grossness. For no matter how cruel was the ferocity of those

men who were threatening the state, and on whose account the gods were

being propitiated, it could not have been more hurtful than the

alliance of gods who were won with the foulest vices. To avert the

danger which threatened men's bodies, the gods were conciliated in a

fashion that drove virtue from their spirits; and the gods did not

enrol themselves as defenders of the battlements against the besiegers,

until they had first stormed and sacked the morality of the citizens.

This propitiation of such divinities,--a propitiation so wanton, so

impure, so immodest, so wicked, so filthy, whose actors the innate and

praiseworthy virtue of the Romans disabled from civic honors, erased

from their tribe, recognized as polluted and made infamous;--this

propitiation, I say, so foul, so detestable, and alien from every

religious feeling, these fabulous and ensnaring accounts of the

criminal actions of the gods, these scandalous actions which they

either shamefully and wickedly committed, or more shamefully and

wickedly feigned, all this the whole city learned in public both by the

words and gestures of the actors. They saw that the gods delighted in

the commission of these things, and therefore believed that they wished

them not only to be exhibited to them, but to be imitated by

themselves. But as for that good and honest instruction which they

speak of, it was given in such secrecy, and to so few (if indeed given

at all), that they seemed rather to fear it might be divulged, than

that it might not be practised.

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[116] Cicero, C. Verrem, vi. 8.

[117] Cicero, C. Catilinam, iii. 8.

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Chapter 28.--That the Christian Religion is Health-Giving.

They, then, are but abandoned and ungrateful wretches, in deep and fast

bondage to that malign spirit, who complain and murmur that men are

rescued by the name of Christ from the hellish thraldom of these

unclean spirits, and from a participation in their punishment, and are

brought out of the night of pestilential ungodliness into the light of

most healthful piety. Only such men could murmur that the masses flock

to the churches and their chaste acts of worship, where a seemly

separation of the sexes is observed; where they learn how they may so

spend this earthly life, as to merit a blessed eternity hereafter;

where Holy Scripture and instruction in righteousness are proclaimed

from a raised platform in presence of all, that both they who do the

word may hear to their salvation, and they who do it not may hear to

judgment. And though some enter who scoff at such precepts, all their

petulance is either quenched by a sudden change, or is restrained

through fear or shame. For no filthy and wicked action is there set

forth to be gazed at or to be imitated; but either the precepts of the

true God are recommended, His miracles narrated, His gifts praised, or

His benefits implored.

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Chapter 29.--An Exhortation to the Romans to Renounce Paganism.

This, rather, is the religion worthy of your desires, O admirable Roman

race,--the progeny of your Sc�volas and Scipios, of Regulus, and of

Fabricius. This rather covet, this distinguish from that foul vanity

and crafty malice of the devils. If there is in your nature any

eminent virtue, only by true piety is it purged and perfected, while by

impiety it is wrecked and punished. Choose now what you will pursue,

that your praise may be not in yourself, but in the true God, in whom

is no error. For of popular glory you have had your share; but by the

secret providence of God, the true religion was not offered to your

choice. Awake, it is now day; as you have already awaked in the

persons of some in whose perfect virtue and sufferings for the true

faith we glory: for they, contending on all sides with hostile powers,

and conquering them all by bravely dying, have purchased for us this

country of ours with their blood; to which country we invite you, and

exhort you to add yourselves to the number of the citizens of this

city, which also has a sanctuary [118] of its own in the true remission

of sins. Do not listen to those degenerate sons of thine who slander

Christ and Christians, and impute to them these disastrous times,

though they desire times in which they may enjoy rather impunity for

their wickedness than a peaceful life. Such has never been Rome's

ambition even in regard to her earthly country. Lay hold now on the

celestial country, which is easily won, and in which you will reign

truly and for ever. For there shall thou find no vestal fire, no

Capitoline stone, but the one true God.

"No date, no goal will here ordain:

But grant an endless, boundless reign." [119]

No longer, then, follow after false and deceitful gods; abjure them

rather, and despise them, bursting forth into true liberty. Gods they

are not, but malignant spirits, to whom your eternal happiness will be

a sore punishment. Juno, from whom you deduce your origin according to

the flesh, did not so bitterly grudge Rome's citadels to the Trojans,

as these devils whom yet ye repute gods, grudge an everlasting seat to

the race of mankind. And thou thyself hast in no wavering voice passed

judgment on them, when thou didst pacify them with games, and yet didst

account as infamous the men by whom the plays were acted. Suffer us,

then, to assert thy freedom against the unclean spirits who had imposed

on thy neck the yoke of celebrating their own shame and filthiness.

The actors of these divine crimes thou hast removed from offices of

honor; supplicate the true God, that He may remove from thee those gods

who delight in their crimes,--a most disgraceful thing if the crimes

are really theirs, and a most malicious invention if the crimes are

feigned. Well done, in that thou hast spontaneously banished from the

number of your citizens all actors and players. Awake more fully: the

majesty of God cannot be propitiated by that which defiles the dignity

of man. How, then, can you believe that gods who take pleasure in such

lewd plays, belong to the number of the holy powers of heaven, when the

men by whom these plays are acted are by yourselves refused admission

into the number of Roman citizens even of the lowest grade?

Incomparably more glorious than Rome, is that heavenly city in which

for victory you have truth; for dignity, holiness; for peace, felicity;

for life, eternity. Much less does it admit into its society such

gods, if thou dost blush to admit into thine such men. Wherefore, if

thou wouldst attain to the blessed city, shun the society of devils.

They who are propitiated by deeds of shame, are unworthy of the worship

of right-hearted men. Let these, then, be obliterated from your

worship by the cleansing of the Christian religion, as those men were

blotted from your citizenship by the censor's mark.

But, so far as regards carnal benefits, which are the only blessings

the wicked desire to enjoy, and carnal miseries, which alone they

shrink from enduring, we will show in the following book that the

demons have not the power they are supposed to have; and although they

had it, we ought rather on that account to despise these blessings,

than for the sake of them to worship those gods, and by worshipping

them to miss the attainment of these blessings they grudge us. But

that they have not even this power which is ascribed to them by those

who worship them for the sake of temporal advantages, this, I say, I

will prove in the following book; so let us here close the present

argument.

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[118] Alluding to the sanctuary given to all who fled to Rome in its

early days.

[119] Virgil, �neid, i. 278.

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Book III.

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Argument--As in the foregoing book Augustin has proved regarding moral

and spiritual calamities, so in this book he proves regarding external

and bodily disasters, that since the foundation of the city the Romans

have been continually subject to them; and that even when the false

gods were worshipped without a rival, before the advent of Christ, they

afforded no relief from such calamities.

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Chapter 1.--Of the Ills Which Alone the Wicked Fear, and Which the

World Continually Suffered, Even When the Gods Were Worshipped.

Of moral and spiritual evils, which are above all others to be

deprecated, I think enough has already been said to show that the false

gods took no steps to prevent the people who worshipped them from being

overwhelmed by such calamities, but rather aggravated the ruin. I see

I must now speak of those evils which alone are dreaded by the

heathen--famine, pestilence, war, pillage, captivity, massacre, and the

like calamities, already enumerated in the first book. For evil men

account those things alone evil which do not make men evil; neither do

they blush to praise good things, and yet to remain evil among the good

things they praise. It grieves them more to own a bad house than a bad

life, as if it were man's greatest good to have everything good but

himself. But not even such evils as were alone dreaded by the heathen

were warded off by their gods, even when they were most unrestrictedly

worshipped. For in various times and places before the advent of our

Redeemer, the human race was crushed with numberless and sometimes

incredible calamities; and at that time what gods but those did the

world worship, if you except the one nation of the Hebrews, and, beyond

them, such individuals as the most secret and most just judgment of God

counted worthy of divine grace? [120] But that I may not be prolix, I

will be silent regarding the heavy calamities that have been suffered

by any other nations, and will speak only of what happened to Rome and

the Roman empire, by which I mean Rome properly so called, and those

lands which already, before the coming of Christ, had by alliance or

conquest become, as it were, members of the body of the state.

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[120] Compare Aug. Epist. ad Deogratias, 102, 13; and De Pr�d. Sanct.,

19.

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Chapter 2.--Whether the Gods, Whom the Greeks and Romans Worshipped in

Common, Were Justified in Permitting the Destruction of Ilium.

First, then, why was Troy or Ilium, the cradle of the Roman people (for

I must not overlook nor disguise what I touched upon in the first book

[121] ), conquered, taken and destroyed by the Greeks, though it

esteemed and worshipped the same gods as they? Priam, some answer,

paid the penalty of the perjury of his father Laomedon. [122] Then it

is true that Laomedon hired Apollo and Neptune as his workmen. For the

story goes that he promised them wages, and then broke his bargain. I

wonder that famous diviner Apollo toiled at so huge a work, and never

suspected Laomedon was going to cheat him of his pay. And Neptune too,

his uncle, brother of Jupiter, king of the sea, it really was not

seemly that he should be ignorant of what was to happen. For he is

introduced by Homer [123] (who lived and wrote before the building of

Rome) as predicting something great of the posterity of �neas, who in

fact founded Rome. And as Homer says, Nep tune also rescued �neas in a

cloud from the wrath of Achilles, though (according to Virgil [124] )

"All his will was to destroy

His own creation, perjured Troy."

Gods, then, so great as Apollo and Neptune, in ignorance of the cheat

that was to defraud them of their wages, built the walls of Troy for

nothing but thanks and thankless people. [125] There may be some

doubt whether it is not a worse crime to believe such persons to be

gods, than to cheat such gods. Even Homer himself did not give full

credence to the story for while he represents Neptune, indeed, as

hostile to the Trojans, he introduces Apollo as their champion, though

the story implies that both were offended by that fraud. If,

therefore, they believe their fables, let them blush to worship such

gods; if they discredit the fables, let no more be said of the "Trojan

perjury;" or let them explain how the gods hated Trojan, but loved

Roman perjury. For how did the conspiracy of Catiline, even in so

large and corrupt a city, find so abundant a supply of men whose hands

and tongues found them a living by perjury and civic broils? What else

but perjury corrupted the judgments pronounced by so many of the

senators? What else corrupted the people's votes and decisions of all

causes tried before them? For it seems that the ancient practice of

taking oaths has been preserved even in the midst of the greatest

corruption, not for the sake of restraining wickedness by religious

fear, but to complete the tale of crimes by adding that of perjury.

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[121] Ch. 4.

[122] Virg, Georg. i. 502, Laomedonte� luimus perjuria Troj�.

[123] Iliad, xx. 293 et seqq.

[124] �neid. v. 810, 811.

[125] Gratis et ingratis.

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Chapter 3.--That the Gods Could Not Be Offended by the Adultery of

Paris, This Crime Being So Common Among Themselves.

There is no ground, then, for representing the gods (by whom, as they

say, that empire stood, though they are proved to have been conquered

by the Greeks) as being enraged at the Trojan perjury. Neither, as

others again plead in their defence, was it indignation at the adultery

of Paris that caused them to withdraw their protection from Troy. For

their habit is to be instigators and instructors in vice, not its

avengers. "The city of Rome," says Sallust, "was first built and

inhabited, as I have heard, by the Trojans, who, flying their country,

under the conduct of �neas, wandered about without making any

settlement." [126] If, then, the gods were of opinion that the

adultery of Paris should be punished, it was chiefly the Romans, or at

least the Romans also, who should have suffered; for the adultery was

brought about by �neas' mother. But how could they hate in Paris a

crime which they made no objection to in their own sister Venus, who

(not to mention any other instance) committed adultery with Anchises,

and so became the mother of �neas? Is it because in the one case

Menelaus [127] was aggrieved, while in the other Vulcan [128] connived

at the crime? For the gods, I fancy, are so little jealous of their

wives, that they make no scruple of sharing them with men. But perhaps

I may be suspected of turning the myths into ridicule, and not handling

so weighty a subject with sufficient gravity. Well, then, let us say

that �neas is not the son of Venus. I am willing to admit it; but is

Romulus any more the son of Mars? For why not the one as well as the

other? Or is it lawful for gods to have intercourse with women,

unlawful for men to have intercourse with goddesses? A hard, or rather

an incredible condition, that what was allowed to Mars by the law of

Venus, should not be allowed to Venus herself by her own law. However,

both cases have the authority of Rome; for C�sar in modern times

believed no less that he was descended from Venus, [129] than the

ancient Romulus believed himself the son of Mars.

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[126] De Conj. Cat.vi.

[127] Helen's husband.

[128] Venus' husband.

[129] Suetonius, in his Life of Julius C�sar (c. 6), relates that, in

pronouncing a funeral oration in praise of his aunt Julia, C�sar

claimed for the Julian gens to which his family belonged a descent from

Venus, through Iulus, son of Eneas.

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Chapter 4.--Of Varro's Opinion, that It is Useful for Men to Feign

Themselves the Offspring of the Gods.

Some one will say, But do you believe all this? Not I indeed. For

even Varro, a very learned heathen, all but admits that these stories

are false, though he does not boldly and confidently say so. But he

maintains it is useful for states that brave men believe, though

falsely, that they are descended from the gods; for that thus the human

spirit, cherishing the belief of its divine descent, will both more

boldly venture into great enterprises, and will carry them out more

energetically, and will therefore by its very confidence secure more

abundant success. You see how wide a field is opened to falsehood by

this opinion of Varro's, which I have expressed as well as I could in

my own words; and how comprehensible it is, that many of the religions

and sacred legends should be feigned in a community in which it was

judged profitable for the citizens that lies should be told even about

the gods themselves.

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Chapter 5.--That It is Not Credible that the Gods Should Have Punished

the Adultery of Paris, Seeing They Showed No Indignation at the

Adultery of the Mother of Romulus.

But whether Venus could bear �neas to a human father Anchises, or Mars

beget Romulus of the daughter of Numitor, we leave as unsettled

questions. For our own Scriptures suggest the very similar question,

whether the fallen angels had sexual intercourse with the daughters of

men, by which the earth was at that time filled with giants, that is,

with enormously large and strong men. At present, then, I will limit

my discussion to this dilemma: If that which their books relate about

the mother of �neas and the father of Romulus be true, how can the gods

be displeased with men for adulteries which, when committed by

themselves, excite no displeasure? If it is false, not even in this

case can the gods be angry that men should really commit adulteries,

which, even when falsely attributed to the gods, they delight in.

Moreover, if the adultery of Mars be discredited, that Venus also may

be freed from the imputation, then the mother of Romulus is left

unshielded by the pretext of a divine seduction. For Sylvia was a

vestal priestess, and the gods ought to avenge this sacrilege on the

Romans with greater severity than Paris' adultery on the Trojans. For

even the Romans themselves in primitive times used to go so far as to

bury alive any vestal who was detected in adultery, while women

unconsecrated, though they were punished, were never punished with

death for that crime; and thus they more earnestly vindicated the

purity of shrines they esteemed divine, than of the human bed.

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Chapter 6.--That the Gods Exacted No Penalty for the Fratricidal Act of

Romulus.

I add another instance: If the sins of men so greatly incensed those

divinities, that they abandoned Troy to fire and sword to punish the

crime of Paris, the murder of Romulus' brother ought to have incensed

them more against the Romans than the cajoling of a Greek husband moved

them against the Trojans: fratricide in a newly-born city should have

provoked them more than adultery in a city already flourishing. It

makes no difference to the question we now discuss, whether Romulus

ordered his brother to be slain, or slew him with his own hand; it is a

crime which many shamelessly deny, many through shame doubt, many in

grief disguise. And we shall not pause to examine and weigh the

testimonies of historical writers on the subject. All agree that the

brother of Romulus was slain, not by enemies, not by strangers. If it

was Romulus who either commanded or perpetrated this crime; Romulus was

more truly the head of the Romans than Paris of the Trojans; why then

did he who carried off another man's wife bring down the anger of the

gods on the Trojans, while he who took his brother's life obtained the

guardianship of those same gods? If, on the other hand, that crime was

not wrought either by the hand or will of Romulus, then the whole city

is chargeable with it, because it did not see to its punishment, and

thus committed, not fratricide, but parricide, which is worse. For

both brothers were the founders of that city, of which the one was by

villainy prevented from being a ruler. So far as I see, then, no evil

can be ascribed to Troy which warranted the gods in abandoning it to

destruction, nor any good to Rome which accounts for the gods visiting

it with prosperity; unless the truth be, that they fled from Troy

because they were vanquished, and betook themselves to Rome to practise

their characteristic deceptions there. Nevertheless they kept a

footing for themselves in Troy, that they might deceive future

inhabitants who re-peopled these lands; while at Rome, by a wider

exercise of their malignant arts, they exulted in more abundant honors.

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Chapter 7.--Of the Destruction of Ilium by Fimbria, a Lieutenant of

Marius.

And surely we may ask what wrong poor Ilium had done, that, in the

first heat of the civil wars of Rome, it should suffer at the hand of

Fimbria, the veriest villain among Marius' partisans, a more fierce and

cruel destruction than the Grecian sack. [130] For when the Greeks

took it many escaped, and many who did not escape were suffered to

live, though in captivity. But Fimbria from the first gave orders that

not a life should be spared, and burnt up together the city and all its

inhabitants. Thus was Ilium requited, not by the Greeks, whom she had

provoked by wrong-doing; but by the Romans, who had been built out of

her ruins; while the gods, adored alike of both sides, did simply

nothing, or, to speak more correctly, could do nothing. Is it then

true, that at this time also, after Troy had repaired the damage done

by the Grecian fire, all the gods by whose help the kingdom stood,

"forsook each fane, each sacred shrine?"

But if so, I ask the reason; for in my judgment, the conduct of the

gods was as much to be reprobated as that of the townsmen to be

applauded. For these closed their gates against Fimbria, that they

might preserve the city for Sylla, and were therefore burnt and

consumed by the enraged general. Now, up to this time, Sylla's cause

was the more worthy of the two; for till now he used arms to restore

the republic, and as yet his good intentions had met with no reverses.

What better thing, then, could the Trojans have done? What more

honorable, what more faithful to Rome, or more worthy of her

relationship, than to preserve their city for the better part of the

Romans, and to shut their gates against a parricide of his country? It

is for the defenders of the gods to consider the ruin which this

conduct brought on Troy. The gods deserted an adulterous people, and

abandoned Troy to the fires of the Greeks, that out of her ashes a

chaster Rome might arise. But why did they a second time abandon this

same town, allied now to Rome, and not making war upon her noble

daughter, but preserving a most steadfast and pious fidelity to Rome's

most justifiable faction? Why did they give her up to be destroyed,

not by the Greek heroes, but by the basest of the Romans? Or, if the

gods did not favor Sylla's cause, for which the unhappy Trojans

maintained their city, why did they themselves predict and promise

Sylla such successes? Must we call them flatterers of the fortunate,

rather than helpers of the wretched? Troy was not destroyed, then,

because the gods deserted it. For the demons, always watchful to

deceive, did what they could. For, when all the statues were

overthrown and burnt together with the town, Livy tells us that only

the image of Minerva is said to have been found standing uninjured

amidst the ruins of her temple; not that it might be said in their

praise, "The gods who made this realm divine," but that it might not be

said in their defence, They are "gone from each fane, each sacred

shrine:" for that marvel was permitted to them, not that they might be

proved to be powerful, but that they might be convicted of being

present.

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[130] Livy, 83, one of the lost books; and Appian, in Mithridat.

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Chapter 8.--Whether Rome Ought to Have Been Entrusted to the Trojan

Gods.

Where, then, was the wisdom of entrusting Rome to the Trojan gods, who

had demonstrated their weakness in the loss of Troy? Will some one say

that, when Fimbria stormed Troy, the gods were already resident in

Rome? How, then, did the image of Minerva remain standing? Besides,

if they were at Rome when Fimbria destroyed Troy, perhaps they were at

Troy when Rome itself was taken and set on fire by the Gauls. But as

they are very acute in hearing, and very swift in their movements, they

came quickly at the cackling of the goose to defend at least the

Capitol, though to defend the rest of the city they were too long in

being warned.

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Chapter 9.--Whether It is Credible that the Peace During the Reign of

Numa Was Brought About by the Gods.

It is also believed that it was by the help of the gods that the

successor of Romulus, Numa Pompilius, enjoyed peace during his entire

reign, and shut the gates of Janus, which are customarily kept open

[131] during war. And it is supposed he was thus requited for

appointing many religious observances among the Romans. Certainly that

king would have commanded our congratulations for so rare a leisure,

had he been wise enough to spend it on wholesome pursuits, and,

subduing a pernicious curiosity, had sought out the true God with true

piety. But as it was, the gods were not the authors of his leisure;

but possibly they would have deceived him less had they found him

busier. For the more disengaged they found him, the more they

themselves occupied his attention. Varro informs us of all his

efforts, and of the arts he employed to associate these gods with

himself and the city; and in its own place, if God will, I shall

discuss these matters. Meanwhile, as we are speaking of the benefits

conferred by the gods, I readily admit that peace is a great benefit;

but it is a benefit of the true God, which, like the sun, the rain, and

other supports of life, is frequently conferred on the ungrateful and

wicked. But if this great boon was conferred on Rome and Pompilius by

their gods, why did they never afterwards grant it to the Roman empire

during even more meritorious periods? Were the sacred rites more

efficient at their first institution than during their subsequent

celebration? But they had no existence in Numa's time, until he added

them to the ritual; whereas afterwards they had already been celebrated

and preserved, that benefit might arise from them. How, then, is it

that those forty-three, or as others prefer it, thirty-nine years of

Numa's reign, were passed in unbroken peace, and yet that afterwards,

when the worship was established, and the gods themselves, who were

invoked by it, were the recognized guardians and pa trons of the city,

we can with difficulty find during the whole period, from the building

of the city to the reign of Augustus, one year--that, viz., which

followed the close of the first Punic war--in which, for a marvel, the

Romans were able to shut the gates of war? [132]

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[131] The gates of Janus were not the gates of a temple, but the gates

of a passage called Janus, which was used only for military purposes;

shut therefore in peace, open in war.

[132] The year of the Consuls T. Manlius and C. Atilius, a.u.c. 519.

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Chapter 10.--Whether It Was Desirable that The Roman Empire Should Be

Increased by Such a Furious Succession of Wars, When It Might Have Been

Quiet and Safe by Following in the Peaceful Ways of Numa.

Do they reply that the Roman empire could never have been so widely

extended, nor so glorious, save by constant and unintermitting wars? A

fit argument, truly! Why must a kingdom be distracted in order to be

great? In this little world of man's body, is it not better to have a

moderate stature, and health with it, than to attain the huge

dimensions of a giant by unnatural torments, and when you attain it to

find no rest, but to be pained the more in proportion to the size of

your members? What evil would have resulted, or rather what good would

not have resulted, had those times continued which Sallust sketched,

when he says, "At first the kings (for that was the first title of

empire in the world) were divided in their sentiments: part cultivated

the mind, others the body: at that time the life of men was led

without coveteousness; every one was sufficiently satisfied with his

own!" [133] Was it requisite, then, for Rome's prosperity, that the

state of things which Virgil reprobates should succeed:

"At length stole on a baser age

And war's indomitable rage,

And greedy lust of gain?" [134]

But obviously the Romans have a plausible defence for undertaking and

carrying on such disastrous wars,--to wit, that the pressure of their

enemies forced them to resist, so that they were compelled to fight,

not by any greed of human applause, but by the necessity of protecting

life and liberty. Well, let that pass. Here is Sallust's account of

the matter: "For when their state, enriched with laws, institutions,

territory, seemed abundantly prosperous and sufficiently powerful,

according to the ordinary law of human nature, opulence gave birth to

envy. Accordingly, the neighboring kings and states took arms and

assaulted them. A few allies lent assistance; the rest, struck with

fear, kept aloof from dangers. But the Romans, watchful at home and in

war, were active, made preparations, encouraged one another, marched to

meet their enemies,--protected by arms their liberty, country,

parents. Afterwards, when they had repelled the dangers by their

bravery, they carried help to their allies and friends, and procured

alliances more by conferring than by receiving favors." [135] This

was to build up Rome's greatness by honorable means. But, in Numa's

reign, I would know whether the long peace was maintained in spite of

the incursions of wicked neighbors, or if these incursions were

discontinued that the peace might be maintained? For if even then Rome

was harassed by wars, and yet did not meet force with force, the same

means she then used to quiet her enemies without conquering them in

war, or terrifying them with the onset of battle, she might have used

always, and have reigned in peace with the gates of Janus shut. And if

this was not in her power, then Rome enjoyed peace not at the will of

her gods, but at the will of her neighbors round about, and only so

long as they cared to provoke her with no war, unless perhaps these

pitiful gods will dare to sell to one man as their favor what lies not

in their power to bestow, but in the will of another man. These

demons, indeed, in so far as they are permitted, can terrify or incite

the minds of wicked men by their own peculiar wickedness. But if they

always had this power, and if no action were taken against their

efforts by a more secret and higher power, they would be supreme to

give peace or the victories of war, which almost always fall out

through some human emotion, and frequently in opposition to the will of

the gods, as is proved not only by lying legends, which scarcely hint

or signify any grain of truth, but even by Roman history itself.

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[133] Sall. Conj. Cat. ii.

[134] �neid, viii. 326-7.

[135] Sall. Cat. Conj. vi.

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Chapter 11.--Of the Statue of Apollo at Cum�, Whose Tears are Supposed

to Have Portended Disaster to the Greeks, Whom the God Was Unable to

Succor.

And it is still this weakness of the gods which is confessed in the

story of the Cuman Apollo, who is said to have wept for four days

during the war with the Ach�ans and King Aristonicus. And when the

augurs were alarmed at the portent, and had determined to cast the

statue into the sea, the old men of Cum� interposed, and related that a

similar prodigy had occurred to the same image during the wars against

Antiochus and against Perseus, and that by a decree of the senate,

gifts had been presented to Apollo, because the event had proved

favorable to the Romans. Then soothsayers were summoned who were

supposed to have greater professional skill, and they pronounced that

the weeping of Apollo's image was propitious to the Romans, because

Cum� was a Greek colony, and that Apollo was bewailing (and thereby

presaging) the grief and calamity that was about to light upon his own

land of Greece, from which he had been brought. Shortly afterwards it

was reported that King Aristonicus was defeated and made prisoner,--a

defeat certainly opposed to the will of Apollo; and this he indicated

by even shedding tears from his marble image. And this shows us that,

though the verses of the poets are mythical, they are not altogether

devoid of truth, but describe the manners of the demons in a

sufficiently fit style. For in Virgil, Diana mourned for Camilla,

[136] and Hercules wept for Pallas doomed to die. [137] This is

perhaps the reason why Numa Pompilius, too, when, enjoying prolonged

peace, but without knowing or inquiring from whom he received it, he

began in his leisure to consider to what gods he should entrust the

safe keeping and conduct of Rome, and not dreaming that the true,

almighty, and most high God cares for earthly affairs, but recollecting

only that the Trojan gods which �neas had brought to Italy had been

able to preserve neither the Trojan nor Lavinian kingdom rounded by

�neas himself, concluded that he must provide other gods as guardians

of fugitives and helpers of the weak, and add them to those earlier

divinities who had either come over to Rome with Romulus, or when Alba

was destroyed.

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[136] �neid, xi. 532.

[137] Ibid. x. 464.

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Chapter 12.--That the Romans Added a Vast Number of Gods to Those

Introduced by Numa, and that Their Numbers Helped Them Not at All.

But though Pompilius introduced so ample a ritual, yet did not Rome see

fit to be content with it. For as yet Jupiter himself had not his

chief temple,--it being King Tarquin who built the Capitol. And

�sculapius left Epidaurus for Rome, that in this foremost city he might

have a finer field for the exercise of his great medical skill. [138]

The mother of the gods, too, came I know not whence from Pessinuns; it

being unseemly that, while her son presided on the Capitoline hill, she

herself should lie hid in obscurity. But if she is the mother of all

the gods, she not only followed some of her children to Rome, but left

others to follow her. I wonder, indeed, if she were the mother of

Cynocephalus, who a long while afterwards came from Egypt. Whether

also the goddess Fever was her offspring, is a matter for her grandson

�sculapius [139] to decide. But of whatever breed she be, the foreign

gods will not presume, I trust, to call a goddess base-born who is a

Roman citizen. Who can number the deities to whom the guardianship of

Rome was entrusted? Indigenous and imported, both of heaven, earth,

hell, seas, fountains, rivers; and, as Varro says, gods certain and

uncertain, male and female: for, as among animals, so among all kinds

of gods are there these distinctions. Rome, then, enjoying the

protection of such a cloud of deities, might surely have been preserved

from some of those great and horrible calamities, of which I can

mention but a few. For by the great smoke of her altars she summoned

to her protection, as by a beacon-fire, a host of gods, for whom she

appointed and maintained temples, altars, sacrifices, priests, and thus

offended the true and most high God, to whom alone all this ceremonial

is lawfully due. And, indeed, she was more prosperous when she had

fewer gods; but the greater she became, the more gods she thought she

should have, as the larger ship needs to be manned by a larger crew. I

suppose she despaired of the smaller number, under whose protection she

had spent comparatively happy days, being able to defend her

greatness. For even under the kings (with the exception of Numa

Pompilius, of whom I have already spoken), how wicked a contentiousness

must have existed to occasion the death of Romulus' brother!

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[138] Livy, x. 47.

[139] Being son of Apollo.

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Chapter 13.--By What Right or Agreement The Romans Obtained Their First

Wives.

How is it that neither Juno, who with her husband Jupiter even then

cherished

"Rome's sons, the nation of the gown," [140]

nor Venus herself, could assist the children of the loved �neas to find

wives by some right and equitable means? For the lack of this entailed

upon the Romans the lamentable necessity of stealing their wives, and

then waging war with their fathers-in-law; so that the wretched women,

before they had recovered from the wrong done them by their husbands,

were dowried with the blood of their fathers. "But the Romans

conquered their neighbors." Yes; but with what wounds on both sides,

and with what sad slaughter of relatives and neighbors! The war of

C�sar and Pompey was the contest of only one father-in-law with one

son-in-law; and before it began, the daughter of C�sar, Pompey's wife,

was already dead. But with how keen and just an accent of grief does

Lucan [141] exclaim: "I sing that worse than civil war waged in the

plains of Emathia, and in which the crime was justified by the

victory!"

The Romans, then, conquered that they might, with hands stained in the

blood of their fathers-in-law, wrench the miserable girls from their

embrace,--girls who dared not weep for their slain parents, for fear of

offending their victorious husbands; and while yet the battle was

raging, stood with their prayers on their lips, and knew not for whom

to utter them. Such nuptials were certainly prepared for the Roman

people not by Venus, but Bellona; or possibly that infernal fury Alecto

had more liberty to injure them now that Juno was aiding them, than

when the prayers of that goddess had excited her against �neas.

Andromache in captivity was happier than these Roman brides. For

though she was a slave, yet, after she had become the wife of Pyrrhus,

no more Trojans fell by his hand; but the Romans slew in battle the

very fathers of the brides they fondled. Andromache, the victor's

captive, could only mourn, not fear, the death of her people. The

Sabine women, related to men still combatants, feared the death of

their fathers when their husbands went out to battle, and mourned their

death as they returned, while neither their grief nor their fear could

be freely expressed. For the victories of their husbands, involving

the destruction of fellow-townsmen, relatives, brothers, fathers,

caused either pious agony or cruel exultation. Moreover, as the

fortune of war is capricious, some of them lost their husbands by the

sword of their parents, while others lost husband and father together

in mutual destruction. For the Romans by no means escaped with

impunity, but they were driven back within their walls, and defended

themselves behind closed gates; and when the gates were opened by

guile, and the enemy admitted into the town, the Forum itself was the

field of a hateful and fierce engagement of fathers-in-law and

sons-in-law. The ravishers were indeed quite defeated, and, flying on

all sides to their houses, sullied with new shame their original

shameful and lamentable triumph. It was at this juncture that Romulus,

hoping no more from the valor of his citizens, prayed Jupiter that they

might stand their ground; and from this occasion the god gained the

name of Stator. But not even thus would the mischief have been

finished, had not the ravished women themselves flashed out with

dishevelled hair, and cast themselves before their parents, and thus

disarmed their just rage, not with the arms of victory, but with the

supplications of filial affection. Then Romulus, who could not brook

his own brother as a colleague, was compelled to accept Titus Tatius,

king of the Sabines, as his partner on the throne. But how long would

he who misliked the fellowship of his own twin-brother endure a

stranger? So, Tatius being slain, Romulus remained sole king, that he

might be the greater god. See what rights of marriage these were that

fomented unnatural wars. These were the Roman leagues of kindred,

relationship, alliance, religion. This was the life of the city so

abundantly protected by the gods. You see how many severe things might

be said on this theme; but our purpose carries us past them, and

requires our discourse for other matters.

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[140] Virgil, �n. i. 286.

[141] Pharsal. v. 1.

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Chapter 14.--Of the Wickedness of the War Waged by the Romans Against

the Albans, and of the Victories Won by the Lust of Power.

But what happened after Numa's reign, and under the other kings, when

the Albans were provoked into war, with sad results not to themselves

alone, but also to the Romans? The long peace of Numa had become

tedious; and with what endless slaughter and detriment of both states

did the Roman and Alban armies bring it to an end! For Alba, which had

been founded by Ascanius, son of �neas, and which was more properly the

mother of Rome than Troy herself, was provoked to battle by Tullus

Hostilius, king of Rome, and in the conflict both inflicted and

received such damage, that at length both parties wearied of the

struggle. It was then devised that the war should be decided by the

combat of three twin-brothers from each army: from the Romans the

three Horatii stood forward, from the Albans the three Curiatii. Two

of the Horatii were overcome and disposed of by the Curiatii; but by

the remaining Horatius the three Curiatii were slain. Thus Rome

remained victorious, but with such a sacrifice that only one survivor

returned to his home. Whose was the loss on both sides? Whose the

grief, but of the offspring of �neas, the descendants of Ascanius, the

progeny of Venus, the grandsons of Jupiter? For this, too, was a

"worse than civil" war, in which the belligerent states were mother and

daughter. And to this combat of the three twin-brothers there was

added another atrocious and horrible catastrophe. For as the two

nations had formerly been friendly (being related and neighbors), the

sister of the Horatii had been betrothed to one of the Curiatii; and

she, when she saw her brother wearing the spoils of her betrothed,

burst into tears, and was slain by her own brother in his anger. To

me, this one girl seems to have been more humane than the whole Roman

people. I cannot think her to blame for lamenting the man to whom

already she had plighted her troth, or, as perhaps she was doing, for

grieving that her brother should have slain him to whom he had promised

his sister. For why do we praise the grief of �neas (in Virgil [142] )

over the enemy cut down even by his own hand? Why did Marcellus shed

tears over the city of Syracuse, when he recollected, just before he

destroyed, its magnificence and meridian glory, and thought upon the

common lot of all things? I demand, in the name of humanity, that if

men are praised for tears shed over enemies conquered by themselves, a

weak girl should not be counted criminal for bewailing her lover

slaughtered by the hand of her brother. While, then, that maiden was

weeping for the death of her betrothed inflicted by her brother's hand,

Rome was rejoicing that such devastation had been wrought on her mother

state, and that she had purchased a victory with such an expenditure of

the common blood of herself and the Albans.

Why allege to me the mere names and words of "glory" and "victory?"

Tear off the disguise of wild delusion, and look at the naked deeds:

weigh them naked, judge them naked. Let the charge be brought against

Alba, as Troy was charged with adultery. There is no such charge, none

like it found: the war was kindled only in order that there

"Might sound in languid ears the cry

Of Tullus and of victory." [143]

This vice of restless ambition was the sole motive to that social and

parricidal war,--a vice which Sallust brands in passing; for when he

has spoken with brief but hearty commendation of those primitive times

in which life was spent without covetousness, and every one was

sufficiently satisfied with what he had, he goes on: "But after Cyrus

in Asia, and the Lacedemonians and Athenians in Greece, began to subdue

cities and nations, and to account the lust of sovereignty a sufficient

ground for war, and to reckon that the greatest glory consisted in the

greatest empire;" [144] and so on, as I need not now quote. This lust

of sovereignty disturbs and consumes the human race with frightful

ills. By this lust Rome was overcome when she triumphed over Alba, and

praising her own crime, called it glory. For, as our Scriptures say,

"the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous,

whom the Lord abhorreth." [145] Away, then, with these deceitful

masks, these deluding whitewashes, that things may be truthfully seen

and scrutinized. Let no man tell me that this and the other was a

"great" man, because he fought and conquered so and so. Gladiators

fight and conquer, and this barbarism has its meed of praise; but I

think it were better to take the consequences of any sloth, than to

seek the glory won by such arms. And if two gladiators entered the

arena to fight, one being father, the other his son, who would endure

such a spectacle? who would not be revolted by it? How, then, could

that be a glorious war which a daughter-state waged against its

mother? Or did it constitute a difference, that the battlefield was

not an arena, and that the wide plains were filled with the carcasses

not of two gladiators, but of many of the flower of two nations; and

that those contests were viewed not by the amphitheatre, but by the

whole world, and furnished a profane spectacle both to those alive at

the time, and to their posterity, so long as the fame of it is handed

down?

Yet those gods, guardians of the Roman empire, and, as it were,

theatric spectators of such contests as these, were not satisfied until

the sister of the Horatii was added by her brother's sword as a third

victim from the Roman side, so that Rome herself, though she won the

day, should have as many deaths to mourn. Afterwards, as a fruit of

the victory, Alba was destroyed, though it was there the Trojan gods

had formed a third asylum after Ilium had been sacked by the Greeks,

and after they had left Lavinium, where �neas had founded a kingdom in

a land of banishment. But probably Alba was destroyed because from it

too the gods had migrated, in their usual fashion, as Virgil says:

"Gone from each fane, each sacred shrine,

Are those who made this realm divine." [146]

Gone, indeed, and from now their third asylum, that Rome might seem all

the wiser in committing herself to them after they had deserted three

other cities. Alba, whose king Amulius had banished his brother,

displeased them; Rome, whose king Romulus had slain his brother,

pleased them. But before Alba was destroyed, its population, they say,

was amalgamated with the inhabitants of Rome so that the two cities

were one. Well, admitting it was so, yet the fact remains that the

city of Ascanius, the third retreat of the Trojan gods, was destroyed

by the daughter-city. Besides, to effect this pitiful conglomerate of

the war's leavings, much blood was spilt on both sides. And how shall

I speak in detail of the same wars, so often renewed in subsequent

reigns, though they seemed to have been finished by great victories;

and of wars that time after time were brought to an end by great

slaughters, and which yet time after time were renewed by the posterity

of those who had made peace and struck treaties? Of this calamitous

history we have no small proof, in the fact that no subsequent king

closed the gates of war; and therefore with all their tutelar gods, no

one of them reigned in peace.

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[142] �neid, x. 821, of Lausus: "But when Anchises' son surveyed The

fair, fair face so ghastly made, He groaned, by tenderness unmanned,

And stretched the sympathizing hand," etc.

[143] Virgil, �neid, vi. 813.

[144] Sallust, Cat. Conj. ii.

[145] Ps. x. 3.

[146] �neid, ii. 351-2.

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Chapter 15.--What Manner of Life and Death the Roman Kings Had.

And what was the end of the kings themselves? Of Romulus, a flattering

legend tells us that he was assumed into heaven. But certain Roman

historians relate that he was torn in pieces by the senate for his

ferocity, and that a man, Julius Proculus, was suborned to give out

that Romulus had appeared to him, and through him commanded the Roman

people to worship him as a god; and that in this way the people, who

were beginning to resent the action of the senate, were quieted and

pacified. For an eclipse of the sun had also happened; and this was

attributed to the divine power of Romulus by the ignorant multitude,

who did not know that it was brought about by the fixed laws of the

sun's course: though this grief of the sun might rather have been

considered proof that Romulus had been slain, and that the crime was

indicated by this deprivation of the sun's light; as, in truth, was the

case when the Lord was crucified through the cruelty and impiety of the

Jews. For it is sufficiently demonstrated that this latter obscuration

of the sun did not occur by the natural laws of the heavenly bodies,

because it was then the Jewish Passover, which is held only at full

moon, whereas natural eclipses of the sun happen only at the last

quarter of the moon. Cicero, too, shows plainly enough that the

apotheosis of Romulus was imaginary rather than real, when, even while

he is praising him in one of Scipio's remarks in the De Republica, he

says: "Such a reputation had he acquired, that when he suddenly

disappeared during an eclipse of the sun, he was supposed to have been

assumed into the number of the gods, which could be supposed of no

mortal who had not the highest reputation for virtue." [147] By these

words, "he suddenly disappeared," we are to understand that he was

mysteriously made away with by the violence either of the tempest or of

a murderous assault. For their other writers speak not only of an

eclipse, but of a sudden storm also, which certainly either afforded

opportunity for the crime, or itself made an end of Romulus. And of

Tullus Hostilius, who was the third king of Rome, and who was himself

destroyed by lightning, Cicero in the same book says, that "he was not

supposed to have been deified by this death, possibly because the

Romans were unwilling to vulgarize the promotion they were assured or

persuaded of in the case of Romulus, lest they should bring it into

contempt by gratuitously assigning it to all and sundry." In one of

his invectives, [148] too, he says, in round terms, "The founder of

this city, Romulus, we have raised to immortality and divinity by

kindly celebrating his services;" implying that his deification was not

real, but reputed, and called so by courtesy on account of his

virtues. In the dialogue Hortensius, too, while speaking of the

regular eclipses of the sun, he says that they "produce the same

darkness as covered the death of Romulus, which happened during an

eclipse of the sun." Here you see he does not at all shrink from

speaking of his "death," for Cicero was more of a reasoner than an

eulogist.

The other kings of Rome, too, with the exception of Numa Pompilius and

Ancus Marcius, who died natural deaths, what horrible ends they had!

Tullus Hostilius, the conqueror and destroyer of Alba, was, as I said,

himself and all his house consumed by lightning. Priscus Tarquinius

was slain by his predecessor's sons. Servius Tullius was foully

murdered by his son-in-law Tarquinius Superbus, who succeeded him on

the throne. Nor did so flagrant a parricide committed against Rome's

best king drive from their altars and shrines those gods who were said

to have been moved by Paris' adultery to treat poor Troy in this style,

and abandon it to the fire and sword of the Greeks. Nay, the very

Tarquin who had murdered, was allowed to succeed his father-in-law.

And this infamous parricide, during the reign he had secured by murder,

was allowed to triumph in many victorious wars, and to build the

Capitol from their spoils; the gods meanwhile not departing, but

abiding, and abetting, and suffering their king Jupiter to preside and

reign over them in that very splendid Capitol, the work of a

parricide. For he did not build the Capitol in the days of his

innocence, and then suffer banishment for subsequent crimes; but to

that reign during which he built the Capitol, he won his way by

unnatural crime. And when he was afterwards banished by the Romans,

and forbidden the city, it was not for his own but his son's wickedness

in the affair of Lucretia,--a crime perpetrated not only without his

cognizance, but in his absence. For at that time he was besieging

Ardea, and fighting Rome's battles; and we cannot say what he would

have done had he been aware of his son's crime. Notwithstanding,

though his opinion was neither inquired into nor ascertained, the

people stripped him of royalty; and when he returned to Rome with his

army, it was admitted, but he was excluded, abandoned by his troops,

and the gates shut in his face. And yet, after he had appealed to the

neighboring states, and tormented the Romans with calamitous but

unsuccessful wars, and when he was deserted by the ally on whom he most

depended, despairing of regaining the kingdom, he lived a retired and

quiet life for fourteen years, as it is reported, in Tusculum, a Roman

town, where he grew old in his wife's company, and at last terminated

his days in a much more desirable fashion than his father-in-law, who

had perished by the hand of his son-in-law; his own daughter abetting,

if report be true. And this Tarquin the Romans called, not the Cruel,

nor the Infamous, but the Proud; their own pride perhaps resenting his

tyrannical airs. So little did they make of his murdering their best

king, his own father-in-law, that they elected him their own king. I

wonder if it was not even more criminal in them to reward so

bountifully so great a criminal. And yet there was no word of the gods

abandoning the altars; unless, perhaps, some one will say in defence of

the gods, that they remained at Rome for the purpose of punishing the

Romans, rather than of aiding and profiting them, seducing them by

empty victories, and wearing them out by severe wars. Such was the

life of the Romans under the kings during the much-praised epoch of the

state which extends to the expulsion of Tarquinius Superbus in the 243d

year, during which all those victories, which were bought with so much

blood and such disasters, hardly pushed Rome's dominion twenty miles

from the city; a territory which would by no means bear comparison with

that of any petty G�tulian state.

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[147] Cicero, De Rep. ii. 10.

[148] Contra Cat.iii. 2.

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Chapter 16.--Of the First Roman Consuls, the One of Whom Drove the

Other from the Country, and Shortly After Perished at Rome by the Hand

of a Wounded Enemy, and So Ended a Career of Unnatural Murders.

To this epoch let us add also that of which Sallust says, that it was

ordered with justice and moderation, while the fear of Tarquin and of a

war with Etruria was impending. For so long as the Etrurians aided the

efforts of Tarquin to regain the throne, Rome was convulsed with

distressing war. And therefore he says that the state was ordered with

justice and moderation, through the pressure of fear, not through the

influence of equity. And in this very brief period, how calamitous a

year was that in which consuls were first created, when the kingly

power was abolished! They did not fulfill their term of office. For

Junius Brutus deprived his colleague Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus, and

banished him from the city; and shortly after he himself fell in

battle, at once slaying and slain, having formerly put to death his own

sons and his brothers-in-law, because he had discovered that they were

conspiring to restore Tarquin. It is this deed that Virgil shudders to

record, even while he seems to praise it; for when he says:

"And call his own rebellious seed

For menaced liberty to bleed,"

he immediately exclaims,

"Unhappy father! howsoe'er

The deed be judged by after days;"

that is to say, let posterity judge the deed as they please, let them

praise and extol the father who slew his sons, he is unhappy. And then

he adds, as if to console so unhappy a man:

"His country's love shall all o'erbear,

And unextinguished thirst of praise." [149]

In the tragic end of Brutus, who slew his own sons, and though he slew

his enemy, Tarquin's son, yet could not survive him, but was survived

by Tarquin the elder, does not the innocence of his colleague

Collatinus seem to be vindicated, who, though a good citizen, suffered

the same punishment as Tarquin himself, when that tyrant was banished?

For Brutus himself is said to have been a relative [150] of Tarquin.

But Collatinus had the misfortune to bear not only the blood, but the

name of Tarquin. To change his name, then, not his country, would have

been his fit penalty: to abridge his name by this word, and be called

simply L. Collatinus. But he was not com pelled to lose what he could

lose without detriment, but was stripped of the honor of the first

consulship, and was banished from the land he loved. Is this, then,

the glory of Brutus--this injustice, alike detestable and profitless to

the republic? Was it to this he was driven by "his country's love, and

unextinguished thirst of praise?"

When Tarquin the tyrant was expelled, L. Tarquinius Collatinus, the

husband of Lucretia, was created consul along with Brutus. How justly

the people acted, in looking more to the character than the name of a

citizen! How unjustly Brutus acted, in depriving of honor and country

his colleague in that new office, whom he might have deprived of his

name, if it were so offensive to him! Such were the ills, such the

disasters, which fell out when the government was "ordered with justice

and moderation." Lucretius, too, who succeeded Brutus, was carried off

by disease before the end of that same year. So P. Valerius, who

succeeded Collatinus, and M. Horatius, who filled the vacancy

occasioned by the death of Lucretius, completed that disastrous and

funereal year, which had five consuls. Such was the year in which the

Roman republic inaugurated the new honor and office of the consulship.

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[149] �neid, vi. 820, etc.

[150] His nephew.

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Chapter 17.--Of the Disasters Which Vexed the Roman Republic After the

Inauguration of the Consulship, and of the Non-Intervention of the Gods

of Rome.

After this, when their fears were gradually diminished,--not because

the wars ceased, but because they were not so furious,--that period in

which things were "ordered with justice and moderation" drew to an end,

and there followed that state of matters which Sallust thus briefly

sketches: "Then began the patricians to oppress the people as slaves,

to condemn them to death or scourging, as the kings had done, to drive

them from their holdings, and to tyrannize over those who had no

property to lose. The people, overwhelmed by these oppressive

measures, and most of all by usury, and obliged to contribute both

money and personal service to the constant wars, at length took arms

and seceded to Mount Aventine and Mount Sacer, and thus secured for

themselves tribunes and protective laws. But it was only the second

Punic war that put an end on both sides to discord and strife." [151]

But why should I spend time in writing such things, or make others

spend it in reading them? Let the terse summary of Sallust suffice to

intimate the misery of the republic through all that long period till

the second Punic war,--how it was distracted from without by unceasing

wars, and torn with civil broils and dissensions. So that those

victories they boast were not the substantial joys of the happy, but

the empty comforts of wretched men, and seductive incitements to

turbulent men to concoct disasters upon disasters. And let not the

good and prudent Romans be angry at our saying this; and indeed we need

neither deprecate nor denounce their anger, for we know they will

harbor none. For we speak no more severely than their own authors, and

much less elaborately and strikingly; yet they diligently read these

authors, and compel their children to learn them. But they who are

angry, what would they do to me were I to say what Sallust says?

"Frequent mobs, seditions, and at last civil wars, became common, while

a few leading men on whom the masses were dependent, affected supreme

power under the seemly pretence of seeking the good of senate and

people; citizens were judged good or bad without reference to their

loyalty to the republic (for all were equally corrupt); but the wealthy

and dangerously powerful were esteemed good citizens, because they

maintained the existing state of things." Now, if those historians

judged that an honorable freedom of speech required that they should

not be silent regarding the blemishes of their own state, which they

have in many places loudly applauded in their ignorance of that other

and true city in which citizenship is an everlasting dignity; what does

it become us to do, whose liberty ought to be so much greater, as our

hope in God is better and more assured, when they impute to our Christ

the calamities of this age, in order that men of the less instructed

and weaker sort may be alienated from that city in which alone eternal

and blessed life can be enjoyed? Nor do we utter against their gods

anything more horrible than their own authors do, whom they read and

circulate. For, indeed, all that we have said we have derived from

them, and there is much more to say of a worse kind which we are unable

to say.

Where, then, were those gods who are supposed to be justly worshipped

for the slender and delusive prosperity of this world, when the Romans,

who were seduced to their service by lying wiles, were harassed by such

calamities? Where were they when Valerius the consul was killed while

defending the Capitol, that had been fired by exiles and slaves? He

was himself better able to defend the temple of Jupiter, than that

crowd of divinities with their most high and mighty king, whose temple

he came to the rescue of were able to defend him. Where were they when

the city, worn out with unceasing seditions, was waiting in some kind

of calm for the return of the ambassadors who had been sent to Athens

to borrow laws, and was desolated by dreadful famine and pestilence?

Where were they when the people, again distressed with famine, created

for the first time a prefect of the market; and when Spurius Melius,

who, as the famine increased, distributed corn to the famishing masses,

was accused of aspiring to royalty, and at the instance of this same

prefect, and on the authority of the superannuated dictator L.

Quintius, was put to death by Quintus Servilius, master of the

horse,--an event which occasioned a serious and dangerous riot? Where

were they when that very severe pestilence visited Rome, on account of

which the people, after long and wearisome and useless supplications of

the helpless gods, conceived the idea of celebrating Lectisternia,

which had never been done before; that is to say, they set couches in

honor of the gods, which accounts for the name of this sacred rite, or

rather sacrilege? [152] Where were they when, during ten successive

years of reverses, the Roman army suffered frequent and great losses

among the Veians and would have been destroyed but for the succor of

Furius Camillus, who was afterwards banished by an ungrateful country?

Where were they when the Gauls took, sacked, burned, and desolated

Rome? Where were they when that memorable pestilence wrought such

destruction, in which Furius Camillus too perished, who first defended

the ungrateful republic from the Veians, and afterwards saved it from

the Gauls? Nay, during this plague, they introduced a new pestilence

of scenic entertainments, which spread its more fatal contagion, not to

the bodies, but the morals of the Romans? Where were they when another

frightful pestilence visited the city--I mean the poisonings imputed to

an incredible number of noble Roman matrons, whose characters were

infected with a disease more fatal than any plague? Or when both

consuls at the head of the army were beset by the Samnites in the

Caudine Forks, and forced to strike a shameful treaty, 600 Roman

knights being kept as hostages; while the troops, having laid down

their arms, and being stripped of everything, were made to pass under

the yoke with one garment each? Or when, in the midst of a serious

pestilence, lightning struck the Roman camp and killed many? Or when

Rome was driven, by the violence of another intolerable plague, to send

to Epidaurus for �sculapius as a god of medicine; since the frequent

adulteries of Jupiter in his youth had not perhaps left this king of

all who so long reigned in the Capitol, any leisure for the study of

medicine? Or when, at one time, the Lucanians, Brutians, Samnites,

Tuscans, and Senonian Gauls conspired against Rome, and first slew her

ambassadors, then overthrew an army under the pr�tor, putting to the

sword 13,000 men, besides the commander and seven tribunes? Or when

the people, after the serious and long-continued disturbances at Rome,

at last plundered the city and withdrew to Janiculus; a danger so

grave, that Hortensius was created dictator,--an office which they had

recourse to only in extreme emergencies; and he, having brought back

the people, died while yet he retained his office,--an event without

precedent in the case of any dictator, and which was a shame to those

gods who had now �sculapius among them?

At that time, indeed, so many wars were everywhere engaged in, that

through scarcity of soldiers they enrolled for military service the

proletarii, who received this name, because, being too poor to equip

for military service, they had leisure to beget offspring. [153]

Pyrrhus, king of Greece, and at that time of widespread renown, was

invited by the Tarentines to enlist himself against Rome. It was to

him that Apollo, when consulted regarding the issue of his enterprise,

uttered with some pleasantry so ambiguous an oracle, that whichever

alternative happened, the god himself should be counted divine. For he

so worded the oracle [154] that whether Pyrrhus was conquered by the

Romans, or the Romans by Pyrrhus, the soothsaying god would securely

await the issue. And then what frightful massacres of both armies

ensued! Yet Pyrrhus remained conqueror, and would have been able now

to proclaim Apollo a true diviner, as he understood the oracle, had not

the Romans been the conquerors in the next engagement. And while such

disastrous wars were being waged, a terrible disease broke out among

the women. For the pregnant women died before delivery. And

�sculapius, I fancy, excused himself in this matter on the ground that

he professed to be arch-physician, not midwife. Cattle, too, similarly

perished; so that it was believed that the whole race of animals was

destined to become extinct. Then what shall I say of that memorable

winter in which the weather was so incredibly severe, that in the Forum

frightfully deep snow lay for forty days together, and the Tiber was

frozen? Had such things happened in our time, what accusations we

should have heard from our enemies! And that other great pestilence,

which raged so long and carried off so many; what shall I say of it?

Spite of all the drugs of �sculapius, it only grew worse in its second

year, till at last recourse was had to the Sibylline books,--a kind of

oracle which, as Cicero says in his De Divinatione, owes significance

to its interpreters, who make doubtful conjectures as they can or as

they wish. In this instance, the cause of the plague was said to be

that so many temples had been used as private residences. And thus

�sculapius for the present escaped the charge of either ignominious

negligence or want of skill. But why were so many allowed to occupy

sacred tenements without interference, unless because supplication had

long been addressed in vain to such a crowd of gods, and so by degrees

the sacred places were deserted of worshippers, and being thus vacant,

could without offence be put at least to some human uses? And the

temples, which were at that time laboriously recognized and restored

that the plague might be stayed, fell afterwards into disuse, and were

again devoted to the same human uses. Had they not thus lapsed into

obscurity, it could not have been pointed to as proof of Varro's great

erudition, that in his work on sacred places he cites so many that were

unknown. Meanwhile, the restoration of the temples procured no cure of

the plague, but only a fine excuse for the gods.

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[151] Hist. i.

[152] Lectisternia, from lectus, and sterno, I spread.

[153] Proletarius, from proles, offspring.

[154] The oracle ran: "Dico te, Pyrrhe, vincere posse Romanos."

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Chapter 18.--The Disasters Suffered by the Romans in the Punic Wars,

Which Were Not Mitigated by the Protection of the Gods.

In the Punic wars, again, when victory hung so long in the balance

between the two kingdoms, when two powerful nations were straining

every nerve and using all their resources against one another, how many

smaller kingdoms were crushed, how many large and flourishing cities

were demolished, how many states were overwhelmed and ruined, how many

districts and lands far and near were desolated! How often were the

victors on either side vanquished! What multitudes of men, both of

those actually in arms and of others, were destroyed! What huge

navies, too, were crippled in engagements, or were sunk by every kind

of marine disaster! Were we to attempt to recount or mention these

calamities, we should become writers of history. At that period Rome

was mightily perturbed, and resorted to vain and ludicrous expedients.

On the authority of the Sibylline books, the secular games were

re-appointed, which had been inaugurated a century before, but had

faded into oblivion in happier times. The games consecrated to the

infernal gods were also renewed by the pontiffs; for they, too, had

sunk into disuse in the better times. And no wonder; for when they

were renewed, the great abundance of dying men made all hell rejoice at

its riches, and give itself up to sport: for certainly the ferocious

wars, and disastrous quarrels, and bloody victories--now on one side,

and now on the other--though most calamitous to men, afforded great

sport and a rich banquet to the devils. But in the first Punic war

there was no more disastrous event than the Roman defeat in which

Regulus was taken. We made mention of him in the two former books as

an incontestably great man, who had before conquered and subdued the

Carthaginians, and who would have put an end to the first Punic war,

had not an inordinate appetite for praise and glory prompted him to

impose on the worn-out Carthagians harder conditions than they could

bear. If the unlooked-for captivity and unseemly bondage of this man,

his fidelity to his oath, and his surpassingly cruel death, do not

bring a blush to the face of the gods, it is true that they are brazen

and bloodless.

Nor were there wanting at that time very heavy disasters within the

city itself. For the Tiber was extraordinarily flooded, and destroyed

almost all the lower parts of the city; some buildings being carried

away by the violence of the torrent, while others were soaked to

rottenness by the water that stood round them even after the flood was

gone. This visitation was followed by a fire which was still more

destructive, for it consumed some of the loftier buildings round the

Forum, and spared not even its own proper temple, that of Vesta, in

which virgins chosen for this honor, or rather for this punishment, had

been employed in conferring, as it were, everlasting life on fire, by

ceaselessly feeding it with fresh fuel. But at the time we speak of,

the fire in the temple was not content with being kept alive: it

raged. And when the virgins, scared by its vehemence, were unable to

save those fatal images which had already brought destruction on three

cities [155] in which they had been received, Metellus the priest,

forgetful of his own safety, rushed in and res cued the sacred things,

though he was half roasted in doing so. For either the fire did not

recognize even him, or else the goddess of fire was there,--a goddess

who would not have fled from the fire supposing she had been there.

But here you see how a man could be of greater service to Vesta than

she could be to him. Now if these gods could not avert the fire from

themselves, what help against flames or flood could they bring to the

state of which they were the reputed guardians? Facts have shown that

they were useless. These objections of ours would be idle if our

adversaries maintained that their idols are consecrated rather as

symbols of things eternal, than to secure the blessings of time; and

that thus, though the symbols, like all material and visible things,

might perish, no damage thereby resulted to the things for the sake of

which they had been consecrated, while, as for the images themselves,

they could be renewed again for the same purposes they had formerly

served. But with lamentable blindness, they suppose that, through the

intervention of perishable gods, the earthly well-being and temporal

prosperity of the state can be preserved from perishing. And so, when

they are reminded that even when the gods remained among them this

well-being and prosperity were blighted, they blush to change the

opinion they are unable to defend.

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[155] Troy, Lavinia, Alba.

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Chapter 19.--Of the Calamity of the Second Punic War, Which Consumed

the Strength of Both Parties.

As to the second Punic war, it were tedious to recount the disasters it

brought on both the nations engaged in so protracted and shifting a

war, that (by the acknowledgment even of those writers who have made it

their object not so much to narrate the wars as to eulogize the

dominion of Rome) the people who remained victorious were less like

conquerors than conquered. For, when Hannibal poured out of Spain over

the Pyrenees, and overran Gaul, and burst through the Alps, and during

his whole course gathered strength by plundering and subduing as he

went, and inundated Italy like a torrent, how bloody were the wars, and

how continuous the engagements, that were fought! How often were the

Romans vanquished! How many towns went over to the enemy, and how many

were taken and subdued! What fearful battles there were, and how often

did the defeat of the Romans shed lustre on the arms of Hannibal! And

what shall I say of the wonderfully crushing defeat at Cann�, where

even Hannibal, cruel as he was, was yet sated with the blood of his

bitterest enemies, and gave orders that they be spared? From this

field of battle he sent to Carthage three bushels of gold rings,

signifying that so much of the rank of Rome had that day fallen, that

it was easier to give an idea of it by measure than by numbers and that

the frightful slaughter of the common rank and file whose bodies lay

undistinguished by the ring, and who were numerous in proportion to

their meanness, was rather to be conjectured than accurately reported.

In fact, such was the scarcity of soldiers after this, that the Romans

impressed their criminals on the promise of impunity, and their slaves

by the bribe of liberty, and out of these infamous classes did not so

much recruit as create an army. But these slaves, or, to give them all

their titles, these freed-men who were enlisted to do battle for the

republic of Rome, lacked arms. And so they took arms from the temples,

as if the Romans were saying to their gods: Lay down those arms you

have held so long in vain, if by chance our slaves may be able to use

to purpose what you, our gods, have been impotent to use. At that

time, too, the public treasury was too low to pay the soldiers, and

private resources were used for public purposes; and so generously did

individuals contribute of their property, that, saving the gold ring

and bulla which each wore, the pitiful mark of his rank, no senator,

and much less any of the other orders and tribes, reserved any gold for

his own use. But if in our day they were reduced to this poverty, who

would be able to endure their reproaches, barely endurable as they are

now, when more money is spent on actors for the sake of a superfluous

gratification, than was then disbursed to the legions?

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Chapter 20.--Of the Destruction of the Saguntines, Who Received No Help

from the Roman Gods, Though Perishing on Account of Their Fidelity to

Rome.

But among all the disasters of the second Punic war, there occurred

none more lamentable, or calculated to excite deeper complaint, than

the fate of the Saguntines. This city of Spain, eminently friendly to

Rome, was destroyed by its fidelity to the Roman people. For when

Hannibal had broken treaty with the Romans, he sought occasion for

provoking them to war, and accordingly made a fierce assault upon

Saguntum. When this was reported at Rome, ambassadors were sent to

Hannibal, urging him to raise the siege; and when this remonstrance was

neglected, they proceeded to Carthage, lodged complaint against the

breaking of the treaty, and returned to Rome without accomplishing

their object. Meanwhile the siege went on; and in the eighth or ninth

month, this opulent but ill-fated city, dear as it was to its own state

and to Rome, was taken, and subjected to treatment which one cannot

read, much less narrate, without horror. And yet, because it bears

directly on the matter in hand, I will briefly touch upon it. First,

then, famine wasted the Saguntines, so that even human corpses were

eaten by some: so at least it is recorded. Subsequently, when

thoroughly worn out, that they might at least escape the ignominy of

falling into the hands of Hannibal, they publicly erected a huge

funeral pile, and cast themselves into its flames, while at the same

time they slew their children and themselves with the sword. Could

these gods, these debauchees and gourmands, whose mouths water for fat

sacrifices, and whose lips utter lying divinations,--could they not do

anything in a case like this? Could they not interfere for the

preservation of a city closely allied to the Roman people, or prevent

it perishing for its fidelity to that alliance of which they themselves

had been the mediators? Saguntum, faithfully keeping the treaty it had

entered into before these gods, and to which it had firmly bound itself

by an oath, was besieged, taken, and destroyed by a perjured person.

If afterwards, when Hannibal was close to the walls of Rome, it was the

gods who terrified him with lightning and tempest, and drove him to a

distance, why, I ask, did they not thus interfere before? For I make

bold to say, that this demonstration with the tempest would have been

more honorably made in defence of the allies of Rome--who were in

danger on account of their reluctance to break faith with the Romans,

and had no resources of their own--than in defence of the Romans

themselves, who were fighting in their own cause, and had abundant

resources to oppose Hannibal. If, then, they had been the guardians of

Roman prosperity and glory, they would have preserved that glory from

the stain of this Saguntine disaster; and how silly it is to believe

that Rome was preserved from destruction at the hands of Hannibal by

the guardian care of those gods who were unable to rescue the city of

Saguntum from perishing through its fidelity to the alliance of Rome.

If the population of Saguntum had been Christian, and had suffered as

it did for the Christian faith (though, of course, Christians would not

have used fire and sword against their own persons), they would have

suffered with that hope which springs from faith in Christ--the hope

not of a brief temporal reward, but of unending and eternal bliss.

What, then, will the advocates and apologists of these gods say in

their defence, when charged with the blood of these Saguntines; for

they are professedly worshipped and invoked for this very purpose of

securing prosperity in this fleeting and transitory life? Can anything

be said but what was alleged in the case of Regulus' death? For though

there is a difference between the two cases, the one being an

individual, the other a whole community, yet the cause of destruction

was in both cases the keeping of their plighted troth. For it was this

which made Regulus willing to return to his enemies, and this which

made the Saguntines unwilling to revolt to their enemies. Does, then,

the keeping of faith provoke the gods to anger? Or is it possible that

not only individuals, but even entire communities, perish while the

gods are propitious to them? Let our adversaries choose which

alternative they will. If, on the one hand, those gods are enraged at

the keeping of faith, let them enlist perjured persons as their

worshippers. If, on the other hand, men and states can suffer great

and terrible calamities, and at last perish while favored by the gods,

then does their worship not produce happiness as its fruit. Let those,

therefore, who suppose that they have fallen into distress because

their religious worship has been abolished, lay aside their anger; for

it were quite possible that did the gods not only remain with them, but

regard them with favor, they might yet be left to mourn an unhappy lot,

or might, even like Regulus and the Saguntines, be horribly tormented,

and at last perish miserably.

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Chapter 21.--Of the Ingratitude of Rome to Scipio, Its Deliverer, and

of Its Manners During the Period Which Sallust Describes as the Best.

Omitting many things, that I may not exceed the limits of the work I

have proposed to myself, I come to the epoch between the second and

last Punic wars, during which, according to Sallust, the Romans lived

with the greatest virtue and concord. Now, in this period of virtue

and harmony, the great Scipio, the liberator of Rome and Italy, who had

with surprising ability brought to a close the second Punic war--that

horrible, destructive, dangerous contest--who had defeated Hannibal and

subdued Carthage, and whose whole life is said to have been dedicated

to the gods, and cherished in their temples,--this Scipio, after such a

triumph, was obliged to yield to the accusations of his enemies, and to

leave his country, which his valor had saved and liberated, to spend

the remainder of his days in the town of Liternum, so indifferent to a

recall from exile, that he is said to have given orders that not even

his remains should lie in his ungrateful country. It was at that time

also that the pro-consul Cn. Manlius, after subduing the Galatians,

introduced into Rome the luxury of Asia, more destructive than all

hostile armies. It was then that iron bedsteads and expensive carpets

were first used; then, too, that female singers were admitted at

banquets, and other licentious abominations were introduced. But at

present I meant to speak, not of the evils men voluntarily practise,

but of those they suffer in spite of themselves. So that the case of

Scipio, who succumbed to his enemies, and died in exile from the

country he had rescued, was mentioned by me as being pertinent to the

present discussion; for this was the reward he received from those

Roman gods whose temples he saved from Hannibal, and who are worshipped

only for the sake of securing temporal happiness. But since Sallust,

as we have seen, declares that the manners of Rome were never better

than at that time, I therefore judged it right to mention the Asiatic

luxury then introduced, that it might be seen that what he says is

true, only when that period is compared with the others during which

the morals were certainly worse, and the factions more violent. For at

that time--I mean between the second and third Punic war--that

notorious Lex Voconia was passed, which prohibited a man from making a

woman, even an only daughter, his heir; than which law I am at a loss

to conceive what could be more unjust. It is true that in the interval

between these two Punic wars the misery of Rome was somewhat less.

Abroad, indeed, their forces were consumed by wars, yet also consoled

by victories; while at home there were not such disturbances as at

other times. But when the last Punic war had terminated in the utter

destruction of Rome's rival, which quickly succumbed to the other

Scipio, who thus earned for himself the surname of Africanus, then the

Roman republic was overwhelmed with such a host of ills, which sprang

from the corrupt manners induced by prosperity and security, that the

sudden overthrow of Carthage is seen to have injured Rome more

seriously than her long-continued hostility. During the whole

subsequent period down to the time of C�sar Augustus, who seems to have

entirely deprived the Romans of liberty,--a liberty, indeed, which in

their own judgment was no longer glorious, but full of broils and

dangers, and which now was quite enervated and languishing,--and who

submitted all things again to the will of a monarch, and infused as it

were a new life into the sickly old age of the republic, and

inaugurated a fresh r�gime;--during this whole period, I say, many

military disasters were sustained on a variety of occasions, all of

which I here pass by. There was specially the treaty of Numantia,

blotted as it was with extreme disgrace; for the sacred chickens, they

say, flew out of the coop, and thus augured disaster to Mancinus the

consul; just as if, during all these years in which that little city of

Numantia had withstood the besieging army of Rome, and had become a

terror to the republic, the other generals had all marched against it

under unfavorable auspices.

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Chapter 22.--Of the Edict of Mithridates, Commanding that All Roman

Citizens Found in Asia Should Be Slain.

These things, I say, I pass in silence; but I can by no means be silent

regarding the order given by Mithridates, king of Asia, that on one day

all Roman citizens residing anywhere in Asia (where great numbers of

them were following their private business) should be put to death:

and this order was executed. How miserable a spectacle was then

presented, when each man was suddenly and treacherously murdered

wherever he happened to be, in the field or on the road, in the town,

in his own home, or in the street, in market or temple, in bed or at

table! Think of the groans of the dying, the tears of the spectators,

and even of the executioners themselves. For how cruel a necessity was

it that compelled the hosts of these victims, not only to see these

abominable butcheries in their own houses, but even to perpetrate

them: to change their countenance suddenly from the bland kindliness

of friendship, and in the midst of peace set about the business of war;

and, shall I say, give and receive wounds, the slain being pierced in

body, the slayer in spirit! Had all these murdered persons, then,

despised auguries? Had they neither public nor household gods to

consult when they left their homes and set out on that fatal journey?

If they had not, our adversaries have no reason to complain of these

Christian times in this particular, since long ago the Romans despised

auguries as idle. If, on the other hand, they did consult omens, let

them tell us what good they got thereby, even when such things were not

prohibited, but authorized, by human, if not by divine law.

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Chapter 23.--Of the Internal Disasters Which Vexed the Roman Republic,

and Followed a Portentous Madness Which Seized All the Domestic

Animals.

But let us now mention, as succinctly as possible, those disasters

which were still more vexing, because nearer home; I mean those

discords which are erroneously called civil, since they destroy civil

interests. The seditions had now become urban wars, in which blood was

freely shed, and in which parties raged against one another, not with

wrangling and verbal contention, but with physical force and arms.

What a sea of Roman blood was shed, what desolations and devastations

were occasioned in Italy by wars social, wars servile, wars civil!

Before the Latins began the social war against Rome, all the animals

used in the service of man--dogs, horses, asses, oxen, and all the rest

that are subject to man--suddenly grew wild, and forgot their

domesticated tameness, forsook their stalls and wandered at large, and

could not be closely approached either by strangers or their own

masters without danger. If this was a portent, how serious a calamity

must have been portended by a plague which, whether portent or no, was

in itself a serious calamity! Had it happened in our day, the heathen

would have been more rabid against us than their animals were against

them.

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Chapter 24.--Of the Civil Dissension Occasioned by the Sedition of the

Gracchi.

The civil wars originated in the seditions which the Gracchi excited

regarding the agrarian laws; for they were minded to divide among the

people the lands which were wrongfully possessed by the nobility. But

to reform an abuse of so long standing was an enterprise full of peril,

or rather, as the event proved, of destruction. For what disasters

accompanied the death of the older Gracchus! what slaughter ensued

when, shortly after, the younger brother met the same fate! For noble

and ignoble were indiscriminately massacred; and this not by legal

authority and procedure, but by mobs and armed rioters. After the

death of the younger Gracchus, the consul Lucius Opimius, who had given

battle to him within the city, and had defeated and put to the sword

both himself and his confederates, and had massacred many of the

citizens, instituted a judicial examination of others, and is reported

to have put to death as many as 3000 men. From this it may be gathered

how many fell in the riotous encounters, when the result even of a

judicial investigation was so bloody. The assassin of Gracchus himself

sold his head to the consul for its weight in gold, such being the

previous agreement. In this massacre, too, Marcus Fulvius, a man of

consular rank, with all his children, was put to death.

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Chapter 25.--Of the Temple of Concord, Which Was Erected by a Decree of

the Senate on the Scene of These Seditions and Massacres.

A pretty decree of the senate it was, truly, by which the temple of

Concord was built on the spot where that disastrous rising had taken

place, and where so many citizens of every rank had fallen. [156] I

suppose it was that the monument of the Gracchi's punishment might

strike the eye and affect the memory of the pleaders. But what was

this but to deride the gods, by building a temple to that goddess who,

had she been in the city, would not have suffered herself to be torn by

such dissensions? Or was it that Concord was chargeable with that

bloodshed because she had deserted the minds of the citizens, and was

therefore incarcerated in that temple? For if they had any regard to

consistency, why did they not rather erect on that site a temple of

Discord? Or is there a reason for Concord being a goddess while

Discord is none? Does the distinction of Labeo hold here, who would

have made the one a good, the other an evil deity?--a distinction which

seems to have been suggested to him by the mere fact of his observing

at Rome a temple to Fever as well as one to Health. But, on the same

ground, Discord as well as Concord ought to be deified. A hazardous

venture the Romans made in provoking so wicked a goddess, and in

forgetting that the destruction of Troy had been occasioned by her

taking offence. For, being indignant that she was not invited with the

other gods [to the nuptials of Peleus and Thetis], she created

dissension among the three goddesses by sending in the golden apple,

which occasioned strife in heaven, victory to Venus, the rape of Helen,

and the destruction of Troy. Wherefore, if she was perhaps offended

that the Romans had not thought her worthy of a temple among the other

gods in their city, and therefore disturbed the state with such

tumults, to how much fiercer passion would she be roused when she saw

the temple of her adversary erected on the scene of that massacre, or,

in other words, on the scene of her own handiwork! Those wise and

learned men are enraged at our laughing at these follies; and yet,

being worshippers of good and bad divinities alike, they cannot escape

this dilemma about Concord and Discord: either they have neglected the

worship of these goddesses, and preferred Fever and War, to whom there

are shrines erected of great antiquity, or they have worshipped them,

and after all Concord has abandoned them, and Discord has tempestuously

hurled them into civil wars.

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[156] Under the inscription on the temple some person wrote the line,

"Vecordi� opus �dem facit Concordi�."--The work of discord makes the

temple of Concord.

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Chapter 26.--Of the Various Kinds of Wars Which Followed the Building

of the Temple of Concord.

But they supposed that, in erecting the temple of Concord within the

view of the orators, as a memorial of the punishment and death of the

Gracchi, they were raising an effectual obstacle to sedition. How much

effect it had, is indicated by the still more deplorable wars that

followed. For after this the orators endeavored not to avoid the

example of the Gracchi, but to surpass their projects; as did Lucius

Saturninus, a tribune of the people, and Caius Servilius the pr�tor,

and some time after Marcus Drusus, all of whom stirred seditions which

first of all occasioned bloodshed, and then the social wars by which

Italy was grievously injured, and reduced to a piteously desolate and

wasted condition. Then followed the servile war and the civil wars;

and in them what battles were fought, and what blood was shed, so that

almost all the peoples of Italy, which formed the main strength of the

Roman empire, were conquered as if they were barbarians! Then even

historians themselves find it difficult to explain how the servile war

was begun by a very few, certainly less than seventy gladiators, what

numbers of fierce and cruel men attached themselves to these, how many

of the Roman generals this band defeated, and how it laid waste many

districts and cities. And that was not the only servile war: the

province of Macedonia, and subsequently Sicily and the sea-coast, were

also depopulated by bands of slaves. And who can adequately describe

either the horrible atrocities which the pirates first committed, or

the wars they afterwards maintained against Rome?

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Chapter 27.--Of the Civil War Between Marius and Sylla.

But when Marius, stained with the blood of his fellow-citizens, whom

the rage of party had sacrificed, was in his turn vanquished and driven

from the city, it had scarcely time to breathe freely, when, to use the

words of Cicero, "Cinna and Marius together returned and took

possession of it. Then, indeed, the foremost men in the state were put

to death, its lights quenched. Sylla afterwards avenged this cruel

victory; but we need not say with what loss of life, and with what ruin

to the republic." [157] For of this vengeance, which was more

destructive than if the crimes which it punished had been committed

with impunity, Lucan says: "The cure was excessive, and too closely

resembled the disease. The guilty perished, but when none but the

guilty survived: and then private hatred and anger, unbridled by law,

were allowed free indulgence." [158] In that war between Marius and

Sylla, besides those who fell in the field of battle, the city, too,

was filled with corpses in its streets, squares, markets, theatres, and

temples; so that it is not easy to reckon whether the victors slew more

before or after victory, that they might be, or because they were,

victors. As soon as Marius triumphed, and returned from exile, besides

the butcheries everywhere perpetrated, the head of the consul Octavius

was exposed on the rostrum; C�sar and Fimbria were assassinated in

their own houses; the two Crassi, father and son, were murdered in one

another's sight; Bebius and Numitorius were disembowelled by being

dragged with hooks; Catulus escaped the hands of his enemies by

drinking poison; Merula, the flamen of Jupiter, cut his veins and made

a libation of his own blood to his god. Moreover, every one whose

salutation Marius did not answer by giving his hand, was at once cut

down before his face.

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[157] Cicero, in Catilin, iii. sub. fin.

[158] Lucan, Pharsal. 142-146.

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Chapter 28.--Of the Victory of Sylla, the Avenger of the Cruelties of

Marius.

Then followed the victory of Sylla, the so-called avenger of the

cruelties of Marius. But not only was his victory purchased with great

bloodshed; but when hostilities were finished, hostility survived, and

the subsequent peace was bloody as the war. To the former and still

recent massacres of the elder Marius, the younger Marius and Carbo, who

belonged to the same party, added greater atrocities. For when Sylla

approached, and they despaired not only of victory, but of life itself,

they made a promiscuous massacre of friends and foes. And, not

satisfied with staining every corner of Rome with blood, they besieged

the senate, and led forth the senators to death from the curia as from

a prison. Mucius Sc�vola the pontiff was slain at the altar of Vesta,

which he had clung to because no spot in Rome was more sacred than her

temple; and his blood well-nigh extinguished the fire which was kept

alive by the constant care of the virgins. Then Sylla entered the city

victorious, after having slaughtered in the Villa Publica, not by

combat, but by an order, 7000 men who had surrendered, and were

therefore unarmed; so fierce was the rage of peace itself, even after

the rage of war was extinct. Moreover, throughout the whole city every

partisan of Sylla slew whom he pleased, so that the number of deaths

went beyond computation, till it was suggested to Sylla that he should

allow some to survive, that the victors might not be destitute of

subjects. Then this furious and promiscuous licence to murder was

checked, and much relief was expressed at the publication of the

proscription list, containing though it did the death-warrant of two

thousand men of the highest ranks, the senatorial and equestrian. The

large number was indeed saddening, but it was consolatory that a limit

was fixed; nor was the grief at the numbers slain so great as the joy

that the rest were secure. But this very security, hard-hearted as it

was, could not but bemoan the exquisite torture applied to some of

those who had been doomed to die. For one was torn to pieces by the

unarmed hands of the executioners; men treating a living man more

savagely than wild beasts are used to tear an abandoned corpse.

Another had his eyes dug out, and his limbs cut away bit by bit, and

was forced to live a long while, or rather to die a long while, in such

torture. Some celebrated cities were put up to auction, like farms;

and one was collectively condemned to slaughter, just as an individual

criminal would be condemned to death. These things were done in peace

when the war was over, not that victory might be more speedily

obtained, but that, after being obtained, it might not be thought

lightly of. Peace vied with war in cruelty, and surpassed it: for

while war overthrew armed hosts, peace slew the defenceless. War gave

liberty to him who was attacked, to strike if he could; peace granted

to the survivors not life, but an unresisting death.

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Chapter 29.--A Comparison of the Disasters Which Rome Experienced

During the Gothic and Gallic Invasions, with Those Occasioned by the

Authors of the Civil Wars.

What fury of foreign nations, what barbarian ferocity, can compare with

this victory of citizens over citizens? Which was more disastrous,

more hideous, more bitter to Rome: the recent Gothic and the old

Gallic invasion, or the cruelty displayed by Marius and Sylla and their

partisans against men who were members of the same body as themselves?

The Gauls, indeed, massacred all the senators they found in any part of

the city except the Capitol, which alone was defended; but they at

least sold life to those who were in the Capitol, though they might

have starved them out if they could not have stormed it. The Goths,

again, spared so many senators, that it is the more surprising that

they killed any. But Sylla, while Marius was still living, established

himself as conqueror in the Capitol, which the Gauls had not violated,

and thence issued his death-warrants; and when Marius had escaped by

flight, though destined to return more fierce and bloodthirsty than

ever, Sylla issued from the Capitol even decrees of the senate for the

slaughter and confiscation of the property of many citizens. Then,

when Sylla left, what did the Marian faction hold sacred or spare, when

they gave no quarter even to Mucius, a citizen, a senator, a pontiff,

and though clasping in piteous embrace the very altar in which, they

say, reside the destinies of Rome? And that final proscription list of

Sylla's, not to mention countless other massacres, despatched more

senators than the Goths could even plunder.

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Chapter 30.--Of the Connection of the Wars Which with Great Severity

and Frequency Followed One Another Before the Advent of Christ.

With what effrontery, then, with what assurance, with what impudence,

with what folly, or rather insanity, do they refuse to impute these

disasters to their own gods, and impute the present to our Christ!

These bloody civil wars, more distressing, by the avowal of their own

historians, than any foreign wars, and which were pronounced to be not

merely calamitous, but absolutely ruinous to the republic, began long

before the coming of Christ, and gave birth to one another; so that a

concatenation of unjustifiable causes led from the wars of Marius and

Sylla to those of Sertorius and Cataline, of whom the one was

proscribed, the other brought up by Sylla; from this to the war of

Lepidus and Catulus, of whom the one wished to rescind, the other to

defend the acts of Sylla; from this to the war of Pompey and C�sar, of

whom Pompey had been a partisan of Sylla, whose power he equalled or

even surpassed, while C�sar condemned Pompey's power because it was not

his own, and yet exceeded it when Pompey was defeated and slain. From

him the chain of civil wars extended to the second C�sar, afterwards

called Augustus, and in whose reign Christ was born. For even Augustus

himself waged many civil wars; and in these wars many of the foremost

men perished, among them that skilful manipulator of the republic,

Cicero. Caius [Julius] C�sar, when he had conquered Pompey, though he

used his victory with clemency, and granted to men of the opposite

faction both life and honors, was suspected of aiming at royalty, and

was assassinated in the curia by a party of noble senators, who had

conspired to defend the liberty of the republic. His power was then

coveted by Antony, a man of very different character, polluted and

debased by every kind of vice, who was strenuously resisted by Cicero

on the same plea of defending the liberty of the republic. At this

juncture that other C�sar, the adopted son of Caius, and afterwards, as

I said, known by the name of Augustus, had made his d�but as a young

man of remarkable genius. This youthful C�sar was favored by Cicero,

in order that his influence might counteract that of Antony; for he

hoped that C�sar would overthrow and blast the power of Antony, and

establish a free state,--so blind and unaware of the future was he:

for that very young man, whose advancement and influence he was

fostering, allowed Cicero to be killed as the seal of an alliance with

Antony, and subjected to his own rule the very liberty of the republic

in defence of which he had made so many orations.

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Chapter 31.--That It is Effrontery to Impute the Present Troubles to

Christ and the Prohibition of Polytheistic Worship Since Even When the

Gods Were Worshipped Such Calamities Befell the People.

Let those who have no gratitude to Christ for His great benefits, blame

their own gods for these heavy disasters. For certainly when these

occurred the altars of the gods were kept blazing, and there rose the

mingled fragrance of "Sab�an incense and fresh garlands;" [159] the

priests were clothed with honor, the shrines were maintained in

splendor; sacrifices, games, sacred ecstasies, were common in the

temples; while the blood of the citizens was being so freely shed, not

only in remote places, but among the very altars of the gods. Cicero

did not choose to seek sanctuary in a temple, because Mucius had sought

it there in vain. But they who most unpardonably calumniate this

Christian era, are the very men who either themselves fled for asylum

to the places specially dedicated to Christ, or were led there by the

barbarians that they might be safe. In short, not to recapitulate the

many instances I have cited, and not to add to their number others

which it were tedious to enumerate, this one thing I am persuaded of,

and this every impartial judgment will readily acknowledge, that if the

human race had received Christianity before the Punic wars, and if the

same desolating calamities which these wars brought upon Europe and

Africa had followed the introduction of Christianity, there is no one

of those who now accuse us who would not have attributed them to our

religion. How intolerable would their accusations have been, at least

so far as the Romans are concerned, if the Christian religion had been

received and diffused prior to the invasion of the Gauls, or to the

ruinous floods and fires which desolated Rome, or to those most

calamitous of all events, the civil wars! And those other disasters,

which were of so strange a nature that they were reckoned prodigies,

had they happened since the Christian era, to whom but to the

Christians would they have imputed these as crimes? I do not speak of

those things which were rather surprising than hurtful,--oxen speaking,

unborn infants articulating some words in their mothers' wombs,

serpents flying, hens and women being changed into the other sex; and

other similar prodigies which, whether true or false, are recorded not

in their imaginative, but in their historical works, and which do not

injure, but only astonish men. But when it rained earth, when it

rained chalk, when it rained stones--not hailstones, but real

stones--this certainly was calculated to do serious damage. We have

read in their books that the fires of Etna, pouring down from the top

of the mountain to the neighboring shore, caused the sea to boil, so

that rocks were burnt up, and the pitch of ships began to run,--a

phenomenon incredibly surprising, but at the same time no less

hurtful. By the same violent heat, they relate that on another

occasion Sicily was filled with cinders, so that the houses of the city

Catina were destroyed and buried under them,--a calamity which moved

the Romans to pity them, and remit their tribute for that year. One

may also read that Africa, which had by that time become a province of

Rome, was visited by a prodigious multitude of locusts, which, after

consuming the fruit and foliage of the trees, were driven into the sea

in one vast and measureless cloud; so that when they were drowned and

cast upon the shore the air was polluted, and so serious a pestilence

produced that in the kingdom of Masinissa alone they say there perished

800,000 persons, besides a much greater number in the neighboring

districts. At Utica they assure us that, of 30,000 soldiers then

garrisoning it, there survived only ten. Yet which of these disasters,

suppose they happened now, would not be attributed to the Christian

religion by those who thus thoughtlessly accuse us, and whom we are

compelled to answer? And yet to their own gods they attribute none of

these things, though they worship them for the sake of escaping lesser

calamities of the same kind, and do not reflect that they who formerly

worshipped them were not preserved from these serious disasters.

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[159] Virgil, �neid, i. 417.

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Book IV. [160]

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Argument--In this book it is proved that the extent and long duration

of the Roman empire is to be ascribed, not to Jove or the gods of the

heathen, to whom individually scarce even single things and the very

basest functions were believed to be entrusted, but to the one true

God, the author of felicity, by whose power and judgment earthly

kingdoms are founded and maintained.

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Chapter 1.--Of the Things Which Have Been Discussed in the First Book.

Having begun to speak of the city of God, I have thought it necessary

first of all to reply to its enemies, who, eagerly pursuing earthly

joys and gaping after transitory things, throw the blame of all the

sorrow they suffer in them--rather through the compassion of God in

admonishing than His severity in punishing--on the Christian religion,

which is the one salutary and true religion. And since there is among

them also an unlearned rabble, they are stirred up as by the authority

of the learned to hate us more bitterly, thinking in their inexperience

that things which have happened unwontedly in their days were not wont

to happen in other times gone by; and whereas this opinion of theirs is

confirmed even by those who know that it is false, and yet dissemble

their knowledge in order that they may seem to have just cause for

murmuring against us, it was necessary, from books in which their

authors recorded and published the history of bygone times that it

might be known, to demonstrate that it is far otherwise than they

think; and at the same time to teach that the false gods, whom they

openly worshipped, or still worship in secret, are most unclean

spirits, and most malignant and deceitful demons, even to such a pitch

that they take delight in crimes which, whether real or only

fictitious, are yet their own, which it has been their will to have

celebrated in honor of them at their own festivals; so that human

infirmity cannot be called back from the perpetration of damnable

deeds, so long as authority is furnished for imitating them that seems

even divine. These things we have proved, not from our own

conjectures, but partly from recent memory, because we ourselves have

seen such things celebrated, and to such deities, partly from the

writings of those who have left these things on record to posterity,

not as if in reproach but as in honor of their own gods. Thus Varro, a

most learned man among them, and of the weightiest authority, when he

made separate books concerning things human and things divine,

distributing some among the human, others among the divine, according

to the special dignity of each, placed the scenic plays not at all

among things human, but among things divine; though, certainly, if only

there were good and honest men in the state, the scenic plays ought not

to be allowed even among things human. And this he did not on his own

authority, but because, being born and educated at Rome, he found them

among the divine things. Now as we briefly stated in the end of the

first book what we intended afterwards to discuss, and as we have

disposed of a part of this in the next two books, we see what our

readers will expect us now to take up.

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Chapter 2.--Of Those Things Which are Contained in Books Second and

Third.

We had promised, then, that we would say something against those who

attribute the calamities of the Roman republic to our religion, and

that we would recount the evils, as many and great as we could remember

or might deem sufficient, which that city, or the provinces belonging

to its empire, had suffered before their sacrifices were prohibited,

all of which would beyond doubt have been attributed to us, if our

religion had either already shone on them, or had thus prohibited their

sacrilegious rites. These things we have, as we think, fully disposed

of in the second and third books, treating in the second of evils in

morals, which alone or chiefly are to be accounted evils; and in the

third, of those which only fools dread to undergo--namely, those of the

body or of outward things--which for the most part the good also

suffer. But those evils by which they themselves become evil, they

take, I do not say patiently, but with pleasure. And how few evils

have I related concerning that one city and its empire! Not even all

down to the time of C�sar Augustus. What if I had chosen to recount

and enlarge on those evils, not which men have inflicted on each other;

such as the devastations and destructions of war, but which happen in

earthly things, from the elements of the world itself. Of such evils

Apuleius speaks briefly in one passage of that book which he wrote, De

Mundo, saying that all earthly things are subject to change, overthrow,

and destruction. [161] For, to use his own words, by excessive

earthquakes the ground has burst asunder, and cities with their

inhabitants have been clean destroyed: by sudden rains whole regions

have been washed away; those also which formerly had been continents,

have been insulated by strange and new-come waves, and others, by the

subsiding of the sea, have been made passable by the foot of man: by

winds and storms cities have been overthrown; fires have flashed forth

from the clouds, by which regions in the East being burnt up have

perished; and on the western coasts the like destructions have been

caused by the bursting forth of waters and floods. So, formerly, from

the lofty craters of Etna, rivers of fire kindled by God have flowed

like a torrent down the steeps. If I had wished to collect from

history wherever I could, these and similar instances, where should I

have finished what happened even in those times before the name of

Christ had put down those of their idols, so vain and hurtful to true

salvation? I promised that I should also point out which of their

customs, and for what cause, the true God, in whose power all kingdoms

are, had deigned to favor to the enlargement of their empire; and how

those whom they think gods can have profited them nothing, but much

rather hurt them by deceiving and beguiling them; so that it seems to

me I must now speak of these things, and chiefly of the increase of the

Roman empire. For I have already said not a little, especially in the

second book, about the many evils introduced into their manners by the

hurtful deceits of the demons whom they worshipped as gods. But

throughout all the three books already completed, where it appeared

suitable, we have set forth how much succor God, through the name of

Christ, to whom the barbarians beyond the custom of war paid so much

honor, has bestowed on the good and bad, according as it is written,

"Who maketh His sun to rise on the good and the evil, and giveth rain

to the just and the unjust." [162]

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[161] Comp. Bacon's Essay on the Vicissitudes of Things.

[162] Matt. v. 45.

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Chapter 3.--Whether the Great Extent of the Empire, Which Has Been

Acquired Only by Wars, is to Be Reckoned Among the Good Things Either

of the Wise or the Happy.

Now, therefore, let us see how it is that they dare to ascribe the very

great extent and duration of the Roman empire to those gods whom they

contend that they worship honorably, even by the obsequies of vile

games and the ministry of vile men: although I should like first to

inquire for a little what reason, what prudence, there is in wishing to

glory in the greatness and extent of the empire, when you cannot point

out the happiness of men who are always rolling, with dark fear and

cruel lust, in warlike slaughters and in blood, which, whether shed in

civil or foreign war, is still human blood; so that their joy may be

compared to glass in its fragile splendor, of which one is horribly

afraid lest it should be suddenly broken in pieces. That this may be

more easily discerned, let us not come to nought by being carried away

with empty boasting, or blunt the edge of our attention by

loud-sounding names of things, when we hear of peoples, kingdoms,

provinces. But let us suppose a case of two men; for each individual

man, like one letter in a language, is as it were the element of a city

or kingdom, however far-spreading in its occupation of the earth. Of

these two men let us suppose that one is poor, or rather of middling

circumstances; the other very rich. But the rich man is anxious with

fears, pining with discontent, burning with covetousness, never se

cure, always uneasy, panting from the perpetual strife of his enemies,

adding to his patrimony indeed by these miseries to an immense degree,

and by these additions also heaping up most bitter cares. But that

other man of moderate wealth is contented with a small and compact

estate, most dear to his own family, enjoying the sweetest peace with

his kindred neighbors and friends, in piety religious, benignant in

mind, healthy in body, in life frugal, in manners chaste, in conscience

secure. I know not whether any one can be such a fool, that he dare

hesitate which to prefer. As, therefore, in the case of these two men,

so in two families, in two nations, in two kingdoms, this test of

tranquility holds good; and if we apply it vigilantly and without

prejudice, we shall quite easily see where the mere show of happiness

dwells, and where real felicity. Wherefore if the true God is

worshipped, and if He is served with genuine rites and true virtue, it

is advantageous that good men should long reign both far and wide. Nor

is this advantageous so much to themselves, as to those over whom they

reign. For, so far as concerns themselves, their piety and probity,

which are great gifts of God, suffice to give them true felicity,

enabling them to live well the life that now is, and afterwards to

receive that which is eternal. In this world, therefore, the dominion

of good men is profitable, not so much for themselves as for human

affairs. But the dominion of bad men is hurtful chiefly to themselves

who rule, for they destroy their own souls by greater license in

wickedness; while those who are put under them in service are not hurt

except by their own iniquity. For to the just all the evils imposed on

them by unjust rulers are not the punishment of crime, but the test of

virtue. Therefore the good man, although he is a slave, is free; but

the bad man, even if he reigns, is a slave, and that not of one man,

but, what is far more grievous, of as many masters as he has vices; of

which vices when the divine Scripture treats, it says, "For of whom any

man is overcome, to the same he is also the bond-slave." [163]

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[163] 2 Pet. ii. 19.

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Chapter 4.--How Like Kingdoms Without Justice are to Robberies.

Justice being taken away, then, what are kingdoms but great robberies?

For what are robberies themselves, but little kingdoms? The band

itself is made up of men; it is ruled by the authority of a prince, it

is knit together by the pact of the confederacy; the booty is divided

by the law agreed on. If, by the admittance of abandoned men, this

evil increases to such a degree that it holds places, fixes abodes,

takes possession of cities, and subdues peoples, it assumes the more

plainly the name of a kingdom, because the reality is now manifestly

conferred on it, not by the removal of covetousness, but by the

addition of impunity. Indeed, that was an apt and true reply which was

given to Alexander the Great by a pirate who had been seized. For when

that king had asked the man what he meant by keeping hostile possession

of the sea, he answered with bold pride, "What thou meanest by seizing

the whole earth; but because I do it with a petty ship, I am called a

robber, whilst thou who dost it with a great fleet art styled emperor."

[164]

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[164] Nonius Marcell. borrows this anecdote from Cicero, De Repub. iii.

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Chapter 5.--Of the Runaway Gladiators Whose Power Became Like that of

Royal Dignity.

I shall not therefore stay to inquire what sort of men Romulus gathered

together, seeing he deliberated much about them,--how, being assumed

out of that life they led into the fellowship of his city, they might

cease to think of the punishment they deserved, the fear of which had

driven them to greater villainies; so that henceforth they might be

made more peaceable members of society. But this I say, that the Roman

empire, which by subduing many nations had already grown great and an

object of universal dread, was itself greatly alarmed, and only with

much difficulty avoided a disastrous overthrow, because a mere handful

of gladiators in Campania, escaping from the games, had recruited a

great army, appointed three generals, and most widely and cruelly

devastated Italy. Let them say what god aided these men, so that from

a small and contemptible band of robbers they attained to a kingdom,

feared even by the Romans, who had such great forces and fortresses.

Or will they deny that they were divinely aided because they did not

last long? [165] As if, indeed, the life of any man whatever lasted

long. In that case, too, the gods aid no one to reign, since all

individuals quickly die; nor is sovereign power to be reckoned a

benefit, because in a little time in every man, and thus in all of them

one by one, it vanishes like a vapor. For what does it matter to those

who worshipped the gods under Romulus, and are long since dead, that

after their death the Roman empire has grown so great, while they plead

their causes before the powers beneath? Whether those causes are good

or bad, it matters not to the question before us. And this is to be

understood of all those who carry with them the heavy burden of their

actions, having in the few days of their life swiftly and hurriedly

passed over the stage of the imperial office, although the office

itself has lasted through long spaces of time, being filled by a

constant succession of dying men. If, however, even those benefits

which last only for the shortest time are to be ascribed to the aid of

the gods, these gladiators were not a little aided, who broke the bonds

of their servile condition, fled, escaped, raised a great and most

powerful army, obedient to the will and orders of their chiefs and much

feared by the Roman majesty, and remaining unsubdued by several Roman

generals, seized many places, and, having won very many victories,

enjoyed whatever pleasures they wished, and did what their lust

suggested, and, until at last they were conquered, which was done with

the utmost difficulty, lived sublime and dominant. But let us come to

greater matters.

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[165] It was extinguished by Crassus in its third year.

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Chapter 6.--Concerning the Covetousness of Ninus, Who Was the First Who

Made War on His Neighbors, that He Might Rule More Widely.

Justinus, who wrote Greek or rather foreign history in Latin, and

briefly, like Trogus Pompeius whom he followed, begins his work thus:

"In the beginning of the affairs of peoples and nations the government

was in the hands of kings, who were raised to the height of this

majesty not by courting the people, but by the knowledge good men had

of their moderation. The people were held bound by no laws; the

decisions of the princes were instead of laws. It was the custom to

guard rather than to extend the boundaries of the empire; and kingdoms

were kept within the bounds of each ruler's native land. Ninus king of

the Assyrians first of all, through new lust of empire, changed the old

and, as it were, ancestral custom of nations. He first made war on his

neighbors, and wholly subdued as far as to the frontiers of Libya the

nations as yet untrained to resist." And a little after he says:

"Ninus established by constant possession the greatness of the

authority he had gained. Having mastered his nearest neighbors, he

went on to others, strengthened by the accession of forces, and by

making each fresh victory the instrument of that which followed,

subdued the nations of the whole East." Now, with whatever fidelity to

fact either he or Trogus may in general have written--for that they

sometimes told lies is shown by other more trustworthy writers--yet it

is agreed among other authors, that the kingdom of the Assyrians was

extended far and wide by King Ninus. And it lasted so long, that the

Roman empire has not yet attained the same age; for, as those write who

have treated of chronological history, this kingdom endured for twelve

hundred and forty years from the first year in which Ninus began to

reign, until it was transferred to the Medes. But to make war on your

neighbors, and thence to proceed to others, and through mere lust of

dominion to crush and subdue people who do you no harm, what else is

this to be called than great robbery?

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Chapter 7.--Whether Earthly Kingdoms in Their Rise and Fall Have Been

Either Aided or Deserted by the Help of the Gods.

If this kingdom was so great and lasting without the aid of the gods,

why is the ample territory and long duration of the Roman empire to be

ascribed to the Roman gods? For whatever is the cause in it, the same

is in the other also. But if they contend that the prosperity of the

other also is to be attributed to the aid of the gods, I ask of which?

For the other nations whom Ninus overcame, did not then worship other

gods. Or if the Assyrians had gods of their own, who, so to speak,

were more skillful workmen in the construction and preservation of the

empire, whether are they dead, since they themselves have also lost the

empire; or, having been defrauded of their pay, or promised a greater,

have they chosen rather to go over to the Medes, and from them again to

the Persians, because Cyrus invited them, and promised them something

still more advantageous? This nation, indeed, since the time of the

kingdom of Alexander the Macedonian, which was as brief in duration as

it was great in extent, has preserved its own empire, and at this day

occupies no small territories in the East. If this is so, then either

the gods are unfaithful, who desert their own and go over to their

enemies, which Camillus, who was but a man, did not do, when, being

victor and subduer of a most hostile state, although he had felt that

Rome, for whom he had done so much, was ungrateful, yet afterwards,

forgetting the injury and remembering his native land, he freed her

again from the Gauls; or they are not so strong as gods ought to be,

since they can be overcome by human skill or strength. Or if, when

they carry on war among themselves, the gods are not overcome by men,

but some gods who are peculiar to certain cities are perchance overcome

by other gods, it follows that they have quarrels among themselves

which they uphold, each for his own part. Therefore a city ought not

to worship its own gods, but rather others who aid their own

worshippers. Finally, whatever may have been the case as to this

change of sides, or flight, or migration, or failure in battle on the

part of the gods, the name of Christ had not yet been proclaimed in

those parts of the earth when these kingdoms were lost and transferred

through great destructions in war. For if, after more than twelve

hundred years, when the kingdom was taken away from the Assyrians, the

Christian religion had there already preached another eternal kingdom,

and put a stop to the sacrilegious worship of false gods, what else

would the foolish men of that nation have said, but that the kingdom

which had been so long preserved, could be lost for no other cause than

the desertion of their own religions and the reception of

Christianity? In which foolish speech that might have been uttered,

let those we speak of observe their own likeness, and blush, if there

is any sense of shame in them, because they have uttered similar

complaints; although the Roman empire is afflicted rather than

changed,--a thing which has befallen it in other times also, before the

name of Christ was heard, and it has been restored after such

affliction,--a thing which even in these times is not to be despaired

of. For who knows the will of God concerning this matter?

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Chapter 8.--Which of the Gods Can the Romans Suppose Presided Over the

Increase and Preservation of Their Empire, When They Have Believed that

Even the Care of Single Things Could Scarcely Be Committed to Single

Gods.

Next let us ask, if they please, out of so great a crowd of gods which

the Romans worship, whom in especial, or what gods they believe to have

extended and preserved that empire. Now, surely of this work, which is

so excellent and so very full of the highest dignity, they dare not

ascribe any part to the goddess Cloacina; [166] or to Volupia, who has

her appellation from voluptuousness; or to Libentina, who has her name

from lust; or to Vaticanus, who presides over the screaming of infants;

or to Cunina, who rules over their cradles. But how is it possible to

recount in one part of this book all the names of gods or goddesses,

which they could scarcely comprise in great volumes, distributing among

these divinities their peculiar offices about single things? They have

not even thought that the charge of their lands should be committed to

any one god: but they have entrusted their farms to Rusina; the ridges

of the mountains to Jugatinus; over the downs they have set the goddess

Collatina; over the valleys, Vallonia. Nor could they even find one

Segetia so competent, that they could commend to her care all their

corn crops at once; but so long as their seed-corn was still under the

ground, they would have the goddess Seia set over it; then, whenever it

was above ground and formed straw, they set over it the goddess

Segetia; and when the grain was collected and stored, they set over it

the goddess Tutilina, that it might be kept safe. Who would not have

thought that goddess Segetia sufficient to take care of the standing

corn until it had passed from the first green blades to the dry ears?

Yet she was not enough for men, who loved a multitude of gods, that the

miserable soul, despising the chaste embrace of the one true God,

should be prostituted to a crowd of demons. Therefore they set

Proserpina over the germinating seeds; over the joints and knots of the

stems, the god Nodotus; over the sheaths enfolding the ears, the

goddess Voluntina; when the sheaths opened that the spike might shoot

forth, it was ascribed to the goddess Patelana; when the stems stood

all equal with new ears, because the ancients described this equalizing

by the term hostire, it was ascribed to the goddess Hostilina; when the

grain was in flower, it was dedicated to the goddess Flora; when full

of milk, to the god Lacturnus; when maturing, to the goddess Matuta;

when the crop was runcated,--that is, removed from the soil,--to the

goddess Runcina. Nor do I yet recount them all, for I am sick of all

this, though it gives them no shame. Only, I have said these very few

things, in order that it may be understood they dare by no means say

that the Roman empire has been established, increased, and preserved by

their deities, who had all their own functions assigned to them in such

a way, that no general oversight was entrusted to any one of them.

When, therefore, could Segetia take care of the empire, who was not

allowed to take care of the corn and the trees? When could Cunina take

thought about war, whose oversight was not allowed to go beyond the

cradles of the babies? When could Nodotus give help in battle, who had

nothing to do even with the sheath of the ear, but only with the knots

of the joints? Every one sets a porter at the door of his house, and

because he is a man, he is quite sufficient; but these people have set

three gods, Forculus to the doors, Cardea to the hinge, Limentinus to

the threshold. [167] Thus Forculus could not at the same time take

care also of the hinge and the threshold.

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[166] Cloacina, supposed by Lactantius (De falsa relig. i. 20), Cyprian

(De Idol. vanit.), and Augustin (infra, c. 23) to be the goddess of the

cloaca, or sewage of Rome. Others, however, suppose it to be

equivalent to Cluacina, a title given to Venus, because the Romans

after the end of the Sabine war purified themselves (cluere) in the

vicinity of her statue.

[167] Forculum foribus, Cardeam cardini, Limentinum limini.

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Chapter 9.--Whether the Great Extent and Long Duration of the Roman

Empire Should Be Ascribed to Jove, Whom His Worshippers Believe to Be

the Chief God.

Therefore omitting, or passing by for a little, that crowd of petty

gods, we ought to inquire into the part performed by the great gods,

whereby Rome has been made so great as to reign so long over so many

nations. Doubtless, therefore, this is the work of Jove. For they

will have it that he is the king of all the gods and goddesses, as is

shown by his sceptre and by the Capitol on the lofty hill. Concerning

that god they publish a saying which, although that of a poet, is most

apt, "All things are full of Jove." [168] Varro believes that this

god is worshipped, although called by another name, even by those who

worship one God alone without any image. But if this is so, why has he

been so badly used at Rome (and indeed by other nations too), that an

image of him should be made?--a thing which was so displeasing to Varro

himself, that although he was overborne by the perverse custom of so

great a city, he had not the least hesitation in both saying and

writing, that those who have appointed images for the people have both

taken away fear and added error.

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[168] Virgil, Eclog. iii. 60.

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Chapter 10.--What Opinions Those Have Followed Who Have Set Divers Gods

Over Divers Parts of the World.

Why, also, is Juno united to him as his wife, who is called at once

"sister and yoke-fellow?" [169] Because, say they, we have Jove in

the ether, Juno in the air; and these two elements are united, the one

being superior, the other inferior. It is not he, then, of whom it is

said, "All things are full of Jove," if Juno also fills some part.

Does each fill either, and are both of this couple in both of these

elements, and in each of them at the same time? Why, then, is the

ether given to Jove, the air to Juno? Besides, these two should have

been enough. Why is it that the sea is assigned to Neptune, the earth

to Pluto? And that these also might not be left without mates, Salacia

is joined to Neptune, Proserpine to Pluto. For they say that, as Juno

possesses the lower part of the heavens,--that is, the air,--so Salacia

possesses the lower part of the sea, and Proserpine the lower part of

the earth. They seek how they may patch up these fables, but they find

no way. For if these things were so, their ancient sages would have

maintained that there are three chief elements of the world, not four,

in order that each of the elements might have a pair of gods. Now,

they have positively affirmed that the ether is one thing, the air

another. But water, whether higher or lower, is surely water. Suppose

it ever so unlike, can it ever be so much so as no longer to be water?

And the lower earth, by whatever divinity it may be distinguished, what

else can it be than earth? Lo, then, since the whole physical world is

complete in these four or three elements, where shall Minerva be? What

should she possess, what should she fill? For she is placed in the

Capitol along with these two, although she is not the offspring of

their marriage. Or if they say that she possesses the higher part of

the ether,--and on that account the poets have feigned that she sprang

from the head of Jove,--why then is she not rather reckoned queen of

the gods, because she is superior to Jove? Is it because it would be

improper to set the daughter before the father? Why, then, is not that

rule of justice observed concerning Jove himself toward Saturn? Is it

because he was conquered? Have they fought then? By no means, say

they; that is an old wife's fable. Lo, we are not to believe fables,

and must hold more worthy opinions concerning the gods! Why, then, do

they not assign to the father of Jove a seat, if not of higher, at

least of equal honor? Because Saturn, say they, is length of time.

[170] Therefore they who worship Saturn worship Time; and it is

insinuated that Jupiter, the king of the gods, was born of Time. For

is anything unworthy said when Jupiter and Juno are said to have been

sprung from Time, if he is the heaven and she is the earth, since both

heaven and earth have been made, and are therefore not eternal? For

their learned and wise men have this also in their books. Nor is that

saying taken by Virgil out of poetic figments, but out of the books of

philosophers,

"Then Ether, the Father Almighty, in copious showers descended

Into his spouse's glad bosom, making it fertile," [171]

--that is, into the bosom of Tellus, or the earth. Although here,

also, they will have it that there are some differences, and think that

in the earth herself Terra is one thing, Tellus another, and Tellumo

another. And they have all these as gods, called by their own names

distinguished by their own offices, and venerated with their own altars

and rites. This same earth also they call the mother of the gods, so

that even the fictions of the poets are more tolerable, if, according,

not to their poetical but sacred books, Juno is not only the sister and

wife, but also the mother of Jove. The same earth they worship as

Ceres, and also as Vesta; while yet they more frequently affirm that

Vesta is nothing else than fire, pertaining to the hearths, without

which the city cannot exist; and therefore virgins are wont to serve

her, because as nothing is born of a virgin, so nothing is born of

fire;--but all this nonsense ought to be completely abolished and

extinguished by Him who is born of a virgin. For who can bear that,

while they ascribe to the fire so much honor, and, as it were,

chastity, they do not blush sometimes even to call Vesta Venus, so that

honored virginity may vanish in her hand-maidens? For if Vesta is

Venus, how can virgins rightly serve her by abstaining from venery?

Are there two Venuses, the one a virgin, the other not a maid? Or

rather, are there three, one the goddess of virgins, who is also called

Vesta, another the goddess of wives, and another of harlots? To her

also the Phenicians offered a gift by prostituting their daughters

before they united them to husbands. [172] Which of these is the wife

of Vulcan? Certainly not the virgin, since she has a husband. Far be

it from us to say it is the harlot, lest we should seem to wrong the

son of Juno and fellow-worker of Minerva. Therefore it is to be

understood that she belongs to the married people; but we would not

wish them to imitate her in what she did with Mars. "Again," say they,

"you return to fables." What sort of justice is that, to be angry with

us because we say such things of their gods, and not to be angry with

themselves, who in their theatres most willingly behold the crimes of

their gods? And,--a thing incredible, if it were not thoroughly well

proved,--these very theatric representations of the crimes of their

gods have been instituted in honor of these same gods.

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[169] Virgil, �neid, i. 47.

[170] Cicero, De Nat. Deor. ii. 25.

[171] Virgil, Georg. ii. 325, 326.

[172] Eusebius, De Proep. Evang. i. 10.

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Chapter 11.--Concerning the Many Gods Whom the Pagan Doctors Defend as

Being One and the Same Jove.

Let them therefore assert as many things as ever they please in

physical reasonings and disputations. One while let Jupiter be the

soul of this corporeal world, who fills and moves that whole mass,

constructed and compacted out of four, or as many elements as they

please; another while, let him yield to his sister and brothers their

parts of it: now let him be the ether, that from above he may embrace

Juno, the air spread out beneath; again, let him be the whole heaven

along with the air, and impregnate with fertilizing showers and seeds

the earth, as his wife, and, at the same time, his mother (for this is

not vile in divine beings); and yet again (that it may not be necessary

to run through them all), let him, the one god, of whom many think it

has been said by a most noble poet,

"For God pervadeth all things,

All lands, and the tracts of the sea, and the depth of the heavens,"

[173]

--let it be him who in the ether is Jupiter; in the air, Juno; in the

sea, Neptune; in the lower parts of the sea, Salacia; in the earth,

Pluto; in the lower part of the earth, Proserpine; on the domestic

hearths, Vesta; in the furnace of the workmen, Vulcan; among the stars,

Sol and Luna, and the Stars; in divination, Apollo; in merchandise,

Mercury; in Janus, the initiator; in Terminus, the terminator; Saturn,

in time; Mars and Bellona, in war; Liber, in vineyards; Ceres, in

cornfields; Diana, in forests; Minerva, in learning. Finally, let it

be him who is in that crowd, as it were, of plebeian gods: let him

preside under the name of Liber over the seed of men, and under that of

Libera over that of women: let him be Diespiter, who brings forth the

birth to the light of day: let him be the goddess Mena, whom they set

over the menstruation of women: let him be Lucina, who is invoked by

women in childbirth: let him bring help to those who are being born,

by taking them up from the bosom of the earth, and let him be called

Opis: let him open the mouth in the crying babe, and be called the god

Vaticanus: let him lift it from the earth, and be called the goddess

Levana; let him watch over cradles, and be called the goddess Cunina:

let it be no other than he who is in those goddesses, who sing the

fates of the new born, and are called Carmentes: let him preside over

fortuitous events, and be called Fortuna: in the goddess Rumina, let

him milk out the breast to the little one, because the ancients termed

the breast ruma: in the goddess Potina, let him administer drink: in

the goddess Educa, let him supply food: from the terror of infants,

let him be styled Paventia: from the hope which comes, Venilia: from

voluptuousness, Volupia: from action, Agenor: from the stimulants by

which man is spurred on to much action, let him be named the goddess

Stimula: let him be the goddess Strenia, for making strenuous;

Numeria, who teaches to number; Camoena, who teaches to sing: let him

be both the god Consus for granting counsel, and the goddess Sentia for

inspiring sentences: let him be the goddess Juventas, who, after the

robe of boyhood is laid aside, takes charge of the beginning of the

youthful age: let him be Fortuna Barbata, who endues adults with a

beard, whom they have not chosen to honor; so that this divinity,

whatever it may be, should at least be a male god, named either

Barbatus, from barba, like Nodotus, from nodus; or, certainly, not

Fortuna, but because he has beards, Fortunius: let him, in the god

Jugatinus, yoke couples in marriage; and when the girdle of the virgin

wife is loosed, let him be invoked as the goddess Virginiensis: let

him be Mutunus or Tuternus, who, among the Greeks, is called Priapus.

If they are not ashamed of it, let all these which I have named, and

whatever others I have not named (for I have not thought fit to name

all), let all these gods and goddesses be that one Jupiter, whether, as

some will have it, all these are parts of him, or are his powers, as

those think who are pleased to consider him the soul of the world,

which is the opinion of most of their doctors, and these the greatest.

If these things are so (how evil they may be I do not yet meanwhile

inquire), what would they lose, if they, by a more prudent abridgment,

should worship one god? For what part of him could be contemned if he

himself should be worshipped? But if they are afraid lest parts of him

should be angry at being passed by or neglected, then it is not the

case, as they will have it, that this whole is as the life of one

living being, which contains all the gods together, as if they were its

virtues, or members, or parts; but each part has its own life separate

from the rest, if it is so that one can be angered, appeased, or

stirred up more than another. But if it is said that all

together,--that is, the whole Jove himself,--would be offended if his

parts were not also worshipped singly and minutely, it is foolishly

spoken. Surely none of them could be passed by if he who singly

possesses them all should be worshipped. For, to omit other things

which are innumerable, when they say that all the stars are parts of

Jove, and are all alive, and have rational souls, and therefore without

controversy are gods, can they not see how many they do not worship, to

how many they do not build temples or set up altars, and to how very

few, in fact, of the stars they have thought of setting them up and

offering sacrifice? If, therefore, those are displeased who are not

severally worshipped, do they not fear to live with only a few

appeased, while all heaven is displeased? But if they worship all the

stars because they are part of Jove whom they worship, by the same

compendious method they could supplicate them all in him alone. For in

this way no one would be displeased, since in him alone all would be

supplicated. No one would be contemned, instead of there being just

cause of displeasure given to the much greater number who are passed by

in the worship offered to some; especially when Priapus, stretched out

in vile nakedness, is preferred to those who shine from their supernal

abode.

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[173] Virgil, Georg. iv. 221, 222.

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Chapter 12.--Concerning the Opinion of Those Who Have Thought that God

is the Soul of the World, and the World is the Body of God.

Ought not men of intelligence, and indeed men of every kind, to be

stirred up to examine the nature of this opinion? For there is no need

of excellent capacity for this task, that putting away the desire of

contention, they may observe that if God is the soul of the world, and

the world is as a body to Him, who is the soul, He must be one living

being consisting of soul and body, and that this same God is a kind of

womb of nature containing all things in Himself, so that the lives and

souls of all living things are taken, according to the manner of each

one's birth, out of His soul which vivifies that whole mass, and

therefore nothing at all remains which is not a part of God. And if

this is so, who cannot see what impious and irreligious consequences

follow, such as that whatever one may trample, he must trample a part

of God, and in slaying any living creature, a part of God must be

slaughtered? But I am unwilling to utter all that may occur to those

who think of it, yet cannot be spoken without irreverence.

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Chapter 13.--Concerning Those Who Assert that Only Rational Animals are

Parts of the One God.

But if they contend that only rational animals, such as men, are parts

of God, I do not really see how, if the whole world is God, they can

separate beasts from being parts of Him. But what need is there of

striving about that? Concerning the rational animal himself,--that is,

man,--what more unhappy belief can be entertained than that a part of

God is whipped when a boy is whipped? And who, unless he is quite mad,

could bear the thought that parts of God can become lascivi ous,

iniquitous, impious, and altogether damnable? In brief, why is God

angry at those who do not worship Him, since these offenders are parts

of Himself? It remains, therefore, that they must say that all the

gods have their own lives; that each one lives for himself, and none of

them is a part of any one; but that all are to be worshipped,--at least

as many as can be known and worshipped; for they are so many it is

impossible that all can be so. And of all these, I believe that

Jupiter, because he presides as king, is thought by them to have both

established and extended the Roman empire. For if he has not done it,

what other god do they believe could have attempted so great a work,

when they must all be occupied with their own offices and works, nor

can one intrude on that of another? Could the kingdom of men then be

propagated and increased by the king of the gods?

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Chapter 14.--The Enlargement of Kingdoms is Unsuitably Ascribed to

Jove; For If, as They Will Have It, Victoria is a Goddess, She Alone

Would Suffice for This Business.

Here, first of all, I ask, why even the kingdom itself is not some

god. For why should not it also be so, if Victory is a goddess? Or

what need is there of Jove himself in this affair, if Victory favors

and is propitious, and always goes to those whom she wishes to be

victorious? With this goddess favorable and propitious, even if Jove

was idle and did nothing, what nations could remain unsubdued, what

kingdom would not yield? But perhaps it is displeasing to good men to

fight with most wicked unrighteousness, and provoke with voluntary war

neighbors who are peaceable and do no wrong, in order to enlarge a

kingdom? If they feel thus, I entirely approve and praise them.

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Chapter 15.--Whether It is Suitable for Good Men to Wish to Rule More

Widely.

Let them ask, then, whether it is quite fitting for good men to rejoice

in extended empire. For the iniquity of those with whom just wars are

carried on favors the growth of a kingdom, which would certainly have

been small if the peace and justice of neighbors had not by any wrong

provoked the carrying on of war against them; and human affairs being

thus more happy, all kingdoms would have been small, rejoicing in

neighborly concord; and thus there would have been very many kingdoms

of nations in the world, as there are very many houses of citizens in a

city. Therefore, to carry on war and extend a kingdom over wholly

subdued nations seems to bad men to be felicity, to good men

necessity. But because it would be worse that the injurious should

rule over those who are more righteous, therefore even that is not

unsuitably called felicity. But beyond doubt it is greater felicity to

have a good neighbor at peace, than to conquer a bad one by making

war. Your wishes are bad, when you desire that one whom you hate or

fear should be in such a condition that you can conquer him. If,

therefore, by carrying on wars that were just, not impious or

unrighteous, the Romans could have acquired so great an empire, ought

they not to worship as a goddess even the injustice of foreigners? For

we see that this has cooperated much in extending the empire, by making

foreigners so unjust that they became people with whom just wars might

be carried on, and the empire increased. And why may not injustice, at

least that of foreign nations, also be a goddess, if Fear and Dread and

Ague have deserved to be Roman gods? By these two, therefore,--that

is, by foreign injustice, and the goddess Victoria, for injustice stirs

up causes of wars, and Victoria brings these same wars to a happy

termination,--the empire has increased, even although Jove has been

idle. For what part could Jove have here, when those things which

might be thought to be his benefits are held to be gods, called gods,

worshipped as gods, and are themselves invoked for their own parts? He

also might have some part here, if he himself might be called Empire,

just as she is called Victory. Or if empire is the gift of Jove, why

may not victory also be held to be his gift? And it certainly would

have been held to be so, had he been recognized and worshipped, not as

a stone in the Capitol, but as the true King of kings and Lord of

lords.

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Chapter 16.--What Was the Reason Why the Romans, in Detailing Separate

Gods for All Things and All Movements of the Mind, Chose to Have the

Temple of Quiet Outside the Gates.

But I wonder very much, that while they assigned to separate gods

single things, and (well nigh) all movements of the mind; that while

they invoked the goddess Agenoria, who should excite to action; the

goddess Stimula, who should stimulate to unusual action; the goddess

Murcia, who should not move men beyond measure, but make them, as

Pomponius says, murcid--that is, too slothful and inactive; the goddess

Strenua, who should make them strenuous; and that while they offered to

all these gods and goddesses solemn and public worship, they should yet

have been unwilling to give public acknowledgment to her whom they name

Quies because she makes men quiet, but built her temple outside the

Colline gate. Whether was this a symptom of an unquiet mind, or rather

was it thus intimated that he who should persevere in worshipping that

crowd, not, to be sure, of gods, but of demons, could not dwell with

quiet; to which the true Physician calls, saying, "Learn of me, for I

am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls?"

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Chapter 17.--Whether, If the Highest Power Belongs to Jove, Victoria

Also Ought to Be Worshipped.

Or do they say, perhaps, that Jupiter sends the goddess Victoria, and

that she, as it were acting in obedience to the king of the gods, comes

to those to whom he may have despatched her, and takes up her quarters

on their side? This is truly said, not of Jove, whom they, according

to their own imagination, feign to be king of the gods, but of Him who

is the true eternal King, because he sends, not Victory, who is no

person, but His angel, and causes whom He pleases to conquer; whose

counsel may be hidden, but cannot be unjust. For if Victory is a

goddess, why is not Triumph also a god, and joined to Victory either as

husband, or brother, or son? Indeed, they have imagined such things

concerning the gods, that if the poets had feigned the like, and they

should have been discussed by us, they would have replied that they

were laughable figments of the poets not to be attributed to true

deities. And yet they themselves did not laugh when they were, not

reading in the poets, but worshipping in the temples such doating

follies. Therefore they should entreat Jove alone for all things, and

supplicate him only. For if Victory is a goddess, and is under him as

her king, wherever he might have sent her, she could not dare to resist

and do her own will rather than his.

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Chapter 18.--With What Reason They Who Think Felicity and Fortune

Goddesses Have Distinguished Them.

What shall we say, besides, of the idea that Felicity also is a

goddess? She has received a temple; she has merited an altar; suitable

rites of worship are paid to her. She alone, then, should be

worshipped. For where she is present, what good thing can be absent?

But what does a man wish, that he thinks Fortune also a goddess and

worships her? Is felicity one thing, fortune another? Fortune,

indeed, may be bad as well as good; but felicity, if it could be bad,

would not be felicity. Certainly we ought to think all the gods of

either sex (if they also have sex) are only good. This says Plato;

this say other philosophers; this say all estimable rulers of the

republic and the nations. How is it, then, that the goddess Fortune is

sometimes good, sometimes bad? Is it perhaps the case that when she is

bad she is not a goddess, but is suddenly changed into a malignant

demon? How many Fortunes are there then? Just as many as there are

men who are fortunate, that is, of good fortune. But since there must

also be very many others who at the very same time are men of bad

fortune, could she, being one and the same Fortune, be at the same time

both bad and good--the one to these, the other to those? She who is

the goddess, is she always good? Then she herself is felicity. Why,

then, are two names given her? Yet this is tolerable; for it is

customary that one thing should be called by two names. But why

different temples, different altars, different rituals? There is a

reason, say they, because Felicity is she whom the good have by

previous merit; but fortune, which is termed good without any trial of

merit, befalls both good and bad men fortuitously, whence also she is

named Fortune. How, therefore, is she good, who without any

discernment comes--both to the good and to the bad? Why is she

worshipped, who is thus blind, running at random on any one whatever,

so that for the most part she passes by her worshippers, and cleaves to

those who despise her? Or if her worshippers profit somewhat, so that

they are seen by her and loved, then she follows merit, and does not

come fortuitously. What, then, becomes of that definition of fortune?

What becomes of the opinion that she has received her very name from

fortuitous events? For it profits one nothing to worship her if she is

truly fortune. But if she distinguishes her worshippers, so that she

may benefit them, she is not fortune. Or does, Jupiter send her too,

whither he pleases? Then let him alone be worshipped; because Fortune

is not able to resist him when he commands her, and sends her where he

pleases. Or, at least, let the bad worship her, who do not choose to

have merit by which the goddess Felicity might be invited.

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Chapter 19.--Concerning Fortuna Muliebris. [174]

To this supposed deity, whom they call Fortuna, they ascribe so much,

indeed, that they have a tradition that the image of her, which was

dedicated by the Roman matrons, and called Fortuna Muliebris, has

spoken, and has said, once and again, that the matrons pleased her by

their homage; which, indeed, if it is true, ought not to excite our

wonder. For it is not so difficult for malignant demons to deceive,

and they ought the rather to advert to their wits and wiles, because it

is that goddess who comes by haphazard who has spoken, and not she who

comes to reward merit. For Fortuna was loquacious, and Felicitas mute;

and for what other reason but that men might not care to live rightly,

having made Fortuna their friend, who could make them fortunate without

any good desert? And truly, if Fortuna speaks, she should at least

speak, not with a womanly, but with a manly voice; lest they themselves

who have dedicated the image should think so great a miracle has been

wrought by feminine loquacity.

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[174] The feminine Fortune.

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Chapter 20.--Concerning Virtue and Faith, Which the Pagans Have Honored

with Temples and Sacred Rites, Passing by Other Good Qualities, Which

Ought Likewise to Have Been Worshipped, If Deity Was Rightly Attributed

to These.

They have made Virtue also a goddess, which, indeed, if it could be a

goddess, had been preferable to many. And now, because it is not a

goddess, but a gift of God, let it be obtained by prayer from Him, by

whom alone it can be given, and the whole crowd of false gods

vanishes. But why is Faith believed to be a goddess, and why does she

herself receive temple and altar? For whoever prudently acknowledges

her makes his own self an abode for her. But how do they know what

faith is, of which it is the prime and greatest function that the true

God may be believed in? But why had not virtue sufficed? Does it not

include faith also? Forasmuch as they have thought proper to

distribute virtue into four divisions--prudence, justice, fortitude,

and temperance--and as each of these divisions has its own virtues,

faith is among the parts of justice, and has the chief place with as

many of us as know what that saying means, "The just shall live by

faith." [175] But if Faith is a goddess, I wonder why these keen

lovers of a multitude of gods have wronged so many other goddesses, by

passing them by, when they could have dedicated temples and altars to

them likewise. Why has temperance not deserved to be a goddess, when

some Roman princes have obtained no small glory on account of her?

Why, in fine, is fortitude not a goddess, who aided Mucius when he

thrust his right hand into the flames; who aided Curtius, when for the

sake of his country he threw himself headlong into the yawning earth;

who aided Decius the sire, and Decius the son, when they devoted

themselves for the army?--though we might question whether these men

had true fortitude, if this concerned our present discussion. Why have

prudence and wisdom merited no place among the gods? Is it because

they are all worshipped under the general name of Virtue itself? Then

they could thus worship the true God also, of whom all the other gods

are thought to be parts. But in that one name of virtue is

comprehended both faith and chastity, which yet have obtained separate

altars in temples of their own.

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[175] Hab. ii. 4.

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Chapter 21.--That Although Not Understanding Them to Be the Gifts of

God, They Ought at Least to Have Been Content with Virtue and Felicity.

These, not verity but vanity has made goddesses. For these are gifts

of the true God, not themselves goddesses. However, where virtue and

felicity are, what else is sought for? What can suffice the man whom

virtue and felicity do not suffice? For surely virtue comprehends all

things we need do, felicity all things we need wish for. If Jupiter,

then, was worshipped in order that he might give these two

things,--because, if extent and duration of empire is something good,

it pertains to this same felicity,--why is it not understood that they

are not goddesses, but the gifts of God? But if they are judged to be

goddesses, then at least that other great crowd of gods should not be

sought after. For, having considered all the offices which their fancy

has distributed among the various gods and goddesses, let them find

out, if they can, anything which could be bestowed by any god whatever

on a man possessing virtue, possessing felicity. What instruction

could be sought either from Mercury or Minerva, when Virtue already

possessed all in herself? Virtue, indeed, is defined by the ancients

as itself the art of living well and rightly. Hence, because virtue is

called in Greek arete, it has been thought the Latins have derived from

it the term art. But if Virtue cannot come except to the clever, what

need was there of the god Father Catius, who should make men cautious,

that is, acute, when Felicity could confer this? Because, to be born

clever belongs to felicity. Whence, although goddess Felicity could

not be worshipped by one not yet born, in order that, being made his

friend, she might bestow this on him, yet she might confer this favor

on parents who were her worshippers, that clever children should be

born to them. What need had women in childbirth to invoke Lucina,

when, if Felicity should be present, they would have, not only a good

delivery, but good children too? What need was there to commend the

children to the goddess Ops when they were being born; to the god

Vaticanus in their birth-cry; to the goddess Cunina when lying cradled;

to the goddess Rimina when sucking; to the god Statilinus when

standing; to the goddess Adeona when coming; to Abeona when going away;

to the goddess Mens that they might have a good mind; to the god

Volumnus, and the goddess Volumna, that they might wish for good

things; to the nuptial gods, that they might make good matches; to the

rural gods, and chiefly to the goddess Fructesca herself, that they

might receive the most abundant fruits; to Mars and Bellona, that they

might carry on war well; to the goddess Victoria, that they might be

victorious; to the god Honor, that they might be honored; to the

goddess Pecunia, that they might have plenty money; to the god

Aesculanus, and his son Argentinus, that they might have brass and

silver coin? For they set down Aesculanus as the father of Argentinus

for this reason, that brass coin began to be used before silver. But I

wonder Argentinus has not begotten Aurinus, since gold coin also has

followed. Could they have him for a god, they would prefer Aurinus

both to his father Argentinus and his grandfather Aesculanus, just as

they set Jove before Saturn. Therefore, what necessity was there on

account of these gifts, either of soul, or body, or outward estate, to

worship and invoke so great a crowd of gods, all of whom I have not

mentioned, nor have they themselves been able to provide for all human

benefits, minutely and singly methodized, minute and single gods, when

the one goddess Felicity was able, with the greatest ease,

compendiously to bestow the whole of them? nor should any other be

sought after, either for the bestowing of good things, or for the

averting of evil. For why should they invoke the goddess Fessonia for

the weary; for driving away enemies, the goddess Pellonia; for the

sick, as a physician, either Apollo or �sculapius, or both together if

there should be great danger? Neither should the god Spiniensis be

entreated that he might root out the thorns from the fields; nor the

goddess Rubigo that the mildew might not come,--Felicitas alone being

present and guarding, either no evils would have arisen, or they would

have been quite easily driven away. Finally, since we treat of these

two goddesses, Virtue and Felicity, if felicity is the reward of

virtue, she is not a goddess, but a gift of God. But if she is a

goddess, why may she not be said to confer virtue itself, inasmuch as

it is a great felicity to attain virtue?

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Chapter 22.--Concerning the Knowledge of the Worship Due to the Gods,

Which Varro Glories in Having Himself Conferred on the Romans.

What is it, then, that Varro boasts he has bestowed as a very great

benefit on his fellow-citizens, because he not only recounts the gods

who ought to be worshipped by the Romans, but also tells what pertains

to each of them? "Just as it is of no advantage," he says, "to know

the name and appearance of any man who is a physician, and not know

that he is a physician, so," he says, "it is of no advantage to know

well that �sculapius is a god, if you are not aware that he can bestow

the gift of health, and consequently do not know why you ought to

supplicate him." He also affirms this by another comparison, saying,

"No one is able, not only to live well, but even to live at all, if he

does not know who is a smith, who a baker, who a weaver, from whom he

can seek any utensil, whom he may take for a helper, whom for a leader,

whom for a teacher;" asserting, "that in this way it can be doubtful to

no one, that thus the knowledge of the gods is useful, if one can know

what force, and faculty, or power any god may have in any thing. For

from this we may be able," he says, "to know what god we ought to call

to, and invoke for any cause; lest we should do as too many are wont to

do, and desire water from Liber, and wine from Lymphs." Very useful,

forsooth! Who would not give this man thanks if he could show true

things, and if he could teach that the one true God, from whom all good

things are, is to be worshipped by men?

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Chapter 23.--Concerning Felicity, Whom the Romans, Who Venerate Many

Gods, for a Long Time Did Not Worship with Divine Honor, Though She

Alone Would Have Sufficed Instead of All.

But how does it happen, if their books and rituals are true, and

Felicity is a goddess, that she herself is not appointed as the only

one to be worshipped, since she could confer all things, and all at

once make men happy? For who wishes anything for any other reason than

that he may become happy? Why was it left to Lucullus to dedicate a

temple to so great a goddess at so late a date, and after so many Roman

rulers? Why did Romulus himself, ambitious as he was of founding a

fortunate city, not erect a temple to this goddess before all others?

Why did he supplicate the other gods for anything, since he would have

lacked nothing had she been with him? For even he himself would

neither have been first a king, then afterwards, as they think, a god,

if this goddess had not been propitious to him. Why, therefore, did he

appoint as gods for the Romans, Janus, Jove, Mars, Picus, Faunus,

Tibernus, Hercules, and others, if there were more of them? Why did

Titus Tatius add Saturn, Ops, Sun, Moon, Vulcan, Light, and whatever

others he added, among whom was even the goddess Cloacina, while

Felicity was neglected? Why did Numa appoint so many gods and so many

goddesses without this one? Was it perhaps because he could not see

her among so great a crowd? Certainly king Hostilius would not have

introduced the new gods Fear and Dread to be propitiated, if he could

have known or might have worshipped this goddess. For, in presence of

Felicity, Fear and Dread would have disappeared,--I do not say

propitiated, but put to flight. Next, I ask, how is it that the Roman

empire had already immensely increased before any one worshipped

Felicity? Was the empire, therefore, more great than happy? For how

could true felicity be there, where there was not true piety? For

piety is the genuine worship of the true God, and not the worship of as

many demons as there are false gods. Yet even afterwards, when

Felicity had already been taken into the number of the gods, the great

infelicity of the civil wars ensued. Was Felicity perhaps justly

indignant, both because she was invited so late, and was invited not to

honor, but rather to reproach, because along with her were worshipped

Priapus, and Cloacina, and Fear and Dread, and Ague, and others which

were not gods to be worshipped, but the crimes of the worshippers?

Last of all, if it seemed good to worship so great a goddess along with

a most unworthy crowd, why at least was she not worshipped in a more

honorable way than the rest? For is it not intolerable that Felicity

is placed neither among the gods Consentes, [176] whom they allege to

be admitted into the council of Jupiter, nor among the gods whom they

term Select? Some temple might be made for her which might be

pre-eminent, both in loftiness of site and dignity of style. Why,

indeed, not something better than is made for Jupiter himself? For who

gave the kingdom even to Jupiter but Felicity? I am supposing that

when he reigned he was happy. Felicity, however, is certainly more

valuable than a kingdom. For no one doubts that a man might easily be

found who may fear to be made a king; but no one is found who is

unwilling to be happy. Therefore, if it is thought they can be

consulted by augury, or in any other way, the gods themselves should be

consulted about this thing, whether they may wish to give place to

Felicity. If, perchance, the place should already be occupied by the

temples and altars of others, where a greater and more lofty temple

might be built to Felicity, even Jupiter himself might give way, so

that Felicity might rather obtain the very pinnacle of the Capitoline

hill. For there is not any one who would resist Felicity, except,

which is impossible, one who might wish to be unhappy. Certainly, if

he should be consulted, Jupiter would in no case do what those three

gods, Mars, Terminus, and Juventas, did, who positively refused to give

place to their superior and king. For, as their books record, when

king Tarquin wished to construct the Capitol, and perceived that the

place which seemed to him to be the most worthy and suitable was

preoccupied by other gods, not daring to do anything contrary to their

pleasure, and believing that they would willingly give place to a god

who was so great, and was their own master, because there were many of

them there when the Capitol was founded, he inquired by augury whether

they chose to give place to Jupiter, and they were all willing to

remove thence except those whom I have named, Mars, Terminus, and

Juventas; and therefore the Capitol was built in such a way that these

three also might be within it, yet with such obscure signs that even

the most learned men could scarcely know this. Surely, then, Jupiter

himself would by no means despise Felicity, as he was himself despised

by Terminus, Mars, and Juventas. But even they themselves who had not

given place to Jupiter, would certainly give place to Felicity, who had

made Jupiter king over them. Or if they should not give place, they

would act thus not out of contempt of her, but because they chose

rather to be obscure in the house of Felicity, than to be eminent

without her in their own places.

Thus the goddess Felicity being established in the largest and loftiest

place, the citizens should learn whence the furtherance of every good

desire should be sought. And so, by the persuasion of nature herself,

the superfluous multitude of other gods being abandoned, Felicity alone

would be worshipped, prayer would be made to her alone, her temple

alone would be frequented by the citizens who wished to be happy, which

no one of them would not wish; and thus felicity, who was sought for

from all the gods, would be sought for only from her own self. For who

wishes to receive from any god anything else than felicity, or what he

supposes to tend to felicity? Wherefore, if Felicity has it in her

power to be with what man she pleases (and she has it if she is a

goddess), what folly is it, after all, to seek from any other god her

whom you can obtain by request from her own self! Therefore they ought

to honor this goddess above other gods, even by dignity of place. For,

as we read in their own authors, the ancient Romans paid greater honors

to I know not what Summanus, to whom they attributed nocturnal

thunderbolts, than to Jupiter, to whom diurnal thunderbolts were held

to pertain. But, after a famous and conspicuous temple had been built

to Jupiter, owing to the dignity of the building, the multitude

resorted to him in so great numbers, that scarce one can be found who

remembers even to have read the name of Summanus, which now he cannot

once hear named. But if Felicity is not a goddess, because, as is

true, it is a gift of God, that god must be sought who has power to

give it, and that hurtful multitude of false gods must be abandoned

which the vain multitude of foolish men follows after, making gods to

itself of the gifts of God, and offending Himself whose gifts they are

by the stubbornness of a proud will. For he cannot be free from

infelicity who worships Felicity as a goddess, and forsakes God, the

giver of felicity; just as he cannot be free from hunger who licks a

painted loaf of bread, and does not buy it of the man who has a real

one.

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[176] So called from the consent or harmony of the celestial movements

of these gods.

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Chapter 24.--The Reasons by Which the Pagans Attempt to Defend Their

Worshipping Among the Gods the Divine Gifts Themselves.

We may, however, consider their reasons. Is it to be believed, say

they, that our forefathers were besotted even to such a degree as not

to know that these things are divine gifts, and not gods? But as they

knew that such things are granted to no one, except by some god freely

bestowing them, they called the gods whose names they did not find out

by the names of those things which they deemed to be given by them;

sometimes slightly altering the name for that purpose, as, for example,

from war they have named Bellona, not bellum; from cradles, Cunina, not

cun�; from standing corn, Segetia, not seges; from apples, Pomona, not

pomum; from oxen, Bubona, not bos. Sometimes, again, with no alteration

of the word, just as the things themselves are named, so that the

goddess who gives money is called Pecunia, and money is not thought to

be itself a goddess: so of Virtus, who gives virtue; Honor, who gives

honor; Concordia, who gives concord; Victoria, who gives victory. So,

they say, when Felicitas is called a goddess, what is meant is not the

thing itself which is given, but that deity by whom felicity is given.

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Chapter 25.--Concerning the One God Only to Be Worshipped, Who,

Although His Name is Unknown, is Yet Deemed to Be the Giver of

Felicity.

Having had that reason rendered to us, we shall perhaps much more

easily persuade, as we wish, those whose heart has not become too much

hardened. For if now human infirmity has perceived that felicity

cannot be given except by some god; if this was perceived by those who

worshipped so many gods, at whose head they set Jupiter himself; if, in

their ignorance of the name of Him by whom felicity was given, they

agreed to call Him by the name of that very thing which they believed

He gave;--then it follows that they thought that felicity could not be

given even by Jupiter himself, whom they already worshipped, but

certainly by him whom they thought fit to worship under the name of

Felicity itself. I thoroughly affirm the statement that they believed

felicity to be given by a certain God whom they knew not: let Him

therefore be sought after, let Him be worshipped, and it is enough.

Let the train of innumerable demons be repudiated, and let this God

suffice every man whom his gift suffices. For him, I say, God the

giver of felicity will not be enough to worship, for whom felicity

itself is not enough to receive. But let him for whom it suffices (and

man has nothing more he ought to wish for) serve the one God, the giver

of felicity. This God is not he whom they call Jupiter. For if they

acknowledged him to be the giver of felicity, they would not seek,

under the name of Felicity itself, for another god or goddess by whom

felicity might be given; nor could they tolerate that Jupiter himself

should be worshipped with such infamous attributes. For he is said to

be the debaucher of the wives of others; he is the shameless lover and

ravisher of a beautiful boy.

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Chapter 26.--Of the Scenic Plays, the Celebration of Which the Gods

Have Exacted from Their Worshippers.

"But," says Cicero, "Homer invented these things, and transferred

things human to the gods: I would rather transfer things divine to

us." [177] The poet, by ascribing such crimes to the gods, has justly

displeased the grave man. Why, then, are the scenic plays, where these

crimes are habitually spoken of, acted, exhibited, in honor of the

gods, reckoned among things divine by the most learned men? Cicero

should exclaim, not against the inventions of the poets, but against

the customs of the ancients. Would not they have exclaimed in reply,

What have we done? The gods themselves have loudly demanded that these

plays should be exhibited in their honor, have fiercely exacted them,

have menaced destruction unless this was performed, have avenged its

neglect with great severity, and have manifested pleasure at the

reparation of such neglect. Among their virtuous and wonderful deeds

the following is related. It was announced in a dream to Titus

Latinius, a Roman rustic, that he should go to the senate and tell them

to recommence the games of Rome, because on the first day of their

celebration a condemned criminal had been led to punishment in sight of

the people, an incident so sad as to disturb the gods who were seeking

amusement from the games. And when the peasant who had received this

intimation was afraid on the following day to deliver it to the senate,

it was renewed next night in a severer form: he lost his son, because

of his neglect. On the third night he was warned that a yet graver

punishment was impending, if he should still refuse obedience. When

even thus he did not dare to obey, he fell into a virulent and horrible

disease. But then, on the advice of his friends, he gave information

to the magistrates, and was carried in a litter into the senate, and

having, on declaring his dream, immediately recovered strength, went

away on his own feet whole. [178] The senate, amazed at so great a

miracle, decreed that the games should be renewed at fourfold cost.

What sensible man does not see that men, being put upon by malignant

demons, from whose domination nothing save the grace of God through

Jesus Christ our Lord sets free, have been compelled by force to

exhibit to such gods as these, plays which, if well advised, they

should condemn as shameful? Certain it is that in these plays the

poetic crimes of the gods are celebrated, yet they are plays which were

re-established by decree of the senate, under compulsion of the gods.

In these plays the most shameless actors celebrated Jupiter as the

corrupter of chastity, and thus gave him pleasure. If that was a

fiction, he would have been moved to anger; but if he was delighted

with the representation of his crimes, even although fabulous, then,

when he happened to be worshipped, who but the devil could be served?

Is it so that he could found, extend, and preserve the Roman empire,

who was more vile than any Roman man whatever, to whom such things were

displeasing? Could he give felicity who was so infelicitously

worshipped, and who, unless he should be thus worshipped, was yet more

infelicitously provoked to anger?

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[177] Tusc. Qu�st.i. 26.

[178] Livy, ii. 36; Cicero, De Divin. 26.

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Chapter 27.--Concerning the Three Kinds of Gods About Which the Pontiff

Sc�vola Has Discoursed.

It is recorded that the very learned pontiff Sc�vola [179] had

distinguished about three kinds of gods--one introduced by the poets,

another by the philosophers, another by the statesmen. The first kind

he declares to be trifling, because many unworthy things have been

invented by the poets concerning the gods; the second does not suit

states, because it contains some things that are superfluous, and some,

too, which it would be prejudicial for the people to know. It is no

great matter about the superfluous things, for it is a common saying of

skillful lawyers, "Superfluous things do no harm." [180] But what are

those things which do harm when brought before the multitude? "These,"

he says, "that Hercules, �sculapius, Castor and Pollux, are not gods;

for it is declared by learned men that these were but men, and yielded

to the common lot of mortals." What else? "That states have not the

true images of the gods; because the true God has neither sex, nor age,

nor definite corporeal members." The pontiff is not willing that the

people should know these things; for he does not think they are false.

He thinks it expedient, therefore, that states should be deceived in

matters of religion; which Varro himself does not even hesitate to say

in his books about things divine. Excellent religion! to which the

weak, who requires to be delivered, may flee for succor; and when he

seeks for the truth by which he may be delivered, it is believed to be

expedient for him that he be deceived. And, truly, in these same

books, Sc�vola is not silent as to his reason for rejecting the poetic

sort of gods,--to wit, "because they so disfigure the gods that they

could not bear comparison even with good men, when they make one to

commit theft, another adultery; or, again, to say or do something else

basely and foolishly; as that three goddesses contested (with each

other) the prize of beauty, and the two vanquished by Venus destroyed

Troy; that Jupiter turned himself into a bull or swan that he might

copulate with some one; that a goddess married a man, and Saturn

devoured his children; that, in fine, there is nothing that could be

imagined, either of the miraculous or vicious, which may not be found

there, and yet is far removed from the nature of the gods." O chief

pontiff Sc�vola, take away the plays if thou art able; instruct the

people that they may not offer such honors to the immortal gods, in

which, if they like, they may admire the crimes of the gods, and, so

far as it is possible, may, if they please, imitate them. But if the

people shall have answered thee, You, O pontiff, have brought these

things in among us, then ask the gods themselves at whose instigation

you have ordered these things, that they may not order such things to

be offered to them. For if they are bad, and therefore in no way to be

believed concerning the majority of the gods, the greater is the wrong

done the gods about whom they are feigned with impunity. But they do

not hear thee, they are demons, they teach wicked things, they rejoice

in vile things; not only do they not count it a wrong if these things

are feigned about them, but it is a wrong they are quite unable to bear

if they are not acted at their stated festivals. But now, if thou

wouldst call on Jupiter against them, chiefly for that reason that more

of his crimes are wont to be acted in the scenic plays, is it not the

case that, although you call him god Jupiter, by whom this whole world

is ruled and administered, it is he to whom the greatest wrong is done

by you, because you have thought he ought to be worshipped along with

them, and have styled him their king?

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[179] Called by Cicero (De Oratore, i. 39) the most eloquent of

lawyers, and the best skilled lawyer among eloquent men.

[180] Superflua non nocent.

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Chapter 28.--Whether the Worship of the Gods Has Been of Service to the

Romans in Obtaining and Extending the Empire.

Therefore such gods, who are propitiated by such honors, or rather are

impeached by them (for it is a greater crime to delight in having such

things said of them falsely, than even if they could be said truly),

could never by any means have been able to increase and preserve the

Roman empire. For if they could have done it, they would rather have

bestowed so grand a gift on the Greeks, who, in this kind of divine

things,--that is, in scenic plays,--have worshipped them more honorably

and worthily, although they have not exempted themselves from those

slanders of the poets, by whom they saw the gods torn in pieces, giving

them licence to ill-use any man they pleased, and have not deemed the

scenic players themselves to be base, but have held them worthy even of

distinguished honor. But just as the Romans were able to have gold

money, although they did not worship a god Aurinus, so also they could

have silver and brass coin, and yet worship neither Argentinus nor his

father Aesculanus; and so of all the rest, which it would be irksome

for me to detail. It follows, therefore, both that they could not by

any means attain such dominion if the true God was unwilling; and that

if these gods, false and many, were unknown or contemned, and He alone

was known and worshipped with sincere faith and virtue, they would both

have a better kingdom here, whatever might be its extent, and whether

they might have one here or not, would afterwards receive an eternal

kingdom.

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Chapter 29.--Of the Falsity of the Augury by Which the Strength and

Stability of the Roman Empire Was Considered to Be Indicated.

For what kind of augury is that which they have declared to be most

beautiful, and to which I referred a little ago, that Mars, and

Terminus, and Juventas would not give place even to Jove, the king of

the gods? For thus, they say, it was signified that the nation

dedicated to Mars,--that is, the Roman,--should yield to none the place

it once occupied; likewise, that on account of the god Terminus, no one

would be able to disturb the Roman frontiers; and also, that the Roman

youth, because of the goddess Juventas, should yield to no one. Let

them see, therefore, how they can hold him to be the king of their

gods, and the giver of their own kingdom, if these auguries set him

down for an adversary, to whom it would have been honorable not to

yield. However, if these things are true, they need not be at all

afraid. For they are not going to confess that the gods who would not

yield to Jove have yielded to Christ. For, without altering the

boundaries of the empire, Jesus Christ has proved Himself able to drive

them, not only from their temples, but from the hearts of their

worshippers. But, before Christ came in the flesh, and, indeed, before

these things which we have quoted from their books could have been

written, but yet after that auspice was made under king Tarquin, the

Roman army has been divers times scattered or put to flight, and has

shown the falseness of the auspice, which they derived from the fact

that the goddess Juventas had not given place to Jove; and the nation

dedicated to Mars was trodden down in the city itself by the invading

and triumphant Gauls; and the boundaries of the empire, through the

falling away of many cities to Hannibal, had been hemmed into a narrow

space. Thus the beauty of the auspices is made void, and there has

remained only the contumacy against Jove, not of gods, but of demons.

For it is one thing not to have yielded, and another to have returned

whither you have yielded. Besides, even afterwards, in the oriental

regions, the boundaries of the Roman empire were changed by the will of

Hadrian; for he yielded up to the Persian empire those three noble

provinces, Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria. Thus that god Terminus,

who according to these books was the guardian of the Roman frontiers,

and by that most beautiful auspice had not given place to Jove, would

seem to have been more afraid of Hadrian, a king of men, than of the

king of the gods. The aforesaid provinces having also been taken back

again, almost within our own recollection the frontier fell back, when

Julian, given up to the oracles of their gods, with immoderate daring

ordered the victualling ships to be set on fire. The army being thus

left destitute of provisions, and he himself also being presently

killed by the enemy, and the legions being hard pressed, while dismayed

by the loss of their commander, they were reduced to such extremities

that no one could have escaped, unless by articles of peace the

boundaries of the empire had then been established where they still

remain; not, indeed, with so great a loss as was suffered by the

concession of Hadrian, but still at a considerable sacrifice. It was a

vain augury, then, that the god Terminus did not yield to Jove, since

he yielded to the will of Hadrian, and yielded also to the rashness of

Julian, and the necessity of Jovinian. The more intelligent and grave

Romans have seen these things, but have had little power against the

custom of the state, which was bound to observe the rites of the

demons; because even they themselves, although they perceived that

these things were vain, yet thought that the religious worship which is

due to God should be paid to the nature of things which is established

under the rule and government of the one true God, "serving," as saith

the apostle, "the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for

evermore." [181] The help of this true God was necessary to send holy

and truly pious men, who would die for the true religion that they

might remove the false from among the living.

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[181] Rom. i. 25.

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Chapter 30.--What Kind of Things Even Their Worshippers Have Owned They

Have Thought About the Gods of the Nations.

Cicero the augur laughs at auguries, and reproves men for regulating

the purposes of life by the cries of crows and jackdaws. [182] But it

will be said that an academic philosopher, who argues that all things

are uncertain, is unworthy to have any authority in these matters. In

the second book of his De Natura Deorum, [183] he introduces Lucilius

Balbus, who, after showing that superstitions have their origin in

physical and philosophical truths, expresses his indignation at the

setting up of images and fabulous notions, speaking thus: "Do you not

therefore see that from true and useful physical discoveries the reason

may be drawn away to fabulous and imaginary gods? This gives birth to

false opinions and turbulent errors, and superstitions well-nigh

old-wifeish. For both the forms of the gods, and their ages, and

clothing, and ornaments, are made familiar to us; their genealogies,

too, their marriages, kinships, and all things about them, are debased

to the likeness of human weakness. They are even introduced as having

perturbed minds; for we have accounts of the lusts, cares, and angers

of the gods. Nor, indeed, as the fables go, have the gods been without

their wars and battles. And that not only when, as in Homer, some gods

on either side have defended two opposing armies, but they have even

carried on wars on their own account, as with the Titans or with the

Giants. Such things it is quite absurd either to say or to believe:

they are utterly frivolous and groundless." Behold, now, what is

confessed by those who defend the gods of the nations. Afterwards he

goes on to say that some things belong to superstition, but others to

religion, which he thinks good to teach according to the Stoics. "For

not only the philosophers," he says, "but also our forefathers, have

made a distinction between superstition and religion. For those," he

says, "who spent whole days in prayer, and offered sacrifice, that

their children might outlive them, are called superstitious." [184]

Who does not see that he is trying, while he fears the public

prejudice, to praise the religion of the ancients, and that he wishes

to disjoin it from superstition, but cannot find out how to do so? For

if those who prayed and sacrificed all day were called superstitious by

the ancients, were those also called so who instituted (what he blames)

the images of the gods of diverse age and distinct clothing, and

invented the genealogies of gods, their marriages, and kinships? When,

therefore, these things are found fault with as superstitious, he

implicates in that fault the ancients who instituted and worshipped

such images. Nay, he implicates himself, who, with whatever eloquence

he may strive to extricate himself and be free, was yet under the

necessity of venerating these images; nor dared he so much as whisper

in a discourse to the people what in this disputation he plainly sounds

forth. Let us Christians, therefore, give thanks to the Lord our

God--not to heaven and earth, as that author argues, but to Him who has

made heaven and earth; because these superstitions, which that Balbus,

like a babbler, [185] scarcely reprehends, He, by the most deep

lowliness of Christ, by the preaching of the apostles, by the faith of

the martyrs dying for the truth and living with the truth, has

overthrown, not only in the hearts of the religious, but even in the

temples of the superstitious, by their own free service.

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[182] De Divin.ii. 37.

[183] Cic. De Nat. Deorum, lib. ii. c. 28.

[184] Superstition, from superstes. Against his etymology of Cicero,

see Lact. Inst. Div. iv. 28.

[185] Balbus, from balbutiens, stammering, babbling.

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Chapter 31.--Concerning the Opinions of Varro, Who, While Reprobating

the Popular Belief, Thought that Their Worship Should Be Confined to

One God, Though He Was Unable to Discover the True God.

What says Varro himself, whom we grieve to have found, although not by

his own judgment, placing the scenic plays among things divine? When

in many passages he is exhorting, like a religious man, to the worship

of the gods, does he not in doing so admit that he does not in his own

judgment believe those things which he relates that the Roman state has

instituted; so that he does not hesitate to affirm that if he were

founding a new state, he could enumerate the gods and their names

better by the rule of nature? But being born into a nation already

ancient, he says that he finds himself bound to accept the traditional

names and surnames of the gods, and the histories connected with them,

and that his purpose in investigating and publishing these details is

to incline the people to worship the gods, and not to despise them. By

which words this most acute man sufficiently indicates that he does not

publish all things, because they would not only have been contemptible

to himself, but would have seemed despicable even to the rabble, unless

they had been passed over in silence. I should be thought to

conjecture these things, unless he himself, in another passage, had

openly said, in speaking of religious rites, that many things are true

which it is not only not useful for the common people to know, but that

it is expedient that the people should think otherwise, even though

falsely, and therefore the Greeks have shut up the religious ceremonies

and mysteries in silence, and within walls. In this he no doubt

expresses the policy of the so-called wise men by whom states and

peoples are ruled. Yet by this crafty device the malign demons are

wonderfully delighted, who possess alike the deceivers and the

deceived, and from whose tyranny nothing sets free save the grace of

God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The same most acute and learned author also says, that those alone seem

to him to have perceived what God is, who have believed Him to be the

soul of the world, governing it by design and reason. [186] And by

this, it appears, that although he did not attain to the truth,--for

the true God is not a soul, but the maker and author of the soul,--yet

if he could have been free to go against the prejudices of custom, he

could have confessed and counselled others that the one God ought to be

worshipped, who governs the world by design and reason; so that on this

subject only this point would remain to be debated with him, that he

had called Him a soul, and not rather the creator of the soul. He

says, also, that the ancient Romans, for more than a hundred and

seventy years, worshipped the gods without an image. [187] "And if

this custom," he says, "could have remained till now, the gods would

have been more purely worshipped." In favor of this opinion, he cites

as a witness among others the Jewish nation; nor does he hesitate to

conclude that passage by saying of those who first consecrated images

for the people, that they have both taken away religious fear from

their fellow-citizens, and increased error, wisely thinking that the

gods easily fall into contempt when exhibited under the stolidity of

images. But as he does not say they have transmitted error, but that

they have increased it, he therefore wishes it to be understood that

there was error already when there were no images. Wherefore, when he

says they alone have perceived what God is who have believed Him to be

the governing soul of the world, and thinks that the rites of religion

would have been more purely observed without images, who fails to see

how near he has come to the truth? For if he had been able to do

anything against so inveterate an error, he would certainly have given

it as his opinion both that the one God should be worshipped, and that

He should be worshipped without an image; and having so nearly

discovered the truth, perhaps he might easily have been put in mind of

the mutability of the soul, and might thus have perceived that the true

God is that immutable nature which made the soul itself. Since these

things are so, whatever ridicule such men have poured in their writings

against the plurality of the gods, they have done so rather as

compelled by the secret will of God to confess them, than as trying to

persuade others. If, therefore, any testimonies are adduced by us from

these writings, they are adduced for the confutation of those who are

unwilling to consider from how great and malignant a power of the

demons the singular sacrifice of the shedding of the most holy blood,

and the gift of the imparted Spirit, can set us free.

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[186] See Cicero, De Nat. Deor. i. 2.

[187] Plutarch's Numa, c. 8.

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Chapter 32.--In What Interest the Princes of the Nations Wished False

Religions to Continue Among the People Subject to Them.

Varro says also, concerning the generations of the gods, that the

people have inclined to the poets rather than to the natural

philosophers; and that therefore their forefathers,--that is, the

ancient Romans,--believed both in the sex and the generations of the

gods, and settled their marriages; which certainly seems to have been

done for no other cause except that it was the business of such men as

were prudent and wise to deceive the people in matters of religion, and

in that very thing not only to worship, but also to imitate the demons,

whose greatest lust is to deceive. For just as the demons cannot

possess any but those whom they have deceived with guile, so also men

in princely office, not indeed being just, but like demons, have

persuaded the people in the name of religion to receive as true those

things which they themselves knew to be false; in this way, as it were,

binding them up more firmly in civil society, so that they might in

like manner possess them as subjects. But who that was weak and

unlearned could escape the deceits of both the princes of the state and

the demons?

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Chapter 33.--That the Times of All Kings and Kingdoms are Ordained by

the Judgment and Power of the True God.

Therefore that God, the author and giver of felicity, because He alone

is the true God, Himself gives earthly kingdoms both to good and bad.

Neither does He do this rashly, and, as it were, fortuitously,--because

He is God not fortune,--but according to the order of things and times,

which is hidden from us, but thoroughly known to Himself; which same

order of times, however, He does not serve as subject to it, but

Himself rules as lord and appoints as governor. Felicity He gives only

to the good. Whether a man be a subject or a king makes no difference;

he may equally either possess or not possess it. And it shall be full

in that life where kings and subjects exist no longer. And therefore

earthly kingdoms are given by Him both to the good and the bad; lest

His worshippers, still under the conduct of a very weak mind, should

covet these gifts from Him as some great things. And this is the

mystery of the Old Testament, in which the New was hidden, that there

even earthly gifts are promised: those who were spiritual

understanding even then, although not yet openly declaring, both the

eternity which was symbolized by these earthly things, and in what

gifts of God true felicity could be found.

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Chapter 34.--Concerning the Kingdom of the Jews, Which Was Founded by

the One and True God, and Preserved by Him as Long as They Remained in

the True Religion.

Therefore, that it might be known that these earthly good things, after

which those pant who cannot imagine better things, remain in the power

of the one God Himself, not of the many false gods whom the Romans have

formerly believed worthy of worship, He multiplied His people in Egypt

from being very few, and delivered them out of it by wonderful signs.

Nor did their women invoke Lucina when their offspring was being

incredibly multiplied; and that nation having increased incredibly, He

Himself delivered, He Himself saved them from the hands of the

Egyptians, who persecuted them, and wished to kill all their infants.

Without the goddess Rumina they sucked; without Cunina they were

cradled, without Educa and Potina they took food and drink; without all

those puerile gods they were educated; without the nuptial gods they

were married; without the worship of Priapus they had conjugal

intercourse; without invocation of Neptune the divided sea opened up a

way for them to pass over, and overwhelmed with its returning waves

their enemies who pursued them. Neither did they consecrate any

goddess Mannia when they received manna from heaven; nor, when the

smitten rock poured forth water to them when they thirsted, did they

worship Nymphs and Lymphs. Without the mad rites of Mars and Bellona

they carried on war; and while, indeed, they did not conquer without

victory, yet they did not hold it to be a goddess, but the gift of

their God. Without Segetia they had harvests; without Bubona, oxen;

honey without Mellona; apples without Pomona: and, in a word,

everything for which the Romans thought they must supplicate so great a

crowd of false gods, they received much more happily from the one true

God. And if they had not sinned against Him with impious curiosity,

which seduced them like magic arts, and drew them to strange gods and

idols, and at last led them to kill Christ, their kingdom would have

remained to them, and would have been, if not more spacious, yet more

happy, than that of Rome. And now that they are dispersed through

almost all lands and nations, it is through the providence of that one

true God; that whereas the images, altars, groves, and temples of the

false gods are everywhere overthrown, and their sacrifices prohibited,

it may be shown from their books how this has been foretold by their

prophets so long before; lest, perhaps, when they should be read in

ours, they might seem to be invented by us. But now, reserving what is

to follow for the following book, we must here set a bound to the

prolixity of this one.

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[160] In Augustin's letter to Evodius (169), which was written towards

the end of the year 415, he mentions that this fourth book and the

following one were begun and finished during that same year.

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Book V. [188]

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Argument--Augustin first discusses the doctrine of fate, for the sake

of confuting those who are disposed to refer to fate the power and

increase of the Roman empire, which could not be attributed to false

gods, as has been shown in the preceding book. After that, he proves

that there is no contradiction between God's prescience and our free

will. He then speaks of the manners of the ancient Romans, and shows

in what sense it was due to the virtue of the Romans themselves, and in

how far to the counsel of God, that he increased their dominion, though

they did not worship him. Finally, he explains what is to be accounted

the true happiness of the Christian emperors.

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Preface.

Since, then, it is established that the complete attainment of all we

desire is that which constitutes felicity, which is no goddess, but a

gift of God, and that therefore men can worship no god save Him who is

able to make them happy,--and were Felicity herself a goddess, she

would with reason be the only object of worship,--since, I say, this is

established, let us now go on to consider why God, who is able to give

with all other things those good gifts which can be possessed by men

who are not good, and consequently not happy, has seen fit to grant

such extended and long-continued dominion to the Roman empire; for that

this was not effected by that multitude of false gods which they

worshipped, we have both already adduced, and shall, as occasion

offers, yet adduce considerable proof.

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Chapter 1.--That the Cause of the Roman Empire, and of All Kingdoms, is

Neither Fortuitous Nor Consists in the Position of the Stars. [189]

The cause, then, of the greatness of the Roman empire is neither

fortuitous nor fatal, according to the judgment or opinion of those who

call those things fortuitous which either have no causes, or such

causes as do not proceed from some intelligible order, and those things

fatal which happen independently of the will of God and man, by the

necessity of a certain order. In a word, human kingdoms are

established by divine providence. And if any one attributes their

existence to fate, because he calls the will or the power of God itself

by the name of fate, let him keep his opinion, but correct his

language. For why does he not say at first what he will say

afterwards, when some one shall put the question to him, What he means

by fate? For when men hear that word, according to the ordinary use of

the language, they simply understand by it the virtue of that

particular position of the stars which may exist at the time when any

one is born or conceived, which some separate altogether from the will

of God, whilst others affirm that this also is dependent on that will.

But those who are of opinion that, apart from the will of God, the

stars determine what we shall do, or what good things we shall possess,

or what evils we shall suffer, must be refused a hearing by all, not

only by those who hold the true religion, but by those who wish to be

the worshippers of any gods whatsoever, even false gods. For what does

this opinion really amount to but this, that no god whatever is to be

worshipped or prayed to? Against these, however, our present

disputation is not intended to be directed, but against those who, in

defence of those whom they think to be gods, oppose the Christian

religion. They, however, who make the position of the stars depend on

the divine will, and in a manner decree what character each man shall

have, and what good or evil shall happen to him, if they think that

these same stars have that power conferred upon them by the supreme

power of God, in order that they may determine these things according

to their will, do a great injury to the celestial sphere, in whose most

brilliant senate, and most splendid senate-house, as it were, they

suppose that wicked deeds are decreed to be done,--such deeds as that,

if any terrestrial state should decree them, it would be condemned to

overthrow by the decree of the whole human race. What judgment, then,

is left to God concerning the deeds of men, who is Lord both of the

stars and of men, when to these deeds a celestial necessity is

attributed? Or, if they do not say that the stars, though they have

indeed received a certain power from God, who is supreme, determine

those things according to their own discretion, but simply that His

commands are fulfilled by them instrumentally in the application and

enforcing of such necessities, are we thus to think concerning God even

what it seemed unworthy that we should think concerning the will of the

stars? But, if the stars are said rather to signify these things than

to effect them, so that that position of the stars is, as it were, a

kind of speech predicting, not causing future things,--for this has

been the opinion of men of no ordinary learning,--certainly the

mathematicians are not wont so to speak saying, for example, Mars in

such or such a position signifies a homicide, but makes a homicide.

But, nevertheless, though we grant that they do not speak as they

ought, and that we ought to accept as the proper form of speech that

employed by the philosophers in predicting those things which they

think they discover in the position of the stars, how comes it that

they have never been able to assign any cause why, in the life of

twins, in their actions, in the events which befall them, in their

professions, arts, honors, and other things pertaining to human life,

also in their very death, there is often so great a difference, that,

as far as these things are concerned, many entire strangers are more

like them than they are like each other, though separated at birth by

the smallest interval of time, but at conception generated by the same

act of copulation, and at the same moment?

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[189] On the application of astrology to national prosperity, and the

success of certain religions, see Lecky's Rationalism, i. 303.

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Chapter 2.--On the Difference in the Health of Twins.

Cicero says that the famous physician Hippocrates has left in writing

that he had suspected that a certain pair of brothers were twins, from

the fact that they both took ill at once, and their disease advanced to

its crisis and subsided in the same time in each of them. [190]

Posidonius the Stoic, who was much given to astrology, used to explain

the fact by supposing that they had been born and conceived under the

same constellation. In this question the conjecture of the physician

is by far more worthy to be accepted, and approaches much nearer to

credibility, since, according as the parents were affected in body at

the time of copulation, so might the first elements of the foetuses

have been affected, so that all that was necessary for their growth and

development up till birth having been supplied from the body of the

same mother, they might be born with like constitutions. Thereafter,

nourished in the same house, on the same kinds of food, where they

would have also the same kinds of air, the same locality, the same

quality of water,--which, according to the testimony of medical

science, have a very great influence, good or bad, on the condition of

bodily health,--and where they would also be accustomed to the same

kinds of exercise, they would have bodily constitutions so similar that

they would be similarly affected with sickness at the same time and by

the same causes. But, to wish to adduce that particular position of

the stars which existed at the time when they were born or conceived as

the cause of their being simultaneously affected with sickness,

manifests the greatest arrogance, when so many beings of most diverse

kinds, in the most diverse conditions, and subject to the most diverse

events, may have been conceived and born at the same time, and in the

same district, lying under the same sky. But we know that twins do not

only act differently, and travel to very different places, but that

they also suffer from different kinds of sickness; for which

Hippocrates would give what is in my opinion the simplest reason,

namely, that, through diversity of food and exercise, which arises not

from the constitution of the body, but from the inclination of the

mind, they may have come to be different from each other in respect of

health. Moreover, Posidonius, or any other asserter of the fatal

influence of the stars, will have enough to do to find anything to say

to this, if he be unwilling to im pose upon the minds of the

uninstructed in things of which they are ignorant. But, as to what

they attempt to make out from that very small interval of time elapsing

between the births of twins, on account of that point in the heavens

where the mark of the natal hour is placed, and which they call the

"horoscope," it is either disproportionately small to the diversity

which is found in the dispositions, actions, habits, and fortunes of

twins, or it is disproportionately great when compared with the estate

of twins, whether low or high, which is the same for both of them, the

cause for whose greatest difference they place, in every case, in the

hour on which one is born; and, for this reason, if the one is born so

immediately after the other that there is no change in the horoscope, I

demand an entire similarity in all that respects them both, which can

never be found in the case of any twins. But if the slowness of the

birth of the second give time for a change in the horoscope, I demand

different parents, which twins can never have.

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[190] This fact is not recorded in any of the extant works of

Hippocrates or Cicero. Vives supposes it may have found place in

Cicero's book, De Fato.

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Chapter 3.--Concerning the Arguments Which Nigidius the Mathematician

Drew from the Potter's Wheel, in the Question About the Birth of Twins.

It is to no purpose, therefore, that that famous fiction about the

potter's wheel is brought forward, which tells of the answer which

Nigidius is said to have given when he was perplexed with this

question, and on account of which he was called Figulus. [191] For,

having whirled round the potter's wheel with all his strength he marked

it with ink, striking it twice with the utmost rapidity, so that the

strokes seemed to fall on the very same part of it. Then, when the

rotation had ceased, the marks which he had made were found upon the

rim of the wheel at no small distance apart. Thus, said he,

considering the great rapidity with which the celestial sphere

revolves, even though twins were born with as short an interval between

their births as there was between the strokes which I gave this wheel,

that brief interval of time is equivalent to a very great distance in

the celestial sphere. Hence, said he, come whatever dissimilitudes may

be remarked in the habits and fortunes of twins. This argument is more

fragile than the vessels which are fashioned by the rotation of that

wheel. For if there is so much significance in the heavens which

cannot be comprehended by observation of the constellations, that, in

the case of twins, an inheritance may fall to the one and not to the

other, why, in the case of others who are not twins, do they dare,

having examined their constellations, to declare such things as pertain

to that secret which no one can comprehend, and to attribute them to

the precise moment of the birth of each individual? Now, if such

predictions in connection with the natal hours of others who are not

twins are to be vindicated on the ground that they are founded on the

observation of more extended spaces in the heavens, whilst those very

small moments of time which separated the births of twins, and

correspond to minute portions of celestial space, are to be connected

with trifling things about which the mathematicians are not wont to be

consulted,--for who would consult them as to when he is to sit, when to

walk abroad, when and on what he is to dine? --how can we be justified

in so speaking, when we can point out such manifold diversity both in

the habits, doings, and destinies of twins?

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[191] I.e. the potter.

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Chapter 4.--Concerning the Twins Esau and Jacob, Who Were Very Unlike

Each Other Both in Their Character and Actions.

In the time of the ancient fathers, to speak concerning illustrious

persons, there were born two twin brothers, the one so immediately

after the other, that the first took hold of the heel of the second.

So great a difference existed in their lives and manners, so great a

dissimilarity in their actions, so great a difference in their parents'

love for them respectively, that the very contrast between them

produced even a mutual hostile antipathy. Do we mean, when we say that

they were so unlike each other, that when the one was walking the other

was sitting, when the one was sleeping the other was waking,--which

differences are such as are attributed to those minute portions of

space which cannot be appreciated by those who note down the position

of the stars which exists at the moment of one's birth, in order that

the mathematicians may be consulted concerning it? One of these twins

was for a long time a hired servant; the other never served. One of

them was beloved by his mother; the other was not so. One of them lost

that honor which was so much valued among their people; the other

obtained it. And what shall we say of their wives, their children, and

their possessions? How different they were in respect to all these!

If, therefore, such things as these are connected with those minute

intervals of time which elapse between the births of twins, and are not

to be attributed to the constellations, wherefore are they predicted in

the case of others from the examination of their constellations? And

if, on the other hand, these things are said to be predicted, because

they are connected, not with minute and inappreciable moments, but with

intervals of time which can be observed and noted down, what purpose is

that potter's wheel to serve in this matter, except it be to whirl

round men who have hearts of clay, in order that they may be prevented

from detecting the emptiness of the talk of the mathematicians?

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Chapter 5.--In What Manner the Mathematicians are Convicted of

Professing a Vain Science.

Do not those very persons whom the medical sagacity of Hippocrates led

him to suspect to be twins, because their disease was observed by him

to develop to its crisis and to subside again in the same time in each

of them,--do not these, I say, serve as a sufficient refutation of

those who wish to attribute to the influence of the stars that which

was owing to a similarity of bodily constitution? For wherefore were

they both sick of the same disease, and at the same time, and not the

one after the other in the order of their birth? (for certainly they

could not both be born at the same time.) Or, if the fact of their

having been born at different times by no means necessarily implies

that they must be sick at different times, why do they contend that the

difference in the time of their births was the cause of their

difference in other things? Why could they travel in foreign parts at

different times, marry at different times, beget children at different

times, and do many other things at different times, by reason of their

having been born at different times, and yet could not, for the same

reason, also be sick at different times? For if a difference in the

moment of birth changed the horoscope, and occasioned dissimilarity in

all other things, why has that simultaneousness which belonged to their

conception remained in their attacks of sickness? Or, if the destinies

of health are involved in the time of conception, but those of other

things be said to be attached to the time of birth, they ought not to

predict anything concerning health from examination of the

constellations of birth, when the hour of conception is not also given,

that its constellations may be inspected. But if they say that they

predict attacks of sickness without examining the horoscope of

conception, because these are indicated by the moments of birth, how

could they inform either of these twins when he would be sick, from the

horoscope of his birth, when the other also, who had not the same

horoscope of birth, must of necessity fall sick at the same time?

Again, I ask, if the distance of time between the births of twins is so

great as to occasion a difference of their constellations on account of

the difference of their horoscopes, and therefore of all the cardinal

points to which so much influence is attributed, that even from such

change there comes a difference of destiny, how is it possible that

this should be so, since they cannot have been conceived at different

times? Or, if two conceived at the same moment of time could have

different destinies with respect to their births, why may not also two

born at the same moment of time have different destinies for life and

for death? For if the one moment in which both were conceived did not

hinder that the one should be born before the other, why, if two are

born at the same moment, should anything hinder them from dying at the

same moment? If a simultaneous conception allows of twins being

differently affected in the womb, why should not simultaneousness of

birth allow of any two individuals having different fortunes in the

world? and thus would all the fictions of this art, or rather delusion,

be swept away. What strange circumstance is this, that two children

conceived at the same time, nay, at the same moment, under the same

position of the stars, have different fates which bring them to

different hours of birth, whilst two children, born of two different

mothers, at the same moment of time, under one and the same position of

the stars, cannot have different fates which shall conduct them by

necessity to diverse manners of life and of death? Are they at

conception as yet without destinies, because they can only have them if

they be born? What, therefore, do they mean when they say that, if the

hour of the conception be found, many things can be predicted by these

astrologers? from which also arose that story which is reiterated by

some, that a certain sage chose an hour in which to lie with his wife,

in order to secure his begetting an illustrious son. From this opinion

also came that answer of Posidonius, the great astrologer and also

philosopher, concerning those twins who were attacked with sickness at

the same time, namely, "That this had happened to them because they

were conceived at the same time, and born at the same time." For

certainly he added "conception," lest it should be said to him that

they could not both be born at the same time, knowing that at any rate

they must both have been conceived at the same time; wishing thus to

show that he did not attribute the fact of their being similarly and

simultaneously affected with sickness to the similarity of their bodily

constitutions as its proximate cause, but that he held that even in

respect of the similarity of their health, they were bound together by

a sidereal connection. If, therefore, the time of conception has so

much to do with the similarity of destinies, these same destinies ought

not to be changed by the circumstances of birth; or, if the destinies

of twins be said to be changed because they are born at different

times, why should we not rather understand that they had been already

changed in order that they might be born at different times? Does not,

then, the will of men living in the world change the destinies of

birth, when the order of birth can change the destinies they had at

conception?

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Chapter 6.--Concerning Twins of Different Sexes.

But even in the very conception of twins, which certainly occurs at the

same moment in the case of both, it often happens that the one is

conceived a male, and the other a female. I know two of different

sexes who are twins. Both of them are alive, and in the flower of

their age; and though they resemble each other in body, as far as

difference of sex will permit, still they are very different in the

whole scope and purpose of their lives (consideration being had of

those differences which necessarily exist between the lives of males

and females),--the one holding the office of a count, and being almost

constantly away from home with the army in foreign service, the other

never leaving her country's soil, or her native district. Still

more,--and this is more incredible, if the destinies of the stars are

to be believed in, though it is not wonderful if we consider the wills

of men, and the free gifts of God,--he is married; she is a sacred

virgin: he has begotten a numerous offspring; she has never even

married. But is not the virtue of the horoscope very great? I think I

have said enough to show the absurdity of that. But, say those

astrologers, whatever be the virtue of the horoscope in other respects,

it is certainly of significance with respect to birth. But why not

also with respect to conception, which takes place undoubtedly with one

act of copulation? And, indeed, so great is the force of nature, that

after a woman has once conceived, she ceases to be liable to

conception. Or were they, perhaps, changed at birth, either he into a

male, or she into a female, because of the difference in their

horoscopes? But, whilst it is not altogether absurd to say that

certain sidereal influences have some power to cause differences in

bodies alone,--as, for instance, we see that the seasons of the year

come round by the approaching and receding of the sun, and that certain

kinds of things are increased in size or diminished by the waxings and

wanings of the moon, such as sea-urchins, oysters, and the wonderful

tides of the ocean,--it does not follow that the wills of men are to be

made subject to the position of the stars. The astrologers, however,

when they wish to bind our actions also to the constellations, only set

us on investigating whether, even in these bodies, the changes may not

be attributable to some other than a sidereal cause. For what is there

which more intimately concerns a body than its sex? And yet, under the

same position of the stars, twins of different sexes may be conceived.

Wherefore, what greater absurdity can be affirmed or believed than that

the position of the stars, which was the same for both of them at the

time of conception, could not cause that the one child should not have

been of a different sex from her brother, with whom she had a common

constellation, whilst the position of the stars which existed at the

hour of their birth could cause that she should be separated from him

by the great distance between marriage and holy virginity?

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Chapter 7.--Concerning the Choosing of a Day for Marriage, or for

Planting, or Sowing.

Now, will any one bring forward this, that in choosing certain

particular days for particular actions, men bring about certain new

destinies for their actions? That man, for instance, according to this

doctrine, was not born to have an illustrious son, but rather a

contemptible one, and therefore, being a man of learning, he choose an

hour in which to lie with his wife. He made, therefore, a destiny

which he did not have before, and from that destiny of his own making

something began to be fatal which was not contained in the destiny of

his natal hour. Oh, singular stupidity! A day is chosen on which to

marry; and for this reason, I believe, that unless a day be chosen, the

marriage may fall on an unlucky day, and turn out an unhappy one. What

then becomes of what the stars have already decreed at the hour of

birth? Can a man be said to change by an act of choice that which has

already been determined for him, whilst that which he himself has

determined in the choosing of a day cannot be changed by another

power? Thus, if men alone, and not all things under heaven, are

subject to the influence of the stars, why do they choose some days as

suitable for planting vines or trees, or for sowing grain, other days

as suitable for taming beasts on, or for putting the males to the

females, that the cows and mares may be impregnated, and for such-like

things? If it be said that certain chosen days have an influence on

these things, because the constellations rule over all terrestrial

bodies, animate and inanimate, according to differences in moments of

time, let it be considered what innumerable multitudes of beings are

born or arise, or take their origin at the very same instant of time,

which come to ends so different, that they may persuade any little boy

that these observations about days are ridiculous. For who is so mad

as to dare affirm that all trees, all herbs, all beasts, serpents,

birds, fishes, worms, have each separately their own moments of birth

or commencement? Nevertheless, men are wont, in order to try the skill

of the mathematicians, to bring before them the constellations of dumb

animals, the constellations of whose birth they diligently observe at

home with a view to this discovery; and they prefer those

mathematicians to all others, who say from the inspection of the

constellations that they indicate the birth of a beast and not of a

man. They also dare tell what kind of beast it is, whether it is a

wool-bearing beast, or a beast suited for carrying burthens, or one fit

for the plough, or for watching a house; for the astrologers are also

tried with respect to the fates of dogs, and their answers concerning

these are followed by shouts of admiration on the part of those who

consult them. They so deceive men as to make them think that during

the birth of a man the births of all other beings are suspended, so

that not even a fly comes to life at the same time that he is being

born, under the same region of the heavens. And if this be admitted

with respect to the fly, the reasoning cannot stop there, but must

ascend from flies till it lead them up to camels and elephants. Nor

are they willing to attend to this, that when a day has been chosen

whereon to sow a field, so many grains fall into the ground

simultaneously, germinate simultaneously, spring up, come to

perfection, and ripen simultaneously; and yet, of all the ears which

are coeval, and, so to speak, congerminal, some are destroyed by

mildew, some are devoured by the birds, and some are pulled by men.

How can they say that all these had their different constellations,

which they see coming to so different ends? Will they confess that it

is folly to choose days for such things, and to affirm that they do not

come within the sphere of the celestial decree, whilst they subject men

alone to the stars, on whom alone in the world God has bestowed free

wills? All these things being considered, we have good reason to

believe that, when the astrologers give very many wonderful answers, it

is to be attributed to the occult inspiration of spirits not of the

best kind, whose care it is to insinuate into the minds of men, and to

confirm in them, those false and noxious opinions concerning the fatal

influence of the stars, and not to their marking and inspecting of

horoscopes, according to some kind of art which in reality has no

existence.

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Chapter 8.--Concerning Those Who Call by the Name of Fate, Not the

Position of the Stars, But the Connection of Causes Which Depends on

the Will of God.

But, as to those who call by the name of fate, not the disposition of

the stars as it may exist when any creature is conceived, or born, or

commences its existence, but the whole connection and train of causes

which makes everything become what it does become, there is no need

that I should labor and strive with them in a merely verbal

controversy, since they attribute the so-called order and connection of

causes to the will and power of God most high, who is most rightly and

most truly believed to know all things before they come to pass, and to

leave nothing unordained; from whom are all powers, although the wills

of all are not from Him. Now, that it is chiefly the will of God most

high, whose power extends itself irresistibly through all things which

they call fate, is proved by the following verses, of which, if I

mistake not, Ann�us Seneca is the author:--

"Father supreme, Thou ruler of the lofty heavens,

Lead me where'er it is Thy pleasure; I will give

A prompt obedience, making no delay,

Lo! here I am. Promptly I come to do Thy sovereign will;

If thy command shall thwart my inclination, I will still

Follow Thee groaning, and the work assigned,

With all the suffering of a mind repugnant,

Will perform, being evil; which, had I been good,

I should have undertaken and performed, though hard,

With virtuous cheerfulness.

The Fates do lead the man that follows willing;

But the man that is unwilling, him they drag." [192]

Most evidently, in this last verse, he calls that "fate" which he had

before called "the will of the Father supreme," whom, he says, he is

ready to obey that he may be led, being willing, not dragged, being

unwilling, since "the Fates do lead the man that follows willing, but

the man that is unwilling, him they drag."

The following Homeric lines, which Cicero translates into Latin, also

favor this opinion :--

"Such are the minds of men, as is the light

Which Father Jove himself doth pour

Illustrious o'er the fruitful earth." [193]

Not that Cicero wishes that a poetical sentiment should have any weight

in a question like this; for when he says that the Stoics, when

asserting the power of fate, were in the habit of using these verses

from Homer, he is not treating concerning the opinion of that poet, but

concerning that of those philosophers, since by these verses, which

they quote in connection with the controversy which they hold about

fate, is most distinctly manifested what it is which they reckon fate,

since they call by the name of Jupiter him whom they reckon the supreme

god, from whom, they say, hangs the whole chain of fates.

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[192] Epist. 107.

[193] Odyssey,xviii. 136, 137.

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Chapter 9.--Concerning the Foreknowledge of God and the Free Will of

Man, in Opposition to the Definition of Cicero.

The manner in which Cicero addresses himself to the task of refuting

the Stoics, shows that he did not think he could effect anything

against them in argument unless he had first demolished divination.

[194] And this he attempts to accomplish by denying that there is any

knowledge of future things, and maintains with all his might that there

is no such knowledge either in God or man, and that there is no

prediction of events. Thus he both denies the foreknowledge of God,

and attempts by vain arguments, and by opposing to himself certain

oracles very easy to be refuted, to overthrow all prophecy, even such

as is clearer than the light (though even these oracles are not refuted

by him).

But, in refuting these conjectures of the mathematicians, his argument

is triumphant, because truly these are such as destroy and refute

themselves. Nevertheless, they are far more tolerable who assert the

fatal influence of the stars than they who deny the foreknowledge of

future events. For, to confess that God exists, and at the same time

to deny that He has foreknowledge of future things, is the most

manifest folly. This Cicero himself saw, and therefore attempted to

assert the doctrine embodied in the words of Scripture, "The fool hath

said in his heart, There is no God." [195] That, however, he did not

do in his own person, for he saw how odious and offensive such an

opinion would be; and therefore, in his book on the nature of the gods,

[196] he makes Cotta dispute concerning this against the Stoics, and

preferred to give his own opinion in favor of Lucilius Balbus, to whom

he assigned the defence of the Stoical position, rather than in favor

of Cotta, who maintained that no divinity exists. However, in his book

on divination, he in his own person most openly opposes the doctrine of

the prescience of future things. But all this he seems to do in order

that he may not grant the doctrine of fate, and by so doing destroy

free will. For he thinks that, the knowledge of future things being

once conceded, fate follows as so necessary a consequence that it

cannot be denied.

But, let these perplexing debatings and disputations of the

philosophers go on as they may, we, in order that we may confess the

most high and true God Himself, do confess His will, supreme power, and

prescience. Neither let us be afraid lest, after all, we do not do by

will that which we do by will, because He, whose foreknowledge is

infallible, foreknew that we would do it. It was this which Cicero was

afraid of, and therefore opposed foreknowledge. The Stoics also

maintained that all things do not come to pass by necessity, although

they contended that all things happen according to destiny. What is

it, then, that Cicero feared in the prescience of future things?

Doubtless it was this,--that if all future things have been foreknown,

they will happen in the order in which they have been foreknown; and if

they come to pass in this order, there is a certain order of things

foreknown by God; and if a certain order of things, then a certain

order of causes, for nothing can happen which is not preceded by some

efficient cause. But if there is a certain order of causes according

to which everything happens which does happen, then by fate, says he,

all things happen which do happen. But if this be so, then is there

nothing in our own power, and there is no such thing as freedom of

will; and if we grant that, says he, the whole economy of human life is

subverted. In vain are laws enacted. In vain are reproaches, praises,

chidings, exhortations had recourse to; and there is no justice

whatever in the appointment of rewards for the good, and punishments

for the wicked. And that consequences so disgraceful, and absurd, and

pernicious to humanity may not follow, Cicero chooses to reject the

foreknowledge of future things, and shuts up the religious mind to this

alternative, to make choice between two things, either that something

is in our own power, or that there is foreknowledge,--both of which

cannot be true; but if the one is affirmed, the other is thereby

denied. He therefore, like a truly great and wise man, and one who

consulted very much and very skillfully for the good of humanity, of

those two chose the freedom of the will, to confirm which he denied the

foreknowledge of future things; and thus, wishing to make men free he

makes them sacrilegious. But the religious mind chooses both,

confesses both, and maintains both by the faith of piety. But how so?

says Cicero; for the knowledge of future things being granted, there

follows a chain of consequences which ends in this, that there can be

nothing depending on our own free wills. And further, if there is

anything depending on our wills, we must go backwards by the same steps

of reasoning till we arrive at the conclusion that there is no

foreknowledge of future things. For we go backwards through all the

steps in the following order:--If there is free will, all things do not

happen according to fate; if all things do not happen according to

fate, there is not a certain order of causes; and if there is not a

certain order of causes, neither is there a certain order of things

foreknown by God,--for things cannot come to pass except they are

preceded by efficient causes,--but, if there is no fixed and certain

order of causes foreknown by God, all things cannot be said to happen

according as He foreknew that they would happen. And further, if it is

not true that all things happen just as they have been foreknown by

Him, there is not, says he, in God any foreknowledge of future events.

Now, against the sacrilegious and impious darings of reason, we assert

both that God knows all things before they come to pass, and that we do

by our free will whatsoever we know and feel to be done by us only

because we will it. But that all things come to pass by fate, we do

not say; nay we affirm that nothing comes to pass by fate; for we

demonstrate that the name of fate, as it is wont to be used by those

who speak of fate, meaning thereby the position of the stars at the

time of each one's conception or birth, is an unmeaning word, for

astrology itself is a delusion. But an order of causes in which the

highest efficiency is attributed to the will of God, we neither deny

nor do we designate it by the name of fate, unless, perhaps, we may

understand fate to mean that which is spoken, deriving it from fari, to

speak; for we cannot deny that it is written in the sacred Scriptures,

"God hath spoken once; these two things have I heard, that power

belongeth unto God. Also unto Thee, O God, belongeth mercy: for Thou

wilt render unto every man according to his works." [197] Now the

expression, "Once hath He spoken," is to be understood as meaning

"immovably," that is, unchangeably hath He spoken, inasmuch as He knows

unchangeably all things which shall be, and all things which He will

do. We might, then, use the word fate in the sense it bears when

derived from fari, to speak, had it not already come to be understood

in another sense, into which I am unwilling that the hearts of men

should unconsciously slide. But it does not follow that, though there

is for God a certain order of all causes, there must therefore be

nothing depending on the free exercise of our own wills, for our wills

themselves are included in that order of causes which is certain to

God, and is embraced by His foreknowledge, for human wills are also

causes of human actions; and He who foreknew all the causes of things

would certainly among those causes not have been ignorant of our

wills. For even that very concession which Cicero himself makes is

enough to refute him in this argument. For what does it help him to

say that nothing takes place without a cause, but that every cause is

not fatal, there being a fortuitous cause, a natural cause, and a

voluntary cause? It is sufficient that he confesses that whatever

happens must be preceded by a cause. For we say that those causes

which are called fortuitous are not a mere name for the absence of

causes, but are only latent, and we attribute them either to the will

of the true God, or to that of spirits of some kind or other. And as

to natural causes, we by no means separate them from the will of Him

who is the author and framer of all nature. But now as to voluntary

causes. They are referable either to God, or to angels, or to men, or

to animals of whatever description, if indeed those instinctive

movements of animals devoid of reason, by which, in accordance with

their own nature, they seek or shun various things, are to be called

wills. And when I speak of the wills of angels, I mean either the

wills of good angels, whom we call the angels of God, or of the wicked

angels, whom we call the angels of the devil, or demons. Also by the

wills of men I mean the wills either of the good or of the wicked. And

from this we conclude that there are no efficient causes of all things

which come to pass unless voluntary causes, that is, such as belong to

that nature which is the spirit of life. For the air or wind is called

spirit, but, inasmuch as it is a body, it is not the spirit of life.

The spirit of life, therefore, which quickens all things, and is the

creator of every body, and of every created spirit, is God Himself, the

uncreated spirit. In His supreme will resides the power which acts on

the wills of all created spirits, helping the good, judging the evil,

controlling all, granting power to some, not granting it to others.

For, as He is the creator of all natures, so also is He the bestower of

all powers, not of all wills; for wicked wills are not from Him, being

contrary to nature, which is from Him. As to bodies, they are more

subject to wills: some to our wills, by which I mean the wills of all

living mortal creatures, but more to the wills of men than of beasts.

But all of them are most of all subject to the will of God, to whom all

wills also are subject, since they have no power except what He has

bestowed upon them. The cause of things, therefore, which makes but is

not made, is God; but all other causes both make and are made. Such

are all created spirits, and especially the rational. Material causes,

therefore, which may rather be said to be made than to make, are not to

be reckoned among efficient causes, because they can only do what the

wills of spirits do by them. How, then, does an order of causes which

is certain to the foreknowledge of God necessitate that there should be

nothing which is dependent on our wills, when our wills themselves have

a very important place in the order of causes? Cicero, then, contends

with those who call this order of causes fatal, or rather designate

this order itself by the name of fate; to which we have an abhorrence,

especially on account of the word, which men have become accustomed to

understand as meaning what is not true. But, whereas he denies that

the order of all causes is most certain, and perfectly clear to the

prescience of God, we detest his opinion more than the Stoics do. For

he either denies that God exists,--which, indeed, in an assumed

personage, he has labored to do, in his book De Natura Deorum,--or if

he confesses that He exists, but denies that He is prescient of future

things, what is that but just "the fool saying in his heart there is no

God?" For one who is not prescient of all future things is not God.

Wherefore our wills also have just so much power as God willed and

foreknew that they should have; and therefore whatever power they have,

they have it within most certain limits; and whatever they are to do,

they are most assuredly to do, for He whose foreknowledge is infallible

foreknew that they would have the power to do it, and would do it.

Wherefore, if I should choose to apply the name of fate to anything at

all, I should rather say that fate belongs to the weaker of two

parties, will to the stronger, who has the other in his power, than

that the freedom of our will is excluded by that order of causes,

which, by an unusual application of the word peculiar to themselves,

the Stoics call Fate.

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[194] De Divinat.ii.

[195] Ps. xiv. 1.

[196] Book iii.

[197] Ps. lxii. 11, 12.

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Chapter 10.--Whether Our Wills are Ruled by Necessity.

Wherefore, neither is that necessity to be feared, for dread of which

the Stoics labored to make such distinctions among the causes of things

as should enable them to rescue certain things from the dominion of

necessity, and to subject others to it. Among those things which they

wished not to be subject to necessity they placed our wills, knowing

that they would not be free if subjected to necessity. For if that is

to be called our necessity which is not in our power, but even though

we be unwilling effects what it can effect,--as, for instance, the

necessity of death,--it is manifest that our wills by which we live

up-rightly or wickedly are not under such a necessity; for we do many

things which, if we were not willing, we should certainly not do. This

is primarily true of the act of willing itself,--for if we will, it is;

if we will not, it is not,--for we should not will if we were

unwilling. But if we define necessity to be that according to which we

say that it is necessary that anything be of such or such a nature, or

be done in such and such a manner, I know not why we should have any

dread of that necessity taking away the freedom of our will. For we do

not put the life of God or the foreknowledge of God under necessity if

we should say that it is necessary that God should live forever, and

foreknow all things; as neither is His power diminished when we say

that He cannot die or fall into error,--for this is in such a way

impossible to Him, that if it were possible for Him, He would be of

less power. But assuredly He is rightly called omnipotent, though He

can neither die nor fall into error. For He is called omnipotent on

account of His doing what He wills, not on account of His suffering

what He wills not; for if that should befall Him, He would by no means

be omnipotent. Wherefore, He cannot do some things for the very reason

that He is omnipotent. So also, when we say that it is necessary that,

when we will, we will by free choice, in so saying we both affirm what

is true beyond doubt, and do not still subject our wills thereby to a

necessity which destroys liberty. Our wills, therefore, exist as

wills, and do themselves whatever we do by willing, and which would not

be done if we were unwilling. But when any one suffers anything, being

unwilling by the will of another, even in that case will retains its

essential validity, --we do not mean the will of the party who inflicts

the suffering, for we resolve it into the power of God. For if a will

should simply exist, but not be able to do what it wills, it would be

overborne by a more powerful will. Nor would this be the case unless

there had existed will, and that not the will of the other party, but

the will of him who willed, but was not able to accomplish what he

willed. Therefore, whatsoever a man suffers contrary to his own will,

he ought not to attribute to the will of men, or of angels, or of any

created spirit, but rather to His will who gives power to wills. It is

not the case, therefore, that because God foreknew what would be in the

power of our wills, there is for that reason nothing in the power of

our wills. For he who foreknew this did not foreknow nothing.

Moreover, if He who foreknew what would be in the power of our wills

did not foreknow nothing, but something, assuredly, even though He did

foreknow, there is something in the power of our wills. Therefore we

are by no means compelled, either, retaining the prescience of God, to

take away the freedom of the will, or, retaining the freedom of the

will, to deny that He is prescient of future things, which is impious.

But we embrace both. We faithfully and sincerely confess both. The

former, that we may believe well; the latter, that we may live well.

For he lives ill who does not believe well concerning God. Wherefore,

be it far from us, in order to maintain our freedom, to deny the

prescience of Him by whose help we are or shall be free. Consequently,

it is not in vain that laws are enacted, and that reproaches,

exhortations, praises, and vituperations are had recourse to; for these

also He foreknew, and they are of great avail, even as great as He

foreknew that they would be of. Prayers, also, are of avail to procure

those things which He foreknew that He would grant to those who offered

them; and with justice have rewards been appointed for good deeds, and

punishments for sins. For a man does not therefore sin because God

foreknew that he would sin. Nay, it cannot be doubted but that it is

the man himself who sins when he does sin, because He, whose

foreknowledge is infallible, foreknew not that fate, or fortune, or

something else would sin, but that the man himself would sin, who, if

he wills not, sins not. But if he shall not will to sin, even this did

God foreknow.

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Chapter 11.--Concerning the Universal Providence of God in the Laws of

Which All Things are Comprehended.

Therefore God supreme and true, with His Word and Holy Spirit (which

three are one), one God omnipotent, creator and maker of every soul and

of every body; by whose gift all are happy who are happy through verity

and not through vanity; who made man a rational animal consisting of

soul and body, who, when he sinned, neither permitted him to go

unpunished, nor left him without mercy; who has given to the good and

to the evil, being in common with stones, vegetable life in common with

trees, sensuous life in common with brutes, intellectual life in common

with angels alone; from whom is every mode, every species, every order;

from whom are measure, number, weight; from whom is everything which

has an existence in nature, of whatever kind it be, and of whatever

value; from whom are the seeds of forms and the forms of seeds, and the

motion of seeds and of forms; who gave also to flesh its origin,

beauty, health, reproductive fecundity, disposition of members, and the

salutary concord of its parts; who also to the irrational soul has

given memory, sense, appetite, but to the rational soul, in addition to

these, has given intelligence and will; who has not left, not to speak

of heaven and earth, angels and men, but not even the entrails of the

smallest and most contemptible animal, or the feather of a bird, or the

little flower of a plant, or the leaf of a tree, without an harmony,

and, as it were, a mutual peace among all its parts;--that God can

never be believed to have left the kingdoms of men, their dominations

and servitudes, outside of the laws of His providence.

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Chapter 12.--By What Virtues the Ancient Romans Merited that the True

God, Although They Did Not Worship Him, Should Enlarge Their Empire.

Wherefore let us go on to consider what virtues of the Romans they were

which the true God, in whose power are also the kingdoms of the earth,

condescended to help in order to raise the empire, and also for what

reason He did so. And, in order to discuss this question on clearer

ground, we have written the former books, to show that the power of

those gods, who, they thought, were to be worshipped with such trifling

and silly rites, had nothing to do in this matter; and also what we

have already accomplished of the present volume, to refute the doctrine

of fate, lest any one who might have been already persuaded that the

Roman empire was not extended and preserved by the worship of these

gods, might still be attributing its extension and preservation to some

kind of fate, rather than to the most powerful will of God most high.

The ancient and primitive Ro mans, therefore, though their history

shows us that, like all the other nations, with the sole exception of

the Hebrews, they worshipped false gods, and sacrificed victims, not to

God, but to demons, have nevertheless this commendation bestowed on

them by their historian, that they were "greedy of praise, prodigal of

wealth, desirous of great glory, and content with a moderate fortune."

[198] Glory they most ardently loved: for it they wished to live,

for it they did not hesitate to die. Every other desire was repressed

by the strength of their passion for that one thing. At length their

country itself, because it seemed inglorious to serve, but glorious to

rule and to command, they first earnestly desired to be free, and then

to be mistress. Hence it was that, not enduring the domination of

kings, they put the government into the hands of two chiefs, holding

office for a year, who were called consuls, not kings or lords. [199]

But royal pomp seemed inconsistent with the administration of a ruler

(regentis), or the benevolence of one who consults (that is, for the

public good) (consulentis), but rather with the haughtiness of a lord

(dominantis). King Tarquin, therefore, having been banished, and the

consular government having been instituted, it followed, as the same

author already alluded to says in his praises of the Romans, that "the

state grew with amazing rapidity after it had obtained liberty, so

great a desire of glory had taken possession of it." That eagerness

for praise and desire of glory, then, was that which accomplished those

many wonderful things, laudable, doubtless, and glorious according to

human judgment. The same Sallust praises the great men of his own

time, Marcus Cato, and Caius C�sar, saying that for a long time the

republic had no one great in virtue, but that within his memory there

had been these two men of eminent virtue, and very different pursuits.

Now, among the praises which he pronounces on C�sar he put this, that

he wished for a great empire, an army, and a new war, that he might

have a sphere where his genius and virtue might shine forth. Thus it

was ever the prayer of men of heroic character that Bellona would

excite miserable nations to war, and lash them into agitation with her

bloody scourge, so that there might be occasion for the display of

their valor. This, forsooth, is what that desire of praise and thirst

for glory did. Wherefore, by the love of liberty in the first place,

afterwards also by that of domination and through the desire of praise

and glory, they achieved many great things; and their most eminent poet

testifies to their having been prompted by all these motives:

"Porsenna there, with pride elate,

Bids Rome to Tarquin ope her gate;

With arms he hems the city in,

�neas' sons stand firm to win." [200]

At that time it was their greatest ambition either to die bravely or to

live free; but when liberty was obtained, so great a desire of glory

took possession of them, that liberty alone was not enough unless

domination also should be sought, their great ambition being that which

the same poet puts into the mouth of Jupiter:

"Nay, Juno's self, whose wild alarms

Set ocean, earth, and heaven in arms,

Shall change for smiles her moody frown,

And vie with me in zeal to crown

Rome's sons, the nation of the gown.

So stands my will. There comes a day,

While Rome's great ages hold their way,

When old Assaracus's sons

Shall quit them on the myrmidons,

O'er Phthia and Mycen� reign,

And humble Argos to their chain." [201]

Which things, indeed, Virgil makes Jupiter predict as future, whilst,

in reality, he was only himself passing in review in his own mind,

things which were already done, and which were beheld by him as present

realities. But I have mentioned them with the intention of showing

that, next to liberty, the Romans so highly esteemed domination, that

it received a place among those things on which they bestowed the

greatest praise. Hence also it is that that poet, preferring to the

arts of other nations those arts which peculiarly belong to the Romans,

namely, the arts of ruling and commanding, and of subjugating and

vanquishing nations, says,

"Others, belike, with happier grace,

From bronze or stone shall call the face,

Plead doubtful causes, map the skies,

And tell when planets set or rise;

But Roman thou, do thou control

The nations far and wide;

Be this thy genius, to impose

The rule of peace on vanquished foes,

Show pity to the humble soul,

And crush the sons of pride." [202]

These arts they exercised with the more skill the less they gave

themselves up to pleasures, and to enervation of body and mind in

coveting and amassing riches, and through these corrupting morals, by

extorting them from the miserable citizens and lavishing them on base

stage-players. Hence these men of base character, who abounded when

Sallust wrote and Virgil sang these things, did not seek after honors

and glory by these arts, but by treachery and deceit. Wherefore the

same says, "But at first it was rather ambition than avarice that

stirred the minds of men, which vice, however, is nearer to virtue.

For glory, honor, and power are desired alike by the good man and by

the ignoble; but the former," he says, "strives onward to them by the

true way, whilst the other, knowing nothing of the good arts, seeks

them by fraud and deceit." [203] And what is meant by seeking the

attainment of glory, honor, and power by good arts, is to seek them by

virtue, and not by deceitful intrigue; for the good and the ignoble man

alike desire these things, but the good man strives to overtake them by

the true way. The way is virtue, along which he presses as to the goal

of possession--namely, to glory, honor, and power. Now that this was a

sentiment engrained in the Roman mind, is indicated even by the temples

of their gods; for they built in very close proximity the temples of

Virtue and Honor, worshipping as gods the gifts of God. Hence we can

understand what they who were good thought to be the end of virtue, and

to what they ultimately referred it, namely, to honor; for, as to the

bad, they had no virtue though they desired honor, and strove to

possess it by fraud and deceit. Praise of a higher kind is bestowed

upon Cato, for he says of him "The less he sought glory, the more it

followed him." [204] We say praise of a higher kind; for the glory

with the desire of which the Romans burned is the judgment of men

thinking well of men. And therefore virtue is better, which is content

with no human judgment save that of one's own conscience. Whence the

apostle says, "For this is our glory, the testimony of our conscience."

[205] And in another place he says, "But let every one prove his own

work, and then he shall have glory in himself, and not in another."

[206] That glory, honor, and power, therefore, which they desired for

themselves, and to which the good sought to attain by good arts, should

not be sought after by virtue, but virtue by them. For there is no

true virtue except that which is directed towards that end in which is

the highest and ultimate good of man. Wherefore even the honors which

Cato sought he ought not to have sought, but the state ought to have

conferred them on him unsolicited, on account of his virtues.

But, of the two great Romans of that time, Cato was he whose virtue was

by far the nearest to the true idea of virtue. Wherefore, let us refer

to the opinion of Cato himself, to discover what was the judgment he

had formed concerning the condition of the state both then and in

former times. "I do not think," he says, "that it was by arms that our

ancestors made the republic great from being small. Had that been the

case, the republic of our day would have been by far more flourishing

than that of their times, for the number of our allies and citizens is

far greater; and, besides, we possess a far greater abundance of armor

and of horses than they did. But it was other things than these that

made them great, and we have none of them: industry at home, just

government without, a mind free in deliberation, addicted neither to

crime nor to lust. Instead of these, we have luxury and avarice,

poverty in the state, opulence among citizens; we laud riches, we

follow laziness; there is no difference made between the good and the

bad; all the rewards of virtue are got possession of by intrigue. And

no wonder, when every individual consults only for his own good, when

ye are the slaves of pleasure at home, and, in public affairs, of money

and favor, no wonder that an onslaught is made upon the unprotected

republic." [207]

He who hears these words of Cato or of Sallust probably thinks that

such praise bestowed on the ancient Romans was applicable to all of

them, or, at least, to very many of them. It is not so; otherwise the

things which Cato himself writes, and which I have quoted in the second

book of this work, would not be true. In that passage he says, that

even from the very beginning of the state wrongs were committed by the

more powerful, which led to the separation of the people from the

fathers, besides which there were other internal dissensions; and the

only time at which there existed a just and moderate administration was

after the banishment of the kings, and that no longer than whilst they

had cause to be afraid of Tarquin, and were carrying on the grievous

war which had been undertaken on his account against Etruria; but

afterwards the fathers oppressed the people as slaves, flogged them as

the kings had done, drove them from their land, and, to the exclusion

of all others, held the government in their own hands alone. And to

these discords, whilst the fathers were wishing to rule, and the people

were unwilling to serve, the second Punic war put an end; for again

great fear began to press upon their disquieted minds, holding them

back from those distractions by another and greater anxiety, and

bringing them back to civil concord. But the great things which were

then achieved were accomplished through the administration of a few

men, who were good in their own way. And by the wisdom and forethought

of these few good men, which first enabled the republic to endure these

evils and mitigated them, it waxed greater and greater. And this the

same historian affirms, when he says that, reading and hearing of the

many illustrious achievements of the Roman people in peace and in war,

by land and by sea, he wished to understand what it was by which these

great things were specially sustained. For he knew that very often the

Romans had with a small company contended with great legions of the

enemy; and he knew also that with small resources they had carried on

wars with opulent kings. And he says that, after having given the

matter much consideration, it seemed evident to him that the

pre-eminent virtue of a few citizens had achieved the whole, and that

that explained how poverty overcame wealth, and small numbers great

multitudes. But, he adds, after that the state had been corrupted by

luxury and indolence, again the republic, by its own greatness, was

able to bear the vices of its magistrates and generals. Wherefore even

the praises of Cato are only applicable to a few; for only a few were

possessed of that virtue which leads men to pursue after glory, honor,

and power by the true way,--that is, by virtue itself. This industry

at home, of which Cato speaks, was the consequence of a desire to

enrich the public treasury, even though the result should be poverty at

home; and therefore, when he speaks of the evil arising out of the

corruption of morals, he reverses the expression, and says, "Poverty in

the state, riches at home."

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[198] Sallust, Cat. vii.

[199] Augustin notes that the name consul is derived from consulere,

and thus signifies a more benign rule than that of a rex (from regere),

or dominus (from dominari).

[200] �neid, viii. 646.

[201] Ibid. i. 279.

[202] Ibid. vi. 847.

[203] Sallust, in Cat. c. xi.

[204] Sallust, in Cat. c. 54.

[205] 2 Cor. i. 12.

[206] Gal. vi. 4.

[207] Sallust, in Cat. c. 52.

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Chapter 13.--Concerning the Love of Praise, Which, Though It is a Vice,

is Reckoned a Virtue, Because by It Greater Vice is Restrained.

Wherefore, when the kingdoms of the East had been illustrious for a

long time, it pleased God that there should also arise a Western

empire, which, though later in time, should be more illustrious in

extent and greatness. And, in order that it might overcome the

grievous evils which existed among other nations, He purposely granted

it to such men as, for the sake of honor, and praise, and glory,

consulted well for their country, in whose glory they sought their own,

and whose safety they did not hesitate to prefer to their own,

suppressing the desire of wealth and many other vices for this one

vice, namely, the love of praise. For he has the soundest perception

who recognizes that even the love of praise is a vice; nor has this

escaped the perception of the poet Horace, who says,

"You're bloated by ambition? take advice:

Yon book will ease you if you read it thrice." [208]

And the same poet, in a lyric song, hath thus spoken with the desire

of repressing the passion for domination:

"Rule an ambitious spirit, and thou hast

A wider kingdom than if thou shouldst join

To distant Gades Lybia, and thus

Shouldst hold in service either Carthaginian." [209]

Nevertheless, they who restrain baser lusts, not by the power of the

Holy Spirit obtained by the faith of piety, or by the love of

intelligible beauty, but by desire of human praise, or, at all events,

restrain them better by the love of such praise, are not indeed yet

holy, but only less base. Even Tully was not able to conceal this

fact; for, in the same books which he wrote, De Republica, when

speaking concerning the education of a chief of the state, who ought,

he says, to be nourished on glory, goes on to say that their ancestors

did many wonderful and illustrious things through desire of glory. So

far, therefore, from resisting this vice, they even thought that it

ought to be excited and kindled up, supposing that that would be

beneficial to the republic. But not even in his books on philosophy

does Tully dissimulate this poisonous opinion, for he there avows it

more clearly than day. For when he is speaking of those studies which

are to be pursued with a view to the true good, and not with the

vainglorious desire of human praise, he introduces the following

universal and general statement:

"Honor nourishes the arts, and all are stimulated to the prosecution of

studies by glory; and those pursuits are always neglected which are

generally discredited." [210]

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[208] Horace, Epist. i. l. 36, 37.

[209] Hor. Carm. ii. 2.

[210] Tusc. Qu�st.i. 2.

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Chapter 14.--Concerning the Eradication of the Love of Human Praise,

Because All the Glory of the Righteous is in God.

It is, therefore, doubtless far better to resist this desire than to

yield to it, for the purer one is from this defilement, the liker is he

to God; and, though this vice be not thoroughly eradicated from his

heart,--for it does not cease to tempt even the minds of those who are

making good progress in virtue,--at any rate, let the desire of glory

be surpassed by the love of righteousness, so that, if there be seen

anywhere "lying neglected things which are generally discredited," if

they are good, if they are right, even the love of human praise may

blush and yield to the love of truth. For so hostile is this vice to

pious faith, if the love of glory be greater in the heart than the fear

or love of God, that the Lord said, "How can ye believe, who look for

glory from one another, and do not seek the glory which is from God

alone?" [211] Also, concerning some who had believed on Him, but were

afraid to confess Him openly, the evangelist says, "They loved the

praise of men more than the praise of God;" [212] which did not the

holy apostles, who, when they proclaimed the name of Christ in those

places where it was not only discredited, and therefore

neglected,--according as Cicero says, "Those things are always

neglected which are generally discredited,"--but was even held in the

utmost detestation, holding to what they had heard from the Good

Master, who was also the physician of minds, "If any one shall deny me

before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven, and

before the angels of God," [213] amidst maledictions and reproaches,

and most grievous persecutions and cruel punishments, were not deterred

from the preaching of human salvation by the noise of human

indignation. And when, as they did and spake divine things, and lived

divine lives, conquering, as it were, hard hearts, and introducing into

them the peace of righteousness, great glory followed them in the

church of Christ, they did not rest in that as in the end of their

virtue, but, referring that glory itself to the glory of God, by whose

grace they were what they were, they sought to kindle, also by that

same flame, the minds of those for whose good they consulted, to the

love of Him, by whom they could be made to be what they themselves

were. For their Master had taught them not to seek to be good for the

sake of human glory, saying, "Take heed that ye do not your

righteousness before men to be seen of them, or otherwise ye shall not

have a reward from your Father who is in heaven." [214] But again,

lest, understanding this wrongly, they should, through fear of pleasing

men, be less useful through concealing their goodness, showing for what

end they ought to make it known, He says, "Let your works shine before

men, that they may see your good deeds, and glorify your Father who is

in heaven." [215] Not, observe, "that ye may be seen by them, that

is, in order that their eyes may be directed upon you,"--for of

yourselves ye are, nothing,--but "that they may glorify your Father who

is in heaven," by fixing their regards on whom they may become such as

ye are. These the martyrs followed, who surpassed the Sc�volas, and

the Curtiuses, and the Deciuses, both in true virtue, because in true

piety, and also in the greatness of their number. But since those

Romans were in an earthly city, and had before them, as the end of all

the offices undertaken in its behalf, its safety, and a kingdom, not in

heaven, but in earth,--not in the sphere of eternal life, but in the

sphere of demise and succession, where the dead are succeeded by the

dying,--what else but glory should they love, by which they wished even

after death to live in the mouths of their admirers?

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[211] John v. 44.

[212] John xii. 43.

[213] Matt. x. 33.

[214] Matt. vi. 1.

[215] Matt. v. 16.

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Chapter 15.--Concerning the Temporal Reward Which God Granted to the

Virtues of the Romans.

Now, therefore, with regard to those to whom God did not purpose to

give eternal life with His holy angels in His own celestial city, to

the society of which that true piety which does not render the service

of religion, which the Greeks call latreia, to any save the true God

conducts, if He had also withheld from them the terrestrial glory of

that most excellent empire, a reward would not have been rendered to

their good arts,--that is, their virtues,--by which they sought to

attain so great glory. For as to those who seem to do some good that

they may receive glory from men, the Lord also says, "Verily I say unto

you, they have received their reward." [216] So also these despised

their own private affairs for the sake of the republic, and for its

treasury resisted avarice, consulted for the good of their country with

a spirit of freedom, addicted neither to what their laws pronounced to

be crime nor to lust. By all these acts, as by the true way, they

pressed forward to honors, power, and glory; they were honored among

almost all nations; they imposed the laws of their empire upon many

nations; and at this day, both in literature and history, they are

glorious among almost all nations. There is no reason why they should

complain against the justice of the supreme and true God,--"they have

received their reward."

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[216] Matt. vi. 2.

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Chapter 16.--Concerning the Reward of the Holy Citizens of the

Celestial City, to Whom the Example of the Virtues of the Romans are

Useful.

But the reward of the saints is far different, who even here endured

reproaches for that city of God which is hateful to the lovers of this

world. That city is eternal. There none are born, for none die.

There is true and full felicity,--not a goddess, but a gift of God.

Thence we receive the pledge of faith whilst on our pilgrimage we sigh

for its beauty. There rises not the sun on the good and the evil, but

the Sun of Righteousness protects the good alone. There no great

industry shall be expended to enrich the public treasury by suffering

privations at home, for there is the common treasury of truth. And,

therefore, it was not only for the sake of recompensing the citizens of

Rome that her empire and glory had been so signally extended, but also

that the citizens of that eternal city, during their pilgrimage here,

might diligently and soberly contemplate these examples, and see what a

love they owe to the supernal country on account of life eternal, if

the terrestrial country was so much beloved by its citizens on account

of human glory.

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Chapter 17.--To What Profit the Romans Carried on Wars, and How Much

They Contributed to the Well-Being of Those Whom They Conquered.

For, as far as this life of mortals is concerned, which is spent and

ended in a few days, what does it matter under whose government a dying

man lives, if they who govern do not force him to impiety and

iniquity? Did the Romans at all harm those nations, on whom, when

subjugated, they imposed their laws, except in as far as that was

accomplished with great slaughter in war? Now, had it been done with

consent of the nations, it would have been done with greater success,

but there would have been no glory of conquest, for neither did the

Romans themselves live exempt from those laws which they imposed on

others. Had this been done without Mars and Bellona, so that there

should have been no place for victory, no one conquering where no one

had fought, would not the condition of the Romans and of the other

nations have been one and the same, especially if that had been done at

once which afterwards was done most humanely and most acceptably,

namely, the admission of all to the rights of Roman citizens who

belonged to the Roman empire, and if that had been made the privilege

of all which was formerly the privilege of a few, with this one

condition, that the humbler class who had no lands of their own should

live at the public expense--an alimentary impost, which would have been

paid with a much better grace by them into the hands of good

administrators of the republic, of which they were members, by their

own hearty consent, than it would have been paid with had it to be

extorted from them as conquered men? For I do not see what it makes

for the safety, good morals, and certainly not for the dignity, of men,

that some have conquered and others have been conquered, except that it

yields them that most insane pomp of human glory, in which "they have

received their reward," who burned with excessive desire of it, and

carried on most eager wars. For do not their lands pay tribute? Have

they any privilege of learning what the others are not privileged to

learn? Are there not many senators in the other countries who do not

even know Rome by sight? Take away outward show, [217] and what are

all men after all but men? But even though the perversity of the age

should permit that all the better men should be more highly honored

than others, neither thus should human honor be held at a great price,

for it is smoke which has no weight. But let us avail ourselves even

in these things of the kindness of God. Let us consider how great

things they despised, how great things they endured, what lusts they

subdued for the sake of human glory, who merited that glory, as it

were, in reward for such virtues; and let this be useful to us even in

suppressing pride, so that, as that city in which it has been promised

us to reign as far surpasses this one as heaven is distant from the

earth, as eternal life surpasses temporal joy, solid glory empty

praise, or the society of angels the society of mortals, or the glory

of Him who made the sun and moon the light of the sun and moon, the

citizens of so great a country may not seem to themselves to have done

anything very great, if, in order to obtain it, they have done some

good works or endured some evils, when those men for this terrestrial

country already obtained, did such great things, suffered such great

things. And especially are all these things to be considered, because

the remission of sins which collects citizens to the celestial country

has something in it to which a shadowy resemblance is found in that

asylum of Romulus, whither escape from the punishment of all manner of

crimes congregated that multitude with which the state was to be

founded.

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[217] Jactantia.

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Chapter 18.--How Far Christians Ought to Be from Boasting, If They Have

Done Anything for the Love of the Eternal Country, When the Romans Did

Such Great Things for Human Glory and a Terrestrial City.

What great thing, therefore, is it for that eternal and celestial city

to despise all the charms of this world, however pleasant, if for the

sake of this terrestrial city Brutus could even put to death his

son,--a sacrifice which the heavenly city compels no one to make? But

certainly it is more difficult to put to death one's sons, than to do

what is required to be done for the heavenly country, even to

distribute to the poor those things which were looked upon as things to

be massed and laid up for one's children, or to let them go, if there

arise any temptation which compels us to do so, for the sake of faith

and righteousness. For it is not earthly riches which make us or our

sons happy; for they must either be lost by us in our lifetime, or be

possessed when we are dead, by whom we know not, or perhaps by whom we

would not. But it is God who makes us happy, who is the true riches of

minds. But of Brutus, even the poet who celebrates his praises

testifies that it was the occasion of unhappiness to him that he slew

his son, for he says,

"And call his own rebellious seed

For menaced liberty to bleed.

Unhappy father! howsoe'er

The deed be judged by after days." [218]

But in the following verse he consoles him in his unhappiness, saying,

"His country's love shall all o'erbear."

There are those two things, namely, liberty and the desire of human

praise, which compelled the Romans to admirable deeds. If, therefore,

for the liberty of dying men, and for the desire of human praise which

is sought after by mortals, sons could be put to death by a father,

what great thing is it, if, for the true liberty which has made us free

from the dominion of sin, and death, and the devil,--not through the

desire of human praise, but through the earnest desire of fleeing men,

not from King Tarquin, but from demons and the prince of the

demons,--we should, I do not say put to death our sons, but reckon

among our sons Christ's poor ones? If, also, another Roman chief,

surnamed Torquatus, slew his son, not because he fought against his

country, but because, being challenged by an enemy, he through youthful

impetuosity fought, though for his country, yet contrary to orders

which he his father had given as general; and this he did,

notwithstanding that his son was victorious, lest there should be more

evil in the example of authority despised, than good in the glory of

slaying an enemy;--if, I say, Torquatus acted thus, wherefore should

they boast themselves, who, for the laws of a celestial country,

despise all earthly good things, which are loved far less than sons?

If Furius Camillus, who was condemned by those who envied him,

notwithstanding that he had thrown off from the necks of his countrymen

the yoke of their most bitter enemies, the Veientes, again delivered

his ungrateful country from the Gauls, because he had no other in which

he could have better opportunities for living a life of glory;--if

Camillus did thus, why should he be extolled as having done some great

thing, who, having, it may be, suffered in the church at the hands of

carnal enemies most grievous and dishonoring injury, has not betaken

himself to heretical enemies, or himself raised some heresy against

her, but has rather defended her, as far as he was able, from the most

pernicious perversity of heretics, since there is not another church, I

say not in which one can live a life of glory, but in which eternal

life can be obtained? If Mucius, in order that peace might be made

with King Porsenna, who was pressing the Romans with a most grievous

war, when he did not succeed in slaying Porsenna, but slew another by

mistake for him, reached forth his right hand and laid it on a red-hot

altar, saying that many such as he saw him to be had conspired for his

destruction, so that Porsenna, terrified at his daring, and at the

thought of a conspiracy of such as he, without any delay recalled all

his warlike purposes, and made peace;--if, I say, Mucius did this, who

shall speak of his meritorious claims to the kingdom of heaven, if for

it he may have given to the flames not one hand, but even his whole

body, and that not by his own spontaneous act, but because he was

persecuted by another? If Curtius, spurring on his steed, threw

himself all armed into a precipitous gulf, obeying the oracles of their

gods, which had commanded that the Romans should throw into that gulf

the best thing which they possessed, and they could only understand

thereby that, since they excelled in men and arms, the gods had

commanded that an armed man should be cast headlong into that

destruction;--if he did this, shall we say that that man has done a

great thing for the eternal city who may have died by a like death,

not, however, precipitating himself spontaneously into a gulf, but

having suffered this death at the hands of some enemy of his faith,

more especially when he has received from his Lord, who is also King of

his country, a more certain oracle, "Fear not them who kill the body,

but cannot kill the soul?" [219] If the Decii dedicated themselves to

death, consecrating themselves in a form of words, as it were, that

falling, and pacifying by their blood the wrath of the gods, they might

be the means of delivering the Roman army;--if they did this, let not

the holy martyrs carry themselves proudly, as though they had done some

meritorious thing for a share in that country where are eternal life

and felicity, if even to the shedding of their blood, loving not only

the brethren for whom it was shed, but, according as had been commanded

them, even their enemies by whom it was being shed, they have vied with

one another in faith of love and love of faith. If Marcus Pulvillus,

when engaged in dedicating a temple to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva,

received with such indifference the false intelligence which was

brought to him of the death of his son, with the intention of so

agitating him that he should go away, and thus the glory of dedicating

the temple should fall to his colleague;--if he received that

intelligence with such indifference that he even ordered that his son

should be cast out unburied, the love of glory having overcome in his

heart the grief of bereavement, how shall any one affirm that he had

done a great thing for the preaching of the gospel, by which the

citizens of the heavenly city are delivered from divers errors and

gathered together from divers wanderings, to whom his Lord has said,

when anxious about the burial of his father, "Follow me, and let the

dead bury their dead?" [220] Regulus, in order not to break his oath,

even with his most cruel enemies, returned to them from Rome itself,

because (as he is said to have replied to the Romans when they wished

to retain him) he could not have the dignity of an honorable citizen at

Rome after having been a slave to the Africans, and the Carthaginians

put him to death with the utmost tortures, because he had spoken

against them in the senate. If Regulus acted thus, what tortures are

not to be despised for the sake of good faith toward that country to

whose beatitude faith itself leads? Or what will a man have rendered

to the Lord for all He has bestowed upon him, if, for the faithfulness

he owes to Him, he shall have suffered such things as Regulus suffered

at the hands of his most ruthless enemies for the good faith which he

owed to them? And how shall a Christian dare vaunt himself of his

voluntary poverty, which he has chosen in order that during the

pilgrimage of this life he may walk the more disencumbered on the way

which leads to the country where the true riches are, even God

Himself;--how, I say, shall he vaunt himself for this, when he hears or

reads that Lucius Valerius, who died when he was holding the office of

consul, was so poor that his funeral expenses were paid with money

collected by the people?--or when he hears that Quintius Cincinnatus,

who, possessing only four acres of land, and cultivating them with his

own hands, was taken from the plough to be made dictator,--an office

more honorable even than that of consul,--and that, after having won

great glory by conquering the enemy, he preferred notwithstanding to

continue in his poverty? Or how shall he boast of having done a great

thing, who has not been prevailed upon by the offer of any reward of

this world to renounce his connection with that heavenly and eternal

country, when he hears that Fabricius could not be prevailed on to

forsake the Roman city by the great gifts offered to him by Pyrrhus

king of the Epirots, who promised him the fourth part of his kingdom,

but preferred to abide there in his poverty as a private individual?

For if, when their republic,--that is, the interest of the people, the

interest of the country, the common interest,--was most prosperous and

wealthy, they themselves were so poor in their own houses, that one of

them, who had already been twice a consul, was expelled from that

senate of poor men by the censor, because he was discovered to possess

ten pounds weight of silverplate,--since, I say, those very men by

whose triumphs the public treasury was enriched were so poor, ought not

all Christians, who make common property of their riches with a far

nobler purpose, even that (according to what is written in the Acts of

the Apostles) they may distribute to each one according to his need,

and that no one may say that anything is his own, but that all things

may be their common possession, [221] --ought they not to understand

that they should not vaunt themselves, because they do that to obtain

the society of angels, when those men did well-nigh the same thing to

preserve the glory of the Romans?

How could these, and whatever like things are found in the Roman

history, have become so widely known, and have been proclaimed by so

great a fame, had not the Roman empire, extending far and wide, been

raised to its greatness by magnificent successes? Wherefore, through

that empire, so extensive and of so long continuance, so illustrious

and glorious also through the virtues of such great men, the reward

which they sought was rendered to their earnest aspirations, and also

examples are set before us, containing necessary admonition, in order

that we may be stung with shame if we shall see that we have not held

fast those virtues for the sake of the most glorious city of God, which

are, in whatever way, resembled by those virtues which they held fast

for the sake of the glory of a terrestrial city, and that, too, if we

shall feel conscious that we have held them fast, we may not be lifted

up with pride, because, as the apostle says, "The sufferings of the

present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be

revealed in us." [222] But so far as regards human and temporal

glory, the lives of these ancient Romans were reckoned sufficiently

worthy. Therefore, also, we see, in the light of that truth which,

veiled in the Old Testament, is revealed in the New, namely, that it is

not in view of terrestrial and temporal benefits, which divine

providence grants promiscuously to good and evil, that God is to be

worshipped, but in view of eternal life, everlasting gifts, and of the

society of the heavenly city itself;--in the light of this truth we see

that the Jews were most righteously given as a trophy to the glory of

the Romans; for we see that these Romans, who rested on earthly glory,

and sought to obtain it by virtues, such as they were, conquered those

who, in their great depravity, slew and rejected the giver of true

glory, and of the eternal city.

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[218] �neid, vi. 820.

[219] Matt. x. 28.

[220] Matt. viii. 22.

[221] Acts ii. 45.

[222] Rom. viii. 18.

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Chapter 19.--Concerning the Difference Between True Glory and the

Desire of Domination.

There is assuredly a difference between the desire of human glory and

the desire of domination; for, though he who has an overweening delight

in human glory will be also very prone to aspire earnestly after

domination, nevertheless they who desire the true glory even of human

praise strive not to displease those who judge well of them. For there

are many good moral qualities, of which many are competent judges,

although they are not possessed by many; and by those good moral

qualities those men press on to glory, honor and domination, of whom

Sallust says, "But they press on by the true way."

But whosoever, without possessing that desire of glory which makes one

fear to displease those who judge his conduct, desires domination and

power, very often seeks to obtain what he loves by most open crimes.

Therefore he who desires glory presses on to obtain it either by the

true way, or certainly by deceit and artifice, wishing to appear good

when he is not. Therefore to him who possesses virtues it is a great

virtue to despise glory; for contempt of it is seen by God, but is not

manifest to human judgment. For whatever any one does before the eyes

of men in order to show himself to be a despiser of glory, if they

suspect that he is doing it in order to get greater praise,--that is,

greater glory,--he has no means of demonstrating to the perceptions of

those who suspect him that the case is really otherwise than they

suspect it to be. But he who despises the judgment of praisers,

despises also the rashness of suspectors. Their salvation, indeed, he

does not despise, if he is truly good; for so great is the

righteousness of that man who receives his virtues from the Spirit of

God, that he loves his very enemies, and so loves them that he desires

that his haters and detractors may be turned to righteousness, and

become his associates, and that not in an earthly but in a heavenly

country. But with respect to his praisers, though he sets little value

on their praise, he does not set little value on their love; neither

does he elude their praise, lest he should forfeit their love. And,

therefore, he strives earnestly to have their praises directed to Him

from whom every one receives whatever in him is truly praiseworthy.

But he who is a despiser of glory, but is greedy of domination, exceeds

the beasts in the vices of cruelty and luxuriousness. Such, indeed,

were certain of the Romans, who, wanting the love of esteem, wanted not

the thirst for domination; and that there were many such, history

testifies. But it was Nero C�sar who was the first to reach the

summit, and, as it were, the citadel, of this vice; for so great was

his luxuriousness, that one would have thought there was nothing manly

to be dreaded in him, and such his cruelty, that, had not the contrary

been known, no one would have thought there was anything effeminate in

his character. Nevertheless power and domination are not given even to

such men save by the providence of the most high God, when He judges

that the state of human affairs is worthy of such lords. The divine

utterance is clear on this matter; for the Wisdom of God thus speaks:

"By me kings reign, and tyrants possess the land." [223] But, that it

may not be thought that by "tyrants" is meant, not wicked and impious

kings, but brave men, in accordance with the ancient use of the word,

as when Virgil says,

"For know that treaty may not stand

Where king greets king and joins not hand," [224]

in another place it is most unambiguously said of God, that He "maketh

the man who is an hypocrite to reign on account of the perver sity of

the people." [225] Wherefore, though I have, according to my ability,

shown for what reason God, who alone is true and just, helped forward

the Romans, who were good according to a certain standard of an earthly

state, to the acquirement of the glory of so great an empire, there may

be, nevertheless, a more hidden cause, known better to God than to us,

depending on the diversity of the merits of the human race. Among all

who are truly pious, it is at all events agreed that no one without

true piety,--that is, true worship of the true God--can have true

virtue; and that it is not true virtue which is the slave of human

praise. Though, nevertheless, they who are not citizens of the eternal

city, which is called the city of God in the sacred Scriptures, are

more useful to the earthly city when they possess even that virtue than

if they had not even that. But there could be nothing more fortunate

for human affairs than that, by the mercy of God, they who are endowed

with true piety of life, if they have the skill for ruling people,

should also have the power. But such men, however great virtues they

may possess in this life, attribute it solely to the grace of God that

He has bestowed it on them--willing, believing, seeking. And, at the

same time, they understand how far they are short of that perfection of

righteousness which exists in the society of those holy angels for

which they are striving to fit themselves. But however much that

virtue may be praised and cried up, which without true piety is the

slave of human glory, it is not at all to be compared even to the

feeble beginnings of the virtue of the saints, whose hope is placed in

the grace and mercy of the true God.

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[223] Prov. viii. 15.

[224] �neid, vii. 266.

[225] Job xxxiv. 30.

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Chapter 20.--That It is as Shameful for the Virtues to Serve Human

Glory as Bodily Pleasure.

Philosophers,--who place the end of human good in virtue itself, in

order to put to shame certain other philosophers, who indeed approve of

the virtues, but measure them all with reference to the end of bodily

pleasure, and think that this pleasure is to be sought for its own

sake, but the virtues on account of pleasure,--are wont to paint a kind

of word-picture, in which Pleasure sits like a luxurious queen on a

royal seat, and all the virtues are subjected to her as slaves,

watching her nod, that they may do whatever she shall command. She

commands Prudence to be ever on the watch to discover how Pleasure may

rule, and be safe. Justice she orders to grant what benefits she can,

in order to secure those friendships which are necessary for bodily

pleasure; to do wrong to no one, lest, on account of the breaking of

the laws, Pleasure be not able to live in security. Fortitude she

orders to keep her mistress, that is, Pleasure, bravely in her mind, if

any affliction befall her body which does not occasion death, in order

that by remembrance of former delights she may mitigate the poignancy

of present pain. Temperance she commands to take only a certain

quantity even of the most favorite food, lest, through immoderate use,

anything prove hurtful by disturbing the health of the body, and thus

Pleasure, which the Epicureans make to consist chiefly in the health of

the body, be grievously offended. Thus the virtues, with the whole

dignity of their glory, will be the slaves of Pleasure, as of some

imperious and disreputable woman.

There is nothing, say our philosophers, more disgraceful and monstrous

than this picture, and which the eyes of good men can less endure. And

they say the truth. But I do not think that the picture would be

sufficiently becoming, even if it were made so that the virtues should

be represented as the slaves of human glory; for, though that glory be

not a luxurious woman, it is nevertheless puffed up, and has much

vanity in it. Wherefore it is unworthy of the solidity and firmness of

the virtues to represent them as serving this glory, so that Prudence

shall provide nothing, Justice distribute nothing, Temperance moderate

nothing, except to the end that men may be pleased and vain glory

served. Nor will they be able to defend themselves from the charge of

such baseness, whilst they, by way of being despisers of glory,

disregard the judgment of other men, seem to themselves wise, and

please themselves. For their virtue,--if, indeed, it is virtue at

all,--is only in another way subjected to human praise; for he who

seeks to please himself seeks still to please man. But he who, with

true piety towards God, whom he loves, believes, and hopes in, fixes

his attention more on those things in which he displeases himself, than

on those things, if there are any such, which please himself, or

rather, not himself, but the truth, does not attribute that by which he

can now please the truth to anything but to the mercy of Him whom he

has feared to displease, giving thanks for what in him is healed, and

pouring out prayers for the healing of that which is yet unhealed.

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Chapter 21.--That the Roman Dominion Was Granted by Him from Whom is

All Power, and by Whose Providence All Things are Ruled.

These things being so, we do not attribute the power of giving kingdoms

and empires to any save to the true God, who gives happiness in the

kingdom of heaven to the pious alone, but gives kingly power on earth

both to the pious and the impious, as it may please Him, whose good

pleasure is always just. For though we have said something about the

principles which guide His administration, in so far as it has seemed

good to Him to explain it, nevertheless it is too much for us, and far

surpasses our strength, to discuss the hidden things of men's hearts,

and by a clear examination to determine the merits of various

kingdoms. He, therefore, who is the one true God, who never leaves the

human race without just judgment and help, gave a kingdom to the Romans

when He would, and as great as He would, as He did also to the

Assyrians, and even the Persians, by whom, as their own books testify,

only two gods are worshipped, the one good and the other evil,--to say

nothing concerning the Hebrew people, of whom I have already spoken as

much as seemed necessary, who, as long as they were a kingdom,

worshipped none save the true God. The same, therefore, who gave to

the Persians harvests, though they did not worship the goddess Segetia,

who gave the other blessings of the earth, though they did not worship

the many gods which the Romans supposed to preside, each one over some

particular thing, or even many of them over each several thing,--He, I

say, gave the Persians dominion, though they worshipped none of those

gods to whom the Romans believed themselves indebted for the empire.

And the same is true in respect of men as well as nations. He who gave

power to Marius gave it also to Caius C�sar; He who gave it to Augustus

gave it also to Nero; He also who gave it to the most benignant

emperors, the Vespasians, father and son, gave it also to the cruel

Domitian; and, finally, to avoid the necessity of going over them all,

He who gave it to the Christian Constantine gave it also to the

apostate Julian, whose gifted mind was deceived by a sacrilegious and

detestable curiosity, stimulated by the love of power. And it was

because he was addicted through curiosity to vain oracles, that,

confident of victory, he burned the ships which were laden with the

provisions necessary for his army, and therefore, engaging with hot

zeal in rashly audacious enterprises, he was soon slain, as the just

consequence of his recklessness, and left his army unprovisioned in an

enemy's country, and in such a predicament that it never could have

escaped, save by altering the boundaries of the Roman empire, in

violation of that omen of the god Terminus of which I spoke in the

preceding book; for the god Terminus yielded to necessity, though he

had not yielded to Jupiter. Manifestly these things are ruled and

governed by the one God according as He pleases; and if His motives are

hid, are they therefore unjust?

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Chapter 22.--The Durations and Issues of War Depend on the Will of God.

Thus also the durations of wars are determined by Him as He may see

meet, according to His righteous will, and pleasure, and mercy, to

afflict or to console the human race, so that they are sometimes of

longer, sometimes of shorter duration. The war of the Pirates and the

third Punic war were terminated with incredible celerity. Also the war

of the fugitive gladiators, though in it many Roman generals and the

consuls were defeated, and Italy was terribly wasted and ravaged, was

nevertheless ended in the third year, having itself been, during its

continuance, the end of much. The Picentes, the Marsi, and the

Peligni, not distant but Italian nations, after a long and most loyal

servitude under the Roman yoke, attempted to raise their heads into

liberty, though many nations had now been subjected to the Roman power,

and Carthage had been overthrown. In this Italian war the Romans were

very often defeated, and two consuls perished, besides other noble

senators; nevertheless this calamity was not protracted over a long

space of time, for the fifth year put an end to it. But the second

Punic war, lasting for the space of eighteen years, and occasioning the

greatest disasters and calamities to the republic, wore out and

well-nigh consumed the strength of the Romans; for in two battles about

seventy thousand Romans fell. [226] The first Punic war was

terminated after having been waged for three-and-twenty years. The

Mithridatic war was waged for forty years. And that no one may think

that in the early and much belauded times of the Romans they were far

braver and more able to bring wars to a speedy termination, the Samnite

war was protracted for nearly fifty years; and in this war the Romans

were so beaten that they were even put under the yoke. But because

they did not love glory for the sake of justice, but seemed rather to

have loved justice for the sake of glory, they broke the peace and the

treaty which had been concluded. These things I mention, because many,

ignorant of past things, and some also dissimulating what they know, if

in Christian times they see any war protracted a little longer than

they expected, straightway make a fierce and insolent attack on our

religion, exclaiming that, but for it, the deities would have been

supplicated still, according to ancient rites; and then, by that

bravery of the Romans, which, with the help of Mars and Bellona,

speedily brought to an end such great wars, this war also would be

speedily terminated. Let them, therefore, who have read history

recollect what long-continued wars, having various issues and entailing

woeful slaughter, were waged by the ancient Romans, in accordance with

the general truth that the earth, like the tempestuous deep, is subject

to agitations from tempests--tempests of such evils, in various

degrees,--and let them sometimes confess what they do not like to own,

and not, by madly speaking against God, destroy themselves and deceive

the ignorant.

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[226] Of the Thrasymene Lake and Cann�.

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Chapter 23.--Concerning the War in Which Radagaisus, King of the Goths,

a Worshipper of Demons, Was Conquered in One Day, with All His Mighty

Forces.

Nevertheless they do not mention with thanksgiving what God has very

recently, and within our own memory, wonderfully and mercifully done,

but as far as in them lies they attempt, if possible, to bury it in

universal oblivion. But should we be silent about these things, we

should be in like manner ungrateful. When Radagaisus, king of the

Goths, having taken up his position very near to the city, with a vast

and savage army, was already close upon the Romans, he was in one day

so speedily and so thoroughly beaten, that, whilst not even one Roman

was wounded, much less slain, far more than a hundred thousand of his

army were prostrated, and he himself and his sons, having been

captured, were forthwith put to death, suffering the punishment they

deserved. For had so impious a man, with so great and so impious a

host, entered the city, whom would he have spared? what tombs of the

martyrs would he have respected? in his treatment of what person would

he have manifested the fear of God? whose blood would he have refrained

from shedding? whose chastity would he have wished to preserve

inviolate? But how loud would they not have been in the praises of

their gods! How insultingly they would have boasted, saying that

Radagaisus had conquered, that he had been able to achieve such great

things, because he propitiated and won over the gods by daily

sacrifices,--a thing which the Christian religion did not allow the

Romans to do! For when he was approaching to those places where he was

overwhelmed at the nod of the Supreme Majesty, as his fame was

everywhere increasing, it was being told us at Carthage that the pagans

were believing, publishing, and boasting, that he, on account of the

help and protection of the gods friendly to him, because of the

sacrifices which he was said to be daily offering to them, would

certainly not be conquered by those who were not performing such

sacrifices to the Roman gods, and did not even permit that they should

be offered by any one. And now these wretched men do not give thanks

to God for his great mercy, who, having determined to chastise the

corruption of men, which was worthy of far heavier chastisement than

the corruption of the barbarians, tempered His indignation with such

mildness as, in the first instance, to cause that the king of the Goths

should be conquered in a wonderful manner, lest glory should accrue to

demons, whom he was known to be supplicating, and thus the minds of the

weak should be overthrown; and then, afterwards, to cause that, when

Rome was to be taken, it should be taken by those barbarians who,

contrary to any custom of all former wars, protected, through reverence

for the Christian religion, those who fled for refuge to the sacred

places, and who so opposed the demons themselves, and the rites of

impious sacrifices, that they seemed to be carrying on a far more

terrible war with them than with men. Thus did the true Lord and

Governor of things both scourge the Romans mercifully, and, by the

marvellous defeat of the worshippers of demons, show that those

sacrifices were not necessary even for the safety of present things; so

that, by those who do not obstinately hold out, but prudently consider

the matter, true religion may not be deserted on account of the

urgencies of the present time, but may be more clung to in most

confident expectation of eternal life.

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Chapter 24.--What Was the Happiness of the Christian Emperors, and How

Far It Was True Happiness.

For neither do we say that certain Christian emperors were therefore

happy because they ruled a long time, or, dying a peaceful death, left

their sons to succeed them in the empire, or subdued the enemies of the

republic, or were able both to guard against and to suppress the

attempt of hostile citizens rising against them. These and other gifts

or comforts of this sorrowful life even certain worshippers of demons

have merited to receive, who do not belong to the kingdom of God to

which these belong; and this is to be traced to the mercy of God, who

would not have those who believe in Him desire such things as the

highest good. But we say that they are happy if they rule justly; if

they are not lifted up amid the praises of those who pay them sublime

honors, and the obsequiousness of those who salute them with an

excessive humility, but remember that they are men; if they make their

power the handmaid of His majesty by using it for the greatest possible

extension of His worship; if they fear, love, worship God; if more than

their own they love that kingdom in which they are not afraid to have

partners; if they are slow to punish, ready to pardon; if they apply

that punishment as necessary to government and defence of the republic,

and not in order to gratify their own enmity; if they grant pardon, not

that iniquity may go unpunished, but with the hope that the

transgressor may amend his ways; if they compensate with the lenity of

mercy and the liberality of benevolence for whatever severity they may

be compelled to decree; if their luxury is as much restrained as it

might have been unrestrained; if they prefer to govern depraved desires

rather than any nation whatever; and if they do all these things, not

through ardent desire of empty glory, but through love of eternal

felicity, not neglecting to offer to the true God, who is their God,

for their sins, the sacrifices of humility, contrition, and prayer.

Such Christian emperors, we say, are happy in the present time by hope,

and are destined to be so in the enjoyment of the reality itself, when

that which we wait for shall have arrived.

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Chapter 25.--Concerning the Prosperity Which God Granted to the

Christian Emperor Constantine.

For the good God, lest men, who believe that He is to be worshipped

with a view to eternal life, should think that no one could attain to

all this high estate, and to this terrestrial dominion, unless he

should be a worshipper of the demons,--supposing that these spirits

have great power with respect to such things,--for this reason He gave

to the Emperor Constantine, who was not a worshipper of demons, but of

the true God Himself, such fullness of earthly gifts as no one would

even dare wish for. To him also He granted the honor of founding a

city, [227] a companion to the Roman empire, the daughter, as it were,

of Rome itself, but without any temple or image of the demons. He

reigned for a long period as sole emperor, and unaided held and

defended the whole Roman world. In conducting and carrying on wars he

was most victorious; in overthrowing tyrants he was most successful.

He died at a great age, of sickness and old age, and left his sons to

succeed him in the empire. [228] But again, lest any emperor should

become a Christian in order to merit the happiness of Constantine, when

every one should be a Christian for the sake of eternal life, God took

away Jovian far sooner than Julian, and permitted that Gratian should

be slain by the sword of a tyrant. But in his case there was far more

mitigation of the calamity than in the case of the great Pompey, for he

could not be avenged by Cato, whom he had left, as it were, heir to the

civil war. But Gratian, though pious minds require not such

consolations, was avenged by Theodosius, whom he had associated with

himself in the empire, though he had a little brother of his own, being

more desirous of a faithful alliance than of extensive power.

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[227] Constantinople.

[228] Constantius, Constantine, and Constans.

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Chapter 26.--On the Faith and Piety of Theodosius Augustus.

And on this account, Theodosius not only preserved during the lifetime

of Gratian that fidelity which was due to him, but also, after his

death, he, like a true Christian, took his little brother Valentinian

under his protection, as joint emperor, after he had been expelled by

Maximus, the murderer of his father. He guarded him with paternal

affection, though he might without any difficulty have got rid of him,

being entirely destitute of all resources, had he been animated with

the desire of extensive empire, and not with the ambition of being a

benefactor. It was therefore a far greater pleasure to him, when he

had adopted the boy, and preserved to him his imperial dignity, to

console him by his very humanity and kindness. Afterwards, when that

success was rendering Maximus terrible, Theodosius, in the midst of his

perplexing anxieties, was not drawn away to follow the suggestions of a

sacrilegious and unlawful curiosity, but sent to John, whose abode was

in the desert of Egypt,--for he had learned that this servant of God

(whose fame was spreading abroad) was endowed with the gift of

prophecy,--and from him he received assurance of victory. Immediately

the slayer of the tyrant Maximus, with the deepest feelings of

compassion and respect, restored the boy Valentinianus to his share in

the empire from which he had been driven. Valentinianus being soon

after slain by secret assassination, or by some other plot or accident,

Theodosius, having again received a response from the prophet, and

placing entire confidence in it, marched against the tyrant Eugenius,

who had been unlawfully elected to succeed that emperor, and defeated

his very powerful army, more by prayer than by the sword. Some

soldiers who were at the battle reported to me that all the missiles

they were throwing were snatched from their hands by a vehement wind,

which blew from the direction of Theodosius' army upon the enemy; nor

did it only drive with greater velocity the darts which were hurled

against them, but also turned back upon their own bodies the darts

which they themselves were throwing. And therefore the poet Claudian,

although an alien from the name of Christ, nevertheless says in his

praises of him, "O prince, too much beloved by God, for thee �olus

pours armed tempests from their caves; for thee the air fights, and the

winds with one accord obey thy bugles." [229] But the victor, as he

had believed and predicted, overthrew the statues of Jupiter, which had

been, as it were, consecrated by I know not what kind of rites against

him, and set up in the Alps. And the thunderbolts of these statues,

which were made of gold, he mirthfully and graciously presented to his

couriers who (as the joy of the occasion permitted) were jocularly

saying that they would be most happy to be struck by such

thunderbolts. The sons of his own enemies, whose fathers had been

slain not so much by his orders as by the vehemence of war, having fled

for refuge to a church, though they were not yet Christians, he was

anxious, taking advantage of the occasion, to bring over to

Christianity, and treated them with Christian love. Nor did he deprive

them of their property, but, besides allowing them to retain it,

bestowed on them additional honors. He did not permit private

animosities to affect the treatment of any man after the war. He was

not like Cinna, and Marius, and Sylla, and other such men, who wished

not to finish civil wars even when they were finished, but rather

grieved that they had arisen at all, than wished that when they were

finished they should harm any one. Amid all these events, from the

very commencement of his reign, he did not cease to help the troubled

church against the impious by most just and merciful laws, which the

heretical Valens, favoring the Arians, had vehemently afflicted.

Indeed, he rejoiced more to be a member of this church than he did to

be a king upon the earth. The idols of the Gentiles he everywhere

ordered to be overthrown, understanding well that not even terrestrial

gifts are placed in the power of demons, but in that of the true God.

And what could be more admirable than his religious humility, when,

compelled by the urgency of certain of his intimates, he avenged the

grievous crime of the Thessalonians, which at the prayer of the bishops

he had promised to pardon, and, being laid hold of by the discipline of

the church, did penance in such a way that the sight of his imperial

loftiness prostrated made the people who were interceding for him weep

more than the consciousness of offence had made them fear it when

enraged? These and other similar good works, which it would be long to

tell, he carried with him from this world of time, where the greatest

human nobility and loftiness are but vapor. Of these works the reward

is eternal happiness, of which God is the giver, though only to those

who are sincerely pious. But all other blessings and privileges of

this life, as the world itself, light, air, earth, water, fruits, and

the soul of man himself, his body, senses, mind, life, He lavishes on

good and bad alike. And among these blessings is also to be reckoned

the possession of an empire, whose extent He regulates according to the

requirements of His providential government at various times. Whence,

I see, we must now answer those who, being confuted and convicted by

the most manifest proofs, by which it is shown that for obtaining these

terrestrial things, which are all the foolish desire to have, that

multitude of false gods is of no use, attempt to assert that the gods

are to be worshipped with a view to the interest, not of the present

life, but of that which is to come after death. For as to those who,

for the sake of the friendship of this world, are willing to worship

vanities, and do not grieve that they are left to their puerile

understandings, I think they have been sufficiently answered in these

five books; of which books, when I had published the first three, and

they had begun to come into the hands of many, I heard that certain

persons were preparing against them an answer of some kind or other in

writing. Then it was told me that they had already written their

answer, but were waiting a time when they could publish it without

danger. Such persons I would advise not to desire what cannot be of

any advantage to them; for it is very easy for a man to seem to himself

to have answered arguments, when he has only been unwilling to be

silent. For what is more loquacious than vanity? And though it be

able, if it like, to shout more loudly than the truth, it is not, for

all that, more powerful than the truth. But let men consider

diligently all the things that we have said, and if, perchance, judging

without party spirit, they shall clearly perceive that they are such

things as may rather be shaken than torn up by their most impudent

garrulity, and, as it were, satirical and mimic levity, let them

restrain their absurdities, and let them choose rather to be corrected

by the wise than to be lauded by the foolish. For if they are waiting

an opportunity, not for liberty to speak the truth, but for license to

revile, may not that befall them which Tully says concerning some one,

"Oh, wretched man! who was at liberty to sin?" [230] Wherefore,

whoever he be who deems himself happy because of license to revile, he

would be far happier if that were not allowed him at all; for he might

all the while, laying aside empty boast, be contradicting those to

whose views he is opposed by way of free consultation with them, and be

listening, as it becomes him, honorably, gravely, candidly, to all that

can be adduced by those whom he consults by friendly disputation.

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[229] Panegyr, de tertio Honorii consulatu.

[230] Tusc. Qu�st.v. 19.

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[188] Written in the year 415.

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Book VI.

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Argument--Hitherto the argument has been conducted against those who

believe that the gods are to be worshipped for the sake of temporal

advantages, now it is directed against those who believe that they are

to be worshipped for the sake of eternal life. Augustin devotes the

five following books to the confutation of this latter belief, and

first of all shows how mean an opinion of the gods was held by Varro

himself, the most esteemed writer on heathen theology. Of this

theology Augustin adopts Varro's division into three kinds, mythical,

natural, and civil; and at once demonstrates that neither the mythical

nor the civil can contribute anything to the happiness of the future

life.

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Preface.

In the five former books, I think I have sufficiently disputed against

those who believe that the many false gods, which the Christian truth

shows to be useless images, or unclean spirits and pernicious demons,

or certainly creatures, not the Creator, are to be worshipped for the

advantage of this mortal life, and of terrestrial affairs, with that

rite and service which the Greeks call latreia, and which is due to the

one true God. And who does not know that, in the face of excessive

stupidity and obstinacy, neither these five nor any other number of

books whatsoever could be enough, when it is esteemed the glory of

vanity to yield to no amount of strength on the side of

truth,--certainly to his destruction over whom so heinous a vice

tyrannizes? For, notwithstanding all the assiduity of the physician

who attempts to effect a cure, the disease remains unconquered, not

through any fault of his, but because of the incurableness of the sick

man. But those who thoroughly weigh the things which they read, having

understood and considered them, without any, or with no great and

excessive degree of that obstinacy which belongs to a long-cherished

error, will more readily judge that, in the five books already

finished, we have done more than the necessity of the question

demanded, than that we have given it less discussion than it required.

And they cannot have doubted but that all the hatred which the ignorant

attempt to bring upon the Christian religion on account of the

disasters of this life, and the destruction and change which befall

terrestrial things, whilst the learned do not merely dissimulate, but

encourage that hatred, contrary to their own consciences, being

possessed by a mad impiety;--they cannot have doubted, I say, but that

this hatred is devoid of right reflection and reason, and full of most

light temerity, and most pernicious animosity.

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Chapter 1.--Of Those Who Maintain that They Worship the Gods Not for

the Sake of Temporal But Eternal Advantages.

Now, as, in the next place (as the promised order demands), those are

to be refuted and taught who contend that the gods of the nations,

which the Christian truth destroys, are to be worshipped not on account

of this life, but on account of that which is to be after death, I

shall do well to commence my disputation with the truthful oracle of

the holy psalm, "Blessed is the man whose hope is the Lord God, and who

respecteth not vanities and lying follies." [231] Nevertheless, in

all vanities and lying follies the philosophers are to be listened to

with far more toleration, who have repudiated those opinions and errors

of the people; for the people set up images to the deities, and either

feigned concerning those whom they call immortal gods many false and

unworthy things, or believed them, already feigned, and, when believed,

mixed them up with their worship and sacred rites.

With those men who, though not by free avowal of their convictions, do

still testify that they disapprove of those things by their muttering

disapprobation during disputations on the subject, it may not be very

far amiss to discuss the following question: Whether for the sake of

the life which is to be after death, we ought to worship, not the one

God who made all creatures spiritual and corporeal, but those many gods

who, as some of these philosophers hold, were made by that one God, and

placed by Him in their respective sublime spheres, and are therefore

considered more excellent and more noble than all the others? [232]

But who will assert that it must be affirmed and contended that those

gods, certain of whom I have mentioned in the fourth book, [233] to

whom are distributed, each to each, the charges of minute things, do

bestow eternal life? But will those most skilled and most acute men,

who glory in having written for the great benefit of men, to teach on

what account each god is to be worshipped, and what is to be sought

from each, lest with most disgraceful absurdity, such as a mimic is

wont for the sake of merriment to exhibit, water should be sought from

Liber, wine from the Lymphs,--will those men indeed affirm to any man

supplicating the immortal gods, that when he shall have asked wine from

the Lymphs, and they shall have answered him, "We have water, seek wine

from Liber," he may rightly say, "If ye have not wine, at least give me

eternal life?" What more monstrous than this absurdity? Will not

these Lymphs,--for they are wont to be very easily made laugh, [234]

--laughing loudly (if they do not attempt to deceive like demons),

answer the suppliant, "O man, dost thou think that we have life (vitam)

in our power, who thou hearest have not even the vine (vitem)?" It is

therefore most impudent folly to seek and hope for eternal life from

such gods as are asserted so to preside over the separate minute

concernments of this most sorrowful and short life, and whatever is

useful for supporting and propping it, as that if anything which is

under the care and power of one be sought from another, it is so

incongruous and absurd that it appears very like to mimic

drollery,--which, when it is done by mimics knowing what they are

doing, is deservedly laughed at in the theatre, but when it is done by

foolish persons, who do not know better, is more deservedly ridiculed

in the world. Wherefore, as concerns those gods which the states have

established, it has been cleverly invented and handed down to memory by

learned men, what god or goddess is to be supplicated in relation to

every particular thing,--what, for instance, is to be sought from

Liber, what from the Lymphs, what from Vulcan, and so of all the rest,

some of whom I have mentioned in the fourth book, and some I have

thought right to omit. Further, if it is an error to seek wine from

Ceres, bread from Liber, water from Vulcan, fire from the Lymphs, how

much greater absurdity ought it to be thought, if supplication be made

to any one of these for eternal life?

Wherefore, if, when we were inquiring what gods or goddesses are to be

believed to be able to confer earthly kingdoms upon men, all things

having been discussed, it was shown to be very far from the truth to

think that even terrestrial kingdoms are established by any of those

many false deities, is it not most insane impiety to believe that

eternal life, which is, without any doubt or comparison, to be

preferred to all terrestrial kingdoms, can be given to any one by any

of these gods? For the reason why such gods seemed to us not to be

able to give even an earthly kingdom, was not because they are very

great and exalted, whilst that is something small and abject, which

they, in their so great sublimity, would not condescend to care for,

but because, however deservedly any one may, in consideration of human

frailty, despise the falling pinnacles of an earthly kingdom, these

gods have presented such an appearance as to seem most unworthy to have

the granting and preserving of even those entrusted to them; and

consequently, if (as we have taught in the two last books of our work,

where this matter is treated of) no god out of all that crowd, either

belonging to, as it were, the plebeian or to the noble gods, is fit to

give mortal kingdoms to mortals, how much less is he able to make

immortals of mortals?

And more than this, if, according to the opinion of those with whom we

are now arguing, the gods are to be worshipped, not on account of the

present life, but of that which is to be after death, then, certainly,

they are not to be worshipped on account of those particular things

which are distributed and portioned out (not by any law of rational

truth, but by mere vain conjecture) to the power of such gods, as they

believe they ought to be worshipped, who contend that their worship is

necessary for all the desirable things of this mortal life, against

whom I have disputed sufficiently, as far as I was able, in the five

preceding books. These things being so, if the age itself of those who

worshipped the goddess Juventas should be characterized by remarkable

vigor, whilst her despisers should either die within the years of

youth, or should, during that period, grow cold as with the torpor of

old age; if bearded Fortuna should cover the cheeks of her worshippers

more handsomely and more gracefully than all others, whilst we should

see those by whom she was despised either altogether beardless or

ill-bearded; even then we should most rightly say, that thus far these

several gods had power, limited in some way by their functions, and

that, consequently, neither ought eternal life to be sought from

Juventas, who could not give a beard, nor ought any good thing after

this life to be expected from Fortuna Barbata, who has no power even in

this life to give the age itself at which the beard grows. But now,

when their worship is necessary not even on account of those very

things which they think are subjected to their power,--for many

worshippers of the goddess Juventas have not been at all vigorous at

that age, and many who do not worship her rejoice in youthful strength;

and also many suppliants of Fortuna Barbata have either not been able

to attain to any beard at all, not even an ugly one, although they who

adore her in order to obtain a beard are ridiculed by her bearded

despisers,--is the human heart really so foolish as to believe that

that worship of the gods, which it acknowledges to be vain and

ridiculous with respect to those very temporal and swiftly passing

gifts, over each of which one of these gods is said to preside, is

fruitful in results with respect to eternal life? And that they are

able to give eternal life has not been affirmed even by those who, that

they might be worshipped by the silly populace, distributed in minute

division among them these temporal occupations, that none of them might

sit idle; for they had supposed the existence of an exceedingly great

number.

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[231] Ps. xl. 4.

[232] Plato, in the Tim�us.

[233] Ch. xi. and xxi.

[234] See Virgil, Ec. iii. 9.

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Chapter 2.--What We are to Believe that Varro Thought Concerning the

Gods of the Nations, Whose Various Kinds and Sacred Rites He Has Shown

to Be Such that He Would Have Acted More Reverently Towards Them Had He

Been Altogether Silent Concerning Them.

Who has investigated those things more carefully than Marcus Varro?

Who has discovered them more learnedly? Who has considered them more

attentively? Who has distinguished them more acutely? Who has written

about them more diligently and more fully?--who, though he is less

pleasing in his eloquence, is nevertheless so full of instruction and

wisdom, that in all the erudition which we call secular, but they

liberal, he will teach the student of things as much as Cicero delights

the student of words. And even Tully himself renders him such

testimony, as to say in his Academic books that he had held that

disputation which is there carried on with Marcus Varro, "a man," he

adds, "unquestionably the acutest of all men, and, without any doubt,

the most learned." [235] He does not say the most eloquent or the

most fluent, for in reality he was very deficient in this faculty, but

he says, "of all men the most acute." And in those books,--that is,

the Academic,--where he contends that all things are to be doubted, he

adds of him, "without any doubt the most learned." In truth, he was so

certain concerning this thing, that he laid aside that doubt which he

is wont to have recourse to in all things, as if, when about to dispute

in favor of the doubt of the Academics, he had, with respect to this

one thing, forgotten that he was an Academic. But in the first book,

when he extols the literary works of the same Varro, he says, "Us

straying and wandering in our own city like strangers, thy books, as it

were, brought home, that at length we might come to know of who we were

and where we were. Thou has opened up to us the age of the country,

the distribution of seasons, the laws of sacred things, and of the

priests; thou hast opened up to us domestic and public discipline; thou

hast pointed out to us the proper places for religious ceremonies, and

hast informed us concerning sacred places. Thou hast shown us the

names, kinds, offices, causes of all divine and human things." [236]

This man, then, of so distinguished and excellent acquirements, and, as

Terentian briefly says of him in a most elegant verse,

"Varro, a man universally informed," [237]

who read so much that we wonder when he had time to write, wrote so

much that we can scarcely believe any one could have read it all,--this

man, I say, so great in talent, so great in learning, had he been an

opposer and destroyer of the so-called divine things of which he wrote,

and had he said that they pertained to superstition rather than to

religion, might perhaps, even in that case, not have written so many

things which are ridiculous, contemptible, detestable. But when he so

worshipped these same gods, and so vindicated their worship, as to say,

in that same literary work of his, that he was afraid lest they should

perish, not by an assault by enemies, but by the negligence of the

citizens, and that from this ignominy they are being delivered by him,

and are being laid up and preserved in the memory of the good by means

of such books, with a zeal far more beneficial than that through which

Metellus is declared to have rescued the sacred things of Vesta from

the flames, and �neas to have rescued the Penates from the burning of

Troy; and when he nevertheless, gives forth such things to be read by

succeeding ages as are deservedly judged by wise and unwise to be unfit

to be read, and to be most hostile to the truth of religion; what ought

we to think but that a most acute and learned man,--not, however made

free by the Holy Spirit,--was overpowered by the custom and laws of his

state, and, not being able to be silent about those things by which he

was influenced, spoke of them under pretence of commending religion?

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[235] Of the four books De Acad., dedicated to Varro, only a part of

the first is extant.

[236] Cicero, De Qu�st. Acad. i. 3.

[237] In his book De Metris,, chapter on phal�cian verses.

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Chapter 3.--Varro's Distribution of His Book Which He Composed

Concerning the Antiquities of Human and Divine Things.

He wrote forty-one books of antiquities. These he divided into human

and divine things. Twenty-five he devoted to human things, sixteen to

divine things; following this plan in that division,--namely, to give

six books to each of the four divisions of human things. For he

directs his attention to these considerations: who perform, where they

perform, when they perform, what they perform. Therefore in the first

six books he wrote concerning men; in the second six, concerning

places; in the third six, concerning times; in the fourth and last six,

concerning things. Four times six, however, make only twenty-four.

But he placed at the head of them one separate work, which spoke of all

these things conjointly.

In divine things, the same order he preserved throughout, as far as

concerns those things which are performed to the gods. For sacred

things are performed by men in places and times. These four things I

have mentioned he embraced in twelve books, allotting three to each.

For he wrote the first three concerning men, the following three

concerning places, the third three concerning times, and the fourth

three concerning sacred rites,--showing who should perform, where they

should perform, when they should perform, what they should perform,

with most subtle distinction. But because it was necessary to say--and

that especially was expected--to whom they should perform sacred rites,

he wrote concerning the gods themselves the last three books; and these

five times three made fifteen. But they are in all, as we have said,

sixteen. For he put also at the beginning of these one distinct book,

speaking by way of introduction of all which follows; which being

finished, he proceeded to subdivide the first three in that five-fold

distribution which pertain to men, making the first concerning high

priests, the second concerning augurs, the third concerning the fifteen

men presiding over the sacred ceremonies. [238] The second three he

made concerning places, speaking in one of them concerning their

chapels, in the second concerning their temples, and in the third

concerning religious places. The next three which follow these, and

pertain to times,--that is, to festival days,--he distributed so as to

make one concerning holidays, the other concerning the circus games,

and the third concerning scenic plays. Of the fourth three, pertaining

to sacred things, he devoted one to consecrations, another to private,

the last to public, sacred rites. In the three which remain, the gods

themselves follow this pompous train, as it were, for whom all this

culture has been expended. In the first book are the certain gods, in

the second the uncertain, in the third, and last of all, the chief and

select gods.

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[238] Tarquin the Proud, having bought the books of the sibyl,

appointed two men to preserve and interpret them (Dionys. Halic. Antiq.

iv. 62. These were afterwards increased to ten, while the plebeians

were contended for larger privileges; and subsequently five more were

added.

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Chapter 4.--That from the Disputation of Varro, It Follows that the

Worshippers of the Gods Regard Human Things as More Ancient Than Divine

Things.

In this whole series of most beautiful and most subtle distributions

and distinctions, it will most easily appear evident from the things we

have said already, and from what is to be said hereafter, to any man

who is not, in the obstinacy of his heart, an enemy to himself, that it

is vain to seek and to hope for, and even most impudent to wish for

eternal life. For these institutions are either the work of men or of

demons,--not of those whom they call good demons, but, to speak more

plainly, of unclean, and, without controversy, malign spirits, who with

wonderful slyness and secretness suggest to the thoughts of the

impious, and sometimes openly present to their understandings, noxious

opinions, by which the human mind grows more and more foolish, and

becomes unable to adapt itself to and abide in the immutable and

eternal truth, and seek to confirm these opinions by every kind of

fallacious attestation in their power. This very same Varro testifies

that he wrote first concerning human things, but afterwards concerning

divine things, because the states existed first, and afterward these

things were instituted by them. But the true religion was not

instituted by any earthly state, but plainly it established the

celestial city. It, however, is inspired and taught by the true God,

the giver of eternal life to His true worshippers.

The following is the reason Varro gives when he confesses that he had

written first concerning human things, and afterwards of divine things,

because these divine things were instituted by men:--"As the painter is

before the painted tablet, the mason before the edifice, so states are

before those things which are instituted by states." But he says that

he would have written first concerning the gods, afterwards concerning

men, if he had been writing concerning the whole nature of the

gods,--as if he were really writing concerning some portion of, and not

all, the nature of the gods; or as if, indeed, some portion of, though

not all, the nature of the gods ought not to be put before that of

men. How, then, comes it that in those three last books, when he is

diligently explaining the certain, uncertain and select gods, he seems

to pass over no portion of the nature of the gods? Why, then, does he

say, "If we had been writing on the whole nature of the gods, we would

first have finished the divine things before we touched the human?"

For he either writes concerning the whole nature of the gods, or

concerning some portion of it, or concerning no part of it at all. If

concerning it all, it is certainly to be put before human things; if

concerning some part of it, why should it not, from the very nature of

the case, precede human things? Is not even some part of the gods to

be preferred to the whole of humanity? But if it is too much to prefer

a part of the divine to all human things, that part is certainly worthy

to be preferred to the Romans at least. For he writes the books

concerning human things, not with reference to the whole world, but

only to Rome; which books he says he had properly placed, in the order

of writing, before the books on divine things, like a painter before

the painted tablet, or a mason before the building, most openly

confessing that, as a picture or a structure, even these divine things

were instituted by men. There remains only the third supposition, that

he is to be understood to have written concerning no divine nature, but

that he did not wish to say this openly, but left it to the intelligent

to infer; for when one says "not all," usage understands that to mean

"some," but it may be understood as meaning none, because that which is

none is neither all nor some. In fact, as he himself says, if he had

been writing concerning all the nature of the gods, its due place would

have been before human things in the order of writing. But, as the

truth declares, even though Varro is silent, the divine nature should

have taken precedence of Roman things, though it were not all, but only

some. But it is properly put after, therefore it is none. His

arrangement, therefore, was due, not to a desire to give human things

priority to divine things, but to his unwillingness to prefer false

things to true. For in what he wrote on human things, he followed the

history of affairs; but in what he wrote concerning those things which

they call divine, what else did he follow but mere conjectures about

vain things? This, doubtless, is what, in a subtle manner, he wished

to signify; not only writing concerning divine things after the human,

but even giving a reason why he did so; for if he had suppressed this,

some, perchance, would have defended his doing so in one way, and some

in another. But in that very reason he has rendered, he has left

nothing for men to conjecture at will, and has sufficiently proved that

he preferred men to the institutions of men, not the nature of men to

the nature of the gods. Thus he confessed that, in writing the books

concerning divine things, he did not write concerning the truth which

belongs to nature, but the falseness which belongs to error; which he

has elsewhere expressed more openly (as I have mentioned in the fourth

book [239] ), saying that, had he been founding a new city himself, he

would have written according to the order of nature; but as he had only

found an old one, he could not but follow its custom.

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[239] Ch. 31.

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Chapter 5.--Concerning the Three Kinds of Theology According to Varro,

Namely, One Fabulous, the Other Natural, the Third Civil.

Now what are we to say of this proposition of his, namely, that there

are three kinds of theology, that is, of the account which is given of

the gods; and of these, the one is called mythical, the other physical,

and the third civil? Did the Latin usage permit, we should call the

kind which he has placed first in order fabular, [240] but let us call

it fabulous, [241] for mythical is derived from the Greek muthos, a

fable; but that the second should be called natural, the usage of

speech now admits; the third he himself has designated in Latin, call

ing it civil. [242] Then he says, "they call that kind mythical which

the poets chiefly use; physical, that which the philosophers use;

civil, that which the people use. As to the first I have mentioned,"

says he, "in it are many fictions, which are contrary to the dignity

and nature of the immortals. For we find in it that one god has been

born from the head, another from the thigh, another from drops of

blood; also, in this we find that gods have stolen, committed adultery,

served men; in a word, in this all manner of things are attributed to

the gods, such as may befall, not merely any man, but even the most

contemptible man." He certainly, where he could, where he dared, where

he thought he could do it with impunity, has manifested, without any of

the haziness of ambiguity, how great injury was done to the nature of

the gods by lying fables; for he was speaking, not concerning natural

theology, not concerning civil, but concerning fabulous theology, which

he thought he could freely find fault with.

Let us see, now, what he says concerning the second kind. "The second

kind which I have explained," he says, "is that concerning which

philosophers have left many books, in which they treat such questions

as these: what gods there are, where they are, of what kind and

character they are, since what time they have existed, or if they have

existed from eternity; whether they are of fire, as Heraclitus

believes; or of number, as Pythagoras; or of atoms, as Epicurus says;

and other such things, which men's ears can more easily hear inside the

walls of a school than outside in the Forum." He finds fault with

nothing in this kind of theology which they call physical, and which

belongs to philosophers, except that he has related their controversies

among themselves, through which there has arisen a multitude of

dissentient sects. Nevertheless he has removed this kind from the

Forum, that is, from the populace, but he has shut it up in schools.

But that first kind, most false and most base, he has not removed from

the citizens. Oh, the religious ears of the people, and among them

even those of the Romans, that are not able to bear what the

philosophers dispute concerning the gods! But when the poets sing and

stage-players act such things as are derogatory to the dignity and the

nature of the immortals, such as may befall not a man merely, but the

most contemptible man, they not only bear, but willingly listen to.

Nor is this all, but they even consider that these things please the

gods, and that they are propitiated by them.

But some one may say, Let us distinguish these two kinds of theology,

the mythical and the physical,--that is, the fabulous and the

natural,--from this civil kind about which we are now speaking.

Anticipating this, he himself has distinguished them. Let us see now

how he explains the civil theology itself. I see, indeed, why it

should be distinguished as fabulous, even because it is false, because

it is base, because it is unworthy. But to wish to distinguish the

natural from the civil, what else is that but to confess that the civil

itself is false? For if that be natural, what fault has it that it

should be excluded? And if this which is called civil be not natural,

what merit has it that it should be admitted? This, in truth, is the

cause why he wrote first concerning human things, and afterwards

concerning divine things; since in divine things he did not follow

nature, but the institution of men. Let us look at this civil theology

of his. "The third kind," says he, "is that which citizens in cities,

and especially the priests, ought to know and to administer. From it

is to be known what god each one may suitably worship, what sacred

rites and sacrifices each one may suitably perform." Let us still

attend to what follows. "The first theology," he says, "is especially

adapted to the theatre, the second to the world, the third to the

city." Who does not see to which he gives the palm? Certainly to the

second, which he said above is that of the philosophers. For he

testifies that this pertains to the world, than which they think there

is nothing better. But those two theologies, the first and the

third,--to wit, those of the theatre and of the city,--has he

distinguished them or united them? For although we see that the city

is in the world, we do not see that it follows that any things

belonging to the city pertain to the world. For it is possible that

such things may be worshipped and believed in the city, according to

false opinions, as have no existence either in the world or out of it.

But where is the theatre but in the city? Who instituted the theatre

but the state? For what purpose did it constitute it but for scenic

plays? And to what class of things do scenic plays belong but to those

divine things concerning which these books of Varro's are written with

so much ability?

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[240] Fabulare.

[241] Fabulosum.

[242] Civile.

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Chapter 6.--Concerning the Mythic, that Is, the Fabulous, Theology, and

the Civil, Against Varro.

O Marcus Varro! thou art the most acute, and without doubt the most

learned, but still a man, not God,--now lifted up by the Spirit of God

to see and to announce divine things, thou seest, indeed, that divine

things are to be separated from human trifles and lies, but thou

fearest to offend those most corrupt opinions of the populace, and

their customs in public superstitions, which thou thyself, when thou

considerest them on all sides, perceivest, and all your literature

loudly pronounces to be abhorrent from the nature of the gods, even of

such gods as the frailty of the human mind supposes to exist in the

elements of this world. What can the most excellent human talent do

here? What can human learning, though manifold, avail thee in this

perplexity? Thou desirest to worship the natural gods; thou art

compelled to worship the civil. Thou hast found some of the gods to be

fabulous, on whom thou vomitest forth very freely what thou thinkest,

and, whether thou willest or not, thou wettest therewith even the civil

gods. Thou sayest, forsooth, that the fabulous are adapted to the

theatre, the natural to the world, and the civil to the city; though

the world is a divine work, but cities and theatres are the works of

men, and though the gods who are laughed at in the theatre are not

other than those who are adored in the temples; and ye do not exhibit

games in honor of other gods than those to whom ye immolate victims.

How much more freely and more subtly wouldst thou have decided these

hadst thou said that some gods are natural, others established by men;

and concerning those who have been so established, the literature of

the poets gives one account, and that of the priests another,--both of

which are, nevertheless, so friendly the one to the other, through

fellowship in falsehood, that they are both pleasing to the demons, to

whom the doctrine of the truth is hostile.

That theology, therefore, which they call natural, being put aside for

a moment, as it is afterwards to be discussed, we ask if any one is

really content to seek a hope for eternal life from poetical,

theatrical, scenic gods? Perish the thought! The true God avert so

wild and sacrilegious a madness! What, is eternal life to be asked

from those gods whom these things pleased, and whom these things

propitiate, in which their own crimes are represented? No one, as I

think, has arrived at such a pitch of headlong and furious impiety. So

then, neither by the fabulous nor by the civil theology does any one

obtain eternal life. For the one sows base things concerning the gods

by feigning them, the other reaps by cherishing them; the one scatters

lies, the other gathers them together; the one pursues divine things

with false crimes, the other incorporates among divine things the plays

which are made up of these crimes; the one sounds abroad in human songs

impious fictions concerning the gods, the other consecrates these for

the festivities of the gods themselves; the one sings the misdeeds and

crimes of the gods, the other loves them; the one gives forth or

feigns, the other either attests the true or delights in the false.

Both are base; both are damnable. But the one which is theatrical

teaches public abomination, and that one which is of the city adorns

itself with that abomination. Shall eternal life be hoped for from

these, by which this short and temporal life is polluted? Does the

society of wicked men pollute our life if they insinuate themselves

into our affections, and win our assent? and does not the society of

demons pollute the life, who are worshipped with their own crimes?--if

with true crimes, how wicked the demons! if with false, how wicked the

worship!

When we say these things, it may perchance seem to some one who is very

ignorant of these matters that only those things concerning the gods

which are sung in the songs of the poets and acted on the stage are

unworthy of the divine majesty, and ridiculous, and too detestable to

be celebrated, whilst those sacred things which not stage-players but

priests perform are pure and free from all unseemliness. Had this been

so, never would any one have thought that these theatrical abominations

should be celebrated in their honor, never would the gods themselves

have ordered them to be performed to them. But men are in nowise

ashamed to perform these things in the theatres, because similar things

are carried on in the temples. In short, when the fore-mentioned

author attempted to distinguish the civil theology from the fabulous

and natural, as a sort of third and distinct kind, he wished it to be

understood to be rather tempered by both than separated from either.

For he says that those things which the poets write are less than the

people ought to follow, whilst what the philosophers say is more than

it is expedient for the people to pry into. "Which," says he, "differ

in such a way, that nevertheless not a few things from both of them

have been taken to the account of the civil theology; wherefore we will

indicate what the civil theology has in common with that of the poet,

though it ought to be more closely connected with the theology of

philosophers." Civil theology is therefore not quite disconnected from

that of the poets. Nevertheless, in another place, concerning the

generations of the gods, he says that the people are more inclined

toward the poets than toward the physical theologists. For in this

place he said what ought to be done; in that other place, what was

really done. He said that the latter had written for the sake of

utility, but the poets for the sake of amusement. And hence the things

from the poets' writings, which the people ought not to follow, are the

crimes of the gods; which, nevertheless, amuse both the people and the

gods. For, for amusement's sake, he says, the poets write, and not for

that of utility; nevertheless they write such things as the gods will

desire, and the people perform.

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Chapter 7.--Concerning the Likeness and Agreement of the Fabulous and

Civil Theologies.

That theology, therefore, which is fabulous, theatrical, scenic, and

full of all baseness and unseemliness, is taken up into the civil

theology; and part of that theology, which in its totality is

deservedly judged to be worthy of reprobation and rejection, is

pronounced worthy to be cultivated and observed;--not at all an

incongruous part, as I have undertaken to show, and one which, being

alien to the whole body, was unsuitably attached to and suspended from

it, but a part entirely congruous with, and most harmoniously fitted to

the rest, as a member of the same body. For what else do those images,

forms, ages, sexes, characteristics of the gods show? If the poets

have Jupiter with a beard and Mercury beardless, have not the priests

the same? Is the Priapus of the priests less obscene than the Priapus

of the players? Does he receive the adoration of worshippers in a

different form from that in which he moves about the stage for the

amusement of spectators? Is not Saturn old and Apollo young in the

shrines where their images stand as well as when represented by actors'

masks? Why are Forculus, who presides over doors, and Limentinus, who

presides over thresholds and lintels, male gods, and Cardea between

them feminine, who presides over hinges? Are not those things found in

books on divine things, which grave poets have deemed unworthy of their

verses? Does the Diana of the theatre carry arms, whilst the Diana of

the city is simply a virgin? Is the stage Apollo a lyrist, but the

Delphic Apollo ignorant of this art? But these things are decent

compared with the more shameful things. What was thought of Jupiter

himself by those who placed his wet nurse in the Capitol? Did they not

bear witness to Euhemerus, who, not with the garrulity of a

fable-teller, but with the gravity of an historian who had diligently

investigated the matter, wrote that all such gods had been men and

mortals? And they who appointed the Epulones as parasites at the table

of Jupiter, what else did they wish for but mimic sacred rites. For if

any mimic had said that parasites of Jupiter were made use of at his

table, he would assuredly have appeared to be seeking to call forth

laughter. Varro said it,--not when he was mocking, but when he was

commending the gods did he say it. His books on divine, not on human,

things testify that he wrote this,--not where he set forth the scenic

games, but where he explained the Capitoline laws. In a word, he is

conquered, and confesses that, as they made the gods with a human form,

so they believed that they are delighted with human pleasures.

For also malign spirits were not so wanting to their own business as

not to confirm noxious opinions in the minds of men by converting them

into sport. Whence also is that story about the sacristan of Hercules,

which says that, having nothing to do, he took to playing at dice as a

pastime, throwing them alternately with the one hand for Hercules, with

the other for himself, with this understanding, that if he should win,

he should from the funds of the temple prepare himself a supper, and

hire a mistress; but if Hercules should win the game, he himself

should, at his own expense, provide the same for the pleasure of

Hercules. Then, when he had been beaten by himself, as though by

Hercules, he gave to the god Hercules the supper he owed him, and also

the most noble harlot Larentina. But she, having fallen asleep in the

temple, dreamed that Hercules had had intercourse with her, and had

said to her that she would find her payment with the youth whom she

should first meet on leaving the temple, and that she was to believe

this to be paid to her by Hercules. And so the first youth that met

her on going out was the wealthy Tarutius, who kept her a long time,

and when he died left her his heir. She, having obtained a most ample

fortune, that she should not seem ungrateful for the divine hire, in

her turn made the Roman people her heir, which she thought to be most

acceptable to the deities; and, having disappeared, the will was

found. By which meritorious conduct they say that she gained divine

honors.

Now had these things been feigned by the poets and acted by the mimics,

they would without any doubt have been said to pertain to the fabulous

theology, and would have been judged worthy to be separated from the

dig nity of the civil theology. But when these shameful things,--not

of the poets, but of the people; not of the mimics, but of the sacred

things; not of the theatres, but of the temples, that is, not of the

fabulous, but of the civil theology,--are reported by so great an

author, not in vain do the actors represent with theatrical art the

baseness of the gods, which is so great; but surely in vain do the

priests attempt, by rites called sacred, to represent their nobleness

of character, which has no existence. There are sacred rites of Juno;

and these are celebrated in her beloved island, Samos, where she was

given in marriage to Jupiter. There are sacred rites of Ceres, in

which Proserpine is sought for, having been carried off by Pluto.

There are sacred rites of Venus, in which, her beloved Adonis being

slain by a boar's tooth, the lovely youth is lamented. There are

sacred rites of the mother of the gods, in which the beautiful youth

Atys, loved by her, and castrated by her through a woman's jealousy, is

deplored by men who have suffered the like calamity, whom they call

Galli. Since, then, these things are more unseemly than all scenic

abomination, why is it that they strive to separate, as it were, the

fabulous fictions of the poet concerning the gods, as, forsooth,

pertaining to the theatre, from the civil theology which they wish to

belong to the city, as though they were separating from noble and

worthy things, things unworthy and base? Wherefore there is more

reason to thank the stage-actors, who have spared the eyes of men and

have not laid bare by theatrical exhibition all the things which are

hid by the walls of the temples. What good is to be thought of their

sacred rites which are concealed in darkness, when those which are

brought forth into the light are so detestable? And certainly they

themselves have seen what they transact in secret through the agency of

mutilated and effeminate men. Yet they have not been able to conceal

those same men miserably and vile enervated and corrupted. Let them

persuade whom they can that they transact anything holy through such

men, who, they cannot deny, are numbered, and live among their sacred

things. We know not what they transact, but we know through whom they

transact; for we know what things are transacted on the stage, where

never, even in a chorus of harlots, hath one who is mutilated or an

effeminate appeared. And, nevertheless, even these things are acted by

vile and infamous characters; for, indeed, they ought not to be acted

by men of good character. What, then, are those sacred rites, for the

performance of which holiness has chosen such men as not even the

obscenity of the stage has admitted?

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Chapter 8.--Concerning the Interpretations, Consisting of Natural

Explanations, Which the Pagan Teachers Attempt to Show for Their Gods.

But all these things, they say, have certain physical, that is, natural

interpretations, showing their natural meaning; as though in this

disputation we were seeking physics and not theology, which is the

account, not of nature, but of God. For although He who is the true

God is God, not by opinion, but by nature, nevertheless all nature is

not God; for there is certainly a nature of man, of a beast, of a tree,

of a stone,--none of which is God. For if, when the question is

concerning the mother of the gods, that from which the whole system of

interpretation starts certainly is, that the mother of the gods is the

earth, why do we make further inquiry? why do we carry our

investigation through all the rest of it? What can more manifestly

favor them who say that all those gods were men? For they are

earth-born in the sense that the earth is their mother. But in the

true theology the earth is the work, not the mother, of God. But in

whatever way their sacred rites may be interpreted, and whatever

reference they may have to the nature of things, it is not according to

nature, but contrary to nature, that men should be effeminates. This

disease, this crime, this abomination, has a recognized place among

those sacred things, though even depraved men will scarcely be

compelled by torments to confess they are guilty of it. Again, if

these sacred rites, which are proved to be fouler than scenic

abominations, are excused and justified on the ground that they have

their own interpretations, by which they are shown to symbolize the

nature of things, why are not the poetical things in like manner

excused and justified? For many have interpreted even these in like

fashion, to such a degree that even that which they say is the most

monstrous and most horrible,--namely, that Saturn devoured his own

children,--has been interpreted by some of them to mean that length of

time, which is signified by the name of Saturn, consumes whatever it

begets; or that, as the same Varro thinks, Saturn belongs to seeds

which fall back again into the earth from whence they spring. And so

one interprets it in one way, and one in another. And the same is to

be said of all the rest of this theology.

And, nevertheless, it is called the fabulous theology, and is censured,

cast off, rejected, together with all such interpretations belonging to

it. And not only by the natural theology, which is that of the

philosophers, but also by this civil theology, concerning which we are

speaking, which is asserted to pertain to cities and peoples, it is

judged worthy of repudiation, because it has invented unworthy things

concerning the gods. Of which, I wot, this is the secret: that those

most acute and learned men, by whom those things were written,

understood that both theologies ought to be rejected,--to wit, both

that fabulous and this civil one,--but the former they dared to reject,

the latter they dared not; the former they set forth to be censured,

the latter they showed to be very like it; not that it might be chosen

to be held in preference to the other, but that it might be understood

to be worthy of being rejected together with it. And thus, without

danger to those who feared to censure the civil theology, both of them

being brought into contempt, that theology which they call natural

might find a place in better disposed minds; for the civil and the

fabulous are both fabulous and both civil. He who shall wisely inspect

the vanities and obscenities of both will find that they are both

fabulous; and he who shall direct his attention to the scenic plays

pertaining to the fabulous theology in the festivals of the civil gods,

and in the divine rites of the cities, will find they are both civil.

How, then, can the power of giving eternal life be attributed to any of

those gods whose own images and sacred rites convict them of being most

like to the fabulous gods, which are most openly reprobated, in forms,

ages, sex, characteristics, marriages, generations, rites; in all which

things they are understood either to have been men, and to have had

their sacred rites and solemnities instituted in their honor according

to the life or death of each of them, the demons suggesting and

confirming this error, or certainly most foul spirits, who, taking

advantage of some occasion or other, have stolen into the minds of men

to deceive them?

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Chapter 9.--Concerning the Special Offices of the Gods.

And as to those very offices of the gods, so meanly and so minutely

portioned out, so that they say that they ought to be supplicated, each

one according to his special function,--about which we have spoken much

already, though not all that is to be said concerning it,--are they not

more consistent with mimic buffoonery than divine majesty? If any one

should use two nurses for his infant, one of whom should give nothing

but food, the other nothing but drink, as these make use of two

goddesses for this purpose, Educa and Potina, he should certainly seem

to be foolish, and to do in his house a thing worthy of a mimic. They

would have Liber to have been named from "liberation," because through

him males at the time of copulation are liberated by the emission of

the seed. They also say that Libera (the same in their opinion as

Venus) exercises the same function in the case of women, because they

say that they also emit seed; and they also say that on this account

the same part of the male and of the female is placed in the temple,

that of the male to Liber, and that of the female to Libera. To these

things they add the women assigned to Liber, and the wine for exciting

lust. Thus the Bacchanalia are celebrated with the utmost insanity,

with respect to which Varro himself confesses that such things would

not be done by the Bacchanals except their minds were highly excited.

These things, however, afterwards displeased a saner senate, and it

ordered them to be discontinued. Here, at length, they perhaps

perceived how much power unclean spirits, when held to be gods,

exercise over the minds of men. These things, certainly, were not to

be done in the theatres; for there they play, not rave, although to

have gods who are delighted with such plays is very like raving.

But what kind of distinction is this which he makes between the

religious and the superstitious man, saying that the gods are feared

[243] by the superstitious man, but are reverenced [244] as parents by

the religious man, not feared as enemies; and that they are all so good

that they will more readily spare those who are impious than hurt one

who is innocent? And yet he tells us that three gods are assigned as

guardians to a woman after she has been delivered, lest the god

Silvanus come in and molest her; and that in order to signify the

presence of these protectors, three men go round the house during the

night, and first strike the threshold with a hatchet, next with a

pestle, and the third time sweep it with a brush, in order that these

symbols of agriculture having been exhibited, the god Silvanus might be

hindered from entering, because neither are trees cut down or pruned

without a hatchet, neither is grain ground without a pestle, nor corn

heaped up without a besom. Now from these three things three gods have

been named: Intercidona, from the cut [245] made by the hatchet;

Pilumnus, from the pestle; Diverra, from the besom;--by which guardian

gods the woman who has been de livered is preserved against the power

of the god Silvanus. Thus the guardianship of kindly-disposed gods

would not avail against the malice of a mischievous god, unless they

were three to one, and fought against him, as it were, with the

opposing emblems of cultivation, who, being an inhabitant of the woods,

is rough, horrible, and uncultivated. Is this the innocence of the

gods? Is this their concord? Are these the health-giving deities of

the cities, more ridiculous than the things which are laughed at in the

theatres?

When a male and a female are united, the god Jugatinus presides. Well,

let this be borne with. But the married woman must be brought home:

the god Domiducus also is invoked. That she may be in the house, the

god Domitius is introduced. That she may remain with her husband, the

goddess Manturn� is used. What more is required? Let human modesty be

spared. Let the lust of flesh and blood go on with the rest, the

secret of shame being respected. Why is the bed-chamber filled with a

crowd of deities, when even the groomsmen [246] have departed? And,

moreover, it is so filled, not that in consideration of their presence

more regard may be paid to chastity, but that by their help the woman,

naturally of the weaker sex, and trembling with the novelty of her

situation, may the more readily yield her virginity. For there are the

goddess Virginiensis, and the god-father Subigus, and the

goddess-mother Prema, and the goddess Pertunda, and Venus, and Priapus.

[247] What is this? If it was absolutely necessary that a man,

laboring at this work, should be helped by the gods, might not some one

god or goddess have been sufficient? Was Venus not sufficient alone,

who is even said to be named from this, that without her power a woman

does not cease to be a virgin? If there is any shame in men, which is

not in the deities, is it not the case that, when the married couple

believe that so many gods of either sex are present, and busy at this

work, they are so much affected with shame, that the man is less moved,

and the woman more reluctant? And certainly, if the goddess

Virginiensis is present to loose the virgin's zone, if the god Subigus

is present that the virgin may be got under the man, if the goddess

Prema is present that, having been got under him, she may be kept down,

and may not move herself, what has the goddess Pertunda to do there?

Let her blush; let her go forth. Let the husband himself do

something. It is disgraceful that any one but himself should do that

from which she gets her name. But perhaps she is tolerated because she

is said to be a goddess, and not a god. For if she were believed to be

a male, and were called Pertundus, the husband would demand more help

against him for the chastity of his wife than the newly-delivered woman

against Silvanus. But why am I saying this, when Priapus, too, is

there, a male to excess, upon whose immense and most unsightly member

the newly-married bride is commanded to sit, according to the most

honorable and most religious custom of matrons?

Let them go on, and let them attempt with all the subtlety they can to

distinguish the civil theology from the fabulous, the cities from the

theatres, the temples from the stages, the sacred things of the priests

from the songs of the poets, as honorable things from base things,

truthful things from fallacious, grave from light, serious from

ludicrous, desirable things from things to be rejected, we understand

what they do. They are aware that that theatrical and fabulous

theology hangs by the civil, and is reflected back upon it from the

songs of the poets as from a mirror; and thus, that theology having

been exposed to view which they do not dare to condemn, they more

freely assail and censure that picture of it, in order that those who

perceive what they mean may detest this very face itself of which that

is the picture,--which, however, the gods themselves, as though seeing

themselves in the same mirror, love so much, that it is better seen in

both of them who and what they are. Whence, also, they have compelled

their worshippers, with terrible commands, to dedicate to them the

uncleanness of the fabulous theology, to put them among their

solemnities, and reckon them among divine things; and thus they have

both shown themselves more manifestly to be most impure spirits, and

have made that rejected and reprobated theatrical theology a member and

a part of this, as it were, chosen and approved theology of the city,

so that, though the whole is disgraceful and false, and contains in it

fictitious gods, one part of it is in the literature of the priests,

the other in the songs of the poets. Whether it may have other parts

is another question. At present, I think, I have sufficiently shown,

on account of the division of Varro, that the theology of the city and

that of the theatre belong to one civil theology. Wherefore, because

they are both equally disgraceful, absurd, shameful, false, far be it

from religious men to hope for eternal life from either the one or the

other.

In fine, even Varro himself, in his account and enumeration of the

gods, starts from the moment of a man's conception. He commences the

series of those gods who take charge of man with Janus, carries it on

to the death of the man decrepit with age, and terminates it with the

goddess N�nia, who is sung at the funerals of the aged. After that, he

begins to give an account of the other gods, whose province is not man

himself, but man's belongings, as food, clothing, and all that is

necessary for this life; and, in the case of all these, he explains

what is the special office of each, and for what each ought to be

supplicated. But with all this scrupulous and comprehensive diligence,

he has neither proved the existence, nor so much as mentioned the name,

of any god from whom eternal life is to be sought,--the one object for

which we are Christians. Who, then, is so stupid as not to perceive

that this man, by setting forth and opening up so diligently the civil

theology, and by exhibiting its likeness to that fabulous, shameful,

and disgraceful theology, and also by teaching that that fabulous sort

is also a part of this other, was laboring to obtain a place in the

minds of men for none but that natural theology, which he says pertains

to philosophers, with such subtlety that he censures the fabulous, and,

not daring openly to censure the civil, shows its censurable character

by simply exhibiting it; and thus, both being reprobated by the

judgment of men of right understanding, the natural alone remains to be

chosen? But concerning this in its own place, by the help of the true

God, we have to discuss more diligently.

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[243] Timeri.

[244] Vereri.

[245] Intercido, I cut or cleave.

[246] Paranymphi.

[247] Comp. Tertullian, Adv. Nat. ii. 11; Arnobius, Contra Gent. iv.;

Lactantius, Inst. i. 20.

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Chapter 10.--Concerning the Liberty of Seneca, Who More Vehemently

Censured the Civil Theology Than Varro Did the Fabulous.

That liberty, in truth, which this man wanted, so that he did not dare

to censure that theology of the city, which is very similar to the

theatrical, so openly as he did the theatrical itself, was, though not

fully, yet in part possessed by Ann�us Seneca, whom we have some

evidence to show to have flourished in the times of our apostles. It

was in part possessed by him, I say, for he possessed it in writing,

but not in living. For in that book which he wrote against

superstition, [248] he more copiously and vehemently censured that

civil and urban theology than Varro the theatrical and fabulous. For,

when speaking concerning images, he says, "They dedicate images of the

sacred and inviolable immortals in most worthless and motionless

matter. They give them the appearance of man, beasts, and fishes, and

some make them of mixed sex, and heterogeneous bodies. They call them

deities, when they are such that if they should get breath and should

suddenly meet them, they would be held to be monsters." Then, a while

afterwards, when extolling the natural theology, he had expounded the

sentiments of certain philosophers, he opposes to himself a question,

and says, "Here some one says, Shall I believe that the heavens and the

earth are gods, and that some are above the moon and some below it?

Shall I bring forward either Plato or the peripatetic Strato, one of

whom made God to be without a body, the other without a mind?" In

answer to which he says, "And, really, what truer do the dreams of

Titus Tatius, or Romulus, or Tullus Hostilius appear to thee? Tatius

declared the divinity of the goddess Cloacina; Romulus that of Picus

and Tiberinus; Tullus Hostilius that of Pavor and Pallor, the most

disagreeable affections of men, the one of which is the agitation of

the mind under fright, the other that of the body, not a disease,

indeed, but a change of color." Wilt thou rather believe that these

are deities, and receive them into heaven? But with what freedom he

has written concerning the rites themselves, cruel and shameful!

"One," he says, "castrates himself, another cuts his arms. Where will

they find room for the fear of these gods when angry, who use such

means of gaining their favor when propitious? But gods who wish to be

worshipped in this fashion should be worshipped in none. So great is

the frenzy of the mind when perturbed and driven from its seat, that

the gods are propitiated by men in a manner in which not even men of

the greatest ferocity and fable-renowned cruelty vent their rage.

Tyrants have lacerated the limbs of some; they never ordered any one to

lacerate his own. For the gratification of royal lust, some have been

castrated; but no one ever, by the command of his lord, laid violent

hands on himself to emasculate himself. They kill themselves in the

temples. They supplicate with their wounds and with their blood. If

any one has time to see the things they do and the things they suffer,

he will find so many things unseemly for men of respectability, so

unworthy of freemen, so unlike the doings of sane men, that no one

would doubt that they are mad, had they been mad with the minority; but

now the multitude of the insane is the defence of their sanity."

He next relates those things which are wont to be done in the Capitol,

and with the utmost intrepidity insists that they are such things as

one could only believe to be done by men making sport, or by madmen.

For having spoken with derision of this, that in the Egyptian sacred

rites Osiris, being lost, is lamented for, but straightway, when found,

is the occasion of great joy by his reappearance, because both the

losing and the finding of him are feigned; and yet that grief and that

joy which are elicited thereby from those who have lost nothing and

found nothing are real;--having I say, so spoken of this, he says,

"Still there is a fixed time for this frenzy. It is tolerable to go

mad once in the year. Go into the Capitol. One is suggesting divine

commands [249] to a god; another is telling the hours to Jupiter; one

is a lictor; another is an anointer, who with the mere movement of his

arms imitates one anointing. There are women who arrange the hair of

Juno and Minerva, standing far away not only from her image, but even

from her temple. These move their fingers in the manner of

hairdressers. There are some women who hold a mirror. There are some

who are calling the gods to assist them in court. There are some who

are holding up documents to them, and are explaining to them their

cases. A learned and distinguished comedian, now old and decrepit, was

daily playing the mimic in the Capitol, as though the gods would gladly

be spectators of that which men had ceased to care about. Every kind

of artificers working for the immortal gods is dwelling there in

idleness." And a little after he says, "Nevertheless these, though

they give themselves up to the gods for purposes superflous enough, do

not do so for any abominable or infamous purpose. There sit certain

women in the Capitol who think they are beloved by Jupiter; nor are

they frightened even by the look of the, if you will believe the poets,

most wrathful Juno."

This liberty Varro did not enjoy. It was only the poetical theology he

seemed to censure. The civil, which this man cuts to pieces, he was

not bold enough to impugn. But if we attend to the truth, the temples

where these things are performed are far worse than the theatres where

they are represented. Whence, with respect to these sacred rites of

the civil theology, Seneca preferred, as the best course to be followed

by a wise man, to feign respect for them in act, but to have no real

regard for them at heart. "All which things," he says, "a wise man

will observe as being commanded by the laws, but not as being pleasing

to the gods." And a little after he says, "And what of this, that we

unite the gods in marriage, and that not even naturally, for we join

brothers and sisters? We marry Bellona to Mars, Venus to Vulcan,

Salacia to Neptune. Some of them we leave unmarried, as though there

were no match for them, which is surely needless, especially when there

are certain unmarried goddesses, as Populonia, or Fulgora, or the

goddess Rumina, for whom I am not astonished that suitors have been

awanting. All this ignoble crowd of gods, which the superstition of

ages has amassed, we ought," he says, "to adore in such a way as to

remember all the while that its worship belongs rather to custom than

to reality." Wherefore, neither those laws nor customs instituted in

the civil theology that which was pleasing to the gods, or which

pertained to reality. But this man, whom philosophy had made, as it

were, free, nevertheless, because he was an illustrious senator of the

Roman people, worshipped what he censured, did what he condemned,

adored what he reproached, because, forsooth, philosophy had taught him

something great,--namely, not to be superstitious in the world, but, on

account of the laws of cities and the customs of men, to be an actor,

not on the stage, but in the temples,--conduct the more to be

condemned, that those things which he was deceitfully acting he so

acted that the people thought he was acting sincerely. But a

stage-actor would rather delight people by acting plays than take them

in by false pretences.

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[248] Mentioned also by Tertullian, Apol. 12, but not extant.

[249] Numina. Another reading is nomina; and with either reading

another translation is admissible; "One is announcing to a god the

names (or gods) who salute him."

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Chapter 11.--What Seneca Thought Concerning the Jews.

Seneca, among the other superstitions of civil theology, also found

fault with the sacred things of the Jews, and especially the sabbaths,

affirming that they act uselessly in keeping those seventh days,

whereby they lose through idleness about the seventh part of their

life, and also many things which demand immediate attention are

damaged. The Christians, however, who were already most hostile to the

Jews, he did not dare to mention, either for praise or blame, lest, if

he praised them, he should do so against the ancient custom of his

country, or, perhaps, if he should blame them, he should do so against

his own will.

When he was speaking concerning those Jews, he said, "When, meanwhile,

the customs of that most accursed nation have gained such strength that

they have been now received in all lands, the conquered have given laws

to the conquerors." By these words he expresses his astonishment; and,

not knowing what the providence of God was leading him to say, subjoins

in plain words an opinion by which he showed what he thought about the

meaning of those sacred institutions: "For," he says, "those, however,

know the cause of their rites, whilst the greater part of the people

know not why they perform theirs." But concerning the solemnities of

the Jews, either why or how far they were instituted by divine

authority, and afterwards, in due time, by the same authority taken

away from the people of God, to whom the mystery of eternal life was

revealed, we have both spoken elsewhere, especially when we were

treating against the Manich�ans, and also intend to speak in this work

in a more suitable place.

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Chapter 12.--That When Once the Vanity of the Gods of the Nations Has

Been Exposed, It Cannot Be Doubted that They are Unable to Bestow

Eternal Life on Any One, When They Cannot Afford Help Even with Respect

to the Things Of this Temporal Life.

Now, since there are three theologies, which the Greeks call

respectively mythical, physical, and political, and which may be called

in Latin fabulous, natural, and civil; and since neither from the

fabulous, which even the worshippers of many and false gods have

themselves most freely censured, nor from the civil, of which that is

convicted of being a part, or even worse than it, can eternal life be

hoped for from any of these theologies,--if any one thinks that what

has been said in this book is not enough for him, let him also add to

it the many and various dissertations concerning God as the giver of

felicity, contained in the former books, especially the fourth one.

For to what but to felicity should men consecrate themselves, were

felicity a goddess? However, as it is not a goddess, but a gift of

God, to what God but the giver of happiness ought we to consecrate

ourselves, who piously love eternal life, in which there is true and

full felicity? But I think, from what has been said, no one ought to

doubt that none of those gods is the giver of happiness, who are

worshipped with such shame, and who, if they are not so worshipped, are

more shamefully enraged, and thus confess that they are most foul

spirits. Moreover, how can he give eternal life who cannot give

happiness? For we mean by eternal life that life where there is

endless happiness. For if the soul live in eternal punishments, by

which also those unclean spirits shall be tormented, that is rather

eternal death than eternal life. For there is no greater or worse

death than when death never dies. But because the soul from its very

nature, being created immortal, cannot be without some kind of life,

its utmost death is alienation from the life of God in an eternity of

punishment. So, then, He only who gives true happiness gives eternal

life, that is, an endlessly happy life. And since those gods whom this

civil theology worships have been proved to be unable to give this

happiness, they ought not to be worshipped on account of those temporal

and terrestrial things, as we showed in the five former books, much

less on account of eternal life, which is to be after death, as we have

sought to show in this one book especially, whilst the other books also

lend it their co-operation. But since the strength of inveterate habit

has its roots very deep, if any one thinks that I have not disputed

sufficiently to show that this civil theology ought to be rejected and

shunned, let him attend to another book which, with God's help, is to

be joined to this one.

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Book VII.

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Argument--In this book it is shown that eternal life is not obtained by

the worship of Janus, Jupiter, Saturn, and the other "select gods" of

the civil theology.

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Preface.

It will be the duty of those who are endowed with quicker and better

understandings, in whose case the former books are sufficient, and more

than sufficient, to effect their intended object, to bear with me with

patience and equanimity whilst I attempt with more than ordinary

diligence to tear up and eradicate depraved and ancient opinions

hostile to the truth of piety, which the long-continued error of the

human race has fixed very deeply in unenlightened minds; co-operating

also in this, according to my little measure, with the grace of Him

who, being the true God, is able to accomplish it, and on whose help I

depend in my work; and, for the sake of others, such should not deem

superfluous what they feel to be no longer necessary for themselves. A

very great matter is at stake when the true and truly holy divinity is

commended to men as that which they ought to seek after and to worship;

not, however, on account of the transitory vapor of mortal life, but on

account of life eternal, which alone is blessed, although the help

necessary for this frail life we are now living is also afforded us by

it.

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Chapter 1.--Whether, Since It is Evident that Deity is Not to Be Found

in the Civil Theology, We are to Believe that It is to Be Found in the

Select Gods.

If there is any one whom the sixth book, which I have last finished,

has not persuaded that this divinity, or, so to speak, deity--for this

word also our authors do not hesitate to use, in order to translate

more accurately that which the Greeks call theotes;--if there is any

one, I say, whom the sixth book has not persuaded that this divinity or

deity is not to be found in that theology which they call civil, and

which Marcus Varro has explained in sixteen books,--that is, that the

happiness of eternal life is not attainable through the worship of gods

such as states have established to be worshipped, and that in such a

form,--perhaps, when he has read this book, he will not have anything

further to desire in order to the clearing up of this question. For it

is possible that some one may think that at least the select and chief

gods, whom Varro comprised in his last book, and of whom we have not

spoken sufficiently, are to be worshipped on account of the blessed

life, which is none other than eternal. In respect to which matter I

do not say what Tertullian said, perhaps more wittily than truly, "If

gods are selected like onions, certainly the rest are rejected as bad."

[250] I do not say this, for I see that even from among the select,

some are selected for some greater and more excellent office: as in

warfare, when recruits have been elected, there are some again elected

from among those for the performance of some greater military service;

and in the church, when persons are elected to be overseers, certainly

the rest are not rejected, since all good Christians are deservedly

called elect; in the erection of a building corner-stones are elected,

though the other stones, which are destined for other parts of the

structure, are not rejected; grapes are elected for eating, whilst the

others, which we leave for drinking, are not rejected. There is no

need of adducing many illustrations, since the thing is evident.

Wherefore the selection of certain gods from among many affords no

proper reason why either he who wrote on this subject, or the

worshippers of the gods, or the gods themselves, should be spurned. We

ought rather to seek to know what gods these are, and for what purpose

they may appear to have been selected.

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[250] Tert. Apol. 13, Nec electio sine reprobatione; and Ad Nationes,

ii. 9, Si dei bulbi seliguntur, qui non seliguntur, reprobi

pronuntiantur.

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Chapter 2.--Who are the Select Gods, and Whether They are Held to Be

Exempt from the Offices of the Commoner Gods.

The following gods, certainly, Varro signalizes as select, devoting one

book to this subject: Janus, Jupiter, Saturn, Genius, Mercury, Apollo,

Mars, Vulcan, Neptune, Sol, Orcus, father Liber, Tellus, Ceres, Juno,

Luna, Diana, Minerva, Venus, Vesta; of which twenty gods, twelve are

males, and eight females. Whether are these deities called select,

because of their higher spheres of administration in the world, or

because they have become better known to the people, and more worship

has been expended on them? If it be on account of the greater works

which are performed by them in the world, we ought not to have found

them among that, as it were, plebeian crowd of deities, which has

assigned to it the charge of minute and trifling things. For, first of

all, at the conception of a foetus, from which point all the works

commence which have been distributed in minute detail to many deities,

Janus himself opens the way for the reception of the seed; there also

is Saturn, on account of the seed itself; there is Liber, [251] who

liberates the male by the effusion of the seed; there is Libera, whom

they also would have to be Venus, who confers this same benefit on the

woman, namely, that she also be liberated by the emission of the

seed;--all these are of the number of those who are called select. But

there is also the goddess Mena, who presides over the menses; though

the daughter of Jupiter, ignoble nevertheless. And this province of

the menses the same author, in his book on the select gods, assigns to

Juno herself, who is even queen among the select gods; and here, as

Juno Lucina, along with the same Mena, her stepdaughter, she presides

over the same blood. There also are two gods, exceedingly obscure,

Vitumnus and Sentinus--the one of whom imparts life to the foetus, and

the other sensation; and, of a truth, they bestow, most ignoble though

they be, far more than all those noble and select gods bestow. For,

surely, without life and sensation, what is the whole foetus which a

woman carries in her womb, but a most vile and worthless thing, no

better than slime and dust?

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[251] Cicero, De Nat. Deor ii., distinguishes this Liber from Liber

Bacchus, son of Jupiter and Semele.

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Chapter 3.--How There is No Reason Which Can Be Shown for the Selection

of Certain Gods, When the Administration of More Exalted Offices is

Assigned to Many Inferior Gods.

What is the cause, therefore, which has driven so many select gods to

these very small works, in which they are excelled by Vitumnus and

Sentinus, though little known and sunk in obscurity, inasmuch as they

confer the munificent gifts of life and sensation? For the select

Janus bestows an entrance, and, as it were, a door [252] for the seed;

the select Saturn bestows the seed itself; the select Liber bestows on

men the emission of the same seed; Libera, who is Ceres or Venus,

confers the same on women; the select Juno confers (not alone, but

together with Mena, the daughter of Jupiter) the menses, for the growth

of that which has been conceived; and the obscure and ignoble Vitumnus

confers life, whilst the obscure and ignoble Sentinus confers

sensation;--which two last things are as much more excellent than the

others, as they themselves are excelled by reason and intellect. For

as those things which reason and understand are preferable to those

which, without intellect and reason, as in the case of cattle, live and

feel; so also those things which have been endowed with life and

sensation are deservedly preferred to those things which neither live

nor feel. Therefore Vitumnus the life-giver, [253] and Sentinus the

sense-giver, [254] ought to have been reckoned among the select gods,

rather than Janus the admitter of seed, and Saturn the giver or sower

of seed, and Liber and Libera the movers and liberators of seed; which

seed is not worth a thought, unless it attain to life and sensation.

Yet these select gifts are not given by select gods, but by certain

unknown, and, considering their dignity, neglected gods. But if it be

replied that Janus has dominion over all beginnings, and therefore the

opening of the way for conception is not without reason assigned to

him; and that Saturn has dominion over all seeds, and therefore the

sowing of the seed whereby a human being is generated cannot be

excluded from his operation; that Liber and Libera have power over the

emission of all seeds, and therefore preside over those seeds which

pertain to the procreation of men; that Juno presides over all

purgations and births, and therefore she has also charge of the

purgations of women and the births of human beings;--if they give this

reply, let them find an answer to the question concerning Vitumnus and

Sentinus, whether they are willing that these likewise should have

dominion over all things which live and feel. If they grant this, let

them observe in how sublime a position they are about to place them.

For to spring from seeds is in the earth and of the earth, but to live

and feel are supposed to be properties even of the sidereal gods. But

if they say that only such things as come to life in flesh, and are

supported by senses, are assigned to Sentinus, why does not that God

who made all things live and feel, bestow on flesh also life and

sensation, in the universality of His operation conferring also on

foetuses this gift? And what, then, is the use of Vitumnus and

Sentinus? But if these, as it were, extreme and lowest things have

been committed by Him who presides universally over life and sense to

these gods as to servants, are these select gods then so destitute of

servants, that they could not find any to whom even they might commit

those things, but with all their dignity, for which they are, it seems,

deemed worthy to be selected, were compelled to perform their work

along with ignoble ones? Juno is select queen of the gods, and the

sister and wife of Jupiter; nevertheless she is Iterduca, the

conductor, to boys, and performs this work along with a most ignoble

pair--the goddesses Abeona and Adeona. There they have also placed the

goddess Mena, who gives to boys a good mind, and she is not placed

among the select gods; as if anything greater could be bestowed on a

man than a good mind. But Juno is placed among the select because she

is Iterduca and Domiduca (she who conducts one on a journey, and who

conducts him home again); as if it is of any advantage for one to make

a journey, and to be conducted home again, if his mind is not good.

And yet the goddess who bestows that gift has not been placed by the

selectors among the select gods, though she ought indeed to have been

preferred even to Minerva, to whom, in this minute distribution of

work, they have allotted the memory of boys. For who will doubt that

it is a far better thing to have a good mind, than ever so great a

memory? For no one is bad who has a good mind; [255] but some who are

very bad are possessed of an admirable memory, and are so much the

worse, the less they are able to forget the bad things which they

think. And yet Minerva is among the select gods, whilst the goddess

Mena is hidden by a worthless crowd. What shall I say concerning

Virtus? What concerning Felicitas?--concerning whom I have already

spoken much in the fourth book; [256] to whom, though they held them to

be goddesses, they have not thought fit to assign a place among the

select gods, among whom they have given a place to Mars and Orcus, the

one the causer of death, the other the receiver of the dead.

Since, therefore, we see that even the select gods themselves work

together with the others, like a senate with the people, in all those

minute works which have been minutely portioned out among many gods;

and since we find that far greater and better things are administered

by certain gods who have not been reckoned worthy to be selected than

by those who are called select, it remains that we suppose that they

were called select and chief, not on account of their holding more

exalted offices in the world, but because it happened to them to become

better known to the people. And even Varro himself says, that in that

way obscurity had fallen to the lot of some father gods and mother

goddesses, [257] as it fails to the lot of man. If, therefore,

Felicity ought not perhaps to have been put among the select gods,

because they did not attain to that noble position by merit, but by

chance, Fortune at least should have been placed among them, or rather

before them; for they say that that goddess distributes to every one

the gifts she receives, not according to any rational arrangement, but

according as chance may determine. She ought to have held the

uppermost place among the select gods, for among them chiefly it is

that she shows what power she has. For we see that they have been

selected not on account of some eminent virtue or rational happiness,

but by that random power of Fortune which the worshippers of these gods

think that she exerts. For that most eloquent man Sallust also may

perhaps have the gods themselves in view when he says: "But, in truth,

fortune rules in everything; it renders all things famous or obscure,

according to caprice rather than according to truth." [258] For they

cannot discover a reason why Venus should have been made famous, whilst

Virtus has been made obscure, when the divinity of both of them has

been solemnly recognized by them, and their merits are not to be

compared. Again, if she has deserved a noble position on account of

the fact that she is much sought after--for there are more who seek

after Venus than after Virtus--why has Minerva been celebrated whilst

Pecunia has been left in obscurity, although throughout the whole human

race avarice allures a far greater number than skill? And even among

those who are skilled in the arts, you will rarely find a man who does

not practise his own art for the purpose of pecuniary gain; and that

for the sake of which anything is made, is always valued more than that

which is made for the sake of something else. If, then, this selection

of gods has been made by the judgment of the foolish multitude, why has

not the goddess Pecunia been preferred to Minerva, since there are many

artificers for the sake of money? But if this distinction has been

made by the few wise, why has Virtus been preferred to Venus, when

reason by far prefers the former? At all events, as I have already

said, Fortune herself--who, according to those who attribute most

influence to her, renders all things famous or obscure according to

caprice rather than according to the truth--since she has been able to

exercise so much power even over the gods, as, according to her

capricious judgment, to render those of them famous whom she would, and

those obscure whom she would; Fortune herself ought to occupy the place

of pre-eminence among the select gods, since over them also she has

such pre-eminent power. Or must we suppose that the reason why she is

not among the select is simply this, that even Fortune herself has had

an adverse fortune? She was adverse, then, to herself, since, whilst

ennobling others, she herself has remained obscure.

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[252] Januam.

[253] Vivificator.

[254] Sensificator.

[255] As we say, right-minded.

[256] Ch. 21, 23.

[257] The father Saturn, and the mother Ops, e.g., being more obscure

than their son Jupiter and daughter Juno.

[258] Sallust, Cat. Conj. ch. 8.

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Chapter 4.--The Inferior Gods, Whose Names are Not Associated with

Infamy, Have Been Better Dealt with Than the Select Gods, Whose

Infamies are Celebrated.

However, any one who eagerly seeks for celebrity and renown, might

congratulate those select gods, and call them fortunate, were it not

that he saw that they have been selected more to their injury than to

their honor. For that low crowd of gods have been protected by their

very meanness and obscurity from being overwhelmed with infamy. We

laugh, indeed, when we see them distributed by the mere fiction of

human opinions, according to the special works assigned to them, like

those who farm small portions of the public revenue, or like workmen in

the street of the silversmiths, [259] where one vessel, in order that

it may go out perfect, passes through the hands of many, when it might

have been finished by one perfect workman. But the only reason why the

combined skill of many workmen was thought necessary, was, that it is

better that each part of an art should be learned by a special workman,

which can be done speedily and easily, than that they should all be

compelled to be perfect in one art throughout all its parts, which they

could only attain slowly and with difficulty. Nevertheless there is

scarcely to be found one of the non-select gods who has brought infamy

on himself by any crime, whilst there is scarce any one of the select

gods who has not received upon himself the brand of notable infamy.

These latter have descended to the humble works of the others, whilst

the others have not come up to their sublime crimes. Concerning Janus,

there does not readily occur to my recollection anything infamous; and

perhaps he was such an one as lived more innocently than the rest, and

further removed from misdeeds and crimes. He kindly received and

entertained Saturn when he was fleeing; he divided his kingdom with his

guest, so that each of them had a city for himself, [260] the one

Janiculum, and the other Saturnia. But those seekers after every kind

of unseemliness in the worship of the gods have disgraced him, whose

life they found to be less disgracful than that of the other gods, with

an image of monstrous deformity, making it sometimes with two faces,

and sometimes, as it were, double, with four faces. [261] Did they

wish that, as the most of the select gods had lost shame [262] through

the perpetration of shameful crimes, his greater innocence should be

marked by a greater number of faces? [263]

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[259] Vicus argentarius.

[260] Virgil, �neid, viii. 357, 358.

[261] Quadrifrons.

[262] Frons.

[263] Quanto iste innocentior esset, tanto frontosior appareret; being

used for the shamelessness of innocence, as we use "face" for the

shamelessness of impudence.

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Chapter 5.--Concerning the More Secret Doctrine of the Pagans, and

Concerning the Physical Interpretations.

But let us hear their own physical interpretations by which they

attempt to color, as with the appearance of profounder doctrine, the

baseness of most miserable error. Varro, in the first place, commends

these interpretations so strongly as to say, that the ancients invented

the images, badges, and adornments of the gods, in order that when

those who went to the mysteries should see them with their bodily eyes,

they might with the eyes of their mind see the soul of the world, and

its parts, that is, the true gods; and also that the meaning which was

intended by those who made their images with the human form, seemed to

be this,--namely, that the mind of mortals, which is in a human body,

is very like to the immortal mind, [264] just as vessels might be

placed to represent the gods, as, for instance, a wine-vessel might be

placed in the temple of Liber, to signify wine, that which is contained

being signified by that which contains. Thus by an image which had the

human form the rational soul was signified, because the human form is

the vessel, as it were, in which that nature is wont to be contained

which they attribute to God, or to the gods. These are the mysteries

of doctrine to which that most learned man penetrated in order that he

might bring them forth to the light. But, O thou most acute man, hast

thou lost among those mysteries that prudence which led thee to form

the sober opinion, that those who first established those images for

the people took away fear from the citizens and added error, and that

the ancient Romans honored the gods more chastely without images? For

it was through consideration of them that thou wast emboldened to speak

these things against the later Romans. For if those most ancient

Romans also had worshipped images, perhaps thou wouldst have suppressed

by the silence of fear all those sentiments (true sentiments,

nevertheless) concerning the folly of setting up images, and wouldst

have extolled more loftily, and more loquaciously, those mysterious

doctrines consisting of these vain and pernicious fictions. Thy soul,

so learned and so clever (and for this I grieve much for thee), could

never through these mysteries have reached its God; that is, the God by

whom, not with whom, it was made, of whom it is not a part, but a

work,--that God who is not the soul of all things, but who made every

soul, and in whose light alone every soul is blessed, if it be not

ungrateful for His grace.

But the things which follow in this book will show what is the nature

of these mysteries, and what value is to be set upon them. Meanwhile,

this most learned man confesses as his opinion that the soul of the

world and its parts are the true gods, from which we perceive that his

theology (to wit, that same natural theology to which he pays great

regard) has been able, in its completeness, to extend itself even to

the nature of the rational soul. For in this book (concerning the

select gods) he says a very few things by anticipation concerning the

natural theology; and we shall see whether he has been able in that

book, by means of physical interpretations, to refer to this natural

theology that civil theology, concerning which he wrote last when

treating of the select gods. Now, if he has been able to do this, the

whole is natural; and in that case, what need was there for

distinguishing so carefully the civil from the natural? But if it has

been distinguished by a veritable distinction, then, since not even

this natural theology with which he is so much pleased is true (for

though it has reached as far as the soul, it has not reached to the

true God who made the soul), how much more contemptible and false is

that civil theology which is chiefly occupied about what is corporeal,

as will be shown by its very interpretations, which they have with such

diligence sought out and enucleated, some of which I must necessarily

mention!

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[264] Cicero, Tusc. Qu�st. v. 13.

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Chapter 6.--Concerning the Opinion of Varro, that God is the Soul of

the World, Which Nevertheless, in Its Various Parts, Has Many Souls

Whose Nature is Divine.

The same Varro, then, still speaking by anticipation, says that he

thinks that God is the soul of the world (which the Greeks call

kosmos), and that this world itself is God; but as a wise man, though

he consists of body and mind, is nevertheless called wise on account of

his mind, so the world is called God on account of mind, although it

consists of mind and body. Here he seems, in some fashion at least, to

acknowledge one God; but that he may introduce more, he adds that the

world is divided into two parts, heaven and earth, which are again

divided each into two parts, heaven into ether and air, earth into

water and land, of all which the ether is the highest, the air second,

the water third, and the earth the lowest. All these four parts, he

says, are full of souls; those which are in the ether and air being

immortal, and those which are in the water and on the earth mortal.

From the highest part of the heavens to the orbit of the moon there are

souls, namely, the stars and planets; and these are not only understood

to be gods, but are seen to be such. And between the orbit of the moon

and the commencement of the region of clouds and winds there are aerial

souls; but these are seen with the mind, not with the eyes, and are

called Heroes, and Lares, and Genii. This is the natural theology

which is briefly set forth in these anticipatory statements, and which

satisfied not Varro only, but many philosophers besides. This I must

discuss more carefully, when, with the help of God, I shall have

completed what I have yet to say concerning the civil theology, as far

as it concerns the select gods.

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Chapter 7.--Whether It is Reasonable to Separate Janus and Terminus as

Two Distinct Deities.

Who, then, is Janus, with whom Varro commences? He is the world.

Certainly a very brief and unambiguous reply. Why, then, do they say

that the beginnings of things pertain to him, but the ends to another

whom they call Terminus? For they say that two months have been

dedicated to these two gods, with reference to beginnings and

ends--January to Janus, and February to Terminus--over and above those

ten months which commence with March and end with December. And they

say that that is the reason why the Terminalia are celebrated in the

month of February, the same month in which the sacred purification is

made which they call Februum, and from which the month derives its

name. [265] Do the beginnings of things, therefore, pertain to the

world, which is Janus, and not also the ends, since another god has

been placed over them? Do they not own that all things which they say

begin in this world also come to an end in this world? What folly it

is, to give him only half power in work, when in his image they give

him two faces! Would it not be a far more elegant way of interpreting

the two-faced image, to say that Janus and Terminus are the same, and

that the one face has reference to beginnings, the other to ends? For

one who works ought to have respect to both. For he who in every

forthputting of activity does not look back on the beginning, does not

look forward to the end. Wherefore it is necessary that prospective

intention be connected with retrospective memory. For how shall one

find how to finish anything, if he has forgotten what it was which he

had begun? But if they thought that the blessed life is begun in this

world, and perfected beyond the world, and for that reason attributed

to Janus, that is, to the world, only the power of beginnings, they

should certainly have preferred Terminus to him, and should not have

shut him out from the number of the select gods. Yet even now, when

the beginnings and ends of temporal things are represented by these two

gods, more honor ought to have been given to Terminus. For the greater

joy is that which is felt when anything is finished; but things begun

are always cause of much anxiety until they are brought to an end,

which end he who begins anything very greatly longs for, fixes his mind

on, expects, desires; nor does any one ever rejoice over anything he

has begun, unless it be brought to an end.

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[265] An interesting account of the changes made in the Roman year by

Numa is given in Plutarch's life of that king. Ovid also (Fasti, ii.)

explains the derivation of February, telling us that it was the last

month of the old year, and took its name from the lustrations performed

then: Februa Romani dixere piamina patres.

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Chapter 8.--For What Reason the Worshippers of Janus Have Made His

Image with Two Faces, When They Would Sometimes Have It Be Seen with

Four.

But now let the interpretation of the two-faced image be produced. For

they say that it has two faces, one before and one behind, because our

gaping mouths seem to resemble the world: whence the Greeks call the

palate ouranos, and some Latin poets, [266] he says, have called the

heavens palatum [the palate]; and from the gaping mouth, they say,

there is a way out in the direction of the teeth, and a way in in the

direction of the gullet. See what the world has been brought to on

account of a Greek or a poetical word for our palate! Let this god be

worshipped only on account of saliva, which has two open doorways under

the heavens of the palate,--one through which part of it may be spitten

out, the other through which part of it may be swallowed down.

Besides, what is more absurd than not to find in the world itself two

doorways opposite to each other, through which it may either receive

anything into itself, or cast it out from itself; and to seek of our

throat and gullet, to which the world has no resemblance, to make up an

image of the world in Janus, because the world is said to resemble the

palate, to which Janus bears no likeness? But when they make him

four-faced, and call him double Janus, they interpret this as having

reference to the four quarters of the world, as though the world looked

out on anything, like Janus through his four faces. Again, if Janus is

the world, and the world consists of four quarters, then the image of

the two-faced Janus is false. Or if it is true, because the whole

world is sometimes understood by the expression east and west, will any

one call the world double when north and south also are mentioned, as

they call Janus double when he has four faces? They have no way at all

of interpreting, in relation to the world, four doorways by which to go

in and to come out as they did in the case of the two-faced Janus,

where they found, at any rate in the human mouth, something which

answered to what they said about him; unless perhaps Neptune come to

their aid, and hand them a fish, which, besides the mouth and gullet,

has also the openings of the gills, one on each side. Nevertheless,

with all the doors, no soul escapes this vanity but that one which

hears the truth saying, "I am the door." [267]

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[266] Ennius, in Cicero, De Nat. Deor. ii. 18.

[267] John x. 9.

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Chapter 9.--Concerning the Power of Jupiter, and a Comparison of

Jupiter with Janus.

But they also show whom they would have Jove (who is also called

Jupiter) understood to be. He is the god, say they, who has the power

of the causes by which anything comes to be in the world. And how

great a thing this is, that most noble verse of Virgil testifies:

"Happy is he who has learned the causes of things." [268]

But why is Janus preferred to him? Let that most acute and most

learned man answer us this question. "Because," says he, "Janus has

dominion over first things, Jupiter over highest [269] things.

Therefore Jupiter is deservedly held to be the king of all things; for

highest things are better than first things: for although first things

precede in time, highest things excel by dignity."

Now this would have been rightly said had the first parts of things

which are done been distinguished from the highest parts; as, for

instance, it is the beginning of a thing done to set out, the highest

part to arrive. The commencing to learn is the first part of a thing

begun, the acquirement of knowledge is the highest part. And so of all

things: the beginnings are first, the ends highest. This matter,

however, has been already discussed in connection with Janus and

Terminus. But the causes which are attributed to Jupiter are things

effecting, not things effected; and it is impossible for them to be

prevented in time by things which are made or done, or by the

beginnings of such things; for the thing which makes is always prior to

the thing which is made. Therefore, though the beginnings of things

which are made or done pertain to Janus, they are nevertheless not

prior to the efficient causes which they attribute to Jupiter. For as

nothing takes place without being preceded by an efficient cause, so

without an efficient cause nothing begins to take place. Verily, if

the people call this god Jupiter, in whose power are all the causes of

all natures which have been made, and of all natural things, and

worship him with such insults and infamous criminations, they are

guilty of more shocking sacrilege than if they should totally deny the

existence of any god. It would therefore be better for them to call

some other god by the name of Jupiter--some one worthy of base and

criminal honors; substituting instead of Jupiter some vain fiction (as

Saturn is said to have had a stone given to him to devour instead of

his son,) which they might make the subject of their blasphemies,

rather than speak of that god as both thundering and committing

adultery,--ruling the whole world, and laying himself out for the

commission of so many licentious acts,--having in his power nature and

the highest causes of all natural things, but not having his own causes

good.

Next, I ask what place they find any longer for this Jupiter among the

gods, if Janus is the world; for Varro defined the true gods to be the

soul of the world, and the parts of it. And therefore whatever falls

not within this definition, is certainly not a true god, according to

them. Will they then say that Jupiter is the soul of the world, and

Janus the body --that is, this visible world? If they say this, it

will not be possible for them to affirm that Janus is a god. For even,

according to them, the body of the world is not a god, but the soul of

the world and its parts. Wherefore Varro, seeing this, says that he

thinks God is the soul of the world, and that this world itself is God;

but that as a wise man though he consists of soul and body, is

nevertheless called wise from the soul, so the world is called God from

the soul, though it consists of soul and body. Therefore the body of

the world alone is not God, but either the soul of it alone, or the

soul and the body together, yet so as that it is God not by virtue of

the body, but by virtue of the soul. If, therefore, Janus is the

world, and Janus is a god, will they say, in order that Jupiter may be

a god, that he is some part of Janus? For they are wont rather to

attribute universal existence to Jupiter; whence the saying, "All

things are full of Jupiter." [270] Therefore they must think Jupiter

also, in order that he may be a god, and especially king of the gods,

to be the world, that he may rule over the other gods--according to

them, his parts. To this effect, also, the same Varro expounds certain

verses of Valerius Soranus [271] in that book which he wrote apart from

the others concerning the worship of the gods. These are the verses:

"Almighty Jove, progenitor of kings, and things, and gods,

And eke the mother of the gods, god one and all."

But in the same book he expounds these verses by saying that as the

male emits seed, and the female receives it, so Jupiter, whom they

believed to be the world, both emits all seeds from himself and

receives them into himself. For which reason, he says, Soranus wrote,

"Jove, progenitor and mother;" and with no less reason said that one

and all were the same. For the world is one, and in that one are all

things.

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[268] Georgic, ii. 470.

[269] Summa, which also includes the meaning--last.

[270] Virgil, Eclog. iii. 60, who borrows the expression from the

Phoenomena of Aratus.

[271] Soranus lived about B.C. 100. See Smith's Dict.

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Chapter 10.--Whether the Distinction Between Janus and Jupiter is a

Proper One.

Since, therefore, Janus is the world, and Jupiter is the world,

wherefore are Janus and Jupiter two gods, while the world is but one?

Why do they have separate temples, separate altars, different rites,

dissimilar images? If it be because the nature of beginnings is one,

and the nature of causes another, and the one has received the name of

Janus, the other of Jupiter; is it then the case, that if one man has

two distinct offices of authority, or two arts, two judges or two

artificers are spoken of, because the nature of the offices or the arts

is different? So also with respect to one god: if he have the power

of beginnings and of causes, must he therefore be thought to be two

gods, because beginnings and causes are two things? But if they think

that this is right, let them also affirm that Jupiter is as many gods

as they have given him surnames, on account of many powers; for the

things from which these surnames are applied to him are many and

diverse. I shall mention a few of them.

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Chapter 11.--Concerning the Surnames of Jupiter, Which are Referred Not

to Many Gods, But to One and the Same God.

They have called him Victor, Invictus, Opitulus, Impulsor, Stator,

Centumpeda, Supinalis, Tigillus, Almus, Ruminus, and other names which

it were long to enumerate. But these surnames they have given to one

god on account of diverse causes and powers, but yet have not compelled

him to be, on account of so many things, as many gods. They gave him

these surnames because he conquered all things; because he was

conquered by none; because he brought help to the needy; because he had

the power of impelling, stopping, stablishing, throwing on the back;

because as a beam [272] he held together and sustained the world;

because he nourished all things; because, like the pap, [273] he

nourished animals. Here, we perceive, are some great things and some

small things; and yet it is one who is said to perform them all. I

think that the causes and the beginnings of things, on account of which

they have thought that the one world is two gods, Jupiter and Janus,

are nearer to each other than the holding together of the world, and

the giving of the pap to animals; and yet, on account of these two

works so far apart from each other, both in nature and dignity, there

has not been any necessity for the existence of two gods; but one

Jupiter has been called, on account of the one Tigillus, on account of

the other Ruminus. I am unwilling to say that the giving of the pap to

sucking animals might have become Juno rather than Jupiter, especially

when there was the goddess Rumina to help and to serve her in this

work; for I think it may be replied that Juno herself is nothing else

than Jupiter, according to those verses of Valerius Soranus, where it

has been said:

"Almighty Jove, progenitor of kings, and things, and gods,

And eke the mother of the gods," etc.

Why, then, was he called Ruminus, when they who may perchance inquire

more diligently may find that he is also that goddess Rumina?

If, then, it was rightly thought unworthy of the majesty of the gods,

that in one ear of corn one god should have the care of the joint,

another that of the husk, how much more unworthy of that majesty is it,

that one thing, and that of the lowest kind, even the giving of the pap

to animals that they may be nourished, should be under the care of two

gods, one of whom is Jupiter himself, the very king of all things, who

does this not along with his own wife, but with some ignoble Rumina

(unless perhaps he himself is Rumina, being Ruminus for males and

Rumina for females)! I should certainly have said that they had been

unwilling to apply to Jupiter a feminine name, had he not been styled

in these verses "progenitor and mother," and had I not read among other

surnames of his that of Pecunia [money], which we found as a goddess

among those petty deities, as I have already mentioned in the fourth

book. But since both males and females have money [pecuniam], why has

he not been called both Pecunius and Pecunia? That is their concern.

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[272] Tigillus.

[273] Ruma.

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Chapter 12.--That Jupiter is Also Called Pecunia.

How elegantly they have accounted for this name! "He is also called

Pecunia," say they, "because all things belong to him." Oh how grand

an explanation of the name of a deity! Yes; he to whom all things

belong is most meanly and most contumeliously called Pecunia. In

comparison of all things which are contained by heaven and earth, what

are all things together which are possessed by men under the name of

money? [274] And this name, forsooth, hath avarice given to Jupiter,

that whoever was a lover of money might seem to himself to love not an

ordinary god, but the very king of all things himself. But it would be

a far different thing if he had been called Riches. For riches are one

thing, money another. For we call rich the wise, the just, the good,

who have either no money or very little. For they are more truly rich

in possessing virtue, since by it, even as re spects things necessary

for the body, they are content with what they have. But we call the

greedy poor, who are always craving and always wanting. For they may

possess ever so great an amount of money; but whatever be the abundance

of that, they are not able but to want. And we properly call God

Himself rich; not, however, in money, but in omnipotence. Therefore

they who have abundance of money are called rich, but inwardly needy if

they are greedy. So also, those who have no money are called poor, but

inwardly rich if they are wise.

What, then, ought the wise man to think of this theology, in which the

king of the gods receives the name of that thing "which no wise man has

desired?" [275] For had there been anything wholesomely taught by

this philosophy concerning eternal life, how much more appropriately

would that god who is the ruler of the world have been called by them,

not money, but wisdom, the love of which purges from the filth of

avarice, that is, of the love of money!

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[274] Pecunia,that is, property; the original meaning of pecunia being

property in cattle, then property or wealth of any kind. Comp.

Augustin, De discipl. Christ. 6.

[275] Sallust, Catil. c. 11.

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Chapter 13.--That When It is Expounded What Saturn Is, What Genius Is,

It Comes to This, that Both of Them are Shown to Be Jupiter.

But why speak more of this Jupiter, with whom perchance all the rest

are to be identified; so that, he being all, the opinion as to the

existence of many gods may remain as a mere opinion, empty of all

truth? And they are all to be referred to him, if his various parts

and powers are thought of as so many gods, or if the principle of mind

which they think to be diffused through all things has received the

names of many gods from the various parts which the mass of this

visible world combines in itself, and from the manifold administration

of nature. For what is Saturn also? "One of the principal gods," he

says, "who has dominion over all sowings." Does not the exposition of

the verses of Valerius Soranus teach that Jupiter is the world, and

that he emits all seeds from himself, and receives them into himself?

It is he, then, with whom is the dominion of all sowings. What is

Genius? "He is the god who is set over, and has the power of

begetting, all things." Who else than the world do they believe to

have this power, to which it has been said:

"Almighty Jove, progenitor and mother?"

And when in another place he says that Genius is the rational soul of

every one, and therefore exists separately in each individual, but that

the corresponding soul of the world is God, he just comes back to this

same thing,--namely, that the soul of the world itself is to be held to

be, as it were, the universal genius. This, therefore, is what he

calls Jupiter. For if every genius is a god, and the soul of every man

a genius, it follows that the soul of every man is a god. But if very

absurdity compels even these theologists themselves to shrink from

this, it remains that they call that genius god by special and

pre-eminent distinction, whom they call the soul of the world, and

therefore Jupiter.

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Chapter 14.--Concerning the Offices of Mercury and Mars.

But they have not found how to refer Mercury and Mars to any parts of

the world, and to the works of God which are in the elements; and

therefore they have set them at least over human works, making them

assistants in speaking and in carrying on wars. Now Mercury, if he has

also the power of the speech of the gods, rules also over the king of

the gods himself, if Jupiter, as he receives from him the faculty of

speech, also speaks according as it is his pleasure to permit

him--which surely is absurd; but if it is only the power over human

speech which is held to be attributed to him, then we say it is

incredible that Jupiter should have condescended to give the pap not

only to children, but also to beasts--from which he has been surnamed

Ruminus--and yet should have been unwilling that the care of our

speech, by which we excel the beasts, should pertain to him. And thus

speech itself both belongs to Jupiter, and is Mercury. But if speech

itself is said to be Mercury, as those things which are said concerning

him by way of interpretation show it to be;--for he is said to have

been called Mercury, that is, he who runs between, [276] because speech

runs between men: they say also that the Greeks call him Ermes,

because speech, or interpretation, which certainly belongs to speech,

is called by them hermeneia: also he is said to preside over payments,

because speech passes between sellers and buyers: the wings, too,

which he has on his head and on his feet, they say mean that speech

passes winged through the air: he is also said to have been called the

messenger, [277] because by means of speech all our thoughts are

expressed; [278] --if, therefore, speech itself is Mercury, then, even

by their own confession, he is not a god. But when they make to

themselves gods of such as are not even demons, by praying to unclean

spirits, they are possessed by such as are not gods, but demons. In

like manner, because they have not been able to find for Mars any

element or part of the world in which he might perform some works of

nature of whatever kind, they have said that he is the god of war,

which is a work of men, and that not one which is considered desirable

by them. If, therefore, Felicitas should give perpetual peace, Mars

would have nothing to do. But if war itself is Mars, as speech is

Mercury, I wish it were as true that there were no war to be falsely

called a god, as it is true that it is not a god.

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[276] Quasi medius currens.

[277] Nuncius.

[278] Enunciantur.

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Chapter 15.--Concerning Certain Stars Which the Pagans Have Called by

the Names of Their Gods.

But possibly these stars which have been called by their names are

these gods. For they call a certain star Mercury, and likewise a

certain other star Mars. But among those stars which are called by the

names of gods, is that one which they call Jupiter, and yet with them

Jupiter is the world. There also is that one they call Saturn, and yet

they give to him no small property besides,--namely, all seeds. There

also is that brightest of them all which is called by them Venus, and

yet they will have this same Venus to be also the moon:--not to mention

how Venus and Juno are said by them to contend about that most

brilliant star, as though about another golden apple. For some say

that Lucifer belongs to Venus, and some to Juno. But, as usual, Venus

conquers. For by far the greatest number assign that star to Venus, so

much so that there is scarcely found one of them who thinks otherwise.

But since they call Jupiter the king of all, who will not laugh to see

his star so far surpassed in brilliancy by the star of Venus? For it

ought to have been as much more brilliant than the rest, as he himself

is more powerful. They answer that it only appears so because it is

higher up, and very much farther away from the earth. If, therefore,

its greater dignity has deserved a higher place, why is Saturn higher

in the heavens than Jupiter? Was the vanity of the fable which made

Jupiter king not able to reach the stars? And has Saturn been

permitted to obtain at least in the heavens, what he could not obtain

in his own kingdom nor in the Capitol?

But why has Janus received no star? If it is because he is the world,

and they are all in him, the world is also Jupiter's, and yet he has

one. Did Janus compromise his case as best he could, and instead of

the one star which he does not have among the heavenly bodies, accept

so many faces on earth? Again, if they think that on account of the

stars alone Mercury and Mars are parts of the world, in order that they

may be able to have them for gods, since speech and war are not parts

of the world, but acts of men, how is it that they have made no altars,

established no rites, built no temples for Aries, and Taurus, and

Cancer, and Scorpio, and the rest which they number as the celestial

signs, and which consist not of single stars, but each of them of many

stars, which also they say are situated above those already mentioned

in the highest part of the heavens, where a more constant motion causes

the stars to follow an undeviating course? And why have they not

reckoned them as gods, I do not say among those select gods, but not

even among those, as it were, plebeian gods?

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Chapter 16.--Concerning Apollo and Diana, and the Other Select Gods

Whom They Would Have to Be Parts of the World.

Although they would have Apollo to be a diviner and physician, they

have nevertheless given him a place as some part of the world. They

have said that he is also the sun; and likewise they have said that

Diana, his sister, is the moon, and the guardian of roads. Whence also

they will have her be a virgin, because a road brings forth nothing.

They also make both of them have arrows, because those two planets send

their rays from the heavens to the earth. They make Vulcan to be the

fire of the world; Neptune the waters of the world; Father Dis, that

is, Orcus, the earthy and lowest part of the world. Liber and Ceres

they set over seeds,--the former over the seeds of males, the latter

over the seeds of females; or the one over the fluid part of seed, but

the other over the dry part. And all this together is referred to the

world, that is, to Jupiter, who is called "progenitor and mother,"

because he emitted all seeds from himself, and received them into

himself. For they also make this same Ceres to be the Great Mother,

who they say is none other than the earth, and call her also Juno. And

therefore they assign to her the second causes of things,

notwithstanding that it has been said to Jupiter, "progenitor and

mother of the gods;" because, according to them, the whole world itself

is Jupiter's. Minerva, also, because they set her over human arts, and

did not find even a star in which to place her, has been said by them

to be either the highest ether, or even the moon. Also Vesta herself

they have thought to be the highest of the goddesses, because she is

the earth; although they have thought that the milder fire of the

world, which is used for the ordinary purposes of human life, not the

more violent fire, such as belongs to Vulcan, is to be assigned to

her. And thus they will have all those select gods to be the world and

its parts,--some of them the whole world, others of them its parts; the

whole of it Jupiter,--its parts, Genius, Mater Magna, Sol and Luna, or

rather Apollo and Diana, and so on. And sometimes they make one god

many things; sometimes one thing many gods. Many things are one god in

the case of Jupiter; for both the whole world is Jupiter, and the sky

alone is Jupiter, and the star alone is said and held to be Jupiter.

Juno also is mistress of second causes,--Juno is the air, Juno is the

earth; and had she won it over Venus, Juno would have been the star.

Likewise Minerva is the highest ether, and Minerva is likewise the

moon, which they suppose to be in the lowest limit of the ether. And

also they make one thing many gods in this way. The world is both

Janus and Jupiter; also the earth is Juno, and Mater Magna, and Ceres.

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Chapter 17.--That Even Varro Himself Pronounced His Own Opinions

Regarding the Gods Ambiguous.

And the same is true with respect to all the rest, as is true with

respect to those things which I have mentioned for the sake of

example. They do not explain them, but rather involve them. They rush

hither and thither, to this side or to that, according as they are

driven by the impulse of erratic opinion; so that even Varro himself

has chosen rather to doubt concerning all things, than to affirm

anything. For, having written the first of the three last books

concerning the certain gods, and having commenced in the second of

these to speak of the uncertain gods, he says: "I ought not to be

censured for having stated in this book the doubtful opinions

concerning the gods. For he who, when he has read them, shall think

that they both ought to be, and can be, conclusively judged of, will do

so himself. For my own part, I can be more easily led to doubt the

things which I have written in the first book, than to attempt to

reduce all the things I shall write in this one to any orderly

system." Thus he makes uncertain not only that book concerning the

uncertain gods, but also that other concerning the certain gods.

Moreover, in that third book concerning the select gods, after having

exhibited by anticipation as much of the natural theology as he deemed

necessary, and when about to commence to speak of the vanities and

lying insanities of the civil theology, where he was not only without

the guidance of the truth of things, but was also pressed by the

authority of tradition, he says: "I will write in this book concerning

the public gods of the Roman people, to whom they have dedicated

temples, and whom they have conspicuously distinguished by many

adornments; but, as Xenophon of Colophon writes, I will state what I

think, not what I am prepared to maintain: it is for man to think

those things, for God to know them."

It is not, then, an account of things comprehended and most certainly

believed which he promised, when about to write those things which were

instituted by men. He only timidly promises an account of things which

are but the subject of doubtful opinion. Nor, indeed, was it possible

for him to affirm with the same certainty that Janus was the world, and

such like things; or to discover with the same certainty such things as

how Jupiter was the son of Saturn, while Saturn was made subject to him

as king:--he could, I say, neither affirm nor discover such things with

the same certainty with which he knew such things as that the world

existed, that the heavens and earth existed, the heavens bright with

stars, and the earth fertile through seeds; or with the same perfect

conviction with which he believed that this universal mass of nature is

governed and administered by a certain invisible and mighty force.

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Chapter 18.--A More Credible Cause of the Rise of Pagan Error.

A far more credible account of these gods is given, when it is said

that they were men, and that to each one of them sacred rites and

solemnities were instituted, according to his particular genius,

manners, actions, circumstances; which rites and solemnities, by

gradually creeping through the souls of men, which are like demons, and

eager for things which yield them sport, were spread far and wide; the

poets adorning them with lies, and false spirits seducing men to

receive them. For it is far more likely that some youth, either

impious himself, or afraid of being slain by an impious father, being

desirous to reign, dethroned his father, than that (according to

Varro's interpretation) Saturn was overthrown by his son Jupiter: for

cause, which belongs to Jupiter, is before seed, which belongs to

Saturn. For had this been so, Saturn would never have been before

Jupiter, nor would he have been the father of Jupiter. For cause

always precedes seed, and is never generated from seed. But when they

seek to honor by natural interpretation most vain fables or deeds of

men, even the acutest men are so perplexed that we are compelled to

grieve for their folly also.

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Chapter 19.--Concerning the Interpretations Which Compose the Reason of

the Worship of Saturn.

They said, says Varro, that Saturn was wont to devour all that sprang

from him, because seeds returned to the earth from whence they sprang.

And when it is said that a lump of earth was put before Saturn to be

devoured instead of Jupiter, it is signified, he says, that before the

art of ploughing was discovered, seeds were buried in the earth by the

hands of men. The earth itself, then, and not seeds, should have been

called Saturn, because it in a manner devours what it has brought

forth, when the seeds which have sprung from it return again into it.

And what has Saturn's receiving of a lump of earth instead of Jupiter

to do with this, that the seeds were covered in the soil by the hands

of men? Was the seed kept from being devoured, like other things, by

being covered with the soil? For what they say would imply that he who

put on the soil took away the seed, as Jupiter is said to have been

taken away when the lump of soil was offered to Saturn instead of him,

and not rather that the soil, by covering the seed, only caused it to

be devoured the more eagerly. Then, in that way, Jupiter is the seed,

and not the cause of the seed, as was said a little before.

But what shall men do who cannot find anything wise to say, because

they are interpreting foolish things? Saturn has a pruning-knife.

That, says Varro, is on account of agriculture. Certainly in Saturn's

reign there as yet existed no agriculture, and therefore the former

times of Saturn are spoken of, because, as the same Varro interprets

the fables, the primeval men lived on those seeds which the earth

produced spontaneously. Perhaps he received a pruning-knife when he

had lost his sceptre; that he who had been a king, and lived at ease

during the first part of his time, should become a laborious workman

whilst his son occupied the throne. Then he says that boys were wont

to be immolated to him by certain peoples, the Carthaginians for

instance; and also that adults were immolated by some nations, for

example the Gauls--because, of all seeds, the human race is the best.

What need we say more concerning this most cruel vanity. Let us rather

attend to and hold by this, that these interpretations are not carried

up to the true God,--a living, incorporeal, unchangeable nature, from

whom a blessed life enduring for ever may be obtained,--but that they

end in things which are corporeal, temporal, mutable, and mortal. And

whereas it is said in the fables that Saturn castrated his father

Coelus, this signifies, says Varro, that the divine seed belongs to

Saturn, and not to Coelus; for this reason, as far as a reason can be

discovered, namely, that in heaven [279] nothing is born from seed.

But, lo! Saturn, if he is the son of Coelus, is the son of Jupiter.

For they affirm times without number, and that emphatically, that the

heavens [280] are Jupiter. Thus those things which come not of the

truth, do very often, without being impelled by any one, themselves

overthrow one another. He says that Saturn was called Kronos, which in

the Greek tongue signifies a space of time, [281] because, without

that, seed cannot be productive. These and many other things are said

concerning Saturn, and they are all referred to seed. But Saturn

surely, with all that great power, might have sufficed for seed. Why

are other gods demanded for it, especially Liber and Libera, that is,

Ceres?--concerning whom again, as far as seed is concerned, he says as

many things as if he had said nothing concerning Saturn.

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[279] C�lo.

[280] C�lum.

[281] Sc. Chronos.

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Chapter 20.--Concerning the Rites of Eleusinian Ceres.

Now among the rites of Ceres, those Eleusinian rites are much famed

which were in the highest repute among the Athenians, of which Varro

offers no interpretation except with respect to corn, which Ceres

discovered, and with respect to Proserpine, whom Ceres lost, Orcus

having carried her away. And this Proserpine herself, he says,

signifies the fecundity of seeds. But as this fecundity departed at a

certain season, whilst the earth wore an aspect of sorrow through the

consequent sterility, there arose an opinion that the daughter of

Ceres, that is, fecundity itself, who was called Proserpine, from

proserpere (to creep forth, to spring), had been carried away by Orcus,

and detained among the inhabitants of the nether world; which

circumstance was celebrated with public mourning. But since the same

fecundity again returned, there arose joy because Proserpine had been

given back by Orcus, and thus these rites were instituted. Then Varro

adds, that many things are taught in the mysteries of Ceres which only

refer to the discovery of fruits.

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Chapter 21.--Concerning the Shamefulness of the Rites Which are

Celebrated in Honor of Liber.

Now as to the rites of Liber, whom they have set over liquid seeds, and

therefore not only over the liquors of fruits, among which wine holds,

so to speak, the primacy, but also over the seeds of animals:--as to

these rites, I am unwilling to undertake to show to what excess of

turpitude they had reached, because that would entail a lengthened

discourse, though I am not unwilling to do so as a demonstration of the

proud stupidity of those who practise them. Among other rites which I

am compelled from the greatness of their number to omit, Varro says

that in Italy, at the places where roads crossed each other the rites

of Liber were celebrated with such unrestrained turpitude, that the

private parts of a man were worshipped in his honor. Nor was this

abomination transacted in secret that some regard at least might be

paid to modesty, but was openly and wantonly displayed. For during the

festival of Liber this obscene member, placed on a car, was carried

with great honor, first over the crossroads in the country, and then

into the city. But in the town of Lavinium a whole month was devoted

to Liber alone, during the days of which all the people gave themselves

up to the must dissolute conversation, until that member had been

carried through the forum and brought to rest in its own place; on

which unseemly member it was necessary that the most honorable matron

should place a wreath in the presence of all the people. Thus,

forsooth, was the god Liber to be appeased in order to the growth of

seeds. Thus was enchantment to be driven away from fields, even by a

matron's being compelled to do in public what not even a harlot ought

to be permitted to do in a theatre, if there were matrons among the

spectators. For these reasons, then, Saturn alone was not believed to

be sufficient for seeds,--namely, that the impure mind might find

occasions for multiplying the gods; and that, being righteously

abandoned to uncleanness by the one true God, and being prostituted to

the worship of many false gods, through an avidity for ever greater and

greater uncleanness, it should call these sacrilegious rites sacred

things, and should abandon itself to be violated and polluted by crowds

of foul demons.

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Chapter 22.--Concerning Neptune, and Salacia and Venilia.

Now Neptune had Salacia to wife, who they say is the nether waters of

the sea. Wherefore was Venilia also joined to him? Was it not simply

through the lust of the soul desiring a greater number of demons to

whom to prostitute itself, and not because this goddess was necessary

to the perfection of their sacred rites? But let the interpretation of

this illustrious theology be brought forward to restrain us from this

censuring by rendering a satisfactory reason. Venilia, says this

theology, is the wave which comes to the shore, Salacia the wave which

returns into the sea. Why, then, are there two goddesses, when it is

one wave which comes and returns? Certainly it is mad lust itself,

which in its eagerness for many deities resembles the waves which break

on the shore. For though the water which goes is not different from

that which returns, still the soul which goes and returns not is

defiled by two demons, whom it has taken occasion by this false pretext

to invite. I ask thee, O Varro, and you who have read such works of

learned men, and think ye have learned something great,--I ask you to

interpret this, I do not say in a manner consistent with the eternal

and unchangeable nature which alone is God, but only in a manner

consistent with the doctrine concerning the soul of the world and its

parts, which ye think to be the true gods. It is a somewhat more

tolerable thing that ye have made that part of the soul of the world

which pervades the sea your god Neptune. Is the wave, then, which

comes to the shore and returns to the main, two parts of the world, or

two parts of the soul of the world? Who of you is so silly as to think

so? Why, then, have they made to you two goddesses? The only reason

seems to be, that your wise ancestors have provided, not that many gods

should rule you, but that many of such demons as are delighted with

those vanities and falsehoods should possess you. But why has that

Salacia, according to this interpretation, lost the lower part of the

sea, seeing that she was represented as subject to her husband? For in

saying that she is the receding wave, ye have put her on the surface.

Was she enraged at her husband for taking Venilia as a concubine, and

thus drove him from the upper part of the sea?

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Chapter 23.--Concerning the Earth, Which Varro Affirms to Be a Goddess,

Because that Soul of the World Which He Thinks to Be God Pervades Also

This Lowest Part of His Body, and Imparts to It a Divine Force.

Surely the earth, which we see full of its own living creatures, is

one; but for all that, it is but a mighty mass among the elements, and

the lowest part of the world. Why, then, would they have it to be a

goddess? Is it because it is fruitful? Why, then, are not men rather

held to be gods, who render it fruitful by cultivating it; but though

they plough it, do not adore it? But, say they, the part of the soul

of the world which pervades it makes it a goddess. As if it were not a

far more evident thing, nay, a thing which is not called in question,

that there is a soul in man. And yet men are not held to be gods, but

(a thing to be sadly lamented), with wonderful and pitiful delusion,

are subjected to those who are not gods, and than whom they themselves

are better, as the objects of deserved worship and adoration. And

certainly the same Varro, in the book concerning the select gods,

affirms that there are three grades of soul in universal nature. One

which pervades all the living parts of the body, and has not sensation,

but only the power of life,--that principle which penetrates into the

bones, nails and hair. By this principle in the world trees are

nourished, and grow without being possessed of sensation, and live in a

manner peculiar to themselves. The second grade of soul is that in

which there is sensation. This principle penetrates into the eyes,

ears, nostrils, mouth, and the organs of sensation. The third grade of

soul is the highest, and is called mind, where intelligence has its

throne. This grade of soul no mortal creatures except man are

possessed of. Now this part of the soul of the world, Varro says, is

called God, and in us is called Genius. And the stones and earth in

the world, which we see, and which are not pervaded by the power of

sensation, are, as it were, the bones and nails of God. Again, the

sun, moon, and stars, which we perceive, and by which He perceives, are

His organs of perception. Moreover, the ether is His mind; and by the

virtue which is in it, which penetrates into the stars, it also makes

them gods; and because it penetrates through them into the earth, it

makes it the goddess Tellus, whence again it enters and permeates the

sea and ocean, making them the god Neptune.

Let him return from this, which he thinks to be natural theology, back

to that from which he went out, in order to rest from the fatigue

occasioned by the many turnings and windings of his path. Let him

return, I say, let him return to the civil theology. I wish to detain

him there a while. I have somewhat to say which has to do with that

theology. I am not yet saying, that if the earth and stones are

similar to our bones and nails, they are in like manner devoid of

intelligence, as they are devoid of sensation. Nor am I saying that,

if our bones and nails are said to have intelligence, because they are

in a man who has intelligence, he who says that the things analogous to

these in the world are gods, is as stupid as he is who says that our

bones and nails are men. We shall perhaps have occasion to dispute

these things with the philosophers. At present, however, I wish to

deal with Varro as a political theologian. For it is possible that,

though he may seem to have wished to lift up his head, as it were, into

the liberty of natural theology, the consciousness that the book with

which he was occupied was one concerning a subject belonging to civil

theology, may have caused him to relapse into the point of view of that

theology, and to say this in order that the ancestors of his nation,

and other states, might not be believed to have bestowed on Neptune an

irrational worship. What I am to say is this: Since the earth is one,

why has not that part of the soul of the world which permeates the

earth made it that one goddess which he calls Tellus? But had it done

so, what then had become of Orcus, the brother of Jupiter and Neptune,

whom they call Father Dis? [282] And where, in that case, had been

his wife Proserpine, who, according to another opinion given in the

same book, is called, not the fecundity of the earth, but its lower

part? [283] But if they say that part of the soul of the world, when

it permeates the upper part of the earth, makes the god Father Dis, but

when it pervades the nether part of the same the goddess Proserpine;

what, in that case, will that Tellus be? For all that which she was

has been divided into these two parts, and these two gods; so that it

is impossible to find what to make or where to place her as a third

goddess, except it be said that those divinities Orcus and Proserpine

are the one goddess Tellus, and that they are not three gods, but one

or two, whilst notwithstanding they are called three, held to be three,

worshipped as three, having their own several altars, their own

shrines, rites, images, priests, whilst their own false demons also

through these things defile the prostituted soul. Let this further

question be answered: What part of the earth does a part of the soul

of the world permeate in order to make the god Tellumo? No, says he;

but the earth being one and the same, has a double life,--the

masculine, which produces seed, and the feminine, which receives and

nourishes the seed. Hence it has been called Tellus from the feminine

principle, and Tellumo from the masculine. Why, then, do the priests,

as he indicates, perform divine service to four gods, two others being

added,--namely, to Tellus, Tellumo, Altor, and Rusor? We have already

spoken concerning Tellus and Tellumo. But why do they worship Altor?

[284] Because, says he, all that springs of the earth is nourished by

the earth. Wherefore do they worship Rusor? [285] Because all things

return back again to the place whence they proceeded.

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[282] See ch. 16.

[283] Varro, De Ling. Lat. v. 68.

[284] Nourisher.

[285] Returner.

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Chapter 24.--Concerning the Surnames of Tellus and Their

Significations, Which, Although They Indicate Many Properties, Ought

Not to Have Established the Opinion that There is a Corresponding

Number of Gods.

The one earth, then, on account of this fourfold virtue, ought to have

had four surnames, but not to have been considered as four gods,--as

Jupiter and Juno, though they have so many surnames, are for all that

only single deities,--for by all these surnames it is signified that a

manifold virtue belongs to one god or to one goddess; but the multitude

of surnames does not imply a multitude of gods. But as sometimes even

the vilest women themselves grow tired of those crowds which they have

sought after under the impulse of wicked passion, so also the soul,

become vile, and prostituted to impure spirits, sometimes begins to

loathe to multiply to itself gods to whom to surrender itself to be

polluted by them, as much as it once delighted in so doing. For Varro

himself, as if ashamed of that crowd of gods, would make Tellus to be

one goddess. "They say," says he, "that whereas the one great mother

has a tympanum, it is signified that she is the orb of the earth;

whereas she has towers on her head, towns are signified; and whereas

seats are fixed round about her, it is signified that whilst all things

move, she moves not. And their having made the Galli to serve this

goddess, signifies that they who are in need of seed ought to follow

the earth for in it all seeds are found. By their throwing themselves

down before her, it is taught," he says, "that they who cultivate the

earth should not sit idle, for there is always something for them to

do. The sound of the cymbals signifies the noise made by the throwing

of iron utensils, and by men's hands, and all other noises connected

with agricultural operations; and these cymbals are of brass, because

the ancients used brazen utensils in their agriculture before iron was

discovered. They place beside the goddess an unbound and tame lion, to

show that there is no kind of land so wild and so excessively barren as

that it would be profitless to attempt to bring it in and cultivate

it." Then he adds that, because they gave many names and surnames to

mother Tellus, it came to be thought that these signified many gods.

"They think," says he, "that Tellus is Ops, because the earth is

improved by labor; Mother, because it brings forth much; Great, because

it brings forth seed; Proserpine, because fruits creep forth from it;

Vesta, because it is invested with herbs. And thus," says he, "they

not at all absurdly identify other goddesses with the earth." If,

then, it is one goddess (though, if the truth were consulted, it is not

even that), why do they nevertheless separate it into many? Let there

be many names of one goddess, and let there not be as many goddesses as

there are names.

But the authority of the erring ancients weighs heavily on Varro, and

compels him, after having expressed this opinion, to show signs of

uneasiness; for he immediately adds, "With which things the opinion of

the ancients, who thought that there were really many goddesses, does

not conflict." How does it not conflict, when it is entirely a

different thing to say that one goddess has many names, and to say that

there are many goddesses? But it is possible, he says, that the same

thing may both be one, and yet have in it a plurality of things. I

grant that there are many things in one man; are there therefore in him

many men? In like manner, in one goddess there are many things; are

there therefore also many goddesses? But let them divide, unite,

multiply, reduplicate, and implicate as they like.

These are the famous mysteries of Tellus and the Great Mother, all of

which are shown to have reference to mortal seeds and to agriculture.

Do these things, then,--namely, the tympanum, the towers, the Galli,

the tossing to and fro of limbs, the noise of cymbals, the images of

lions,--do these things, having this reference and this end, promise

eternal life? Do the mutilated Galli, then, serve this Great Mother in

order to signify that they who are in need of seed should follow the

earth, as though it were not rather the case that this very service

caused them to want seed? For whether do they, by following this

goddess, acquire seed, being in want of it, or, by following her, lose

seed when they have it? Is this to interpret or to deprecate? Nor is

it considered to what a degree malign demons have gained the upper

hand, inasmuch as they have been able to exact such cruel rites without

having dared to promise any great things in return for them. Had the

earth not been a goddess, men would have, by laboring, laid their hands

on it in order to obtain seed through it, and would not have laid

violent hands on themselves in order to lose seed on account of it.

Had it not been a goddess, it would have become so fertile by the hands

of others, that it would not have compelled a man to be rendered barren

by his own hands; nor that in the festival of Liber an honorable matron

put a wreath on the private parts of a man in the sight of the

multitude, where perhaps her husband was standing by blushing and

perspiring, if there is any shame left in men; and that in the

celebration of marriages the newly-married bride was ordered to sit

upon Priapus. These things are bad enough, but they are small and

contemptible in comparison with that most cruel abomination, or most

abominable cruelty, by which either set is so deluded that neither

perishes of its wound. There the enchantment of fields is feared; here

the amputation of members is not feared. There the modesty of the

bride is outraged, but in such a manner as that neither her

fruitfulness nor even her virginity is taken away; here a man is so

mutilated that he is neither changed into a woman nor remains a man.

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Chapter 25.--The Interpretation of the Mutilation of Atys Which the

Doctrine of the Greek Sages Set Forth.

Varro has not spoken of that Atys, nor sought out any interpretation

for him, in memory of whose being loved by Ceres the Gallus is

mutilated. But the learned and wise Greeks have by no means been

silent about an interpretation so holy and so illustrious. The

celebrated philosopher Porphyry has said that Atys signifies the

flowers of spring, which is the most beautiful season, and therefore

was mutilated because the flower falls before the fruit appears. [286]

They have not, then, compared the man himself, or rather that

semblance of a man they called Atys, to the flower, but his male

organs,--these, indeed, fell whilst he was living. Did I say fell?

nay, truly they did not fall, nor were they plucked off, but torn

away. Nor when that flower was lost did any fruit follow, but rather

sterility. What, then, do they say is signified by the castrated Atys

himself, and whatever remained to him after his castration? To what do

they refer that? What interpretation does that give rise to? Do they,

after vain endeavors to discover an interpretation, seek to persuade

men that that is rather to be believed which report has made public,

and which has also been written concerning his having been a mutilated

man? Our Varro has very properly opposed this, and has been unwilling

to state it; for it certainly was not unknown to that most learned man.

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[286] In the book De Ratione Naturali Deorum.

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Chapter 26.--Concerning the Abomination of the Sacred Rites of the

Great Mother.

Concerning the effeminates consecrated to the same Great Mother, in

defiance of all the modesty which belongs to men and women, Varro has

not wished to say anything, nor do I remember to have read anywhere

aught concerning them. These effeminates, no later than yesterday,

were going through the streets and places of Carthage with anointed

hair, whitened faces, relaxed bodies, and feminine gait, exacting from

the people the means of maintaining their ignominious lives. Nothing

has been said concerning them. Interpretation failed, reason blushed,

speech was silent. The Great Mother has surpassed all her sons, not in

greatness of deity, but of crime. To this monster not even the

monstrosity of Janus is to be compared. His deformity was only in his

image; hers was the deformity of cruelty in her sacred rites. He has a

redundancy of members in stone images; she inflicts the loss of members

on men. This abomination is not surpassed by the licentious deeds of

Jupiter, so many and so great. He, with all his seductions of women,

only disgraced heaven with one Ganymede; she, with so many avowed and

public effeminates, has both defiled the earth and outraged heaven.

Perhaps we may either compare Saturn to this Magna Mater, or even set

him before her in this kind of abominable cruelty, for he mutilated his

father. But at the festivals of Saturn, men could rather be slain by

the hands of others than mutilated by their own. He devoured his sons,

as the poets say, and the natural theologists interpret this as they

list. History says he slew them. But the Romans never received, like

the Carthaginians, the custom of sacrificing their sons to him. This

Great Mother of the gods, however, has brought mutilated men into Roman

temples, and has preserved that cruel custom, being believed to promote

the strength of the Romans by emasculating their men. Compared with

this evil, what are the thefts of Mercury, the wantonness of Venus, and

the base and flagitious deeds of the rest of them, which we might bring

forward from books, were it not that they are daily sung and danced in

the theatres? But what are these things to so great an evil,--an evil

whose magnitude was only proportioned to the greatness of the Great

Mother,--especially as these are said to have been invented by the

poets? as if the poets had also invented this that they are acceptable

to the gods. Let it be imputed, then, to the audacity and impudence of

the poets that these things have been sung and written of. But that

they have been incorporated into the body of divine rites and honors,

the deities themselves demanding and extorting that incorporation, what

is that but the crime of the gods? nay more, the confession of demons

and the deception of wretched men? But as to this that the Great

Mother is considered to be worshipped in the appropriate form when she

is worshipped by the consecration of mutilated men, this is not an

invention of the poets, nay, they have rather shrunk from it with

horror than sung of it. Ought any one, then, to be consecrated to

these select gods, that he may live blessedly after death, consecrated

to whom he could not live decently before death, being subjected to

such foul superstitions, and bound over to unclean demons? But all

these things, says Varro, are to be referred to the world. [287] Let

him consider if it be not rather to the unclean. [288] But why not

refer that to the world which is demonstrated to be in the world? We,

however, seek for a mind which, trusting to true religion, does not

adore the world as its god, but for the sake of God praises the world

as a work of God, and, purified from mundane defilements, comes pure

[289] to God Himself who founded the world. [290]

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[287] Mundum.

[288] Immundum.

[289] Mundus.

[290] Mundum.

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Chapter 27.--Concerning the Figments of the Physical Theologists, Who

Neither Worship the True Divinity, Nor Perform the Worship Wherewith

the True Divinity Should Be Served.

We see that these select gods have, indeed, become more famous than the

rest; not, however, that their merits may be brought to light, but that

their opprobrious deeds may not be hid. Whence it is more credible

that they were men, as not only poetic but also historical literature

has handed down. For this which Virgil says,

"Then from Olympus' heights came down

Good Saturn, exiled from his throne

By Jove, his mightier heir;" [291]

and what follows with reference to this affair, is fully related by the

historian Euhemerus, and has been translated into Latin by Ennius. And

as they who have written before us in the Greek or in the Latin tongue

against such errors as these have said much concerning this matter, I

have thought it unnecessary to dwell upon it. When I consider those

physical reasons, then, by which learned and acute men attempt to turn

human things into divine things, all I see is that they have been able

to refer these things only to temporal works and to that which has a

corporeal nature, and even though invisible still mutable; and this is

by no means the true God. But if this worship had been performed as

the symbolism of ideas at least congruous with religion, though it

would indeed have been cause of grief that the true God was not

announced and proclaimed by its symbolism, nevertheless it could have

been in some degree borne with, when it did not occasion and command

the performance of such foul and abominable things. But since it is

impiety to worship the body or the soul for the true God, by whose

indwelling alone the soul is happy, how much more impious is it to

worship those things through which neither soul nor body can obtain

either salvation or human honor? Wherefore if with temple, priest, and

sacrifice, which are due to the true God, any element of the world be

worshipped, or any created spirit, even though not impure and evil,

that worship is still evil, not because the things are evil by which

the worship is performed, but because those things ought only to be

used in the worship of Him to whom alone such worship and service are

due. But if any one insist that he worships the one true God,--that

is, the Creator of every soul and of every body,--with stupid and

monstrous idols, with human victims, with putting a wreath on the male

organ, with the wages of unchastity, with the cutting of limbs, with

emasculation, with the consecration of effeminates, with impure and

obscene plays, such a one does not sin because he worships One who

ought not to be worshipped, but because he worships Him who ought to be

worshipped in a way in which He ought not to be worshipped. But he who

worships with such things,--that is, foul and obscene things,--and that

not the true God, namely, the maker of soul and body, but a creature,

even though not a wicked creature, whether it be soul or body, or soul

and body together, twice sins against God, because he both worships for

God what is not God, and also worships with such things as neither God

nor what is not God ought to be worshipped with. It is, indeed,

manifest how these pagans worship,--that is, how shamefully and

criminally they worship; but what or whom they worship would have been

left in obscurity, had not their history testi fied that those same

confessedly base and foul rites were rendered in obedience to the

demands of the gods, who exacted them with terrible severity.

Wherefore it is evident beyond doubt that this whole civil theology is

occupied in inventing means for attracting wicked and most impure

spirits, inviting them to visit senseless images, and through these to

take possession of stupid hearts.

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[291] Virgil, �neid, viii. 319-20.

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Chapter 28.--That the Doctrine of Varro Concerning Theology is in No

Part Consistent with Itself.

To what purpose, then, is it that this most learned and most acute man

Varro attempts, as it were, with subtle disputation, to reduce and

refer all these gods to heaven and earth? He cannot do it. They go

out of his hands like water; they shrink back; they slip down and

fall. For when about to speak of the females, that is, the goddesses,

he says, "Since, as I observed in the first book concerning places,

heaven and earth are the two origins of the gods, on which account they

are called celestials and terrestrials, and as I began in the former

books with heaven, speaking of Janus, whom some have said to be heaven,

and others the earth, so I now commence with Tellus in speaking

concerning the goddesses." I can understand what embarrassment so

great a mind was experiencing. For he is influenced by the perception

of a certain plausible resemblance, when he says that the heaven is

that which does, and the earth that which suffers, and therefore

attributes the masculine principle to the one, and the feminine to the

other, not considering that it is rather He who made both heaven and

earth who is the maker of both activity and passivity. On this

principle he interprets the celebrated mysteries of the Samothracians,

and promises, with an air of great devoutness, that he will by writing

expound these mysteries, which have not been so much as known to his

countrymen, and will send them his exposition. Then he says that he

had from many proofs gathered that, in those mysteries, among the

images one signifies heaven, another the earth, another the patterns of

things, which Plato calls ideas. He makes Jupiter to signify heaven,

Juno the earth, Minerva the ideas. Heaven, by which anything is made;

the earth, from which it is made; and the pattern, according to which

it is made. But, with respect to the last, I am forgetting to say that

Plato attributed so great an importance to these ideas as to say, not

that anything was made by heaven according to them, but that according

to them heaven itself was made. [292] To return, however,--it is to

be observed that Varro has, in the book on the select gods, lost that

theory of these gods, in whom he has, as it were, embraced all things.

For he assigns the male gods to heaven, the females to earth; among

which latter he has placed Minerva, whom he had before placed above

heaven itself. Then the male god Neptune is in the sea, which pertains

rather to earth than to heaven. Last of all, father Dis, who is called

in Greek Plouton, another male god, brother of both (Jupiter and

Neptune), is also held to be a god of the earth, holding the upper

region of the earth himself, and allotting the nether region to his

wife Proserpine. How, then, do they attempt to refer the gods to

heaven, and the goddesses to earth? What solidity, what consistency,

what sobriety has this disputation? But that Tellus is the origin of

the goddesses,--the great mother, to wit, beside whom there is

continually the noise of the mad and abominable revelry of effeminates

and mutilated men, and men who cut themselves, and indulge in frantic

gesticulations,--how is it, then, that Janus is called the head of the

gods, and Tellus the head of the goddesses? In the one case error does

not make one head, and in the other frenzy does not make a sane one.

Why do they vainly attempt to refer these to the world? Even if they

could do so, no pious person worships the world for the true God.

Nevertheless, plain truth makes it evident that they are not able even

to do this. Let them rather identify them with dead men and most

wicked demons, and no further question will remain.

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[292] In the Tim�us.

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Chapter 29.--That All Things Which the Physical Theologists Have

Referred to the World and Its Parts, They Ought to Have Referred to the

One True God.

For all those things which, according to the account given of those

gods, are referred to the world by so-called physical interpretation,

may, without any religious scruple, be rather assigned to the true God,

who made heaven and earth, and created every soul and every body; and

the following is the manner in which we see that this may be done. We

worship God,--not heaven and earth, of which two parts this world

consists, nor the soul or souls diffused through all living

things,--but God who made heaven and earth, and all things which are in

them; who made every soul, whatever be the nature of its life, whether

it have life without sensation and reason, or life with sensation, or

life with both sensation and reason.

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Chapter 30.--How Piety Distinguishes the Creator from the Creatures, So

That, Instead of One God, There are Not Worshipped as Many Gods as

There are Works of the One Author.

And now, to begin to go over those works of the one true God, on

account of which these have made to themselves many and false gods,

whilst they attempt to give an honorable interpretation to their many

most abominable and most infamous mysteries,--we worship that God who

has appointed to the natures created by Him both the beginnings and the

end of their existing and moving; who holds, knows, and disposes the

causes of things; who hath created the virtue of seeds; who hath given

to what creatures He would a rational soul, which is called mind; who

hath bestowed the faculty and use of speech; who hath imparted the gift

of foretelling future things to whatever spirits it seemed to Him good;

who also Himself predicts future things, through whom He pleases, and

through whom He will, removes diseases who, when the human race is to

be corrected and chastised by wars, regulates also the beginnings,

progress, and ends of these wars who hath created and governs the most

vehement and most violent fire of this world, in due relation and

proportion to the other elements of immense nature; who is the governor

of all the waters; who hath made the sun brightest of all material

lights, and hath given him suitable power and motion; who hath not

withdrawn, even from the inhabitants of the nether world, His dominion

and power; who hath appointed to mortal natures their suitable seed and

nourishment, dry or liquid; who establishes and makes fruitful the

earth; who bountifully bestows its fruits on animals and on men; who

knows and ordains, not only principal causes, but also subsequent

causes; who hath determined for the moon her motion; who affords ways

in heaven and on earth for passage from one place to another; who hath

granted also to human minds, which He hath created, the knowledge of

the various arts for the help of life and nature; who hath appointed

the union of male and female for the propagation of offspring; who hath

favored the societies of men with the gift of terrestrial fire for the

simplest and most familiar purposes, to burn on the hearth and to give

light. These are, then, the things which that most acute and most

learned man Varro has labored to distribute among the select gods, by I

know not what physical interpretation, which he has got from other

sources, and also conjectured for himself. But these things the one

true God makes and does, but as the same God,--that is, as He who is

wholly everywhere, included in no space, bound by no chains, mutable in

no part of His being, filling heaven and earth with omnipresent power,

not with a needy nature. Therefore He governs all things in such a

manner as to allow them to perform and exercise their own proper

movements. For although they can be nothing without Him, they are not

what He is. He does also many things through angels; but only from

Himself does He beatify angels. So also, though He send angels to men

for certain purposes, He does not for all that beatify men by the good

inherent in the angels, but by Himself, as He does the angels

themselves.

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Chapter 31.--What Benefits God Gives to the Followers of the Truth to

Enjoy Over and Above His General Bounty.

For, besides such benefits as, according to this administration of

nature of which we have made some mention, He lavishes on good and bad

alike, we have from Him a great manifestation of great love, which

belongs only to the good. For although we can never sufficiently give

thanks to Him, that we are, that we live, that we behold heaven and

earth, that we have mind and reason by which to seek after Him who made

all these things, nevertheless, what hearts, what number of tongues,

shall affirm that they are sufficient to render thanks to Him for this,

that He hath not wholly departed from us, laden and overwhelmed with

sins, averse to the contemplation of His light, and blinded by the love

of darkness, that is, of iniquity, but hath sent to us His own Word,

who is His only Son, that by His birth and suffering for us in the

flesh, which He assumed, we might know how much God valued man, and

that by that unique sacrifice we might be purified from all our sins,

and that, love being shed abroad in our hearts by His Spirit, we might,

having surmounted all difficulties, come into eternal rest, and the

ineffable sweetness of the contemplation of Himself?

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Chapter 32.--That at No Time in the Past Was the Mystery of Christ's

Redemption Awanting, But Was at All Times Declared, Though in Various

Forms.

This mystery of eternal life, even from the beginning of the human

race, was, by certain signs and sacraments suitable to the times,

announced through angels to those to whom it was meet. Then the Hebrew

people was congregated into one republic, as it were, to perform this

mystery; and in that republic was foretold, sometimes through men who

understood what they spake, and sometimes through men who understood

not, all that had transpired since the advent of Christ until now, and

all that will transpire. This same nation, too, was afterwards

dispersed through the nations, in order to testify to the scriptures in

which eternal salvation in Christ had been declared. For not only the

prophecies which are contained in words, nor only the precepts for the

right conduct of life, which teach morals and piety, and are contained

in the sacred writings,--not only these, but also the rites,

priesthood, tabernacle or temple, altars, sacrifices, ceremonies, and

whatever else belongs to that service which is due to God, and which in

Greek is properly called latreia,--all these signified and

fore-announced those things which we who believe in Jesus Christ unto

eternal life believe to have been fulfilled, or behold in process of

fulfillment, or confidently believe shall yet be fulfilled.

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Chapter 33.--That Only Through the Christian Religion Could the Deceit

of Malign Spirits, Who Rejoice in the Errors of Men, Have Been

Manifested.

This, the only true religion, has alone been able to manifest that the

gods of the nations are most impure demons, who desire to be thought

gods, availing themselves of the names of certain defunct souls, or the

appearance of mundane creatures, and with proud impurity rejoicing in

things most base and infamous, as though in divine honors, and envying

human souls their conversion to the true God. From whose most cruel

and most impious dominion a man is liberated when he believes on Him

who has afforded an example of humility, following which men may rise

as great as was that pride by which they fell. Hence are not only

those gods, concerning whom we have already spoken much, and many

others belonging to different nations and lands, but also those of whom

we are now treating, who have been selected as it were into the senate

of the gods,--selected, however, on account of the notoriousness of

their crimes, not on account of the dignity of their virtues,--whose

sacred things Varro attempts to refer to certain natural reasons,

seeking to make base things honorable, but cannot find how to square

and agree with these reasons, because these are not the causes of those

rites, which he thinks, or rather wishes to be thought to be so. For

had not only these, but also all others of this kind, been real causes,

even though they had nothing to do with the true God and eternal life,

which is to be sought in religion, they would, by affording some sort

of reason drawn from the nature of things, have mitigated in some

degree that offence which was occasioned by some turpitude or absurdity

in the sacred rites, which was not understood. This he attempted to do

in respect to certain fables of the theatres, or mysteries of the

shrines; but he did not acquit the theatres of likeness to the shrines,

but rather condemned the shrines for likeness to the theatres.

However, he in some way made the attempt to soothe the feelings shocked

by horrible things, by rendering what he would have to be natural

interpretations.

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Chapter 34.--Concerning the Books of Numa Pompilius, Which the Senate

Ordered to Be Burned, in Order that the Causes of Sacred Rights Therein

Assigned Should Not Become Known.

But, on the other hand, we find, as the same most learned man has

related, that the causes of the sacred rites which were given from the

books of Numa Pompilius could by no means be tolerated, and were

considered unworthy, not only to become known to the religious by being

read, but even to lie written in the darkness in which they had been

concealed. For now let me say what I promised in the third book of

this work to say in its proper place. For, as we read in the same

Varro's book on the worship of the gods, "A certain one Terentius had a

field at the Janiculum, and once, when his ploughman was passing the

plough near to the tomb of Numa Pompilius, he turned up from the ground

the books of Numa, in which were written the causes of the sacred

institutions; which books he carried to the pr�tor, who, having read

the beginnings of them, referred to the senate what seemed to be a

matter of so much importance. And when the chief senators had read

certain of the causes why this or that rite was instituted, the senate

assented to the dead Numa, and the conscript fathers, as though

concerned for the interests of religion, ordered the pr�tor to burn the

books." [293] Let each one believe what he thinks; nay, let every

champion of such impiety say whatever mad contention may suggest. For

my part, let it suffice to suggest that the causes of those sacred

things which were written down by King Numa Pompilius, the institutor

of the Roman rites, ought never to have become known to people or

senate, or even to the priests themselves; and also that Numa him self

attained to these secrets of demons by an illicit curiosity, in order

that he might write them down, so as to be able, by reading, to be

reminded of them. However, though he was king, and had no cause to be

afraid of any one, he neither dared to teach them to any one, nor to

destroy them by obliteration, or any other form of destruction.

Therefore, because he was unwilling that any one should know them, lest

men should be taught infamous things, and because he was afraid to

violate them, lest he should enrage the demons against himself, he

buried them in what he thought a safe place, believing that a plough

could not approach his sepulchre. But the senate, fearing to condemn

the religious solemnities of their ancestors, and therefore compelled

to assent to Numa, were nevertheless so convinced that those books were

pernicious, that they did not order them to be buried again, knowing

that human curiosity would thereby be excited to seek with far greater

eagerness after the matter already divulged, but ordered the scandalous

relics to be destroyed with fire; because, as they thought it was now a

necessity to perform those sacred rites, they judged that the error

arising from ignorance of their causes was more tolerable than the

disturbance which the knowledge of them would occasion the state.

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[293] Plutarch's Numa; Livy, xl. 29.

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Chapter 35.--Concerning the Hydromancy Through Which Numa Was Befooled

by Certain Images of Demons Seen in the Water.

For Numa himself also, to whom no prophet of God, no holy angel was

sent, was driven to have recourse to hydromancy, that he might see the

images of the gods in the water (or, rather, appearances whereby the

demons made sport of him), and might learn from them what he ought to

ordain and observe in the sacred rites. This kind of divination, says

Varro, was introduced from the Persians, and was used by Numa himself,

and at an after time by the philosopher Pythagoras. In this

divination, he says, they also inquire at the inhabitants of the nether

world, and make use of blood; and this the Greeks call nekromanteian.

But whether it be called necromancy or hydromancy it is the same thing,

for in either case the dead are supposed to foretell future things.

But by what artifices these things are done, let themselves consider;

for I am unwilling to say that these artifices were wont to be

prohibited by the laws, and to be very severely punished even in the

Gentile states, before the advent of our Saviour. I am unwilling, I

say, to affirm this, for perhaps even such things were then allowed.

However, it was by these arts that Pompilius learned those sacred rites

which he gave forth as facts, whilst he concealed their causes; for

even he himself was afraid of that which he had learned. The senate

also caused the books in which those causes were recorded to be

burned. What is it, then, to me, that Varro attempts to adduce all

sorts of fanciful physical interpretations, which if these books had

contained, they would certainly not have been burned? For otherwise

the conscript fathers would also have burned those books which Varro

published and dedicated to the high priest C�sar. [294] Now Numa is

said to have married the nymph Egeria, because (as Varro explains it in

the forementioned book) he carried forth [295] water wherewith to

perform his hydromancy. Thus facts are wont to be converted into

fables through false colorings. It was by that hydromancy, then, that

that over-curious Roman king learned both the sacred rites which were

to be written in the books of the priests, and also the causes of those

rites,--which latter, however, he was unwilling that any one besides

himself should know. Wherefore he made these causes, as it were, to

die along with himself, taking care to have them written by themselves,

and removed from the knowledge of men by being buried in the earth.

Wherefore the things which are written in those books were either

abominations of demons, so foul and noxious as to render that whole

civil theology execrable even in the eyes of such men as those

senators, who had accepted so many shameful things in the sacred rites

themselves, or they were nothing else than the accounts of dead men,

whom, through the lapse of ages, almost all the Gentile nations had

come to believe to be immortal gods; whilst those same demons were

delighted even with such rites, having presented themselves to receive

worship under pretence of being those very dead men whom they had

caused to be thought immortal gods by certain fallacious miracles,

performed in order to establish that belief. But, by the hidden

providence of the true God, these demons were permitted to confess

these things to their friend Numa, having been gained by those arts

through which necromancy could be performed, and yet were not

constrained to admonish him rather at his death to burn than to bury

the books in which they were written. But, in order that these books

might be unknown, the demons could not resist the plough by which they

were thrown up, or the pen of Varro, through which the things which

were done in reference to this matter have come down even to our

knowledge. For they are not able to effect anything which they are not

allowed; but they are permitted to influence those whom God, in His

deep and just judgment, according to their deserts, gives over either

to be simply afflicted by them, or to be also subdued and deceived.

But how pernicious these writings were judged to be, or how alien from

the worship of the true Divinity, may be understood from the fact that

the senate preferred to burn what Pompilius had hid, rather than to

fear what he feared, so that he could not dare to do that. Wherefore

let him who does not desire to live a pious life even now, seek eternal

life by means of such rites. But let him who does not wish to have

fellowship with malign demons have no fear for the noxious superstition

wherewith they are worshipped, but let him recognize the true religion

by which they are unmasked and vanquished.

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[294] Comp. Lactantius, Instit. i. 6.

[295] Egesserit.

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Book VIII.

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Argument--Augustin comes now to the third kind of theology, that is,

the natural, and takes up the question, whether the worship of the gods

of the natural theology is of any avail towards securing blessedness in

the life to come. This question he prefers to discuss with the

Platonists, because the Platonic system is "facile princeps" among

philosophies, and makes the nearest approximation to Christian truth.

In pursuing this argument, he first refutes Apuleius, and all who

maintain that the demons should be worshipped as messengers and

mediators between gods and men; demonstrating that by no possibility

can men be reconciled to good gods by demons, who are the slaves of

vice, and who delight in and patronize what good and wise men abhor and

condemn,--The blasphemous fictions of poets, theatrical exhibitions,

and magical arts.

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Chapter 1.--That the Question of Natural Theology is to Be Discussed

with Those Philosophers Who Sought a More Excellent Wisdom.

We shall require to apply our mind with far greater intensity to the

present question than was requisite in the solution and unfolding of

the questions handled in the preceding books; for it is not with

ordinary men, but with philosophers that we must confer concerning the

theology which they call natural. For it is not like the fabulous,

that is, the theatrical; nor the civil, that is, the urban theology:

the one of which displays the crimes of the gods, whilst the other

manifests their criminal desires, which demonstrate them to be rather

malign demons than gods. It is, we say, with philosophers we have to

confer with respect to this theology,--men whose very name, if rendered

into Latin, signifies those who profess the love of wisdom. Now, if

wisdom is God, who made all things, as is attested by the divine

authority and truth, [296] then the philosopher is a lover of God. But

since the thing itself, which is called by this name, exists not in all

who glory in the name,--for it does not follow, of course, that all who

are called philosophers are lovers of true wisdom,--we must needs

select from the number of those with whose opinions we have been able

to acquaint ourselves by reading, some with whom we may not unworthily

engage in the treatment of this question. For I have not in this work

undertaken to refute all the vain opinions of the philosophers, but

only such as pertain to theology, which Greek word we understand to

mean an account or explanation of the divine nature. Nor, again, have

I undertaken to refute all the vain theological opinions of all the

philosophers, but only of such of them as, agreeing in the belief that

there is a divine nature, and that this divine nature is concerned

about human affairs, do nevertheless deny that the worship of the one

unchangeable God is sufficient for the obtaining of a blessed life

after death, as well as at the present time; and hold that, in order to

obtain that life, many gods, created, indeed, and appointed to their

several spheres by that one God, are to be worshipped. These approach

nearer to the truth than even Varro; for, whilst he saw no difficulty

in extending natural theology in its entirety even to the world and the

soul of the world, these acknowledge God as existing above all that is

of the nature of soul, and as the Creator not only of this visible

world, which is often called heaven and earth, but also of every soul

whatsoever, and as Him who gives blessedness to the rational soul,--of

which kind is the human soul,--by participation in His own unchangeable

and incorporeal light. There is no one, who has even a slender

knowledge of these things, who does not know of the Platonic

philosophers, who derive their name from their master Plato.

Concerning this Plato, then, I will briefly state such things as I deem

necessary to the present question, mentioning beforehand those who

preceded him in time in the same department of literature.

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[296] Wisdom vii. 24-27.

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Chapter 2.--Concerning the Two Schools of Philosophers, that Is, the

Italic and Ionic, and Their Founders.

As far as concerns the literature of the Greeks, whose language holds a

more illustrious place than any of the languages of the other nations,

history mentions two schools of philosophers, the one called the Italic

school, originating in that part of Italy which was formerly called

Magna Gr�cia; the other called the Ionic school, having its origin in

those regions which are still called by the name of Greece. The Italic

school had for its founder Pythagoras of Samos, to whom also the term

"philosophy" is said to owe its origin. For whereas formerly those who

seemed to excel others by the laudable manner in which they regulated

their lives were called sages, Pythagoras, on being asked what he

professed, replied that he was a philosopher, that is, a student or

lover of wisdom; for it seemed to him to be the height of arrogance to

profess oneself a sage. [297] The founder of the Ionic school, again,

was Thales of Miletus, one of those seven who were styled the "seven

sages," of whom six were distinguished by the kind of life they lived,

and by certain maxims which they gave forth for the proper conduct of

life. Thales was distinguished as an investigator into the nature of

things; and, in order that he might have successors in his school, he

committed his dissertations to writing. That, however, which

especially rendered him eminent was his ability, by means of

astronomical calculations, even to predict eclipses of the sun and

moon. He thought, however, that water was the first principle of

things, and that of it all the elements of the world, the world itself,

and all things which are generated in it, ultimately consist. Over all

this work, however, which, when we consider the world, appears so

admirable, he set nothing of the nature of divine mind. To him

succeeded Anaximander, his pupil, who held a different opinion

concerning the nature of things; for he did not hold that all things

spring from one principle, as Thales did, who held that principle to be

water, but thought that each thing springs from its own proper

principle. These principles of things he believed to be infinite in

number, and thought that they generated innumerable worlds, and all the

things which arise in them. He thought, also, that these worlds are

subject to a perpetual process of alternate dissolution and

regeneration, each one continuing for a longer or shorter period of

time, according to the nature of the case; nor did he, any more than

Thales, attribute anything to a divine mind in the production of all

this activity of things. Anaximander left as his successor his

disciple Anaximenes, who attributed all the causes of things to an

infinite air. He neither denied nor ignored the existence of gods,

but, so far from believing that the air was made by them, he held, on

the contrary, that they sprang from the air. Anaxagoras, however, who

was his pupil, perceived that a divine mind was the productive cause of

all things which we see, and said that all the various kinds of things,

according to their several modes and species, were produced out of an

infinite matter consisting of homogeneous particles, but by the

efficiency of a divine mind. Diogenes, also, another pupil of

Anaximenes, said that a certain air was the original substance of

things out of which all things were produced, but that it was possessed

of a divine reason, without which nothing could be produced from it.

Anaxagoras was succeeded by his disciple Archelaus, who also thought

that all things consisted of homogeneous particles, of which each

particular thing was made, but that those particles were pervaded by a

divine mind, which perpetually energized all the eternal bodies,

namely, those particles, so that they are alternately united and

separated. Socrates, the master of Plato, is said to have been the

disciple of Archelaus; and on Plato's account it is that I have given

this brief historical sketch of the whole history of these schools.

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[297] Sapiens,that is, a wise man, one who had attained to wisdom.

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Chapter 3.--Of the Socratic Philosophy.

Socrates is said to have been the first who directed the entire effort

of philosophy to the correction and regulation of manners, all who went

before him having expended their greatest efforts in the investigation

of physical, that is, natural phenomena. However, it seems to me that

it cannot be certainly discovered whether Socrates did this because he

was wearied of obscure and uncertain things, and so wished to direct

his mind to the discovery of something manifest and certain, which was

necessary in order to the obtaining of a blessed life,--that one great

object toward which the labor, vigilance, and industry of all

philosophers seem to have been directed,--or whether (as some yet more

favorable to him suppose) he did it because he was unwilling that minds

defiled with earthly desires should essay to raise themselves upward to

divine things. For he saw that the causes of things were sought for by

them,--which causes he believed to be ultimately reducible to nothing

else than the will of the one true and supreme God,--and on this

account he thought they could only be comprehended by a purified mind;

and therefore that all diligence ought to be given to the purification

of the life by good morals, in order that the mind, delivered from the

depressing weight of lusts, might raise itself upward by its native

vigor to eternal things, and might, with purified understanding,

contemplate that nature which is incorporeal and unchangeable light,

where live the causes of all created natures. It is evident, however,

that he hunted out and pursued, with a wonderful pleasantness of style

and argument, and with a most pointed and insinuating urbanity, the

foolishness of ignorant men, who thought that they knew this or

that,--sometimes confessing his own ignorance, and sometimes

dissimulating his knowledge, even in those very moral questions to

which he seems to have directed the whole force of his mind. And hence

there arose hostility against him, which ended in his being

calumniously impeached, and condemned to death. Afterwards, however,

that very city of the Athenians, which had publicly condemned him, did

publicly bewail him,--the popular indignation having turned with such

vehemence on his accusers, that one of them perished by the violence of

the multitude, whilst the other only escaped a like punishment by

voluntary and perpetual exile.

Illustrious, therefore, both in his life and in his death, Socrates

left very many disciples of his philosophy, who vied with one another

in desire for proficiency in handling those moral questions which

concern the chief good (summum bonum), the possession of which can make

a man blessed; and because, in the disputations of Socrates, where he

raises all manner of questions, makes assertions, and then demolishes

them, it did not evidently appear what he held to be the chief good,

every one took from these disputations what pleased him best, and every

one placed the final good [298] in whatever it appeared to himself to

consist. Now, that which is called the final good is that at which,

when one has arrived, he is blessed. But so diverse were the opinions

held by those followers of Socrates concerning this final good, that (a

thing scarcely to be credited with respect to the followers of one

master) some placed the chief good in pleasure, as Aristippus, others

in virtue, as Antisthenes. Indeed, it were tedious to recount the

various opinions of various disciples.

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[298] Finem boni.

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Chapter 4.--Concerning Plato, the Chief Among the Disciples of

Socrates, and His Threefold Division of Philosophy.

But, among the disciples of Socrates, Plato was the one who shone with

a glory which far excelled that of the others, and who not unjustly

eclipsed them all. By birth, an Athenian of honorable parentage, he

far surpassed his fellow-disciples in natural endowments, of which he

was possessed in a wonderful degree. Yet, deeming himself and the

Socratic discipline far from sufficient for bringing philosophy to

perfection, he travelled as extensively as he was able, going to every

place famed for the cultivation of any science of which he could make

himself master. Thus he learned from the Egyptians whatever they held

and taught as important; and from Egypt, passing into those parts of

Italy which were filled with the fame of the Pythagoreans, he mastered,

with the greatest facility, and under the most eminent teachers, all

the Italic philosophy which was then in vogue. And, as he had a

peculiar love for his master Socrates, he made him the speaker in all

his dialogues, putting into his mouth whatever he had learned, either

from others, or from the efforts of his own powerful intellect,

tempering even his moral disputations with the grace and politeness of

the Socratic style. And, as the study of wisdom consists in action and

contemplation, so that one part of it may be called active, and the

other contemplative,--the active part having reference to the conduct

of life, that is, to the regulation of morals, and the contemplative

part to the investigation into the causes of nature and into pure

truth,--Socrates is said to have excelled in the active part of that

study, while Pythagoras gave more attention to its contemplative part,

on which he brought to bear all the force of his great intellect. To

Plato is given the praise of having perfected philosophy by combining

both parts into one. He then divides it into three parts,--the first

moral, which is chiefly occupied with action; the second natural, of

which the object is contemplation; and the third rational, which

discriminates between the true and the false. And though this last is

necessary both to action and contemplation, it is contemplation,

nevertheless, which lays peculiar claim to the office of investigating

the nature of truth. Thus this tripartite division is not contrary to

that which made the study of wisdom to consist in action and

contemplation. Now, as to what Plato thought with respect to each of

these parts,--that is, what he believed to be the end of all actions,

the cause of all natures, and the light of all intelligences,--it would

be a question too long to discuss, and about which we ought not to make

any rash affirmation. For, as Plato liked and constantly affected the

well-known method of his master Socrates, namely, that of dissimulating

his knowledge or his opinions, it is not easy to discover clearly what

he himself thought on various matters, any more than it is to discover

what were the real opinions of Socrates. We must, nevertheless, insert

into our work certain of those opinions which he expresses in his

writings, whether he himself uttered them, or narrates them as

expressed by others, and seems himself to approve of,--opinions

sometimes favorable to the true religion, which our faith takes up and

defends, and sometimes contrary to it, as, for example, in the

questions concerning the existence of one God or of many, as it relates

to the truly blessed life which is to be after death. For those who

are praised as having most closely followed Plato, who is justly

preferred to all the other philosophers of the Gentiles, and who are

said to have manifested the greatest acuteness in understanding him, do

perhaps entertain such an idea of God as to admit that in Him are to be

found the cause of existence, the ultimate reason for the

understanding, and the end in reference to which the whole life is to

be regulated. Of which three things, the first is understood to

pertain to the natural, the second to the rational, and the third to

the moral part of philosophy. For if man has been so created as to

attain, through that which is most excellent in him, to that which

excels all things,--that is, to the one true and absolutely good God,

without whom no nature exists, no doctrine instructs, no exercise

profits,--let Him be sought in whom all things are secure to us, let

Him be discovered in whom all truth becomes certain to us, let Him be

loved in whom all becomes right to us.

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Chapter 5.--That It is Especially with the Platonists that We Must

Carry on Our Disputations on Matters of Theology, Their Opinions Being

Preferable to Those of All Other Philosophers.

If, then, Plato defined the wise man as one who imitates, knows, loves

this God, and who is rendered blessed through fellowship with Him in

His own blessedness, why discuss with the other philosophers? It is

evident that none come nearer to us than the Platonists. To them,

therefore, let that fabulous theology give place which delights the

minds of men with the crimes of the gods; and that civil theology also,

in which impure demons, under the name of gods, have seduced the

peoples of the earth given up to earthly pleasures, desiring to be

honored by the errors of men, and by filling the minds of their

worshippers with impure desires, exciting them to make the

representation of their crimes one of the rites of their worship,

whilst they themselves found in the spectators of these exhibitions a

most pleasing spectacle,--a theology in which, whatever was honorable

in the temple, was defiled by its mixture with the obscenity of the

theatre, and whatever was base in the theatre was vindicated by the

abominations of the temples. To these philosophers also the

interpretations of Varro must give place, in which he explains the

sacred rites as having reference to heaven and earth, and to the seeds

and operations of perishable things; for, in the first place, those

rites have not the signification which he would have men believe is

attached to them, and therefore truth does not follow him in his

attempt so to interpret them; and even if they had this signification,

still those things ought not to be worshipped by the rational soul as

its god which are placed below it in the scale of nature, nor ought the

soul to prefer to itself as gods things to which the true God has given

it the preference. The same must be said of those writings pertaining

to the sacred rites, which Numa Pompilius took care to conceal by

causing them to be buried along with himself, and which, when they were

afterwards turned up by the plough, were burned by order of the

senate. And, to treat Numa with all honor, let us mention as belonging

to the same rank as these writings that which Alexander of Macedon

wrote to his mother as communicated to him by Leo, an Egyptian high

priest. In this letter not only Picus and Faunus, and �neas and

Romulus or even Hercules, and �sculapius and Liber, born of Semele, and

the twin sons of Tyndareus, or any other mortals who have been deified,

but even the principal gods themselves, [299] to whom Cicero, in his

Tusculan questions, [300] alludes without mentioning their names,

Jupiter, Juno, Saturn, Vulcan, Vesta, and many others whom Varro

attempts to identify with the parts or the elements of the world, are

shown to have been men. There is, as we have said, a similarity

between this case and that of Numa; for the priest being afraid because

he had revealed a mystery, earnestly begged of Alexander to command his

mother to burn the letter which conveyed these communications to her.

Let these two theologies, then, the fabulous and the civil, give place

to the Platonic philosophers, who have recognized the true God as the

author of all things, the source of the light of truth, and the

bountiful bestower of all blessedness. And not these only, but to

these great acknowledgers of so great a God, those philosophers must

yield who, having their mind enslaved to their body, supposed the

principles of all things to be material; as Thales, who held that the

first principle of all things was water; Anaximenes, that it was air;

the Stoics, that it was fire; Epicurus, who affirmed that it consisted

of atoms, that is to say, of minute corpuscules; and many others whom

it is needless to enumerate, but who believed that bodies, simple or

compound, animate or inanimate, but nevertheless bodies, were the cause

and principle of all things. For some of them--as, for instance, the

Epicureans--believed that living things could originate from things

without life; others held that all things living or without life spring

from a living principle, but that, nevertheless, all things, being

material, spring from a material principle. For the Stoics thought

that fire, that is, one of the four material elements of which this

visible world is composed, was both living and intelligent, the maker

of the world and of all things contained in it,--that it was in fact

God. These and others like them have only been able to suppose that

which their hearts enslaved to sense have vainly suggested to them.

And yet they have within themselves something which they could not

see: they represented to themselves inwardly things which they had

seen without, even when they were not seeing them, but only thinking of

them. But this representation in thought is no longer a body, but only

the similitude of a body; and that faculty of the mind by which this

similitude of a body is seen is neither a body nor the similitude of a

body; and the faculty which judges whether the representation is

beautiful or ugly is without doubt superior to the object judged of.

This principle is the understanding of man, the rational soul; and it

is certainly not a body, since that similitude of a body which it

beholds and judges of is itself not a body. The soul is neither earth,

nor water, nor air, nor fire, of which four bodies, called the four

elements, we see that this world is composed. And if the soul is not a

body, how should God, its Creator, be a body? Let all those

philosophers, then, give place, as we have said, to the Platonists, and

those also who have been ashamed to say that God is a body, but yet

have thought that our souls are of the same nature as God. They have

not been staggered by the great changeableness of the soul,--an

attribute which it would be impious to ascribe to the divine

nature,--but they say it is the body which changes the soul, for in

itself it is unchangeable. As well might they say, "Flesh is wounded

by some body, for in itself it is invulnerable." In a word, that which

is unchangeable can be changed by nothing, so that that which can be

changed by the body cannot properly be said to be immutable.

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[299] Dii majorum gentium.

[300] Book i. 13.

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Chapter 6.--Concerning the Meaning of the Platonists in that Part of

Philosophy Called Physical.

These philosophers, then, whom we see not undeservedly exalted above

the rest in fame and glory, have seen that no material body is God, and

therefore they have transcended all bodies in seeking for God. They

have seen that whatever is changeable is not the most high God, and

therefore they have transcended every soul and all changeable spirits

in seeking the supreme. They have seen also that, in every changeable

thing, the form which makes it that which it is, whatever be its mode

or nature, can only be through Him who truly is, because He is

unchangeable. And therefore, whether we consider the whole body of the

world, its figure, qualities, and orderly movement, and also all the

bodies which are in it; or whether we consider all life, either that

which nourishes and maintains, as the life of trees, or that which,

besides this, has also sensation, as the life of beasts; or that which

adds to all these intelligence, as the life of man; or that which does

not need the support of nutriment, but only maintains, feels,

understands, as the life of angels,--all can only be through Him who

absolutely is. For to Him it is not one thing to be, and another to

live, as though He could be, not living; nor is it to Him one thing to

live, and another thing to understand, as though He could live, not

understanding; nor is it to Him one thing to understand, another thing

to be blessed, as though He could understand and not be blessed. But

to Him to live, to understand, to be blessed, are to be. They have

understood, from this unchangeableness and this simplicity, that all

things must have been made by Him, and that He could Himself have been

made by none. For they have considered that whatever is is either body

or life, and that life is something better than body, and that the

nature of body is sensible, and that of life intelligible. Therefore

they have preferred the intelligible nature to the sensible. We mean

by sensible things such things as can be perceived by the sight and

touch of the body; by intelligible things, such as can be understood by

the sight of the mind. For there is no corporeal beauty, whether in

the condition of a body, as figure, or in its movement, as in music, of

which it is not the mind that judges. But this could never have been,

had there not existed in the mind itself a superior form of these

things, without bulk, without noise of voice, without space and time.

But even in respect of these things, had the mind not been mutable, it

would not have been possible for one to judge better than another with

regard to sensible forms. He who is clever, judges better than he who

is slow, he who is skilled than he who is unskillful, he who is

practised than he who is unpractised; and the same person judges better

after he has gained experience than he did before. But that which is

capable of more and less is mutable; whence able men, who have thought

deeply on these things, have gathered that the first form is not to be

found in those things whose form is changeable. Since, therefore, they

saw that body and mind might be more or less beautiful in form, and

that, if they wanted form, they could have no existence, they saw that

there is some existence in which is the first form, unchangeable, and

therefore not admitting of degrees of comparison, and in that they most

rightly believed was the first principle of things which was not made,

and by which all things were made. Therefore that which is known of

God He manifested to them when His invisible things were seen by them,

being understood by those things which have been made; also His eternal

power and Godhead by whom all visible and temporal things have been

created. [301] We have said enough upon that part of theology which

they call physical, that is, natural.

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[301] Rom. i. 19, 20.

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Chapter 7.--How Much the Platonists are to Be Held as Excelling Other

Philosophers in Logic, i.e. Rational Philosophy.

Then, again, as far as regards the doctrine which treats of that which

they call logic, that is, rational philosophy, far be it from us to

compare them with those who attributed to the bodily senses the faculty

of discriminating truth, and thought, that all we learn is to be

measured by their untrustworthy and fallacious rules. Such were the

Epicureans, and all of the same school. Such also were the Stoics, who

ascribed to the bodily senses that expertness in disputation which they

so ardently love, called by them dialectic, asserting that from the

senses the mind conceives the notions (ennoiai) of those things which

they explicate by definition. And hence is developed the whole plan

and connection of their learning and teaching. I often wonder, with

respect to this, how they can say that none are beautiful but the wise;

for by what bodily sense have they perceived that beauty, by what eyes

of the flesh have they seen wisdom's comeliness of form? Those,

however, whom we justly rank before all others, have distinguished

those things which are conceived by the mind from those which are

perceived by the senses, neither taking away from the senses anything

to which they are competent, nor attributing to them anything beyond

their competency. And the light of our understandings, by which all

things are learned by us, they have affirmed to be that selfsame God by

whom all things were made.

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Chapter 8.--That the Platonists Hold the First Rank in Moral Philosophy

Also.

The remaining part of philosophy is morals, or what is called by the

Greeks ethike, in which is discussed the question concerning the chief

good,--that which will leave us nothing further to seek in order to be

blessed, if only we make all our actions refer to it, and seek it not

for the sake of something else, but for its own sake. Therefore it is

called the end, because we wish other things on account of it, but

itself only for its own sake. This beatific good, therefore, according

to some, comes to a man from the body, according to others, from the

mind, and, according to others, from both together. For they saw that

man himself consists of soul and body; and therefore they believed that

from either of these two, or from both together, their well-being must

proceed, consisting in a certain final good, which could render them

blessed, and to which they might refer all their actions, not requiring

anything ulterior to which to refer that good itself. This is why

those who have added a third kind of good things, which they call

extrinsic,--as honor, glory, wealth, and the like,--have not regarded

them as part of the final good, that is, to be sought after for their

own sake, but as things which are to be sought for the sake of

something else, affirming that this kind of good is good to the good,

and evil to the evil. Wherefore, whether they have sought the good of

man from the mind or from the body, or from both together, it is still

only from man they have supposed that it must be sought. But they who

have sought it from the body have sought it from the inferior part of

man; they who have sought it from the mind, from the superior part; and

they who have sought it from both, from the whole man. Whether

therefore, they have sought it from any part, or from the whole man,

still they have only sought it from man; nor have these differences,

being three, given rise only to three dissentient sects of

philosophers, but to many. For diverse philosophers have held diverse

opinions, both concerning the good of the body, and the good of the

mind, and the good of both together. Let, therefore, all these give

place to those philosophers who have not affirmed that a man is blessed

by the enjoyment of the body, or by the enjoyment of the mind, but by

the enjoyment of God,--enjoying Him, however, not as the mind does the

body or itself, or as one friend enjoys another, but as the eye enjoys

light, if, indeed, we may draw any comparison between these things.

But what the nature of this comparison is, will, if God help me, be

shown in another place, to the best of my ability. At present, it is

sufficient to mention that Plato determined the final good to be to

live according to virtue, and affirmed that he only can attain to

virtue who knows and imitates God,--which knowledge and imitation are

the only cause of blessedness. Therefore he did not doubt that to

philosophize is to love God, whose nature is incorporeal. Whence it

certainly follows that the student of wisdom, that is, the philosopher,

will then become blessed when he shall have begun to enjoy God. For

though he is not necessarily blessed who enjoys that which he loves

(for many are miserable by loving that which ought not to be loved, and

still more miserable when they enjoy it), nevertheless no one is

blessed who does not enjoy that which he loves. For even they who love

things which ought not to be loved do not count themselves blessed by

loving merely, but by enjoying them. Who, then, but the most miserable

will deny that he is blessed, who enjoys that which he loves, and loves

the true and highest good? But the true and highest good, according to

Plato, is God, and therefore he would call him a philosopher who loves

God; for philosophy is directed to the obtaining of the blessed life,

and he who loves God is blessed in the enjoyment of God.

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Chapter 9.--Concerning that Philosophy Which Has Come Nearest to the

Christian Faith.

Whatever philosophers, therefore, thought concerning the supreme God,

that He is both the maker of all created things, the light by which

things are known, and the good in reference to which things are to be

done; that we have in Him the first principle of nature, the truth of

doctrine, and the happiness of life,--whether these philosophers may be

more suitably called Platonists, or whether they may give some other

name to their sect; whether, we say, that only the chief men of the

Ionic school, such as Plato himself, and they who have well understood

him, have thought thus; or whether we also include the Italic school,

on account of Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans, and all who may have

held like opinions; and, lastly, whether also we include all who have

been held wise men and philosophers among all nations who are

discovered to have seen and taught this, be they Atlantics, Libyans,

Egyptians, Indians, Persians, Chaldeans, Scythians, Gauls, Spaniards,

or of other nations,--we prefer these to all other philosophers, and

confess that they approach nearest to us.

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Chapter 10.--That the Excellency of the Christian Religion is Above All

the Science of Philosophers.

For although a Christian man instructed only in ecclesiastical

literature may perhaps be ignorant of the very name of Platonists, and

may not even know that there have existed two schools of philosophers

speaking the Greek tongue, to wit, the Ionic and Italic, he is

nevertheless not so deaf with respect to human affairs, as not to know

that philosophers profess the study, and even the possession, of

wisdom. He is on his guard, however, with respect to those who

philosophize according to the elements of this world, not according to

God, by whom the world itself was made; for he is warned by the precept

of the apostle, and faithfully hears what has been said, "Beware that

no one deceive you through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the

elements of the world." [302] Then, that he may not suppose that all

philosophers are such as do this, he hears the same apostle say

concerning certain of them, "Because that which is known of God is

manifest among them, for God has manifested it to them. For His

invisible things from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being

understood by the things which are made, also His eternal power and

Godhead." [303] And, when speaking to the Athenians, after having

spoken a mighty thing concerning God, which few are able to understand,

"In Him we live, and move, and have our being," [304] he goes on to

say, "As certain also of your own have said." He knows well, too, to

be on his guard against even these philosophers in their errors. For

where it has been said by him, "that God has manifested to them by

those things which are made His invisible things, that they might be

seen by the understanding," there it has also been said that they did

not rightly worship God Himself, because they paid divine honors, which

are due to Him alone, to other things also to which they ought not to

have paid them,--"because, knowing God, they glorified Him not as God:

neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their

foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they

became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the

likeness of the image of corruptible man, and of birds, and fourfooted

beasts, and creeping things;" [305] --where the apostle would have us

understand him as meaning the Romans, and Greeks, and Egyptians, who

gloried in the name of wisdom; but concerning this we will dispute with

them afterwards. With respect, however, to that wherein they agree

with us we prefer them to all others namely, concerning the one God,

the author of this universe, who is not only above every body, being

incorporeal, but also above all souls, being incorruptible--our

principle, our light, our good. And though the Christian man, being

ignorant of their writings, does not use in disputation words which he

has not learned,--not calling that part of philosophy natural (which is

the Latin term), or physical (which is the Greek one), which treats of

the investigation of nature; or that part rational, or logical, which

deals with the question how truth may be discovered; or that part

moral, or ethical, which concerns morals, and shows how good is to be

sought, and evil to be shunned,--he is not, therefore, ignorant that it

is from the one true and supremely good God that we have that nature in

which we are made in the image of God, and that doctrine by which we

know Him and ourselves, and that grace through which, by cleaving to

Him, we are blessed. This, therefore, is the cause why we prefer these

to all the others, because, whilst other philosophers have worn out

their minds and powers in seeking the causes of things, and endeavoring

to discover the right mode of learning and of living, these, by knowing

God, have found where resides the cause by which the universe has been

constituted, and the light by which truth is to be discovered, and the

fountain at which felicity is to be drunk. All philosophers, then, who

have had these thoughts concerning God, whether Platonists or others,

agree with us. But we have thought it better to plead our cause with

the Platonists, because their writings are better known. For the

Greeks, whose tongue holds the highest place among the languages of the

Gentiles, are loud in their praises of these writings; and the Latins,

taken with their excellence, or their renown, have studied them more

heartily than other writings, and, by translating them into our tongue,

have given them greater celebrity and notoriety.

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[302] Col. ii. 8.

[303] Rom. i. 19, 20.

[304] Acts xvii. 28.

[305] Rom. i. 21-23.

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Chapter 11.--How Plato Has Been Able to Approach So Nearly to Christian

Knowledge.

Certain partakers with us in the grace of Christ, wonder when they hear

and read that Plato had conceptions concerning God, in which they

recognize considerable agreement with the truth of our religion. Some

have concluded from this, that when he went to Egypt he had heard the

prophet Jeremiah, or, whilst travelling in the same country, had read

the prophetic scriptures, which opinion I myself have expressed in

certain of my writings. [306] But a careful calculation of dates,

contained in chronological history, shows that Plato was born about a

hundred years after the time in which Jeremiah prophesied, and, as he

lived eighty-one years, there are found to have been about seventy

years from his death to that time when Ptolemy, king of Egypt,

requested the prophetic scriptures of the Hebrew people to be sent to

him from Judea, and committed them to seventy Hebrews, who also knew

the Greek tongue, to be translated and kept. Therefore, on that voyage

of his, Plato could neither have seen Jeremiah, who was dead so long

before, nor have read those same scriptures which had not yet been

translated into the Greek language, of which he was a master, unless,

indeed, we say that, as he was most earnest in the pursuit of

knowledge, he also studied those writings through an interpreter, as he

did those of the Egyptians,--not, indeed, writing a translation of them

(the facilities for doing which were only gained even by Ptolemy in

return for munificent acts of kindness, [307] though fear of his kingly

authority might have seemed a sufficient motive), but learning as much

as he possibly could concerning their contents by means of

conversation. What warrants this supposition are the opening verses of

Genesis: "In the beginning God made the heaven and earth. And the

earth was invisible, and without order; and darkness was over the

abyss: and the Spirit of God moved over the waters." [308] For in

the Tim�us, when writing on the formation of the world, he says that

God first united earth and fire; from which it is evident that he

assigns to fire a place in heaven. This opinion bears a certain

resemblance to the statement, "In the beginning God made heaven and

earth." Plato next speaks of those two intermediary elements, water

and air, by which the other two extremes, namely, earth and fire, were

mutually united; from which circumstance he is thought to have so

understood the words, "The Spirit of God moved over the waters." For,

not paying sufficient attention to the designations given by those

scriptures to the Spirit of God, he may have thought that the four

elements are spoken of in that place, because the air also is called

spirit. [309] Then, as to Plato's saying that the philosopher is a

lover of God, nothing shines forth more conspicuously in those sacred

writings. But the most striking thing in this connection, and that

which most of all inclines me almost to assent to the opinion that

Plato was not ignorant of those writings, is the answer which was given

to the question elicited from the holy Moses when the words of God were

conveyed to him by the angel; for, when he asked what was the name of

that God who was commanding him to go and deliver the Hebrew people out

of Egypt, this answer was given: "I am who am; and thou shalt say to

the children of Israel, He who is sent me unto you;" [310] as though

compared with Him that truly is, because He is unchangeable, those

things which have been created mutable are not,--a truth which Plato

zealously held, and most diligently commended. And I know not whether

this sentiment is anywhere to be found in the books of those who were

before Plato, unless in that book where it is said, "I am who am; and

thou shalt say to the children of Israel, who is sent me unto you."

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[306] De Doctrina Christiana, ii. 43. Comp. Retract. ii. 4, 2.

[307] Liberating Jewish slaves, and sending gifts to the temple. See

Josephus, Ant. xii. 2.

[308] Gen. i. 1, 2.

[309] Spiritus.

[310] Ex. iii. 14.

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Chapter 12.--That Even the Platonists, Though They Say These Things

Concerning the One True God, Nevertheless Thought that Sacred Rites

Were to Be Performed in Honor of Many Gods.

But we need not determine from what source he learned these

things,--whether it was from the books of the ancients who preceded

him, or, as is more likely, from the words of the apostle: "Because

that which is known of God, has been manifested among them, for God

hath manifested it to them. For His invisible things from the creation

of the world are clearly seen, being understood by those things which

have been made, also His eternal power and Godhead." [311] From

whatever source he may have derived this knowledge, then, I think I

have made it sufficiently plain that I have not chosen the Platonic

philosophers undeservedly as the parties with whom to discuss; because

the question we have just taken up concerns the natural theology,--the

question, namely, whether sacred rites are to be performed to one God,

or to many, for the sake of the happiness which is to be after death.

I have specially chosen them because their juster thoughts concerning

the one God who made heaven and earth, have made them illustrious among

philosophers. This has given them such superiority to all others in

the judgment of posterity, that, though Aristotle, the disciple of

Plato, a man of eminent abilities, inferior in eloquence to Plato, yet

far superior to many in that respect, had founded the Peripatetic

sect,--so called because they were in the habit of walking about during

their disputations,--and though he had, through the greatness of his

fame, gathered very many disciples into his school, even during the

life of his master; and though Plato at his death was succeeded in his

school, which was called the Academy, by Speusippus, his sister's son,

and Xenocrates, his beloved disciple, who, together with their

successors, were called from this name of the school, Academics;

nevertheless the most illustrious recent philosophers, who have chosen

to follow Plato, have been unwilling to be called Peripatetics, or

Academics, but have preferred the name of Platonists. Among these were

the renowned Plotinus, Iamblichus, and Porphyry, who were Greeks, and

the African Apuleius, who was learned both in the Greek and Latin

tongues. All these, however, and the rest who were of the same school,

and also Plato himself, thought that sacred rites ought to be performed

in honor of many gods.

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[311] Rom. i. 20.

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Chapter 13.--Concerning the Opinion of Plato, According to Which He

Defined the Gods as Beings Entirely Good and the Friends of Virtue.

Therefore, although in many other important respects they differ from

us, nevertheless with respect to this particular point of difference,

which I have just stated, as it is one of great moment, and the

question on hand concerns it, I will first ask them to what gods they

think that sacred rites are to be performed,--to the good or to the

bad, or to both the good and the bad? But we have the opinion of Plato

affirming that all the gods are good, and that there is not one of the

gods bad. It follows, therefore, that these are to be performed to the

good, for then they are performed to gods; for if they are not good,

neither are they gods. Now, if this be the case (for what else ought

we to believe concerning the gods?), certainly it explodes the opinion

that the bad gods are to be propitiated by sacred rites in order that

they may not harm us, but the good gods are to be invoked in order that

they may assist us. For there are no bad gods, and it is to the good

that, as they say, the due honor of such rites is to be paid. Of what

character, then, are those gods who love scenic displays, even

demanding that a place be given them among divine things, and that they

be exhibited in their honor? The power of these gods proves that they

exist, but their liking such things proves that they are bad. For it

is well-known what Plato's opinion was concerning scenic plays. He

thinks that the poets themselves, because they have composed songs so

unworthy of the majesty and goodness of the gods, ought to be banished

from the state. Of what character, therefore, are those gods who

contend with Plato himself about those scenic plays? He does not

suffer the gods to be defamed by false crimes; the gods command those

same crimes to be celebrated in their own honor.

In fine, when they ordered these plays to be inaugurated, they not only

demanded base things, but also did cruel things, taking from Titus

Latinius his son, and sending a disease upon him because he had refused

to obey them, which they removed when he had fulfilled their commands.

Plato, however, bad though they were, did not think they were to be

feared; but, holding to his opinion with the utmost firmness and

constancy, does not hesitate to remove from a well-ordered state all

the sacrilegious follies of the poets, with which these gods are

delighted because they themselves are impure. But Labeo places this

same Plato (as I have mentioned already in the second book [312] )

among the demi-gods. Now Labeo thinks that the bad deities are to be

propitiated with bloody victims, and by fasts accompanied with the

same, but the good deities with plays, and all other things which are

associated with joyfulness. How comes it, then, that the demi-god

Plato so persistently dares to take away those pleasures, because he

deems them base, not from the demi-gods but from the gods, and these

the good gods? And, moreover, those very gods themselves do certainly

refute the opinion of Labeo, for they showed themselves in the case of

Latinius to be not only wanton and sportive, but also cruel and

terrible. Let the Platonists, therefore, explain these things to us,

since, following the opinion of their master, they think that all the

gods are good and honorable, and friendly to the virtues of the wise,

holding it unlawful to think otherwise concerning any of the gods. We

will explain it, say they. Let us then attentively listen to them.

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[312] Ch. 14.

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Chapter 14.--Of the Opinion of Those Who Have Said that Rational Souls

are of Three Kinds, to Wit, Those of the Celestial Gods, Those of the

Aerial Demons, and Those of Terrestrial Men.

There is, say they, a threefold division of all animals endowed with a

rational soul, namely, into gods, men, and demons. The gods occupy the

loftiest region, men the lowest, the demons the middle region. For the

abode of the gods is heaven, that of men the earth, that of the demons

the air. As the dignity of their regions is diverse, so also is that

of their natures; therefore the gods are better than men and demons.

Men have been placed below the gods and demons, both in respect of the

order of the regions they inhabit, and the difference of their merits.

The demons, therefore, who hold the middle place, as they are inferior

to the gods, than whom they inhabit a lower region, so they are

superior to men, than whom they inhabit a loftier one. For they have

immortality of body in common with the gods, but passions of the mind

in common with men. On which account, say they, it is not wonderful

that they are delighted with the obscenities of the theatre, and the

fictions of the poets, since they are also subject to human passions,

from which the gods are far removed, and to which they are altogether

strangers. Whence we conclude that it was not the gods, who are all

good and highly exalted, that Plato deprived of the pleasure of

theatric plays, by reprobating and prohibiting the fictions of the

poets, but the demons.

Of these things many have written: among others Apuleius, the

Platonist of Madaura, who composed a whole work on the subject,

entitled, Concerning the God of Socrates. He there discusses and

explains of what kind that deity was who attended on Socrates, a sort

of familiar, by whom it is said he was admon ished to desist from any

action which would not turn out to his advantage. He asserts most

distinctly, and proves at great length, that it was not a god but a

demon; and he discusses with great diligence the opinion of Plato

concerning the lofty estate of the gods, the lowly estate of men, and

the middle estate of demons. These things being so, how did Plato dare

to take away, if not from the gods, whom he removed from all human

contagion, certainly from the demons, all the pleasures of the theatre,

by expelling the poets from the state? Evidently in this way he wished

to admonish the human soul, although still confined in these moribund

members, to despise the shameful commands of the demons, and to detest

their impurity, and to choose rather the splendor of virtue. But if

Plato showed himself virtuous in answering and prohibiting these

things, then certainly it was shameful of the demons to command them.

Therefore either Apuleius is wrong, and Socrates' familiar did not

belong to this class of deities, or Plato held contradictory opinions,

now honoring the demons, now removing from the well-regulated state the

things in which they delighted, or Socrates is not to be congratulated

on the friendship of the demon, of which Apuleius was so ashamed that

he entitled his book On the God of Socrates, whilst according to the

tenor of his discussion, wherein he so diligently and at such length

distinguishes gods from demons, he ought not to have entitled it,

Concerning the God, but Concerning the Demon of Socrates. But he

preferred to put this into the discussion itself rather than into the

title of his book. For, through the sound doctrine which has

illuminated human society, all, or almost all men have such a horror at

the name of demons, that every one who before reading the dissertation

of Apuleius, which sets forth the dignity of demons, should have read

the title of the book, On the Demon of Socrates, would certainly have

thought that the author was not a sane man. But what did even Apuleius

find to praise in the demons, except subtlety and strength of body and

a higher place of habitation? For when he spoke generally concerning

their manners, he said nothing that was good, but very much that was

bad. Finally, no one, when he has read that book, wonders that they

desired to have even the obscenity of the stage among divine things, or

that, wishing to be thought gods, they should be delighted with the

crimes of the gods, or that all those sacred solemnities, whose

obscenity occasions laughter, and whose shameful cruelty causes horror,

should be in agreement with their passions.

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Chapter 15.--That the Demons are Not Better Than Men Because of Their

Aerial Bodies, or on Account of Their Superior Place of Abode.

Wherefore let not the mind truly religious, and submitted to the true

God, suppose that demons are better than men, because they have better

bodies. Otherwise it must put many beasts before itself which are

superior to us both in acuteness of the senses, in ease and quickness

of movement, in strength and in long-continued vigor of body. What man

can equal the eagle or the vulture in strength of vision? Who can

equal the dog in acuteness of smell? Who can equal the hare, the stag,

and all the birds in swiftness? Who can equal in strength the lion or

the elephant? Who can equal in length of life the serpents, which are

affirmed to put off old age along with their skin, and to return to

youth again? But as we are better than all these by the possession of

reason and understanding, so we ought also to be better than the demons

by living good and virtuous lives. For divine providence gave to them

bodies of a better quality than ours, that that in which we excel them

might in this way be commended to us as deserving to be far more cared

for than the body, and that we should learn to despise the bodily

excellence of the demons compared with goodness of life, in respect of

which we are better than they, knowing that we too shall have

immortality of body,--not an immortality tortured by eternal

punishment, but that which is consequent on purity of soul.

But now, as regards loftiness of place, it is altogether ridiculous to

be so influenced by the fact that the demons inhabit the air, and we

the earth, as to think that on that account they are to be put before

us; for in this way we put all the birds before ourselves. But the

birds, when they are weary with flying, or require to repair their

bodies with food, come back to the earth to rest or to feed, which the

demons, they say, do not. Are they, therefore, inclined to say that

the birds are superior to us, and the demons superior to the birds?

But if it be madness to think so, there is no reason why we should

think that, on account of their inhabiting a loftier element, the

demons have a claim to our religious submission. But as it is really

the case that the birds of the air are not only not put before us who

dwell on the earth; but are even subjected to us on account of the

dignity of the rational soul which is in us, so also it is the case

that the demons, though they are aerial, are not better than we who are

terrestrial because the air is higher than the earth, but, on the

contrary, men are to be put before demons because their despair is not

to be compared to the hope of pious men. Even that law of Plato's,

according to which he mutually orders and arranges the four elements,

inserting between the two extreme elements--namely, fire, which is in

the highest degree mobile, and the immoveable earth--the two middle

ones, air and water, that by how much the air is higher up than the

water, and the fire than the air, by so much also are the waters higher

than the earth,--this law, I say, sufficiently admonishes us not to

estimate the merits of animated creatures according to the grades of

the elements. And Apuleius himself says that man is a terrestrial

animal in common with the rest, who is nevertheless to be put far

before aquatic animals, though Plato puts the waters themselves before

the land. By this he would have us understand that the same order is

not to be observed when the question concerns the merits of animals,

though it seems to be the true one in the gradation of bodies; for it

appears to be possible that a soul of a higher order may inhabit a body

of a lower, and a soul of a lower order a body of a higher.

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Chapter 16.--What Apuleius the Platonist Thought Concerning the Manners

and Actions of Demons.

The same Apuleius, when speaking concerning the manners of demons, said

that they are agitated with the same perturbations of mind as men; that

they are provoked by injuries, propitiated by services and by gifts,

rejoice in honors, are delighted with a variety of sacred rites, and

are annoyed if any of them be neglected. Among other things, he also

says that on them depend the divinations of augurs, soothsayers, and

prophets, and the revelations of dreams, and that from them also are

the miracles of the magicians. But, when giving a brief definition of

them, he says, "Demons are of an animal nature, passive in soul,

rational in mind, aerial in body, eternal in time." "Of which five

things, the three first are common to them and us, the fourth peculiar

to themselves, and the fifth common to therewith the gods." [313] But

I see that they have in common with the gods two of the first things,

which they have in common with us. For he says that the gods also are

animals; and when he is assigning to every order of beings its own

element, he places us among the other terrestrial animals which live

and feel upon the earth. Wherefore, if the demons are animals as to

genus, this is common to them, not only with men, but also with the

gods and with beasts; if they are rational as to their mind, this is

common to them with the gods and with men; if they are eternal in time,

this is common to them with the gods only; if they are passive as to

their soul, this is common to them with men only; if they are aerial in

body, in this they are alone. Therefore it is no great thing for them

to be of an animal nature, for so also are the beasts; in being

rational as to mind, they are not above ourselves, for so are we also;

and as to their being eternal as to time, what is the advantage of that

if they are not blessed? for better is temporal happiness than eternal

misery. Again, as to their being passive in soul, how are they in this

respect above us, since we also are so, but would not have been so had

we not been miserable? Also, as to their being aerial in body, how

much value is to be set on that, since a soul of any kind whatsoever is

to be set above every body? and therefore religious worship, which

ought to be rendered from the soul, is by no means due to that thing

which is inferior to the soul. Moreover, if he had, among those things

which he says belong to demons, enumerated virtue, wisdom, happiness,

and affirmed that they have those things in common with the gods, and,

like them, eternally, he would assuredly have attributed to them

something greatly to be desired, and much to be prized. And even in

that case it would not have been our duty to worship them like God on

account of these things, but rather to worship Him from whom we know

they had received them. But how much less are they really worthy of

divine honor,--those aerial animals who are only rational that they may

be capable of misery, passive that they may be actually miserable, and

eternal that it may be impossible for them to end their misery!

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[313] De Deo Socratis.

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Chapter 17.--Whether It is Proper that Men Should Worship Those Spirits

from Whose Vices It is Necessary that They Be Freed.

Wherefore, to omit other things, and confine our attention to that

which he says is common to the demons with us, let us ask this

question: If all the four elements are full of their own animals, the

fire and the air of immortal, and the water and the earth of mortal

ones, why are the souls of demons agitated by the whirlwinds and

tempests of passions?--for the Greek word pathos means perturbation,

whence he chose to call the demons "passive in soul," because the word

passion, which is derived from pathos, signified a commotion of the

mind contrary to reason. Why, then, are these things in the minds of

demons which are not in beasts? For if anything of this kind appears

in beasts, it is not perturbation, because it is not contrary to

reason, of which they are devoid. Now it is foolishness or misery

which is the cause of these perturbations in the case of men, for we

are not yet blessed in the possession of that perfection of wisdom

which is promised to us at last, when we shall be set free from our

present mortality. But the gods, they say, are free from these

perturbations, because they are not only eternal, but also blessed; for

they also have the same kind of rational souls, but most pure from all

spot and plague. Wherefore, if the gods are free from perturbation

because they are blessed, not miserable animals, and the beasts are

free from them because they are animals which are capable neither of

blessedness nor misery, it remains that the demons, like men, are

subject to perturbations because they are not blessed but miserable

animals. What folly, therefore, or rather what madness, to submit

ourselves through any sentiment of religion to demons, when it belongs

to the true religion to deliver us from that depravity which makes us

like to them! For Apuleius himself, although he is very sparing toward

them, and thinks they are worthy of divine honors, is nevertheless

compelled to confess that they are subject to anger; and the true

religion commands us not to be moved with anger, but rather to resist

it. The demons are won over by gifts; and the true religion commands

us to favor no one on account of gifts received. The demons are

flattered by honors; but the true religion commands us by no means to

be moved by such things. The demons are haters of some men and lovers

of others, not in consequence of a prudent and calm judgment, but

because of what he calls their "passive soul;" whereas the true

religion commands us to love even our enemies. Lastly, the true

religion commands us to put away all disquietude of heart and agitation

of mind, and also all commotions and tempests of the soul, which

Apuleius asserts to be continually swelling and surging in the souls of

demons. Why, therefore, except through foolishness and miserable error

shouldst thou humble thyself to worship a being to whom thou desirest

to be unlike in thy life? And why shouldst thou pay religious homage

to him whom thou art unwilling to imitate, when it is the highest duty

of religion to imitate Him whom thou worshippest?

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Chapter 18.--What Kind of Religion that is Which Teaches that Men Ought

to Employ the Advocacy of Demons in Order to Be Recommended to the

Favor of the Good Gods.

In vain, therefore, have Apuleius, and they who think with him,

conferred on the demons the honor of placing them in the air, between

the ethereal heavens and the earth, that they may carry to the gods the

prayers of men, to men the answers of the gods: for Plato held, they

say, that no god has intercourse with man. They who believe these

things have thought it unbecoming that men should have intercourse with

the gods, and the gods with men, but a befitting thing that the demons

should have intercourse with both gods and men, presenting to the gods

the petitions of men, and conveying to men what the gods have granted;

so that a chaste man, and one who is a stranger to the crimes of the

magic arts, must use as patrons, through whom the gods may be induced

to hear him, demons who love these crimes, although the very fact of

his not loving them ought to have recommended him to them as one who

deserved to be listened to with greater readiness and willingness on

their part. They love the abominations of the stage, which chastity

does not love. They love, in the sorceries of the magicians, "a

thousand arts of inflicting harm," [314] which innocence does not

love. Yet both chastity and innocence, if they wish to obtain anything

from the gods, will not be able to do so by their own merits, except

their enemies act as mediators on their behalf. Apuleius need not

attempt to justify the fictions of the poets, and the mockeries of the

stage. If human modesty can act so faithlessly towards itself as not

only to love shameful things, but even to think that they are pleasing

to the divinity, we can cite on the other side their own highest

authority and teacher, Plato.

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[314] Virgil, �n. 7, 338.

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Chapter 19.--Of the Impiety of the Magic Art, Which is Dependent on the

Assistance of Malign Spirits.

Moreover, against those magic arts, concerning which some men,

exceedingly wretched and exceedingly impious, delight to boast, may not

public opinion itself be brought forward as a witness? For why are

those arts so severely punished by the laws, if they are the works of

deities who ought to be worshipped? Shall it be said that the

Christians have or dained those laws by which magic arts are punished?

With what other meaning, except that these sorceries are without doubt

pernicious to the human race, did the most illustrious poet say,

"By heaven, I swear, and your dear life,

Unwillingly these arms I wield,

And take, to meet the coming strife,

Enchantment's sword and shield." [315]

And that also which he says in another place concerning magic arts,

"I've seen him to another place transport the standing corn," [316]

has reference to the fact that the fruits of one field are said to be

transferred to another by these arts which this pestiferous and

accursed doctrine teaches. Does not Cicero inform us that, among the

laws of the Twelve Tables, that is, the most ancient laws of the

Romans, there was a law written which appointed a punishment to be

inflicted on him who should do this? [317] Lastly, was it before

Christian judges that Apuleius himself was accused of magic arts? [318]

Had he known these arts to be divine and pious, and congruous with

the works of divine power, he ought not only to have confessed, but

also to have professed them, rather blaming the laws by which these

things were prohibited and pronounced worthy of condemnation, while

they ought to have been held worthy of admiration and respect. For by

so doing, either he would have persuaded the judges to adopt his own

opinion, or, if they had shown their partiality for unjust laws, and

condemned him to death notwithstanding his praising and commending such

things, the demons would have bestowed on his soul such rewards as he

deserved, who, in order to proclaim and set forth their divine works,

had not feared the loss of his human life. As our martyrs, when that

religion was charged on them as a crime, by which they knew they were

made safe and most glorious throughout eternity, did not choose, by

denying it, to escape temporal punishments, but rather by confessing,

professing, and proclaiming it, by enduring all things for it with

fidelity and fortitude, and by dying for it with pious calmness, put to

shame the law by which that religion was prohibited, and caused its

revocation. But there is extant a most copious and eloquent oration of

this Platonic philosopher, in which he defends himself against the

charge of practising these arts, affirming that he is wholly a stranger

to them, and only wishing to show his innocence by denying such things

as cannot be innocently committed. But all the miracles of the

magicians, who he thinks are justly deserving of condemnation, are

performed according to the teaching and by the power of demons. Why,

then, does he think that they ought to be honored? For he asserts that

they are necessary, in order to present our prayers to the gods, and

yet their works are such as we must shun if we wish our prayers to

reach the true God. Again, I ask, what kind of prayers of men does he

suppose are presented to the good gods by the demons? If magical

prayers, they will have none such; if lawful prayers, they will not

receive them through such beings. But if a sinner who is penitent pour

out prayers, especially if he has committed any crime of sorcery, does

he receive pardon through the intercession of those demons by whose

instigation and help he has fallen into the sin he mourns? or do the

demons themselves, in order that they may merit pardon for the

penitent, first become penitents because they have deceived them? This

no one ever said concerning the demons; for had this been the case,

they would never have dared to seek for themselves divine honors. For

how should they do so who desired by penitence to obtain the grace of

pardon; seeing that such detestable pride could not exist along with a

humility worthy of pardon?

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[315] Virgil, �n. 4. 492, 493.

[316] Virgil, Ec. 8. 99.

[317] Pliny (Hist. Nat. xxviii. 2) and others quote the law as

running: Qui fruges incantasit, qui malum carmen incantasit...neu

alienam segetem pelexeris.

[318] Before Claudius, the prefect of Africa, a heathen.

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Chapter 20.--Whether We are to Believe that the Good Gods are More

Willing to Have Intercourse with Demons Than with Men.

But does any urgent and most pressing cause compel the demons to

mediate between the gods and men, that they may offer the prayers of

men, and bring back the answers from the gods? and if so, what, pray,

is that cause, what is that so great necessity? Because, say they, no

god has intercourse with man. Most admirable holiness of God, which

has no intercourse with a supplicating man, and yet has intercourse

with an arrogant demon! which has no intercourse with a penitent man,

and yet has intercourse with a deceiving demon! which has no

intercourse with a man fleeing for refuge to the divine nature, and yet

has intercourse with a demon feigning divinity! which has no

intercourse with a man seeking pardon, and yet has intercourse with a

demon persuading to wickedness! which has no intercourse with a man

expelling the poets by means of philosophical writings from a

well-regulated state, and yet has intercourse with a demon requesting

from the princes and priests of a state the theatri cal performance of

the mockeries of the poets! which has no intercourse with the man who

prohibits the ascribing of crime to the gods, and yet has intercourse

with a demon who takes delight in the fictitious representation of

their crimes! which has no intercourse with a man punishing the crimes

of the magicians by just laws, and yet has intercourse with a demon

teaching and practising magical arts! which has no intercourse with a

man shunning the imitation of a demon, and yet has intercourse with a

demon lying in wait for the deception of a man!

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Chapter 21.--Whether the Gods Use the Demons as Messengers and

Interpreters, and Whether They are Deceived by Them Willingly, or

Without Their Own Knowledge.

But herein, no doubt, lies the great necessity for this absurdity, so

unworthy of the gods, that the ethereal gods, who are concerned about

human affairs, would not know what terrestrial men were doing unless

the aerial demons should bring them intelligence, because the ether is

suspended far away from the earth and far above it, but the air is

contiguous both to the ether and to the earth. O admirable wisdom!

what else do these men think concerning the gods who, they say, are all

in the highest degree good, but that they are concerned about human

affairs, lest they should seem unworthy of worship, whilst, on the

other hand, from the distance between the elements, they are ignorant

of terrestrial things? It is on this account that they have supposed

the demons to be necessary as agents, through whom the gods may inform

themselves with respect to human affairs, and through whom, when

necessary, they may succor men; and it is on account of this office

that the demons themselves have been held as deserving of worship. If

this be the case, then a demon is better known by these good gods

through nearness of body, than a man is by goodness of mind. O

mournful necessity, or shall I not rather say detestable and vain

error, that I may not impute vanity to the divine nature! For if the

gods can, with their minds free from the hindrance of bodies, see our

mind, they do not need the demons as messengers from our mind to them;

but if the ethereal gods, by means of their bodies, perceive the

corporeal indices of minds, as the countenance, speech, motion, and

thence understand what the demons tell them, then it is also possible

that they may be deceived by the falsehoods of demons. Moreover, if

the divinity of the gods cannot be deceived by the demons, neither can

it be ignorant of our actions. But I would they would tell me whether

the demons have informed the gods that the fictions of the poets

concerning the crimes of the gods displease Plato, concealing the

pleasure which they themselves take in them; or whether they have

concealed both, and have preferred that the gods should be ignorant

with respect to this whole matter, or have told both, as well the pious

prudence of Plato with respect to the gods as their own lust, which is

injurious to the gods; or whether they have concealed Plato's opinion,

according to which he was unwilling that the gods should be defamed

with falsely alleged crimes through the impious license of the poets,

whilst they have not been ashamed nor afraid to make known their own

wickedness, which make them love theatrical plays, in which the

infamous deeds of the gods are celebrated. Let them choose which they

will of these four alternatives, and let them consider how much evil

any one of them would require them to think of the gods. For if they

choose the first, they must then confess that it was not possible for

the good gods to dwell with the good Plato, though he sought to

prohibit things injurious to them, whilst they dwelt with evil demons,

who exulted in their injuries; and this because they suppose that the

good gods can only know a good man, placed at so great a distance from

them, through the mediation of evil demons, whom they could know on

account of their nearness to themselves. [319] If they shall choose

the second, and shall say that both these things are concealed by the

demons, so that the gods are wholly ignorant both of Plato's most

religious law and the sacrilegious pleasure of the demons, what, in

that case, can the gods know to any profit with respect to human

affairs through these mediating demons, when they do not know those

things which are decreed, through the piety of good men, for the honor

of the good gods against the lust of evil demons? But if they shall

choose the third, and reply that these intermediary demons have

communicated, not only the opinion of Plato, which prohibited wrongs to

be done to the gods, but also their own delight in these wrongs, I

would ask if such a communication is not rather an insult? Now the

gods, hearing both and knowing both, not only permit the approach of

those malign demons, who desire and do things contrary to the dignity

of the gods and the religion of Plato, but also, through these wicked

demons, who are near to them, send good things to the good Plato, who

is far away from them; for they inhabit such a place in the

concatenated series of the elements, that they can come into contact

with those by whom they are accused, but not with him by whom they are

defended,--knowing the truth on both sides, but not being able to

change the weight of the air and the earth. There remains the fourth

supposition; but it is worse than the rest. For who will suffer it to

be said that the demons have made known the calumnious fictions of the

poets concerning the immortal gods, and also the disgraceful mockeries

of the theatres, and their own most ardent lust after, and most sweet

pleasure in these things, whilst they have concealed from them that

Plato, with the gravity of a philosopher, gave it as his opinion that

all these things ought to be removed from a well-regulated republic; so

that the good gods are now compelled, through such messengers, to know

the evil doings of the most wicked beings, that is to say, of the

messengers themselves, and are not allowed to know the good deeds of

the philosophers, though the former are for the injury, but these

latter for the honor of the gods themselves?

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[319] Another reading, whom they could not know, though near to

themselves.

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Chapter 22.--That We Must, Notwithstanding the Opinion of Apuleius,

Reject the Worship of Demons.

None of these four alternatives, then, is to be chosen; for we dare not

suppose such unbecoming things concerning the gods as the adoption of

any one of them would lead us to think. It remains, therefore, that no

credence whatever is to be given to the opinion of Apuleius and the

other philosophers of the same school, namely, that the demons act as

messengers and interpreters between the gods and men to carry our

petitions from us to the gods, and to bring back to us the help of the

gods. On the contrary, we must believe them to be spirits most eager

to inflict harm, utterly alien from righteousness, swollen with pride,

pale with envy, subtle in deceit; who dwell indeed in this air as in a

prison, in keeping with their own character, because, cast down from

the height of the higher heaven, they have been condemned to dwell in

this element as the just reward of irretrievable transgression. But,

though the air is situated above the earth and the waters, they are not

on that account superior in merit to men, who, though they do not

surpass them as far as their earthly bodies are concerned, do

nevertheless far excel them through piety of mind,--they having made

choice of the true God as their helper. Over many, however, who are

manifestly unworthy of participation in the true religion, they

tyrannize as over captives whom they have subdued,--the greatest part

of whom they have persuaded of their divinity by wonderful and lying

signs, consisting either of deeds or of predictions. Some,

nevertheless, who have more attentively and diligently considered their

vices, they have not been able to persuade that they are gods, and so

have feigned themselves to be messengers between the gods and men.

Some, indeed, have thought that not even this latter honor ought to be

acknowledged as belonging to them, not believing that they were gods,

because they saw that they were wicked, whereas the gods, according to

their view, are all good. Nevertheless they dared not say that they

were wholly unworthy of all divine honor, for fear of offending the

multitude, by whom, through inveterate superstition, the demons were

served by the performance of many rites, and the erection of many

temples.

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Chapter 23.--What Hermes Trismegistus Thought Concerning Idolatry, and

from What Source He Knew that the Superstitions of Egypt Were to Be

Abolished.

The Egyptian Hermes, whom they call Trismegistus, had a different

opinion concerning those demons. Apuleius, indeed, denies that they

are gods; but when he says that they hold a middle place between the

gods and men, so that they seem to be necessary for men as mediators

between them and the gods, he does not distinguish between the worship

due to them and the religious homage due to the supernal gods. This

Egyptian, however, says that there are some gods made by the supreme

God, and some made by men. Any one who hears this, as I have stated

it, no doubt supposes that it has reference to images, because they are

the works of the hands of men; but he asserts that visible and tangible

images are, as it were, only the bodies of the gods, and that there

dwell in them certain spirits, which have been invited to come into

them, and which have power to inflict harm, or to fulfil the desires of

those by whom divine honors and services are rendered to them. To

unite, therefore, by a certain art, those invisible spirits to visible

and material things, so as to make, as it were, animated bodies,

dedicated and given up to those spirits who inhabit them,--this, he

says, is to make gods, adding that men have received this great and

wonderful power. I will give the words of this Egyptian as they have

been translated into our tongue: "And, since we have undertaken to

discourse concerning the relationship and fellowship between men and

the gods, know, O �sculapius, the power and strength of man. As the

Lord and Father, or that which is highest, even God, is the maker of

the celestial gods, so man is the maker of the gods who are in the

temples, content to dwell near to men." [320] And a little after he

says, "Thus humanity, always mindful of its nature and origin,

perseveres in the imitation of divinity; and as the Lord and Father

made eternal gods, that they should be like Himself, so humanity

fashioned its own gods according to the likeness of its own

countenance." When this �sculapius, to whom especially he was

speaking, had answered him, and had said, "Dost thou mean the statues,

O Trismegistus?"--"Yes, the statues," replied he, "however unbelieving

thou art, O �sculapius,--the statues, animated and full of sensation

and spirit, and who do such great and wonderful things,--the statues

prescient of future things, and foretelling them by lot, by prophet, by

dreams, and many other things, who bring diseases on men and cure them

again, giving them joy or sorrow according to their merits. Dost thou

not know, O �sculapius, that Egypt is an image of heaven, or, more

truly, a translation and descent of all things which are ordered and

transacted there, that it is, in truth, if we may say so, to be the

temple of the whole world? And yet, as it becomes the prudent man to

know all things beforehand, ye ought not to be ignorant of this, that

there is a time coming when it shall appear that the Egyptians have all

in vain, with pious mind, and with most scrupulous diligence, waited on

the divinity, and when all their holy worship shall come to nought, and

be found to be in vain."

Hermes then follows out at great length the statements of this passage,

in which he seems to predict the present time, in which the Christian

religion is overthrowing all lying figments with a vehemence and

liberty proportioned to its superior truth and holiness, in order that

the grace of the true Saviour may deliver men from those gods which man

has made, and subject them to that God by whom man was made. But when

Hermes predicts these things, he speaks as one who is a friend to these

same mockeries of demons, and does not clearly express the name of

Christ. On the contrary, he deplores, as if it had already taken

place, the future abolition of those things by the observance of which

there was maintained in Egypt a resemblance of heaven,--he bears

witness to Christianity by a kind of mournful prophecy. Now it was

with reference to such that the apostle said, that "knowing God, they

glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in

their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing

themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the

incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of corruptible man,"

[321] and so on, for the whole passage is too long to quote. For

Hermes makes many such statements agreeable to the truth concerning the

one true God who fashioned this world. And I know not how he has

become so bewildered by that "darkening of the heart" as to stumble

into the expression of a desire that men should always continue in

subjection to those gods which he confesses to be made by men, and to

bewail their future removal; as if there could be anything more

wretched than mankind tyrannized over by the work of his own hands,

since man, by worshipping the works of his own hands, may more easily

cease to be man, than the works of his hands can, through his worship

of them, become gods. For it can sooner happen that man, who has

received an honorable position, may, through lack of understanding,

become comparable to the beasts, than that the works of man may become

preferable to the work of God, made in His own image, that is, to man

himself. Wherefore deservedly is man left to fall away from Him who

made Him, when he prefers to himself that which he himself has made.

For these vain, deceitful, pernicious, sacrilegious things did the

Egyptian Hermes sorrow, because he knew that the time was coming when

they should be removed. But his sorrow was as impudently expressed as

his knowledge was imprudently obtained; for it was not the Holy Spirit

who revealed these things to him, as He had done to the holy prophets,

who, foreseeing these things, said with exultation, "If a man shall

make gods, lo, they are no gods;" [322] and in another place, "And it

shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that I will cut off the

names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be

remembered." [323] But the holy Isaiah prophesies expressly

concerning Egypt in reference to this matter, saying, "And the idols of

Egypt shall be moved at His presence, and their heart shall be overcome

in them," [324] and other things to the same effect. And with the

prophet are to be classed those who rejoiced that that which they knew

was to come had actually come,--as Simeon, or Anna, who immediately

recognized Jesus when He was born, or Elisabeth, who in the Spirit

recognized Him when He was conceived, or Peter, who said by the

revelation of the Father, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."

[325] But to this Egyptian those spirits indicated the time of their

own destruction, who also, when the Lord was present in the flesh, said

with trembling, "Art Thou come hither to destroy us before the time?"

[326] meaning by destruction before the time, either that very

destruction which they expected to come, but which they did not think

would come so suddenly as it appeared to have done, or only that

destruction which consisted in their being brought into contempt by

being made known. And, indeed, this was a destruction before the time,

that is, before the time of judgment, when they are to be punished with

eternal damnation, together with all men who are implicated in their

wickedness, as the true religion declares, which neither errs nor leads

into error; for it is not like him who, blown hither and thither by

every wind of doctrine, and mixing true things with things which are

false, bewails as about to perish a religion, which he afterwards

confesses to be error.

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[320] These quotations are from a dialogue between Hermes and

�sculapius, which is said to have been translated into Latin by

Apuleius.

[321] Rom. i. 21.

[322] Jer. xvi. 10.

[323] Zech. xiii. 2.

[324] Isa. xix. 1.

[325] Matt. xvi. 16.

[326] Matt. viii. 29.

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Chapter 24.--How Hermes Openly Confessed the Error of His Forefathers,

the Coming Destruction of Which He Nevertheless Bewailed.

After a long interval, Hermes again comes back to the subject of the

gods which men have made, saying as follows: "But enough on this

subject. Let us return to man and to reason, that divine gift on

account of which man has been called a rational animal. For the things

which have been said concerning man, wonderful though they are, are

less wonderful than those which have been said concerning reason. For

man to discover the divine nature, and to make it, surpasses the wonder

of all other wonderful things. Because, therefore, our forefathers

erred very far with respect to the knowledge of the gods, through

incredulity and through want of attention to their worship and service,

they invented this art of making gods; and this art once invented, they

associated with it a suitable virtue borrowed from universal nature,

and being incapable of making souls, they evoked those of demons or of

angels, and united them with these holy images and divine mysteries, in

order that through these souls the images might have power to do good

or harm to men." I know not whether the demons themselves could have

been made, even by adjuration, to confess as he has confessed in these

words: "Because our forefathers erred very far with respect to the

knowledge of the gods, through incredulity and through want of

attention to their worship and service, they invented the art of making

gods." Does he say that it was a moderate degree of error which

resulted in their discovery of the art of making gods, or was he

content to say "they erred?" No; he must needs add "very far," and

say, "They erred very far." It was this great error and incredulity,

then, of their forefathers who did not attend to the worship and

service of the gods, which was the origin of the art of making gods.

And yet this wise man grieves over the ruin of this art at some future

time, as if it were a divine religion. Is he not verily compelled by

divine influence, on the one hand, to reveal the past error of his

forefathers, and by a diabolical influence, on the other hand, to

bewail the future punishment of demons? For if their forefathers, by

erring very far with respect to the knowledge of the gods, through

incredulity and aversion of mind from their worship and service,

invented the art of making gods, what wonder is it that all that is

done by this detestable art, which is opposed to the divine religion,

should be taken away by that religion, when truth corrects error, faith

refutes incredulity, and conversion rectifies aversion?

For if he had only said, without mentioning the cause, that his

forefathers had discovered the art of making gods, it would have been

our duty, if we paid any regard to what is right and pious, to consider

and to see that they could never have attained to this art if they had

not erred from the truth, if they had believed those things which are

worthy of God, if they had attended to divine worship and service.

However, if we alone should say that the causes of this art were to be

found in the great error and incredulity of men, and aversion of the

mind erring from and unfaithful to divine religion, the impudence of

those who resist the truth were in some way to be borne with; but when

he who admires in man, above all other things, this power which it has

been granted him to practise, and sorrows because a time is coming when

all those figments of gods invented by men shall even be commanded by

the laws to be taken away,--when even this man confesses nevertheless,

and explains the causes which led to the discovery of this art, saying

that their ancestors, through great error and incredulity, and through

not attending to the worship and service of the gods, invented this art

of making gods,--what ought we to say, or rather to do, but to give to

the Lord our God all the thanks we are able, because He has taken away

those things by causes the contrary of those which led to their

institution? For that which the prevalence of error instituted, the

way of truth took away; that which incredulity instituted, faith took

away; that which aversion from divine worship and service instituted,

conversion to the one true and holy God took away. Nor was this the

case only in Egypt, for which country alone the spirit of the demons

lamented in Hermes, but in all the earth, which sings to the Lord a new

song, [327] as the truly holy and truly prophetic Scriptures have

predicted, in which it is written, "Sing unto the Lord a new song; sing

unto the Lord, all the earth." For the title of this psalm is, "When

the house was built after the captivity." For a house is being built

to the Lord in all the earth, even the city of God, which is the holy

Church, after that captivity in which demons held captive those men

who, through faith in God, became living stones in the house. For

although man made gods, it did not follow that he who made them was not

held captive by them, when, by worshipping them, he was drawn into

fellowship with them,--into the fellowship not of stolid idols, but of

cunning demons; for what are idols but what they are represented to be

in the same scriptures, "They have eyes, but they do not see," [328]

and, though artistically fashioned, are still without life and

sensation? But unclean spirits, associated through that wicked art

with these same idols, have miserably taken captive the souls of their

worshippers, by bringing them down into fellowship with themselves.

Whence the apostle says, "We know that an idol is nothing, but those

things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not

to God; and I would not ye should have fellowship with demons." [329]

After this captivity, therefore, in which men were held by malign

demons, the house of God is being built in all the earth; whence the

title of that psalm in which it is said, "Sing unto the Lord a new

song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless His

name; declare well His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory

among the nations, among all people His wonderful things. For great is

the Lord, and much to be praised: He is terrible above all gods. For

all the gods of the nations are demons: but the Lord made the

heavens." [330]

Wherefore he who sorrowed because a time was coming when the worship of

idols should be abolished, and the domination of the demons over those

who worshipped them, wished, under the influence of a demon, that that

captivity should always continue, at the cessation of which that psalm

celebrates the building of the house of the Lord in all the earth.

Hermes foretold these things with grief, the prophet with joyfulness;

and because the Spirit is victorious who sang these things through the

ancient prophets, even Hermes himself was compelled in a wonderful

manner to confess, that those very things which he wished not to be

removed, and at the prospect of whose removal he was sorrowful, had

been instituted, not by prudent, faithful, and religious, but by erring

and unbelieving men, averse to the worship and service of the gods.

And although he calls them gods, nevertheless, when he says that they

were made by such men as we certainly ought not to be, he shows,

whether he will or not, that they are not to be worshipped by those who

do not resemble these image-makers, that is, by prudent, faithful, and

religious men, at the same time also making it manifest that the very

men who made them involved themselves in the worship of those as gods

who were not gods. For true is the saying of the prophet, "If a man

make gods, lo, they are no gods." [331] Such gods, therefore,

acknowledged by such worshippers and made by such men, did Hermes call

"gods made by men," that is to say, demons, through some art of I know

not what description, bound by the chains of their own lusts to

images. But, nevertheless, he did not agree with that opinion of the

Platonic Apuleius, of which we have already shown the incongruity and

absurdity, namely, that they were interpreters and intercessors between

the gods whom God made, and men whom the same God made, bringing to God

the prayers of men, and from God the gifts given in answer to these

prayers. For it is exceedingly stupid to believe that gods whom men

have made have more influence with gods whom God has made than men

themselves have, whom the very same God has made. And consider, too,

that it is a demon which, bound by a man to an image by means of an

impious art, has been made a god, but a god to such a man only, not to

every man. What kind of god, therefore, is that which no man would

make but one erring, incredulous, and averse to the true God?

Moreover, if the demons which are worshipped in the temples, being

introduced by some kind of strange art into images, that is, into

visible representations of themselves, by those men who by this art

made gods when they were straying away from, and were averse to the

worship and service of the gods,--if, I say, those demons are neither

mediators nor interpreters between men and the gods, both on account of

their own most wicked and base manners, and because men, though erring,

incredulous, and averse from the worship and service of the gods, are

nevertheless beyond doubt better than the demons whom they themselves

have evoked, then it remains to be affirmed that what power they

possess they possess as demons, doing harm by bestowing pretended

benefits,--harm all the greater for the deception,--or else openly and

undisguisedly doing evil to men. They cannot, however, do anything of

this kind unless where they are permitted by the deep and secret

providence of God, and then only so far as they are permitted. When,

however, they are permitted, it is not because they, being midway

between men and the gods, have through the friendship of the gods great

power over men; for these demons cannot possibly be friends to the good

gods who dwell in the holy and heavenly habitation, by whom we mean

holy angels and rational creatures, whether thrones, or dominations, or

principalities, or powers, from whom they are as far separated in

disposition and character as vice is distant from virtue, wickedness

from goodness.

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[327] Ps. xcvi. 1.

[328] Ps. cxv. 5, etc.

[329] 1 Cor. x. 19, 20.

[330] Ps. xcvi. 1-5.

[331] Jer. xvi. 20.

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Chapter 25.--Concerning Those Things Which May Be Common to the Holy

Angels and to Men.

Wherefore we must by no means seek, through the supposed mediation of

demons, to avail ourselves of the benevolence or beneficence of the

gods, or rather of the good angels, but through resembling them in the

possession of a good will, through which we are with them, and live

with them, and worship with them the same God, although we cannot see

them with the eyes of our flesh. But it is not in locality we are

distant from them, but in merit of life, caused by our miserable

unlikeness to them in will, and by the weakness of our character; for

the mere fact of our dwelling on earth under the conditions of life in

the flesh does not prevent our fellowship with them. It is only

prevented when we, in the impurity of our hearts, mind earthly things.

But in this present time, while we are being healed that we may

eventually be as they are, we are brought near to them by faith, if by

their assistance we believe that He who is their blessedness is also

ours.

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Chapter 26.--That All the Religion of the Pagans Has Reference to Dead

Men.

It is certainly a remarkable thing how this Egyptian, when expressing

his grief that a time was coming when those things would be taken away

from Egypt, which he confesses to have been invented by men erring,

incredulous, and averse to the service of divine religion, says, among

other things, "Then shall that land, the most holy place of shrines and

temples, be full of sepulchres and dead men," as if, in sooth, if these

things were not taken away, men would not die! as if dead bodies could

be buried elsewhere than in the ground! as if, as time advanced, the

number of sepulchres must not necessarily increase in proportion to the

increase of the number of the dead! But they who are of a perverse

mind, and opposed to us, suppose that what he grieves for is that the

memorials of our martyrs were to succeed to their temples and shrines,

in order, forsooth, that they may have grounds for thinking that gods

were worshipped by the pagans in temples, but that dead men are

worshipped by us in sepulchres. For with such blindness do impious

men, as it were, stumble over mountains, and will not see the things

which strike their own eyes, that they do not attend to the fact that

in all the literature of the pagans there are not found any, or

scarcely any gods, who have not been men, to whom, when dead, divine

honors have been paid. I will not enlarge on the fact that Varro says

that all dead men are thought by them to be gods--Manes and proves it

by those sacred rites which are performed in honor of almost all the

dead, among which he mentions funeral games, considering this the very

highest proof of divinity, because games are only wont to be celebrated

in honor of divinities. Hermes himself, of whom we are now treating,

in that same book in which, as if foretelling future things, he says

with sorrow "Then shall that land, the most holy place of shrines and

temples, be full of sepulchres and dead men," testifies that the gods

of Egypt were dead men. For, having said that their forefathers,

erring very far with respect to the knowledge of the gods, incredulous

and inattentive to the divine worship and service, invented the art of

making gods, with which art, when invented, they associated the

appropriate virtue which is inherent in universal nature, and by mixing

up that virtue with this art, they called forth the souls of demons or

of angels (for they could not make souls), and caused them to take

possession of, or associate themselves with holy images and divine

mysteries, in order that through these souls the images might have

power to do good or harm to men;--having said this, he goes on, as it

were, to prove it by illustrations, saying, "Thy grandsire, O

�sculapius, the first discoverer of medicine, to whom a temple was

consecrated in a mountain of Libya, near to the shore of the

crocodiles, in which temple lies his earthly man, that is, his

body,--for the better part of him, or rather the whole of him, if the

whole man is in the intelligent life, went back to heaven,--affords

even now by his divinity all those helps to infirm men which formerly

he was wont to afford to them by the art of medicine." He says,

therefore that a dead man was worshipped as a god in that place where

he had his sepulchre. He deceives men by a falsehood, for the man

"went back to heaven." Then he adds "Does not Hermes, who was my

grandsire, and whose name I bear, abiding in the country which is

called by his name, help and preserve all mortals who come to him from

every quarter?" For this elder Hermes, that is, Mercury, who, he says,

was his grandsire, is said to be buried in Hermopolis, that is, in the

city called by his name; so here are two gods whom he affirms to have

been men, �sculapius and Mercury. Now concerning �sculapius, both the

Greeks and the Latins think the same thing; but as to Mercury, there

are many who do not think that he was formerly a mortal, though Hermes

testifies that he was his grandsire. But are these two different

individuals who were called by the same name? I will not dispute much

whether they are different individuals or not. It is sufficient to

know that this Mercury of whom Hermes speaks is, as well as �sculapius,

a god who once was a man, according, to the testimony of this same

Trismegistus, esteemed so great by his countrymen, and also the

grandson of Mercury himself.

Hermes goes on to say, "But do we know how many good things Isis, the

wife of Osiris, bestows when she is propitious, and what great

opposition she can offer when enraged?" Then, in order to show that

there were gods made by men through this art, he goes on to say, "For

it is easy for earthly and mundane gods to be angry, being made and

composed by men out of either nature;" thus giving us to understand

that he believed that demons were formerly the souls of dead men,

which, as he says, by means of a certain art invented by men very far

in error, incredulous, and irreligious, were caused to take possession

of images, because they who made such gods were not able to make

souls. When, therefore, he says "either nature," he means soul and

body,--the demon being the soul, and the image the body. What, then,

becomes of that mournful complaint, that the land of Egypt, the most

holy place of shrines and temples, was to be full of sepulchres and

dead men? Verily, the fallacious spirit, by whose inspiration Hermes

spoke these things, was compelled to confess through him that even

already that land was full of sepulchres and of dead men, whom they

were worshipping as gods. But it was the grief of the demons which was

expressing itself through his mouth, who were sorrowing on account of

the punishments which were about to fall upon them at the tombs of the

martyrs. For in many such places they are tortured and compelled to

confess, and are cast out of the bodies of men, of which they had taken

possession.

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Chapter 27.--Concerning the Nature of the Honor Which the Christians

Pay to Their Martyrs.

But, nevertheless, we do not build temples, and ordain priests, rites,

and sacrifices for these same martyrs; for they are not our gods, but

their God is our God. Certainly we honor their reliquaries, as the

memorials of holy men of God who strove for the truth even to the death

of their bodies, that the true religion might be made known, and false

and fictitious religions exposed. For if there were some before them

who thought that these religions were really false and fictitious, they

were afraid to give expression to their convictions. But who ever

heard a priest of the faithful, standing at an altar built for the

honor and worship of God over the holy body of some martyr, say in the

prayers, I offer to thee a sacrifice, O Peter, or O Paul, or O Cyprian?

for it is to God that sacrifices are offered at their tombs,--the God

who made them both men and martyrs, and associated them with holy

angels in celestial honor; and the reason why we pay such honors to

their memory is, that by so doing we may both give thanks to the true

God for their victories, and, by recalling them afresh to remembrance,

may stir ourselves up to imitate them by seeking to obtain like crowns

and palms, calling to our help that same God on whom they called.

Therefore, whatever honors the religious may pay in the places of the

martyrs, they are but honors rendered to their memory, [332] not sacred

rites or sacrifices offered to dead men as to gods. And even such as

bring thither food,--which, indeed, is not done by the better

Christians, and in most places of the world is not done at all,--do so

in order that it may be sanctified to them through the merits of the

martyrs, in the name of the Lord of the martyrs, first presenting the

food and offering prayer, and thereafter taking it away to be eaten, or

to be in part bestowed upon the needy. [333] But he who knows the one

sacrifice of Christians, which is the sacrifice offered in those

places, also knows that these are not sacrifices offered to the

martyrs. It is, then, neither with divine honors nor with human

crimes, by which they worship their gods, that we honor our martyrs;

neither do we offer sacrifices to them, or convert the crimes of the

gods into their sacred rites. For let those who will and can read the

letter of Alexander to his mother Olympias, in which he tells the

things which were revealed to him by the priest Leon, and let those who

have read it recall to memory what it contains, that they may see what

great abominations have been handed down to memory, not by poets, but

by the mystic writings of the Egyptians, concerning the goddess Isis,

the wife of Osiris, and the parents of both, all of whom, according to

these writings, were royal personages. Isis, when sacrificing to her

parents, is said to have discovered a crop of barley, of which she

brought some ears to the king her husband, and his councillor

Mercurius, and hence they identify her with Ceres. Those who read the

letter may there see what was the character of those people to whom

when dead sacred rites were instituted as to gods, and what those deeds

of theirs were which furnished the occasion for these rites. Let them

not once dare to compare in any respect those people, though they hold

them to be gods, to our holy martyrs, though we do not hold them to be

gods. For we do not ordain priests and offer sacrifices to our

martyrs, as they do to their dead men, for that would be incongruous,

undue, and unlawful, such being due only to God; and thus we do not

delight them with their own crimes, or with such shameful plays as

those in which the crimes of the gods are celebrated, which are either

real crimes committed by them at a time when they were men, or else, if

they never were men, fictitious crimes invented for the pleasure of

noxious demons. The god of Socrates, if he had a god, cannot have

belonged to this class of demons. But perhaps they who wished to excel

in this art of making gods, imposed a god of this sort on a man who was

a stranger to, and innocent of any connection with that art. What need

we say more? No one who is even moderately wise imagines that demons

are to be worshipped on account of the blessed life which is to be

after death. But perhaps they will say that all the gods are good, but

that of the demons some are bad and some good, and that it is the good

who are to be worshipped, in order that through them we may attain to

the eternally blessed life. To the examination of this opinion we will

devote the following book.

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[332] Ornamenta memoriarum.

[333] Comp. The Confessions, vi. 2.

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Book IX.

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Argument--Having in the preceding book shown that the worship of demons

must be abjured, since they in a thousand ways proclaim themselves to

be wicked spirits, Augustin in this book meets those who allege a

distinction among demons, some being evil, while others are good; and,

having exploded this distinction, he proves that to no demon, but to

Christ alone, belongs the office of providing men with eternal

blessedness.

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Chapter 1.--The Point at Which the Discussion Has Arrived, and What

Remains to Be Handled.

Some have advanced the opinion that there are both good and bad gods;

but some, thinking more respectfully of the gods, have attributed to

them so much honor and praise as to preclude the supposition of any god

being wicked. But those who have maintained that there are wicked gods

as well as good ones have included the demons under the name "gods,"

and sometimes though more rarely, have called the gods demons; so that

they admit that Jupiter, whom they make the king and head of all the

rest, is called a demon by Homer. [334] Those, on the other hand, who

maintain that the gods are all good, and far more excellent than the

men who are justly called good, are moved by the actions of the demons,

which they can neither deny nor impute to the gods whose goodness they

affirm, to distinguish between gods and demons; so that, whenever they

find anything offensive in the deeds or sentiments by which unseen

spirits manifest their power, they believe this to proceed not from the

gods, but from the demons. At the same time they believe that, as no

god can hold direct intercourse with men, these demons hold the

position of mediators, ascending with prayers, and returning with

gifts. This is the opinion of the Platonists, the ablest and most

esteemed of their philosophers, with whom we therefore chose to debate

this question,--whether the worship of a number of gods is of any

service toward obtaining blessedness in the future life. And this is

the reason why, in the preceding book, we have inquired how the demons,

who take pleasure in such things as good and wise men loathe and

execrate, in the sacrilegious and immoral fictions which the poets have

written not of men, but of the gods themselves, and in the wicked and

criminal violence of magical arts, can be regarded as more nearly

related and more friendly to the gods than men are, and can mediate

between good men and the good gods; and it has been demonstrated that

this is absolutely impossible.

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[334] See Plutarch, on the Cessation of Oracles.

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Chapter 2.--Whether Among the Demons, Inferior to the Gods, There are

Any Good Spirits Under Whose Guardianship the Human Soul Might Reach

True Blessedness.

This book, then, ought, according to the promise made in the end of the

preceding one, to contain a discussion, not of the difference which

exists among the gods, who, according to the Platonists, are all good,

nor of the difference between gods and demons, the former of whom they

separate by a wide interval from men, while the latter are placed

intermediately between the gods and men, but of the difference, since

they make one, among the demons themselves. This we shall discuss so

far as it bears on our theme. It has been the common and usual belief

that some of the demons are bad, others good; and this opinon, whether

it be that of the Platonists or any other sect, must by no means be

passed over in silence, lest some one suppose he ought to cultivate the

good demons in order that by their mediation he may be accepted by the

gods, all of whom he believes to be good, and that he may live with

them after death; whereas he would thus be ensnared in the toils of

wicked spirits, and would wander far from the true God, with whom

alone, and in whom alone, the human soul, that is to say, the soul that

is rational and intellectual, is blessed.

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Chapter 3.--What Apuleius Attributes to the Demons, to Whom, Though He

Does Not Deny Them Reason, He Does Not Ascribe Virtue.

What, then, is the difference between good and evil demons? For the

Platonist Apuleius, in a treatise on this whole subject, [335] while he

says a great deal about their aerial bodies, has not a word to say of

the spiritual virtues with which, if they were good, they must have

been endowed. Not a word has he said, then, of that which could give

them happiness; but proof of their misery he has given, acknowledging

that their mind, by which they rank as reasonable beings, is not only

not imbued and fortified with virtue so as to resist all unreasonable

passions, but that it is somehow agitated with tempestuous emotions,

and is thus on a level with the mind of foolish men. His own words

are: "It is this class of demons the poets refer to, when, without

serious error, they feign that the gods hate and love individuals among

men, prospering and ennobling some, and opposing and distressing

others. Therefore pity, indignation, grief, joy, every human emotion

is experienced by the demons, with the same mental disturbance, and the

same tide of feeling and thought. These turmoils and tempests banish

them far from the tranquility of the celestial gods." Can there be any

doubt that in these words it is not some inferior part of their

spiritual nature, but the very mind by which the demons hold their rank

as rational beings, which he says is tossed with passion like a stormy

sea? They cannot, then, be compared even to wise men, who with

undisturbed mind resist these perturbations to which they are exposed

in this life, and from which human infirmity is never exempt, and who

do not yield themselves to approve of or perpetrate anything which

might deflect them from the path of wisdom and law of rectitude. They

resemble in character, though not in bodily appearance, wicked and

foolish men. I might indeed say they are worse, inasmuch as they have

grown old in iniquity, and incorrigible by punishment. Their mind, as

Apuleius says, is a sea tossed with tempest, having no rallying point

of truth or virtue in their soul from which they can resist their

turbulent and depraved emotions.

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[335] The De Deo Socratis.

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Chapter 4.--The Opinion of the Peripatetics and Stoics About Mental

Emotions.

Among the philosophers there are two opinions about these mental

emotions, which the Greeks call pathe, while some of our own writers,

as Cicero, call them perturbations, [336] some affections, and some, to

render the Greek word more accurately, passions. Some say that even

the wise man is subject to these perturbations, though moderated and

controlled by reason, which imposes laws upon them, and so restrains

them within necessary bounds. This is the opinion of the Platonists

and Aristotelians; for Aristotle was Plato's disciple, and the founder

of the Peripatetic school. But others, as the Stoics, are of opinion

that the wise man is not subject to these perturbations. But Cicero,

in his book De Finibus, shows that the Stoics are here at variance with

the Platonists and Peripatetics rather in words than in reality; for

the Stoics decline to apply the term "goods" to external and bodily

advantages, [337] because they reckon that the only good is virtue, the

art of living well, and this exists only in the mind. The other

philosophers, again, use the simple and customary phraseology, and do

not scruple to call these things goods, though in comparison of virtue,

which guides our life, they are little and of small esteem. And thus

it is obvious that, whether these outward things are called goods or

advantages, they are held in the same estimation by both parties, and

that in this matter the Stoics are pleasing themselves merely with a

novel phraseology. It seems, then, to me that in this question,

whether the wise man is subject to mental passions, or wholly free from

them, the controversy is one of words rather than of things; for I

think that, if the reality and not the mere sound of the words is

considered, the Stoics hold precisely the same opinion as the

Platonists and Peripatetics. For, omitting for brevity's sake other

proofs which I might adduce in support of this opinion, I will state

but one which I consider conclusive. Aulus Gellius, a man of extensive

erudition, and gifted with an eloquent and graceful style, relates, in

his work entitled Noctes Attic� [338] that he once made a voyage with

an eminent Stoic philosopher; and he goes on to relate fully and with

gusto what I shall barely state, that when the ship was tossed and in

danger from a violent storm, the philosopher grew pale with terror.

This was noticed by those on board, who, though themselves threatened

with death, were curious to see whether a philosopher would be agitated

like other men. When the tempest had passed over, and as soon as their

security gave them freedom to resume their talk, one of the passengers,

a rich and luxurious Asiatic, begins to banter the philosopher, and

rally him because he had even become pale with fear, while he himself

had been unmoved by the impending destruction. But the philosopher

availed himself of the reply of Aristippus the Socratic, who, on

finding himself similarly bantered by a man of the same character,

answered, "You had no cause for anxiety for the soul of a profligate

debauchee, but I had reason to be alarmed for the soul of Aristippus."

The rich man being thus disposed of, Aulus Gellius asked the

philosopher, in the interests of science and not to annoy him, what was

the reason of his fear? And he willing to instruct a man so zealous in

the pursuit of knowledge, at once took from his wallet a book of

Epictetus the Stoic, [339] in which doctrines were advanced which

precisely harmonized with those of Zeno and Chrysippus, the founders of

the Stoical school. Aulus Gellius says that he read in this book that

the Stoics maintain that there are certain impressions made on the soul

by external objects which they call phantasi�, and that it is not in

the power of the soul to determine whether or when it shall be invaded

by these. When these impressions are made by alarming and formidable

objects, it must needs be that they move the soul even of the wise man,

so that for a little he trembles with fear, or is depressed by sadness,

these impressions anticipating the work of reason and self-control; but

this does not imply that the mind accepts these evil impressions, or

approves or consents to them. For this consent is, they think, in a

man's power; there being this difference between the mind of the wise

man and that of the fool, that the fool's mind yields to these passions

and consents to them, while that of the wise man, though it cannot help

being invaded by them, yet retains with unshaken firmness a true and

steady persuasion of those things which it ought rationally to desire

or avoid. This account of what Aulus Gellius relates that he read in

the book of Epictetus about the sentiments and doctrines of the Stoics

I have given as well as I could, not, perhaps, with his choice

language, but with greater brevity, and, I think, with greater

clearness. And if this be true, then there is no difference, or next

to none, between the opinion of the Stoics and that of the other

philosophers regarding mental passions and perturbations, for both

parties agree in maintaining that the mind and reason of the wise man

are not subject to these. And perhaps what the Stoics mean by

asserting this, is that the wisdom which characterizes the wise man is

clouded by no error and sullied by no taint, but, with this reservation

that his wisdom remains undisturbed, he is exposed to the impressions

which the goods and ills of this life (or, as they prefer to call them,

the advantages or disadvantages) make upon them. For we need not say

that if that philosopher had thought nothing of those things which he

thought he was forthwith to lose, life and bodily safety, he would not

have been so terrified by his danger as to betray his fear by the

pallor of his cheek. Nevertheless, he might suffer this mental

disturbance, and yet maintain the fixed persuasion that life and bodily

safety, which the violence of the tempest threatened to destroy, are

not those good things which make their possessors good, as the

possession of righteousness does. But in so far as they persist that

we must call them not goods but advantages, they quarrel about words

and neglect things. For what difference does it make whether goods or

advantages be the better name, while the Stoic no less than the

Peripatetic is alarmed at the prospect of losing them, and while,

though they name them differently, they hold them in like esteem? Both

parties assure us that, if urged to the commission of some immorality

or crime by the threatened loss of these goods or advantages, they

would prefer to lose such things as preserve bodily comfort and

security rather than commit such things as violate righteousness. And

thus the mind in which this resolution is well grounded suffers no

perturbations to prevail with it in opposition to reason, even though

they assail the weaker parts of the soul; and not only so, but it rules

over them, and, while it refuses its consent and resists them,

administers a reign of virtue. Such a character is ascribed to �neas

by Virgil when he says,

"He stands immovable by tears,

Nor tenderest words with pity hears." [340]

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[336] De Fin. iii. 20; Tusc. Disp. iii. 4.

[337] The distinction between bona and commoda is thus given by Seneca

(Ep. 87, ad fin.): Commodum est quod plus usus est quam molesti�;

bonum sincerum debet esse et ab omni parte innoxium.

[338] Book xix. ch. 1.

[339] See Diog. Laert. ii. 71.

[340] Virgil, �n. iv. 449.

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Chapter 5.--That the Passions Which Assail the Souls of Christians Do

Not Seduce Them to Vice, But Exercise Their Virtue.

We need not at present give a careful and copious exposition of the

doctrine of Scripture, the sum of Christian knowledge, regarding these

passions. It subjects the mind itself to God, that He may rule and aid

it, and the passions, again, to the mind, to moderate and bridle them,

and turn them to righteous uses. In our ethics, we do not so much

inquire whether a pious soul is angry, as why he is angry; not whether

he is sad, but what is the cause of his sadness; not whether he fears,

but what he fears. For I am not aware that any right thinking person

would find fault with anger at a wrongdoer which seeks his amendment,

or with sadness which intends relief to the suffering, or with fear

lest one in danger be destroyed. The Stoics, indeed, are accustomed to

condemn compassion. [341] But how much more honorable had it been in

that Stoic we have been telling of, had he been disturbed by compassion

prompting him to relieve a fellow-creature, than to be disturbed by the

fear of shipwreck! Far better and more humane, and more consonant with

pious sentiments, are the words of Cicero in praise of C�sar, when he

says, "Among your virtues none is more admirable and agreeable than

your compassion." [342] And what is compassion but a fellow-feeling

for another's misery, which prompts us to help him if we can? And this

emotion is obedient to reason, when compassion is shown without

violating right, as when the poor are relieved, or the penitent

forgiven. Cicero, who knew how to use language, did not hesitate to

call this a virtue, which the Stoics are not ashamed to reckon among

the vices, although, as the book of the eminent Stoic, Epictetus,

quoting the opinions of Zeno and Chrysippus, the founders of the

school, has taught us, they admit that passions of this kind invade the

soul of the wise man, whom they would have to be free from all vice.

Whence it follows that these very passions are not judged by them to be

vices, since they assail the wise man without forcing him to act

against reason and virtue; and that, therefore, the opinion of the

Peripatetics or Platonists and of the Stoics is one and the same. But,

as Cicero says, [343] mere logomachy is the bane of these pitiful

Greeks, who thirst for contention rather than for truth. However, it

may justly be asked, whether our subjection to these affections, even

while we follow virtue, is a part of the infirmity of this life? For

the holy angels feel no anger while they punish those whom the eternal

law of God consigns to punishment, no fellow-feeling with misery while

they relieve the miserable, no fear while they aid those who are in

danger; and yet ordinary language ascribes to them also these mental

emotions, because, though they have none of our weakness, their acts

resemble the actions to which these emotions move us; and thus even God

Himself is said in Scripture to be angry, and yet without any

perturbation. For this word is used of the effect of His vengeance,

not of the disturbing mental affection.

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[341] Seneca, De Clem. ii. 4 and 5.

[342] Pro. Lig. c. 12.

[343] De Oratore,i. 11, 47.

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Chapter 6.--Of the Passions Which, According to Apuleius, Agitate the

Demons Who Are Supposed by Him to Mediate Between Gods and Men.

Deferring for the present the question about the holy angels, let us

examine the opinion of the Platonists, that the demons who mediate

between gods and men are agitated by passions. For if their mind,

though exposed to their incursion, still remained free and superior to

them, Apuleius could not have said that their hearts are tossed with

passions as the sea by stormy winds. [344] Their mind, then,--that

superior part of their soul whereby they are rational beings, and

which, if it actually exists in them, should rule and bridle the

turbulent passions of the inferior parts of the soul,--this mind of

theirs, I say, is, according to the Platonist referred to, tossed with

a hurricane of passions. The mind of the demons, therefore, is subject

to the emotions of fear, anger, lust, and all similar affections. What

part of them, then, is free, and endued with wisdom, so that they are

pleasing to the gods, and the fit guides of men into purity of life,

since their very highest part, being the slave of passion and subject

to vice, only makes them more intent on deceiving and seducing, in

proportion to the mental force and energy of desire they possess?

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[344] De Deo Soc.

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Chapter 7.--That the Platonists Maintain that the Poets Wrong the Gods

by Representing Them as Distracted by Party Feeling, to Which the

Demons and Not the Gods, are Subject.

But if any one says that it is not of all the demons, but only of the

wicked, that the poets, not without truth, say that they violently love

or hate certain men,--for it was of them Apuleius said that they were

driven about by strong currents of emotion,--how can we accept this

interpretation, when Apuleius, in the very same connection, represents

all the demons, and not only the wicked, as intermediate between gods

and men by their aerial bodies? The fiction of the poets, according to

him, consists in their making gods of demons, and giving them the names

of gods, and assigning them as allies or enemies to individual men,

using this poetical license, though they profess that the gods are very

different in character from the demons, and far exalted above them by

their celestial abode and wealth of beatitude. This, I say, is the

poets' fiction, to say that these are gods who are not gods, and that,

under the names of gods, they fight among themselves about the men whom

they love or hate with keen partisan feeling. Apuleius says that this

is not far from the truth, since, though they are wrongfully called by

the names of the gods, they are described in their own proper character

as demons. To this category, he says, belongs the Minerva of Homer,

"who interposed in the ranks of the Greeks to restrain Achilles." [345]

For that this was Minerva he supposes to be poetical fiction; for he

thinks that Minerva is a goddess, and he places her among the gods whom

he believes to be all good and blessed in the sublime ethereal region,

remote from intercourse with men. But that there was a demon favorable

to the Greeks and adverse to the Trojans, as another, whom the same

poet mentions under the name of Venus or Mars (gods exalted above

earthly affairs in their heavenly habitations), was the Trojans' ally

and the foe of the Greeks, and that these demons fought for those they

loved against those they hated,--in all this he owned that the poets

stated something very like the truth. For they made these statements

about beings to whom he ascribes the same violent and tempestuous

passions as disturb men, and who are therefore capable of loves and

hatreds not justly formed, but formed in a party spirit, as the

spectators in races or hunts take fancies and prejudices. It seems to

have been the great fear of this Platonist that the poetical fictions

should be believed of the gods, and not of the demons who bore their

names.

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[345] De Deo. Soc.

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Chapter 8.--How Apuleius Defines the Gods Who Dwell in Heaven, the

Demons Who Occupy the Air, and Men Who Inhabit Earth.

The definition which Apuleius gives of demons, and in which he of

course includes all demons, is that they are in nature animals, in soul

subject to passion, in mind reasonable, in body aerial, in duration

eternal. Now in these five qualities he has named absolutely nothing

which is proper to good men and not also to bad. For when Apuleius had

spoken of the celestials first, and had then extended his description

so as to include an account of those who dwell far below on the earth,

that, after describing the two extremes of rational being, he might

proceed to speak of the intermediate demons, he says, "Men, therefore,

who are endowed with the faculty of reason and speech, whose soul is

immortal and their members mortal, who have weak and anxious spirits,

dull and corruptible bodies, dissimilar characters, similar ignorance,

who are obstinate in their audacity, and persistent in their hope,

whose labor is vain, and whose fortune is ever on the wane, their race

immortal, themselves perishing, each generation replenished with

creatures whose life is swift and their wisdom slow, their death sudden

and their life a wail,--these are the men who dwell on the earth."

[346] In recounting so many qualities which belong to the large

proportion of men, did he forget that which is the property of the few

when he speaks of their wisdom being slow? If this had been omitted,

this his description of the human race, so carefully elaborated, would

have been defective. And when he commended the excellence of the gods,

he affirmed that they excelled in that very blessedness to which he

thinks men must attain by wisdom. And therefore, if he had wished us

to believe that some of the demons are good, he should have inserted in

his description something by which we might see that they have, in

common with the gods, some share of blessedness, or, in common with

men, some wisdom. But, as it is, he has mentioned no good quality by

which the good may be distinguished from the bad. For although he

refrained from giving a full account of their wickedness, through fear

of offending, not themselves but their worshippers, for whom he was

writing, yet he sufficiently indicated to discerning readers what

opinion he had of them; for only in the one article of the eternity of

their bodies does he assimilate them to the gods, all of whom, he

asserts, are good and blessed, and absolutely free from what he himself

calls the stormy passions of the demons; and as to the soul, he quite

plainly affirms that they resemble men and not the gods, and that this

resemblance lies not in the possession of wisdom, which even men can

attain to, but in the perturbation of passions which sway the foolish

and wicked, but is so ruled by the good and wise that they prefer not

to admit rather than to conquer it. For if he had wished it to be

understood that the demons resembled the gods in the eternity not of

their bodies but of their souls, he would certainly have admitted men

to share in this privilege, because, as a Platonist, he of course must

hold that the human soul is eternal. Accordingly, when describing this

race of living beings, he said that their souls were immortal, their

members mortal. And, consequently, if men have not eternity in common

with the gods because they have mortal bodies, demons have eternity in

common with the gods because their bodies are immortal.

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[346] De Deo Soc.

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Chapter 9.--Whether the Intercession of the Demons Can Secure for Men

the Friendship of the Celestial Gods.

How, then, can men hope for a favorable introduction to the friendship

of the gods by such mediators as these, who are, like men, defective in

that which is the better part of every living creature, viz., the soul,

and who resemble the gods only in the body, which is the inferior

part? For a living creature or animal consists of soul and body, and

of these two parts the soul is undoubtedly the better; even though

vicious and weak, it is obviously better than even the soundest and

strongest body, for the greater excellence of its nature is not reduced

to the level of the body even by the pollution of vice, as gold, even

when tarnished, is more precious than the purest silver or lead. And

yet these mediators, by whose interposition things human and divine are

to be harmonized, have an eternal body in common with the gods, and a

vicious soul in common with men,--as if the religion by which these

demons are to unite gods and men were a bodily, and not a spiritual

matter. What wickedness, then, or punishment has suspended these false

and deceitful mediators, as it were head downwards, so that their

inferior part, their body, is linked to the gods above, and their

superior part, the soul, bound to men beneath; united to the celestial

gods by the part that serves, and miserable, together with the

inhabitants of earth, by the part that rules? For the body is the

servant, as Sallust says: "We use the soul to rule, the body to obey;"

[347] adding, "the one we have in common with the gods, the other with

the brutes." For he was here speaking of men; and they have, like the

brutes, a mortal body. These demons, whom our philosophic friends have

provided for us as mediators with the gods, may indeed say of the soul

and body, the one we have in common with the gods, the other with men;

but, as I said, they are as it were suspended and bound head downwards,

having the slave, the body, in common with the gods, the master, the

soul, in common with miserable men,--their inferior part exalted, their

superior part depressed. And therefore, if any one supposes that,

because they are not subject, like terrestrial animals, to the

separation of soul and body by death, they therefore resemble the gods

in their eternity, their body must not be considered a chariot of an

eternal triumph, but rather the chain of an eternal punishment.

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[347] Cat. Conj.i.

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Chapter 10.--That, According to Plotinus, Men, Whose Body is Mortal,

are Less Wretched Than Demons, Whose Body is Eternal.

Plotinus, whose memory is quite recent, [348] enjoys the reputation of

having understood Plato better than any other of his disciples. In

speaking of human souls, he says, "The Father in compassion made their

bonds mortal;" [349] that is to say, he considered it due to the

Father's mercy that men, having a mortal body, should not be forever

confined in the misery of this life. But of this mercy the demons have

been judged unworthy, and they have received, in conjunction with a

soul subject to passions, a body not mortal like man's, but eternal.

For they should have been happier than men if they had, like men, had a

mortal body, and, like the gods, a blessed soul. And they should have

been equal to men, if in conjunction with a miserable soul they had at

least received, like men, a mortal body, so that death might have freed

them from trouble, if, at least, they should have attained some degree

of piety. But, as it is, they are not only no happier than men,

having, like them, a miserable soul, they are also more wretched, being

eternally bound to the body; for he does not leave us to infer that by

some progress in wisdom and piety they can become gods, but expressly

says that they are demons forever.

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[348] Plotinus died in 270 A.D. For his relation to Plato, see

Augustin's Contra Acad. iii. 41.

[349] Ennead. iv. 3. 12.

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Chapter 11.--Of the Opinion of the Platonists, that the Souls of Men

Become Demons When Disembodied.

He [350] says, indeed, that the souls of men are demons, and that men

become Lares if they are good, Lemures or Larv� if they are bad, and

Manes if it is uncertain whether they de serve well or ill. Who does

not see at a glance that this is a mere whirlpool sucking men to moral

destruction? For, however wicked men have been, if they suppose they

shall become Larv� or divine Manes, they will become the worse the more

love they have for inflicting injury; for, as the Larv� are hurtful

demons made out of wicked men, these men must suppose that after death

they will be invoked with sacrifices and divine honors that they may

inflict injuries. But this question we must not pursue. He also

states that the blessed are called in Greek eudaimones, because they

are good souls, that is to say, good demons, confirming his opinion

that the souls of men are demons.

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[350] Apuleius, not Plotinus.

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Chapter 12.--Of the Three Opposite Qualities by Which the Platonists

Distinguish Between the Nature of Men and that of Demons.

But at present we are speaking of those beings whom he described as

being properly intermediate between gods and men, in nature animals, in

mind rational, in soul subject to passion, in body aerial, in duration

eternal. When he had distinguished the gods, whom he placed in the

highest heaven, from men, whom he placed on earth, not only by position

but also by the unequal dignity of their natures, he concluded in these

words: "You have here two kinds of animals: the gods, widely

distinguished from men by sublimity of abode, perpetuity of life,

perfection of nature; for their habitations are separated by so wide an

interval that there can be no intimate communication between them, and

while the vitality of the one is eternal and indefeasible, that of the

others is fading and precarious, and while the spirits of the gods are

exalted in bliss, those of men are sunk in miseries." [351] Here I

find three opposite qualities ascribed to the extremes of being, the

highest and lowest. For, after mentioning the three qualities for

which we are to admire the gods, he repeated, though in other words,

the same three as a foil to the defects of man. The three qualities

are, "sublimity of abode, perpetuity of life, perfection of nature."

These he again mentioned so as to bring out their contrasts in man's

condition. As he had mentioned "sublimity of abode," he says, "Their

habitations are separated by so wide an interval;" as he had mentioned

"perpetuity of life," he says, that "while divine life is eternal and

indefeasible, human life is fading and precarious;" and as he had

mentioned "perfection of nature," he says, that "while the spirits of

the gods are exalted in bliss, those of men are sunk in miseries."

These three things, then, he predicates of the gods, exaltation,

eternity, blessedness; and of man he predicates the opposite, lowliness

of habitation, mortality, misery.

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[351] De Deo Socratis.

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Chapter 13.--How the Demons Can Mediate Between Gods and Men If They

Have Nothing in Common with Both, Being Neither Blessed Like the Gods,

Nor Miserable Like Men.

If, now, we endeavor to find between these opposites the mean occupied

by the demons, there can be no question as to their local position;

for, between the highest and lowest place, there is a place which is

rightly considered and called the middle place. The other two

qualities remain, and to them we must give greater care, that we may

see whether they are altogether foreign to the demons, or how they are

so bestowed upon them without infringing upon their mediate position.

We may dismiss the idea that they are foreign to them. For we cannot

say that the demons, being rational animals, are neither blessed nor

wretched, as we say of the beasts and plants, which are void of feeling

and reason, or as we say of the middle place, that it is neither the

highest nor the lowest. The demons, being rational, must be either

miserable or blessed. And, in like manner, we cannot say that they are

neither mortal nor immortal; for all living things either live

eternally or end life in death. Our author, besides, stated that the

demons are eternal. What remains for us to suppose, then, but that

these mediate beings are assimilated to the gods in one of the two

remaining qualities, and to men in the other? For if they received

both from above, or both from beneath, they should no longer be

mediate, but either rise to the gods above, or sink to men beneath.

Therefore, as it has been demonstrated that they must possess these two

qualities, they will hold their middle place if they receive one from

each party. Consequently, as they cannot receive their eternity from

beneath, because it is not there to receive, they must get it from

above; and accordingly they have no choice but to complete their

mediate position by accepting misery from men.

According to the Platonists, then, the gods, who occupy the highest

place, enjoy eternal blessedness, or blessed eternity; men, who occupy

the lowest, a mortal misery, or a miserable mortality; and the demons,

who occupy the mean, a miserable eternity, or an eternal misery. As to

those five things which Apu leius included in his definition of demons,

he did not show, as he promised, that the demons are mediate. For

three of them, that their nature is animal, their mind rational, their

soul subject to passions, he said that they have in common with men;

one thing, their eternity, in common with the gods; and one proper to

themselves, their aerial body. How, then, are they intermediate, when

they have three things in common with the lowest, and only one in

common with the highest? Who does not see that the intermediate

position is abandoned in proportion as they tend to, and are depressed

towards, the lowest extreme? But perhaps we are to accept them as

intermediate because of their one property of an aerial body, as the

two extremes have each their proper body, the gods an ethereal, men a

terrestrial body, and because two of the qualities they possess in

common with man they possess also in common with the gods, namely,

their animal nature and rational mind. For Apuleius himself, in

speaking of gods and men, said, "You have two animal natures." And

Platonists are wont to ascribe a rational mind to the gods. Two

qualities remain, their liability to passion, and their eternity,--the

first of which they have in common with men, the second with the gods;

so that they are neither wafted to the highest nor depressed to the

lowest extreme, but perfectly poised in their intermediate position.

But then, this is the very circumstance which constitutes the eternal

misery, or miserable eternity, of the demons. For he who says that

their soul is subject to passions would also have said that they are

miserable, had he not blushed for their worshippers. Moreover, as the

world is governed, not by fortuitous haphazard, but, as the Platonists

themselves avow, by the providence of the supreme God, the misery of

the demons would not be eternal unless their wickedness were great.

If, then, the blessed are rightly styled eudemons, the demons

intermediate between gods and men are not eudemons. What, then, is the

local position of those good demons, who, above men but beneath the

gods, afford assistance to the former, minister to the latter? For if

they are good and eternal, they are doubtless blessed. But eternal

blessedness destroys their intermediate character, giving them a close

resemblance to the gods, and widely separating them from men. And

therefore the Platonists will in vain strive to show how the good

demons, if they are both immortal and blessed, can justly be said to

hold a middle place between the gods, who are immortal and blessed, and

men, who are mortal and miserable. For if they have both immortality

and blessedness in common with the gods, and neither of these in common

with men, who are both miserable and mortal, are they not rather remote

from men and united with the gods, than intermediate between them.

They would be intermediate if they held one of their qualities in

common with the one party, and the other with the other, as man is a

kind of mean between angels and beasts,--the beast being an irrational

and mortal animal, the angel a rational and immortal one, while man,

inferior to the angel and superior to the beast, and having in common

with the one mortality, and with the other reason, is a rational and

mortal animal. So, when we seek for an intermediate between the

blessed immortals and miserable mortals, we should find a being which

is either mortal and blessed, or immortal and miserable.

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Chapter 14.--Whether Men, Though Mortal, Can Enjoy True Blessedness.

It is a great question among men, whether man can be mortal and

blessed. Some, taking the humbler view of his condition, have denied

that he is capable of blessedness so long as he continues in this

mortal life; others, again, have spurned this idea, and have been bold

enough to maintain that, even though mortal, men may be blessed by

attaining wisdom. But if this be the case, why are not these wise men

constituted mediators between miserable mortals and the blessed

immortals, since they have blessedness in common with the latter, and

mortality in common with the former? Certainly, if they are blessed,

they envy no one (for what more miserable than envy?), but seek with

all their might to help miserable mortals on to blessedness, so that

after death they may become immortal, and be associated with the

blessed and immortal angels.

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Chapter 15.--Of the Man Christ Jesus, the Mediator Between God and Men.

But if, as is much more probable and credible, it must needs be that

all men, so long as they are mortal, are also miserable, we must seek

an intermediate who is not only man, but also God, that, by the

interposition of His blessed mortality, He may bring men out of their

mortal misery to a blessed immortality. In this intermediate two

things are requisite, that He become mortal, and that He do not

continue mortal. He did become mortal, not rendering the divinity of

the Word infirm, but assuming the infirmity of flesh. Neither did He

continue mortal in the flesh, but raised it from the dead; for it is

the very fruit of His mediation that those, for the sake of whose

redemption He became the Mediator, should not abide eternally in bodily

death. Wherefore it became the Mediator between us and God to have

both a transient mortality and a permanent blessedness, that by that

which is transient He might be assimilated to mortals, and might

translate them from mortality to that which is permanent. Good angels,

therefore, cannot mediate between miserable mortals and blessed

immortals, for they themselves also are both blessed and immortal; but

evil angels can mediate, because they are immortal like the one party,

miserable like the other. To these is opposed the good Mediator, who,

in opposition to their immortality and misery, has chosen to be mortal

for a time, and has been able to continue blessed in eternity. It is

thus He has destroyed, by the humility of His death and the benignity

of His blessedness, those proud immortals and hurtful wretches, and has

prevented them from seducing to misery by their boast of immortality

those men whose hearts He has cleansed by faith, and whom He has thus

freed from their impure dominion.

Man, then, mortal and miserable, and far removed from the immortal and

the blessed, what medium shall he choose by which he may be united to

immortality and blessedness? The immortality of the demons, which

might have some charm for man, is miserable; the mortality of Christ,

which might offend man, exists no longer. In the one there is the fear

of an eternal misery; in the other, death, which could not be eternal,

can no longer be feared, and blessedness, which is eternal, must be

loved. For the immortal and miserable mediator interposes himself to

prevent us from passing to a blessed immortality, because that which

hinders such a passage, namely, misery, continues in him; but the

mortal and blessed Mediator interposed Himself, in order that, having

passed through mortality, He might of mortals make immortals (showing

His power to do this in His own resurrection), and from being miserable

to raise them to the blessed company from the number of whom He had

Himself never departed. There is, then, a wicked mediator, who

separates friends, and a good Mediator, who reconciles enemies. And

those who separate are numerous, because the multitude of the blessed

are blessed only by their participation in the one God; of which

participation the evil angels being deprived, they are wretched, and

interpose to hinder rather than to help to this blessedness, and by

their very number prevent us from reaching that one beatific good, to

obtain which we need not many but one Mediator, the uncreated Word of

God, by whom all things were made, and in partaking of whom we are

blessed. I do not say that He is Mediator because He is the Word, for

as the Word He is supremely blessed and supremely immortal, and

therefore far from miserable mortals; but He is Mediator as He is man,

for by His humanity He shows us that, in order to obtain that blessed

and beatific good, we need not seek other mediators to lead us through

the successive steps of this attainment, but that the blessed and

beatific God, having Himself become a partaker of our humanity, has

afforded us ready access to the participation of His divinity. For in

delivering us from our mortality and misery, He does not lead us to the

immortal and blessed angels, so that we should become immortal and

blessed by participating in their nature, but He leads us straight to

that Trinity, by participating in which the angels themselves are

blessed. Therefore, when He chose to be in the form of a servant, and

lower than the angels, that He might be our Mediator, He remained

higher than the angels, in the form of God,--Himself at once the way of

life on earth and life itself in heaven.

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Chapter 16.--Whether It is Reasonable in the Platonists to Determine

that the Celestial Gods Decline Contact with Earthly Things and

Intercourse with Men, Who Therefore Require the Intercession of the

Demons.

That opinion, which the same Platonist avers that Plato uttered, is not

true, "that no god holds intercourse with men." [352] And this, he

says, is the chief evidence of their exaltation, that they are never

contaminated by contact with men. He admits, therefore, that the

demons are contaminated; and it follows that they cannot cleanse those

by whom they are themselves contaminated, and thus all alike become

impure, the demons by associating with men, and men by worshipping the

demons. Or, if they say that the demons are not contaminated by

associating and dealing with men, then they are better than the gods,

for the gods, were they to do so, would be contaminated. For this, we

are told, is the glory of the gods, that they are so highly exalted

that no human intercourse can sully them. He affirms, indeed, that the

supreme God, the Creator of all things, whom we call the true God, is

spoken of by Plato as the only God whom the poverty of human speech

fails even passably to describe; and that even the wise, when their

mental energy is as far as possible delivered from the trammels of

connection with the body, have only such gleams of insight into His

nature as may be compared to a flash of lightning illumining the

darkness. If, then, this supreme God, who is truly exalted above all

things, does nevertheless visit the minds of the wise, when emancipated

from the body, with an intelligible and ineffable presence, though this

be only occasional, and as it were a swift flash of light athwart the

darkness, why are the other gods so sublimely removed from all contact

with men, as if they would be polluted by it? as if it were not a

sufficient refutation of this to lift up our eyes to those heavenly

bodies which give the earth its needful light. If the stars, though

they, by his account, are visible gods, are not contaminated when we

look at them, neither are the demons contaminated when men see them

quite closely. But perhaps it is the human voice, and not the eye,

which pollutes the gods; and therefore the demons are appointed to

mediate and carry men's utterances to the gods, who keep themselves

remote through fear of pollution? What am I to say of the other

senses? For by smell neither the demons, who are present, nor the

gods, though they were present and inhaling the exhalations of living

men, would be polluted if they are not contaminated with the effluvia

of the carcasses offered in sacrifice. As for taste, they are pressed

by no necessity of repairing bodily decay, so as to be reduced to ask

food from men. And touch is in their own power. For while it may seem

that contact is so called, because the sense of touch is specially

concerned in it, yet the gods, if so minded, might mingle with men, so

as to see and be seen, hear and be heard; and where is the need of

touching? For men would not dare to desire this, if they were favored

with the sight or conversation of gods or good demons; and if through

excessive curiosity they should desire it, how could they accomplish

their wish without the consent of the god or demon, when they cannot

touch so much as a sparrow unless it be caged?

There is, then, nothing to hinder the gods from mingling in a bodily

form with men, from seeing and being seen, from speaking and hearing.

And if the demons do thus mix with men, as I said, and are not

polluted, while the gods, were they to do so, should be polluted, then

the demons are less liable to pollution than the gods. And if even the

demons are contaminated, how can they help men to attain blessedness

after death, if, so far from being able to cleanse them, and present

them clean to the unpolluted gods, these mediators are themselves

polluted? And if they cannot confer this benefit on men, what good can

their friendly mediation do? Or shall its result be, not that men find

entrance to the gods, but that men and demons abide together in a state

of pollution, and consequently of exclusion from blessedness? Unless,

perhaps, some one may say that, like sponges or things of that sort,

the demons themselves, in the process of cleansing their friends,

become themselves the filthier in proportion as the others become

clean. But if this is the solution, then the gods, who shun contact or

intercourse with men for fear of pollution, mix with demons who are far

more polluted. Or perhaps the gods, who cannot cleanse men without

polluting themselves, can without pollution cleanse the demons who have

been contaminated by human contact? Who can believe such follies,

unless the demons have practised their deceit upon him? If seeing and

being seen is contamination, and if the gods, whom Apuleius himself

calls visible, "the brilliant lights of the world," [353] and the other

stars, are seen by men, are we to believe that the demons, who cannot

be seen unless they please, are safer from contamination? Or if it is

only the seeing and not the being seen which contaminates, then they

must deny that these gods of theirs, these brilliant lights of the

world, see men when their rays beam upon the earth. Their rays are not

contaminated by lighting on all manner of pollution, and are we to

suppose that the gods would be contaminated if they mixed with men, and

even if contact were needed in order to assist them? For there is

contact between the earth and the sun's or moon's rays, and yet this

does not pollute the light.

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[352] Apuleius, ibid.

[353] Virgil, Georg. i. 5.

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Chapter 17.--That to Obtain the Blessed Life, Which Consists in

Partaking of the Supreme Good, Man Needs Such Mediation as is Furnished

Not by a Demon, But by Christ Alone.

I am considerably surprised that such learned men, men who pronounce

all material and sensible things to be altogether inferior to those

that are spiritual and intelligible, should mention bodily contact in

connection with the blessed life. Is that sentiment of Plotinus

forgotten?--"We must fly to our beloved fatherland. There is the

Father, there our all. What fleet or flight shall convey us thither?

Our way is, to become like God." [354] If, then, one is nearer to God

the liker he is to Him, there is no other distance from God than

unlikeness to Him. And the soul of man is unlike that incorporeal and

unchangeable and eternal essence, in proportion as it craves things

temporal and mutable. And as the things beneath, which are mortal and

impure, cannot hold intercourse with the immortal purity which is

above, a mediator is indeed needed to remove this difficulty; but not a

mediator who resembles the highest order of being by possessing an

immortal body, and the lowest by having a diseased soul, which makes

him rather grudge that we be healed than help our cure. We need a

Mediator who, being united to us here below by the mortality of His

body, should at the same time be able to afford us truly divine help in

cleansing and liberating us by means of the immortal righteousness of

His spirit, whereby He remained heavenly even while here upon earth.

Far be it from the incontaminable God to fear pollution from the man

[355] He assumed, or from the men among whom He lived in the form of a

man. For, though His incarnation showed us nothing else, these two

wholesome facts were enough, that true divinity cannot be polluted by

flesh, and that demons are not to be considered better than ourselves

because they have not flesh. [356] This, then, as Scripture says, is

the "Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," [357] of

whose divinity, whereby He is equal to the Father, and humanity,

whereby He has become like us, this is not the place to speak as fully

as I could.

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[354] Augustin apparently quotes from memory from two passages of the

Enneades, l. vi. 8, and ii. 3.

[355] Or, humanity.

[356] Comp. De Trin. 13. 22.

[357] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

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Chapter 18.--That the Deceitful Demons, While Promising to Conduct Men

to God by Their Intercession, Mean to Turn Them from the Path of Truth.

As to the demons, these false and deceitful mediators, who, though

their uncleanness of spirit frequently reveals their misery and

malignity, yet, by virtue of the levity of their aerial bodies and the

nature of the places they inhabit, do contrive to turn us aside and

hinder our spiritual progress; they do not help us towards God, but

rather prevent us from reaching Him. Since even in the bodily way,

which is erroneous and misleading, and in which righteousness does not

walk,--for we must rise to God not by bodily ascent, but by incorporeal

or spiritual conformity to Him,--in this bodily way, I say, which the

friends of the demons arrange according to the weight of the various

elements, the aerial demons being set between the ethereal gods and

earthy men, they imagine the gods to have this privilege, that by this

local interval they are preserved from the pollution of human contact.

Thus they believe that the demons are contaminated by men rather than

men cleansed by the demons, and that the gods themselves should be

polluted unless their local superiority preserved them. Who is so

wretched a creature as to expect purification by a way in which men are

contaminating, demons contaminated, and gods contaminable? Who would

not rather choose that way whereby we escape the contamination of the

demons, and are cleansed from pollution by the incontaminable God, so

as to be associated with the uncontaminated angels?

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Chapter 19.--That Even Among Their Own Worshippers the Name "Demon" Has

Never a Good Signification.

But as some of these demonolators, as I may call them, and among them

Labeo, allege that those whom they call demons are by others called

angels, I must, if I would not seem to dispute merely about words, say

something about the good angels. The Platonists do not deny their

existence, but prefer to call them good demons. But we, following

Scripture, according to which we are Christians, have learned that some

of the angels are good, some bad, but never have we read in Scripture

of good demons; but wherever this or any cognate term occurs, it is

applied only to wicked spirits. And this usage has become so

universal, that, even among those who are called pagans, and who

maintain that demons as well as gods should be worshipped, there is

scarcely a man, no matter how well read and learned, who would dare to

say by way of praise to his slave, You have a demon, or who could doubt

that the man to whom he said this would consider it a curse? Why,

then, are we to subject ourselves to the necessity of explaining away

what we have said when we have given offence by using the word demon,

with which every one, or almost every one, connects a bad meaning,

while we can so easily evade this necessity by using the word angel?

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Chapter 20.--Of the Kind of Knowledge Which Puffs Up the Demons.

However, the very origin of the name suggests something worthy of

consideration, if we compare it with the divine books. They are called

demons from a Greek word meaning knowledge. [358] Now the apostle,

speaking with the Holy Spirit, says, "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity

buildeth up." [359] And this can only be understood as meaning that

without charity knowledge does no good, but inflates a man or magnifies

him with an empty windiness. The demons, then, have knowledge without

charity, and are thereby so inflated or proud, that they crave those

divine honors and religious services which they know to be due to the

true God, and still, as far as they can, exact these from all over whom

they have influence. Against this pride of the demons, under which the

human race was held subject as its merited punishment, there was

exerted the mighty influence of the humility of God, who appeared in

the form of a servant; but men, resembling the demons in pride, but not

in knowledge, and being puffed up with uncleanness, failed to recognize

Him.

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[358] daimon=daemon, knowing; so Plato, Cratylus, 398. B.

[359] 1 Cor. viii. 1.

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Chapter 21.--To What Extent the Lord Was Pleased to Make Himself Known

to the Demons.

The devils themselves knew this manifestation of God so well, that they

said to the Lord though clothed with the infirmity of flesh, "What have

we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us

before the time?" [360] From these words, it is clear that they had

great knowledge, and no charity. They feared His power to punish, and

did not love His righteousness. He made known to them so much as He

pleased, and He was pleased to make known so much as was needful. But

He made Himself known not as to the holy angels, who know Him as the

Word of God, and rejoice in His eternity, which they partake, but as

was requisite to strike with terror the beings from whose tyranny He

was going to free those who were predestined to His kingdom and the

glory of it, eternally true and truly eternal. He made Himself known,

therefore, to the demons, not by that which is life eternal, and the

unchangeable light which illumines the pious, whose souls are cleansed

by the faith that is in Him, but by some temporal effects of His power,

and evidences of His mysterious presence, which were more easily

discerned by the angelic senses even of wicked spirits than by human

infirmity. But when He judged it advisable gradually to suppress these

signs, and to retire into deeper obscurity, the prince of the demons

doubted whether He were the Christ, and endeavored to ascertain this by

tempting Him, in so far as He permitted Himself to be tempted, that He

might adapt the manhood He wore to be an example for our imitation.

But after that temptation, when, as Scripture says, He was ministered

to [361] by the angels who are good and holy, and therefore objects of

terror to the impure spirits, He revealed more and more distinctly to

the demons how great He was, so that, even though the infirmity of His

flesh might seem contemptible, none dared to resist His authority.

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[360] Mark i. 24.

[361] Matt. iv. 3-11.

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Chapter 22.--The Difference Between the Knowledge of the Holy Angels

and that of the Demons.

The good angels, therefore, hold cheap all that knowledge of material

and transitory things which the demons are so proud of possessing,--not

that they are ignorant of these things, but because the love of God,

whereby they are sanctified, is very dear to them, and because, in

comparison of that not merely immaterial but also unchangeable and

ineffable beauty, with the holy love of which they are inflamed, they

despise all things which are beneath it, and all that is not it, that

they may with every good thing that is in them enjoy that good which is

the source of their goodness. And therefore they have a more certain

knowledge even of those temporal and mutable things, because they

contemplate their principles and causes in the word of God, by which

the world was made,--those causes by which one thing is, approved,

another rejected, and all arranged. But the demons do not behold in

the wisdom of God these eternal, and, as it were, cardinal causes of

things temporal, but only foresee a larger part of the future than men

do, by reason of their greater acquaintance with the signs which are

hidden from us. Sometimes, too, it is their own intentions they

predict. And, finally, the demons are frequently, the angels never,

deceived. For it is one thing, by the aid of things temporal and

changeable, to conjecture the changes that may occur in time, and to

modify such things by one's own will and faculty,--and this is to a

certain extent permitted to the demons,--it is another thing to foresee

the changes of times in the eternal and immutable laws of God, which

live in His wisdom, and to know the will of God, the most infallible

and powerful of all causes, by participating in His spirit; and this is

granted to the holy angels by a just discretion. And thus they are not

only eternal, but blessed. And the good wherein they are blessed is

God, by whom they were created. For without end they enjoy the

contemplation and participation of Him.

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Chapter 23.--That the Name of Gods is Falsely Given to the Gods of the

Gentiles, Though Scripture Applies It Both to the Holy Angels and Just

Men.

If the Platonists prefer to call these angels gods rather than demons,

and to reckon them with those whom Plato, their founder and master,

maintains were created by the supreme God, [362] they are welcome to do

so, for I will not spend strength in fighting about words. For if they

say that these beings are immortal, and yet created by the supreme God,

blessed but by cleaving to their Creator and not by their own power,

they say what we say, whatever name they call these beings by. And

that this is the opinion either of all or the best of the Platonists

can be ascertained by their writings. And regarding the name itself,

if they see fit to call such blessed and immortal creatures gods, this

need not give rise to any serious discussion between us, since in our

own Scriptures we read, "The God of gods, the Lord hath spoken;" [363]

and again, "Confess to the God of gods;" [364] and again, "He is a

great King above all gods." [365] And where it is said, "He is to be

feared above all gods," the reason is forthwith added, for it follows,

"for all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the

heavens." [366] He said, "above all gods," but added, "of the

nations;" that is to say, above all those whom the nations count gods,

in other words, demons. By them He is to be feared with that terror in

which they cried to the Lord, "Hast Thou come to destroy us?" But

where it is said, "the God of gods," it cannot be understood as the god

of the demons; and far be it from us to say that "great King above all

gods" means "great King above all demons." But the same Scripture also

calls men who belong to God's people "gods:" "I have said, Ye are

gods, and all of you children of the Most High." [367] Accordingly,

when God is styled God of gods, this may be understood of these gods;

and so, too, when He is styled a great King above all gods.

Nevertheless, some one may say, if men are called gods because they

belong to God's people, whom He addresses by means of men and angels,

are not the immortals, who already enjoy that felicity which men seek

to attain by worshipping God, much more worthy of the title? And what

shall we reply to this, if not that it is not without reason that in

holy Scripture men are more expressly styled gods than those immortal

and blessed spirits to whom we hope to be equal in the resurrection,

because there was a fear that the weakness of unbelief, being overcome

with the excellence of these beings, might presume to constitute some

of them a god? In the case of men this was a result that need not be

guarded against. Besides, it was right that the men belonging to God's

people should be more expressly called gods, to assure and certify them

that He who is called God of gods is their God; because, although those

immortal and blessed spirits who dwell in the heavens are called gods,

yet they are not called gods of gods, that is to say, gods of the men

who constitute God's people, and to whom it is said, "I have said, Ye

are gods, and all of you the children of the Most High." Hence the

saying of the apostle, "Though there be that are called gods, whether

in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many and lords many, but to us

there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in

Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him."

[368]

We need not, therefore, laboriously contend about the name, since the

reality is so obvious as to admit of no shadow of doubt. That which we

say, that the angels who are sent to announce the will of God to men

belong to the order of blessed immortals, does not satisfy the

Platonists, because they believe that this ministry is discharged, not

by those whom they call gods, in other words, not by blessed immortals,

but by demons, whom they dare not affirm to be blessed, but only

immortal, or if they do rank them among the blessed immortals, yet only

as good demons, and not as gods who dwell in the heaven of heavens

remote from all human contact. But, though it may seem mere wrangling

about a name, yet the name of demon is so detestable that we cannot

bear in any sense to apply it to the holy angels. Now, therefore, let

us close this book in the assurance that, whatever we call these

immortal and blessed spirits, who yet are only creatures, they do not

act as mediators to introduce to everlasting felicity miserable

mortals, from whom they are severed by a twofold distinction. And

those others who are mediators, in so far as they have immortality in

common with their superiors, and misery in common with their inferiors

(for they are justly miserable in punishment of their wickedness),

cannot bestow upon us, but rather grudge that we should possess, the

blessedness from which they themselves are excluded. And so the

friends of the demons have nothing considerable to allege why we should

rather worship them as our helpers than avoid them as traitors to our

interests. As for those spirits who are good, and who are therefore

not only immortal but also blessed, and to whom they suppose we should

give the title of gods, and offer worship and sacrifices for the sake

of inheriting a future life, we shall, by God's help, endeavor in the

following book to show that these spirits, call them by what name, and

ascribe to them what nature you will, desire that religious worship be

paid to God alone, by whom they were created, and by whose

communications of Himself to them they are blessed.

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[362] Tim�us.

[363] Ps. l. 1.

[364] Ps. cxxxvi. 2.

[365] Ps. xcv. 3.

[366] Ps. xcvi. 5, 6.

[367] Ps. lxxxii. 6.

[368] 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.

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Book X.

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Argument--In this book Augustin teaches that the good angels wish God

alone, whom they themselves serve, to receive that divine honor which

is rendered by sacrifice, and which is called "latreia." He then goes

on to dispute against Porphyry about the principle and way of the

soul's cleansing and deliverance.

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Chapter 1.--That the Platonists Themselves Have Determined that God

Alone Can Confer Happiness Either on Angels or Men, But that It Yet

Remains a Question Whether Those Spirits Whom They Direct Us to

Worship, that We May Obtain Happiness, Wish Sacrifice to Be Offered to

Themselves, or to the One God Only.

It is the decided opinion of all who use their brains, that all men

desire to be happy. But who are happy, or how they become so, these

are questions about which the weakness of human understanding stirs

endless and angry controversies, in which philosophers have wasted

their strength and expended their leisure. To adduce and discuss their

various opinions would be tedious, and is unnecessary. The reader may

remember what we said in the eighth book, while making a selection of

the philosophers with whom we might discuss the question regarding the

future life of happiness, whether we can reach it by paying divine

honors to the one true God, the Creator of all gods, or by worshipping

many gods, and he will not expect us to repeat here the same argument,

especially as, even if he has forgotten it, he may refresh his memory

by reperusal. For we made selection of the Platonists, justly esteemed

the noblest of the philosophers, because they had the wit to perceive

that the human soul, immortal and rational, or intellectual, as it is,

cannot be happy except by partaking of the light of that God by whom

both itself and the world were made; and also that the happy life which

all men desire cannot be reached by any who does not cleave with a pure

and holy love to that one supreme good, the unchangeable God. But as

even these philosophers, whether accommodating to the folly and

ignorance of the people, or, as the apostle says, "becoming vain in

their imaginations," [369] supposed or allowed others to suppose that

many gods should be worshipped, so that some of them considered that

divine honor by worship and sacrifice should be rendered even to the

demons (an error I have already exploded), we must now, by God's help,

ascertain what is thought about our religious worship and piety by

those immortal and blessed spirits, who dwell in the heavenly places

among dominations, principalities, powers, whom the Platonists call

gods, and some either good demons, or, like us, angels,--that is to

say, to put it more plainly, whether the angels desire us to offer

sacrifice and worship, and to consecrate our possessions and ourselves,

to them or only to God, theirs and ours.

For this is the worship which is due to the Divinity, or, to speak more

accurately, to the Deity; and, to express this worship in a single word

as there does not occur to me any Latin term sufficiently exact, I

shall avail myself, whenever necessary, of a Greek word. Latreia,

whenever it occurs in Scripture, is rendered by the word service. But

that service which is due to men, and in reference to which the apostle

writes that servants must be subject to their own masters, [370] is

usually designated by another word in Greek, [371] whereas the service

which is paid to God alone by worship, is always, or almost always,

called latreia in the usage of those who wrote from the divine

oracles. This cannot so well be called simply "cultus," for in that

case it would not seem to be due exclusively to God; for the same word

is applied to the respect we pay either to the memory or the living

presence of men. From it, too, we derive the words agriculture,

colonist, and others. [372] And the heathen call their gods

"coelicol�," not because they worship heaven, but because they dwell in

it, and as it were colonize it,--not in the sense in which we call

those colonists who are attached to their native soil to cultivate it

under the rule of the owners, but in the sense in which the great

master of the Latin language says, "There was an ancient city inhabited

by Tyrian colonists." [373] He called them colonists, not because

they cultivated the soil, but because they inhabited the city. So,

too, cities that have hived off from larger cities are called

colonies. Consequently, while it is quite true that, using the word in

a special sense, "cult" can be rendered to none but God, yet, as the

word is applied to other things besides, the cult due to God cannot in

Latin be expressed by this word alone.

The word "religion" might seem to express more definitely the worship

due to God alone, and therefore Latin translators have used this word

to represent threskeia; yet, as not only the uneducated, but also the

best instructed, use the word religion to express human ties, and

relationships, and affinities, it would inevitably introduce ambiguity

to use this word in discussing the worship of God, unable as we are to

say that religion is nothing else than the worship of God, without

contradicting the common usage which applies this word to the

observance of social relationships. "Piety," again, or, as the Greeks

say, eusebeia, is commonly understood as the proper designation of the

worship of God. Yet this word also is used of dutifulness to parents.

The common people, too, use it of works of charity, which, I suppose,

arises from the circumstance that God enjoins the performance of such

works, and declares that He is pleased with them instead of, or in

preference to sacrifices. From this usage it has also come to pass

that God Himself is called pious, [374] in which sense the Greeks never

use eusebein, though eusebeia is applied to works of charity by their

common people also. In some passages of Scripture, therefore, they

have sought to preserve the distinction by using not eusebeia, the more

general word, but theosebeia, which literally denotes the worship of

God. We, on the other hand, cannot express either of these ideas by

one word. This worship, then, which in Greek is called latreia, and in

Latin "servitus" [service], but the service due to God only; this

worship, which in Greek is called threskeia, and in Latin "religio,"

but the religion by which we are bound to God only; this worship, which

they call theosebeia, but which we cannot express in one word, but call

it the worship of God,--this, we say, belongs only to that God who is

the true God, and who makes His worshippers gods. [375] And

therefore, whoever these immortal and blessed inhabitants of heaven be,

if they do not love us, and wish us to be blessed, then we ought not to

worship them; and if they do love us and desire our happiness, they

cannot wish us to be made happy by any other means than they themselves

have enjoyed,--for how could they wish our blessedness to flow from one

source, theirs from another?

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[369] Rom. i. 21.

[370] Eph. vi. 5.

[371] Namely, douleia: comp. Qu�st in Exod. 94; Qu�st. in Gen. 21;

Contra Faustum, 15. 9, etc.

[372] Agricol�, coloni, incol�.

[373] Virgil, �n., i. 12.

[374] 2 Chron. xxx. 9; Eccl. xi. 13; Judith vii. 20.

[375] Ps. lxxxii. 6.

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Chapter 2.--The Opinion of Plotinus the Platonist Regarding

Enlightenment from Above.

But with these more estimable philosophers we have no dispute in this

matter. For they perceived, and in various forms abundantly expressed

in their writings, that these spirits have the same source of happiness

as ourselves,--a certain intelligible light, which is their God, and is

different from themselves, and illumines them that they may be

penetrated with light, and enjoy perfect happiness in the participation

of God. Plotinus, commenting on Plato, repeatedly and strongly asserts

that not even the soul which they believe to be the soul of the world,

derives its blessedness from any other source than we do, viz., from

that Light which is distinct from it and created it, and by whose

intelligible illumination it enjoys light in things intelligible. He

also compares those spiritual things to the vast and conspicuous

heavenly bodies, as if God were the sun, and the soul the moon; for

they suppose that the moon derives its light from the sun. That great

Platonist, therefore, says that the rational soul, or rather the

intellectual soul,--in which class he comprehends the souls of the

blessed immortals who inhabit heaven,--has no nature superior to it

save God, the Creator of the world and the soul itself, and that these

heavenly spirits derive their blessed life, and the light of truth from

their blessed life, and the light of truth, the source as ourselves,

agreeing with the gospel where we read, "There was a man sent from God

whose name was John; the same came for a witness to bear witness of

that Light, that through Him all might believe. He was not that Light,

but that he might bear witness of the Light. That was the true Light

which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" [376] a

distinction which sufficiently proves that the rational or intellectual

soul such as John had cannot be its own light, but needs to receive

illumination from another, the true Light. This John himself avows

when he delivers his witness: "We have all received of His fullness."

[377]

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[376] John i. 6-9.

[377] Ibid. 16.

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Chapter 3.--That the Platonists, Though Knowing Something of the

Creator of the Universe, Have Misunderstood the True Worship of God, by

Giving Divine Honor to Angels, Good or Bad.

This being so, if the Platonists, or those who think with them, knowing

God, glorified Him as God and gave thanks, if they did not become vain

in their own thoughts, if they did not originate or yield to the

popular errors, they would certainly acknowledge that neither could the

blessed immortals retain, nor we miserable mortals reach, a happy

condition without worshipping the one God of gods, who is both theirs

and ours. To Him we owe the service which is called in Greek latreia,

whether we render it outwardly or inwardly; for we are all His temple,

each of us severally and all of us together, because He condescends to

inhabit each individually and the whole harmonious body, being no

greater in all than in each, since He is neither expanded nor divided.

Our heart when it rises to Him is His altar; the priest who intercedes

for us is His Only-begotten; we sacrifice to Him bleeding victims when

we contend for His truth even unto blood; to Him we offer the sweetest

incense when we come before Him burning with holy and pious love; to

Him we devote and surrender ourselves and His gifts in us; to Him, by

solemn feasts and on appointed days, we consecrate the memory of His

benefits, lest through the lapse of time ungrateful oblivion should

steal upon us; to Him we offer on the altar of our heart the sacrifice

of humility and praise, kindled by the fire of burning love. It is

that we may see Him, so far as He can be seen; it is that we may cleave

to Him, that we are cleansed from all stain of sins and evil passions,

and are consecrated in His name. For He is the fountain of our

happiness, He the end of all our desires. Being attached to Him, or

rather let me say, re-attached,--for we had detached ourselves and lost

hold of Him,--being, I say, re-attached to Him, [378] we tend towards

Him by love, that we may rest in Him, and find our blessedness by

attaining that end. For our good, about which philosophers have so

keenly contended, is nothing else than to be united to God. It is, if

I may say so, by spiritually embracing Him that the intellectual soul

is filled and impregnated with true virtues. We are enjoined to love

this good with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our

strength. To this good we ought to be led by those who love us, and to

lead those we love. Thus are fulfilled those two commandments on which

hang all the law and the prophets: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God

with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul;" and

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." [379] For, that man might

be intelligent in his self-love, there was appointed for him an end to

which he might refer all his actions, that he might be blessed. For he

who loves himself wishes nothing else than this. And the end set

before him is "to draw near to God." [380] And so, when one who has

this intelligent self-love is commanded to love his neighbor as

himself, what else is enjoined than that he shall do all in his power

to commend to him the love of God? This is the worship of God, this is

true religion, this right piety, this the service due to God only. If

any immortal power, then, no matter with what virtue endowed, loves us

as himself, he must desire that we find our happiness by submitting

ourselves to Him, in submission to whom he himself finds happiness. If

he does not worship God, he is wretched, because deprived of God; if he

worships God, he cannot wish to be worshipped in God's stead. On the

contrary, these higher powers acquiesce heartily in the divine sentence

in which it is written, "He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto

the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed." [381]

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[378] Augustin here remarks, in a clause that cannot be given in

English, that the word religio is derived from religere.--So Cicero, De

Nat. Deor. ii. 28.

[379] Matt. xxii. 37-40.

[380] Ps. lxxiii. 28.

[381] Ex. xxii. 20.

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Chapter 4.--That Sacrifice is Due to the True God Only.

But, putting aside for the present the other religious services with

which God is worshipped, certainly no man would dare to say that

sacrifice is due to any but God. Many parts, indeed, of divine worship

are unduly used in showing honor to men, whether through an excessive

humility or pernicious flattery; yet, while this is done, those persons

who are thus worshipped and venerated, or even adored, are reckoned no

more than human; and who ever thought of sacrificing save to one whom

he knew, supposed, or feigned to be a god? And how ancient a part of

God's worship sacrifice is, those two brothers, Cain and Abel,

sufficiently show, of whom God rejected the elder's sacrifice, and

looked favorably on the younger's.

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Chapter 5.--Of the Sacrifices Which God Does Not Require, But Wished to

Be Observed for the Exhibition of Those Things Which He Does Require.

And who is so foolish as to suppose that the things offered to God are

needed by Him for some uses of His own? Divine Scripture in many

places explodes this idea. Not to be wearisome, suffice it to quote

this brief saying from a psalm: "I have said to the Lord, Thou art my

God: for Thou needest not my goodness." [382] We must believe, then,

that God has no need, not only of cattle, or any other earthly and

material thing, but even of man's righteousness, and that whatever

right worship is paid to God profits not Him, but man. For no man

would say he did a benefit to a fountain by drinking, or to the light

by seeing. And the fact that the ancient church offered animal

sacrifices, which the people of God now-a-days read of without

imitating, proves nothing else than this, that those sacrifices

signified the things which we do for the purpose of drawing near to

God, and inducing our neighbor to do the same. A sacrifice, therefore,

is the visible sacrament or sacred sign of an invisible sacrifice.

Hence that penitent in the psalm, or it may be the Psalmist himself,

entreating God to be merciful to his sins, says, "If Thou desiredst

sacrifice, I would give it: Thou delightest not in whole

burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken heart: a heart

contrite and humble God will not despise." [383] Observe how, in the

very words in which he is expressing God's refusal of sacrifice, he

shows that God requires sacrifice. He does not desire the sacrifice of

a slaughtered beast, but He desires the sacrifice of a contrite heart.

Thus, that sacrifice which he says God does not wish, is the symbol of

the sacrifice which God does wish. God does not wish sacrifices in the

sense in which foolish people think He wishes them, viz., to gratify

His own pleasure. For if He had not wished that the sacrifices He

requires, as, e.g., a heart contrite and humbled by penitent sorrow,

should be symbolized by those sacrifices which He was thought to desire

because pleasant to Himself, the old law would never have enjoined

their presentation; and they were destined to be merged when the fit

opportunity arrived, in order that men might not suppose that the

sacrifices themselves, rather than the things symbolized by them, were

pleasing to God or acceptable in us. Hence, in another passage from

another psalm, he says, "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for

the world is mine and the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of

bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" [384] as if He should say,

Supposing such things were necessary to me, I would never ask thee for

what I have in my own hand. Then he goes on to mention what these

signify: "Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows

unto the Most High. And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will

deliver thee, and thou shall glorify me." [385] So in another

prophet: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself

before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings,

with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of

rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my

first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my

soul? Hath He showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord

require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk

humbly with thy God?" [386] In the words of this prophet, these two

things are distinguished and set forth with sufficient explicitness,

that God does not require these sacrifices for their own sakes, and

that He does require the sacrifices which they symbolize. In the

epistle entitled "To the Hebrews" it is said, "To do good and to

communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well

pleased." [387] And so, when it is written, "I desire mercy rather

than sacrifice," [388] nothing else is meant than that one sacrifice is

preferred to another; for that which in common speech is called

sacrifice is only the symbol of the true sacrifice. Now mercy is the

true sacrifice, and therefore it is said, as I have just quoted, "with

such sacrifices God is well pleased." All the divine ordinances,

therefore, which we read concerning the sacrifices in the service of

the tabernacle or the temple, we are to refer to the love of God and

our neighbor. For "on these two commandments," as it is written, "hang

all the law and the prophets." [389]

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[382] Ps. xvi. 2.

[383] Ps. li. 16, 17.

[384] Ps. l. 12, 13.

[385] Ps. l. 14, 15.

[386] Micah vi. 6-8.

[387] Heb. xiii. 16.

[388] Hos. vi. 6.

[389] Matt. xxii. 40.

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Chapter 6.--Of the True and Perfect Sacrifice.

Thus a true sacrifice is every work which is done that we may be united

to God in holy fellowship, and which has a reference to that supreme

good and end in which alone we can be truly blessed. [390] And

therefore even the mercy we show to men, if it is not shown for God's

sake, is not a sacrifice. For, though made or offered by man,

sacrifice is a divine thing, as those who called it sacrifice [391]

meant to indicate. Thus man himself, consecrated in the name of God,

and vowed to God, is a sacrifice in so far as he dies to the world that

he may live to God. For this is a part of that mercy which each man

shows to himself; as it is written, "Have mercy on thy soul by pleasing

God." [392] Our body, too, as a sacrifice when we chasten it by

temperance, if we do so as we ought, for God's sake, that we may not

yield our members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but

instruments of righteousness unto God. [393] Exhorting to this

sacrifice, the apostle says, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by

the mercy of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,

acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." [394] If, then,

the body, which, being inferior, the soul uses as a servant or

instrument, is a sacrifice when it is used rightly, and with reference

to God, how much more does the soul itself become a sacrifice when it

offers itself to God, in order that, being inflamed by the fire of His

love, it may receive of His beauty and become pleasing to Him, losing

the shape of earthly desire, and being remoulded in the image of

permanent loveliness? And this, indeed, the apostle subjoins, saying,

"And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed in the

renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and

acceptable, and perfect will of God." [395] Since, therefore, true

sacrifices are works of mercy to ourselves or others, done with a

reference to God, and since works of mercy have no other object than

the relief of distress or the conferring of happiness, and since there

is no happiness apart from that good of which it is said, "It is good

for me to be very near to God," [396] it follows that the whole

redeemed city, that is to say, the congregation or community of the

saints, is offered to God as our sacrifice through the great High

Priest, who offered Himself to God in His passion for us, that we might

be members of this glorious head, according to the form of a servant.

For it was this form He offered, in this He was offered, because it is

according to it He is Mediator, in this He is our Priest, in this the

Sacrifice. Accordingly, when the apostle had exhorted us to present

our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable

service, and not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed in

the renewing of our mind, that we might prove what is that good, and

acceptable, and perfect will of God, that is to say, the true sacrifice

of ourselves, he says, "For I say, through the grace of God which is

given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself

more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as

God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For, as we have many

members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we,

being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of

another, having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to

us." [397] This is the sacrifice of Christians: we, being many, are

one body in Christ. And this also is the sacrifice which the Church

continually celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, known to the

faithful, in which she teaches that she herself is offered in the

offering she makes to God.

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[390] On the service rendered to the Church by this definition, see

Waterland's Works, v. 124.

[391] Literally, a sacred action.

[392] Ecclus. xxx. 24.

[393] Rom. vi. 13.

[394] Rom. xii. 1.

[395] Rom. xii. 2.

[396] Ps. lxxiii. 28.

[397] Rom. xii. 3-6.

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Chapter 7.--Of the Love of the Holy Angels, Which Prompts Them to

Desire that We Worship the One True God, and Not Themselves.

It is very right that these blessed and immortal spirits, who inhabit

celestial dwellings, and rejoice in the communications of their

Creator's fullness, firm in His eternity, assured in His truth, holy by

His grace, since they compassionately and tenderly regard us miserable

mortals, and wish us to become immortal and happy, do not desire us to

sacrifice to themselves, but to Him whose sacrifice they know

themselves to be in common with us. For we and they together are the

one city of God, to which it is said in the psalm, "Glorious things are

spoken of thee, O city of God;" [398] the human part sojourning here

below, the angelic aiding from above. For from that heavenly city, in

which God's will is the intelligible and unchangeable law, from that

heavenly council-chamber,--for they sit in counsel regarding us,--that

holy Scripture, descended to us by the ministry of angels, in which it

is written, "He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only,

he shall be utterly destroyed," [399] --this Scripture, this law, these

precepts, have been confirmed by such miracles, that it is sufficiently

evident to whom these immortal and blessed spirits, who desire us to be

like themselves, wish us to sacrifice.

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[398] Ps. lxxxvii. 3.

[399] Ex. xxii. 20.

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Chapter 8.--Of the Miracles Which God Has Condescended to Adhibit

Through the Ministry of Angels, to His Promises for the Confirmation of

the Faith of the Godly.

I should seem tedious were I to recount all the ancient miracles, which

were wrought in attestation of God's promises which He made to Abraham

thousands of years ago, that in his seed all the nations of the earth

should be blessed. [400] For who can but marvel that Abraham's barren

wife should have given birth to a son at an age when not even a

prolific woman could bear children; or, again, that when Abraham

sacrificed, a flame from heaven should have run between the divided

parts; [401] or that the angels in human form, whom he had hospitably

entertained, and who had renewed God's promise of offspring, should

also have predicted the destruction of Sodom by fire from heaven; [402]

and that his nephew Lot should have been rescued from Sodom by the

angels as the fire was just descending, while his wife, who looked back

as she went, and was immediately turned into salt, stood as a sacred

beacon warning us that no one who is being saved should long for what

he is leaving? How striking also were the wonders done by Moses to

rescue God's people from the yoke of slavery in Egypt, when the magi of

the Pharaoh, that is, the king of Egypt, who tyrannized over this

people, were suffered to do some wonderful things that they might be

vanquished all the more signally! They did these things by the magical

arts and incantations to which the evil spirits or demons are addicted;

while Moses, having as much greater power as he had right on his side,

and having the aid of angels, easily conquered them in the name of the

Lord who made heaven and earth. And, in fact, the magicians failed at

the third plague; whereas Moses, dealing out the miracles delegated to

him, brought ten plagues upon the land, so that the hard hearts of

Pharaoh and the Egyptians yielded, and the people were let go. But,

quickly repenting, and essaying to overtake the departing Hebrews, who

had crossed the sea on dry ground, they were covered and overwhelmed in

the returning waters. What shall I say of those frequent and

stupendous exhibitions of divine power, while the people were conducted

through the wilderness?--of the waters which could not be drunk, but

lost their bitterness, and quenched the thirsty, when at God's command

a piece of wood was cast into them? of the manna that descended from

heaven to appease their hunger, and which begat worms and putrefied

when any one collected more than the appointed quantity, and yet,

though double was gathered on the day before the Sabbath (it not being

lawful to gather it on that day), remained fresh? of the birds which

filled the camp, and turned appetite into satiety when they longed for

flesh, which it seemed impossible to supply to so vast a population? of

the enemies who met them, and opposed their passage with arms, and were

defeated without the loss of a single Hebrew, when Moses prayed with

his hands extended in the form of a cross? of the seditious persons who

arose among God's people, and separated themselves from the

divinely-ordered community, and were swallowed up alive by the earth, a

visible token of an invisible punishment? of the rock struck with the

rod, and pouring out waters more than enough for all the host? of the

deadly serpents' bites, sent in just punishment of sin, but healed by

looking at the lifted brazen serpent, so that not only were the

tormented people healed, but a symbol of the crucifixion of death set

before them in this destruction of death by death? It was this serpent

which was preserved in memory of this event, and was afterwards

worshipped by the mistaken people as an idol, and was destroyed by the

pious and God-fearing king Hezekiah, much to his credit.

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[400] Gen. xviii. 18.

[401] Gen. xv. 17. In his Retractations, ii. 43, Augustin says that he

should not have spoken of this as miraculous, because it was an

appearance seen in sleep.

[402] Gen. xviii.

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Chapter 9.--Of the Illicit Arts Connected with Demonolatry, and of

Which the Platonist Porphyry Adopts Some, and Discards Others.

These miracles, and many others of the same nature, which it were

tedious to mention, were wrought for the purpose of commending the

worship of the one true God, and prohibiting the worship of a multitude

of false gods. Moreover, they were wrought by simple faith and godly

confidence, not by the incantations and charms composed under the

influence of a criminal tampering with the unseen world, of an art

which they call either magic, or by the more abominable title

necromancy, [403] or the more honorable designation theurgy; for they

wish to discriminate between those whom the people call magicians, who

practise necromancy, and are addicted to illicit arts and condemned,

and those others who seem to them to be worthy of praise for their

practice of theurgy,--the truth, however, being that both classes are

the slaves of the deceitful rites of the demons whom they invoke under

the names of angels.

For even Porphyry promises some kind of purgation of the soul by the

help of theurgy, though he does so with some hesitation and shame, and

denies that this art can secure to any one a return to God; so that you

can detect his opinion vacillating between the profession of philosophy

and an art which he feels to be presumptuous and sacrilegious. For at

one time he warns us to avoid it as deceitful, and prohibited by law,

and dangerous to those who practise it; then again, as if in deference

to its advocates, he declares it useful for cleansing one part of the

soul, not, indeed, the intellectual part, by which the truth of things

intelligible, which have no sensible images, is recognized, but the

spiritual part, which takes cognizance of the images of things

material. This part, he says, is prepared and fitted for intercourse

with spirits and angels, and for the vision of the gods, by the help of

certain theurgic consecrations, or, as they call them, mysteries. He

acknowledges, however, that these theurgic mysteries impart to the

intellectual soul no such purity as fits it to see its God, and

recognize the things that truly exist. And from this acknowledgment we

may infer what kind of gods these are, and what kind of vision of them

is imparted by theurgic consecrations, if by it one cannot see the

things which truly exist. He says, further, that the rational, or, as

he prefers calling it, the intellectual soul, can pass into the heavens

without the spiritual part being cleansed by theurgic art, and that

this art cannot so purify the spiritual part as to give it entrance to

immortality and eternity. And therefore, although he distinguishes

angels from demons, asserting that the habitation of the latter is in

the air, while the former dwell in the ether and empyrean, and although

he advises us to cultivate the friendship of some demon, who may be

able after our death to assist us, and elevate us at least a little

above the earth,--for he owns that it is by another way we must reach

the heavenly society of the angels,--he at the same time distinctly

warns us to avoid the society of demons, saying that the soul,

expiating its sin after death, execrates the worship of demons by whom

it was entangled. And of theurgy itself, though he recommends it as

reconciling angels and demons, he cannot deny that it treats with

powers which either themselves envy the soul its purity, or serve the

arts of those who do envy it. He complains of this through the mouth

of some Chald�an or other: "A good man in Chald�a complains," he says,

"that his most strenuous efforts to cleanse his soul were frustrated,

because another man, who had influence in these matters, and who envied

him purity, had prayed to the powers, and bound them by his conjuring

not to listen to his request. Therefore," adds Porphyry, "what the one

man bound, the other could not loose." And from this he concludes that

theurgy is a craft which accomplishes not only good but evil among gods

and men; and that the gods also have passions, and are perturbed and

agitated by the emotions which Apuleius attributed to demons and men,

but from which he preserved the gods by that sublimity of residence,

which, in common with Plato, he accorded to them.

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[403] Goetia.

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Chapter 10.--Concerning Theurgy, Which Promises a Delusive Purification

of the Soul by the Invocation of Demons.

But here we have another and a much more learned Platonist than

Apuleius, Porphyry, to wit, asserting that, by I know not what theurgy,

even the gods themselves are subjected to passions and perturbations;

for by adjurations they were so bound and terrified that they could not

confer purity of soul,--were so terrified by him who imposed on them a

wicked command, that they could not by the same theurgy be freed from

that terror, and fulfill the righteous behest of him who prayed to

them, or do the good he sought. Who does not see that all these things

are fictions of deceiving demons, unless he be a wretched slave of

theirs, and an alien from the grace of the true Liberator? For if the

Chald�an had been dealing with good gods, certainly a well-disposed

man, who sought to purify his own soul, would have had more influence

with them than an evil-disposed man seeking to hinder him. Or, if the

gods were just, and considered the man unworthy of the purification he

sought, at all events they should not have been terrified by an envious

person, nor hindered, as Porphyry avows, by the fear of a stronger

deity, but should have simply denied the boon on their own free

judgment. And it is surprising that that well-disposed Chald�an, who

desired to purify his soul by theurgical rites, found no superior deity

who could either terrify the frightened gods still more, and force them

to confer the boon, or compose their fears, and so enable them to do

good without compulsion,--even supposing that the good theurgist had no

rites by which he himself might purge away the taint of fear from the

gods whom he invoked for the purification of his own soul. And why is

it that there is a god who has power to terrify the inferior gods, and

none who has power to free them from fear? Is there found a god who

listens to the envious man, and frightens the gods from doing good? and

is there not found a god who listens to the well-disposed man, and

removes the fear of the gods that they may do him good? O excellent

theurgy! O admirable purification of the soul!--a theurgy in which the

violence of an impure envy has more influence than the entreaty of

purity and holiness. Rather let us abominate and avoid the deceit of

such wicked spirits, and listen to sound doctrine. As to those who

perform these filthy cleansings by sacrilegious rites, and see in their

initiated state (as he further tells us, though we may question this

vision) certain wonderfully lovely appearances of angels or gods, this

is what the apostle refers to when he speaks of "Satan transforming

himself into an angel of light." [404] For these are the delusive

appearances of that spirit who longs to entangle wretched souls in the

deceptive worship of many and false gods, and to turn them aside from

the true worship of the true God, by whom alone they are cleansed and

healed, and who, as was said of Proteus, "turns himself into all

shapes," [405] equally hurtful, whether he assaults us as an enemy, or

assumes the disguise of a friend.

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[404] 2 Cor. xi. 14.

[405] Virgil, Georg. iv. 411.

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Chapter 11.--Of Porphyry's Epistle to Anebo, in Which He Asks for

Information About the Differences Among Demons.

It was a better tone which Porphyry adopted in his letter to Anebo the

Egyptian, in which, assuming the character of an inquirer consulting

him, he unmasks and explodes these sacrilegious arts. In that letter,

indeed, he repudiates all demons, whom he maintains to be so foolish as

to be attracted by the sacrificial vapors, and therefore residing not

in the ether, but in the air beneath the moon, and indeed in the moon

itself. Yet he has not the boldness to attribute to all the demons all

the deceptions and malicious and foolish practices which justly move

his indignation. For, though he acknowledges that as a race demons are

foolish, he so far accommodates himself to popular ideas as to call

some of them benignant demons. He expresses surprise that sacrifices

not only incline the gods, but also compel and force them to do what

men wish; and he is at a loss to understand how the sun and moon, and

other visible celestial bodies,--for bodies he does not doubt that they

are,--are considered gods, if the gods are distinguished from the

demons by their incorporeality; also, if they are gods, how some are

called beneficent and others hurtful, and how they, being corporeal,

are numbered with the gods, who are incorporeal. He inquires further,

and still as one in doubt, whether diviners and wonderworkers are men

of unusually powerful souls, or whether the power to do these things is

communicated by spirits from without. He inclines to the latter

opinion, on the ground that it is by the use of stones and herbs that

they lay spells on people, and open closed doors, and do similar

wonders. And on this account, he says, some suppose that there is a

race of beings whose property it is to listen to men,--a race

deceitful, full of contrivances, capable of assuming all forms,

simulating gods, demons, and dead men,--and that it is this race which

bring about all these things which have the appearance of good or evil,

but that what is really good they never help us in, and are indeed

unacquainted with, for they make wickedness easy, but throw obstacles

in the path of those who eagerly follow virtue; and that they are

filled with pride and rashness, delight in sacrificial odors, are taken

with flattery. These and the other characteristics of this race of

deceitful and malicious spirits, who come into the souls of men and

delude their senses, both in sleep and waking, he describes not as

things of which he is himself convinced, but only with so much

suspicion and doubt as to cause him to speak of them as commonly

received opinions. We should sympathize with this great philosopher in

the difficulty he experienced in acquainting himself with and

confidently assailing the whole fraternity of devils, which any

Christian old woman would unhesitatingly describe and most unreservedly

detest. Perhaps, however, he shrank from offending Anebo, to whom he

was writing, himself the most eminent patron of these mysteries, or the

others who marvelled at these magical feats as divine works, and

closely allied to the worship of the gods.

However, he pursues this subject, and, still in the character of an

inquirer, mentions some things which no sober judgment could attribute

to any but malicious and deceitful powers. He asks why, after the

better class of spirits have been invoked, the worse should be

commanded to perform the wicked desires of men; why they do not hear a

man who has just left a woman's embrace, while they themselves make no

scruple of tempting men to incest and adultery; why their priests are

commanded to abstain from animal food for fear of being polluted by the

corporeal exhalations, while they themselves are attracted by the fumes

of sacrifices and other exhalations; why the initiated are forbidden to

touch a dead body, while their mysteries are celebrated almost entirely

by means of dead bodies; why it is that a man addicted to any vice

should utter threats, not to a demon or to the soul of a dead man, but

to the sun and moon, or some of the heavenly bodies, which he

intimidates by imaginary terrors, that he may wring from them a real

boon,--for he threatens that he will demolish the sky, and such like

impossibilities,--that those gods, being alarmed, like silly children,

with imaginary and absurd threats, may do what they are ordered.

Porphyry further relates that a man, Ch�remon, profoundly versed in

these sacred or rather sacrilegious mysteries, had written that the

famous Egyptian mysteries of Isis and her husband Osiris had very great

influence with the gods to compel them to do what they were ordered,

when he who used the spells threatened to divulge or do away with these

mysteries, and cried with a threatening voice that he would scatter the

members of Osiris if they neglected his orders. Not without reason is

Porphyry surprised that a man should utter such wild and empty threats

against the gods,--not against gods of no account, but against the

heavenly gods, and those that shine with sidereal light,--and that

these threats should be effectual to constrain them with resistless

power, and alarm them so that they fulfill his wishes. Not without

reason does he, in the character of an inquirer into the reasons of

these surprising things, give it to be understood that they are done by

that race of spirits which he previously described as if quoting other

people's opinions,--spirits who deceive not, as he said, by nature, but

by their own corruption, and who simulate gods and dead men, but not,

as he said, demons, for demons they really are. As to his idea that by

means of herbs, and stones, and animals, and certain incantations and

noises, and drawings, sometimes fanciful, and sometimes copied from the

motions of the heavenly bodies, men create upon earth powers capable of

bringing about various results, all that is only the mystification

which these demons practise on those who are subject to them, for the

sake of furnishing themselves with merriment at the expense of their

dupes. Either, then, Porphyry was sincere in his doubts and inquiries,

and mentioned these things to demonstrate and put beyond question that

they were the work, not of powers which aid us in obtaining life, but

of deceitful demons; or, to take a more favorable view of the

philosopher, he adopted this method with the Egyptian who was wedded to

these errors, and was proud of them, that he might not offend him by

assuming the attitude of a teacher, nor discompose his mind by the

altercation of a professed assailant, but, by assuming the character of

an inquirer, and the humble attitude of one who was anxious to learn,

might turn his attention to these matters, and show how worthy they are

to be despised and relinquished. Towards the conclusion of his letter,

he requests Anebo to inform him what the Egyptian wisdom indicates as

the way to blessedness. But as to those who hold intercourse with the

gods, and pester them only for the sake of finding a runaway slave, or

acquiring property, or making a bargain of a marriage, or such things,

he declares that their pretensions to wisdom are vain. He adds that

these same gods, even granting that on other points their utterances

were true, were yet so ill-advised and unsatisfactory in their

disclosures about blessedness, that they cannot be either gods or good

demons, but are either that spirit who is called the deceiver, or mere

fictions of the imagination.

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Chapter 12.--Of the Miracles Wrought by the True God Through the

Ministry of the Holy Angels.

Since by means of these arts wonders are done which quite surpass human

power, what choice have we but to believe that these predictions and

operations, which seem to be miraculous and divine, and which at the

same time form no part of the worship of the one God, in adherence to

whom, as the Platonists themselves abundantly testify, all blessedness

consists, are the pastime of wicked spirits, who thus seek to seduce

and hinder the truly godly? On the other hand, we cannot but believe

that all miracles, whether wrought by angels or by other means, so long

as they are so done as to commend the worship and religion of the one

God in whom alone is blessedness, are wrought by those who love us in a

true and godly sort, or through their means, God Himself working in

them. For we cannot listen to those who maintain that the invisible

God works no visible miracles; for even they believe that He made the

world, which surely they will not deny to be visible. Whatever marvel

happens in this world, it is certainly less marvellous than this whole

world itself,--I mean the sky and earth, and all that is in them,--and

these God certainly made. But, as the Creator Himself is hidden and

incomprehensible to man, so also is the manner of creation. Although,

therefore, the standing miracle of this visible world is little thought

of, because always before us, yet, when we arouse ourselves to

contemplate it, it is a greater miracle than the rarest and most

unheard-of marvels. For man himself is a greater miracle than any

miracle done through his instrumentality. Therefore God, who made the

visible heaven and earth, does not disdain to work visible miracles in

heaven or earth, that He may thereby awaken the soul which is immersed

in things visible to worship Himself, the Invisible. But the place

and time of these miracles are dependent on His unchangeable will, in

which things future are ordered as if already they were accomplished.

For He moves things temporal without Himself moving in time, He does

not in one way know things that are to be, and, in another, things that

have been; neither does He listen to those who pray otherwise than as

He sees those that will pray. For, even when His angels hear us, it is

He Himself who hears us in them, as in His true temple not made with

hands, as in those men who are His saints; and His answers, though

accomplished in time, have been arranged by His eternal appointment.

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Chapter 13.--Of the Invisible God, Who Has Often Made Himself Visible,

Not as He Really Is, But as the Beholders Could Bear the Sight.

Neither need we be surprised that God, invisible as He is, should often

have appeared visibly to the patriarchs. For as the sound which

communicates the thought conceived in the silence of the mind is not

the thought itself, so the form by which God, invisible in His own

nature, became visible, was not God Himself. Nevertheless it is He

Himself who was seen under that form, as that thought itself is heard

in the sound of the voice; and the patriarchs recognized that, though

the bodily form was not God, they saw the invisible God. For, though

Moses conversed with God, yet he said, "If I have found grace in Thy

sight, show me Thyself, that I may see and know Thee." [406] And as

it was fit that the law, which was given, not to one man or a few

enlightened men, but to the whole of a populous nation, should be

accompanied by awe-inspiring signs, great marvels were wrought, by the

ministry of angels, before the people on the mount where the law was

being given to them through one man, while the multitude beheld the

awful appearances. For the people of Israel believed Moses, not as the

Laced�monians believed their Lycurgus, because he had received from

Jupiter or Apollo the laws he gave them. For when the law which

enjoined the worship of one God was given to the people, marvellous

signs and earthquakes, such as the divine wisdom judged sufficient,

were brought about in the sight of all, that they might know that it

was the Creator who could thus use creation to promulgate His law.

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[406] Ex. xxxiii. 13.

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Chapter 14.--That the One God is to Be Worshipped Not Only for the Sake

of Eternal Blessings, But Also in Connection with Temporal Prosperity,

Because All Things are Regulated by His Providence.

The education of the human race, represented by the people of God, has

advanced, like that of an individual, through certain epochs, or, as it

were, ages, so that it might gradually rise from earthly to heavenly

things, and from the visible to the invisible. This object was kept so

clearly in view, that, even in the period when temporal rewards were

promised, the one God was presented as the object of worship, that men

might not acknowledge any other than the true Creator and Lord of the

spirit, even in connection with the earthly blessings of this

transitory life. For he who denies that all things, which either

angels or men can give us, are in the hand of the one Almighty, is a

madman. The Platonist Plotinus discourses concerning providence, and,

from the beauty of flowers and foliage, proves that from the supreme

God, whose beauty is unseen and ineffable, providence reaches down even

to these earthly things here below; and he argues that all these frail

and perishing things could not have so exquisite and elaborate a

beauty, were they not fashioned by Him whose unseen and unchangeable

beauty continually pervades all things. [407] This is proved also by

the Lord Jesus, where He says, "Consider the lilies, how they grow;

they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that

Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God

so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast

into the oven, how much more shall He clothe you, O ye of little

faith.!" [408] It was best, therefore, that the soul of man, which

was still weakly desiring earthly things, should be accustomed to seek

from God alone even these petty temporal boons, and the earthly

necessaries of this transitory life, which are contemptible in

comparison with eternal blessings, in order that the desire even of

these things might not draw it aside from the worship of Him, to whom

we come by despising and forsaking such things.

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[407] Plotin. Ennead. III. ii. 13.

[408] Matt. vi. 28-30.

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Chapter 15.--Of the Ministry of the Holy Angels, by Which They Fulfill

the Providence of God.

And so it has pleased Divine Providence, as I have said, and as we read

in the Acts of the Apostles, [409] that the law enjoining the worship

of one God should be given by the disposition of angels. But among

them the person of God Himself visibly appeared, not, indeed, in His

proper substance, which ever remains invisible to mortal eyes, but by

the infallible signs furnished by creation in obedience to its

Creator. He made use, too, of the words of human speech, uttering them

syllable by syllable successively, though in His own nature He speaks

not in a bodily but in a spiritual way; not to sense, but to the mind;

not in words that occupy time, but, if I may so say, eternally, neither

beginning to speak nor coming to an end. And what He says is

accurately heard, not by the bodily but by the mental ear of His

ministers and messengers, who are immortally blessed in the enjoyment

of His unchangeable truth; and the directions which they in some

ineffable way receive, they execute without delay or difficulty in the

sensible and visible world. And this law was given in conformity with

the age of the world, and contained at the first earthly promises, as I

have said, which, however, symbolized eternal ones; and these eternal

blessings few understood, though many took a part in the celebration of

their visible signs. Nevertheless, with one consent both the words and

the visible rites of that law enjoin the worship of one God,--not one

of a crowd of gods, but Him who made heaven and earth, and every soul

and every spirit which is other than Himself. He created; all else was

created; and, both for being and well-being, all things need Him who

created them.

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[409] Acts vii. 53.

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Chapter 16.--Whether Those Angels Who Demand that We Pay Them Divine

Honor, or Those Who Teach Us to Render Holy Service, Not to Themselves,

But to God, are to Be Trusted About the Way to Life Eternal.

What angels, then, are we to believe in this matter of blessed and

eternal life?--those who wish to be worshipped with religious rites and

observances, and require that men sacrifice to them; or those who say

that all this worship is due to one God, the Creator, and teach us to

render it with true piety to Him, by the vision of whom they are

themselves already blessed, and in whom they promise that we shall be

so? For that vision of God is the beauty of a vision so great, and is

so infinitely desirable, that Plotinus does not hesitate to say that he

who enjoys all other blessings in abundance, and has not this, is

supremely miserable. [410] Since, therefore, miracles are wrought by

some angels to induce us to worship this God, by others, to induce us

to worship themselves; and since the former forbid us to worship these,

while the latter dare not forbid us to worship God, which are we to

listen to? Let the Platonists reply, or any philosophers, or the

theurgists, or rather, periurgists, [411] --for this name is good

enough for those who practise such arts. In short, let all men

answer,--if, at least, there survives in them any spark of that natural

perception which, as rational beings, they possess when created,--let

them, I say, tell us whether we should sacrifice to the gods or angels

who order us to sacrifice to them, or to that One to whom we are

ordered to sacrifice by those who forbid us to worship either

themselves or these others. If neither the one party nor the other had

wrought miracles, but had merely uttered commands, the one to sacrifice

to themselves, the other forbidding that, and ordering us to sacrifice

to God, a godly mind would have been at no loss to discern which

command proceeded from proud arrogance, and which from true religion.

I will say more. If miracles had been wrought only by those who demand

sacrifice for themselves, while those who forbade this, and enjoined

sacrificing to the one God only, thought fit entirely to forego the use

of visible miracles, the authority of the latter was to be preferred by

all who would use, not their eyes only, but their reason. But since

God, for the sake of commending to us the oracles of His truth, has, by

means of these immortal messengers, who proclaim His majesty and not

their own pride, wrought miracles of surpassing grandeur, certainty,

and distinctness, in order that the weak among the godly might not be

drawn away to false religion by those who require us to sacrifice to

them and endeavor to convince us by stupendous appeals to our senses,

who is so utterly unreasonable as not to choose and follow the truth,

when he finds that it is heralded by even more striking evidences than

falsehood?

As for those miracles which history ascribes to the gods of the

heathen,--I do not refer to those prodigies which at intervals happen

from some unknown physical causes, and which are arranged and appointed

by Divine Providence, such as monstrous births, and unusual

meteorological phenomena, whether startling only, or also injurious,

and which are said to be brought about and removed by communication

with demons, and by their most deceitful craft,--but I refer to these

prodigies which manifestly enough are wrought by their power and force,

as, that the household gods which �neas carried from Troy in his flight

moved from place to place; that Tarquin cut a whetstone with a razor;

that the Epidaurian serpent attached himself as a companion to

�sculapius on his voyage to Rome; that the ship in which the image of

the Phrygian mother stood, and which could not be moved by a host of

men and oxen, was moved by one weak woman, who attached her girdle to

the vessel and drew it, as proof of her chastity; that a vestal, whose

virginity was questioned, removed the suspicion by carrying from the

Tiber a sieve full of water without any of it dropping: these, then,

and the like, are by no means to be compared for greatness and virtue

to those which, we read, were wrought among God's people. How much

less can we compare those marvels, which even the laws of heathen

nations prohibit and punish,--I mean the magical and theurgic marvels,

of which the great part are merely illusions practised upon the senses,

as the drawing down of the moon, "that," as Lucan says, "it may shed a

stronger influence on the plants?" [412] And if some of these do seem

to equal those which are wrought by the godly, the end for which they

are wrought distinguishes the two, and shows that ours are incomparably

the more excellent. For those miracles commend the worship of a

plurality of gods, who deserve worship the less the more they demand

it; but these of ours commend the worship of the one God, who, both by

the testimony of His own Scriptures, and by the eventual abolition of

sacrifices, proves that He needs no such offerings. If, therefore, any

angels demand sacrifice for themselves, we must prefer those who demand

it, not for themselves, but for God, the Creator of all, whom they

serve. For thus they prove how sincerely they love us, since they wish

by sacrifice to subject us, not to themselves, but to Him by the

contemplation of whom they themselves are blessed, and to bring us to

Him from whom they themselves have never strayed. If, on the other

hand, any angels wish us to sacrifice, not to one, but to many, not,

indeed, to themselves, but to the gods whose angels they are, we must

in this case also prefer those who are the angels of the one God of

gods, and who so bid us to worship Him as to preclude our worshipping

any other. But, further, if it be the case, as their pride and

deceitfulness rather indicate, that they are neither good angels nor

the angels of good gods, but wicked demons, who wish sacrifice to be

paid, not to the one only and supreme God, but to themselves, what

better protection against them can we choose than that of the one God

whom the good angels serve, the angels who bid us sacrifice, not to

themselves, but to Him whose sacrifice we ourselves ought to be?

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[410] Ennead. 1. vi. 7.

[411] Meaning, officious meddlers.

[412] Pharsal. vi. 503.

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Chapter 17.--Concerning the Ark of the Covenant, and the Miraculous

Signs Whereby God Authenticated the Law and the Promise.

On this account it was that the law of God, given by the disposition of

angels, and which commanded that the one God of gods alone receive

sacred worship, to the exclusion of all others, was deposited in the

ark, called the ark of the testimony. By this name it is sufficiently

indicated, not that God, who was worshipped by all those rites, was

shut up and enclosed in that place, though His responses emanated from

it along with signs appreciable by the senses, but that His will was

declared from that throne. The law itself, too, was engraven on tables

of stone, and, as I have said, deposited in the ark, which the priests

carried with due reverence during the sojourn in the wilderness, along

with the tabernacle, which was in like manner called the tabernacle of

the testimony; and there was then an accompanying sign, which appeared

as a cloud by day and as a fire by night; when the cloud moved, the

camp was shifted, and where it stood the camp was pitched. Besides

these signs, and the voices which proceeded from the place where the

ark was, there were other miraculous testimonies to the law. For when

the ark was carried across Jordan, on the entrance to the land of

promise, the upper part of the river stopped in its course, and the

lower part flowed on, so as to present both to the ark and the people

dry ground to pass over. Then, when it was carried seven times round

the first hostile and polytheistic city they came to, its walls

suddenly fell down, though assaulted by no hand, struck by no

battering-ram. Afterwards, too, when they were now resident in the

land of promise, and the ark had, in punishment of their sin, been

taken by their enemies, its captors triumphantly placed it in the

temple of their favorite god, and left it shut up there, but, on

opening the temple next day, they found the image they used to pray to

fallen to the ground and shamefully shattered. Then, being them selves

alarmed by portents, and still more shamefully punished, they restored

the ark of the testimony to the people from whom they had taken it.

And what was the manner of its restoration? They placed it on a wagon,

and yoked to it cows from which they had taken the calves, and let them

choose their own course, expecting that in this way the divine will

would be indicated; and the cows without any man driving or directing

them, steadily pursued the way to the Hebrews, without regarding the

lowing of their calves, and thus restored the ark to its worshippers.

To God these and such like wonders are small, but they are mighty to

terrify and give wholesome instruction to men. For if philosophers,

and especially the Platonists, are with justice esteemed wiser than

other men, as I have just been mentioning, because they taught that

even these earthly and insignificant things are ruled by Divine

Providence, inferring this from the numberless beauties which are

observable not only in the bodies of animals, but even in plants and

grasses, how much more plainly do these things attest the presence of

divinity which happen at the time predicted, and in which that religion

is commended which forbids the offering of sacrifice to any celestial,

terrestrial, or infernal being, and commands it to be offered to God

only, who alone blesses us by His love for us, and by our love to Him,

and who, by arranging the appointed times of those sacrifices, and by

predicting that they were to pass into a better sacrifice by a better

Priest, testified that He has no appetite for these sacrifices, but

through them indicated others of more substantial blessing,--and all

this not that He Himself may be glorified by these honors, but that we

may be stirred up to worship and cleave to Him, being inflamed by His

love, which is our advantage rather than His?

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Chapter 18.--Against Those Who Deny that the Books of the Church are to

Be Believed About the Miracles Whereby the People of God Were Educated.

Will some one say that these miracles are false, that they never

happened, and that the records of them are lies? Whoever says so, and

asserts that in such matters no records whatever can be credited, may

also say that there are no gods who care for human affairs. For they

have induced men to worship them only by means of miraculous works,

which the heathen histories testify, and by which the gods have made a

display of their own power rather than done any real service. This is

the reason why we have not undertaken in this work, of which we are now

writing the tenth book, to refute those who either deny that there is

any divine power, or contend that it does not interfere with human

affairs, but those who prefer their own god to our God, the Founder of

the holy and most glorious city, not knowing that He is also the

invisible and unchangeable Founder of this visible and changing world,

and the truest bestower of the blessed life which resides not in things

created, but in Himself. For thus speaks His most trustworthy

prophet: "It is good for me to be united to God." [413] Among

philosophers it is a question, what is that end and good to the

attainment of which all our duties are to have a relation? The

Psalmist did not say, It is good for me to have great wealth, or to

wear imperial insignia, purple, sceptre, and diadem; or, as some even

of the philosophers have not blushed to say, It is good for me to enjoy

sensual pleasure; or, as the better men among them seemed to say, My

good is my spiritual strength; but, "It is good for me to be united to

God." This he had learned from Him whom the holy angels, with the

accompanying witness of miracles, presented as the sole object of

worship. And hence he himself became the sacrifice of God, whose

spiritual love inflamed him, and into whose ineffable and incorporeal

embrace he yearned to cast himself. Moreover, if the worshippers of

many gods (whatever kind of gods they fancy their own to be) believe

that the miracles recorded in their civil histories, or in the books of

magic, or of the more respectable theurgy, were wrought by these gods,

what reason have they for refusing to believe the miracles recorded in

those writings, to which we owe a credence as much greater as He is

greater to whom alone these writings teach us to sacrifice?

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[413] Ps. lxxiii. 28.

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Chapter 19.--On the Reasonableness of Offering, as the True Religion

Teaches, a Visible Sacrifice to the One True and Invisible God.

As to those who think that these visible sacrifices are suitably

offered to other gods, but that invisible sacrifices, the graces of

purity of mind and holiness of will, should be offered, as greater and

better, to the invisible God, Himself greater and better than all

others, they must be oblivious that these visible sacrifices are signs

of the invisible, as the words we utter are the signs of things. And

therefore, as in prayer or praise we direct intelligible words to Him

to whom in our heart we offer the very feelings we are expressing, so

we are to understand that in sacrifice we offer visible sacrifice only

to Him to whom in our heart we ought to present ourselves an invisible

sacrifice. It is then that the angels, and all those superior powers

who are mighty by their goodness and piety, regard us with pleasure,

and rejoice with us and assist us to the utmost of their power. But if

we offer such worship to them, they decline it; and when on any mission

to men they become visible to the senses, they positively forbid it.

Examples of this occur in holy writ. Some fancied they should, by

adoration or sacrifice, pay the same honor to angels as is due to God,

and were prevented from doing so by the angels themselves, and ordered

to render it to Him to whom alone they know it to be due. And the holy

angels have in this been imitated by holy men of God. For Paul and

Barnabas, when they had wrought a miracle of healing in Lycaonia, were

thought to be gods, and the Lycaonians desired to sacrifice to them,

and they humbly and piously declined this honor, and announced to them

the God in whom they should believe. And those deceitful and proud

spirits, who exact worship, do so simply because they know it to be due

to the true God. For that which they take pleasure in is not, as

Porphyry says and some fancy, the smell of the victims, but divine

honors. They have, in fact, plenty odors on all hands, and if they

wished more, they could provide them for themselves. But the spirits

who arrogate to themselves divinity are delighted not with the smoke of

carcasses but with the suppliant spirit which they deceive and hold in

subjection, and hinder from drawing near to God, preventing him from

offering himself in sacrifice to God by inducing him to sacrifice to

others.

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Chapter 20.--Of the Supreme and True Sacrifice Which Was Effected by

the Mediator Between God and Men.

And hence that true Mediator, in so far as, by assuming the form of a

servant, He became the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ

Jesus, though in the form of God He received sacrifice together with

the Father, with whom He is one God, yet in the form of a servant He

chose rather to be than to receive a sacrifice, that not even by this

instance any one might have occasion to suppose that sacrifice should

be rendered to any creature. Thus He is both the Priest who offers and

the Sacrifice offered. And He designed that there should be a daily

sign of this in the sacrifice of the Church, which, being His body,

learns to offer herself through Him. Of this true Sacrifice the

ancient sacrifices of the saints were the various and numerous signs;

and it was thus variously figured, just as one thing is signified by a

variety of words, that there may be less weariness when we speak of it

much. To this supreme and true sacrifice all false sacrifices have

given place.

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Chapter 21 .--Of the Power Delegated to Demons for the Trial and

Glorification of the Saints, Who Conquer Not by Propitiating the

Spirits of the Air, But by Abiding in God.

The power delegated to the demons at certain appointed and

well-adjusted seasons, that they may give expression to their hostility

to the city of God by stirring up against it the men who are under

their influence, and may not only receive sacrifice from those who

willingly offer it, but may also extort it from the unwilling by

violent persecution;--this power is found to be not merely harmless,

but even useful to the Church, completing as it does the number of

martyrs, whom the city of God esteems as all the more illustrious and

honored citizens, because they have striven even to blood against the

sin of impiety. If the ordinary language of the Church allowed it, we

might more elegantly call these men our heroes. For this name is said

to be derived from Juno, who in Greek is called H�r�, and hence,

according to the Greek myths, one of her sons was called Heros. And

these fables mystically signified that Juno was mistress of the air,

which they suppose to be inhabited by the demons and the heroes,

understanding by heroes the souls of the well-deserving dead. But for

a quite opposite reason would we call our martyrs heroes,--supposing,

as I said, that the usage of ecclesiastical language would admit of

it,--not because they lived along with the demons in the air, but

because they conquered these demons or powers of the air, and among

them Juno herself, be she what she may, not unsuitably represented, as

she commonly is by the poets, as hostile to virtue, and jealous of men

of mark aspiring to the heavens. Virgil, however, unhappily gives way,

and yields to her; for, though he represents her as saying, "I am

conquered by �neas," [414] Helenus gives �neas himself this religious

advice:

"Pay vows to Juno: overbear

Her queenly soul with gift and prayer." [415]

In conformity with this opinion, Porphyry-- expressing, however, not so

much his own views as other people's--says that a good god or genius

cannot come to a man unless the evil genius has been first of all

propitiated, implying that the evil deities had greater power than the

good; for, until they have been appeased and give place, the good can

give no assistance; and if the evil deities oppose, the good can give

no help; whereas the evil can do injury without the good being able to

prevent them. This is not the way of the true and truly holy religion;

not thus do our martyrs conquer Juno, that is to say, the powers of the

air, who envy the virtues of the pious. Our heroes, if we could so

call them, overcome H�r�, not by suppliant gifts, but by divine

virtues. As Scipio, who conquered Africa by his valor, is more

suitably styled Africanus than if he had appeased his enemies by gifts,

and so won their mercy.

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[414] �n., vii. 310.

[415] �n., iii. 438, 439.

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Chapter 22.--Whence the Saints Derive Power Against Demons and True

Purification of Heart.

It is by true piety that men of God cast out the hostile power of the

air which opposes godliness; it is by exorcising it, not by

propitiating it; and they overcome all the temptations of the adversary

by praying, not to him, but to their own God against him. For the

devil cannot conquer or subdue any but those who are in league with

sin; and therefore he is conquered in the name of Him who assumed

humanity, and that without sin, that Himself being both Priest and

Sacrifice, He might bring about the remission of sins, that is to say,

might bring it about through the Mediator between God and men, the man

Christ Jesus, by whom we are reconciled to God, the cleansing from sin

being accomplished. For men are separated from God only by sins, from

which we are in this life cleansed not by our own virtue, but by the

divine compassion; through His indulgence, not through our own power.

For, whatever virtue we call our own is itself bestowed upon us by His

goodness. And we might attribute too much to ourselves while in the

flesh, unless we lived in the receipt of pardon until we laid it down.

This is the reason why there has been vouchsafed to us, through the

Mediator, this grace, that we who are polluted by sinful flesh should

be cleansed by the likeness of sinful flesh. By this grace of God,

wherein He has shown His great compassion toward us, we are both

governed by faith in this life, and, after this life, are led onwards

to the fullest perfection by the vision of immutable truth.

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Chapter 23.--Of the Principles Which, According to the Platonists,

Regulate the Purification of the Soul.

Even Porphyry asserts that it was revealed by divine oracles that we

are not purified by any sacrifices [416] to sun or moon, meaning it to

be inferred that we are not purified by sacrificing to any gods. For

what mysteries can purify, if those of the sun and moon, which are

esteemed the chief of the celestial gods, do not purify? He says, too,

in the same place, that "principles" can purify, lest it should be

supposed, from his saying that sacrificing to the sun and moon cannot

purify, that sacrificing to some other of the host of gods might do

so. And what he as a Platonist means by "principles," we know. [417]

For he speaks of God the Father and God the Son, whom he calls (writing

in Greek) the intellect or mind of the Father; [418] but of the Holy

Spirit he says either nothing, or nothing plainly, for I do not

understand what other he speaks of as holding the middle place between

these two. For if, like Plotinus in his discussion regarding the three

principal substances, [419] he wished us to understand by this third

the soul of nature, he would certainly not have given it the middle

place between these two, that is, between the Father and the Son. For

Plotinus places the soul of nature after the intellect of the Father,

while Porphyry, making it the mean, does not place it after, but

between the others. No doubt he spoke according to his light, or as he

thought expedient; but we assert that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit not

of the Father only, nor of the Son only, but of both. For philosophers

speak as they have a mind to, and in the most difficult matters do not

scruple to offend religious ears; but we are bound to speak according

to a certain rule, lest freedom of speech beget impiety of opinion

about the matters themselves of which we speak.

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[416] Teletis.

[417] The Platonists of the Alexandrian and Athenian schools, from

Plotinus to Proclus, are at one in recognizing in God three principles

or hypostases: 1st, the One or the Good, which is the Father; 2nd, the

Intelligence or Word, which is the Son; 3rd, the Soul, which is the

universal principle of life. But as to the nature and order of these

hypostases, the Alexandrians are no longer at one with the school of

Athens. On the very subtle differences between the Trinity of Plotinus

and that of Porphyry, consult M. Jules Simon, ii. 110, and M. Vacherot,

ii. 37.--Saisset.

[418] See below, c. 28.

[419] Ennead. v. 1.

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Chapter 24.--Of the One Only True Principle Which Alone Purifies and

Renews Human Nature.

Accordingly, when we speak of God, we do not affirm two or three

principles, no more than we are at liberty to affirm two or three gods;

although, speaking of each, of the Father, or of the Son, or of the

Holy Ghost, we confess that each is God: and yet we do not say, as the

Sabellian heretics say, that the Father is the same as the Son, and the

Holy Spirit the same as the Father and the Son; but we say that the

Father is the Father of the Son, and the Son the Son of the Father, and

that the Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son is neither the Father

nor the Son. It was therefore truly said that man is cleansed only by

a Principle, although the Platonists erred in speaking in the plural of

principles. But Porphyry, being under the dominion of these envious

powers, whose influence he was at once ashamed of and afraid to throw

off, refused to recognize that Christ is the Principle by whose

incarnation we are purified. Indeed he despised Him, because of the

flesh itself which He assumed, that He might offer a sacrifice for our

purification,--a great mystery, unintelligible to Porphyry's pride,

which that true and benignant Redeemer brought low by His humility,

manifesting Himself to mortals by the mortality which He assumed, and

which the malignant and deceitful mediators are proud of wanting,

promising, as the boon of immortals, a deceptive assistance to wretched

men. Thus the good and true Mediator showed that it is sin which is

evil, and not the substance or nature of flesh; for this, together with

the human soul, could without sin be both assumed and retained, and

laid down in death, and changed to something better by resurrection.

He showed also that death itself, although the punishment of sin, was

submitted to by Him for our sakes without sin, and must not be evaded

by sin on our part, but rather, if opportunity serves, be borne for

righteousness' sake. For he was able to expiate sins by dying, because

He both died, and not for sin of His own. But He has not been

recognized by Porphyry as the Principle, otherwise he would have

recognized Him as the Purifier. The Principle is neither the flesh nor

the human soul in Christ but the Word by which all things were made.

The flesh, therefore, does not by its own virtue purify, but by virtue

of the Word by which it was assumed, when "the Word became flesh and

dwelt among us." [420] For speaking mystically of eating His flesh,

when those who did not understand Him were offended and went away,

saying, "This is an hard saying, who can hear it?" He answered to the

rest who remained, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh

profiteth nothing." [421] The Principle, therefore, having assumed a

human soul and flesh, cleanses the soul and flesh of believers.

Therefore, when the Jews asked Him who He was, He answered that He was

the Principle. [422] And this we carnal and feeble men, liable to

sin, and involved in the darkness of ignorance, could not possibly

understand, unless we were cleansed and healed by Him, both by means of

what we were, and of what we were not. For we were men, but we were

not righteous; whereas in His incarnation there was a human nature, but

it was righteous, and not sinful. This is the mediation whereby a hand

is stretched to the lapsed and fallen; this is the seed "ordained by

angels," by whose ministry the law also was given enjoining the worship

of one God, and promising that this Mediator should come.

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[420] John i. 14.

[421] John vi. 60-64.

[422] John viii. 25; or "the beginning," following a different reading

from ours.

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Chapter 25.--That All the Saints, Both Under the Law and Before It,

Were Justified by Faith in the Mystery of Christ's Incarnation.

It was by faith in this mystery, and godliness of life, that

purification was attainable even by the saints of old, whether before

the law was given to the Hebrews (for God and the angels were even then

present as instructors), or in the periods under the law, although the

promises of spiritual things, being presented in figure, seemed to be

carnal, and hence the name of Old Testament. For it was then the

prophets lived, by whom, as by angels, the same promise was announced;

and among them was he whose grand and divine sentiment regarding the

end and supreme good of man I have just now quoted, "It is good for me

to cleave to God." [423] In this psalm the distinction between the

Old and New Testaments is distinctly announced. For the Psalmist says,

that when he saw that the carnal and earthly promises were abundantly

enjoyed by the ungodly, his feet were almost gone, his steps had

well-nigh slipped; and that it seemed to him as if he had served God in

vain, when he saw that those who despised God increased in that

prosperity which he looked for at God's hand. He says, too, that, in

investigating this matter with the desire of understanding why it was

so, he had labored in vain, until he went into the sanctuary of God,

and understood the end of those whom he had erroneously considered

happy. Then he understood that they were cast down by that very thing,

as he says, which they had made their boast, and that they had been

consumed and perished for their inequities; and that that whole fabric

of temporal prosperity had become as a dream when one awaketh, and

suddenly finds himself destitute of all the joys he had imaged in

sleep. And, as in this earth or earthy city they seemed to themselves

to be great, he says, "O Lord, in Thy city Thou wilt reduce their image

to nothing." He also shows how beneficial it had been for him to seek

even earthly blessings only from the one true God, in whose power are

all things, for he says, "As a beast was I before Thee, and I am always

with Thee." "As a beast," he says, meaning that he was stupid. For I

ought to have sought from Thee such things as the ungodly could not

enjoy as well as I, and not those things which I saw them enjoying in

abundance, and hence concluded I was serving Thee in vain, because they

who declined to serve Thee had what I had not. Nevertheless, "I am

always with Thee," because even in my desire for such things I did not

pray to other gods. And consequently he goes on, "Thou hast holden me

by my right hand, and by Thy counsel Thou hast guided me, and with

glory hast taken me up;" as if all earthly advantages were left-hand

blessings, though, when he saw them enjoyed by the wicked, his feet had

almost gone. "For what," he says, "have I in heaven, and what have I

desired from Thee upon earth?" He blames himself, and is justly

displeased with himself; because, though he had in heaven so vast a

possession (as he afterwards understood), he yet sought from his God on

earth a transitory and fleeting happiness;--a happiness of mire, we may

say. "My heart and my flesh," he says, "fail, O God of my heart."

Happy failure, from things below to things above! And hence in another

psalm He says, "My soul longeth, yea, even faileth, for the courts of

the Lord." [424] Yet, though he had said of both his heart and his

flesh that they were failing, he did not say, O God of my heart and my

flesh, but, O God of my heart; for by the heart the flesh is made

clean. Therefore, says the Lord, "Cleanse that which is within, and

the outside shall be clean also." [425] He then says that God

Himself,--not anything received from Him, but Himself,--is his

portion. "The God of my heart, and my portion for ever." Among the

various objects of human choice, God alone satisfied him. "For, lo,"

he says, "they that are far from Thee shall perish: Thou destroyest

all them that go a-whoring from Thee,"--that is, who prostitute

themselves to many gods. And then follows the verse for which all the

rest of the psalm seems to prepare: "It is good for me to cleave to

God,"--not to go far off; not to go a-whoring with a multitude of

gods. And then shall this union with God be perfected, when all that

is to be redeemed in us has been redeemed. But for the present we

must, as he goes on to say, "place our hope in God." "For that which

is seen," says the apostle, "is not hope. For what a man sees, why

does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we

with patience wait for it." [426] Being, then, for the present

established in this hope, let us do what the Psalmist further

indicates, and become in our measure angels or messengers of God,

declaring His will, and praising His glory and His grace. For when he

had said, "To place my hope in God," he goes on, "that I may declare

all Thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Zion." This is the

most glorious city of God; this is the city which knows and worships

one God: she is celebrated by the holy angels, who invite us to their

society, and desire us to become fellow-citizens with them in this

city; for they do not wish us to worship them as our gods, but to join

them in worshipping their God and ours; nor to sacrifice to them, but,

together with them, to become a sacrifice to God. Accordingly, whoever

will lay aside malignant obstinacy, and consider these things, shall be

assured that all these blessed and immortal spirits, who do not envy us

(for if they envied they were not blessed), but rather love us, and

desire us to be as blessed as themselves, look on us with greater

pleasure, and give us greater assistance, when we join them in

worshipping one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, than if we were to

offer to themselves sacrifice and worship.

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[423] Ps. lxxiii. 28.

[424] Ps. lxxxiv. 2.

[425] Matt. xxiii. 26.

[426] Rom. viii. 24, 25.

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Chapter 26.--Of Porphyry's Weakness in Wavering Between the Confession

of the True God and the Worship of Demons.

I know not how it is so, but it seems to me that Porphyry blushed for

his friends the theurgists; for he knew all that I have adduced, but

did not frankly condemn polytheistic worship. He said, in fact, that

there are some angels who visit earth, and reveal divine truth to

theurgists, and others who publish on earth the things that belong to

the Father, His height and depth. Can we believe, then, that the

angels whose office it is to declare the will of the Father, wish us to

be subject to any but Him whose will they declare? And hence, even

this Platonist himself judiciously observes that we should rather

imitate than invoke them. We ought not, then, to fear that we may

offend these immortal and happy subjects of the one God by not

sacrificing to them; for this they know to be due only to the one true

God, in allegiance to whom they themselves find their blessedness, and

therefore they will not have it given to them, either in figure or in

the reality, which the mysteries of sacrifice symbolized. Such

arrogance belongs to proud and wretched demons, whose disposition is

diametrically opposite to the piety of those who are subject to God,

and whose blessedness consists in attachment to Him. And, that we also

may attain to this bliss, they aid us, as is fit, with sincere

kindliness, and usurp over us no dominion, but declare to us Him under

whose rule we are then fellow-subjects. Why, then, O philosopher, do

you still fear to speak freely against the powers which are inimical

both to true virtue and to the gifts of the true God? Already you have

discriminated between the angels who proclaim God's will, and those who

visit theurgists, drawn down by I know not what art. Why do you still

ascribe to these latter the honor of declaring divine truth? If they

do not declare the will of the Father, what divine revelations can they

make? Are not these the evil spirits who were bound over by the

incantations of an envious man, [427] that they should not grant purity

of soul to another, and could not, as you say, be set free from these

bonds by a good man anxious for purity, and recover power over their

own actions? Do you still doubt whether these are wicked demons; or do

you, perhaps, feign ignorance, that you may not give offence to the

theurgists, who have allured you by their secret rites, and have taught

you, as a mighty boon, these insane and pernicious devilries? Do you

dare to elevate above the air, and even to heaven, these envious

powers, or pests, let me rather call them, less worthy of the name of

sovereign than of slave, as you yourself own; and are you not ashamed

to place them even among your sidereal gods, and so put a slight upon

the stars themselves?

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[427] See above, c. 9.

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Chapter 27.--Of the Impiety of Porphyry, Which is Worse Than Even the

Mistake of Apuleius.

How much more tolerable and accordant with human feeling is the error

of your Platonist co-sectary Apuleius! for he attributed the diseases

and storms of human passions only to the demons who occupy a grade

beneath the moon, and makes even this avowal as by constraint regarding

gods whom he honors; but the superior and celestial gods, who inhabit

the ethereal regions, whether visible, as the sun, moon, and other

luminaries, whose brilliancy makes them conspicuous, or invisible, but

believed in by him, he does his utmost to remove beyond the slightest

stain of these perturbations. It is not, then, from Plato, but from

your Chald�an teachers you have learned to elevate human vices to the

ethereal and empyreal regions of the world and to the celestial

firmament, in order that your theurgists might be able to obtain from

your gods divine revelations; and yet you make yourself superior to

these divine revelations by your intellectual life, which dispenses

with these theurgic purifications as not needed by a philosopher. But,

by way of rewarding your teachers, you recommend these arts to other

men, who, not being philosophers, may be persuaded to use what you

acknowledge to be useless to yourself, who are capable of higher

things; so that those who cannot avail themselves of the virtue of

philosophy, which is too arduous for the multitude, may, at your

instigation, betake themselves to theurgists by whom they may be

purified, not, indeed, in the intellectual, but in the spiritual part

of the soul. Now, as the persons who are unfit for philosophy form

incomparably the majority of mankind, more may be compelled to consult

these secret and illicit teachers of yours than frequent the Platonic

schools. For these most impure demons, pretending to be ethereal gods,

whose herald and messenger you have become, have promised that those

who are purified by theurgy in the spiritual part of their soul shall

not indeed return to the Father, but shall dwell among the ethereal

gods above the aerial regions. But such fancies are not listened to by

the multitudes of men whom Christ came to set free from the tyranny of

demons. For in Him they have the most gracious cleansing, in which

mind, spirit, and body alike participate. For, in order that He might

heal the whole man from the plague of sin, He took without sin the

whole human nature. Would that you had known Him, and would that you

had committed yourself for healing to Him rather than to your own frail

and infirm human virtue, or to pernicious and curious arts! He would

not have deceived you; for Him your own oracles, on your own showing,

acknowledged holy and immortal. It is of Him, too, that the most

famous poet speaks, poetically indeed, since he applies it to the

person of another, yet truly, if you refer it to Christ , saying,

"Under thine auspices, if any traces of our crimes remain, they shall

be obliterated, and earth freed from its perpetual fear." [428] By

which he indicates that, by reason of the infirmity which attaches to

this life, the greatest progress in virtue and righteousness leaves

room for the existence, if not of crimes, yet of the traces of crimes,

which are obliterated only by that Saviour of whom this verse speaks.

For that he did not say this at the prompting of his own fancy, Virgil

tells us in almost the last verse of that 4th Eclogue, when he says,

"The last age predicted by the Cum�an sibyl has now arrived;" whence it

plainly appears that this had been dictated by the Cum�an sibyl. But

those theurgists, or rather demons, who assume the appearance and form

of gods, pollute rather than purify the human spirit by false

appearances and the delusive mockery of unsubstantial forms. How can

those whose own spirit is unclean cleanse the spirit of man? Were they

not unclean, they would not be bound by the incantations of an envious

man, and would neither be afraid nor grudge to bestow that hollow boon

which they promise. But it is sufficient for our purpose that you

acknowledge that the intellectual soul, that is, our mind, cannot be

justified by theurgy; and that even the spiritual or inferior part of

our soul cannot by this act be made eternal and immortal, though you

maintain that it can be purified by it. Christ, however, promises life

eternal; and therefore to Him the world flocks, greatly to your

indignation, greatly also to your astonishment and confusion. What

avails your forced avowal that theurgy leads men astray, and deceives

vast numbers by its ignorant and foolish teaching, and that it is the

most manifest mistake to have recourse by prayer and sacrifice to

angels and principalities, when at the same time, to save yourself from

the charge of spending labor in vain on such arts, you direct men to

the theurgists, that by their means men, who do not live by the rule of

the intellectual soul, may have their spiritual soul purified?

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[428] Virgil, Eclog. iv. 13, 14.

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Chapter 28.--How It is that Porphyry Has Been So Blind as Not to

Recognize the True Wisdom--Christ.

You drive men, therefore, into the most palpable error. And yet you

are not ashamed of doing so much harm, though you call yourself a lover

of virtue and wisdom. Had you been true and faithful in this

profession, you would have recognized Christ, the virtue of God and the

wisdom of God, and would not, in the pride of vain science, have

revolted from His wholesome humility. Nevertheless you acknowledge

that the spiritual part of the soul can be purified by the virtue of

chastity without the aid of those theurgic arts and mysteries which you

wasted your time in learning. You even say, sometimes, that these

mysteries do not raise the soul after death, so that, after the

termination of this life, they seem to be of no service even to the

part you call spiritual; and yet you recur on every opportunity to

these arts, for no other purpose, so far as I see, than to appear an

accomplished theurgist, and gratify those who are curious in illicit

arts, or else to inspire others with the same curiosity. But we give

you all praise for saying that this art is to be feared, both on

account of the legal enactments against it, and by reason of the danger

involved in the very practice of it. And would that in this, at least,

you were listened to by its wretched votaries, that they might be

withdrawn from entire absorption in it, or might even be preserved from

tampering with it at all! You say, indeed, that ignorance, and the

numberless vices resulting from it, cannot be removed by any mysteries,

but only by the patrikos nous, that is, the Father's mind or intellect

conscious of the Father's will. But that Christ is this mind you do

not believe; for Him you despise on account of the body He took of a

woman and the shame of the cross; for your lofty wisdom spurns such low

and contemptible things, and soars to more exalted regions. But He

fulfills what the holy prophets truly predicted regarding Him: "I will

destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nought the prudence of the

prudent." [429] For He does not destroy and bring to nought His own

gift in them, but what they arrogate to themselves, and do not hold of

Him. And hence the apostle, having quoted this testimony from the

prophet, adds, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the

disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this

world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew

not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them

that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after

wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a

stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which

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." [430] This is despised as

a weak and foolish thing by those who are wise and strong in

themselves; yet this is the grace which heals the weak, who do not

proudly boast a blessedness of their own, but rather humbly acknowledge

their real misery.

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[429] Isa. xxix. 14.

[430] 1 Cor. i. 19-25.

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Chapter 29.--Of the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Which the

Platonists in Their Impiety Blush to Acknowledge.

You proclaim the Father and His Son, whom you call the Father's

intellect or mind, and between these a third, by whom we suppose you

mean the Holy Spirit, and in your own fashion you call these three

Gods. In this, though your expressions are inaccurate, you do in some

sort, and as through a veil, see what we should strive towards; but the

incarnation of the unchangeable Son of God, whereby we are saved, and

are enabled to reach the things we believe, or in part understand, this

is what you refuse to recognize. You see in a fashion, although at a

distance, although with filmy eye, the country in which we should

abide; but the way to it you know not. Yet you believe in grace, for

you say it is granted to few to reach God by virtue of intelligence.

For you do not say, "Few have thought fit or have wished," but, "It has

been granted to few,"--distinctly acknowledging God's grace, not man's

sufficiency. You also use this word more expressly, when, in

accordance with the opinion of Plato, you make no doubt that in this

life a man cannot by any means attain to perfect wisdom, but that

whatever is lacking is in the future life made up to those who live

intellectually, by God's providence and grace. Oh, had you but

recognized the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, and that very

incarnation of His, wherein He assumed a human soul and body, you might

have seemed the brightest example of grace! [431] But what am I

doing? I know it is useless to speak to a dead man,--useless, at

least, so far as regards you, but perhaps not in vain for those who

esteem you highly, and love you on account of their love of wisdom or

curiosity about those arts which you ought not to have learned; and

these persons I address in your name. The grace of God could not have

been more graciously commended to us than thus, that the only Son of

God, remaining unchangeable in Himself, should assume humanity, and

should give us the hope of His love, by means of the mediation of a

human nature, through which we, from the condition of men, might come

to Him who was so far off,--the immortal from the mortal; the

unchangeable from the changeable; the just from the unjust; the blessed

from the wretched. And, as He had given us a natural instinct to

desire blessedness and immortality, He Himself continuing to be

blessed; but assuming mortality, by enduring what we fear, taught us to

despise it, that what we long for He might bestow upon us.

But in order to your acquiescence in this truth, it is lowliness that

is requisite, and to this it is extremely difficult to bend you. For

what is there incredible, especially to men like you, accustomed to

speculation, which might have predisposed you to believe in this,--what

is there incredible, I say, in the assertion that God assumed a human

soul and body? You yourselves ascribe such excellence to the

intellectual soul, which is, after all, the human soul, that you

maintain that it can become consubstantial with that intelligence of

the Father whom you believe in as the Son of God. What incredible

thing is it, then, if some one soul be assumed by Him in an ineffable

and unique manner for the salvation of many? Moreover, our nature

itself testifies that a man is incomplete unless a body be united with

the soul. This certainly would be more incredible, were it not of all

things the most common; for we should more easily believe in a union

between spirit and spirit, or, to use your own terminology, between the

incorporeal and the incorporeal, even though the one were human, the

other divine, the one changeable and the other unchangeable, than in a

union between the corporeal and the incorporeal. But perhaps it is the

unprecedented birth of a body from a virgin that staggers you? But, so

far from this being a difficulty, it ought rather to assist you to

receive our religion, that a miraculous person was born miraculously.

Or, do you find a difficulty in the fact that, after His body had been

given up to death, and had been changed into a higher kind of body by

resurrection, and was now no longer mortal but incorruptible, He

carried it up into heavenly places? Perhaps you refuse to believe

this, because you remember that Porphyry, in these very books from

which I have cited so much, and which treat of the return of the soul,

so frequently teaches that a body of every kind is to be escaped from,

in order that the soul may dwell in blessedness with God. But here, in

place of following Porphyry, you ought rather to have corrected him,

especially since you agree with him in believing such incredible things

about the soul of this visible world and huge material frame. For, as

scholars of Plato, you hold that the world is an animal, and a very

happy animal, which you wish to be also everlasting. How, then, is it

never to be loosed from a body, and yet never lose its happiness, if,

in order to the happiness of the soul, the body must be left behind?

The sun, too, and the other stars, you not only acknowledge to be

bodies, in which you have the cordial assent of all seeing men, but

also, in obedience to what you reckon a profounder insight, you declare

that they are very blessed animals, and eternal, together with their

bodies. Why is it, then, that when the Christian faith is pressed upon

you, you forget, or pretend to ignore, what you habitually discuss or

teach? Why is it that you refuse to be Christians, on the ground that

you hold opinions which, in fact, you yourselves demolish? Is it not

because Christ came in lowliness, and ye are proud? The precise nature

of the resurrection bodies of the saints may sometimes occasion

discussion among those who are best read in the Christian Scriptures;

yet there is not among us the smallest doubt that they shall be

everlasting, and of a nature exemplified in the instance of Christ's

risen body. But whatever be their nature, since we maintain that they

shall be absolutely incorruptible and immortal, and shall offer no

hindrance to the soul's contemplation, by which it is fixed in God, and

as you say that among the celestials the bodies of the eternally

blessed are eternal, why do you maintain that, in order to blessedness,

every body must be escaped from? Why do you thus seek such a plausible

reason for escaping from the Christian faith, if not because, as I

again say, Christ is humble and ye proud? Are ye ashamed to be

corrected? This is the vice of the proud. It is, forsooth, a

degradation for learned men to pass from the school of Plato to the

discipleship of Christ, who by His Spirit taught a fisherman to think

and to say, "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 by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was

made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the

light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." [432]

The old saint Simplicianus, afterwards bishop of Milan, used to tell

me that a certain Platonist was in the habit of saying that this

opening passage of the holy gospel, entitled, According to John, should

be written in letters of gold, and hung up in all churches in the most

conspicuous place. But the proud scorn to take God for their Master,

because "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." [433] So that,

with these miserable creatures, it is not enough that they are sick,

but they boast of their sickness, and are ashamed of the medicine which

could heal them. And, doing so, they secure not elevation, but a more

disastrous fall.

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[431] According to another reading, "You might have seen it to be,"

etc.

[432] John i. 1-5.

[433] John i. 14.

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Chapter 30.--Porphyry's Emendations and Modifications of Platonism.

If it is considered unseemly to emend anything which Plato has touched,

why did Porphyry himself make emendations, and these not a few? for it

is very certain that Plato wrote that the souls of men return after

death to the bodies of beasts. [434] Plotinus also, Porphyry's

teacher, held this opinion; [435] yet Porphyry justly rejected it. He

was of opinion that human souls return indeed into human bodies, but

not into the bodies they had left, but other new bodies. He shrank

from the other opinion, lest a woman who had returned into a mule might

possibly carry her own son on her back. He did not shrink, however,

from a theory which admitted the possibility of a mother coming back

into a girl and marrying her own son. How much more honorable a creed

is that which was taught by the holy and truthful angels, uttered by

the prophets who were moved by God's Spirit, preached by Him who was

foretold as the coming Saviour by His forerunning heralds, and by the

apostles whom He sent forth, and who filled the whole world with the

gospel,--how much more honorable, I say, is the belief that souls

return once for all to their own bodies, than that they return again

and again to divers bodies? Nevertheless Porphyry, as I have said, did

considerably improve upon this opinion, in so far, at least, as he

maintained that human souls could transmigrate only into human bodies,

and made no scruple about demolishing the bestial prisons into which

Plato had wished to cast them. He says, too, that God put the soul

into the world that it might recognize the evils of matter, and return

to the Father, and be for ever emancipated from the polluting contact

of matter. And although here is some inappropriate thinking (for the

soul is rather given to the body that it may do good; for it would not

learn evil unless it did it), yet he corrects the opinion of other

Platonists, and that on a point of no small importance, inasmuch as he

avows that the soul, which is purged from all evil and received to the

Father's presence, shall never again suffer the ills of this life. By

this opinion he quite subverted the favorite Platonic dogma, that as

dead men are made out of living ones, so living men are made out of

dead ones; and he exploded the idea which Virgil seems to have adopted

from Plato, that the purified souls which have been sent into the

Elysian fields (the poetic name for the joys of the blessed) are

summoned to the river Lethe, that is, to the oblivion of the past,

"That earthward they may pass once more,

Remembering not the things before,

And with a blind propension yearn

To fleshly bodies to return." [436]

This found no favor with Porphyry, and very justly; for it is indeed

foolish to believe that souls should desire to return from that life,

which cannot be very blessed unless by the assurance of its permanence,

and to come back into this life, and to the pollution of corruptible

bodies, as if the result of perfect purification were only to make

defilement desirable. For if perfect purification effects the oblivion

of all evils, and the oblivion of evils creates a desire for a body in

which the soul may again be entangled with evils, then the supreme

felicity will be the cause of infelicity, and the perfection of wisdom

the cause of foolishness, and the purest cleansing the cause of

defilement. And, however long the blessedness of the soul last, it

cannot be founded on truth, if, in order to be blessed, it must be

deceived. For it cannot be blessed unless it be free from fear. But,

to be free from fear, it must be under the false impression that it

shall be always blessed,--the false impression, for it is destined to

be also at some time miserable. How, then, shall the soul rejoice in

truth, whose joy is founded on falsehood? Porphyry saw this, and

therefore said that the purified soul returns to the Father, that it

may never more be entangled in the polluting contact with evil. The

opinion, therefore, of some Platonists, that there is a necessary

revolution carrying souls away and bringing them round again to the

same things, is false. But, were it true, what were the advantage of

knowing it? Would the Platonists presume to allege their superiority

to us, because we were in this life ignorant of what they themselves

were doomed to be ignorant of when perfected in purity and wisdom in

another and better life, and which they must be ignorant of if they are

to be blessed? If it were most absurd and foolish to say so, then

certainly we must prefer Porphyry's opinion to the idea of a

circulation of souls through constantly alternating happiness and

misery. And if this is just, here is a Platonist emending Plato, here

is a man who saw what Plato did not see, and who did not shrink from

correcting so illustrious a master, but preferred truth to Plato.

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[434] Comp. Euseb. Pr�p. Evan. xiii. 16.

[435] Ennead, iii. 4, 2.

[436] �neid, vi. 750, 751.

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Chapter 31.--Against the Arguments on Which the Platonists Ground Their

Assertion that the Human Soul is Co-Eternal with God.

Why, then, do we not rather believe the divinity in those matters,

which human talent cannot fathom? Why do we not credit the assertion

of divinity, that the soul is not co-eternal with God, but is created,

and once was not? For the Platonists seemed to themselves to allege an

adequate reason for their rejection of this doctrine, when they

affirmed that nothing could be everlasting which had not always

existed. Plato, however, in writing concerning the world and the gods

in it, whom the Supreme made, most expressly states that they had a

beginning and yet would have no end, but, by the sovereign will of the

Creator, would endure eternally. But, by way of interpreting this, the

Platonists have discovered that he meant a beginning, not of time, but

of cause. "For as if a foot," they say, "had been always from eternity

in dust, there would always have been a print underneath it; and yet no

one would doubt that this print was made by the pressure of the foot,

nor that, though the one was made by the other, neither was prior to

the other; so," they say, "the world and the gods created in it have

always been, their Creator always existing, and yet they were made."

If, then, the soul has always existed, are we to say that its

wretchedness has always existed? For if there is something in it which

was not from eternity, but began in time, why is it impossible that the

soul itself, though not previously existing, should begin to be in

time? Its blessedness, too, which, as he owns, is to be more stable,

and indeed endless, after the soul's experience of evils,--this

undoubtedly has a beginning in time, and yet is to be always, though

previously it had no existence. This whole argumentation, therefore,

to establish that nothing can be endless except that which has had no

beginning, falls to the ground. For here we find the blessedness of

the soul, which has a beginning, and yet has no end. And, therefore,

let the incapacity of man give place to the authority of God; and let

us take our belief regarding the true religion from the ever-blessed

spirits, who do not seek for themselves that honor which they know to

be due to their God and ours, and who do not command us to sacrifice

save only to Him, whose sacrifice, as I have often said already, and

must often say again, we and they ought together to be, offered through

that Priest who offered Himself to death a sacrifice for us, in that

human nature which He assumed, and according to which He desired to be

our Priest.

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Chapter 32.--Of the Universal Way of the Soul's Deliverance, Which

Porphyry Did Not Find Because He Did Not Rightly Seek It, and Which the

Grace of Christ Has Alone Thrown Open.

This is the religion which possesses the universal way for delivering

the soul; for except by this way, none can be delivered. This is a

kind of royal way, which alone leads to a kingdom which does not totter

like all temporal dignities, but stands firm on eternal foundations.

And when Porphyry says, towards the end of the first book De Regressu

Animoe, that no system of doctrine which furnishes the universal way

for delivering the soul has as yet been received, either from the

truest philosophy, or from the ideas and practices of the Indians, or

from the reasoning [437] of the Chald�ans, or from any source whatever,

and that no historical reading had made him acquainted with that way,

he manifestly acknowledges that there is such a way, but that as yet he

was not acquainted with it. Nothing of all that he had so laboriously

learned concerning the deliverance of the soul, nothing of all that he

seemed to others, if not to himself, to know and believe, satisfied

him. For he perceived that there was still wanting a commanding

authority which it might be right to follow in a matter of such

importance. And when he says that he had not learned from any truest

philosophy a system which possessed the universal way of the soul's

deliverance, he shows plainly enough, as it seems to me, either that

the philosophy of which he was a disciple was not the truest, or that

it did not comprehend such a way. And how can that be the truest

philosophy which does not possess this way? For what else is the

universal way of the soul's deliverance than that by which all souls

universally are delivered, and without which, therefore, no soul is

delivered? And when he says, in addition, "or from the ideas and

practices of the Indians, or from the reasoning of the Chald�ans, or

from any source whatever," he declares in the most unequivocal language

that this universal way of the soul's deliverance was not embraced in

what he had learned either from the Indians or the Chald�ans; and yet

he could not forbear stating that it was from the Chald�ans he had

derived these divine oracles of which he makes such frequent mention.

What, therefore, does he mean by this universal way of the soul's

deliverance, which had not yet been made known by any truest

philosophy, or by the doctrinal systems of those nations which were

considered to have great insight in things divine, because they

indulged more freely in a curious and fanciful science and worship of

angels? What is this universal way of which he acknowledges his

ignorance, if not a way which does not belong to one nation as its

special property, but is common to all, and divinely bestowed?

Porphyry, a man of no mediocre abilities, does not question that such a

way exists; for he believes that Divine Providence could not have left

men destitute of this universal way of delivering the soul. For he

does not say that this way does not exist, but that this great boon and

assistance has not yet been discovered, and has not come to his

knowledge. And no wonder; for Porphyry lived in an age when this

universal way of the soul's deliverance,--in other words, the Christian

religion,--was exposed to the persecutions of idolaters and

demon-worshippers, and earthly rulers, [438] that the number of martyrs

or witnesses for the truth might be completed and consecrated, and that

by them proof might be given that we must endure all bodily sufferings

in the cause of the holy faith, and for the commendation of the truth.

Porphyry, being a witness of these persecutions, concluded that this

way was destined to a speedy extinction, and that it, therefore, was

not the universal way of the soul's deliverance, and did not see that

the very thing that thus moved him, and deterred him from becoming a

Christian, contributed to the confirmation and more effectual

commendation of our religion.

This, then, is the universal way of the soul's deliverance, the way

that is granted by the divine compassion to the nations universally.

And no nation to which the knowledge of it has already come, or may

hereafter come, ought to demand, Why so soon? or, Why so late?--for the

design of Him who sends it is impenetrable by human capacity. This was

felt by Porphyry when he confined himself to saying that this gift of

God was not yet received, and had not yet come to his knowledge. For

though this was so, he did not on that account pronounce that the way

it self had no existence. This, I say, is the universal way for the

deliverance of believers, concerning which the faithful Abraham

received the divine assurance, "In thy seed shall all nations be

blessed." [439] He, indeed, was by birth a Chald�an; but, that he

might receive these great promises, and that there might be propagated

from him a seed "disposed by angels in the hand of a Mediator," [440]

in whom this universal way, thrown open to all nations for the

deliverance of the soul, might be found, he was ordered to leave his

country, and kindred, and father's house. Then was he himself, first

of all, delivered from the Chald�an superstitions, and by his obedience

worshipped the one true God, whose promises he faithfully trusted.

This is the universal way, of which it is said in holy prophecy, "God

be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us;

that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all

nations." [441] And hence, when our Saviour, so long after, had taken

flesh of the seed of Abraham, He says of Himself, "I am the way, the

truth, and the life." [442] This is the universal way, of which so

long before it had been predicted, "And it shall come to pass in the

last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established

in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and

all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come

ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the

God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His

paths: for out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the

Lord from Jerusalem." [443] This way, therefore, is not the property

of one, but of all nations. The law and the word of the Lord did not

remain in Zion and Jerusalem, but issued thence to be universally

diffused. And therefore the Mediator Himself, after His resurrection,

says to His alarmed disciples, "These are the words which I spake unto

you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which

were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the

Psalms, concerning me. Then opened He their understandings that they

might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is

written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the

dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should

be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

[444] This is the universal way of the soul's deliverance, which the

holy angels and the holy prophets formerly disclosed where they could

among the few men who found the grace of God, and especially in the

Hebrew nation, whose commonwealth was, as it were, consecrated to

prefigure and fore-announce the city of God which was to be gathered

from all nations, by their tabernacle, and temple, and priesthood, and

sacrifices. In some explicit statements, and in many obscure

foreshadowings, this way was declared; but latterly came the Mediator

Himself in the flesh, and His blessed apostles, revealing how the grace

of the New Testament more openly explained what had been obscurely

hinted to preceding generations, in conformity with the relation of the

ages of the human race, and as it pleased God in His wisdom to appoint,

who also bore them witness with signs and miracles some of which I have

cited above. For not only were there visions of angels, and words

heard from those heavenly ministrants, but also men of God, armed with

the word of simple piety, cast out unclean spirits from the bodies and

senses of men, and healed deformities and sicknesses; the wild beasts

of earth and sea, the birds of air, inanimate things, the elements, the

stars, obeyed their divine commands; the powers of hell gave way before

them, the dead were restored to life. I say nothing of the miracles

peculiar and proper to the Saviour's own person, especially the

nativity and the resurrection; in the one of which He wrought only the

mystery of a virgin maternity, while in the other He furnished an

instance of the resurrection which all shall at last experience. This

way purifies the whole man, and prepares the mortal in all his parts

for immortality. For, to prevent us from seeking for one purgation for

the part which Porphyry calls intellectual, and another for the part he

calls spiritual, and another for the body itself, our most mighty and

truthful Purifier and Saviour assumed the whole human nature. Except

by this way, which has been present among men both during the period of

the promises and of the proclamation of their fulfillment, no man has

been delivered, no man is delivered, no man shall be delivered.

As to Porphyry's statement that the universal way of the soul's

deliverance had not yet come to his knowledge by any acquaintance he

had with history, I would ask, what more remarkable history can be

found than that which has taken possession of the whole world by its

authoritative voice? or what more trustworthy than that which narrates

past events, and predicts the future with equal clearness, and in the

unfulfilled predictions of which we are constrained to believe by those

that are already fulfilled? For neither Porphyry nor any Platonists

can despise divination and prediction, even of things that pertain to

this life and earthly matters, though they justly despise ordinary

soothsaying and the divination that is connected with magical arts.

They deny that these are the predictions of great men, or are to be

considered important, and they are right; for they are founded, either

on the foresight of subsidiary causes, as to a professional eye much of

the course of a disease is foreseen by certain pre-monitory symptoms,

or the unclean demons predict what they have resolved to do, that they

may thus work upon the thoughts and desires of the wicked with an

appearance of authority, and incline human frailty to imitate their

impure actions. It is not such things that the saints who walk in the

universal way care to predict as important, although, for the purpose

of commending the faith, they knew and often predicted even such things

as could not be detected by human observation, nor be readily verified

by experience. But there were other truly important and divine events

which they predicted, in so far as it was given them to know the will

of God. For the incarnation of Christ, and all those important marvels

that were accomplished in Him, and done in His name; the repentance of

men and the conversion of their wills to God; the remission of sins,

the grace of righteousness, the faith of the pious, and the multitudes

in all parts of the world who believe in the true divinity; the

overthrow of idolatry and demon worship, and the testing of the

faithful by trials; the purification of those who persevered, and their

deliverance from all evil; the day of judgment, the resurrection of the

dead, the eternal damnation of the community of the ungodly, and the

eternal kingdom of the most glorious city of God, ever-blessed in the

enjoyment of the vision of God,--these things were predicted and

promised in the Scriptures of this way; and of these we see so many

fulfilled, that we justly and piously trust that the rest will also

come to pass. As for those who do not believe, and consequently do not

understand, that this is the way which leads straight to the vision of

God and to eternal fellowship with Him, according to the true

predictions and statements of the Holy Scriptures, they may storm at

our position, but they cannot storm it.

And therefore, in these ten books, though not meeting, I dare say, the

expectation of some, yet I have, as the true God and Lord has

vouchsafed to aid me, satisfied the desire of certain persons, by

refuting the objections of the ungodly, who prefer their own gods to

the Founder of the holy city, about which we undertook to speak. Of

these ten books, the first five were directed against those who think

we should worship the gods for the sake of the blessings of this life,

and the second five against those who think we should worship them for

the sake of the life which is to be after death. And now, in

fulfillment of the promise I made in the first book, I shall go on to

say, as God shall aid me, what I think needs to be said regarding the

origin, history, and deserved ends of the two cities, which, as already

remarked, are in this world commingled and implicated with one another.

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[437] Inductio.

[438] Namely, under Diocletian and Maximian.

[439] Gen. xxii. 18.

[440] Gal. iii. 19.

[441] Ps. lxvii. 1, 2.

[442] John xiv. 6.

[443] Isa. ii. 2, 3.

[444] Luke xxiv. 44-47.

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Book XI.

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Argument--Here begins the second part [445] of this work, which treats

of the origin, history, and destinies of the two cities, the earthly

and the heavenly. In the first place, Augustin shows in this book how

the two cities were formed originally, by the separation of the good

and bad angels; and takes occasion to treat of the creation of the

world, as it is described in Holy Scripture in the beginning of the

book of Genesis.

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Chapter 1.--Of This Part of the Work, Wherein We Begin to Explain the

Origin and End of the Two Cities.

The city of God we speak of is the same to which testimony is borne by

that Scripture, which excels all the writings of all nations by its

divine authority, and has brought under its influence all kinds of

minds, and this not by a casual intellectual movement, but obviously by

an express providential arrangement. For there it is written,

"Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." [446] And in

another psalm we read, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in

the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness, increasing the

joy of the whole earth." [447] And, a little after, in the same

psalm, "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of

hosts, in the city of our God. God has established it for ever." And

in another, "There is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the

city of our God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.

God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved." [448] From these

and similar testimonies, all of which it were tedious to cite, we have

learned that there is a city of God, and its Founder has inspired us

with a love which makes us covet its citizenship. To this Founder of

the holy city the citizens of the earthly city prefer their own gods,

not knowing that He is the God of gods, not of false, i.e., of impious

and proud gods, who, being deprived of His unchangeable and freely

communicated light, and so reduced to a kind of poverty-stricken power,

eagerly grasp at their own private privileges, and seek divine honors

from their deluded subjects; but of the pious and holy gods, who are

better pleased to submit themselves to one, than to subject many to

themselves, and who would rather worship God than be worshipped as

God. But to the enemies of this city we have replied in the ten

preceding books, according to our ability and the help afforded by our

Lord and King. Now, recognizing what is expected of me, and not

unmindful of my promise, and relying, too, on the same succor, I will

endeavor to treat of the origin, and progress, and deserved destinies

of the two cities (the earthly and the heavenly, to wit), which, as we

said, are in this present world commingled, and as it were entangled

together. And, first, I will explain how the foundations of these two

cities were originally laid, in the difference that arose among the

angels.

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[446] Ps. lxxxvii. 3.

[447] Ps. xlviii. 1.

[448] Ps. xlvi. 4.

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Chapter 2.--Of the Knowledge of God, to Which No Man Can Attain Save

Through the Mediator Between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.

It is a great and very rare thing for a man, after he has contemplated

the whole creation, corporeal and incorporeal, and has discerned its

mutability, to pass beyond it, and, by the continued soaring of his

mind, to attain to the unchangeable substance of God, and, in that

height of contemplation, to learn from God Himself that none but He has

made all that is not of the divine essence. For God speaks with a man

not by means of some audible creature dinning in his ears, so that

atmospheric vibrations connect Him that makes with him that hears the

sound, nor even by means of a spiritual being with the semblance of a

body, such as we see in dreams or similar states; for even in this case

He speaks as if to the ears of the body, because it is by means of the

semblance of a body He speaks, and with the appearance of a real

interval of space,--for visions are exact representations of bodily

objects. Not by these, then, does God speak, but by the truth itself,

if any one is prepared to hear with the mind rather than with the

body. For He speaks to that part of man which is better than all else

that is in him, and than which God Himself alone is better. For since

man is most properly understood (or, if that cannot be, then, at least,

believed) to be made in God's image, no doubt it is that part of him by

which he rises above those lower parts he has in common with the

beasts, which brings him nearer to the Supreme. But since the mind

itself, though naturally capable of reason and intelligence is disabled

by besotting and inveterate vices not merely from delighting and

abiding in, but even from tolerating His unchangeable light, until it

has been gradually healed, and renewed, and made capable of such

felicity, it had, in the first place, to be impregnated with faith, and

so purified. And that in this faith it might advance the more

confidently towards the truth, the truth itself, God, God's Son,

assuming humanity without destroying His divinity, [449] established

and founded this faith, that there might be a way for man to man's God

through a God-man. For this is the Mediator between God and men, the

man Christ Jesus. For it is as man that He is the Mediator and the

Way. Since, if the way lieth between him who goes, and the place

whither he goes, there is hope of his reaching it; but if there be no

way, or if he know not where it is, what boots it to know whither he

should go? Now the only way that is infallibly secured against all

mistakes, is when the very same person is at once God and man, God our

end, man our way. [450]

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[449] Homine assumto, non Deo consumto.

[450] Quo itur Deus, qua itur homo.

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Chapter 3.--Of the Authority of the Canonical Scriptures Composed by

the Divine Spirit.

This Mediator, having spoken what He judged sufficient first by the

prophets, then by His own lips, and afterwards by the apostles, has

besides produced the Scripture which is called canonical, which has

paramount authority, and to which we yield assent in all matters of

which we ought not to be ignorant, and yet cannot know of ourselves.

For if we attain the knowledge of present objects by the testimony of

our own senses, [451] whether internal or external, then, regarding

objects remote from our own senses, we need others to bring their

testimony, since we cannot know them by our own, and we credit the

persons to whom the objects have been or are sensibly present.

Accordingly, as in the case of visible objects which we have not seen,

we trust those who have, (and likewise with all sensible objects,) so

in the case of things which are perceived [452] by the mind and spirit,

i.e., which are remote from our own interior sense, it behoves us to

trust those who have seen them set in that incorporeal light, or

abidingly contemplate them.

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[451] A clause is here inserted to give the etymology of proesentia

from proe sensibus.

[452] Another derivation, sententia from sensus, the inward perception

of the mind.

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Chapter 4.--That the World is Neither Without Beginning, Nor Yet

Created by a New Decree of God, by Which He Afterwards Willed What He

Had Not Before Willed.

Of all visible things, the world is the greatest; of all invisible, the

greatest is God. But, that the world is, we see; that God is, we

believe. That God made the world, we can believe from no one more

safely than from God Himself. But where have we heard Him? Nowhere

more distinctly than in the Holy Scriptures, where His prophet said,

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." [453] Was

the prophet present when God made the heavens and the earth? No; but

the wisdom of God, by whom all things were made, was there, [454] and

wisdom insinuates itself into holy souls, and makes them the friends of

God and His prophets, and noiselessly informs them of His works. They

are taught also by the angels of God, who always behold the face of the

Father, [455] and announce His will to whom it befits. Of these

prophets was he who said and wrote, "In the beginning God created the

heavens and the earth." And so fit a witness was he of God, that the

same Spirit of God, who revealed these things to him, enabled him also

so long before to predict that our faith also would be forthcoming.

But why did God choose then to create the heavens and earth which up to

that time He had not made? [456] If they who put this question wish

to make out that the world is eternal and without beginning, and that

consequently it has not been made by God, they are strangely deceived,

and rave in the incurable madness of impiety. For, though the voices

of the prophets were silent, the world itself, by its well-ordered

changes and movements, and by the fair appearance of all visible

things, bears a testimony of its own, both that it has been created,

and also that it could not have been created save by God, whose

greatness and beauty are unutterable and invisible. As for those [457]

who own, indeed, that it was made by God, and yet ascribe to it not a

temporal but only a creational beginning, so that in some scarcely

intelligible way the world should always have existed a created world

they make an assertion which seems to them to defend God from the

charge of arbitrary hastiness, or of suddenly conceiving the idea of

creating the world as a quite new idea, or of casually changing His

will, though He be unchangeable. But I do not see how this supposition

of theirs can stand in other respects, and chiefly in respect of the

soul; for if they contend that it is co-eternal with God, they will be

quite at a loss to explain whence there has accrued to it new misery,

which through a previous eternity had not existed. For if they said

that its happiness and misery ceaselessly alternate, they must say,

further, that this alternation will continue for ever; whence will

result this absurdity, that, though the soul is called blessed, it is

not so in this, that it foresees its own misery and disgrace. And yet,

if it does not foresee it, and supposes that it will be neither

disgraced nor wretched, but always blessed, then it is blessed because

it is deceived; and a more foolish statement one cannot make. But if

their idea is that the soul's misery has alternated with its bliss

during the ages of the past eternity, but that now, when once the soul

has been set free, it will return henceforth no more to misery, they

are nevertheless of opinion that it has never been truly blessed

before, but begins at last to enjoy a new and uncertain happiness; that

is to say, they must acknowledge that some new thing, and that an

important and signal thing, happens to the soul which never in a whole

past eternity happened it before. And if they deny that God's eternal

purpose included this new experience of the soul, they deny that He is

the Author of its blessedness, which is unspeakable impiety. If, on

the other hand, they say that the future blessedness of the soul is the

result of a new decree of God, how will they show that God is not

chargeable with that mutability which displeases them? Further, if

they acknowledge that it was created in time, but will never perish in

time,--that it has, like number, [458] a beginning but no end,--and

that, therefore, having once made trial of misery, and been delivered

from it, it will never again return thereto, they will certainly admit

that this takes place without any violation of the immutable counsel of

God. Let them, then, in like manner believe regarding the world that

it too could be made in time, and yet that God, in making it, did not

alter His eternal design.

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[453] Gen. i. 1.

[454] Prov. viii. 27.

[455] Matt. xviii. 10.

[456] A common question among the Epicureans; urged by Velleius in Cic.

De. Nat. Deor. i. 9, adopted by the Manich�ans and spoken to by

Augustin in the Conf. xi. 10, 12, also in De Gen. contra Man. i. 3.

[457] The Neo-Platonists.

[458] Number begins at one, but runs on infinitely.

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Chapter 5.--That We Ought Not to Seek to Comprehend the Infinite Ages

of Time Before the World, Nor the Infinite Realms of Space.

Next, we must see what reply can be made to those who agree that God is

the Creator of the world, but have difficulties about the time of its

creation, and what reply, also, they can make to difficulties we might

raise about the place of its creation. For, as they demand why the

world was created then and no sooner, we may ask why it was created

just here where it is, and not elsewhere. For if they imagine infinite

spaces of time before the world, during which God could not have been

idle, in like manner they may conceive outside the world infinite

realms of space, in which, if any one says that the Omnipotent cannot

hold His hand from working, will it not follow that they must adopt

Epicurus' dream of innumerable worlds? with this difference only, that

he asserts that they are formed and destroyed by the fortuitous

movements of atoms, while they will hold that they are made by God's

hand, if they maintain that, throughout the boundless immensity of

space, stretching interminably in every direction round the world, God

cannot rest, and that the worlds which they suppose Him to make cannot

be destroyed. For here the question is with those who, with ourselves,

believe that God is spiritual, and the Creator of all existences but

Himself. As for others, it is a condescension to dispute with them on

a religious ques tion, for they have acquired a reputation only among

men who pay divine honors to a number of gods, and have become

conspicuous among the other philosophers for no other reason than that,

though they are still far from the truth, they are near it in

comparison with the rest. While these, then, neither confine in any

place, nor limit, nor distribute the divine substance, but, as is

worthy of God, own it to be wholly though spiritually present

everywhere, will they perchance say that this substance is absent from

such immense spaces outside the world, and is occupied in one only,

(and that a very little one compared with the infinity beyond), the

one, namely, in which is the world? I think they will not proceed to

this absurdity. Since they maintain that there is but one world, of

vast material bulk, indeed, yet finite, and in its own determinate

position, and that this was made by the working of God, let them give

the same account of God's resting in the infinite times before the

world as they give of His resting in the infinite spaces outside of

it. And as it does not follow that God set the world in the very spot

it occupies and no other by accident rather than by divine reason,

although no human reason can comprehend why it was so set, and though

there was no merit in the spot chosen to give it the precedence of

infinite others, so neither does it follow that we should suppose that

God was guided by chance when He created the world in that and no

earlier time, although previous times had been running by during an

infinite past, and though there was no difference by which one time

could be chosen in preference to another. But if they say that the

thoughts of men are idle when they conceive infinite places, since

there is no place beside the world, we reply that, by the same showing,

it is vain to conceive of the past times of God's rest, since there is

no time before the world.

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Chapter 6.--That the World and Time Had Both One Beginning, and the One

Did Not Anticipate the Other.

For if eternity and time are rightly distinguished by this, that time

does not exist without some movement and transition, while in eternity

there is no change, who does not see that there could have been no time

had not some creature been made, which by some motion could give birth

to change,--the various parts of which motion and change, as they

cannot be simultaneous, succeed one another,--and thus, in these

shorter or longer intervals of duration, time would begin? Since then,

God, in whose eternity is no change at all, is the Creator and Ordainer

of time, I do not see how He can be said to have created the world

after spaces of time had elapsed, unless it be said that prior to the

world there was some creature by whose movement time could pass. And

if the sacred and infallible Scriptures say that in the beginning God

created the heavens and the earth, in order that it may be understood

that He had made nothing previously,--for if He had made anything

before the rest, this thing would rather be said to have been made "in

the beginning,"--then assuredly the world was made, not in time, but

simultaneously with time. For that which is made in time is made both

after and before some time,--after that which is past, before that

which is future. But none could then be past, for there was no

creature by whose movements its duration could be measured. But

simultaneously with time the world was made, if in the world's creation

change and motion were created, as seems evident from the order of the

first six or seven days. For in these days the morning and evening are

counted, until, on the sixth day, all things which God then made were

finished, and on the seventh the rest of God was mysteriously and

sublimely signalized. What kind of days these were it is extremely

difficult, or perhaps impossible for us to conceive, and how much more

to say!

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Chapter 7.--Of the Nature of the First Days, Which are Said to Have Had

Morning and Evening, Before There Was a Sun.

We see, indeed, that our ordinary days have no evening but by the

setting, and no morning but by the rising, of the sun; but the first

three days of all were passed without sun, since it is reported to have

been made on the fourth day. And first of all, indeed, light was made

by the word of God, and God, we read, separated it from the darkness,

and called the light Day, and the darkness Night; but what kind of

light that was, and by what periodic movement it made evening and

morning, is beyond the reach of our senses; neither can we understand

how it was, and yet must unhesitatingly believe it. For either it was

some material light, whether proceeding from the upper parts of the

world, far removed from our sight, or from the spot where the sun was

afterwards kindled; or under the name of light the holy city was

signified, composed of holy angels and blessed spirits, the city of

which the apostle says, "Jerusalem which is above is our eternal mother

in heaven;" [459] and in another place, "For ye are all the children of

the light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of

darkness." [460] Yet in some respects we may appropriately speak of a

morning and evening of this day also. For the knowledge of the

creature is, in comparison of the knowledge of the Creator, but a

twilight; and so it dawns and breaks into morning when the creature is

drawn to the praise and love of the Creator; and night never falls when

the Creator is not forsaken through love of the creature. In fine,

Scripture, when it would recount those days in order, never mentions

the word night. It never says, "Night was," but "The evening and the

morning were the first day." So of the second and the rest. And,

indeed, the knowledge of created things contemplated by themselves is,

so to speak, more colorless than when they are seen in the wisdom of

God, as in the art by which they were made. Therefore evening is a

more suitable figure than night; and yet, as I said, morning returns

when the creature returns to the praise and love of the Creator. When

it does so in the knowledge of itself, that is the first day; when in

the knowledge of the firmament, which is the name given to the sky

between the waters above and those beneath, that is the second day;

when in the knowledge of the earth, and the sea, and all things that

grow out of the earth, that is the third day; when in the knowledge of

the greater and less luminaries, and all the stars, that is the fourth

day; when in the knowledge of all animals that swim in the waters and

that fly in the air, that is the fifth day; when in the knowledge of

all animals that live on the earth, and of man himself, that is the

sixth day. [461]

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[459] Gal. iv. 26.

[460] 1 Thess. v. 5.

[461] Comp. de Gen. ad Lit. i. and iv.

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Chapter 8.--What We are to Understand of God's Resting on the Seventh

Day, After the Six Days' Work.

When it is said that God rested on the seventh day from all His works,

and hallowed it, we are not to conceive of this in a childish fashion,

as if work were a toil to God, who "spake and it was done,"--spake by

the spiritual and eternal, not audible and transitory word. But God's

rest signifies the rest of those who rest in God, as the joy of a house

means the joy of those in the house who rejoice, though not the house,

but something else, causes the joy. How much more intelligible is such

phraseology, then, if the house itself, by its own beauty, makes the

inhabitants joyful! For in this case we not only call it joyful by

that figure of speech in which the thing containing is used for the

thing contained (as when we say, "The theatres applaud," "The meadows

low," meaning that the men in the one applaud, and the oxen in the

other low), but also by that figure in which the cause is spoken of as

if it were the effect, as when a letter is said to be joyful, because

it makes its readers so. Most appropriately, therefore, the sacred

narrative states that God rested, meaning thereby that those rest who

are in Him, and whom He makes to rest. And this the prophetic

narrative promises also to the men to whom it speaks, and for whom it

was written, that they themselves, after those good works which God

does in and by them, if they have managed by faith to get near to God

in this life, shall enjoy in Him eternal rest. This was pre-figured to

the ancient people of God by the rest enjoined in their sabbath law, of

which, in its own place, I shall speak more at large.

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Chapter 9.--What the Scriptures Teach Us to Believe Concerning the

Creation of the Angels.

At present, since I have undertaken to treat of the origin of the holy

city, and first of the holy angels, who constitute a large part of this

city, and indeed the more blessed part, since they have never been

expatriated, I will give myself to the task of explaining, by God's

help, and as far as seems suitable, the Scriptures which relate to this

point. Where Scripture speaks of the world's creation, it is not

plainly said whether or when the angels were created; but if mention of

them is made, it is implicitly under the name of "heaven," when it is

said, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," or

perhaps rather under the name of "light," of which presently. But that

they were wholly omitted, I am unable to believe, because it is written

that God on the seventh day rested from all His works which He made;

and this very book itself begins, "In the beginning God created the

heavens and the earth," so that before heaven and earth God seems to

have made nothing. Since, therefore, He began with the heavens and the

earth,--and the earth itself, as Scripture adds, was at first invisible

and formless, light not being as yet made, and darkness covering the

face of the deep (that is to say, covering an undefined chaos of earth

and sea, for where light is not, darkness must needs be),--and then

when all things, which are recorded to have been completed in six days,

were created and arranged, how should the angels be omitted, as if they

were not among the works of God, from which on the seventh day He

rested? Yet, though the fact that the angels are the work of God is

not omitted here, it is indeed not explicitly mentioned; but elsewhere

Holy Scripture asserts it in the clearest manner. For in the Hymn of

the Three Children in the Furnace it was said, "O all ye works of the

Lord bless ye the Lord;" [462] and among these works mentioned

afterwards in detail, the angels are named. And in the psalm it is

said, "Praise ye the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the heights.

Praise ye Him, all His angels; praise ye Him, all His hosts. Praise ye

Him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye

heaven of heavens; and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them

praise the name of the Lord; for He commanded, and they were created."

[463] Here the angels are most expressly and by divine authority said

to have been made by God, for of them among the other heavenly things

it is said, "He commanded, and they were created." Who, then, will be

bold enough to suggest that the angels were made after the six days'

creation? If any one is so foolish, his folly is disposed of by a

scripture of like authority, where God says, "When the stars were made,

the angels praised me with a loud voice." [464] The angels therefore

existed before the stars; and the stars were made the fourth day.

Shall we then say that they were made the third day? Far from it; for

we know what was made that day. The earth was separated from the

water, and each element took its own distinct form, and the earth

produced all that grows on it. On the second day, then? Not even on

this; for on it the firmament was made between the waters above and

beneath, and was called "Heaven," in which firmament the stars were

made on the fourth day. There is no question, then, that if the angels

are included in the works of God during these six days, they are that

light which was called "Day," and whose unity Scripture signalizes by

calling that day not the "first day," but "one day." [465] For the

second day, the third, and the rest are not other days; but the same

"one" day is repeated to complete the number six or seven, so that

there should be knowledge both of God's works and of His rest. For

when God said, "Let there be light, and there was light," if we are

justified in understanding in this light the creation of the angels,

then certainly they were created partakers of the eternal light which

is the unchangeable Wisdom of God, by which all things were made, and

whom we call the only-begotten Son of God; so that they, being

illumined by the Light that created them, might themselves become light

and be called "Day," in participation of that unchangeable Light and

Day which is the Word of God, by whom both themselves and all else were

made. "The true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the

world," [466] --this Light lighteth also every pure angel, that he may

be light not in himself, but in God; from whom if an angel turn away,

he becomes impure, as are all those who are called unclean spirits, and

are no longer light in the Lord, but darkness in themselves, being

deprived of the participation of Light eternal. For evil has no

positive nature; but the loss of good has received the name "evil."

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[462] Ver. 35.

[463] Ps. cxlviii. 1-5.

[464] Job xxxviii. 7.

[465] Vives here notes that the Greek theologians and Jerome held, with

Plato, that spiritual creatures were made first, and used by God in the

creation of things material. The Latin theologians and Basil held that

God made all things at once.

[466] John i. 9.

[467] Mali enim nulla natura est: sed amissio boni, mali nomen

accepit.

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Chapter 10.--Of the Simple and Unchangeable Trinity, Father, Son, and

Holy Ghost, One God, in Whom Substance and Quality are Identical.

There is, accordingly, a good which is alone simple, and therefore

alone unchangeable, and this is God. By this Good have all others been

created, but not simple, and therefore not unchangeable. "Created," I

say,--that is, made, not begotten. For that which is begotten of the

simple Good is simple as itself, and the same as itself. These two we

call the Father and the Son; and both together with the Holy Spirit are

one God; and to this Spirit the epithet Holy is in Scripture, as it

were, appropriated. And He is another than the Father and the Son, for

He is neither the Father nor the Son. I say "another," not "another

thing," because He is equally with them the simple Good, unchangeable

and co-eternal. And this Trinity is one God; and none the less simple

because a Trinity. For we do not say that the nature of the good is

simple, because the Father alone possesses it, or the Son alone, or the

Holy Ghost alone; nor do we say, with the Sabellian heretics, that it

is only nominally a Trinity, and has no real distinction of persons;

but we say it is simple, because it is what it has, with the exception

of the relation of the persons to one another. For, in regard to this

relation, it is true that the Father has a Son, and yet is not Himself

the Son; and the Son has a Father, and is not Himself the Father. But,

as regards Himself, irrespective of relation to the other, each is what

He has; thus, He is in Himself living, for He has life, and is Himself

the Life which He has.

It is for this reason, then, that the nature of the Trinity is called

simple, because it has not anything which it can lose, and because it

is not one thing and its contents another, as a cup and the liquor, or

a body and its color, or the air and the light or heat of it, or a mind

and its wisdom. For none of these is what it has: the cup is not

liquor, nor the body color, nor the air light and heat, nor the mind

wisdom. And hence they can be deprived of what they have, and can be

turned or changed into other qualities and states, so that the cup may

be emptied of the liquid of which it is full, the body be discolored,

the air darken, the mind grow silly. The incorruptible body which is

promised to the saints in the resurrection cannot, indeed, lose its

quality of incorruption, but the bodily substance and the quality of

incorruption are not the same thing. For the quality of incorruption

resides entire in each several part, not greater in one and less in

another; for no part is more incorruptible than another. The body,

indeed, is itself greater in whole than in part; and one part of it is

larger, another smaller, yet is not the larger more incorruptible than

the smaller. The body, then, which is not in each of its parts a whole

body, is one thing; incorruptibility, which is throughout complete, is

another thing;--for every part of the incorruptible body, however

unequal to the rest otherwise, is equally incorrupt. For the hand,

e.g., is not more incorrupt than the finger because it is larger than

the finger; so, though finger and hand are unequal, their

incorruptibility is equal. Thus, although incorruptibility is

inseparable from an incorruptible body, yet the substance of the body

is one thing, the quality of incorruption another. And therefore the

body is not what it has. The soul itself, too, though it be always

wise (as it will be eternally when it is redeemed), will be so by

participating in the unchangeable wisdom, which it is not; for though

the air be never robbed of the light that is shed abroad in it, it is

not on that account the same thing as the light. I do not mean that

the soul is air, as has been supposed by some who could not conceive a

spiritual nature; [468] but, with much dissimilarity, the two things

have a kind of likeness, which makes it suitable to say that the

immaterial soul is illumined with the immaterial light of the simple

wisdom of God, as the material air is irradiated with material light,

and that, as the air, when deprived of this light, grows dark, (for

material darkness is nothing else than air wanting light, [469] ) so

the soul, deprived of the light of wisdom, grows dark.

According to this, then, those things which are essentially and truly

divine are called simple, because in them quality and substance are

identical, and because they are divine, or wise, or blessed in

themselves, and without extraneous supplement. In Holy Scripture, it

is true, the Spirit of wisdom is called "manifold" [470] because it

contains many things in it; but what it contains it also is, and it

being one is all these things. For neither are there many wisdoms, but

one, in which are untold and infinite treasures of things intellectual,

wherein are all invisible and unchangeable reasons of things visible

and changeable which were created by it. [471] For God made nothing

unwittingly; not even a human workman can be said to do so. But if He

knew all that He made, He made only those things which He had known.

Whence flows a very striking but true conclusion, that this world could

not be known to us unless it existed, but could not have existed unless

it had been known to God.

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[468] Plutarch (De Plac. Phil. i. 3, and iv. 3) tells us that this

opinion was held by Anaximenes of Miletus, the followers of Anaxagoras,

and many of the Stoics. Diogenes the Cynic, as well, as Diogenes of

Appollonia seems to have adopted the same opinion. See Zeller's

Stoics, pp. 121 and 199.

[469] Ubi lux non est, tenebr� sunt, non quia aliquid sunt tenebr�, sed

ipsa lucis absentia tenebr� dicuntur.--Aug. De. Gen. contra Man. 7.

[470] Wisdom vii. 22.

[471] The strongly Platonic tinge of this language is perhaps best

preserved in a bare literal translation.

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Chapter 11.--Whether the Angels that Fell Partook of the Blessedness

Which the Holy Angels Have Always Enjoyed from the Time of Their

Creation.

And since these things are so, those spirits whom we call angels were

never at any time or in any way darkness, but, as soon as they were

made, were made light; yet they were not so created in order that they

might exist and live in any way whatever, but were enlightened that

they might live wisely and blessedly. Some of them, having turned away

from this light, have not won this wise and blessed life, which is

certainly eternal, and accompanied with the sure confidence of its

eternity; but they have still the life of reason, though darkened with

folly, and this they cannot lose even if they would. But who can

determine to what extent they were partakers of that wisdom before they

fell? And how shall we say that they participated in it equally with

those who through it are truly and fully blessed, resting in a true

certainty of eternal felicity? For if they had equally participated in

this true knowledge, then the evil angels would have remained eternally

blessed equally with the good, because they were equally expectant of

it. For, though a life be never so long, it cannot be truly called

eternal if it is destined to have an end; for it is called life

inasmuch as it is lived, but eternal because it has no end. Wherefore,

although everything eternal is not therefore blessed (for hell-fire is

eternal), yet if no life can be truly and perfectly blessed except it

be eternal, the life of these angels was not blessed, for it was doomed

to end, and therefore not eternal, whether they knew it or not. In the

one case fear, in the other ignorance, prevented them from being

blessed. And even if their ignorance was not so great as to breed in

them a wholly false expectation, but left them wavering in uncertainty

whether their good would be eternal or would some time terminate, this

very doubt concerning so grand a destiny was incompatible with the

plenitude of blessedness which we believe the holy angels enjoyed. For

we do not so narrow and restrict the application of the term

"blessedness" as to apply it to God only, [472] though doubtless He is

so truly blessed that greater blessedness cannot be; and, in comparison

of His blessedness, what is that of the angels, though, according to

their capacity, they be perfectly blessed?

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[472] Vives remarks that the ancients defined blessedness as an

absolutely perfect state in all good, peculiar to God. Perhaps

Augustin had a reminiscence of the remarkable discussion in the Tusc.

Disp. lib. v., and the definition, Neque ulla alia huic verbo, quum

beatum dicimus, subjecta notio est, nisi, secretis malis omnibus,

cumulata bonorum complexio.

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Chapter 12.--A Comparison of the Blessedness of the Righteous, Who Have

Not Yet Received the Divine Reward, with that of Our First Parents in

Paradise.

And the angels are not the only members of the rational and

intellectual creation whom we call blessed. For who will take upon him

to deny that those first men in Paradise were blessed previously to

sin, although they were uncertain how long their blessedness was to

last, and whether it would be eternal (and eternal it would have been

had they not sinned),--who, I say, will do so, seeing that even now we

not unbecomingly call those blessed whom we see leading a righteous and

holy life, in hope of immortality, who have no harrowing remorse of

conscience, but obtain readily divine remission of the sins of their

present infirmity? These, though they are certain that they shall be

rewarded if they persevere, are not certain that they will persevere.

For what man can know that he will persevere to the end in the exercise

and increase of grace, unless he has been certified by some revelation

from Him who, in His just and secret judgment, while He deceives none,

informs few regarding this matter? Accordingly, so far as present

comfort goes, the first man in Paradise was more blessed than any just

man in this insecure state; but as regards the hope of future good,

every man who not merely supposes, but certainly knows that he shall

eternally enjoy the most high God in the company of angels, and beyond

the reach of ill,--this man, no matter what bodily torments afflict

him, is more blessed than was he who, even in that great felicity of

Paradise, was uncertain of his fate. [473]

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[473] With this chapter compare the books De Dono Persever, and De

Correp. et Gratia.

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Chapter 13.--Whether All the Angels Were So Created in One Common State

of Felicity, that Those Who Fell Were Not Aware that They Would Fall,

and that Those Who Stood Received Assurance of Their Own Perseverance

After the Ruin of the Fallen.

From all this, it will readily occur to any one that the blessedness

which an intelligent being desires as its legitimate object results

from a combination of these two things, namely, that it uninterruptedly

enjoy the unchangeable good, which is God; and that it be delivered

from all dubiety, and know certainly that it shall eternally abide in

the same enjoyment. That it is so with the angels of light we piously

believe; but that the fallen angels, who by their own default lost that

light, did not enjoy this blessedness even before they sinned, reason

bids us conclude. Yet if their life was of any duration before they

fell, we must allow them a blessedness of some kind, though not that

which is accompanied with foresight. Or, if it seems hard to believe

that, when the angels were created, some were created in ignorance

either of their perseverance or their fall, while others were most

certainly assured of the eternity of their felicity,--if it is hard to

believe that they were not all from the beginning on an equal footing,

until these who are now evil did of their own will fall away from the

light of goodness, certainly it is much harder to believe that the holy

angels are now uncertain of their eternal blessedness, and do not know

regarding themselves as much as we have been able to gather regarding

them from the Holy Scriptures. For what catholic Christian does not

know that no new devil will ever arise among the good angels, as he

knows that this present devil will never again return into the

fellowship of the good? For the truth in the gospel promises to the

saints and the faithful that they will be equal to the angels of God;

and it is also promised them that they will "go away into life

eternal." [474] But if we are certain that we shall never lapse from

eternal felicity, while they are not certain, then we shall not be

their equals, but their superiors. But as the truth never deceives,

and as we shall be their equals, they must be certain of their

blessedness. And because the evil angels could not be certain of that,

since their blessedness was destined to come to an end, it follows

either that the angels were unequal, or that, if equal, the good angels

were assured of the eternity of their blessedness after the perdition

of the others; unless, possibly, some one may say that the words of the

Lord about the devil "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode

not in the truth," [475] are to be understood as if he was not only a

murderer from the beginning of the human race, when man, whom he could

kill by his deceit, was made, but also that he did not abide in the

truth from the time of his own creation, and was accordingly never

blessed with the holy angels, but refused to submit to his Creator, and

proudly exulted as if in a private lordship of his own, and was thus

deceived and deceiving. For the dominion of the Almighty cannot be

eluded; and he who will not piously submit himself to things as they

are, proudly feigns, and mocks himself with a state of things that does

not exist; so that what the blessed Apostle John says thus becomes

intelligible: "The devil sinneth from the beginning," [476] --that is,

from the time he was created he refused righteousness, which none but a

will piously subject to God can enjoy. Whoever adopts this opinion at

least disagrees with those heretics the Manichees, and with any other

pestilential sect that may suppose that the devil has derived from some

adverse evil principle a nature proper to himself. These persons are

so befooled by error, that, although they acknowledge with ourselves

the authority of the gospels, they do not notice that the Lord did not

say, "The devil was naturally a stranger to the truth," but "The devil

abode not in the truth," by which He meant us to understand that he had

fallen from the truth, in which, if he had abode, he would have become

a partaker of it, and have remained in blessedness along with the holy

angels. [477]

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[474] Matt. xxv. 46.

[475] John viii. 44.

[476] 1 John iii. 8.

[477] Cf. Gen. ad Lit. xl. 27 et seqq.

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Chapter 14.--An Explanation of What is Said of the Devil, that He Did

Not Abide in the Truth, Because the Truth Was Not in Him.

Moreover, as if we had been inquiring why the devil did not abide in

the truth, our Lord subjoins the reason, saying, "because the truth is

not in him." Now, it would be in him had he abode in it. But the

phraseology is unusual. For, as the words stand, "He abode not in the

truth, because the truth is not in him," it seems as if the truth's not

being in him were the cause of his not abiding in it; whereas his not

abiding in the truth is rather the cause of its not being in him. The

same form of speech is found in the psalm: "I have called upon Thee,

for Thou hast heard me, O God," [478] where we should expect it to be

said, Thou hast heard me, O God, for I have called upon Thee. But when

he had said, "I have called," then, as if some one were seeking proof

of this, he demonstrates the effectual earnestness of his prayer by the

effect of God's hearing it; as if he had said, The proof that I have

prayed is that Thou hast heard me.

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[478] Ps. xvii. 6.

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Chapter 15.--How We are to Understand the Words, "The Devil Sinneth

from the Beginning."

As for what John says about the devil, "The devil sinneth from the

beginning" [479] they [480] who suppose it is meant hereby that the

devil was made with a sinful nature, misunderstand it; for if sin be

natural, it is not sin at all. And how do they answer the prophetic

proofs,--either what Isaiah says when he represents the devil under the

person of the king of Babylon, "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of

the morning!" [481] or what Ezekiel says, "Thou hast been in Eden, the

garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering," [482] where it

is meant that he was some time without sin; for a little after it is

still more explicitly said, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways?" And if

these passages cannot well be otherwise interpreted, we must understand

by this one also, "He abode not in the truth," that he was once in the

truth, but did not remain in it. And from this passage, "The devil

sinneth from the beginning," it is not to be supposed that he sinned

from the beginning of his created existence, but from the beginning of

his sin, when by his pride he had once commenced to sin. There is a

passage, too, in the Book of Job, of which the devil is the subject:

"This is the beginning of the creation of God, which He made to be a

sport to His angels," [483] which agrees with the psalm, where it is

said, "There is that dragon which Thou hast made to be a sport

therein." [484] But these passages are not to lead us to suppose that

the devil was originally created to be the sport of the angels, but

that he was doomed to this punishment after his sin. His beginning,

then, is the handiwork of God; for there is no nature, even among the

least, and lowest, and last of the beasts, which was not the work of

Him from whom has proceeded all measure, all form, all order, without

which nothing can be planned or conceived. How much more, then, is

this angelic nature, which surpasses in dignity all else that He has

made, the handiwork of the Most High!

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[479] 1 John iii. 8.

[480] The Manich�ans.

[481] Isa. xiv. 12.

[482] Ezek. xxviii. 13.

[483] Job xl. 14 (LXX.).

[484] Ps. civ. 26.

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Chapter 16.--Of the Ranks and Differences of the Creatures, Estimated

by Their Utility, or According to the Natural Gradations of Being.

For, among those beings which exist, and which are not of God the

Creator's essence, those which have life are ranked above those which

have none; those that have the power of generation, or even of

desiring, above those which want this faculty. And, among things that

have life, the sentient are higher than those which have no sensation,

as animals are ranked above trees. And, among the sentient, the

intelligent are above those that have not intelligence,--men, e.g.,

above cattle. And, among the intelligent, the immortal such as the

angels, above the mortal, such as men. These are the gradations

according to the order of nature; but according to the utility each man

finds in a thing, there are various standards of value, so that it

comes to pass that we prefer some things that have no sensation to some

sentient beings. And so strong is this preference, that, had we the

power, we would abolish the latter from nature altogether, whether in

ignorance of the place they hold in nature, or, though we know it,

sacrificing them to our own convenience. Who, e.g., would not rather

have bread in his house than mice, gold than fleas? But there is

little to wonder at in this, seeing that even when valued by men

themselves (whose nature is certainly of the highest dignity), more is

often given for a horse than for a slave, for a jewel than for a maid.

Thus the reason of one contemplating nature prompts very different

judgments from those dictated by the necessity of the needy, or the

desire of the voluptuous; for the former considers what value a thing

in itself has in the scale of creation, while necessity considers how

it meets its need; reason looks for what the mental light will judge to

be true, while pleasure looks for what pleasantly titilates the bodily

sense. But of such consequence in rational natures is the weight, so

to speak, of will and of love, that though in the order of nature

angels rank above men, yet, by the scale of justice, good men are of

greater value than bad angels.

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Chapter 17.--That the Flaw of Wickedness is Not Nature, But Contrary to

Nature, and Has Its Origin, Not in the Creator, But in the Will.

It is with reference to the nature, then, and not to the wickedness of

the devil, that we are to understand these words, "This is the

beginning of God's handiwork;" [485] for, without doubt, wickedness can

be a flaw or vice [486] only where the nature previously was not

vitiated. Vice, too, is so contrary to nature, that it cannot but

damage it. And therefore departure from God would be no vice, unless

in a nature whose property it was to abide with God. So that even the

wicked will is a strong proof of the goodness of the nature. But God,

as He is the supremely good Creator of good natures, so is He of evil

wills the most just Ruler; so that, while they make an ill use of good

natures, He makes a good use even of evil wills. Accordingly, He

caused the devil (good by God's creation, wicked by his own will) to be

cast down from his high position, and to become the mockery of His

angels,--that is, He caused his temptations to benefit those whom he

wishes to injure by them. And because God, when He created him, was

certainly not ignorant of his future malignity, and foresaw the good

which He Himself would bring out of his evil, therefore says the psalm,

"This leviathan whom Thou hast made to be a sport therein," [487] that

we may see that, even while God in His goodness created him good, He

yet had already foreseen and arranged how He would make use of him when

he became wicked.

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[485] Job. xl. 14 (LXX.).

[486] It must be kept in view that "vice" has, in this passage, the

meaning of sinful blemish.

[487] Ps. civ. 26.

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Chapter 18.--Of the Beauty of the Universe, Which Becomes, by God's

Ordinance, More Brilliant by the Opposition of Contraries.

For God would never have created any, I do not say angel, but even man,

whose future wickedness He foreknew, unless He had equally known to

what uses in behalf of the good He could turn him, thus embellishing,

the course of the ages, as it were an exquisite poem set off with

antitheses. For what are called antitheses are among the most elegant

of the ornaments of speech. They might be called in Latin

"oppositions," or, to speak more accurately, "contrapositions;" but

this word is not in common use among us, [488] though the Latin, and

indeed the languages of all nations, avail themselves of the same

ornaments of style. In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians the

Apostle Paul also makes a graceful use of antithesis, in that place

where he says, "By the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on

the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as

deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and,

behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always

rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet

possessing all things." [489] As, then, these oppositions of

contraries lend beauty to the language, so the beauty of the course of

this world is achieved by the opposition of contraries, arranged, as it

were, by an eloquence not of words, but of things. This is quite

plainly stated in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, in this way: "Good is

set against evil, and life against death: so is the sinner against the

godly. So look upon all the works of the Most High, and these are two

and two, one against another." [490]

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[488] Quintilian uses it commonly in the sense of antithesis.

[489] 2 Cor. vi. 7-10.

[490] Ecclus. xxxiii. 15.

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Chapter 19.--What, Seemingly, We are to Understand by the Words, "God

Divided the Light from the Darkness."

Accordingly, though the obscurity of the divine word has certainly this

advantage, that it causes many opinions about the truth to be started

and discussed, each reader seeing some fresh meaning in it, yet,

whatever is said to be meant by an obscure passage should be either

confirmed by the testimony of obvious facts, or should be asserted in

other and less ambiguous texts. This obscurity is beneficial, whether

the sense of the author is at last reached after the discussion of many

other interpretations, or whether, though that sense remain concealed,

other truths are brought out by the discussion of the obscurity. To me

it does not seem incongruous with the working of God, if we understand

that the angels were created when that first light was made, and that a

separation was made between the holy and the unclean angels, when, as

is said, "God divided the light from the darkness; and God called the

light Day, and the darkness He called Night." For He alone could make

this discrimination, who was able also before they fell, to foreknow

that they would fall, and that, being deprived of the light of truth,

they would abide in the darkness of pride. For, so far as regards the

day and night, with which we are familiar, He commanded those

luminaries of heaven that are obvious to our senses to divide between

the light and the darkness. "Let there be," He says, "lights in the

firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night;" and shortly

after He says, "And God made two great lights; the greater light to

rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: the stars also.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the

earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the

light from the darkness." [491] But between that light, which is the

holy company of the angels spiritually radiant with the illumination of

the truth, and that opposing darkness, which is the noisome foulness of

the spiritual condition of those angels who are turned away from the

light of righteousness, only He Himself could divide, from whom their

wickedness (not of nature, but of will), while yet it was future, could

not be hidden or uncertain.

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[491] Gen. i. 14-18.

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Chapter 20.--Of the Words Which Follow the Separation of Light and

Darkness, "And God Saw the Light that It Was Good."

Then, we must not pass from this passage of Scripture without noticing

that when God said, "Let there be light, and there was light," it was

immediately added, "And God saw the light that it was good." No such

expression followed the statement that He separated the light from the

darkness, and called the light Day and the darkness Night, lest the

seal of His approval might seem to be set on such darkness, as well as

on the light. For when the darkness was not subject of disapprobation,

as when it was divided by the heavenly bodies from this light which our

eyes discern, the statement that God saw that it was good is inserted,

not before, but after the division is recorded. "And God set them," so

runs the passage, "in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon

the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide

the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good." For He

approved of both, because both were sinless. But where God said, "Let

there be light, and there was light; and God saw the light that it was

good;" and the narrative goes on, "and God divided the light from the

darkness! and God called the light Day, and the darkness He called

Night," there was not in this place subjoined the statement, "And God

saw that it was good," lest both should be designated good, while one

of them was evil, not by nature, but by its own fault. And therefore,

in this case, the light alone received the approbation of the Creator,

while the angelic darkness, though it had been ordained, was yet not

approved.

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Chapter 21.--Of God's Eternal and Unchangeable Knowledge and Will,

Whereby All He Has Made Pleased Him in the Eternal Design as Well as in

the Actual Result.

For what else is to be understood by that invariable refrain, "And God

saw that it was good," than the approval of the work in its design,

which is the wisdom of God? For certainly God did not in the actual

achievement of the work first learn that it was good, but, on the

contrary, nothing would have been made had it not been first known by

Him. While, therefore, He sees that that is good which, had He not

seen it before it was made, would never have been made, it is plain

that He is not discovering, but teaching that it is good. Plato,

indeed, was bold enough to say that, when the universe was completed,

God was, as it were, elated with joy. [492] And Plato was not so

foolish as to mean by this that God was rendered more blessed by the

novelty of His creation; but he wished thus to indicate that the work

now completed met with its Maker's approval, as it had while yet in

design. It is not as if the knowledge of God were of various kinds,

knowing in different ways things which as yet are not, things which

are, and things which have been. For not in our fashion does He look

forward to what is future, nor at what is present, nor back upon what

is past; but in a manner quite different and far and profoundly remote

from our way of thinking. For He does not pass from this to that by

transition of thought, but beholds all things with absolute

unchangeableness; so that of those things which emerge in time, the

future, indeed, are not yet, and the present are now, and the past no

longer are; but all of these are by Him comprehended in His stable and

eternal presence. Neither does He see in one fashion by the eye, in

another by the mind, for He is not composed of mind and body; nor does

His present knowledge differ from that which it ever was or shall be,

for those variations of time, past, present, and future, though they

alter our knowledge, do not affect His, "with whom is no variableness,

neither shadow of turning." [493] Neither is there any growth from

thought to thought in the conceptions of Him in whose spiritual vision

all things which He knows are at once embraced. For as without any

movement that time can measure, He Himself moves all temporal things,

so He knows all times with a knowledge that time cannot measure. And

therefore He saw that what He had made was good, when He saw that it

was good to make it. And when He saw it made, He had not on that

account a twofold nor any way increased knowledge of it; as if He had

less knowledge before He made what He saw. For certainly He would not

be the perfect worker He is, unless His knowledge were so perfect as to

receive no addition from His finished works. Wherefore, if the only

object had been to inform us who made the light, it had been enough to

say, "God made the light;" and if further information regarding the

means by which it was made had been intended, it would have sufficed to

say, "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light," that we

might know not only that God had made the world, but also that He had

made it by the word. But because it was right that three leading

truths regarding the creature be intimated to us, viz., who made it, by

what means, and why, it is written, "God said, Let there be light, and

there was light. And God saw the light that it was good." If, then,

we ask who made it, it was "God." If, by what means, He said "Let it

be," and it was. If we ask, why He made it, "it was good." Neither is

there any author more excellent than God, nor any skill more

efficacious than the word of God, nor any cause better than that good

might be created by the good God. This also Plato has assigned as the

most sufficient reason for the creation of the world, that good works

might be made by a good God; [494] whether he read this passage, or,

perhaps, was informed of these things by those who had read them, or,

by his quick-sighted genius, penetrated to things spiritual and

invisible through the things that are created, or was instructed

regarding them by those who had discerned them.

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[492] The reference is to the Tim�us, p. 37 C., where he says, "When

the parent Creator perceived this created image of the eternal Gods in

life and motion, He was delighted, and in His joy considered how He

might make it still liker its model."

[493] Jas. i. 17.

[494] The passage referred to is in the Tim�us p. 29 D.: "Let us say

what was the cause of the Creator's forming this universe. He was

good; and in the good no envy is ever generated about anything

whatever. Therefore, being free from envy, He desired that all things

should, as much as possible, resemble Himself."

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Chapter 22.--Of Those Who Do Not Approve of Certain Things Which are a

Part of This Good Creation of a Good Creator, and Who Think that There

is Some Natural Evil.

This cause, however, of a good creation, namely, the goodness of

God,--this cause, I say, so just and fit, which, when piously and

carefully weighed, terminates all the controversies of those who

inquire into the origin of the world, has not been recognized by some

heretics, [495] because there are, forsooth, many things, such as fire,

frost, wild beasts, and so forth, which do not suit but injure this

thin blooded and frail mortality of our flesh, which is at present

under just punishment. They do not consider how admirable these things

are in their own places, how excellent in their own natures, how

beautifully adjusted to the rest of creation, and how much grace they

contribute to the universe by their own contributions as to a

commonwealth; and how serviceable they are even to ourselves, if we use

them with a knowledge of their fit adaptations,--so that even poisons,

which are destructive when used injudiciously, become wholesome and

medicinal when used in conformity with their qualities and design; just

as, on the other hand, those things which give us pleasure, such as

food, drink, and the light of the sun, are found to be hurtful when

immoderately or unseasonably used. And thus divine providence

admonishes us not foolishly to vituperate things, but to investigate

their utility with care; and, where our mental capacity or infirmity is

at fault, to believe that there is a utility, though hidden, as we have

experienced that there were other things which we all but failed to

discover. For this concealment of the use of things is itself either

an exercise of our humility or a levelling of our pride; for no nature

at all is evil, and this is a name for nothing but the want of good.

But from things earthly to things heavenly, from the visible to the

invisible, there are some things better than others; and for this

purpose are they unequal, in order that they might all exist. Now God

is in such sort a great worker in great things, that He is not less in

little things,--for these little things are to be measured not by their

own greatness (which does not exist), but by the wisdom of their

Designer; as, in the visible appearance of a man, if one eyebrow be

shaved off, how nearly nothing is taken from the body, but how much

from the beauty!--for that is not constituted by bulk, but by the

proportion and arrangement of the members. But we do not greatly

wonder that persons, who suppose that some evil nature has been

generated and propagated by a kind of opposing principle proper to it,

refuse to admit that the cause of the creation was this, that the good

God produced a good creation. For they believe that He was driven to

this enterprise of creation by the urgent necessity of repulsing the

evil that warred against Him, and that He mixed His good nature with

the evil for the sake of restraining and conquering it; and that this

nature of His, being thus shamefully polluted, and most cruelly

oppressed and held captive, He labors to cleanse and deliver it, and

with all His pains does not wholly succeed; but such part of it as

could not be cleansed from that defilement is to serve as a prison and

chain of the conquered and incarcerated enemy. The Manich�ans would

not drivel, or rather, rave in such a style as this, if they believed

the nature of God to be, as it is, unchangeable and absolutely

incorruptible, and subject to no injury; and if, moreover, they held in

Christian sobriety, that the soul which has shown itself capable of

being altered for the worse by its own will, and of being corrupted by

sin, and so, of being deprived of the light of eternal truth,--that

this soul, I say, is not a part of God, nor of the same nature as God,

but is created by Him, and is far different from its Creator.

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[495] The Manich�ans, to wit.

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Chapter 23.--Of the Error in Which the Doctrine of Origen is Involved.

But it is much more surprising that some even of those who, with

ourselves, believe that there is one only source of all things, and

that no nature which is not divine can exist unless originated by that

Creator, have yet refused to accept with a good and simple faith this

so good and simple a reason of the world's creation, that a good God

made it good; and that the things created, being different from God,

were inferior to Him, and yet were good, being created by none other

than He. But they say that souls, though not, indeed, parts of God,

but created by Him, sinned by abandoning God; that, in proportion to

their various sins, they merited different degrees of debasement from

heaven to earth, and diverse bodies as prison-houses; and that this is

the world, and this the cause of its creation, not the production of

good things, but the restraining of evil. Origen is justly blamed for

holding this opinion. For in the books which he entitles peri archon,

that is, Of Origins, this is his sentiment, this his utterance. And I

can not sufficiently express my astonishment, that a man so erudite and

well versed in ecclesiastical literature, should not have observed, in

the first place, how opposed this is to the meaning of this

authoritative Scripture, which, in recounting all the works of God,

regularly adds, "And God saw that it was good;" and, when all were

completed, inserts the words, "And God saw everything that He had made,

and, behold, it was very good." [496] Was it not obviously meant to

be understood that there was no other cause of the world's creation

than that good creatures should be made by a good God? In this

creation, had no one sinned, the world would have been filled and

beautified with natures good without exception; and though there is

sin, all things are not therefore full of sin, for the great majority

of the heavenly inhabitants preserve their nature's integrity. And the

sinful will though it violated the order of its own nature, did not on

that account escape the laws of God, who justly orders all things for

good. For as the beauty of a picture is increased by well-managed

shadows, so, to the eye that has skill to discern it, the universe is

beautified even by sinners, though, considered by themselves, their

deformity is a sad blemish.

In the second place, Origen, and all who think with him, ought to have

seen that if it were the true opinion that the world was created in

order that souls might, for their sins, be accommodated with bodies in

which they should be shut up as in houses of correction, the more

venial sinners receiving lighter and more ethereal bodies, while the

grosser and graver sinners received bodies more crass and grovelling,

then it would follow that the devils, who are deepest in wickedness,

ought, rather than even wicked men, to have earthly bodies, since these

are the grossest and least ethereal of all. But in point of fact, that

we might see that the deserts of souls are not to be estimated by the

qualities of bodies, the wickedest devil possesses an ethereal body,

while man, wicked, it is true, but with a wickedness small and venial

in comparison with his, received even before his sin a body of clay.

And what more foolish assertion can be advanced than that God, by this

sun of ours, did not design to benefit the material creation, or lend

lustre to its loveliness, and therefore created one single sun for this

single world, but that it so happened that one soul only had so sinned

as to deserve to be enclosed in such a body as it is? On this

principle, if it had chanced that not one, but two, yea, or ten, or a

hundred had sinned similarly, and with a like degree of guilt, then

this world would have one hundred suns. And that such is not the case,

is due not to the considerate foresight of the Creator, contriving the

safety and beauty of things material, but rather to the fact that so

fine a quality of sinning was hit upon by only one soul, so that it

alone has merited such a body. Manifestly persons holding such

opinions should aim at confining, not souls of which they know not what

they say, but themselves, lest they fall, and deservedly, far indeed

from the truth. And as to these three answers which I formerly

recommended when in the case of any creature the questions are put, Who

made it? By what means? Why? that it should be replied, God, By the

Word, Because it was good,--as to these three answers, it is very

questionable whether the Trinity itself is thus mystically indicated,

that is, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, or whether there is

some good reason for this acceptation in this passage of

Scripture,--this, I say, is questionable, and one can't be expected to

explain everything in one volume.

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[496] Gen. i. 31.

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Chapter 24.--Of the Divine Trinity, and the Indications of Its Presence

Scattered Everywhere Among Its Works.

We believe, we maintain, we faithfully preach, that the Father begat

the Word, that is, Wisdom, by which all things were made, the

only-begotten Son, one as the Father is one, eternal as the Father is

eternal, and, equally with the Father, supremely good; and that the

Holy Spirit is the Spirit alike of Father and of Son, and is Himself

consubstantial and co-eternal with both; and that this whole is a

Trinity by reason of the individuality [497] of the persons, and one

God by reason of the indivisible divine substance, as also one Almighty

by reason of the indivisible omnipotence; yet so that, when we inquire

regarding each singly, it is said that each is God and Almighty; and,

when we speak of all together, it is said that there are not three

Gods, nor three Almighties, but one God Almighty; so great is the

indivisible unity of these Three, which requires that it be so stated.

But, whether the Holy Spirit of the Father, and of the Son, who are

both good, can be with propriety called the goodness of both, because

He is common to both, I do not presume to determine hastily.

Nevertheless, I would have less hesitation in saying that He is the

holiness of both, not as if He were a divine attribute merely, but

Himself also the divine substance, and the third person in the

Trinity. I am the rather emboldened to make this statement, because,

though the Father is a spirit, and the Son a spirit, and the Father

holy, and the Son holy, yet the third person is distinctively called

the Holy Spirit, as if He were the substantial holiness consubstantial

with the other two. But if the divine goodness is nothing else than

the divine holiness, then certainly it is a reasonable studiousness,

and not presumptuous intrusion, to inquire whether the same Trinity be

not hinted at in an enigmatical mode of speech, by which our inquiry is

stimulated, when it is written who made each creature, and by what

means, and why. For it is the Father of the Word who said, Let there

be. And that which was made when He spoke was certainly made by means

of the Word. And by the words, "God saw that it was good," it is

sufficiently intimated that God made what was made not from any

necessity, nor for the sake of supplying any want, but solely from His

own goodness, i.e., because it was good. And this is stated after the

creation had taken place, that there might be no doubt that the thing

made satisfied the goodness on account of which it was made. And if we

are right in understanding; that this goodness is the Holy Spirit, then

the whole Trinity is revealed to us in the creation. In this, too, is

the origin, the enlightenment, the blessedness of the holy city which

is above among the holy angels. For if we inquire whence it is, God

created it; or whence its wisdom, God illumined it; or whence its

blessedness, God is its bliss. It has its form by subsisting in Him;

its enlightenment by contemplating Him; its joy by abiding in Him. It

is; it sees; it loves. In God's eternity is its life; in God's truth

its light; in God's goodness its joy.

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[497] Proprietas. [The Greeks call it idiotes or idion, i.e. the

propriety or characteristic individuality of each divine person, namely

the fatherhood, paternitas, agennesia, of the first person; the

sonship, filiatio, generatio, gennesia, of the second person; the

procession, processio, ekporeusis, of the third person.--P.S.]

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Chapter 25.--Of the Division of Philosophy into Three Parts.

As far as one can judge, it is for the same reason that philosophers

have aimed at a threefold division of science, or rather, were enabled

to see that there was a threefold division (for they did not invent,

but only discovered it), of which one part is called physical, another

logical, the third ethical. The Latin equivalents of these names are

now naturalized in the writings of many authors, so that these

divisions are called natural, rational, and moral, on which I have

touched slightly in the eighth book. Not that I would conclude that

these philosophers, in this threefold division, had any thought of a

trinity in God, although Plato is said to have been the first to

discover and promulgate this distribution, and he saw that God alone

could be the author of nature, the bestower of intelligence, and the

kindler of love by which life becomes good and blessed. But certain it

is that, though philosophers disagree both regarding the nature of

things, and the mode of investigating truth, and of the good to which

all our actions ought to tend, yet in these three great general

questions all their intellectual energy is spent. And though there be

a confusing diversity of opinion, every man striving to establish his

own opinion in regard to each of these questions, yet no one of them

all doubts that nature has some cause, science some method, life some

end and aim. Then, again, there are three things which every artificer

must possess if he is to effect anything,--nature, education,

practice. Nature is to be judged by capacity, education by knowledge,

practice by its fruit. I am aware that, properly speaking, fruit is

what one enjoys, use [practice] what one uses. And this seems to be

the difference between them, that we are said to enjoy that which in

itself, and irrespective of other ends, delights us; to use that which

we seek for the sake of some end beyond. For which reason the things

of time are to be used rather than enjoyed, that we may deserve to

enjoy things eternal; and not as those perverse creatures who would

fain enjoy money and use God,--not spending money for God's sake, but

worshipping God for money's sake. However, in common parlance, we both

use fruits and enjoy uses. For we correctly speak of the "fruits of

the field," which certainly we all use in the present life. And it was

in accordance with this usage that I said that there were three things

to be observed in a man, nature, education, practice. From these the

philosophers have elaborated, as I said, the threefold division of that

science by which a blessed life is attained: the natural having

respect to nature, the rational to education, the moral to practice.

If, then, we were ourselves the authors of our nature, we should have

generated knowledge in ourselves, and should not require to reach it by

education, i.e., by learning it from others. Our love, too, proceeding

from ourselves and returning to us, would suffice to make our life

blessed, and would stand in need of no extraneous enjoyment. But now,

since our nature has God as its requisite author, it is certain that we

must have Him for our teacher that we may be wise; Him, too, to

dispense to us spiritual sweetness that we may be blessed.

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Chapter 26.--Of the Image of the Supreme Trinity, Which We Find in Some

Sort in Human Nature Even in Its Present State.

And we indeed recognize in ourselves the image of God, that is, of the

supreme Trinity, an image which, though it be not equal to God, or

rather, though it be very far removed from Him,--being neither

co-eternal, nor, to say all in a word, consubstantial with Him,--is yet

nearer to Him in nature than any other of His works, and is destined to

be yet restored, that it may bear a still closer resemblance. For we

both are, and know that we are, and delight in our being, and our

knowledge of it. Moreover, in these three things no true-seeming

illusion disturbs us; for we do not come into contact with these by

some bodily sense, as we perceive the things outside of us,--colors,

e.g., by seeing, sounds by hearing, smells by smelling, tastes by

tasting, hard and soft objects by touching,--of all which sensible

objects it is the images resembling them, but not themselves which we

perceive in the mind and hold in the memory, and which excite us to

desire the objects. But, without any delusive representation of images

or phantasms, I am most certain that I am, and that I know and delight

in this. In respect of these truths, I am not at all afraid of the

arguments of the Academicians, who say, What if you are deceived? For

if I am deceived, I am. [498] For he who is not, cannot be deceived;

and if I am deceived, by this same token I am. And since I am if I am

deceived, how am I deceived in believing that I am? for it is certain

that I am if I am deceived. Since, therefore, I, the person deceived,

should be, even if I were deceived, certainly I am not deceived in this

knowledge that I am. And, consequently, neither am I deceived in

knowing that I know. For, as I know that I am, so I know this also,

that I know. And when I love these two things, I add to them a certain

third thing, namely, my love, which is of equal moment. For neither am

I deceived in this, that I love, since in those things which I love I

am not deceived; though even if these were false, it would still be

true that I loved false things. For how could I justly be blamed and

prohibited from loving false things, if it were false that I loved

them? But, since they are true and real, who doubts that when they are

loved, the love of them is itself true and real? Further, as there is

no one who does not wish to be happy, so there is no one who does not

wish to be. For how can he be happy, if he is nothing?

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[498] This is one of the passages cited by Sir William Hamilton, along

with the Cogito, ergo sum of Descartes, in confirmation of his proof,

that in so far as we are conscious of certain modes of existence, in so

far we possess an absolute certainty that we exist. See note A in

Hamilton's Reid, p. 744.

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Chapter 27.--Of Existence, and Knowledge of It, and the Love of Both.

And truly the very fact of existing is by some natural spell so

pleasant, that even the wretched are, for no other reason, unwilling to

perish; and, when they feel that they are wretched, wish not that they

themselves be annihilated, but that their misery be so. Take even

those who, both in their own esteem, and in point of fact, are utterly

wretched, and who are reckoned so, not only by wise men on account of

their folly, but by those who count themselves blessed, and who think

them wretched because they are poor and destitute,--if any one should

give these men an immortality, in which their misery should be

deathless, and should offer the alternative, that if they shrank from

existing eternally in the same misery they might be annihilated, and

exist nowhere at all, nor in any condition, on the instant they would

joyfully, nay exultantly, make election to exist always, even in such a

condition, rather than not exist at all. The well-known feeling of

such men witnesses to this. For when we see that they fear to die, and

will rather live in such misfortune than end it by death, is it not

obvious enough how nature shrinks from annihilation? And, accordingly,

when they know that they must die, they seek, as a great boon, that

this mercy be shown them, that they may a little longer live in the

same misery, and delay to end it by death. And so they indubitably

prove with what glad alacrity they would accept immortality, even

though it secured to them endless destruction. What! do not even all

irrational animals, to whom such calculations are unknown, from the

huge dragons down to the least worms, all testify that they wish to

exist, and therefore shun death by every movement in their power? Nay,

the very plants and shrubs, which have no such life as enables them to

shun destruction by movements we can see, do not they all seek in their

own fashion to conserve their existence, by rooting themselves more and

more deeply in the earth, that so they may draw nourishment, and throw

out healthy branches towards the sky? In fine, even the lifeless

bodies, which want not only sensation but seminal life, yet either seek

the upper air or sink deep, or are balanced in an intermediate

position, so that they may protect their existence in that situation

where they can exist in most accordance with their nature.

And how much human nature loves the knowledge of its existence, and

how it shrinks from being deceived, will be sufficiently understood

from this fact, that every man prefers to grieve in a sane mind, rather

than to be glad in madness. And this grand and wonderful instinct

belongs to men alone of all animals; for, though some of them have

keener eyesight than ourselves for this world's light, they cannot

attain to that spiritual light with which our mind is somehow

irradiated, so that we can form right judgments of all things. For our

power to judge is proportioned to our acceptance of this light.

Nevertheless, the irrational animals, though they have not knowledge,

have certainly something resembling knowledge; whereas the other

material things are said to be sensible, not because they have senses,

but because they are the objects of our senses. Yet among plants,

their nourishment and generation have some resemblance to sensible

life. However, both these and all material things have their causes

hidden in their nature; but their outward forms, which lend beauty to

this visible structure of the world, are perceived by our senses, so

that they seem to wish to compensate for their own want of knowledge by

providing us with knowledge. But we perceive them by our bodily senses

in such a way that we do not judge of them by these senses. For we

have another and far superior sense, belonging to the inner man, by

which we perceive what things are just, and what unjust,--just by means

of an intelligible idea, unjust by the want of it. This sense is aided

in its functions neither by the eyesight, nor by the orifice of the

ear, nor by the air-holes of the nostrils, nor by the palate's taste,

nor by any bodily touch. By it I am assured both that I am, and that I

know this; and these two I love, and in the same manner I am assured

that I love them.

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Chapter 28.--Whether We Ought to Love the Love Itself with Which We

Love Our Existence and Our Knowledge of It, that So We May More Nearly

Resemble the Image of the Divine Trinity.

We have said as much as the scope of this work demands regarding these

two things, to wit, our existence, and our knowledge of it, and how

much they are loved by us, and how there is found even in the lower

creatures a kind of likeness of these things, and yet with a

difference. We have yet to speak of the love wherewith they are loved,

to determine whether this love itself is loved. And doubtless it is;

and this is the proof. Because in men who are justly loved, it is

rather love itself that is loved; for he is not justly called a good

man who knows what is good, but who loves it. Is it not then obvious

that we love in ourselves the very love wherewith we love whatever good

we love? For there is also a love wherewith we love that which we

ought not to love; and this love is hated by him who loves that

wherewith he loves what ought to be loved. For it is quite possible

for both to exist in one man. And this co-existence is good for a man,

to the end that this love which conduces to our living well may grow,

and the other, which leads us to evil may decrease, until our whole

life be perfectly healed and transmuted into good. For if we were

beasts, we should love the fleshly and sensual life, and this would be

our sufficient good; and when it was well with us in respect of it, we

should seek nothing beyond. In like manner, if we were trees, we could

not, indeed, in the strict sense of the word, love anything;

nevertheless we should seem, as it were, to long for that by which we

might become more abundantly and luxuriantly fruitful. If we were

stones, or waves, or wind, or flame, or anything of that kind, we

should want, indeed, both sensation and life, yet should possess a kind

of attraction towards our own proper position and natural order. For

the specific gravity of bodies is, as it were, their love, whether they

are carried downwards by their weight, or upwards by their levity. For

the body is borne by its gravity, as the spirit by love, whithersoever

it is borne. [499] But we are men, created in the image of our

Creator, whose eternity is true, and whose truth is eternal, whose love

is eternal and true, and who Himself is the eternal, true, and adorable

Trinity, without confusion, without separation; and, therefore, while,

as we run over all the works which He has established, we may detect,

as it were, His footprints, now more and now less distinct even in

those things that are beneath us, since they could not so much as

exist, or be bodied forth in any shape, or follow and observe any law,

had they not been made by Him who supremely is, and is supremely good

and supremely wise; yet in ourselves beholding His image, let us, like

that younger son of the gospel, come to ourselves, and arise and return

to Him from whom by our sin we had departed. There our being will have

no death, our knowledge no error, our love no mishap. But now, though

we are assured of our possession of these three things, not on the

testimony of others, but by our own consciousness of their presence,

and because we see them with our own most truthful interior vision,

yet, as we cannot of our selves know how long they are to continue, and

whether they shall never cease to be, and what issue their good or bad

use will lead to, we seek for others who can acquaint us of these

things, if we have not already found them. Of the trustworthiness of

these witnesses, there will, not now, but subsequently, be an

opportunity of speaking. But in this book let us go on as we have

begun, with God's help, to speak of the city of God, not in its state

of pilgrimage and mortality, but as it exists ever immortal in the

heavens,--that is, let us speak of the holy angels who maintain their

allegiance to God, who never were, nor ever shall be, apostate, between

whom and those who forsook light eternal and became darkness, God, as

we have already said, made at the first a separation.

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[499] Compare the Confessions, xiii. 9.

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Chapter 29.--Of the Knowledge by Which the Holy Angels Know God in His

Essence, and by Which They See the Causes of His Works in the Art of

the Worker, Before They See Them in the Works of the Artist.

Those holy angels come to the knowledge of God not by audible words,

but by the presence to their souls of immutable truth, i.e., of the

only-begotten Word of God; and they know this Word Himself, and the

Father, and their Holy Spirit, and that this Trinity is indivisible,

and that the three persons of it are one substance, and that there are

not three Gods but one God; and this they so know that it is better

understood by them than we are by ourselves. Thus, too, they know the

creature also, not in itself, but by this better way, in the wisdom of

God, as if in the art by which it was created; and, consequently, they

know themselves better in God than in themselves, though they have also

this latter knowledge. For they were created, and are different from

their Creator. In Him, therefore, they have, as it were, a noonday

knowledge; in themselves, a twilight knowledge, according to our former

explanations. [500] For there is a great difference between knowing a

thing in the design in conformity to which it was made, and knowing it

in itself,--e.g., the straightness of lines and correctness of figures

is known in one way when mentally conceived, in another when described

on paper; and justice is known in one way in the unchangeable truth, in

another in the spirit of a just man. So is it with all other

things,--as, the firmament between the water above and below, which was

called the heaven; the gathering of the waters beneath, and the laying

bare of the dry land, and the production of plants and trees; the

creation of sun, moon, and stars; and of the animals out of the waters,

fowls, and fish, and monsters of the deep; and of everything that walks

or creeps on the earth, and of man himself, who excels all that is on

the earth,--all these things are known in one way by the angels in the

Word of God, in which they see the eternally abiding causes and reasons

according to which they were made, and in another way in themselves:

in the former, with a clearer knowledge; in the latter, with a

knowledge dimmer, and rather of the bare works than of the design.

Yet, when these works are referred to the praise and adoration of the

Creator Himself, it is as if morning dawned in the minds of those who

contemplate them.

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[500] Ch. 7.

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Chapter 30.--Of the Perfection of the Number Six, Which is the First of

the Numbers Which is Composed of Its Aliquot Parts.

These works are recorded to have been completed in six days (the same

day being six times repeated), because six is a perfect number,--not

because God required a protracted time, as if He could not at once

create all things, which then should mark the course of time by the

movements proper to them, but because the perfection of the works was

signified by the number six. For the number six is the first which is

made up of its own [501] parts, i.e., of its sixth, third, and half,

which are respectively one, two, and three, and which make a total of

six. In this way of looking at a number, those are said to be its

parts which exactly divide it, as a half, a third, a fourth, or a

fraction with any denominator, e.g., four is a part of nine, but not

therefore an aliquot part; but one is, for it is the ninth part; and

three is, for it is the third. Yet these two parts, the ninth and the

third, or one and three, are far from making its whole sum of nine. So

again, in the number ten, four is a part, yet does not divide it; but

one is an aliquot part, for it is a tenth; so it has a fifth, which is

two; and a half, which is five. But these three parts, a tenth, a

fifth, and a half, or one, two, and five, added together, do not make

ten, but eight. Of the number twelve, again, the parts added together

exceed the whole; for it has a twelfth, that is, one; a sixth, or two;

a fourth, which is three; a third, which is four; and a half, which is

six. But one, two, three, four, and six make up, not twelve, but more,

viz., sixteen. So much I have thought fit to state for the sake of

illustrating the perfection of the number six, which is, as I said, the

first which is exactly made up of its own parts added together; and in

this number of days God finished His work. [502] And, therefore, we

must not despise the science of numbers, which, in many passages of

holy Scripture, is found to be of eminent service to the careful

interpreter. [503] Neither has it been without reason numbered among

God's praises, "Thou hast ordered all things in number, and measure,

and weight." [504]

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[501] Or aliquot parts.

[502] Comp. Aug. Gen. ad Lit. iv. 2, and De Trinitate, iv. 7.

[503] For passages illustrating early opinions regarding numbers, see

Smith's Dict. art. Number.

[504] Wisd. xi. 20.

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Chapter 31.--Of the Seventh Day, in Which Completeness and Repose are

Celebrated.

But, on the seventh day (i.e., the same day repeated seven times, which

number is also a perfect one, though for another reason), the rest of

God is set forth, and then, too, we first hear of its being hallowed.

So that God did not wish to hallow this day by His works, but by His

rest, which has no evening, for it is not a creature; so that, being

known in one way in the Word of God, and in another in itself, it

should make a twofold knowledge, daylight and dusk (day and evening).

Much more might be said about the perfection of the number seven, but

this book is already too long, and I fear lest I should seem to catch

at an opportunity of airing my little smattering of science more

childishly than profitably. I must speak, therefore, in moderation and

with dignity, lest, in too keenly following "number," I be accused of

forgetting "weight" and "measure." Suffice it here to say, that three

is the first whole number that is odd, four the first that is even, and

of these two, seven is composed. On this account it is often put for

all numbers together, as, "A just man falleth seven times, and riseth

up again," [505] --that is, let him fall never so often, he will not

perish (and this was meant to be understood not of sins, but of

afflictions conducing to lowliness). Again, "Seven times a day will I

praise Thee," [506] which elsewhere is expressed thus, "I will bless

the Lord at all times." [507] And many such instances are found in

the divine authorities, in which the number seven is, as I said,

commonly used to express the whole, or the completeness of anything.

And so the Holy Spirit, of whom the Lord says, "He will teach you all

truth," [508] is signified by this number. [509] In it is the rest of

God, the rest His people find in Him. For rest is in the whole, i.e.,

in perfect completeness, while in the part there is labor. And thus we

labor as long as we know in part; "but when that which is perfect is

come, then that which is in part shall be done away." [510] It is

even with toil we search into the Scriptures themselves. But the holy

angels, towards whose society and assembly we sigh while in this our

toilsome pilgrimage, as they already abide in their eternal home, so do

they enjoy perfect facility of knowledge and felicity of rest. It is

without difficulty that they help us; for their spiritual movements,

pure and free, cost them no effort.

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[505] Prov. xxiv. 16.

[506] Ps. cxix. 164.

[507] Ps. xxxiv. 1.

[508] John xvi. 13.

[509] In Isa. xi. 2, as he shows in his eighth sermon, where this

subject is further pursued; otherwise, one might have supposed he

referred to Rev. iii. 1.

[510] l Cor. xiii. 10.

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Chapter 32.--Of the Opinion that the Angels Were Created Before the

World.

But if some one oppose our opinion, and say that the holy angels are

not referred to when it is said, "Let there be light, and there was

light;" if he suppose or teach that some material light, then first

created, was meant, and that the angels were created, not only before

the firmament dividing the waters and named "the heaven," but also

before the time signified in the words, "In the beginning God created

the heaven and the earth;" if he allege that this phrase, "In the

beginning," does not mean that nothing was made before (for the angels

were), but that God made all things by His Wisdom or Word, who is named

in Scripture "the Beginning," as He Himself, in the gospel, replied to

the Jews when they asked Him who He was, that He was the Beginning;

[511] --I will not contest the point, chiefly because it gives me the

liveliest satisfaction to find the Trinity celebrated in the very

beginning of the book of Genesis. For having said "In the Beginning

God created the heaven and the earth," meaning that the Father made

them in the Son (as the psalm testifies where it says, "How manifold

are Thy works, O Lord! in Wisdom hast Thou made them all" [512] ), a

little afterwards mention is fitly made of the Holy Spirit also. For,

when it had been told us what kind of earth God created at first, or

what the mass or matter was which God, under the name of "heaven and

earth," had provided for the construction of the world, as is told in

the additional words, "And the earth was without form, and void; and

darkness was upon the face of the deep," then, for the sake of

completing the mention of the Trinity, it is immediately added, "And

the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Let each one,

then, take it as he pleases; for it is so profound a passage, that it

may well suggest, for the exercise of the reader's tact, many opinions,

and none of them widely departing from the rule of faith. At the same

time, let none doubt that the holy angels in their heavenly abodes are,

though not, indeed, co-eternal with God, yet secure and certain of

eternal and true felicity. To their company the Lord teaches that His

little ones belong; and not only says, "They shall be equal to the

angels of God," [513] but shows, too, what blessed contemplation the

angels themselves enjoy, saying, "Take heed that ye despise not one of

these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do

always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." [514]

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[511] Augustin refers to John viii. 25; see p. 195. He might rather

have referred to Rev. iii. 14.

[512] Ps. civ. 24.

[513] Matt. xxii. 30.

[514] Matt. xviii. 10.

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Chapter 33.--Of the Two Different and Dissimilar Communities of Angels,

Which are Not Inappropriately Signified by the Names Light and

Darkness.

That certain angels sinned, and were thrust down to the lowest parts of

this world, where they are, as it were, incarcerated till their final

damnation in the day of judgment, the Apostle Peter very plainly

declares, when he says that "God spared not the angels that sinned, but

cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to

be reserved into judgment." [515] Who, then, can doubt that God,

either in foreknowledge or in act, separated between these and the

rest? And who will dispute that the rest are justly called "light?"

For even we who are yet living by faith, hoping only and not yet

enjoying equality with them, are already called "light" by the

apostle: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the

Lord." [516] But as for these apostate angels, all who understand or

believe them to be worse than unbelieving men are well aware that they

are called "darkness." Wherefore, though light and darkness are to be

taken in their literal signification in these passages of Genesis in

which it is said, "God said, Let there be light, and there was light,"

and "God divided the light from the darkness," yet, for our part, we

understand these two societies of angels,--the one enjoying God, the

other swelling with pride; the one to whom it is said, "Praise ye Him,

all His angels," [517] the other whose prince says, "All these things

will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me;" [518] the one

blazing with the holy love of God, the other reeking with the unclean

lust of self-advancement. And since, as it is written, "God resisteth

the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble," [519] we may say, the one

dwelling in the heaven of heavens, the other cast thence, and raging

through the lower regions of the air; the one tranquil in the

brightness of piety, the other tempest-tossed with beclouding desires;

the one, at God's pleasure, tenderly succoring, justly avenging,--the

other, set on by its own pride, boiling with the lust of subduing and

hurting; the one the minister of God's goodness to the utmost of their

good pleasure, the other held in by God's power from doing the harm it

would; the former laughing at the latter when it does good unwillingly

by its persecutions, the latter envying the former when it gathers in

its pilgrims. These two angelic communities, then, dissimilar and

contrary to one another, the one both by nature good and by will

upright, the other also good by nature but by will depraved, as they

are exhibited in other and more explicit passages of holy writ, so I

think they are spoken of in this book of Genesis under the names of

light and darkness; and even if the author perhaps had a different

meaning, yet our discussion of the obscure language has not been wasted

time; for, though we have been unable to discover his meaning, yet we

have adhered to the rule of faith, which is sufficiently ascertained by

the faithful from other passages of equal authority. For, though it is

the material works of God which are here spoken of, they have certainly

a resemblance to the spiritual, so that Paul can say, "Ye are all the

children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the

night, nor of darkness." [520] If, on the other hand, the author of

Genesis saw in the words what we see, then our discussion reaches this

more satisfactory conclusion, that the man of God, so eminently and

divinely wise, or rather, that the Spirit of God who by him recorded

God's works which were finished on the sixth day, may be supposed not

to have omitted all mention of the angels whether he included them in

the words "in the beginning," because He made them first, or, which

seems most likely, because He made them in the only-begotten Word.

And, under these names heaven and earth, the whole creation is

signified, either as divided into spiritual and material, which seems

the more likely, or into the two great parts of the world in which all

created things are contained, so that, first of all, the creation is

presented in sum, and then its parts are enumerated according to the

mystic number of the days.

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[515] 2 Peter ii. 4.

[516] Eph. v. 8.

[517] Ps. cxlviii. 2.

[518] Matt. iv. 9.

[519] Jas. iv. 6.

[520] 1 Thess. v. 5.

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Chapter 34.--Of the Idea that the Angels Were Meant Where the

Separation of the Waters by the Firmament is Spoken Of, and of that

Other Idea that the Waters Were Not Created.

Some, [521] however, have supposed that the angelic hosts are somehow

referred to under the name of waters, and that this is what is meant by

"Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters:" [522] that the

waters above should be understood of the angels, and those below either

of the visible waters, or of the multitude of bad angels, or of the

nations of men. If this be so, then it does not here appear when the

angels were created, but when they were separated. Though there have

not been wanting men foolish and wicked enough [523] to deny that the

waters were made by God, because it is nowhere written, "God said, Let

there be waters." With equal folly they might say the same of the

earth, for nowhere do we read, "God said, Let the earth be." But, say

they, it is written, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the

earth." Yes, and there the water is meant, for both are included in

one word. For "the sea is His," as the psalm says, "and He made it;

and His hands formed the dry land." [524] But those who would

understand the angels by the waters above the skies have a difficulty

about the specific gravity of the elements, and fear that the waters,

owing to their fluidity and weight, could not be set in the upper parts

of the world. So that, if they were to construct a man upon their own

principles, they would not put in his head any moist humors, or

"phlegm" as the Greeks call it, and which acts the part of water among

the elements of our body. But, in God's handiwork, the head is the

seat of the phlegm, and surely most fitly; and yet, according to their

supposition, so absurdly that if we were not aware of the fact, and

were informed by this same record that God had put a moist and cold and

therefore heavy humor in the uppermost part of man's body, these

world-weighers would refuse belief. And if they were confronted with

the authority of Scripture, they would maintain that something else

must be meant by the words. But, were we to investigate and discover

all the details which are written in this divine book regarding the

creation of the world, we should have much to say, and should widely

digress from the proposed aim of this work. Since, then, we have now

said what seemed needful regarding these two diverse and contrary

communities of angels, in which the origin of the two human communities

(of which we intend to speak anon) is also found, let us at once bring

this book also to a conclusion.

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[521] Augustin himself published this idea in his Conf. xiii. 32 but

afterwards retracted it, as "said without sufficient consideration"

(Retract. II. vi. 2). Epiphanius and Jerome ascribe it to Origen.

[522] Gen. i. 6.

[523] Namely, the Audians and Samps�ans, insignificant heretical sects

mentioned by Theodoret and Epiphanius.

[524] Ps. xcv. 5.

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[445] Written in the year 416 or 417.

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Book XII.

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Argument--Augustin first institutes two inquiries regarding the angels;

namely, whence is there in some a good, and in others an evil will?

and, what is the reason of the blessedness of the good, and the misery

of the evil? Afterwards he treats of the creation of man, and teaches

that he is not from eternity, but was created, and by none other than

God.

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Chapter 1.--That the Nature of the Angels, Both Good and Bad, is One

and the Same.

It has already, in the preceding book, been shown how the two cities

originated among the angels. Before I speak of the creation of man,

and show how the cities took their rise so far as regards the race of

rational mortals I see that I must first, so far as I can, adduce what

may demonstrate that it is not incongruous and unsuitable to speak of a

society composed of angels and men together; so that there are not four

cities or societies,--two, namely, of angels, and as many of men,--but

rather two in all, one composed of the good, the other of the wicked,

angels or men indifferently.

That the contrary propensities in good and bad angels have arisen, not

from a difference in their nature and origin, since God, the good

Author and Creator of all essences, created them both, but from a

difference in their wills and desires, it is impossible to doubt.

While some steadfastly continued in that which was the common good of

all, namely, in God Himself, and in His eternity, truth, and love;

others, being enamored rather of their own power, as if they could be

their own good, lapsed to this private good of their own, from that

higher and beatific good which was common to all, and, bartering the

lofty dignity of eternity for the inflation of pride, the most assured

verity for the slyness of vanity, uniting love for factious

partisanship, they became proud, deceived, envious. The cause,

therefore, of the blessedness of the good is adherence to God. And so

the cause of the others' misery will be found in the contrary, that is,

in their not adhering to God. Wherefore, if when the question is

asked, why are the former blessed, it is rightly answered, because they

adhere to God; and when it is asked, why are the latter miserable, it

is rightly answered, because they do not adhere to God,--then there is

no other good for the rational or intellectual creature save God only.

Thus, though it is not every creature that can be blessed (for beasts,

trees, stones, and things of that kind have not this capacity), yet

that creature which has the capacity cannot be blessed of itself, since

it is created out of nothing, but only by Him by whom it has been

created. For it is blessed by the possession of that whose loss makes

it miserable. He, then, who is blessed not in another, but in himself,

cannot be miserable, because he cannot lose himself.

Accordingly we say that there is no unchangeable good but the one,

true, blessed God; that the things which He made are indeed good

because from Him, yet mutable because made not out of Him, but out of

nothing. Although, therefore, they are not the supreme good, for God

is a greater good, yet those mutable things which can adhere to the

immutable good, and so be blessed, are very good; for so completely is

He their good, that without Him they cannot but be wretched. And the

other created things in the universe are not better on this account,

that they cannot be miserable. For no one would say that the other

members of the body are superior to the eyes, because they cannot be

blind. But as the sentient nature, even when it feels pain, is

superior to the stony, which can feel none, so the rational nature,

even when wretched, is more excellent than that which lacks reason or

feeling, and can therefore experience no misery. And since this is so,

then in this nature which has been created so excellent, that though it

be mutable itself, it can yet secure its blessedness by adhering to the

immutable good, the supreme God; and since it is not satisfied unless

it be perfectly blessed, and cannot be thus blessed save in God,--in

this nature, I say, not to adhere to God, is manifestly a fault. [525]

Now every fault injures the nature, and is consequently contrary to

the nature. The creature, therefore, which cleaves to God, differs

from those who do not, not by nature, but by fault; and yet by this

very fault the nature itself is proved to be very noble and admirable.

For that nature is certainly praised, the fault of which is justly

blamed. For we justly blame the fault because it mars the praiseworthy

nature. As, then, when we say that blindness is a defect of the eyes,

we prove that sight belongs to the nature of the eyes; and when we say

that deafness is a defect of the ears, hearing is thereby proved to

belong to their nature;--so, when we say that it is a fault of the

angelic creature that it does not cleave to God, we hereby most plainly

declare that it pertained to its nature to cleave to God. And who can

worthily conceive or express how great a glory that is, to cleave to

God, so as to live to Him, to draw wisdom from Him, to delight in Him,

and to enjoy this so great good, without death, error, or grief? And

thus, since every vice is an injury of the nature, that very vice of

the wicked angels, their departure from God, is sufficient proof that

God created their nature so good, that it is an injury to it not to be

with God.

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[525] Vitium: perhaps "fault," most nearly embraces all the uses of

this word.

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Chapter 2.--That There is No Entity [526] Contrary to the Divine,

Because Nonentity Seems to Be that Which is Wholly Opposite to Him Who

Supremely and Always is.

This may be enough to prevent any one from supposing, when we speak of

the apostate angels, that they could have another nature, derived, as

it were, from some different origin, and not from God. From the great

impiety of this error we shall disentangle ourselves the more readily

and easily, the more distinctly we understand that which God spoke by

the angel when He sent Moses to the children of Israel: "I am that I

am." [527] For since God is the supreme existence, that is to say,

supremely is, and is therefore unchangeable, the things that He made He

empowered to be, but not to be supremely like Himself. To some He

communicated a more ample, to others a more limited existence, and thus

arranged the natures of beings in ranks. For as from sapere comes

sapientia, so from esse comes essentia,--a new word indeed, which the

old Latin writers did not use, but which is naturalized in our day,

[528] that our language may not want an equivalent for the Greek

ousia. For this is expressed word for word by essentia. Consequently,

to that nature which supremely is, and which created all else that

exists, no nature is contrary save that which does not exist. For

nonentity is the contrary of that which is. And thus there is no being

contrary to God, the Supreme Being, and Author of all beings

whatsoever.

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[526] Essentia.

[527] Ex. iii. 14.

[528] Quintilian calls it dura.

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Chapter 3.--That the Enemies of God are So, Not by Nature, But by Will,

Which, as It Injures Them, Injures a Good Nature; For If Vice Does Not

Injure, It is Not Vice.

In Scripture they are called God's enemies who oppose His rule, not by

nature, but by vice; having no power to hurt Him, but only themselves.

For they are His enemies, not through their power to hurt, but by their

will to oppose Him. For God is unchangeable, and wholly proof against

injury. Therefore the vice which makes those who are called His

enemies resist Him, is an evil not to God, but to themselves. And to

them it is an evil, solely because it corrupts the good of their

nature. It is not nature, therefore, but vice, which is contrary to

God. For that which is evil is contrary to the good. And who will

deny that God is the supreme good? Vice, therefore, is contrary to

God, as evil to good. Further, the nature it vitiates is a good, and

therefore to this good also it is contrary. But while it is contrary

to God only as evil to good, it is contrary to the nature it vitiates,

both as evil and as hurtful. For to God no evils are hurtful; but only

to natures mutable and corruptible, though, by the testimony of the

vices themselves, originally good. For were they not good, vices could

not hurt them. For how do they hurt them but by depriving them of

integrity, beauty, welfare, virtue, and, in short, whatever natural

good vice is wont to diminish or destroy? But if there be no good to

take away, then no injury can be done, and conse quently there can be

no vice. For it is impossible that there should be a harmless vice.

Whence we gather, that though vice cannot injure the unchangeable good,

it can injure nothing but good; because it does not exist where it does

not injure. This, then, may be thus formulated: Vice cannot be in the

highest good, and cannot be but in some good. Things solely good,

therefore, can in some circumstances exist; things solely evil, never;

for even those natures which are vitiated by an evil will, so far

indeed as they are vitiated, are evil, but in so far as they are

natures they are good. And when a vitiated nature is punished, besides

the good it has in being a nature, it has this also, that it is not

unpunished. [529] For this is just, and certainly everything just is

a good. For no one is punished for natural, but for voluntary vices.

For even the vice which by the force of habit and long continuance has

become a second nature, had its origin in the will. For at present we

are speaking of the vices of the nature, which has a mental capacity

for that enlightenment which discriminates between what is just and

what is unjust.

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[529] With this may be compared the argument of Socrates in the

Gorgias, in which it is shown that to escape punishment is worse than

to suffer it, and that the greatest of evils is to do wrong and not be

chastised.

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Chapter 4.--Of the Nature of Irrational and Lifeless Creatures, Which

in Their Own Kind and Order Do Not Mar the Beauty of the Universe.

But it is ridiculous to condemn the faults of beasts and trees, and

other such mortal and mutable things as are void of intelligence,

sensation, or life, even though these faults should destroy their

corruptible nature; for these creatures received, at their Creator's

will, an existence fitting them, by passing away and giving place to

others, to secure that lowest form of beauty, the beauty of seasons,

which in its own place is a requisite part of this world. For things

earthly were neither to be made equal to things heavenly, nor were

they, though inferior, to be quite omitted from the universe. Since,

then, in those situations where such things are appropriate, some

perish to make way for others that are born in their room, and the less

succumb to the greater, and the things that are overcome are

transformed into the quality of those that have the mastery, this is

the appointed order of things transitory. Of this order the beauty

does not strike us, because by our mortal frailty we are so involved in

a part of it, that we cannot perceive the whole, in which these

fragments that offend us are harmonized with the most accurate fitness

and beauty. And therefore, where we are not so well able to perceive

the wisdom of the Creator, we are very properly enjoined to believe it,

lest in the vanity of human rashness we presume to find any fault with

the work of so great an Artificer. At the same time, if we attentively

consider even these faults of earthly things, which are neither

voluntary nor penal, they seem to illustrate the excellence of the

natures themselves, which are all originated and created by God; for it

is that which pleases us in this nature which we are displeased to see

removed by the fault,--unless even the natures themselves displease

men, as often happens when they become hurtful to them, and then men

estimate them not by their nature, but by their utility; as in the case

of those animals whose swarms scourged the pride of the Egyptians. But

in this way of estimating, they may find fault with the sun itself; for

certain criminals or debtors are sentenced by the judges to be set in

the sun. Therefore it is not with respect to our convenience or

discomfort, but with respect to their own nature, that the creatures

are glorifying to their Artificer. Thus even the nature of the eternal

fire, penal though it be to the condemned sinners, is most assuredly

worthy of praise. For what is more beautiful than fire flaming,

blazing, and shining? What more useful than fire for warming,

restoring, cooking, though nothing is more destructive than fire

burning and consuming? The same thing, then, when applied in one way,

is destructive, but when applied suitably, is most beneficial. For who

can find words to tell its uses throughout the whole world? We must

not listen, then, to those who praise the light of fire but find fault

with its heat, judging it not by its nature, but by their convenience

or discomfort. For they wish to see, but not to be burnt. But they

forget that this very light which is so pleasant to them, disagrees

with and hurts weak eyes; and in that heat which is disagreeable to

them, some animals find the most suitable conditions of a healthy life.

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Chapter 5.--That in All Natures, of Every Kind and Rank, God is

Glorified.

All natures, then, inasmuch as they are, and have therefore a rank and

species of their own, and a kind of internal harmony, are certainly

good. And when they are in the places assigned to them by the order of

their nature, they preserve such being as they have received. And

those things which have not received everlasting being, are altered for

better or for worse, so as to suit the wants and motions of those

things to which the Creator's law has made them subservient; and thus

they tend in the divine providence to that end which is embraced in the

general scheme of the government of the universe. So that, though the

corruption of transitory and perishable things brings them to utter

destruction, it does not prevent their producing that which was

designed to be their result. And this being so, God, who supremely is,

and who therefore created every being which has not supreme existence

(for that which was made of nothing could not be equal to Him, and

indeed could not be at all had He not made it), is not to be found

fault with on account of the creature's faults, but is to be praised in

view of the natures He has made.

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Chapter 6.--What the Cause of the Blessedness of the Good Angels Is,

and What the Cause of the Misery of the Wicked.

Thus the true cause of the blessedness of the good angels is found to

be this, that they cleave to Him who supremely is. And if we ask the

cause of the misery of the bad, it occurs to us, and not unreasonably,

that they are miserable because they have forsaken Him who supremely

is, and have turned to themselves who have no such essence. And this

vice, what else is it called than pride? For "pride is the beginning

of sin." [530] They were unwilling, then, to preserve their strength

for God; and as adherence to God was the condition of their enjoying an

ampler being, they diminished it by preferring themselves to Him. This

was the first defect, and the first impoverishment, and the first flaw

of their nature, which was created, not indeed supremely existent, but

finding its blessedness in the enjoyment of the Supreme Being; whilst

by abandoning Him it should become, not indeed no nature at all, but a

nature with a less ample existence, and therefore wretched.

If the further question be asked, What was the efficient cause of their

evil will? there is none. For what is it which makes the will bad,

when it is the will itself which makes the action bad? And

consequently the bad will is the cause of the bad action, but nothing

is the efficient cause of the bad will. For if anything is the cause,

this thing either has or has not a will. If it has, the will is either

good or bad. If good, who is so left to himself as to say that a good

will makes a will bad? For in this case a good will would be the cause

of sin; a most absurd supposition. On the other hand, if this

hypothetical thing has a bad will, I wish to know what made it so; and

that we may not go on forever, I ask at once, what made the first evil

will bad? For that is not the first which was itself corrupted by an

evil will, but that is the first which was made evil by no other will.

For if it were preceded by that which made it evil, that will was first

which made the other evil. But if it is replied, "Nothing made it

evil; it always was evil," I ask if it has been existing in some

nature. For if not, then it did not exist at all; and if it did exist

in some nature, then it vitiated and corrupted it, and injured it, and

consequently deprived it of good. And therefore the evil will could

not exist in an evil nature, but in a nature at once good and mutable,

which this vice could injure. For if it did no injury, it was no vice;

and consequently the will in which it was, could not be called evil.

But if it did injury, it did it by taking away or diminishing good.

And therefore there could not be from eternity, as was suggested, an

evil will in that thing in which there had been previously a natural

good, which the evil will was able to diminish by corrupting it. If,

then, it was not from eternity, who, I ask, made it? The only thing

that can be suggested in reply is, that something which itself had no

will, made the will evil. I ask, then, whether this thing was

superior, inferior, or equal to it? If superior, then it is better.

How, then, has it no will, and not rather a good will? The same

reasoning applies if it was equal; for so long as two things have

equally a good will, the one cannot produce in the other an evil will.

Then remains the supposition that that which corrupted the will of the

angelic nature which first sinned, was itself an inferior thing without

a will. But that thing, be it of the lowest and most earthly kind, is

certainly itself good, since it is a nature and being, with a form and

rank of its own in its own kind and order. How, then, can a good thing

be the efficient cause of an evil will? How, I say, can good be the

cause of evil? For when the will abandons what is above itself, and

turns to what is lower, it becomes evil--not because that is evil to

which it turns, but because the turning itself is wicked. Therefore it

is not an inferior thing which has made the will evil, but it is itself

which has become so by wickedly and inordinately desiring an inferior

thing. For if two men, alike in physical and moral constitution, see

the same corporal beauty, and one of them is excited by the sight to

desire an illicit enjoyment while the other steadfastly maintains a

modest restraint of his will, what do we suppose brings it about, that

there is an evil will in the one and not in the other? What produces

it in the man in whom it exists? Not the bodily beauty, for that was

presented equally to the gaze of both, and yet did not produce in both

an evil will. Did the flesh of the one cause the desire as he looked?

But why did not the flesh of the other? Or was it the disposition?

But why not the disposition of both? For we are supposing that both

were of a like temperament of body and soul. Must we, then, say that

the one was tempted by a secret suggestion of the evil spirit? As if

it was not by his own will that he consented to this suggestion and to

any inducement whatever! This consent, then, this evil will which he

presented to the evil suasive influence,--what was the cause of it, we

ask? For, not to delay on such a difficulty as this, if both are

tempted equally and one yields and consents to the temptation while the

other remains unmoved by it, what other account can we give of the

matter than this, that the one is willing, the other unwilling, to fall

away from chastity? And what causes this but their own wills, in cases

at least such as we are supposing, where the temperament is identical?

The same beauty was equally obvious to the eyes of both; the same

secret temptation pressed on both with equal violence. However

minutely we examine the case, therefore, we can discern nothing which

caused the will of the one to be evil. For if we say that the man

himself made his will evil, what was the man himself before his will

was evil but a good nature created by God, the unchangeable good? Here

are two men who, before the temptation, were alike in body and soul,

and of whom one yielded to the tempter who persuaded him, while the

other could not be persuaded to desire that lovely body which was

equally before the eyes of both. Shall we say of the successfully

tempted man that he corrupted his own will, since he was certainly good

before his will became bad? Then, why did he do so? Was it because

his will was a nature, or because it was made of nothing? We shall

find that the latter is the case. For if a nature is the cause of an

evil will, what else can we say than that evil arises from good or that

good is the cause of evil? And how can it come to pass that a nature,

good though mutable, should produce any evil--that is to say, should

make the will itself wicked?

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[530] Eccles. x. 13.

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Chapter 7.--That We Ought Not to Expect to Find Any Efficient Cause of

the Evil Will.

Let no one, therefore, look for an efficient cause of the evil will;

for it is not efficient, but deficient, as the will itself is not an

effecting of something, but a defect. For defection from that which

supremely is, to that which has less of being,--this is to begin to

have an evil will. Now, to seek to discover the causes of these

defections,--causes, as I have said, not efficient, but deficient,--is

as if some one sought to see darkness, or hear silence. Yet both of

these are known by us, and the former by means only of the eye, the

latter only by the ear; but not by their positive actuality, [531] but

by their want of it. Let no one, then seek to know from me what I know

that I do not know; unless he perhaps wishes to learn to be ignorant of

that of which all we know is, that it cannot be known. For those

things which are known not by their actuality, but by their want of it,

are known, if our expression may be allowed and understood, by not

knowing them, that by knowing them they may be not known. For when the

eyesight surveys objects that strike the sense, it nowhere sees

darkness but where it begins not to see. And so no other sense but the

ear can perceive silence, and yet it is only perceived by not hearing.

Thus, too, our mind perceives intelligible forms by understanding them;

but when they are deficient, it knows them by not knowing them; for

"who can understand defects?" [532]

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[531] Specie.

[532] Ps. xix. 12.

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Chapter 8.--Of the Misdirected Love Whereby the Will Fell Away from the

Immutable to the Mutable Good.

This I do know, that the nature of God can never, nowhere, nowise be

defective, and that natures made of nothing can. These latter,

however, the more being they have, and the more good they do (for then

they do something positive), the more they have efficient causes; but

in so far as they are defective in being, and consequently do evil (for

then what is their work but vanity?), they have deficient causes. And

I know likewise, that the will could not become evil, were it unwilling

to become so; and therefore its failings are justly punished, being not

necessary, but voluntary. For its defections are not to evil things,

but are themselves evil; that is to say, are not towards things that

are naturally and in themselves evil, but the defection of the will is

evil, because it is contrary to the order of nature, and an abandonment

of that which has supreme being for that which has less. For avarice

is not a fault inherent in gold, but in the man who inordinately loves

gold, to the detriment of justice, which ought to be held in

incomparably higher regard than gold. Neither is luxury the fault of

lovely and charming objects, but of the heart that inordinately loves

sensual pleasures, to the neglect of temperance, which attaches us to

objects more lovely in their spirituality, and more delectable by their

incorruptibility. Nor yet is boasting the fault of human praise, but

of the soul that is inordinately fond of the applause of men, and that

makes light of the voice of conscience. Pride, too, is not the fault

of him who delegates power, nor of power itself, but of the soul that

is inordinately enamored of its own power, and despises the more just

dominion of a higher authority. Consequently he who inordinately loves

the good which any nature possesses, even though he obtain it, himself

becomes evil in the good, and wretched because deprived of a greater

good.

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Chapter 9.--Whether the Angels, Besides Receiving from God Their

Nature, Received from Him Also Their Good Will by the Holy Spirit

Imbuing Them with Love.

There is, then, no natural efficient cause or, if I may be allowed the

expression, no essential cause, of the evil will, since itself is the

origin of evil in mutable spirits, by which the good of their nature is

diminished and corrupted; and the will is made evil by nothing else

than defection from God,--a defection of which the cause, too, is

certainly deficient. But as to the good will, if we should say that

there is no efficient cause of it, we must beware of giving currency to

the opinion that the good will of the good angels is not created, but

is co-eternal with God. For if they themselves are created, how can we

say that their good will was eternal? But if created, was it created

along with themselves, or did they exist for a time without it? If

along with themselves, then doubtless it was created by Him who created

them, and, as soon as ever they were created, they attached themselves

to Him who created them, with the love He created in them. And they

are separated from the society of the rest, because they have continued

in the same good will; while the others have fallen away to another

will, which is an evil one, by the very fact of its being a falling

away from the good; from which, we may add, they would not have fallen

away had they been unwilling to do so. But if the good angels existed

for a time without a good will, and produced it in themselves without

God's interference, then it follows that they made themselves better

than He made them. Away with such a thought! For without a good will,

what were they but evil? Or if they were not evil, because they had

not an evil will any more than a good one (for they had not fallen away

from that which as yet they had not begun to enjoy), certainly they

were not the same, not so good, as when they came to have a good will.

Or if they could not make themselves better than they were made by Him

who is surpassed by none in His work, then certainly, without His

helpful operation, they could not come to possess that good will which

made them better. And though their good will effected that they did

not turn to themselves, who had a more stinted existence, but to Him

who supremely is, and that, being united to Him, their own being was

enlarged, and they lived a wise and blessed life by His communications

to them, what does this prove but that the will, however good it might

be, would have continued helplessly only to desire Him, had not He who

had made their nature out of nothing, and yet capable of enjoying Him,

first stimulated it to desire Him, and then filled it with Himself, and

so made it better?

Besides, this too has to be inquired into, whether, if the good angels

made their own will good, they did so with or without will? If

without, then it was not their doing. If with, was the will good or

bad? If bad, how could a bad will give birth to a good one? If good,

then already they had a good will. And who made this will, which

already they had, but He who created them with a good will, or with

that chaste love by which they cleaved to Him, in one and the same act

creating their nature, and endowing it with grace? And thus we are

driven to believe that the holy angels never existed without a good

will or the love of God. But the angels who, though created good, are

yet evil now, became so by their own will. And this will was not made

evil by their good nature, unless by its voluntary defection from good;

for good is not the cause of evil, but a defection from good is. These

angels, therefore, either received less of the grace of the divine love

than those who persevered in the same; or if both were created equally

good, then, while the one fell by their evil will, the others were more

abundantly assisted, and attained to that pitch of blessedness at which

they became certain they should never fall from it,--as we have already

shown in the preceding book. [533] We must therefore acknowledge,

with the praise due to the Creator, that not only of holy men, but also

of the holy angels, it can be said that "the love of God is shed abroad

in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them." [534]

And that not only of men, but primarily and principally of angels it is

true, as it is written, "It is good to draw near to God." [535] And

those who have this good in common, have, both with Him to whom they

draw near, and with one another, a holy fellowship, and form one city

of God--His living sacrifice, and His living temple. And I see that,

as I have now spoken of the rise of this city among the angels, it is

time to speak of the origin of that part of it which is hereafter to be

united to the immortal angels, and which at present is being gathered

from among mortal men, and is either sojourning on earth, or, in the

persons of those who have passed through death, is resting in the

secret receptacles and abodes of disembodied spirits. For from one

man, whom God created as the first, the whole human race descended,

according to the faith of Holy Scripture, which deservedly is of

wonderful authority among all nations throughout the world; since,

among its other true statements, it predicted, by its divine foresight,

that all nations would give credit to it.

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[533] C. 13.

[534] Rom. v. 5.

[535] Ps. lxxiii. 28.

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Chapter 10.--Of the Falseness of the History Which Allots Many Thousand

Years to the World's Past.

Let us, then, omit the conjectures of men who know not what they say,

when they speak of the nature and origin of the human race. For some

hold the same opinion regarding men that they hold regarding the world

itself, that they have always been. Thus Apuleius says when he is

describing our race, "Individually they are mortal, but collectively,

and as a race, they are immortal." [536] And when they are asked,

how, if the human race has always been, they vindicate the truth of

their history, which narrates who were the inventors, and what they

invented, and who first instituted the liberal studies and the other

arts, and who first inhabited this or that region, and this or that

island? they reply, [537] that most, if not all lands, were so

desolated at intervals by fire and flood, that men were greatly reduced

in numbers, and from these, again, the population was restored to its

former numbers, and that thus there was at intervals a new beginning

made, and though those things which had been interrupted and checked by

the severe devastations were only renewed, yet they seemed to be

originated then; but that man could not exist at all save as produced

by man. But they say what they think, not what they know.

They are deceived, too, by those highly mendacious documents which

profess to give the history of many thousand years, though, reckoning

by the sacred writings, we find that not 6000 years have yet passed.

[538] And, not to spend many words in exposing the baselessness of

these documents, in which so many thousands of years are accounted for,

nor in proving that their authorities are totally inadequate, let me

cite only that letter which Alexander the Great wrote to his mother

Olympias, [539] giving her the narrative he had from an Egyptian

priest, which he had extracted from their sacred archives, and which

gave an account of kingdoms mentioned also by the Greek historians. In

this letter of Alexander's a term of upwards of 5000 years is assigned

to the kingdom of Assyria; while in the Greek history only 1300 years

are reckoned from the reign of Bel himself, whom both Greek and

Egyptian agree in counting the first king of Assyria. Then to the

empire of the Persians and Macedonians this Egyptian assigned more than

8000 years, counting to the time of Alexander, to whom he was speaking;

while among the Greeks, 485 years are assigned to the Macedonians down

to the death of Alexander, and to the Persians 233 years, reckoning to

the termination of his conquests. Thus these give a much smaller

number of years than the Egyptians; and indeed, though multiplied three

times, the Greek chronology would still be shorter. For the Egyptians

are said to have formerly reckoned only four months to their year;

[540] so that one year, according to the fuller and truer computation

now in use among them as well as among ourselves, would comprehend

three of their old years. But not even thus, as I said, does the Greek

history correspond with the Egyptian in its chronology. And therefore

the former must receive the greater credit, because it does not exceed

the true account of the duration of the world as it is given by our

documents, which are truly sacred. Further, if this letter of

Alexander, which has become so famous, differs widely in this matter of

chronology from the probable credible account, how much less can we

believe these documents which, though full of fabu lous and fictitious

antiquities, they would fain oppose to the authority of our well-known

and divine books, which predicted that the whole world would believe

them, and which the whole world accordingly has believed; which proved,

too, that it had truly narrated past events by its prediction of future

events, which have so exactly come to pass!

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[536] De Deo Socrates.

[537] Augustin no doubt refers to the interesting account given by

Critias, near the beginning of the Tim�us, of the conversation of Solon

with the Egyptian priests.

[538] Augustin here follows the chronology of Eusebius, who reckons

5611 years from the Creation to the taking of Rome by the Goths;

adopting the Septuagint version of the Patriarchal ages.

[539] See above, viii. 5.

[540] It is not apparent to what Augustin refers. The Arcadians,

according to Macrobius (Saturn. i. 7), divided their year into three

months, and the Egyptians divided theirs into three seasons: each of

these seasons having four months, it is possible that Augustin may have

referred to this. See Wilkinson's excursus on the Egyptian year, in

Rawlinson's Herod. Book ii.

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Chapter 11.--Of Those Who Suppose that This World Indeed is Not

Eternal, But that Either There are Numberless Worlds, or that One and

the Same World is Perpetually Resolved into Its Elements, and Renewed

at the Conclusion of Fixed Cycles.

There are some, again, who, though they do not suppose that this world

is eternal, are of opinion either that this is not the only world, but

that there are numberless worlds or that indeed it is the only one, but

that it dies, and is born again at fixed intervals, and this times

without number; [541] but they must acknowledge that the human race

existed before there were other men to beget them. For they cannot

suppose that, if the whole world perish, some men would be left alive

in the world, as they might survive in floods and conflagrations, which

those other speculators suppose to be partial, and from which they can

therefore reasonably argue that a few then survived whose posterity

would renew the population; but as they believe that the world itself

is renewed out of its own material, so they must believe that out of

its elements the human race was produced, and then that the progeny of

mortals sprang like that of other animals from their parents.

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[541] The former opinion was held by Democritus and his disciple

Epicurus; the latter by Heraclitus, who supposed that "God amused

Himself" by thus renewing worlds.

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Chapter 12.--How These Persons are to Be Answered, Who Find Fault with

the Creation of Man on the Score of Its Recent Date.

As to those who are always asking why man was not created during these

countless ages of the infinitely extended past, and came into being so

lately that, according to Scripture, less than 6000 years have elapsed

since He began to be, I would reply to them regarding the creation of

man, just as I replied regarding the origin of the world to those who

will not believe that it is not eternal, but had a beginning, which

even Plato himself most plainly declares, though some think his

statement was not consistent with his real opinion. [542] If it

offends them that the time that has elapsed since the creation of man

is so short, and his years so few according to our authorities, let

them take this into consideration, that nothing that has a limit is

long, and that all the ages of time being finite, are very little, or

indeed nothing at all, when compared to the interminable eternity.

Consequently, if there had elapsed since the creation of man, I do not

say five or six, but even sixty or six hundred thousand years, or sixty

times as many, or six hundred or six hundred thousand times as many, or

this sum multiplied until it could no longer be expressed in numbers,

the same question could still be put, Why was he not made before? For

the past and boundless eternity during which God abstained from

creating man is so great, that, compare it with what vast and untold

number of ages you please, so long as there is a definite conclusion of

this term of time, it is not even as if you compared the minutest drop

of water with the ocean that everywhere flows around the globe. For of

these two, one indeed is very small, the other incomparably vast, yet

both are finite; but that space of time which starts from some

beginning, and is limited by some termination, be it of what extent it

may, if you compare it with that which has no beginning, I know not

whether to say we should count it the very minutest thing, or nothing

at all. For, take this limited time, and deduct from the end of it,

one by one, the briefest moments (as you might take day by day from a

man's life, beginning at the day in which he now lives, back to that of

his birth), and though the number of moments you must subtract in this

backward movement be so great that no word can express it, yet this

subtraction will sometime carry you to the beginning. But if you take

away from a time which has no beginning, I do not say brief moments one

by one, nor yet hours, or days, or months, or years even in quantities,

but terms of years so vast that they cannot be named by the most

skillful arithmeticians,--take away terms of years as vast as that

which we have supposed to be gradually consumed by the deduction of

moments,--and take them away not once and again repeatedly, but always,

and what do you effect, what do you make by your deduction, since you

never reach the beginning, which has no existence? Wherefore, that

which we now demand after five thousand odd years, our descendants

might with like curiosity demand after six hundred thousand years,

supposing these dying generations of men continue so long to decay and

be renewed, and supposing posterity continues as weak and ignorant as

ourselves. The same question might have been asked by those who have

lived before us and while man was even newer upon earth. The first man

himself in short might the day after or the very day of his creation

have asked why he was created no sooner. And no matter at what earlier

or later period he had been created, this controversy about the

commencement of this world's history would have had precisely the same

difficulties as it has now.

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[542] The Alexandrian Neo-Platonists endeavored in this way to escape

from the obvious meaning of the Tim�us.

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Chapter 13.--Of the Revolution of the Ages, Which Some Philosophers

Believe Will Bring All Things Round Again, After a Certain Fixed Cycle,

to the Same Order and Form as at First.

This controversy some philosophers have seen no other approved means of

solving than by introducing cycles of time, in which there should be a

constant renewal and repetition of the order of nature; [543] and they

have therefore asserted that these cycles will ceaselessly recur, one

passing away and another coming, though they are not agreed as to

whether one permanent world shall pass through all these cycles, or

whether the world shall at fixed intervals die out, and be renewed so

as to exhibit a recurrence of the same phenomena--the things which have

been, and those which are to be, coinciding. And from this fantastic

vicissitude they exempt not even the immortal soul that has attained

wisdom, consigning it to a ceaseless transmigration between delusive

blessedness and real misery. For how can that be truly called blessed

which has no assurance of being so eternally, and is either in

ignorance of the truth, and blind to the misery that is approaching,

or, knowing it, is in misery and fear? Or if it passes to bliss, and

leaves miseries forever, then there happens in time a new thing which

time shall not end. Why not, then, the world also? Why may not man,

too, be a similar thing? So that, by following the straight path of

sound doctrine, we escape, I know not what circuitous paths, discovered

by deceiving and deceived sages.

Some, too, in advocating these recurring cycles that restore all things

to their original cite in favor of their supposition what Solomon says

in the book of Ecclesiastes: "What is that which hath been? It is

that which shall be. And what is that which is done? It is that which

shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Who can speak

and say, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was

before us." [544] This he said either of those things of which he had

just been speaking--the succession of generations, the orbit of the

sun, the course of rivers,--or else of all kinds of creatures that are

born and die. For men were before us, are with us, and shall be after

us; and so all living things and all plants. Even monstrous and

irregular productions, though differing from one another, and though

some are reported as solitary instances, yet resemble one another

generally, in so far as they are miraculous and monstrous, and, in this

sense, have been, and shall be, and are no new and recent things under

the sun. However, some would understand these words as meaning that in

the predestination of God all things have already existed, and that

thus there is no new thing under the sun. At all events, far be it

from any true believer to suppose that by these words of Solomon those

cycles are meant, in which, according to those philosophers, the same

periods and events of time are repeated; as if, for example, the

philosopher Plato, having taught in the school at Athens which is

called the Academy, so, numberless ages before, at long but certain

intervals, this same Plato and the same school, and the same disciples

existed, and so also are to be repeated during the countless cycles

that are yet to be,--far be it, I say, from us to believe this. For

once Christ died for our sins; and, rising from the dead, He dieth no

more. "Death hath no more dominion over Him; [545] and we ourselves

after the resurrection shall be "ever with the Lord," [546] to whom we

now say, as the sacred Psalmist dictates, "Thou shall keep us, O Lord,

Thou shall preserve us from this generation." [547] And that too

which follows, is, I think, appropriate enough: "The wicked walk in a

circle," not because their life is to recur by means of these circles,

which these philosophers imagine, but because the path in which their

false doctrine now runs is circuitous.

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[543] Antoninus says (ii. 14): "All things from eternity are of like

forms, and come round in a circle." Cf. also ix. 28, and the

references to more ancient philosophical writers in Gataker's notes in

these passages.

[544] Eccles. i. 9, 10. So Origen, de Prin. iii. 5, and ii. 3.

[545] Rom. vi. 9.

[546] 1 Thess. iv. 16.

[547] Ps. xii. 7.

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Chapter 14.--Of the Creation of the Human Race in Time, and How This

Was Effected Without Any New Design or Change of Purpose on God's Part.

What wonder is it if, entangled in these circles, they find neither

entrance nor egress? For they know not how the human race, and this

mortal condition of ours, took its origin, nor how it will be brought

to an end, since they cannot penetrate the inscrutable wisdom of God.

For, though Himself eternal, and without beginning, yet He caused time

to have a beginning; and man, whom He had not previously made He made

in time, not from a new and sudden resolution, but by His unchangeable

and eternal design. Who can search out the unsearchable depth of this

purpose, who can scrutinize the inscrutable wisdom, wherewith God,

without change of will, created man, who had never before been, and

gave him an existence in time, and increased the human race from one

individual? For the Psalmist himself, when he had first said, "Thou

shalt keep us, O Lord, Thou shall preserve us from this generation for

ever," and had then rebuked those whose foolish and impious doctrine

preserves for the soul no eternal deliverance and blessedness adds

immediately, "The wicked walk in a circle." Then, as if it were said

to him, "What then do you believe, feel, know? Are we to believe that

it suddenly occurred to God to create man, whom He had never before

made in a past eternity,--God, to whom nothing new can occur, and in

whom is no changeableness?" the Psalmist goes on to reply, as if

addressing God Himself, "According to the depth of Thy wisdom Thou hast

multiplied the children of men." Let men, he seems to say, fancy what

they please, let them conjecture and dispute as seems good to them, but

Thou hast multiplied the children of men according to the depth of thy

wisdom, which no man can comprehend. For this is a depth indeed, that

God always has been, and that man, whom He had never made before, He

willed to make in time, and this without changing His design and will.

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Chapter 15.--Whether We are to Believe that God, as He Has Always Been

Sovereign Lord, Has Always Had Creatures Over Whom He Exercised His

Sovereignty; And in What Sense We Can Say that the Creature Has Always

Been, and Yet Cannot Say It is Co-Eternal.

For my own part, indeed, as I dare not say that there ever was a time

when the Lord God was not Lord, [548] so I ought not to doubt that man

had no existence before time, and was first created in time. But when

I consider what God could be the Lord of, if there was not always some

creature, I shrink from making any assertion, remembering my own

insignificance, and that it is written, "What man is he that can know

the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of the Lord is? For

the thoughts of mortal men are timid, and our devices are but

uncertain. For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the

earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many

things." [549] Many things certainly do I muse upon in this earthly

tabernacle, because the one thing which is true among the many, or

beyond the many, I cannot find. If, then, among these many thoughts, I

say that there have always been creatures for Him to be Lord of, who is

always and ever has been Lord, but that these creatures have not always

been the same, but succeeded one another (for we would not seem to say

that any is co-eternal with the Creator, an assertion condemned equally

by faith and sound reason), I must take care lest I fall into the

absurd and ignorant error of maintaining that by these successions and

changes mortal creatures have always existed, whereas the immortal

creatures had not begun to exist until the date of our own world, when

the angels were created; if at least the angels are intended by that

light which was first made, or, rather, by that heaven of which it is

said, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." [550]

The angels, at least did not exist before they were created; for if we

say that they have always existed, we shall seem to make them

co-eternal with the Creator. Again, if I say that the angels were not

created in time, but existed before all times, as those over whom God,

who has ever been Sovereign, exercised His sovereignty, then I shall be

asked whether, if they were created before all time, they, being

creatures, could possibly always exist. It may perhaps be replied, Why

not always, since that which is in all time may very properly be said

to be "always?" Now so true is it that these angels have existed in

all time that even before time was they were created; if at least time

began with the heavens, and the angels existed before the heavens. And

if time was even before the heavenly bodies, not indeed marked by

hours, days, months, and years,--for these measures of time's periods

which are commonly and properly called times, did manifestly begin with

the motion of the heavenly bodies, and so God said, when He appointed

them, "Let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for

years," [551] --if, I say, time was before these heavenly bodies by

some changing movement, whose parts succeeded one another and could not

exist simultaneously, and if there was some such movement among the

angels which necessitated the existence of time, and that they from

their very creation should be subject to these temporal changes, then

they have existed in all time, for time came into being along with

them. And who will say that what was in all time, was not always?

But if I make such a reply, it will be said to me, How, then, are they

not co-eternal with the Creator, if He and they always have been? How

even can they be said to have been created, if we are to understand

that they have always existed? What shall we reply to this? Shall we

say that both statements are true? that they always have been, since

they have been in all time, they being created along with time, or time

along with them, and yet that also they were created? For, similarly,

we will not deny that time itself was created, though no one doubts

that time has been in all time; for if it has not been in all time,

then there was a time when there was no time. But the most foolish

person could not make such an assertion. For we can reasonably say

there was a time when Rome was not; there was a time when Jerusalem was

not; there was a time when Abraham was not; there was a time when man

was not, and so on: in fine, if the world was not made at the

commencement of time, but after some time had elapsed, we can say there

was a time when the world was not. But to say there was a time when

time was not, is as absurd as to say there was a man when there was no

man; or, this world was when this world was not. For if we are not

referring to the same object, the form of expression may be used, as,

there was another man when this man was not. Thus we can reasonably

say there was another time when this time was not; but not the merest

simpleton could say there was a time when there was no time. As, then,

we say that time was created, though we also say that it always has

been, since in all time time has been, so it does not follow that if

the angels have always been, they were therefore not created. For we

say that they have always been, because they have been in all time; and

we say they have been in all time, because time itself could no wise be

without them. For where there is no creature whose changing movements

admit of succession, there cannot be time at all. And consequently,

even if they have always existed, they were created; neither, if they

have always existed, are they therefore co-eternal with the Creator.

For He has always existed in unchangeable eternity; while they were

created, and are said to have been always, because they have been in

all time, time being impossible without the creature. But time passing

away by its changefulness, cannot be co-eternal with changeless

eternity. And consequently, though the immortality of the angels does

not pass in time, does not become past as if now it were not, nor has a

future as if it were not yet, still their movements, which are the

basis of time, do pass from future to past; and therefore they cannot

be co-eternal with the Creator, in whose movement we cannot say that

there has been that which now is not, or shall be that which is not

yet. Wherefore, if God always has been Lord, He has always had

creatures under His dominion,--creatures, however, not begotten of Him,

but created by Him out of nothing; nor co-eternal with Him, for He was

before them though at no time without them, because He preceded them,

not by the lapse of time, but by His abiding eternity. But if I make

this reply to those who demand how He was always Creator, always Lord,

if there were not always a subject creation; or how this was created,

and not rather co-eternal with its Creator, if it always was, I fear I

may be accused of recklessly affirming what I know not, instead of

teaching what I know. I return, therefore, to that which our Creator

has seen fit that we should know; and those things which He has allowed

the abler men to know in this life, or has reserved to be known in the

next by the perfected saints, I acknowledge to be beyond my capacity.

But I have thought it right to discuss these matters without making

positive assertions, that they who read may be warned to abstain from

hazardous questions, and may not deem themselves fit for everything.

Let them rather endeavor to obey the wholesome injunction of the

apostle, when he says, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to

every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than

he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to

every man the measure of faith." [552] For if an infant receive

nourishment suited to its strength, it becomes capable, as it grows, of

taking more; but if its strength and capacity be overtaxed, it dwines

away in place of growing.

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[548] Cf. de Trin. v. 17.

[549] Wisdom ix. 13-15.

[550] Gen. i. 1.

[551] Gen. i. 14.

[552] Rom. xii. 3.

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Chapter 16.--How We are to Understand God's Promise of Life Eternal,

Which Was Uttered Before the "Eternal Times."

I own that I do not know what ages passed before the human race was

created, yet I have no doubt that no created thing is co-eternal with

the Creator. But even the apostle speaks of time as eternal, and this

with reference, not to the future, but, which is more surprising, to

the past. For he says, "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot

lie promised before the eternal times, but hath in due times manifested

His word." [553] You see he says that in the past there have been

eternal times, which, however, were not co-eternal with God. And since

God before these eternal times not only existed, but also, "promised"

life eternal, which He manifested in its own times (that is to say, in

due times), what else is this than His word? For this is life

eternal. But then, how did He promise; for the promise was made to

men, and yet they had no existence before eternal times? Does this not

mean that, in His own eternity, and in His co-eternal word, that which

was to be in its own time was already predestined and fixed?

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[553] Titus i. 2, 3. Augustin here follows the version of Jerome, and

not the Vulgate. Comp. Contra Priscill. 6, and de Gen. c. Man. iv. 4.

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Chapter 17.--What Defence is Made by Sound Faith Regarding God's

Unchangeable Counsel and Will, Against the Reasonings of Those Who Hold

that the Works of God are Eternally Repeated in Revolving Cycles that

Restore All Things as They Were.

Of this, too, I have no doubt, that before the first man was created,

there never had been a man at all, neither this same man himself

recurring by I know not what cycles, and having made I know not how

many revolutions, nor any other of similar nature. From this belief I

am not frightened by philosophical arguments, among which that is

reckoned the most acute which is founded on the assertion that the

infinite cannot be comprehended by any mode of knowledge.

Consequently, they argue, God has in his own mind finite conceptions of

all finite things which He makes. Now it cannot be supposed that His

goodness was ever idle; for if it were, there should be ascribed to Him

an awakening to activity in time, from a past eternity of inactivity,

as if He repented of an idleness that had no beginning, and proceeded,

therefore, to make a beginning of work. This being the case, they say

it must be that the same things are always repeated, and that as they

pass, so they are destined always to return, whether amidst all these

changes the world remains the same,--the world which has always been,

and yet was created,--or that the world in these revolutions is

perpetually dying out and being renewed; otherwise, if we point to a

time when the works of God were begun, it would be believed that He

considered His past eternal leisure to be inert and indolent, and

therefore condemned and altered it as displeasing to Himself. Now if

God is supposed to have been indeed always making temporal things, but

different from one another, and one after the other, so, that He thus

came at last to make man, whom He had never made before, then it may

seem that He made man not with knowledge (for they suppose no knowledge

can comprehend the infinite succession of creatures), but at the

dictate of the hour, as it struck him at the moment, with a sudden and

accidental change of mind. On the other hand, say they, if those

cycles be admitted, and if we suppose that the same temporal things are

repeated, while the world either remains identical through all these

rotations, or else dies away and is renewed, then there is ascribed to

God neither the slothful ease of a past eternity, nor a rash and

unforeseen creation. And if the same things be not thus repeated in

cycles, then they cannot by any science or prescience be comprehended

in their endless diversity. Even though reason could not refute, faith

would smile at these argumentations, with which the godless endeavor to

turn our simple piety from the right way, that we may walk with them

"in a circle." But by the help of the Lord our God, even reason, and

that readily enough, shatters these revolving circles which conjecture

frames. For that which specially leads these men astray to refer their

own circles to the straight path of truth, is, that they measure by

their own human, changeable, and narrow intellect the divine mind,

which is absolutely unchangeable, infinitely capacious, and without

succession of thought, counting all things without number. So that

saying of the apostle comes true of them, for, "comparing themselves

with themselves, they do not understand." [554] For because they do,

in virtue of a new purpose, whatever new thing has occurred to them to

be done (their minds being changeable), they conclude it is so with

God; and thus compare, not God,--for they cannot conceive God, but

think of one like themselves when they think of Him,--not God, but

themselves, and not with Him, but with themselves. For our part, we

dare not believe that God is affected in one way when He works, in

another when He rests. Indeed, to say that He is affected at all, is

an abuse of language, since it implies that there comes to be something

in His nature which was not there before. For he who is affected is

acted upon, and whatever is acted upon is changeable. His leisure,

therefore, is no laziness, indolence, inactivity; as in His work is no

labor, effort, industry. He can act while He reposes, and repose while

He acts. He can begin a new work with (not a new, but) an eternal

design; and what He has not made before, He does not now begin to make

because He repents of His former repose. But when one speaks of His

former repose and subsequent operation (and I know not how men can

understand these things), this "former" and "subsequent" are applied

only to the things created, which formerly did not exist, and

subsequently came into existence. But in God the former purpose is not

altered and obliterated by the subsequent and different purpose, but by

one and the same eternal and unchangeable will He effected regarding

the things He created, both that formerly, so long as they were not,

they should not be, and that subsequently, when they began to be, they

should come into existence. And thus, perhaps, He would show, in a

very striking way, to those who have eyes for such things, how

independent He is of what He makes, and how it is of His own gratuitous

goodness He creates, since from eternity He dwelt without creatures in

no less perfect a blessedness.

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[554] 2 Cor. x. 12. Here, and in Enar. in Ps. xxxiv. and also in Cont.

Faust. xxii. 47, Augustin follows the Greek, and not the Vulgate.

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Chapter 18.--Against Those Who Assert that Things that are Infinite

[555] Cannot Be Comprehended by the Knowledge of God.

As for their other assertion, that God's knowledge cannot comprehend

things infinite, it only remains for them to affirm, in order that they

may sound the depths of their impiety, that God does not know all

numbers. For it is very certain that they are infinite; since, no

matter of what number you suppose an end to be made, this number can

be, I will not say, increased by the addition of one more, but however

great it be, and however vast be the multitude of which it is the

rational and scientific expression, it can still be not only doubled,

but even multiplied. Moreover, each number is so defined by its own

properties, that no two numbers are equal. They are therefore both

unequal and different from one another; and while they are simply

finite, collectively they are infinite. Does God, therefore, not know

numbers on account of this infinity; and does His knowledge extend only

to a certain height in numbers, while of the rest He is ignorant? Who

is so left to himself as to say so? Yet they can hardly pretend to put

numbers out of the question, or maintain that they have nothing to do

with the knowledge of God; for Plato, [556] their great authority,

represents God as framing the world on numerical principles: and in

our books also it is said to God, "Thou hast ordered all things in

number, and measure, and weight." [557] The prophet also says," Who

bringeth out their host by number." [558] And the Saviour says in the

Gospel, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." [559] Far be

it, then, from us to doubt that all number is known to Him "whose

understanding," according to the Psalmist, "is infinite." [560] The

infinity of number, though there be no numbering of infinite numbers,

is yet not incomprehensible by Him whose understanding is infinite.

And thus, if everything which is comprehended is defined or made finite

by the comprehension of him who knows it, then all infinity is in some

ineffable way made finite to God, for it is comprehensible by His

knowledge. Wherefore, if the infinity of numbers cannot be infinite to

the knowledge of God, by which it is comprehended, what are we poor

creatures that we should presume to fix limits to His knowledge, and

say that unless the same temporal thing be repeated by the same

periodic revolutions, God cannot either foreknow His creatures that He

may make them, or know them when He has made them? God, whose

knowledge is simply manifold, and uniform in its variety, comprehends

all incomprehensibles with so incomprehensible a comprehension, that

though He willed always to make His later works novel and unlike what

went before them, He could not produce them without order and

foresight, nor conceive them suddenly, but by His eternal

foreknowledge.

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[555] I.e.indefinite, or an indefinite succession of things.

[556] Again in the Tim�us.

[557] Wisdom xi. 20.

[558] Isa. xl. 26.

[559] Matt. x. 30.

[560] Ps. cxlvii. 5.

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Chapter 19.--Of Worlds Without End, or Ages of Ages. [561]

I do not presume to determine whether God does so, and whether these

times which are called "ages of ages" are joined together in a

continuous series, and succeed one another with a regulated diversity,

and leave exempt from their vicissitudes only those who are freed from

their misery, and abide without end in a blessed immortality; or

whether these are called "ages of ages," that we may understand that

the ages remain unchangeable in God's unwavering wisdom, and are the

efficient causes, as it were, of those ages which are being spent in

time. Possibly "ages" is used for "age," so that nothing else is meant

by "ages of ages" than by "age of age," as nothing else is meant by

"heavens of heavens" than by "heaven of heaven." For God called the

firmament, above which are the waters, "Heaven," and yet the psalm

says, "Let the waters that are above the heavens praise the name of the

Lord." [562] Which of these two meanings we are to attach to "ages of

ages," or whether there is not some other and better meaning still, is

a very profound question; and the subject we are at present handling

presents no obstacle to our meanwhile deferring the discussion of it,

whether we may be able to determine anything about it, or may only be

made more cautious by its further treatment, so as to be deterred from

making any rash affirmations in a matter of such obscurity. For at

present we are disputing the opinion that affirms the existence of

those periodic revolutions by which the same things are always

recurring at intervals of time. Now whichever of these suppositions

regarding the "ages of ages" be the true one, it avails nothing for the

substantiating of those cycles; for whether the ages of ages be not a

repetition of the same world, but different worlds succeeding one

another in a regulated connection, the ransomed souls abiding in

well-assured bliss without any recurrence of misery, or whether the

ages of ages be the eternal causes which rule what shall be and is in

time, it equally follows, that those cycles which bring round the same

things have no existence; and nothing more thoroughly explodes them

than the fact of the eternal life of the saints.

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[561] De s�culis s�culorum.

[562] Ps. cxlviii. 4.

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Chapter 20.--Of the Impiety of Those Who Assert that the Souls Which

Enjoy True and Perfect Blessedness, Must Yet Again and Again in These

Periodic Revolutions Return to Labor and Misery.

What pious ears could bear to hear that after a life spent in so many

and severe distresses (if, indeed, that should be called a life at all

which is rather a death, so utter that the love of this present death

makes us fear that death which delivers us from it,) that after evils

so disastrous, and miseries of all kinds have at length been expiated

and finished by the help of true religion and wisdom, and when we have

thus attained to the vision of God, and have entered into bliss by the

contemplation of spiritual light and participation in His unchangeable

immortality, which we burn to attain,--that we must at some time lose

all this, and that they who do lose it are cast down from that

eternity, truth, and felicity to infernal mortality and shameful

foolishness, and are involved in accursed woes, in which God is lost,

truth held in detestation, and happiness sought in iniquitous

impurities? and that this will happen endlessly again and again,

recurring at fixed intervals, and in regularly returning periods? and

that this everlasting and ceaseless revolution of definite cycles,

which remove and restore true misery and deceitful bliss in turn, is

contrived in order that God may be able to know His own works, since on

the one hand He cannot rest from creating and on the other, cannot know

the infinite number of His creatures, if He always makes creatures?

Who, I say, can listen to such things? Who can accept or suffer them

to be spoken? Were they true, it were not only more prudent to keep

silence regarding them, but even (to express myself as best I can) it

were the part of wisdom not to know them. For if in the future world

we shall not remember these things, and by this oblivion be blessed,

why should we now increase our misery, already burdensome enough, by

the knowledge of them? If, on the other hand, the knowledge of them

will be forced upon us hereafter, now at least let us remain in

ignorance, that in the present expectation we may enjoy a blessedness

which the future reality is not to bestow; since in this life we are

expecting to obtain life everlasting, but in the world to come are to

discover it to be blessed, but not everlasting.

And if they maintain that no one can attain to the blessedness of the

world to come, unless in this life he has been indoctrinated in those

cycles in which bliss and misery relieve one another, how do they avow

that the more a man loves God, the more readily he attains to

blessedness,--they who teach what paralyzes love itself? For who would

not be more remiss and lukewarm in his love for a person whom he thinks

he shall be forced to abandon, and whose truth and wisdom he shall come

to hate; and this, too, after he has quite attained to the utmost and

most blissful knowledge of Him that he is capable of? Can any one be

faithful in his love, even to a human friend, if he knows that he is

destined to become his enemy? [563] God forbid that there be any

truth in an opinion which threatens us with a real misery that is never

to end, but is often and endlessly to be interrupted by intervals of

fallacious happiness. For what happiness can be more fallacious and

false than that in whose blaze of truth we yet remain ignorant that we

shall be miserable, or in whose most secure citadel we yet fear that we

shall be so? For if, on the one hand, we are to be ignorant of coming

calamity, then our present misery is not so short-sighted for it is

assured of coming bliss. If, on the other hand, the disaster that

threatens is not concealed from us in the world to come, then the time

of misery which is to be at last exchanged for a state of blessedness,

is spent by the soul more happily than its time of happiness, which is

to end in a return to misery. And thus our expectation of unhappiness

is happy, but of happiness unhappy. And therefore, as we here suffer

present ills, and hereafter fear ills that are imminent, it were truer

to say that we shall always be miserable than that we can some time be

happy.

But these things are declared to be false by the loud testimony of

religion and truth; for religion truthfully promises a true

blessedness, of which we shall be eternally assured, and which cannot

be interrupted by any disaster. Let us therefore keep to the straight

path, which is Christ, and, with Him as our Guide and Saviour, let us

turn away in heart and mind from the unreal and futile cycles of the

godless. Porphyry, Platonist though he was, abjured the opinion of his

school, that in these cycles souls are ceaselessly passing away and

returning, either being struck with the extravagance of the idea, or

sobered by his knowledge of Christianity. As I mentioned in the tenth

book, [564] he preferred saying that the soul, as it had been sent into

the world that it might know evil, and be purged and delivered from it,

was never again exposed to such an experience after it had once

returned to the Father. And if he abjured the tenets of his school,

how much more ought we Christians to abominate and avoid an opinion so

unfounded and hostile to our faith? But having disposed of these

cycles and escaped out of them, no necessity compels us to suppose that

the human race had no beginning in time, on the ground that there is

nothing new in nature which, by I know not what cycles, has not at some

previous period existed, and is not hereafter to exist again. For if

the soul, once delivered, as it never was before, is never to return to

misery, then there happens in its experience something which never

happened before; and this, indeed, something of the greatest

consequence, to wit, the secure entrance into eternal felicity. And if

in an immortal nature there can occur a novelty, which never has been,

nor ever shall be, reproduced by any cycle, why is it disputed that the

same may occur in mortal natures? If they maintain that blessedness is

no new experience to the soul, but only a return to that state in which

it has been eternally, then at least its deliverance from misery is

something new, since, by their own showing, the misery from which it is

delivered is itself, too, a new experience. And if this new experience

fell out by accident, and was not embraced in the order of things

appointed by Divine Providence, then where are those determinate and

measured cycles in which no new thing happens, but all things are

reproduced as they were before? If, however, this new experience was

embraced in that providential order of nature (whether the soul was

exposed to the evil of this world for the sake of discipline, or fell

into it by sin), then it is possible for new things to happen which

never happened before, and which yet are not extraneous to the order of

nature. And if the soul is able by its own imprudence to create for

itself a new misery, which was not unforeseen by the Divine Providence,

but was provided for in the order of nature along with the deliverance

from it, how can we, even with all the rashness of human vanity,

presume to deny that God can create new things--new to the world, but

not to Him--which He never before created, but yet foresaw from all

eternity? If they say that it is indeed true that ransomed souls

return no more to misery, but that even so no new thing happens, since

there always have been, now are, and ever shall be a succession of

ransomed souls, they must at least grant that in this case there are

new souls to whom the misery and the deliverance from it are new. For

if they maintain that those souls out of which new men are daily being

made (from whose bodies, if they have lived wisely, they are so

delivered that they never return to misery) are not new, but have

existed from eternity, they must logically admit that they are

infinite. For however great a finite number of souls there were, that

would not have sufficed to make perpetually new men from eternity,--men

whose souls were to be eternally freed from this mortal state, and

never afterwards to return to it. And our philosophers will find it

hard to explain how there is an infinite number of souls in an order of

nature which they require shall be finite, that it may be known by God.

And now that we have exploded these cycles which were supposed to bring

back the soul at fixed periods to the same miseries, what can seem more

in accordance with godly reason than to believe that it is possible for

God both to create new things never before created, and in doing so, to

preserve His will unaltered? But whether the number of eternally

redeemed souls can be continually increased or not, let the

philosophers themselves decide, who are so subtle in determining where

infinity cannot be admitted. For our own part, our reasoning holds in

either case. For if the number of souls can be indefinitely increased,

what reason is there to deny that what had never before been created,

could be created? since the number of ransomed souls never existed

before, and has yet not only been once made, but will never cease to be

anew coming into being. If, on the other hand, it be more suitable

that the number of eternally ransomed souls be definite, and that this

number will never be increased, yet this number, whatever it be, did

assuredly never exist before, and it cannot increase, and reach the

amount it signifies, without having some beginning; and this beginning

never before existed. That this beginning, therefore, might be, the

first man was created.

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[563] Cicero has the same (de Amicitia, 16): Quonam modo quisquam

amicus esse poterit, cui se putabit inimicum esse posse? He also

quotes Scipio to the effect that no sentiment is more unfriendly to

friendship than this, that we should love as if some day we were to

hate.

[564] C. 30.

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Chapter 21.--That There Was Created at First But One Individual, and

that the Human Race Was Created in Him.

Now that we have solved, as well as we could, this very difficult

question about the eternal God creating new things, without any novelty

of will, it is easy to see how much better it is that God was pleased

to produce the human race from the one individual whom He created, than

if He had originated it in several men. For as to the other animals,

He created some solitary, and naturally seeking lonely places,--as the

eagles, kites, lions, wolves, and such like; others gregarious, which

herd together, and prefer to live in company,--as pigeons, starlings,

stags, and little fallow deer, and the like: but neither class did He

cause to be propagated from individuals, but called into being several

at once. Man, on the other hand, whose nature was to be a mean between

the angelic and bestial, He created in such sort, that if he remained

in subjection to His Creator as his rightful Lord, and piously kept His

commandments, he should pass into the company of the angels, and

obtain, without the intervention of death, [565] a blessed and endless

immortality; but if he offended the Lord his God by a proud and

disobedient use of his free will, he should become subject to death,

and live as the beasts do,--the slave of appetite, and doomed to

eternal punishment after death. And therefore God created only one

single man, not, certainly, that he might be a solitary, bereft of all

society, but that by this means the unity of society and the bond of

concord might be more effectually commended to him, men being bound

together not only by similarity of nature, but by family affection.

And indeed He did not even create the woman that was to be given him as

his wife, as he created the man, but created her out of the man, that

the whole human race might derive from one man.

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[565] Coquaeus remarks that this is levelled against the Pelagians.

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Chapter 22.--That God Foreknew that the First Man Would Sin, and that

He at the Same Time Foresaw How Large a Multitude of Godly Persons

Would by His Grace Be Translated to the Fellowship of the Angels.

And God was not ignorant that man would sin, and that, being himself

made subject now to death, he would propagate men doomed to die, and

that these mortals would run to such enormities in sin, that even the

beasts devoid of rational will, and who were created in numbers from

the waters and the earth, would live more securely and peaceably with

their own kind than men, who had been propagated from one individual

for the very purpose of commending concord. For not even lions or

dragons have ever waged with their kind such wars as men have waged

with one another. [566] But God foresaw also that by His grace a

people would be called to adoption, and that they, being justified by

the remission of their sins, would be united by the Holy Ghost to the

holy angels in eternal peace, the last enemy, death, being destroyed;

and He knew that this people would derive profit from the consideration

that God had caused all men to be derived from one, for the sake of

showing how highly He prizes unity in a multitude.

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[566] ^ "Quando leoni Fortior eripuit vitam leo? quo

nemore unquam Exspiravit aper majoris dentibus apri? Indica tigris agit

rabida cum tigride pacem Perpetuam; s�vis inter se convenit ursis. Ast

homini,"etc. Juvenal, Sat. xv. 160--5. --See also the very striking

lines which precede these.

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Chapter 23.--Of the Nature of the Human Soul Created in the Image of

God.

God, then, made man in His own image. For He created for him a soul

endowed with reason and intelligence, so that he might excel all the

creatures of earth, air, and sea, which were not so gifted. And when

He had formed the man out of the dust of the earth, and had willed that

his soul should be such as I have said,--whether He had already made

it, and now by breathing imparted it to man, or rather made it by

breathing, so that that breath which God made by breathing (for what

else is "to breathe" than to make breath?) is the soul, [567] --He made

also a wife for him, to aid him in the work of generating his kind, and

her He formed of a bone taken out of the man's side, working in a

divine manner. For we are not to conceive of this work in a carnal

fashion, as if God wrought as we commonly see artisans, who use their

hands, and material furnished to them, that by their artistic skill

they may fashion some material object. God's hand is God's power; and

He, working invisibly, effects visible results. But this seems

fabulous rather than true to men, who measure by customary and everyday

works the power and wisdom of God, whereby He understands and produces

without seeds even seeds themselves; and because they cannot understand

the things which at the beginning were created, they are sceptical

regarding them--as if the very things which they do know about human

propagation, conceptions and births, would seem less incredible if told

to those who had no experience of them; though these very things, too,

are attributed by many rather to physical and natural causes than to

the work of the divine mind.

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[567] See this further discussed in Gen. ad Lit. vii. 35, and in

Delitzsch's Bibl. Psychology.

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Chapter 24.--Whether the Angels Can Be Said to Be the Creators of Any,

Even the Least Creature.

But in this book we have nothing to do with those who do not believe

that the divine mind made or cares for this world. As for those who

believe their own Plato, that all mortal animals--among whom man holds

the pre-eminent place, and is near to the gods themselves--were created

not by that most high God who made the world, but by other lesser gods

created by the Supreme, and exercising a delegated power under His

control,--if only those persons be delivered from the superstition

which prompts them to seek a plausible reason for paying divine honors

and sacrificing to these gods as their creators, they will easily be

disentangled also from this their error. For it is blasphemy to

believe or to say (even before it can be understood) that any other

than God is creator of any nature, be it never so small and mortal.

And as for the angels, whom those Platonists prefer to call gods,

although they do, so far as they are permitted and commissioned, aid in

the production of the things around us, yet not on that account are we

to call them creators, any more than we call gardeners the creators of

fruits and trees.

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Chapter 25.--That God Alone is the Creator of Every Kind of Creature,

Whatever Its Nature or Form.

For whereas there is one form which is given from without to every

bodily substance,--such as the form which is constructed by potters and

smiths, and that class of artists who paint and fashion forms like the

body of animals,--but another and internal form which is not itself

constructed, but, as the efficient cause, produces not only the natural

bodily forms, but even the life itself of the living creatures, and

which proceeds from the secret and hidden choice of an intelligent and

living nature,--let that first-mentioned form be attributed to every

artificer, but this latter to one only, God, the Creator and Originator

who made the world itself and the angels, without the help of world or

angels. For the same divine and, so to speak, creative energy, which

cannot be made, but makes, and which gave to the earth and sky their

roundness,--this same divine, effective, and creative energy gave their

roundness to the eye and to the apple; and the other natural objects

which we anywhere see, received also their form, not from without, but

from the secret and profound might of the Creator, who said, "Do not I

fill heaven and earth?" [568] and whose wisdom it is that "reacheth

from one end to another mightily; and sweetly doth she order all

things." [569] Wherefore I know not what kind of aid the angels,

themselves created first, afforded to the Creator in making other

things. I cannot ascribe to them what perhaps they cannot do, neither

ought I to deny them such faculty as they have. But, by their leave, I

attribute the creating and originating work which gave being to all

natures to God, to whom they themselves thankfully ascribe their

existence. We do not call gardeners the creators of their fruits, for

we read, "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that

watereth, but God that giveth the increase." [570] Nay, not even the

earth itself do we call a creator, though she seems to be the prolific

mother of all things which she aids in germinating and bursting forth

from the seed, and which she keeps rooted in her own breast; for we

likewise read, "God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased Him, and to

every seed his own body." [571] We ought not even to call a woman the

creatress of her own offspring; for He rather is its creator who said

to His servant, "Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee." [572]

And although the various mental emotions of a pregnant woman do

produce in the fruit of her womb similar qualities,--as Jacob with his

peeled wands caused piebald sheep to be produced,--yet the mother as

little creates her offspring as she created herself. Whatever bodily

or seminal causes, then, may be used for the production of things,

either by the cooperation of angels, men, or the lower animals, or by

sexual generation; and whatever power the desires and mental emotions

of the mother have to produce in the tender and plastic foetus

corresponding lineaments and colors; yet the natures themselves, which

are thus variously affected, are the production of none but the most

high God. It is His occult power which pervades all things, and is

present in all without being contaminated, which gives being to all

that is, and modifies and limits its existence; so that without Him it

would not be thus, or thus, nor would have any being at all. [573]

If, then, in regard to that outward form which the workman's hand

imposes on his work, we do not say that Rome and Alexandria were built

by masons and architects, but by the kings by whose will, plan, and

resources they were built, so that the one has Romulus, the other

Alexander, for its founder; with how much greater reason ought we to

say that God alone is the Author of all natures, since He neither uses

for His work any material which was not made by Him, nor any workmen

who were not also made by Him, and since, if He were, so to speak, to

withdraw from created things His creative power, they would straightway

relapse into the nothingness in which they were before they were

created? "Before," I mean, in respect of eternity, not of time. For

what other creator could there be of time, than He who created those

things whose movements make time? [574]

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[568] Jer. xxiii. 24.

[569] Wisdom viii. 1.

[570] 1 Cor. iii. 7.

[571] 1 Cor. xv. 38.

[572] Jer. i. 5.

[573] Compare de Trin. iii. 13-16.

[574] See Book xi. 5.

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Chapter 26.--Of that Opinion of the Platonists, that the Angels Were

Themselves Indeed Created by God, But that Afterwards They Created

Man's Body.

It is obvious, that in attributing the creation of the other animals to

those inferior gods who were made by the Supreme, he meant it to be

understood that the immortal part was taken from God Himself, and that

these minor creators added the mortal part; that is to say, he meant

them to be considered the creators of our bodies, but not of our

souls. But since Porphyry maintains that if the soul is to be purified

all entanglement with a body must be escaped from; and at the same time

agrees with Plato and the Platonistsin thinking that those who have not

spent a temperate and honorable life return to mortal bodies as their

punishment (to bodies of brutes in Plato's opinion, to human bodies in

Porphyry's); it follows that those whom they would have us worship as

our parents and authors, that they may plausibly call them gods, are,

after all, but the forgers of our fetters and chains,--not our

creators, but our jailers and turnkeys, who lock us up in the most

bitter and melancholy house of correction. Let the Platonists, then,

either cease menacing us with our bodies as the punishment of our

souls, or preaching that we are to worship as gods those whose work

upon us they exhort us by all means in our power to avoid and escape

from. But, indeed, both opinions are quite false. It is false that

souls return again to this life to be punished; and it is false that

there is any other creator of anything in heaven or earth, than He who

made the heaven and the earth. For if we live in a body only to

expiate our sins, how says Plato in another place, that the world could

not have been the most beautiful and good, had it not been filled with

all kinds of creatures, mortal and immortal? [575] But if our

creation even as mortals be a divine benefit, how is it a punishment to

be restored to a body, that is, to a divine benefit? And if God, as

Plato continually maintains, embraced in His eternal intelligence the

ideas both of the universe and of all the animals, how, then, should He

not with His own hand make them all? Could He be unwilling to be the

constructor of works, the idea and plan of which called for His

ineffable and ineffably to be praised intelligence?

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[575] The deity, desirous of making the universe in all respects

resemble the most beautiful and entirely perfect of intelligible

objects, formed it into one visible animal, containing within itself

all the other animals with which it is naturally allied.--Tim�us, c.

xi.

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Chapter 27.--That the Whole Plenitude of the Human Race Was Embraced in

the First Man, and that God There Saw the Portion of It Which Was to Be

Honored and Rewarded, and that Which Was to Be Condemned and Punished.

With good cause, therefore, does the true religion recognize and

proclaim that the same God who created the universal cosmos, created

also all the animals, souls as well as bodies. Among the terrestrial

animals man was made by Him in His own image, and, for the reason I

have given, was made one individual, though he was not left solitary.

For there is nothing so social by nature, so unsocial by its

corruption, as this race. And human nature has nothing more

appropriate, either for the prevention of discord, or for the healing

of it, where it exists, than the remembrance of that first parent of us

all, whom God was pleased to create alone, that all men might be

derived from one, and that they might thus be admonished to preserve

unity among their whole multitude. But from the fact that the woman

was made for him from his side, it was plainly meant that we should

learn how dear the bond between man and wife should be. These works of

God do certainly seem extraordinary, because they are the first works.

They who do not believe them, ought not to believe any prodigies; for

these would not be called prodigies did they not happen out of the

ordinary course of nature. But, is it possible that anything should

happen in vain, however hidden be its cause, in so grand a government

of divine providence? One of the sacred Psalmists says, "Come, behold

the works of the Lord, what prodigies He hath wrought in the earth."

[576] Why God made woman out of man's side, and what this first

prodigy prefigured, I shall, with God's help, tell in another place.

But at present, since this book must be concluded, let us merely say

that in this first man, who was created in the beginning, there was

laid the foundation, not indeed evidently, but in God's foreknowledge,

of these two cities or societies, so far as regards the human race.

For from that man all men were to be derived--some of them to be

associated with the good angels in their reward, others with the wicked

in punishment; all being ordered by the secret yet just judgment of

God. For since it is written, "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and

truth," [577] neither can His grace be unjust, nor His justice cruel.

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[576] Ps. xlvi. 8.

[577] Ps. xxv. 10.

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Book XIII.

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Argument--In this book it is taught that death is penal, and had its

origin in Adam's sin.

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Chapter 1.--Of the Fall of the First Man, Through Which Mortality Has

Been Contracted.

Having disposed of the very difficult questions concerning the origin

of our world and the beginning of the human race, the natural order

requires that we now discuss the fall of the first man (we may say of

the first men), and of the origin and propagation of human death. For

God had not made man like the angels, in such a condition that, even

though they had sinned, they could none the more die. He had so made

them, that if they discharged the obligations of obedience, an angelic

immortality and a blessed eternity might ensue, without the

intervention of death; but if they disobeyed, death should be visited

on them with just sentence--which, too, has been spoken to in the

preceding book.

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Chapter 2.--Of that Death Which Can Affect an Immortal Soul, and of

that to Which the Body is Subject.

But I see I must speak a little more carefully of the nature of death.

For although the human soul is truly affirmed to be immortal, yet it

also has a certain death of its own. For it is therefore called

immortal, because, in a sense, it does not cease to live and to feel;

while the body is called mortal, because it can be forsaken of all

life, and cannot by itself live at all. The death, then, of the soul

takes place when God forsakes it, as the death of the body when the

soul forsakes it. Therefore the death of both--that is, of the whole

man--occurs when the soul, forsaken by God, forsakes the body. For, in

this case, neither is God the life of the soul, nor the soul the life

of the body. And this death of the whole man is followed by that

which, on the authority of the divine oracles, we call the second

death. This the Saviour referred to when He said, "Fear Him which is

able to destroy both soul and body in hell." [578] And since this

does not happen before the soul is so joined to its body that they

cannot be separated at all, it may be matter of wonder how the body can

be said to be killed by that death in which it is not forsaken by the

soul, but, being animated and rendered sensitive by it, is tormented.

For in that penal and everlasting punishment, of which in its own place

we are to speak more at large, the soul is justly said to die, because

it does not live in connection with God; but how can we say that the

body is dead, seeing that it lives by the soul? For it could not

otherwise feel the bodily torments which are to follow the

resurrection. Is it because life of every kind is good, and pain an

evil, that we decline to say that that body lives, in which the soul is

the cause, not of life, but of pain? The soul, then, lives by God when

it lives well, for it cannot live well unless by God working in it what

is good; and the body lives by the soul when the soul lives in the

body, whether itself be living by God or no. For the wicked man's life

in the body is a life not of the soul, but of the body, which even dead

souls--that is, souls forsaken of God--can confer upon bodies, how

little so-ever of their own proper life, by which they are immortal,

they retain. But in the last damnation, though man does not cease to

feel, yet because this feeling of his is neither sweet with pleasure

nor wholesome with repose, but painfully penal, it is not without

reason called death rather than life. And it is called the second

death because it follows the first, which sunders the two cohering

essences, whether these be God and the soul, or the soul and the body.

Of the first and bodily death, then, we may say that to the good it is

good, and evil to the evil. But, doubtless, the second, as it happens

to none of the good, so it can be good for none.

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[578] Matt. x. 28.

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Chapter 3.--Whether Death, Which by the Sin of Our First Parents Has

Passed Upon All Men, is the Punishment of Sin, Even to the Good.

But a question not to be shirked arises: Whether in very truth death,

which separates soul and body, is good to the good? [579] For if it

be, how has it come to pass that such a thing should be the punishment

of sin? For the first men would not have suffered death had they not

sinned. How, then, can that be good to the good, which could not have

happened except to the evil? Then, again, if it could only happen to

the evil, to the good it ought not to be good, but non-existent. For

why should there be any punishment where there is nothing to punish?

Wherefore we must say that the first men were indeed so created, that

if they had not sinned, they would not have experienced any kind of

death; but that, having become sinners, they were so punished with

death, that whatsoever sprang from their stock should also be punished

with the same death. For nothing else could be born of them than that

which they themselves had been. Their nature was deteriorated in

proportion to the greatness of the condemnation of their sin, so that

what existed as punishment in those who first sinned, became a natural

consequence in their children. For man is not produced by man, as he

was from the dust. For dust was the material out of which man was

made: man is the parent by whom man is begotten. Wherefore earth and

flesh are not the same thing, though flesh be made of earth. But as

man the parent is, such is man the offspring. In the first man,

therefore, there existed the whole human nature, which was to be

transmitted by the woman to posterity, when that conjugal union

received the divine sentence of its own condemnation; and what man was

made, not when created, but when he sinned and was punished, this he

propagated, so far as the origin of sin and death are concerned. For

neither by sin nor its punishment was he himself reduced to that

infantine and helpless infirmity of body and mind which we see in

children. For God ordained that infants should begin the world as the

young of beasts begin it, since their parents had fallen to the level

of the beasts in the fashion of their life and of their death; as it is

written, "Man when he was in honor understood not; he became like the

beasts that have no understanding." [580] Nay more, infants, we see,

are even feebler in the use and movement of their limbs, and more

infirm to choose and refuse, than the most tender offspring of other

animals; as if the force that dwells in human nature were destined to

surpass all other living things so much the more eminently, as its

energy has been longer restrained, and the time of its exercise

delayed, just as an arrow flies the higher the further back it has been

drawn. To this infantine imbecility [581] the first man did not fall

by his lawless presumption and just sentence; but human nature was in

his person vitiated and altered to such an extent, that he suffered in

his members the warring of disobedient lust, and became subject to the

necessity of dying. And what he himself had become by sin and

punishment, such he generated those whom he begot; that is to say,

subject to sin and death. And if infants are delivered from this

bondage of sin by the Redeemer's grace, they can suffer only this death

which separates soul and body; but being redeemed from the obligation

of sin, they do not pass to that second endless and penal death.

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[579] On this question compare the 24th and 25th epistles of Jerome, de

obitu Le�, and de obitu Blesill� fili�. Coqu�us.

[580] Ps. xlix. 12.

[581] On which see further in de Peccat. Mer. i. 67, et seq.

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Chapter 4.--Why Death, the Punishment of Sin, is Not Withheld from

Those Who by the Grace of Regeneration are Absolved from Sin.

If, moreover, any one is solicitous about this point, how, if death be

the very punishment of sin, they whose guilt is cancelled by grace do

yet suffer death, this difficulty has already been handled and solved

in our other work which we have written on the baptism of infants.

[582] There it was said that the parting of soul and body was left,

though its connection with sin was removed, for this reason, that if

the immortality of the body followed immediately upon the sacrament of

regeneration, faith itself would be thereby enervated. For faith is

then only faith when it waits in hope for what is not yet seen in

substance. And by the vigor and conflict of faith, at least in times

past, was the fear of death overcome. Specially was this conspicuous

in the holy martyrs, who could have had no victory, no glory, to whom

there could not even have been any conflict, if, after the layer of

regeneration, saints could not suffer bodily death. Who would not,

then, in company with the infants presented for baptism, run to the

grace of Christ, that so he might not be dismissed from the body? And

thus faith would not be tested with an unseen reward; and so would not

even be faith, seeking and receiving an immediate recompense of its

works. But now, by the greater and more admirable grace of the

Saviour, the punishment of sin is turned to the service of

righteousness. For then it was proclaimed to man, "If thou sinnest,

thou shall die;" now it is said to the martyr, "Die, that thou sin

not." Then it was said, "If ye trangress the commandments, ye shall

die;" now it is said, "If ye decline death, ye transgress the

commandment." That which was formerly set as an object of terror, that

men might not sin, is now to be undergone if we would not sin. Thus,

by the unutterable mercy of God, even the very punishment of wickedness

has become the armor of virtue, and the penalty of the sinner becomes

the reward of the righteous. For then death was incurred by sinning,

now righteousness is fulfilled by dying. In the case of the holy

martyrs it is so; for to them the persecutor proposes the alternative,

apostasy or death. For the righteous prefer by believing to suffer

what the first transgressors suffered by not believing. For unless

they had sinned, they would not have died; but the martyrs sin if they

do not die. The one died because they sinned, the others do not sin

because they die. By the guilt of the first, punishment was incurred;

by the punishment of the second, guilt is prevented. Not that death,

which was before an evil, has become something good, but only that God

has granted to faith this grace, that death, which is the admitted

opposite to life, should become the instrument by which life is

reached.

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[582] De Baptismo Parvulorum is the second half of the title of the

book, de Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione.

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Chapter 5.--As the Wicked Make an Ill Use of the Law, Which is Good, So

the Good Make a Good Use of Death, Which is an Ill.

The apostle, wishing to show how hurtful a thing sin is, when grace

does not aid us, has not hesitated to say that the strength of sin is

that very law by which sin is prohibited. "The sting of death is sin,

and the strength of sin is the law." [583] Most certainly true; for

prohibition increases the desire of illicit action, if righteousness is

not so loved that the desire of sin is conquered by that love. But

unless divine grace aid us, we cannot love nor delight in true

righteousness. But lest the law should be thought to be an evil, since

it is called the strength of sin, the apostle, when treating a similar

question in another place, says, "The law indeed is holy, and the

commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is holy made

death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working

death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might

become exceeding sinful." [584] Exceeding, he says, because the

transgression is more heinous when through the increasing lust of sin

the law itself also is despised. Why have we thought it worth while to

mention this? For this reason, because, as the law is not an evil when

it increases the lust of those who sin, so neither is death a good

thing when it increases the glory of those who suffer it, since either

the former is abandoned wickedly, and makes transgressors, or the

latter is embraced, for the truth's sake, and makes martyrs. And thus

the law is indeed good, because it is prohibition of sin, and death is

evil because it is the wages of sin; but as wicked men make an evil use

not only of evil, but also of good things, so the righteous make a good

use not only of good, but also of evil things. Whence it comes to pass

that the wicked make an ill use of the law, though the law is good; and

that the good die well, though death is an evil.

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[583] 1 Cor. xv. 56.

[584] Rom. vii. 12, 13.

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Chapter 6.--Of the Evil of Death in General, Considered as the

Separation of Soul and Body.

Wherefore, as regards bodily death, that is, the separation of the soul

from the body, it is good unto none while it is being endured by those

whom we say are in the article of death. For the very violence with

which body and soul are wrenched asunder, which in the living had been

conjoined and closely intertwined, brings with it a harsh experience,

jarring horridly on nature so long as it continues, till there comes a

total loss of sensation, which arose from the very interpenetration of

spirit and flesh. And all this anguish is sometimes forestalled by one

stroke of the body or sudden flitting of the soul, the swiftness of

which prevents it from being felt. But whatever that may be in the

dying which with violently painful sensation robs of all sensation,

yet, when it is piously and faithfully borne, it increases the merit of

patience, but does not make the name of punishment inapplicable.

Death, proceeding by ordinary generation from the first man, is the

punishment of all who are born of him, yet, if it be endured for

righteousness' sake, it becomes the glory of those who are born again;

and though death be the award of sin, it sometimes secures that nothing

be awarded to sin.

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Chapter 7.--Of the Death Which the Unbaptized [585] Suffer for the

Confession of Christ.

For whatever unbaptized persons die confessing Christ, this confession

is of the same efficacy for the remission of sins as if they were

washed in the sacred font of baptism. For He who said, "Except a man

be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of

God," [586] made also an exception in their favor, in that other

sentence where He no less absolutely said, "Whosoever shall confess me

before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in

heaven;" [587] and in another place, "Whosoever will lose his life for

my sake, shall find it." [588] And this explains the verse, "Precious

in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." [589] For what

is more precious than a death by which a man's sins are all forgiven,

and his merits increased an hundredfold? For those who have been

baptized when they could no longer escape death, and have departed this

life with all their sins blotted out have not equal merit with those

who did not defer death, though it was in their power to do so, but

preferred to end their life by confessing Christ, rather than by

denying Him to secure an opportunity of baptism. And even had they

denied Him under pressure of the fear of death, this too would have

been forgiven them in that baptism, in which was remitted even the

enormous wickedness of those who had slain Christ. But how abundant in

these men must have been the grace of the Spirit, who breathes where He

listeth, seeing that they so dearly loved Christ as to be unable to

deny Him even in so sore an emergency, and with so sure a hope of

pardon! Precious, therefore, is the death of the saints, to whom the

grace of Christ has been applied with such gracious effects, that they

do not hesitate to meet death themselves, if so be they might meet

Him. And precious is it, also, because it has proved that what was

originally ordained for the punishment of the sinner, has been used for

the production of a richer harvest of righteousness. But not on this

account should we look upon death as a good thing, for it is diverted

to such useful purposes, not by any virtue of its own, but by the

divine interference. Death was originally proposed as an object of

dread, that sin might not be committed; now it must be undergone that

sin may not be committed, or, if committed, be remitted, and the award

of righteousness bestowed on him whose victory has earned it.

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[585] Literally, unregenerate.

[586] John iii. 5.

[587] Matt. x. 32.

[588] Matt. xvi. 25.

[589] Ps. cxvi. 15.

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Chapter 8.--That the Saints, by Suffering the First Death for the

Truth's Sake, are Freed from the Second.

For if we look at the matter a little more carefully, we shall see that

even when a man dies faithfully and laudably for the truth's sake, it

is still death he is avoiding. For he submits to some part of death,

for the very purpose of avoiding the whole, and the second and eternal

death over and above. He submits to the separation of soul and body,

lest the soul be separated both from God and from the body, and so the

whole first death be completed, and the second death receive him

everlastingly. Wherefore death is indeed, as I said, good to none

while it is being actually suffered, and while it is subduing the dying

to its power; but it is meritoriously endured for the sake of retaining

or winning what is good. And regarding what happens after death, it is

no absurdity to say that death is good to the good, and evil to the

evil. For the disembodied spirits of the just are at rest; but those

of the wicked suffer punishment till their bodies rise again,--those of

the just to life everlasting, and of the others to death eternal, which

is called the second death.

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Chapter 9.--Whether We Should Say that The Moment of Death, in Which

Sensation Ceases, Occurs in the Experience of the Dying or in that of

the Dead.

The point of time in which the souls of the good and evil are separated

from the body, are we to say it is after death, or in death rather? If

it is after death, then it is not death which is good or evil, since

death is done with and past, but it is the life which the soul has now

entered on. Death was an evil when it was present, that is to say,

when it was being suffered by the dying; for to them it brought with it

a severe and grievous experience, which the good make a good use of.

But when death is past, how can that which no longer is be either good

or evil? Still further, if we examine the matter more closely, we

shall see that even that sore and grievous pain which the dying

experience is not death itself. For so long as they have any

sensation, they are certainly still alive; and, if still alive, must

rather be said to be in a state previous to death than in death. For

when death actually comes, it robs us of all bodily sensation, which,

while death is only approaching is painful. And thus it is difficult

to explain how we speak of those who are not yet dead, but are agonized

in their last and mortal extremity, as being in the article of death.

Yet what else can we call them than dying persons? for when death which

was imminent shall have actually come, we can no longer call them dying

but dead. No one, therefore, is dying unless living; since even he who

is in the last extremity of life, and, as we say, giving up the ghost,

yet lives. The same person is therefore at once dying and living, but

drawing near to death, departing from life; yet in life, because his

spirit yet abides in the body; not yet in death, because not yet has

his spirit forsaken the body. But if, when it has forsaken it, the man

is not even then in death, but after death, who shall say when he is in

death? On the one hand, no one can be called dying, if a man cannot be

dying and living at the same time; and as long as the soul is in the

body, we cannot deny that he is living. On the other hand, if the man

who is approaching death be rather called dying, I know not who is

living.

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Chapter 10.--Of the Life of Mortals, Which is Rather to Be Called Death

Than Life.

For no sooner do we begin to live in this dying body, than we begin to

move ceaselessly towards death. [590] For in the whole course of this

life (if life we must call it) its mutability tends towards death.

Certainly there is no one who is not nearer it this year than last

year, and to-morrow than to-day, and to-day than yesterday, and a short

while hence than now, and now than a short while ago. For whatever

time we live is deducted from our whole term of life, and that which

remains is daily becoming less and less; so that our whole life is

nothing but a race towards death, in which no one is allowed to stand

still for a little space, or to go somewhat more slowly, but all are

driven forwards with an impartial movement, and with equal rapidity.

For he whose life is short spends a day no more swiftly than he whose

life is longer. But while the equal moments are impartially snatched

from both, the one has a nearer and the other a more remote goal to

reach with this their equal speed. It is one thing to make a longer

journey, and another to walk more slowly. He, therefore, who spends

longer time on his way to death does not proceed at a more leisurely

pace, but goes over more ground. Further, if every man begins to die,

that is, is in death, as soon as death has begun to show itself in him

(by taking away life, to wit; for when life is all taken away, the man

will be then not in death, but after death), then he begins to die so

soon as he begins to live. For what else is going on in all his days,

hours, and moments, until this slow-working death is fully

consummated? And then comes the time after death, instead of that in

which life was being withdrawn, and which we called being in death.

Man, then, is never in life from the moment he dwells in this dying

rather than living body,--if, at least, he cannot be in life and death

at once. Or rather, shall we say, he is in both?--in life, namely,

which he lives till all is consumed; but in death also, which he dies

as his life is consumed? For if he is not in life, what is it which is

consumed till all be gone? And if he is not in death, what is this

consumption itself? For when the whole of life has been consumed, the

expression "after death" would be meaningless, had that consumption not

been death. And if, when it has all been consumed, a man is not in

death but after death, when is he in death unless when life is being

consumed away?

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[590] Much of this paradoxical statement about death is taken from

Seneca. See, among other places, his epistle on the premeditation of

future dangers, the passage beginning, Quotidie morimur, quotide enim

demitur aliqua pars vit�.

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Chapter 11.--Whether One Can Both Be Living and Dead at the Same Time.

But if it is absurd to say that a man is in death before he reaches

death (for to what is his course running as he passes through life, if

already he is in death?), and if it outrage common usage to speak of a

man being at once alive and dead, as much as it does so to speak of him

as at once asleep and awake, it remains to be asked when a man is

dying? For, before death comes, he is not dying but living; and when

death has come, he is not dying but dead. The one is before, the other

after death. When, then, is he in death so that we can say he is

dying? For as there are three times, before death, in death, after

death, so there are three states corresponding, living, dying, dead.

And it is very hard to define when a man is in death or dying, when he

is neither living, which is before death, nor dead, which is after

death, but dying, which is in death. For so long as the soul is in the

body, especially if consciousness remain, the man certainly lives; for

body and soul constitute the man. And thus, before death, he cannot be

said to be in death, but when, on the other hand, the soul has

departed, and all bodily sensation is extinct, death is past, and the

man is dead. Between these two states the dying condition finds no

place; for if a man yet lives, death has not arrived; if he has ceased

to live, death is past. Never, then, is he dying, that is,

comprehended in the state of death. So also in the passing of

time,--you try to lay your finger on the present, and cannot find it,

because the present occupies no space, but is only the transition of

time from the future to the past. Must we then conclude that there is

thus no death of the body at all? For if there is, where is it, since

it is in no one, and no one can be in it? Since, indeed, if there is

yet life, death is not yet; for this state is before death, not in

death: and if life has already ceased, death is not present; for this

state is after death, not in death. On the other hand, if there is no

death before or after, what do we mean when we say "after death," or

"before death?" This is a foolish way of speaking if there is no

death. And would that we had lived so well in Paradise that in very

truth there were now no death! But not only does it now exist, but so

grievous a thing is it, that no skill is sufficient either to explain

or to escape it.

Let us, then, speak in the customary way,--no man ought to speak

otherwise,--and let us call the time before death come, "before death;"

as it is written, "Praise no man before his death." [591] And when it

has happened, let us say that "after death" this or that took place.

And of the present time let us speak as best we can, as when we say,

"He, when dying, made his will, and left this or that to such and such

persons,"--though, of course, he could not do so unless he were living,

and did this rather before death than in death. And let us use the

same phraseology as Scripture uses; for it makes no scruple of saying

that the dead are not after but in death. So that verse, "For in death

there is no remembrance of thee." [592] For until the resurrection

men are justly said to be in death; as every one is said to be in sleep

till he awakes. However, though we can say of persons in sleep that

they are sleeping, we cannot speak in this way of the dead, and say

they are dying. For, so far as regards the death of the body, of which

we are now speaking, one cannot say that those who are already

separated from their bodies continue dying. But this, you see, is just

what I was saying,--that no words can explain how either the dying are

said to live, or how the dead are said, even after death, to be in

death. For how can they be after death if they be in death, especially

when we do not even call them dying, as we call those in sleep,

sleeping; and those in languor, languishing; and those in grief,

grieving; and those in life, living? And yet the dead, until they rise

again, are said to be in death, but cannot be called dying.

And therefore I think it has not unsuitably nor inappropriately come to

pass, though not by the intention of man, yet perhaps with divine

purpose, that this Latin word moritur cannot be declined by the

grammarians according to the rule followed by similar words. For

oritur gives the form ortus est for the perfect; and all similar verbs

form this tense from their perfect participles. But if we ask the

perfect of moritur, we get the regular answer mortuus est, with a

double u. For thus mortuus is pronounced, like fatuus, arduus,

conspicuus, and similar words, which are not perfect participles but

adjectives, and are declined without regard to tense. But mortuus,

though in form an adjective, is used as perfect participle, as if that

were to be declined which cannot be declined; and thus it has suitably

come to pass that, as the thing itself cannot in point of fact be

declined, so neither can the word significant of the act be declined.

Yet, by the aid of our Redeemer's grace, we may manage at least to

decline the second. For that is more grievous still, and, indeed, of

all evils the worst, since it consists not in the separation of soul

and body, but in the uniting of both in death eternal. And there, in

striking contrast to our present conditions, men will not be before or

after death, but always in death; and thus never living, never dead,

but endlessly dying. And never can a man be more disastrously in death

than when death itself shall be deathless.

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[591] Ecclus. xi. 28.

[592] Ps. vi. 5.

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Chapter 12.--What Death God Intended, When He Threatened Our First

Parents with Death If They Should Disobey His Commandment.

When, therefore, it is asked what death it was with which God

threatened our first parents if they should transgress the commandment

they had received from Him, and should fail to preserve their

obedience,--whether it was the death of soul, or of body, or of the

whole man, or that which is called second death,--we must answer, It is

all. For the first consists of two; the second is the complete death,

which consists of all. For, as the whole earth consists of many lands,

and the Church universal of many churches, so death universal consists

of all deaths. The first consists of two, one of the body, and another

of the soul. So that the first death is a death of the whole man,

since the soul without God and without the body suffers punishment for

a time; but the second is when the soul, without God but with the body,

suffers punishment everlasting. When, therefore, God said to that

first man whom he had placed in Paradise, referring to the forbidden

fruit, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,"

[593] that threatening included not only the first part of the first

death, by which the soul is deprived of God; nor only the subsequent

part of the first death, by which the body is deprived of the soul; nor

only the whole first death itself, by which the soul is punished in

separation from God and from the body;--but it includes whatever of

death there is, even to that final death which is called second, and to

which none is subsequent.

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[593] Gen. ii. 17.

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Chapter 13.--What Was the First Punishment of the Transgression of Our

First Parents.

For, as soon as our first parents had transgressed the commandment,

divine grace forsook them, and they were confounded at their own

wickedness; and therefore they took fig-leaves (which were possibly the

first that came to hand in their troubled state of mind), and covered

their shame; for though their members remained the same, they had shame

now where they had none before. They experienced a new motion of their

flesh, which had become disobedient to them, in strict retribution of

their own disobedience to God. For the soul, revelling in its own

liberty, and scorning to serve God, was itself deprived of the command

it had formerly maintained over the body. And because it had willfully

deserted its superior Lord, it no longer held its own inferior servant;

neither could it hold the flesh subject, as it would always have been

able to do had it remained itself subject to God. Then began the flesh

to lust against the Spirit, [594] in which strife we are born, deriving

from the first transgression a seed of death, and bearing in our

members, and in our vitiated nature, the contest or even victory of the

flesh.

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[594] Gal. v. 17.

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Chapter 14.--In What State Man Was Made by God, and into What Estate He

Fell by the Choice of His Own Will.

For God, the author of natures, not of vices, created man upright; but

man, being of his own will corrupted, and justly condemned, begot

corrupted and condemned children. For we all were in that one man,

since we all were that one man, who fell into sin by the woman who was

made from him before the sin. For not yet was the particular form

created and distributed to us, in which we as individuals were to live,

but already the seminal nature was there from which we were to be

propagated; and this being vitiated by sin, and bound by the chain of

death, and justly condemned, man could not be born of man in any other

state. And thus, from the bad use of free will, there originated the

whole train of evil, which, with its concatenation of miseries, convoys

the human race from its depraved origin, as from a corrupt root, on to

the destruction of the second death, which has no end, those only being

excepted who are freed by the grace of God.

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Chapter 15.--That Adam in His Sin Forsook God Ere God Forsook Him, and

that His Falling Away From God Was the First Death of the Soul.

It may perhaps be supposed that because God said, "Ye shall die the

death," [595] and not "deaths," we should understand only that death

which occurs when the soul is deserted by God, who is its life; for it

was not deserted by God, and so deserted Him, but deserted Him, and so

was deserted by Him. For its own will was the originator of its evil,

as God was the originator of its motions towards good, both in making

it when it was not, and in remaking it when it had fallen and

perished. But though we suppose that God meant only this death, and

that the words, "In the day ye eat of it ye shall die the death,"

should be understood as meaning, "In the day ye desert me in

disobedience, I will desert you in justice," yet assuredly in this

death the other deaths also were threatened, which were its inevitable

consequence. For in the first stirring of the disobedient motion which

was felt in the flesh of the disobedient soul, and which caused our

first parents to cover their shame, one death indeed is experienced,

that, namely, which occurs when God forsakes the soul. (This was

intimated by the words He uttered, when the man, stupefied by fear, had

hid himself, "Adam, where art thou?" [596] --words which He used not in

ignorance of inquiry, but warning him to consider where he was, since

God was not with him.) But when the soul itself forsook the body,

corrupted and decayed with age, the other death was experienced of

which God had spoken in pronouncing man's sentence, "Earth thou art,

and unto earth shall thou return." [597] And of these two deaths that

first death of the whole man is composed. And this first death is

finally followed by the second, unless man be freed by grace. For the

body would not return to the earth from which it was made, save only by

the death proper to itself, which occurs when it is forsaken of the

soul, its life. And therefore it is agreed among all Christians who

truthfully hold the catholic faith, that we are subject to the death of

the body, not by the law of nature, by which God ordained no death for

man, but by His righteous infliction on account of sin; for God, taking

vengeance on sin, said to the man, in whom we all then were, "Dust thou

art, and unto dust shall thou return."

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[595] Gen. ii. 17.

[596] Gen. iii. 9.

[597] Gen. iii. 19.

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Chapter 16.--Concerning the Philosophers Who Think that the Separation

of Soul and Body is Not Penal, Though Plato Represents the Supreme

Deity as Promising to the Inferior Gods that They Shall Never Be

Dismissed from Their Bodies.

But the philosophers against whom we are defending the city of God,

that is, His Church seem to themselves to have good cause to deride us,

because we say that the separation of the soul from the body is to be

held as part of man's punishment. For they suppose that the

blessedness of the soul then only is complete, when it is quite denuded

of the body, and returns to God a pure and simple, and, as it were,

naked soul. On this point, if I should find nothing in their own

literature to refute this opinion, I should be forced laboriously to

demonstrate that it is not the body, but the corruptibility of the

body, which is a burden to the soul. Hence that sentence of Scripture

we quoted in a foregoing book, "For the corruptible body presseth down

the soul." [598] The word corruptible is added to show that the soul

is burdened, not by any body whatsoever, but by the body such as it has

become in consequence of sin. And even though the word had not been

added, we could understand nothing else. But when Plato most expressly

declares that the gods who are made by the Supreme have immortal

bodies, and when he introduces their Maker himself, promising them as a

great boon that they should abide in their bodies eternally, and never

by any death be loosed from them, why do these adversaries of ours, for

the sake of troubling the Christian faith, feign to be ignorant of what

they quite well know, and even prefer to contradict themselves rather

than lose an opportunity of contradicting us? Here are Plato's words,

as Cicero has translated them, [599] in which he introduces the Supreme

addressing the gods He had made, and saying, "Ye who are sprung from a

divine stock, consider of what works I am the parent and author. These

(your bodies) are indestructible so long as I will it; although all

that is composed can be destroyed. But it is wicked to dissolve what

reason has compacted. But, seeing that ye have been born, ye cannot

indeed be immortal and indestructible; yet ye shall by no means be

destroyed, nor shall any fates consign you to death, and prove superior

to my will, which is a stronger assurance of your perpetuity than those

bodies to which ye were joined when ye were born." Plato, you see,

says that the gods are both mortal by the connection of the body and

soul, and yet are rendered immortal by the will and decree of their

Maker. If, therefore, it is a punishment to the soul to be connected

with any body whatever, why does God address them as if they were

afraid of death, that is, of the separation, of soul and body? Why

does He seek to reassure them by promising them immortality, not in

virtue of their nature, which is composite and not simple, but by

virtue of His invincible will, whereby He can effect that neither

things born die, nor things compounded be dissolved, but preserved

eternally?

Whether this opinion of Plato's about the stars is true or not, is

another question. For we cannot at once grant to him that these

luminous bodies or globes, which by day and night shine on the earth

with the light of their bodily substance, have also intellectual and

blessed souls which animate each its own body, as he confidently

affirms of the universe itself, as if it were one huge animal, in which

all other animals were contained. [600] But this, as I said, is

another question, which we have not undertaken to discuss at present.

This much only I deemed right to bring forward, in opposition to those

who so pride themselves on being, or on being called Platonists, that

they blush to be Christians, and who cannot brook to be called by a

name which the common people also bear, lest they vulgarize the

philosophers' coterie, which is proud in proportion to its

exclusiveness. These men, seeking a weak point in the Christian

doctrine, select for attack the eternity of the body, as if it were a

contradiction to contend for the blessedness of the soul, and to wish

it to be always resident in the body, bound, as it were, in a

lamentable chain; and this although Plato, their own founder and

master, affirms that it was granted by the Supreme as a boon to the

gods He had made, that they should not die, that is, should not be

separated from the bodies with which He had connected them.

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[598] Wisdom ix. 15.

[599] A translation of part of the Tim�us, given in a little book of

Cicero's, De Universo.

[600] Plato, in the Tim�us, represents the Demiurgus as constructing

the kosmos or universe to be a complete representation of the idea of

animal. He planted in its centre a soul, spreading outwards so as to

pervade the whole body of the kosmos; and then he introduced into it

those various species of animals which were contained in the idea of

animal. Among these animals stand first the celestial, the gods

embodied in the stars, and of these the oldest is the earth, set in the

centre of all, close packed round the great axis which traverses the

centre of the kosmos.--See the Tim�us and Grote's Plato, iii. 250 et

seq.

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Chapter 17.--Against Those Who Affirm that Earthly Bodies Cannot Be

Made Incorruptible and Eternal.

These same philosophers further contend that terrestrial bodies cannot

be eternal though they make no doubt that the whole earth, which is

itself the central member of their god,--not, indeed, of the greatest,

but yet of a great god, that is, of this whole world,--is eternal.

Since, then, the Supreme made for them another god, that is, this

world, superior to the other gods beneath Him; and since they suppose

that this god is an animal, having, as they affirm, a rational or

intellectual soul enclosed in the huge mass of its body, and having, as

the fitly situated and adjusted members of its body, the four elements,

whose union they wish to be indissoluble and eternal, lest perchance

this great god of theirs might some day perish; what reason is there

that the earth, which is the central member in the body of a greater

creature, should be eternal, and the bodies of other terrestrial

creatures should not possibly be eternal if God should so will it? But

earth, say they, must return to earth, out of which the terrestrial

bodies of the animals have been taken. For this, they say, is the

reason of the necessity of their death and dissolution, and this the

manner of their restoration to the solid and eternal earth whence they

came. But if any one says the same thing of fire, holding that the

bodies which are derived from it to make celestial beings must be

restored to the universal fire, does not the immortality which Plato

represents these gods as receiving from the Supreme evanesce in the

heat of this dispute? Or does this not happen with those celestials

because God, whose will, as Plato says, overpowers all powers, has

willed it should not be so? What, then, hinders God from ordaining the

same of terrestrial bodies? And since, indeed, Plato acknowledges that

God can prevent things that are born from dying, and things that are

joined from being sundered, and things that are composed from being

dissolved, and can ordain that the souls once allotted to their bodies

should never abandon them, but enjoy along with them immortality and

everlasting bliss, why may He not also effect that terrestrial bodies

die not? Is God powerless to do everything that is special to the

Christian's creed, but powerful to effect everything the Platonists

desire? The philosophers, forsooth, have been admitted to a knowledge

of the divine purposes and power which has been denied to the

prophets! The truth is, that the Spirit of God taught His prophets so

much of His will as He thought fit to reveal, but the philosophers, in

their efforts to discover it, were deceived by human conjecture.

But they should not have been so led astray, I will not say by their

ignorance, but by their obstinacy, as to contradict themselves so

frequently; for they maintain, with all their vaunted might, that in

order to the happiness of the soul, it must abandon not only its

earthly body, but every kind of body. And yet they hold that the gods,

whose souls are most blessed, are bound to everlasting bodies, the

celestials to fiery bodies, and the soul of Jove himself (or this

world, as they would have us believe) to all the physical elements

which compose this entire mass reaching from earth to heaven. For this

soul Plato believes to be extended and diffused by musical numbers,

[601] from the middle of the inside of the earth, which geometricians

call the centre, outwards through all its parts to the utmost heights

and extremities of the heavens; so that this world is a very great and

blessed immortal animal, whose soul has both the perfect blessedness of

wisdom, and never leaves its own body and whose body has life

everlasting from the soul, and by no means clogs or hinders it, though

itself be not a simple body, but compacted of so many and so huge

materials. Since, therefore, they allow so much to their own

conjectures, why do they refuse to believe that by the divine will and

power immortality can be conferred on earthly bodies, in which the

souls would be neither oppressed with the burden of them, nor separated

from them by any death, but live eternally and blessedly? Do they not

assert that their own gods so live in bodies of fire, and that Jove

himself, their king, so lives in the physical elements? If, in order

to its blessedness, the soul must quit every kind of body, let their

gods flit from the starry spheres, and Jupiter from earth to sky; or,

if they cannot do so, let them be pronounced miserable. But neither

alternative will these men adopt. For, on the one hand, they dare not

ascribe to their own gods a departure from the body, lest they should

seem to worship mortals; on the other hand, they dare not deny their

happiness, lest they should acknowledge wretches as gods. Therefore,

to obtain blessedness, we need not quit every kind of body, but only

the corruptible, cumbersome, painful, dying,--not such bodies as the

goodness of God contrived for the first man, but such only as man's sin

entailed.

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[601] On these numbers see Grote's Plato, iii. 254.

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Chapter 18.--Of Earthly Bodies, Which the Philosophers Affirm Cannot Be

in Heavenly Places, Because Whatever is of Earth is by Its Natural

Weight Attracted to Earth.

But it is necessary, they say, that the natural weight of earthly

bodies either keeps them on earth or draws them to it; and therefore

they cannot be in heaven. Our first parents were indeed on earth, in a

well-wooded and fruitful spot, which has been named Paradise. But let

our adversaries a little more carefully consider this subject of

earthly weight, because it has important bearings, both on the

ascension of the body of Christ, and also on the resurrection body of

the saints. If human skill can by some contrivance fabricate vessels

that float, out of metals which sink as soon as they are placed on the

water, how much more credible is it that God, by some occult mode of

operation, should even more certainly effect that these earthy masses

be emancipated from the downward pressure of their weight? This cannot

be impossible to that God by whose almighty will, according to Plato,

neither things born perish, nor things composed dissolve, especially

since it is much more wonderful that spiritual and bodily essences be

conjoined than that bodies be adjusted to other material substances.

Can we not also easily believe that souls, being made perfectly

blessed, should be endowed with the power of moving their earthy but

incorruptible bodies as they please, with almost spontaneous movement,

and of placing them where they please with the readiest action? If the

angels transport whatever terrestrial creatures they please from any

place they please, and convey them whither they please, is it to be

believed that they cannot do so without toil and the feeling of

burden? Why, then, may we not believe that the spirits of the saints,

made perfect and blessed by divine grace, can carry their own bodies

where they please, and set them where they will? For, though we have

been accustomed to notice, in bearing weights, that the larger the

quantity the greater the weight of earthy bodies is, and that the

greater the weight the more burdensome it is, yet the soul carries the

members of its own flesh with less difficulty when they are massive

with health, than in sickness when they are wasted. And though the

hale and strong man feels heavier to other men carrying him than the

lank and sickly, yet the man himself moves and carries his own body

with less feeling of burden when he has the greater bulk of vigorous

health, than when his frame is reduced to a minimum by hunger or

disease. Of such consequence, in estimating the weight of earthly

bodies, even while yet corruptible and mortal, is the consideration not

of dead weight, but of the healthy equilibrium of the parts. And what

words can tell the difference between what we now call health and

future immortality? Let not the philosophers, then, think to upset our

faith with arguments from the weight of bodies; for I don't care to

inquire why they cannot believe an earthly body can be in heaven, while

the whole earth is suspended on nothing. For perhaps the world keeps

its central place by the same law that attracts to its centre all heavy

bodies. But this I say, if the lesser gods, to whom Plato committed

the creation of man and the other terrestrial creatures, were able, as

he affirms, to withdraw from the fire its quality of burning, while

they left it that of lighting, so that it should shine through the

eyes; and if to the supreme God Plato also concedes the power of

preserving from death things that have been born, and of preserving

from dissolution things that are composed of parts so different as body

and spirit;--are we to hesitate to concede to this same God the power

to operate on the flesh of him whom He has endowed with immortality, so

as to withdraw its corruption but leave its nature, remove its

burdensome weight but retain its seemly form and members? But

concerning our belief in the resurrection of the dead, and concerning

their immortal bodies, we shall speak more at large, God willing, in

the end of this work.

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Chapter 19.--Against the Opinion of Those Who Do Not Believe that the

Primitive Men Would Have Been Immortal If They Had Not Sinned.

At present let us go on, as we have begun, to give some explanation

regarding the bodies of our first parents. I say then, that, except as

the just consequence of sin, they would not have been subjected even to

this death, which is good to the good,--this death, which is not

exclusively known and believed in by a few, but is known to all, by

which soul and body are separated, and by which the body of an animal

which was but now visibly living is now visibly dead. For though there

can be no manner of doubt that the souls of the just and holy dead live

in peaceful rest, yet so much better would it be for them to be alive

in healthy, well-conditioned bodies, that even those who hold the tenet

that it is most blessed to be quit of every kind of body, condemn this

opinion in spite of themselves. For no one will dare to set wise men,

whether yet to die or already dead,--in other words, whether already

quit of the body, or shortly to be so,--above the immortal gods, to

whom the Supreme, in Plato, promises as a munificent gift life

indissoluble, or in eternal union with their bodies. But this same

Plato thinks that nothing better can happen to men than that they pass

through life piously and justly, and, being separated from their

bodies, be received into the bosom of the gods, who never abandon

theirs; "that, oblivious of the past, they may revisit the upper air,

and conceive the longing to return again to the body." [602] Virgil

is applauded for borrowing this from the Platonic system. Assuredly

Plato thinks that the souls of mortals cannot always be in their

bodies, but must necessarily be dismissed by death; and, on the other

hand, he thinks that without bodies they cannot endure for ever, but

with ceaseless alternation pass from life to death, and from death to

life. This difference, however, he sets between wise men and the rest,

that they are carried after death to the stars, that each man may

repose for a while in a star suitable for him, and may thence return to

the labors and miseries of mortals when he has become oblivious of his

former misery, and possessed with the desire of being embodied. Those,

again, who have lived foolishly transmigrate into bodies fit for them,

whether human or bestial. Thus he has appointed even the good and wise

souls to a very hard lot indeed, since they do not receive such bodies

as they might always and even immortally inhabit, but such only as they

can neither permanently retain nor enjoy eternal purity without. Of

this notion of Plato's, we have in a former book already said [603]

that Porphyry was ashamed in the light of these Christian times, so

that he not only emancipated human souls from a destiny in the bodies

of beasts but also contended for the liberation of the souls of the

wise from all bodily ties, so that, escaping from all flesh, they

might, as bare and blessed souls, dwell with the Father time without

end. And that he might not seem to be outbid by Christ's promise of

life everlasting to His saints, he also established purified souls in

endless felicity, without return to their former woes; but, that he

might contradict Christ, he denies the resurrection of incorruptible

bodies, and maintains that these souls will live eternally, not only

without earthly bodies, but without any bodies at all. And yet,

whatever he meant by this teaching, he at least did not teach that

these souls should offer no religious observance to the gods who dwelt

in bodies. And why did he not, unless because he did not believe that

the souls, even though separate from the body, were superior to those

gods? Wherefore, if these philosophers will not dare (as I think they

will not) to set human souls above the gods who are most blessed, and

yet are tied eternally to their bodies, why do they find that absurd

which the Christian faith preaches, [604] namely, that our first

parents were so created that, if they had not sinned, they would not

have been dismissed from their bodies by any death, but would have been

endowed with immortality as the reward of their obedience, and would

have lived eternally with their bodies; and further, that the saints

will in the resurrection inhabit those very bodies in which they have

here toiled, but in such sort that neither shall any corruption or

unwieldiness be suffered to attach to their flesh, nor any grief or

trouble to cloud their felicity?

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[602] Virgil, �n, vi. 750, 751.

[603] Book x. 30.

[604] A catena of passages, showing that this is the catholic Christian

faith, will be found in Bull's State of Man before the Fall (Works,

vol. ii.).

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Chapter 20.--That the Flesh Now Resting in Peace Shall Be Raised to a

Perfection Not Enjoyed by the Flesh of Our First Parents.

Thus the souls of departed saints are not affected by the death which

dismisses them from their bodies, because their flesh rests in hope, no

matter what indignities it receives after sensation is gone. For they

do not desire that their bodies be forgotten, as Plato thinks fit, but

rather, because they remember what has been promised by Him who

deceives no man, and who gave them security for the safe keeping even

of the hairs of their head, they with a longing patience wait in hope

of the resurrection of their bodies, in which they have suffered many

hardships, and are now to suffer never again. For if they did not

"hate their own flesh," when it, with its native infirmity, opposed

their will, and had to be constrained by the spiritual law, how much

more shall they love it, when it shall even itself have become

spiritual! For as, when the spirit serves the flesh, it is fitly

called carnal, so, when the flesh serves the spirit, it will justly be

called spiritual. Not that it is converted into spirit, as some fancy

from the words, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in

incorruption," [605] but because it is subject to the spirit with a

perfect and marvellous readiness of obedience, and responds in all

things to the will that has entered on immortality,-- all reluctance,

all corruption, and all slowness being removed. For the body will not

only be better than it was here in its best estate of health, but it

will surpass the bodies of our first parents ere they sinned. For,

though they were not to die unless they should sin, yet they used food

as men do now, their bodies not being as yet spiritual, but animal

only. And though they decayed not with years, nor drew nearer to

death,--a condition secured to them in God's marvellous grace by the

tree of life, which grew along with the forbidden tree in the midst of

Paradise,--yet they took other nourishment, though not of that one

tree, which was interdicted not because it was itself bad, but for the

sake of commending a pure and simple obedience, which is the great

virtue of the rational creature set under the Creator as his Lord.

For, though no evil thing was touched, yet if a thing forbidden was

touched, the very disobedience was sin. They were, then, nourished by

other fruit, which they took that their animal bodies might not suffer

the discomfort of hunger or thirst; but they tasted the tree of life,

that death might not steal upon them from any quarter, and that they

might not, spent with age, decay. Other fruits were, so to speak,

their nourishment, but this their sacrament. So that the tree of life

would seem to have been in the terrestrial Paradise what the wisdom of

God is in the spiritual, of which it is written, "She is a tree of life

to them that lay hold upon her." [606]

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[605] 1 Cor. xv. 42.

[606] Prov. iii. 18.

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Chapter 21.--Of Paradise, that It Can Be Understood in a Spiritual

Sense Without Sacrificing the Historic Truth of the Narrative Regarding

The Real Place.

On this account some allegorize all that concerns Paradise itself,

where the first men, the parents of the human race, are, according to

the truth of holy Scripture, recorded to have been; and they understand

all its trees and fruit-bearing plants as virtues and habits of life,

as if they had no existence in the external world, but were only so

spoken of or related for the sake of spiritual meanings. As if there

could not be a real terrestrial Paradise! As if there never existed

these two women, Sarah and Hagar, nor the two sons who were born to

Abraham, the one of the bond woman, the other of the free, because the

apostle says that in them the two covenants were prefigured; or as if

water never flowed from the rock when Moses struck it, because therein

Christ can be seen in a figure, as the same apostle says, "Now that

rock was Christ!" [607] No one, then, denies that Paradise may

signify the life of the blessed; its four rivers, the four virtues,

prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice; its trees, all useful

knowledge; its fruits, the customs of the godly; its tree of life,

wisdom herself, the mother of all good; and the tree of the knowledge

of good and evil, the experience of a broken commandment. The

punishment which God appointed was in itself, a just, and therefore a

good thing; but man's experience of it is not good.

These things can also and more profitably be understood of the Church,

so that they become prophetic foreshadowings of things to come. Thus

Paradise is the Church, as it is called in the Canticles; [608] the

four rivers of Paradise are the four gospels; the fruit-trees the

saints, and the fruit their works; the tree of life is the holy of

holies, Christ; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the will's

free choice. For if man despise the will of God, he can only destroy

himself; and so he learns the difference between consecrating himself

to the common good and revelling in his own. For he who loves himself

is abandoned to himself, in order that, being overwhelmed with fears

and sorrows, he may cry, if there be yet soul in him to feel his ills,

in the words of the psalm, "My soul is cast down within me," [609] and

when chastened, may say," Because of his strength I will wait upon

Thee." [610] These and similar allegorical interpretations may be

suitably put upon Paradise without giving offence to any one, while yet

we believe the strict truth of the history, confirmed by its

circumstantial narrative of facts. [611]

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[607] 1 Cor. x. 4.

[608] Cant. iv. 13.

[609] Ps. xlii. 6.

[610] Ps. lix. 9.

[611] Those who wish to pursue this subject will find a pretty full

collection of opinions in the learned commentary on Genesis by the

Jesuit Pererius. Philo was, of course, the leading culprit, but

Ambrose and other Church fathers went nearly as far. Augustin condemns

the Seleucians for this among other heresies, that they denied a

visible Paradise.--De H�res. 59.

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Chapter 22.--That the Bodies of the Saints Shall After the Resurrection

Be Spiritual, and Yet Flesh Shall Not Be Changed into Spirit.

The bodies of the righteous, then, such as they shall be in the

resurrection, shall need neither any fruit to preserve them from dying

of disease or the wasting decay of old age, nor any other physical

nourishment to allay the cravings of hunger or of thirst; for they

shall be invested with so sure and every way inviolable an immortality,

that they shall not eat save when they choose, nor be under the

necessity of eating, while they enjoy the power of doing so. For so

also was it with the angels who presented themselves to the eye and

touch of men, not because they could do no otherwise, but because they

were able and desirous to suit themselves to men by a kind of manhood

ministry. For neither are we to suppose, when men receive them as

guests, that the angels eat only in appearance, though to any who did

not know them to be angels they might seem to eat from the same

necessity as ourselves. So these words spoken in the Book of Tobit,

"You saw me eat, but you saw it but in vision;" [612] that is, you

thought I took food as you do for the sake of refreshing my body. But

if in the case of the angels another opinion seems more capable of

defence, certainly our faith leaves no room to doubt regarding our Lord

Himself, that even after His resurrection, and when now in spiritual

but yet real flesh, He ate and drank with His disciples; for not the

power, but the need, of eating and drinking is taken from these

bodies. And so they will be spiritual, not because they shall cease to

be bodies, but because they shall subsist by the quickening spirit.

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[612] Tobit xii. 19.

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Chapter 23.--What We are to Understand by the Animal and Spiritual

Body; Or of Those Who Die in Adam, And of Those Who are Made Alive in

Christ.

For as those bodies of ours, that have a living soul, though not as yet

a quickening spirit, are called soul-informed bodies, and yet are not

souls but bodies, so also those bodies are called spiritual,--yet God

forbid we should therefore suppose them to be spirits and not

bodies,--which, being quickened by the Spirit, have the substance, but

not the unwieldiness and corruption of flesh. Man will then be not

earthly but heavenly,--not because the body will not be that very body

which was made of earth, but because by its heavenly endowment it will

be a fit inhabitant of heaven, and this not by losing its nature, but

by changing its quality. The first man, of the earth earthy, was made

a living soul, not a quickening spirit,--which rank was reserved for

him as the reward of obedience. And therefore his body, which required

meat and drink to satisfy hunger and thirst, and which had no absolute

and indestructible immortality, but by means of the tree of life warded

off the necessity of dying, and was thus maintained in the flower of

youth,--this body, I say, was doubtless not spiritual, but animal; and

yet it would not have died but that it provoked God's threatened

vengeance by offending. And though sustenance was not denied him even

outside Paradise, yet, being forbidden the tree of life, he was

delivered over to the wasting of time, at least in respect of that life

which, had he not sinned, he might have retained perpetually in

Paradise, though only in an animal body, till such time as it became

spiritual in acknowledgment of his obedience.

Wherefore, although we understand that this manifest death, which

consists in the separation of soul and body, was also signified by God

when He said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,"

[613] it ought not on that account to seem absurd that they were not

dismissed from the body on that very day on which they took the

forbidden and death-bringing fruit. For certainly on that very day

their nature was altered for the worse and vitiated, and by their most

just banishment from the tree of life they were involved in the

necessity even of bodily death, in which necessity we are born. And

therefore the apostle does not say, "The body indeed is doomed to die

on account of sin," but he says, "The body indeed is dead because of

sin." Then he adds, "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from

the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall

also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

[614] Then accordingly shall the body become a quickening spirit

which is now a living soul; and yet the apostle calls it "dead,"

because already it lies under the necessity of dying. But in Paradise

it was so made a living soul, though not a quickening spirit, that it

could not properly be called dead, for, save through the commission of

sin, it could not come under the power of death. Now, since God by the

words, "Adam, where art thou?" pointed to the death of the soul, which

results when He abandons it, and since in the words, "Earth thou art,

and unto earth shalt thou return," [615] He signified the death of the

body, which results when the soul departs from it, we are led,

therefore, to believe that He said nothing of the second death, wishing

it to be kept hidden, and reserving it for the New Testament

dispensation, in which it is most plainly revealed. And this He did in

order that, first of all, it might be evident that this first death,

which is common to all, was the result of that sin which in one man

became common to all. [616] But the second death is not common to

all, those being excepted who were "called according to His purpose.

For whom He did foreknow, He also did pre destinate to be conformed to

the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many

brethren." [617] Those the grace of God has, by a Mediator, delivered

from the second death.

Thus the apostle states that the first man was made in an animal body.

For, wishing to distinguish the animal body which now is from the

spiritual, which is to be in the resurrection, he says, "It is sown in

corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it

is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it

is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Then, to prove

this, he goes on, "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual

body." And to show what the animated body is, he says, "Thus it was

written, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was

made a quickening spirit." [618] He wished thus to show what the

animated body is, though Scripture did not say of the first man Adam,

when his soul was created by the breath of God, "Man was made in an

animated body," but "Man was made a living soul." [619] By these

words, therefore, "The first man was made a living soul," the apostle

wishes man's animated body to be understood. But how he wishes the

spiritual body to be understood he shows when he adds, "But the last

Adam was made a quickening spirit," plainly referring to Christ, who

has so risen from the dead that He cannot die any more. He then goes

on to say, "But that was not first which is spiritual, but that which

is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." And here he much

more clearly asserts that he referred to the animal body when he said

that the first man was made a living soul, and to the spiritual when he

said that the last man was made a quickening spirit. The animal body

is the first, being such as the first Adam had, and which would not

have died had he not sinned, being such also as we now have, its nature

being changed and vitiated by sin to the extent of bringing us under

the necessity of death, and being such as even Christ condescended

first of all to assume, not indeed of necessity, but of choice; but

afterwards comes the spiritual body, which already is worn by

anticipation by Christ as our head, and will be worn by His members in

the resurrection of the dead.

Then the apostle subjoins a notable difference between these two men,

saying, "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the

Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, 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 earthy, we shall also bear the

image of the heavenly." [620] So he elsewhere says, "As many of you

as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ;" [621] but in

very deed this shall be accomplished when that which is animal in us by

our birth shall have become spiritual in our resurrection. For, to use

his words again," We are saved by hope." [622] Now we bear the image

of the earthly man by the propagation of sin and death, which pass on

us by ordinary generation; but we bear the image of the heavenly by the

grace of pardon and life eternal, which regeneration confers upon us

through the Mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. And He is

the heavenly Man of Paul's passage, because He came from heaven to be

clothed with a body of earthly mortality, that He might clothe it with

heavenly immortality. And he calls others heavenly, because by grace

they become His members, that, together with them, He may become one

Christ, as head and body. In the same epistle he puts this yet more

clearly: "Since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection

of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be

made alive," [623] --that is to say, in a spiritual body which shall be

made a quickening spirit. Not that all who die in Adam shall be

members of Christ,--for the great majority shall be punished in eternal

death,--but he uses the word "all" in both clauses, because, as no one

dies in an animal body except in Adam, so no one is quickened a

spiritual body save in Christ. We are not, then, by any means to

suppose that we shall in the resurrection have such a body as the first

man had before he sinned, nor that the words, "As is the earthy such

are they also that are earthy," are to be understood of that which was

brought about by sin; for we are not to think that Adam had a spiritual

body before he fell, and that, in punishment of his sin, it was changed

into an animal body. If this be thought, small heed has been given to

the words of so great a teacher, who says, "There is a natural body,

there is also a spiritual body; as it is written, The first man Adam

was made a living soul." Was it after sin he was made so? or was not

this the primal condition of man from which the blessed apostle selects

his testimony to show what the animal body is?

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[613] Gen. ii. 17.

[614] Rom. viii. 10, 11.

[615] Gen. iii. 19.

[616] In uno commune factum est omnibus.

[617] Rom. viii. 28, 29.

[618] 1 Cor. xv. 42-45.

[619] Gen. ii. 7.

[620] 1 Cor. xv. 47-49.

[621] Gal. iii. 27.

[622] Rom. viii. 24.

[623] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

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Chapter 24.--How We Must Understand that Breathing of God by Which "The

First Man Was Made a Living Soul," And that Also by Which the Lord

Conveyed His Spirit to His Disciples When He Said, "Receive Ye the Holy

Ghost."

Some have hastily supposed from the words, "God breathed into Adam's

nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul, [624] " that

a soul was not then first given to man, but that the soul already given

was quickened by the Holy Ghost. They are encouraged in this

supposition by the fact that the Lord Jesus after His resurrection

breathed on His disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit."

[625] From this they suppose that the same thing was effected in

either case, as if the evangelist had gone on to say, And they became

living souls. But if he had made this addition, we should only

understand that the Spirit is in some way the life of souls, and that

without Him reasonable souls must be accounted dead, though their

bodies seem to live before our eyes. But that this was not what

happened when man was created, the very words of the narrative

sufficiently show: "And God made man dust of the earth;" which some

have thought to render more clearly by the words, "And God formed man

of the clay of the earth." For it had before been said that "there

went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the

ground," [626] in order that the reference to clay, formed of this

moisture and dust, might be understood. For on this verse there

immediately follows the announcement, "And God created man dust of the

earth;" so those Greek manuscripts have it from which this passage has

been translated into Latin. But whether one prefers to read "created"

or "formed," where the Greek reads eplasen, is of little importance;

yet "formed" is the better rendering. But those who preferred

"created" thought they thus avoided the ambiguity arising from the

fact, that in the Latin language the usage obtains that those are said

to form a thing who frame some feigned and fictitious thing. This man,

then, who was created of the dust of the earth, or of the moistened

dust or clay,--this "dust of the earth" (that I may use the express

words of Scripture) was made, as the apostle teaches, an animated body

when he received a soul. This man, he says, "was made a living soul;"

that is, this fashioned dust was made a living soul.

They say, Already he had a soul, else he would not be called a man; for

man is not a body alone, nor a soul alone, but a being composed of

both. This, indeed, is true, that the soul is not the whole man, but

the better part of man; the body not the whole, but the inferior part

of man; and that then, when both are joined, they receive the name of

man, which, however, they do not severally lose even when we speak of

them singly. For who is prohibited from saying, in colloquial usage,

"That man is dead, and is now at rest or in torment," though this can

be spoken only of the soul; or "He is buried in such and such a place,"

though this refers only to the body? Will they say that Scripture

follows no such usage? On the contrary, it so thoroughly adopts it,

that even while a man is alive, and body and soul are united, it calls

each of them singly by the name "man," speaking of the soul as the

"inward man," and of the body as the "outward man," [627] as if there

were two men, though both together are indeed but one. But we must

understand in what sense man is said to be in the image of God, and is

yet dust, and to return to the dust. The former is spoken of the

rational soul, which God by His breathing, or, to speak more

appropriately, by His inspiration, conveyed to man, that is, to his

body; but the latter refers to his body, which God formed of the dust,

and to which a soul was given, that it might become a living body, that

is, that man might become a living soul.

Wherefore, when our Lord breathed on His disciples, and said, "Receive

ye the Holy Ghost," He certainly wished it to be understood that the

Holy Ghost was not only the Spirit of the Father, but of the only

begotten Son Himself. For the same Spirit is, indeed, the Spirit of

the Father and of the Son, making with them the trinity of Father, Son,

and Spirit, not a creature, but the Creator. For neither was that

material breath which proceeded from the mouth of His flesh the very

substance and nature of the Holy Spirit, but rather the intimation, as

I said, that the Holy Spirit was common to the Father and to the Son;

for they have not each a separate Spirit, but both one and the same.

Now this Spirit is always spoken of in sacred Scripture by the Greek

word pneuma, as the Lord, too, named Him in the place cited when He

gave Him to His disciples, and intimated the gift by the breathing of

His lips; and there does not occur to me any place in the whole

Scriptures where He is otherwise named. But in this passage where it

is said, "And the Lord formed man dust of the earth, and breathed, or

inspired, into his face the breath of life;" the Greek has not pneuma,

the usual word for the Holy Spirit, but pnoe, a word more frequently

used of the creature than of the Creator; and for this reason some

Latin interpreters have preferred to render it by "breath" rather than

"spirit." For this word occurs also in the Greek in Isaiah chapter

vii, verse 16 where God says, "I have made all breath," meaning,

doubtless, all souls. Accordingly, this word pnoe is sometimes rendered

"breath," sometimes "spirit," sometimes "inspiration," sometimes

"aspiration," sometimes "soul," even when it is used of God. Pneuma,

on the other hand, is uniformly rendered "spirit," whether of man, of

whom the apostle says, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save

the spirit of man which is in him?" [628] or of beast, as in the book

of Solomon, "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the

spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" [629] or of that

physical spirit which is called wind, for so the Psalmist calls it:

"Fire and hail; snow and vapors; stormy wind;" [630] or of the

uncreated Creator Spirit, of whom the Lord said in the gospel, "Receive

ye the Holy Ghost," indicating the gift by the breathing of His mouth;

and when He says, "Go ye and baptize all nations in the name of the

Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," [631] words which very

expressly and excellently commend the Trinity; and where it is said,

"God is a Spirit;" [632] and in very many other places of the sacred

writings. In all these quotations from Scripture we do not find in the

Greek the word pnoe used, but pneuma, and in the Latin, not flatus, but

spiritus. Wherefore, referring again to that place where it is

written, "He inspired," or to speak more properly, "breathed into his

face the breath of life," even though the Greek had not used pnoe (as

it has) but pneuma, it would not on that account necessarily follow

that the Creator Spirit, who in the Trinity is distinctively called the

Holy Ghost, was meant, since, as has been said, it is plain that pneuma

is used not only of the Creator, but also of the creature.

But, say they, when the Scripture used the word "spirit," [633] it

would not have added "of life" unless it meant us to understand the

Holy Spirit; nor, when it said, "Man became a soul," would it also have

inserted the word "living" unless that life of the soul were signified

which is imparted to it from above by the gift of God. For, seeing

that the soul by itself has a proper life of its own, what need, they

ask, was there of adding living, save only to show that the life which

is given it by the Holy Spirit was meant? What is this but to fight

strenuously for their own conjectures, while they carelessly neglect

the teaching of Scripture? Without troubling themselves much, they

might have found in a preceding page of this very book of Genesis the

words, "Let the earth bring forth the living soul," [634] when all the

terrestrial animals were created. Then at a slight interval, but still

in the same book, was it impossible for them to notice this verse, "All

in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry

land, died," by which it was signified that all the animals which lived

on the earth had perished in the deluge? If, then, we find that

Scripture is accustomed to speak both of the "living soul" and the

"spirit of life" even in reference to beasts; and if in this place,

where it is said, "All things which have the spirit of life," the word

pnoe, not pneuma, is used; why may we not say, What need was there to

add "living," since the soul cannot exist without being alive? or, What

need to add "of life" after the word spirit? But we understand that

Scripture used these expressions in its ordinary style so long as it

speaks of animals, that is, animated bodies, in which the soul serves

as the residence of sensation; but when man is spoken of, we forget the

ordinary and established usage of Scripture, whereby it signifies that

man received a rational soul, which was not produced out of the waters

and the earth like the other living creatures, but was created by the

breath of God. Yet this creation was ordered that the human soul

should live in an animal body, like those other animals of which the

Scripture said, "Let the earth produce every living soul," and

regarding which it again says that in them is the breath of life, where

the word pnoe and not pneuma is used in the Greek, and where certainly

not the Holy Spirit, but their spirit, is signified under that name.

But, again, they object that breath is understood to have been emitted

from the mouth of God; and if we believe that is the soul, we must

consequently acknowledge it to be of the same substance, and equal to

that wisdom, which says, "I come out of the mouth of the Most High."

[635] Wisdom, indeed, does not say it was breathed out of the mouth

of God, but proceeded out of it. But as we are able, when we breathe,

to make a breath, not of our own human nature, but of the surrounding

air, which we inhale and exhale as we draw our breath and breathe

again, so almighty God was able to make breath, not of His own nature,

nor of the creature beneath Him, but even of nothing; and this breath,

when He communicated it to man's body, He is most appropriately said to

have breathed or inspired,--the Immaterial breathing it also

immaterial, but the Immutable not also the immutable; for it was

created, He uncreated. Yet that these persons who are forward to quote

Scripture, and yet know not the usages of its language, may know that

not only what is equal and consubstantial with God is said to proceed

out of His mouth, let them hear or read what God says: "So then

because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee

out of my mouth." [636]

There is no ground, then, for our objecting, when the apostle so

expressly distinguishes the animal body from the spiritual--that is to

say, the body in which we now are from that in which we are to be. He

says, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There

is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is

written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was

made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is

spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is

spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is

the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, 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 earthy, we shall also bear the

image of the heavenly." [637] Of all which words of his we have

previously spoken. The animal body, accordingly, in which the apostle

says that the first man Adam was made, was not so made that it could

not die at all, but so that it should not die unless he should have

sinned. That body, indeed, which shall be made spiritual and immortal

by the quickening Spirit shall not be able to die at all; as the soul

has been created immortal, and therefore, although by sin it may be

said to die, and does lose a certain life of its own, namely, the

Spirit of God, by whom it was enabled to live wisely and blessedly, yet

it does not cease living a kind of life, though a miserable, because it

is immortal by creation. So, too, the rebellious angels, though by

sinning they did in a sense die, because they forsook God, the Fountain

of life, which while they drank they were able to live wisely and well,

yet they could not so die as to utterly cease living and feeling, for

they are immortals by creation. And so, after the final judgment, they

shall be hurled into the second death, and not even there be deprived

of life or of sensation, but shall suffer torment. But those men who

have been embraced by God's grace, and are become the fellow-citizens

of the holy angels who have continued in bliss, shall never more either

sin or die, being endued with spiritual bodies; yet, being clothed with

immortality, such as the angels enjoy, of which they cannot be divested

even by sinning, the nature of their flesh shall continue the same, but

all carnal corruption and unwieldiness shall be removed.

There remains a question which must be discussed, and, by the help of

the Lord God of truth, solved: If the motion of concupiscence in the

unruly members of our first parents arose out of their sin, and only

when the divine grace deserted them; and if it was on that occasion

that their eyes were opened to see, or, more exactly, notice their

nakedness, and that they covered their shame because the shameless

motion of their members was not subject to their will,--how, then,

would they have begotten children had they remained sinless as they

were created? But as this book must be concluded, and so large a

question cannot be summarily disposed of, we may relegate it to the

following book, in which it will be more conveniently treated.

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[624] Gen. ii. 7.

[625] John xx. 22.

[626] Gen. ii. 6.

[627] ^ 2 Cor. iv. 16.

[628] 1 Cor. ii. 11.

[629] Eccles. iii. 21.

[630] Ps. cxlviii. 8.

[631] Matt. xxviii. 19.

[632] John iv. 24.

[633] "Breath," Eng. ver.

[634] Gen. i. 24.

[635] Ecclus. xxiv. 3.

[636] Rev. iii. 16.

[637] 1 Cor. xv. 44-49.

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Book XIV. [638]

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Argument--Augustin again treats of the sin of the first man, and

teaches that it is the cause of the carnal life and vicious affections

of man. Especially he proves that the shame which accompanies lust is

the just punishment of that disobedience, and inquires how man, if he

had not sinned, would have been able without lust to propagate his

kind.

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Chapter 1.--That the Disobedience of the First Man Would Have Plunged

All Men into the Endless Misery of the Second Death, Had Not the Grace

of God Rescued Many.

We have already stated in the preceding books that God, desiring not

only that the human race might be able by their similarity of nature to

associate with one another, but also that they might be bound together

in harmony and peace by the ties of relationship, was pleased to derive

all men from one individual, and created man with such a nature that

the members of the race should not have died, had not the two first (of

whom the one was created out of nothing, and the other out of him)

merited this by their disobedience; for by them so great a sin was

committed, that by it the human nature was altered for the worse, and

was transmitted also to their posterity, liable to sin and subject to

death. And the kingdom of death so reigned over men, that the deserved

penalty of sin would have hurled all headlong even into the second

death, of which there is no end, had not the undeserved grace of God

saved some therefrom. And thus it has come to pass, that though there

are very many and great nations all over the earth, whose rites and

customs, speech, arms, and dress, are distinguished by marked

differences, yet there are no more than two kinds of human society,

which we may justly call two cities, according to the language of our

Scriptures. The one consists of those who wish to live after the

flesh, the other of those who wish to live after the spirit; and when

they severally achieve what they wish, they live in peace, each after

their kind.

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Chapter 2.--Of Carnal Life, Which is to Be Understood Not Only of

Living in Bodily Indulgence, But Also of Living in the Vices of the

Inner Man.

First, we must see what it is to live after the flesh, and what to live

after the spirit. For any one who either does not recollect, or does

not sufficiently weigh, the language of sacred Scripture, may, on first

hearing what we have said, suppose that the Epicurean philosophers live

after the flesh, because they place man's highest good in bodily

pleasure; and that those others do so who have been of opinion that in

some form or other bodily good is man's supreme good; and that the mass

of men do so who, without dogmatizing or philosophizing on the subject,

are so prone to lust that they cannot delight in any pleasure save such

as they receive from bodily sensations: and he may suppose that the

Stoics, who place the supreme good of men in the soul, live after the

spirit; for what is man's soul, if not spirit? But in the sense of the

divine Scripture both are proved to live after the flesh. For by flesh

it means not only the body of a terrestrial and mortal animal, as when

it says, "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of

flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, another of

birds," [639] but it uses this word in many other significations; and

among these various usages, a frequent one is to use flesh for man

himself, the nature of man taking the part for the whole, as in the

words, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified;"

[640] for what does he mean here by "no flesh" but "no man?" And this,

indeed, he shortly after says more plainly: "No man shall be justified

by the law;" [641] and in the Epistle to the Galatians, "Knowing that

man is not justified by the works of the law." And so we understand

the words, "And the Word was made flesh," [642] --that is, man, which

some not accepting in its right sense, have supposed that Christ had

not a human soul. [643] For as the whole is used for the part in the

words of Mary Magdalene in the Gospel, "They have taken away my Lord,

and I know not where they have laid Him," [644] by which she meant only

the flesh of Christ, which she supposed had been taken from the tomb

where it had been buried, so the part is used for the whole, flesh

being named, while man is referred to, as in the quotations above

cited.

Since, then, Scripture uses the word flesh in many ways, which there is

not time to collect and investigate, if we are to ascertain what it is

to live after the flesh (which is certainly evil, though the nature of

flesh is not itself evil), we must carefully examine that passage of

the epistle which the Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, in which he

says, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these:

adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry,

witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions,

heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like:

of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past,

that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

[645] This whole passage of the apostolic epistle being considered,

so far as it bears on the matter in hand, will be sufficient to answer

the question, what it is to live after the flesh. For among the works

of the flesh which he said were manifest, and which he cited for

condemnation, we find not only those which concern the pleasure of the

flesh, as fornications, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness,

revellings, but also those which, though they be remote from fleshly

pleasure, reveal the vices of the soul. For who does not see that

idolatries, witchcrafts, hatreds, variance, emulations, wrath, strife,

heresies, envyings, are vices rather of the soul than of the flesh?

For it is quite possible for a man to abstain from fleshly pleasures

for the sake of idolatry or some heretical error; and yet, even when he

does so, he is proved by this apostolic authority to be living after

the flesh; and in abstaining from fleshly pleasure, he is proved to be

practising damnable works of the flesh. Who that has enmity has it not

in his soul? or who would say to his enemy, or to the man he thinks his

enemy, You have a bad flesh towards me, and not rather, You have a bad

spirit towards me? In fine, if any one heard of what I may call

"carnalities," he would not fail to attribute them to the carnal part

of man; so no one doubts that "animosities" belong to the soul of man.

Why then does the doctor of the Gentiles in faith and verity call all

these and similar things works of the flesh, unless because, by that

mode of speech whereby the part is used for the whole, he means us to

understand by the word flesh the man himself?

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[639] 1 Cor. xv. 39.

[640] Rom. iii. 20.

[641] Gal. iii. 11.

[642] John i. 14.

[643] The Apollinarians.

[644] John xx. 13.

[645] Gal. v. 19-21.

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Chapter 3.--That the Sin is Caused Not by the Flesh, But by the Soul,

and that the Corruption Contracted from Sin is Not Sin But Sin's

Punishment.

But if any one says that the flesh is the cause of all vices and ill

conduct, inasmuch as the soul lives wickedly only because it is moved

by the flesh, it is certain he has not carefully considered the whole

nature of man. For "the corruptible body, indeed, weigheth down the

soul." [646] Whence, too, the apostle, speaking of this corruptible

body, of which he had shortly before said, "though our outward man

perish," [647] says, "We know that if our earthly house of this

tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made

with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly

desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so

be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in

this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be

unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in

life." [648] We are then burdened with this corruptible body; but

knowing that the cause of this burdensomeness is not the nature and

substance of the body, but its corruption, we do not desire to be

deprived of the body, but to be clothed with its immortality. For

then, also, there will be a body, but it shall no longer be a burden,

being no longer corruptible. At present, then, "the corruptible body

presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the

mind that museth upon many things," nevertheless they are in error who

suppose that all the evils of the soul proceed from the body.

Virgil, indeed, seems to express the sentiments of Plato in the

beautiful lines, where he says,--

"A fiery strength inspires their lives,

An essence that from heaven derives,

Though clogged in part by limbs of clay

And the dull 'vesture of decay;'" [649]

but though he goes on to mention the four most common mental

emotions,--desire, fear, joy, sorrow,--with the intention of showing

that the body is the origin of all sins and vices, saying,--

"Hence wild desires and grovelling fears,

And human laughter, human tears,

Immured in dungeon-seeming nights

They look abroad, yet see no light," [650]

yet we believe quite otherwise. For the corruption of the body, which

weighs down the soul, is not the cause but the punishment of the first

sin; and it was not the corruptible flesh that made the soul sinful,

but the sinful soul that made the flesh corruptible. And though from

this corruption of the flesh there arise certain incitements to vice,

and indeed vicious desires, yet we must not attribute to the flesh all

the vices of a wicked life, in case we thereby clear the devil of all

these, for he has no flesh. For though we cannot call the devil a

fornicator or drunkard, or ascribe to him any sensual indulgence

(though he is the secret instigator and prompter of those who sin in

these ways), yet he is exceedingly proud and envious. And this

viciousness has so possessed him, that on account of it he is reserved

in chains of darkness to everlasting punishment. [651] Now these

vices, which have dominion over the devil, the apostle attributes to

the flesh, which certainly the devil has not. For he says "hatred,

variance, emulations, strife, envying" are the works of the flesh; and

of all these evils pride is the origin and head, and it rules in the

devil though he has no flesh. For who shows more hatred to the saints?

who is more at variance with them? who more envious, bitter, and

jealous? And since he exhibits all these works, though he has no

flesh, how are they works of the flesh, unless because they are the

works of man, who is, as I said, spoken of under the name of flesh?

For it is not by having flesh, which the devil has not, but by living

according to himself,--that is, according to man,--that man became like

the devil. For the devil too, wished to live according to himself when

he did not abide in the truth; so that when he lied, this was not of

God, but of himself, who is not only a liar, but the father of lies, he

being the first who lied, and the originator of lying as of sin.

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[646] Wisd. ix. 15.

[647] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

[648] 2 Cor. v. 1-4.

[649] �neid, vi. 730-32.

[650] Ib. 733, 734.

[651] On the punishment of the devil, see the De Agone Christi, 3-5,

and De Nat. Boni, 33.

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Chapter 4.--What It is to Live According to Man, and What to Live

According to God.

When, therefore, man lives according to man, not according to God, he

is like the devil. Because not even an angel might live according to

an angel, but only according to God, if he was to abide in the truth,

and speak God's truth and not his own lie. And of man, too, the same

apostle says in another place, "If the truth of God hath more abounded

through my lie;" [652] --"my lie," he said, and "God's truth." When,

then, a man lives according to the truth, he lives not according to

himself, but according to God; for He was God who said, "I am the

truth." [653] When, therefore, man lives according to himself,--that

is, according to man, not according to God,--assuredly he lives

according to a lie; not that man himself is a lie, for God is his

author and creator, who is certainly not the author and creator of a

lie, but because man was made upright, that he might not live according

to himself, but according to Him that made him,--in other words, that

he might do His will and not his own; and not to live as he was made to

live, that is a lie. For he certainly desires to be blessed even by

not living so that he may be blessed. And what is a lie if this desire

be not? Wherefore it is not without meaning said that all sin is a

lie. For no sin is committed save by that desire or will by which we

desire that it be well with us, and shrink from it being ill with us.

That, therefore, is a lie which we do in order that it may be well with

us, but which makes us more miserable than we were. And why is this,

but because the source of man's happiness lies only in God, whom he

abandons when he sins, and not in himself, by living according to whom

he sins?

In enunciating this proposition of ours, then, that because some live

according to the flesh and others according to the spirit, there have

arisen two diverse and conflicting cities, we might equally well have

said, "because some live according to man, others according to God."

For Paul says very plainly to the Corinthians, "For whereas there is

among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to

man?" [654] So that to walk according to man and to be carnal are the

same; for by flesh, that is, by a part of man, man is meant. For

before he said that those same persons were animal whom afterwards he

calls carnal, saying, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save

the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no

man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of

this world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the

things which are freely given to us of God. Which things also we

speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy

Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the

animal man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are

foolishness unto him." [655] It is to men of this kind, then, that

is, to animal men, he shortly after says, "And I, brethren, could not

speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal." [656] And this

is to be interpreted by the same usage, a part being taken for the

whole. For both the soul and the flesh, the component parts of man,

can be used to signify the whole man; and so the animal man and the

carnal man are not two different things, but one and the same thing,

viz., man living according to man. In the same way it is nothing else

than men that are meant either in the words, "By the deeds of the law

there shall no flesh be justified;" [657] or in the words,

"Seventy-five souls went down into Egypt with Jacob." [658] In the

one passage, "no flesh" signifies "no man;" and in the other, by

"seventy-five souls" seventy-five men are meant. And the expression,

"not in words which man's wisdom teacheth" might equally be "not in

words which fleshly wisdom teacheth;" and the expression, "ye walk

according to man," might be "according to the flesh." And this is

still more apparent in the words which followed: "For while one saith,

I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not men?" The same

thing which he had before expressed by "ye are animal," "ye are carnal,

he now expresses by "ye are men;" that is, ye live according to man,

not according to God, for if you lived according to Him, you should be

gods.

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[652] Rom. iii. 7.

[653] John xiv. 6.

[654] 1 Cor. iii. 3.

[655] 1 Cor. ii. 11-14.

[656] 1 Cor. iii. 1.

[657] Rom. iii. 20.

[658] Gen. xlvi. 27.

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Chapter 5.--That the Opinion of the Platonists Regarding the Nature of

Body and Soul is Not So Censurable as that of the Manich�ans, But that

Even It is Objectionable, Because It Ascribes the Origin of Vices to

the Nature of The Flesh.

There is no need, therefore, that in our sins and vices we accuse the

nature of the flesh to the injury of the Creator, for in its own kind

and degree the flesh is good; but to desert the Creator good, and live

according to the created good, is not good, whether a man choose to

live according to the flesh, or according to the soul, or according to

the whole human nature, which is composed of flesh and soul, and which

is therefore spoken of either by the name flesh alone, or by the name

soul alone. For he who extols the nature of the soul as the chief

good, and condemns the nature of the flesh as if it were evil,

assuredly is fleshly both in his love of the soul and hatred of the

flesh; for these his feelings arise from human fancy, not from divine

truth. The Platonists, indeed, are not so foolish as, with the

Manich�ans, to detest our present bodies as an evil nature; [659] for

they attribute all the elements of which this visible and tangible

world is compacted, with all their qualities, to God their Creator.

Nevertheless, from the death-infected members and earthly construction

of the body they believe the soul is so affected, that there are thus

originated in it the diseases of desires, and fears, and joy, and

sorrow, under which four perturbations, as Cicero [660] calls them, or

passions, as most prefer to name them with the Greeks, is included the

whole viciousness of human life. But if this be so, how is it that

�neas in Virgil, when he had heard from his father in Hades that the

souls should return to bodies, expresses surprise at this declaration,

and exclaims:

"O father! and can thought conceive

That happy souls this realm would leave,

And seek the upper sky,

With sluggish clay to reunite?

This direful longing for the light,

Whence comes it, say, and why?" [661]

This direful longing, then, does it still exist even in that boasted

purity of the disembodied spirits, and does it still proceed from the

death-infected members and earthly limbs? Does he not assert that,

when they begin to long to return to the body, they have already been

delivered from all these so-called pestilences of the body? From which

we gather that, were this endlessly alternating purification and

defilement of departing and returning souls as true as it is most

certainly false, yet it could not be averred that all culpable and

vicious motions of the soul originate in the earthly body; for, on

their own showing, "this direful longing," to use the words of their

noble exponent, is so extraneous to the body, that it moves the soul

that is purged of all bodily taint, and is existing apart from any body

whatever, and moves it, moreover, to be embodied again. So that even

they themselves acknowledge that the soul is not only moved to desire,

fear, joy, sorrow, by the flesh, but that it can also be agitated with

these emotions at its own instance.

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[659] See Augustin, De H�res. 46.

[660] Tusc. Qu�stiv. 6.

[661] �neid, vi. 719-21.

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Chapter 6.--Of the Character of the Human Will Which Makes the

Affections of the Soul Right or Wrong.

But the character of the human will is of moment; because, if it is

wrong, these motions of the soul will be wrong, but if it is right,

they will be not merely blameless, but even praiseworthy. For the will

is in them all; yea, none of them is anything else than will. For what

are desire and joy but a volition of consent to the things we wish?

And what are fear and sadness but a volition of aversion from the

things which we do not wish? But when consent takes the form of

seeking to possess the things we wish, this is called desire; and when

consent takes the form of enjoying the things we wish, this is called

joy. In like manner, when we turn with aversion from that which we do

not wish to happen, this volition is termed fear; and when we turn away

from that which has happened against our will, this act of will is

called sorrow. And generally in respect of all that we seek or shun,

as a man's will is attracted or repelled, so it is changed and turned

into these different affections. Wherefore the man who lives according

to God, and not according to man, ought to be a lover of good, and

therefore a hater of evil. And since no one is evil by nature, but

whoever is evil is evil by vice, he who lives according to God ought to

cherish towards evil men a perfect hatred, so that he shall neither

hate the man because of his vice, nor love the vice because of the man,

but hate the vice and love the man. For the vice being cursed, all

that ought to be loved, and nothing that ought to be hated, will

remain.

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Chapter 7.--That the Words Love and Regard (Amor and Dilectio) are in

Scripture Used Indifferently of Good and Evil Affection.

He who resolves to love God, and to love his neighbor as himself, not

according to man but according to God, is on account of this love said

to be of a good will; and this is in Scripture more commonly called

charity, but it is also, even in the same books, called love. For the

apostle says that the man to be elected as a ruler of the people must

be a lover of good. [662] And when the Lord Himself had asked Peter,

"Hast thou a regard for me (diligis) more than these?" Peter replied,

"Lord, Thou knowest that I love (amo) Thee." And again a second time

the Lord asked not whether Peter loved (amaret) Him, but whether he had

a regard (diligeret)for Him, and, he again answered, "Lord, Thou

knowest that I love (amo) Thee." But on the third interrogation the

Lord Himself no longer says, "Hast thou a regard (diligis) for me,"but

"Lovest thou (amas) me?" And then the evangelist adds, "Peter was

grieved because He said unto him the third time, "Lovest thou (amas)

me?" though the Lord had not said three times but only once, "Lovest

thou (amas) me?" and twice "Diligis me ?" from which we gather that,

even when the Lord said "diligis," He used an equivalent for "amas."

Peter, too, throughout used one word for the one thing, and the third

time also replied, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I

love (amo) Thee." [663]

I have judged it right to mention this, because some are of opinion

that charity or regard (dilectio) is one thing, love (amor) another.

They say that dilectio is used of a good affection, amor of an evil

love. But it is very certain that even secular literature knows no

such distinction. However, it is for the philosophers to determine

whether and how they differ, though their own writings sufficiently

testify that they make great account of love (amor) placed on good

objects, and even on God Himself. But we wished to show that the

Scriptures of our religion, whose authority we prefer to all writings

whatsoever, make no distinction between amor, dilectio, and caritas;

and we have already shown that amor is used in a good connection. And

if any one fancy that amor is no doubt used both of good and bad loves,

but that dilectio is reserved for the good only, let him remember what

the psalm says, "He that loveth (diligit) iniquity hateth his own

soul;" [664] and the words of the Apostle John, "If any man love

(diligere) the world, the love (dilectio) of the Father is not in him."

[665] Here you have in one passage dilectio used both in a good and a

bad sense. And if any one demands an instance of amor being used in a

bad sense (for we have already shown its use in a good sense), let him

read the words, "For men shall be lovers (amantes) of their own selves,

lovers (amatores) of money." [666]

The right will is, therefore, well-directed love, and the wrong will is

ill-directed love. Love, then, yearning to have what is loved, is

desire; and having and enjoying it, is joy; fleeing what is opposed to

it, it is fear; and feeling what is opposed to it, when it has befallen

it, it is sadness. Now these motions are evil if the love is evil;

good if the love is good. What we assert let us prove from Scripture.

The apostle "desires to depart, and to be with Christ." [667] And,

"My soul desired to long for Thy judgments;" [668] or if it is more

appropriate to say, "My soul longed to desire Thy judgments." And,

"The desire of wisdom bringeth to a kingdom." [669] Yet there has

always obtained the usage of understanding desire and concupiscence in

a bad sense if the object be not defined. But joy is used in a good

sense: "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous." [670] And,

"Thou hast put gladness in my heart." [671] And, "Thou wilt fill me

with joy with Thy countenance." [672] Fear is used in a good sense by

the apostle when he says, "Work out your salvation with fear and

trembling." [673] And, "Be not high-minded, but fear." [674] And,

"I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his

subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is

in Christ." [675] But with respect to sadness, which Cicero prefer to

calls sickness (oegritudo), and Virgil pain (dolor) (as he says,

"Dolent gaudentque" [676] ), but which I prefer to call sorrow, because

sickness and pain are more commonly used to express bodily

suffering,--with respect to this emotion, I say, the question whether

it can be used in a good sense is more difficult.

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[662] Tit. i. 8, according to Greek and Vulgate.

[663] John xxi. 15-17. On these synonyms see the commentaries in loc.

[664] Ps. xi. 5.

[665] 1 John ii. 15.

[666] 2 Tim. iii. 2.

[667] Phil. i. 23.

[668] Ps. cxix. 20.

[669] Wisd. vi. 20.

[670] Ps. xxxii. 11.

[671] Ps. iv. 7.

[672] Ps. xvi. 11.

[673] Phil. ii. 12.

[674] Rom. xi. 20.

[675] 2 Cor. xi. 3.

[676] �neid, vi. 733.

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Chapter 8.--Of the Three Perturbations, Which the Stoics Admitted in

the Soul of the Wise Man to the Exclusion of Grief or Sadness, Which

the Manly Mind Ought Not to Experience.

Those emotions which the Greeks call eupatheiai, and which Cicero calls

constantioe, the Stoics would restrict to three; and, instead of three

"perturbations" in the soul of the wise man, they substituted

severally, in place of desire, will; in place of joy, contentment; and

for fear, caution; and as to sickness or pain, which we, to avoid

ambiguity, preferred to call sorrow, they denied that it could exist in

the mind of a wise man. Will, they say, seeks the good, for this the

wise man does. Contentment has its object in good that is possessed,

and this the wise man continually possesses. Caution avoids evil, and

this the wise man ought to avoid. But sorrow arises from evil that has

already happened; and as they suppose that no evil can happen to the

wise man, there can be no representative of sorrow in his mind.

According to them, therefore, none but the wise man wills, is

contented, uses caution; and that the fool can do no more than desire,

rejoice, fear, be sad. The former three affections Cicero calls

constantioe, the last four perturbationes. Many, however, calls these

last passions; and, as I have said, the Greeks call the former

eupatheiai, and the latter pathe. And when I made a careful

examination of Scripture to find whether this terminology was

sanctioned by it, I came upon this saying of the prophet: "There is no

contentment to the wicked, saith the Lord;" [677] as if the wicked

might more properly rejoice than be contented regarding evils, for

contentment is the property of the good and godly. I found also that

verse in the Gospel: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you,

do ye even so unto them?" [678] which seems to imply that evil or

shameful things may be the object of desire, but not of will. Indeed,

some interpreters have added "good things," to make the expression more

in conformity with customary usage, and have given this meaning,

"Whatsoever good deeds that ye would that men should do unto you." For

they thought that this would prevent any one from wishing other men to

provide him with unseemly, not to say shameful

gratifications,--luxurious banquets, for example,--on the supposition

that if he returned the like to them he would be fulfilling this

precept. In the Greek Gospel, however, from which the Latin is

translated, "good" does not occur, but only, "All things whatsoever ye

would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," and, as I

believe, because "good" is already included in the word "would;" for He

does not say "desire."

Yet though we may sometimes avail ourselves of these precise

proprieties of language, we are not to be always bridled by them; and

when we read those writers against whose authority it is unlawful to

reclaim, we must accept the meanings above mentioned in passages where

a right sense can be educed by no other interpretation, as in those

instances we adduced partly from the prophet, partly from the Gospel.

For who does not know that the wicked exult with joy? Yet "there is no

contentment for the wicked, saith the Lord." And how so, unless because

contentment, when the word is used in its proper and distinctive

significance, means something different from joy? In like manner, who

would deny that it were wrong to enjoin upon men that whatever they

desire others to do to them they should themselves do to others, lest

they should mutually please one another by shameful and illicit

pleasure? And yet the precept, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do

unto you, do ye even so to them," is very wholesome and just. And how

is this, unless because the will is in this place used strictly, and

signifies that will which cannot have evil for its object? But

ordinary phraseology would not have allowed the saying, "Be unwilling

to make any manner of lie," [679] had there not been also an evil will,

whose wickedness separates if from that which the angels celebrated,

"Peace on earth, of good will to men." [680] For "good" is

superfluous if there is no other kind of will but good will. And why

should the apostle have mentioned it among the praises of charity as a

great thing, that "it rejoices not in iniquity," unless because

wickedness does so rejoice? For even with secular writers these words

are used indifferently. For Cicero, that most fertile of orators,

says, "I desire, conscript fathers, to be merciful." [681] And who

would be so pedantic as to say that he should have said "I will" rather

than "I desire," because the word is used in a good connection? Again,

in Terence, the profligate youth, burning with wild lust, says, "I will

nothing else than Philumena." [682] That this "will" was lust is

sufficiently indicated by the answer of his old servant which is there

introduced: "How much better were it to try and banish that love from

your heart, than to speak so as uselessly to inflame your passion still

more!" And that contentment was used by secular writers in a bad sense

that verse of Virgil testifies, in which he most succinctly comprehends

these four perturbations,--

"Hence they fear and desire, grieve and are content" [683]

The same author had also used the expression, "the evil contentments of

the mind." [684] So that good and bad men alike will, are cautious,

and contented; or, to say the same thing in other words, good and bad

men alike desire, fear, rejoice, but the former in a good, the latter

in a bad fashion, according as the will is right or wrong. Sorrow

itself, too, which the Stoics would not allow to be represented in the

mind of the wise man, is used in a good sense, and especially in our

writings. For the apostle praises the Corinthians because they had a

godly sorrow. But possibly some one may say that the apostle

congratulated them because they were penitently sorry, and that such

sorrow can exist only in those who have sinned. For these are his

words: "For I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry,

though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made

sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for ye were made sorry after

a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For

godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but

the sorrow of the world worketh death. For, behold, this selfsame

thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought

in you!" [685] Consequently the Stoics may defend themselves by

replying, [686] that sorrow is indeed useful for repentance of sin, but

that this can have no place in the mind of the wise man, inasmuch as no

sin attaches to him of which he could sorrowfully repent, nor any other

evil the endurance or experience of which could make him sorrowful.

For they say that Alcibiades (if my memory does not deceive me), who

believed himself happy, shed tears when Socrates argued with him, and

demonstrated that he was miserable because he was foolish. In his

case, therefore, folly was the cause of this useful and desirable

sorrow, wherewith a man mourns that he is what he ought not to be. But

the Stoics maintain not that the fool, but that the wise man, cannot be

sorrowful.

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[677] Isa. lvii. 21.

[678] Matt. vii. 12.

[679] Ecclus. vii. 13.

[680] Luke ii. 14.

[681] Cat. i. 2.

[682] Ter, Andr. ii. 1, 6.

[683] �neid, vi. 733.

[684] �neid, v. 278.

[685] 2 Cor. vii. 8-11.

[686] Tusc. Disp. iii. 32.

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Chapter 9.--Of the Perturbations of the Soul Which Appear as Right

Affections in the Life of the Righteous.

But so far as regards this question of mental perturbations, we have

answered these philosophers in the ninth book [687] of this work,

showing that it is rather a verbal than a real dispute, and that they

seek contention rather than truth. Among ourselves, according to the

sacred Scriptures and sound doctrine, the citizens of the holy city of

God, who live according to God in the pilgrimage of this life, both

fear and desire, and grieve and rejoice. And because their love is

rightly placed, all these affections of theirs are right. They fear

eternal punishment, they desire eternal life; they grieve because they

themselves groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, the

redemption of their body; [688] they rejoice in hope, because there

"shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is

swallowed up in victory." [689] In like manner they fear to sin, they

desire to persevere; they grieve in sin, they rejoice in good works.

They fear to sin, because they hear that "because iniquity shall

abound, the love of many shall wax cold." [690] They desire to

persevere, because they hear that it is written, "He that endureth to

the end shall be saved." [691] They grieve for sin, hearing that "If

we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not

in us." [692] They rejoice in good works, because they hear that "the

Lord loveth a cheerful giver." [693] In like manner, according as

they are strong or weak, they fear or desire to be tempted, grieve or

rejoice in temptation. They fear to be tempted, because they hear the

injunction, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual

restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself,

lest thou also be tempted." [694] They desire to be tempted, because

they hear one of the heroes of the city of God saying, "Examine me, O

Lord, and tempt me: try my reins and my heart." [695] They grieve in

temptations, because they see Peter weeping; [696] they rejoice in

temptations, because they hear James saying, "My brethren, count it all

joy when ye fall into divers temptations." [697]

And not only on their own account do they experience these emotions,

but also on account of those whose deliverance they desire and whose

perdition they fear, and whose loss or salvation affects them with

grief or with joy. For if we who have come into the Church from among

the Gentiles may suitably instance that noble and mighty hero who

glories in his infirmities, the teacher (doctor) of the nations in

faith and truth, who also labored more than all his fellow-apostles,

and instructed the tribes of God's people by his epistles, which

edified not only those of his own time, but all those who were to be

gathered in,--that hero, I say, and athlete of Christ, instructed by

Him, anointed of His Spirit, crucified with Him, glorious in Him,

lawfully maintaining a great conflict on the theatre of this world, and

being made a spectacle to angels and men, [698] and pressing onwards

for the prize of his high calling, [699] --very joyfully do we with the

eyes of faith behold him rejoicing with them that rejoice, and weeping

with them that weep; [700] though hampered by fightings without and

fears within; [701] desiring to depart and to be with Christ; [702]

longing to see the Romans, that he might have some fruit among them as

among other Gentiles; [703] being jealous over the Corinthians, and

fearing in that jealousy lest their minds should be corrupted from the

chastity that is in Christ; [704] having great heaviness and continual

sorrow of heart for the Israelites, [705] because they, being ignorant

of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own

righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of

God; [706] and expressing not only his sorrow, but bitter lamentation

over some who had formally sinned and had not repented of their

uncleanness and fornications. [707]

If these emotions and affections, arising as they do from the love of

what is good and from a holy charity, are to be called vices, then let

us allow these emotions which are truly vices to pass under the name of

virtues. But since these affections, when they are exercised in a

becoming way, follow the guidance of right reason, who will dare to say

that they are diseases or vicious passions? Wherefore even the Lord

Himself, when He condescended to lead a human life in the form of a

slave, had no sin whatever, and yet exercised these emotions where He

judged they should be exercised. For as there was in Him a true human

body and a true human soul, so was there also a true human emotion.

When, therefore, we read in the Gospel that the hard-heartedness of the

Jews moved Him to sorrowful indignation, [708] that He said, "I am glad

for your sakes, to the intent ye may believe," [709] that when about to

raise Lazarus He even shed tears, [710] that He earnestly desired to

eat the passover with His disciples, [711] that as His passion drew

near His soul was sorrowful, [712] these emotions are certainly not

falsely ascribed to Him. But as He became man when it pleased Him, so,

in the grace of His definite purpose, when it pleased Him He

experienced those emotions in His human soul.

But we must further make the admission, that even when these affections

are well regulated, and according to God's will, they are peculiar to

this life, not to that future life we look for, and that often we yield

to them against our will. And thus sometimes we weep in spite of

ourselves, being carried beyond ourselves, not indeed by culpable

desire; but by praiseworthy charity. In us, therefore, these

affections arise from human infirmity; but it was not so with the Lord

Jesus, for even His infirmity was the consequence of His power. But so

long as we wear the infirmity of this life, we are rather worse men

than better if we have none of these emotions at all. For the apostle

vituperated and abominated some who, as he said, were "without natural

affection." [713] The sacred Psalmist also found fault with those of

whom he said, "I looked for some to lament with me, and there was

none." [714] For to be quite free from pain while we are in this

place of misery is only purchased, as one of this world's literati

perceived and remarked, [715] at the price of blunted sensibilities

both of mind and body. And therefore that which the Greeks call

apatheia, and what the Latins would call, if their language would allow

them, "impassibilitas," if it be taken to mean an impassibility of

spirit and not of body, or, in other words, a freedom from those

emotions which are contrary to reason and disturb the mind, then it is

obviously a good and most desirable quality, but it is not one which is

attainable in this life. For the words of the apostle are the

confession, not of the common herd, but of the eminently pious, just,

and holy men: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the

truth is not in us." [716] When there shall be no sin in a man, then

there shall be this apatheia. At present it is enough if we live

without crime; and he who thinks he lives without sin puts aside not

sin, but pardon. And if that is to be called apathy, where the mind is

the subject of no emotion, then who would not consider this

insensibility to be worse than all vices? It may, indeed, reasonably

be maintained that the perfect blessedness we hope for shall be free

from all sting of fear or sadness; but who that is not quite lost to

truth would say that neither love nor joy shall be experienced there?

But if by apathy a condition be meant in which no fear terrifies nor

any pain annoys, we must in this life renounce such a state if we would

live according to God's will, but may hope to enjoy it in that

blessedness which is promised as our eternal condition.

For that fear of which the Apostle John says, "There is no fear in

love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He

that feareth is not made perfect in love," [717] --that fear is not of

the same kind as the Apostle Paul felt lest the Corinthians should be

seduced by the subtlety of the serpent; for love is susceptible of this

fear, yea, love alone is capable of it. But the fear which is not in

love is of that kind of which Paul himself says, "For ye have not

received the spirit of bondage again to fear." [718] But as for that

"clean fear which endureth for ever," [719] if it is to exist in the

world to come (and how else can it be said to endure for ever?), it is

not a fear deterring us from evil which may happen, but preserving us

in the good which cannot be lost. For where the love of acquired good

is unchangeable, there certainly the fear that avoids evil is, if I may

say so, free from anxiety. For under the name of "clean fear" David

signifies that will by which we shall necessarily shrink from sin, and

guard against it, not with the anxiety of weakness, which fears that we

may strongly sin, but with the tranquillity of perfect love. Or if no

kind of fear at all shall exist in that most imperturbable security of

perpetual and blissful delights, then the expression, "The fear of the

Lord is clean, enduring for ever," must be taken in the same sense as

that other, "The patience of the poor shall not perish for ever." [720]

For patience, which is necessary only where ills are to be borne,

shall not be eternal, but that which patience leads us to will be

eternal. So perhaps this "clean fear" is said to endure for ever,

because that to which fear leads shall endure.

And since this is so,--since we must live a good life in order to

attain to a blessed life, a good life has all these affections right, a

bad life has them wrong. But in the blessed life eternal there will be

love and joy, not only right, but also assured; but fear and grief

there will be none. Whence it already appears in some sort what manner

of persons the citizens of the city of God must be in this their

pilgrimage, who live after the spirit, not after the flesh,--that is to

say, according to God, not according to man,--and what manner of

persons they shall be also in that immortality whither they are

journeying. And the city or society of the wicked, who live not

according to God, but according to man, and who accept the doctrines of

men or devils in the worship of a false and contempt of the true

divinity, is shaken with those wicked emotions as by diseases and

disturbances. And if there be some of its citizens who seem to

restrain and, as it were, temper those passions, they are so elated

with ungodly pride, that their disease is as much greater as their pain

is less. And if some, with a vanity monstrous in proportion to its

rarity, have become enamored of themselves because they can be

stimulated and excited by no emotion, moved or bent by no affection,

such persons rather lose all humanity than obtain true tranquillity.

For a thing is not necessarily right because it is inflexible, nor

healthy because it is insensible.

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[687] C. 4, 5.

[688] Rom. viii. 23.

[689] 1 Cor. xv. 54.

[690] Matt. xxiv. 12.

[691] Matt. x. 22.

[692] 1 John i. 8.

[693] 2 Cor. ix. 7.

[694] Gal. vi. l.

[695] Ps. xxvi. 2.

[696] Matt. xxvi. 75.

[697] Jas. i. 2.

[698] 1 Cor. iv. 9.

[699] Phil. iii. 14.

[700] Rom. xii. 15.

[701] 2 Cor. vii. 5.

[702] Phil. i. 23.

[703] Rom. i. 11-13.

[704] 2 Cor. xi. 1-3.

[705] Rom. ix. 2.

[706] Rom. x. 3.

[707] 2 Cor. xii. 21.

[708] Mark iii. 5.

[709] John xi. 15.

[710] John xi. 35.

[711] Luke xxii. 15.

[712] Matt. xxvi. 38.

[713] Rom. i. 31.

[714] Ps. lxix. 20.

[715] Crantor, an Academic philosopher quoted by Cicero, Tusc Qu�st.

iii. 6.

[716] 1 John i. 8.

[717] 1 John iv. 18.

[718] Rom. viii. 15.

[719] Ps. xix. 9.

[720] Ps. ix. 18.

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Chapter 10.--Whether It is to Be Believed that Our First Parents in

Paradise, Before They Sinned, Were Free from All Perturbation.

But it is a fair question, whether our first parent or first parents

(for there was a marriage of two), before they sinned, experienced in

their animal body such emotions as we shall not experience in the

spiritual body when sin has been purged and finally abolished. For if

they did, then how were they blessed in that boasted place of bliss,

Paradise? For who that is affected by fear or grief can be called

absolutely blessed? And what could those persons fear or suffer in

such affluence of blessings, where neither death nor ill-health was

feared, and where nothing was wanting which a good will could desire,

and nothing present which could interrupt man's mental or bodily

enjoyment? Their love to God was unclouded, and their mutual affection

was that of faithful and sincere marriage; and from this love flowed a

wonderful delight, because they always enjoyed what was loved. Their

avoidance of sin was tranquil; and, so long as it was maintained, no

other ill at all could invade them and bring sorrow. Or did they

perhaps desire to touch and eat the forbidden fruit, yet feared to die;

and thus both fear and desire already, even in that blissful place,

preyed upon those first of mankind? Away with the thought that such

could be the case where there was no sin! And, indeed, this is already

sin, to desire those things which the law of God forbids, and to

abstain from them through fear of punishment, not through love of

righteousness. Away, I say, with the thought, that before there was

any sin, there should already have been committed regarding that fruit

the very sin which our Lord warns us against regarding a woman:

"Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed

adultery with her already in his heart." [721] As happy, then, as

were these our first parents, who were agitated by no mental

perturbations, and annoyed by no bodily discomforts, so happy should

the whole human race have been, had they not introduced that evil which

they have transmitted to their posterity, and had none of their

descendants committed iniquity worthy of damnation; but this original

blessedness continuing until, in virtue of that benediction which said,

"Increase and multiply," [722] the number of the predestined saints

should have been completed, there would then have been bestowed that

higher felicity which is enjoyed by the most blessed angels,--a

blessedness in which there should have been a secure assurance that no

one would sin, and no one die; and so should the saints have lived,

after no taste of labor, pain, or death, as now they shall live in the

resurrection, after they have endured all these things.

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[721] Matt. v. 28.

[722] Gen. i. 28.

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Chapter 11.--Of the Fall of the First Man, in Whom Nature Was Created

Good, and Can Be Restored Only by Its Author.

But because God foresaw all things, and was therefore not ignorant that

man also would fall, we ought to consider this holy city in connection

with what God foresaw and ordained, and not according to our own ideas,

which do not embrace God's ordination. For man, by his sin, could not

disturb the divine counsel, nor compel God to change what He had

decreed; for God's foreknowledge had anticipated both,--that is to say,

both how evil the man whom He had created good should become, and what

good He Himself should even thus derive from him. For though God is

said to change His determinations (so that in a tropical sense the Holy

Scripture says even that God repented [723] ), this is said with

reference to man's expectation, or the order of natural causes, and not

with reference to that which the Almighty had foreknown that He would

do. Accordingly God, as it is written, made man upright, [724] and

consequently with a good will. For if he had not had a good will, he

could not have been upright. The good will, then, is the work of God;

for God created him with it. But the first evil will, which preceded

all man's evil acts, was rather a kind of falling away from the work of

God to its own works than any positive work. And therefore the acts

resulting were evil, not having God, but the will itself for their end;

so that the will or the man himself, so far as his will is bad, was as

it were the evil tree bringing forth evil fruit. Moreover, the bad

will, though it be not in harmony with, but opposed to nature, inasmuch

as it is a vice or blemish, yet it is true of it as of all vice, that

it cannot exist except in a nature, and only in a nature created out of

nothing, and not in that which the Creator has begotten of Himself, as

He begot the Word, by whom all things were made. For though God formed

man of the dust of the earth, yet the earth itself, and every earthly

material, is absolutely created out of nothing; and man's soul, too,

God created out of nothing, and joined to the body, when He made man.

But evils are so thoroughly overcome by good, that though they are

permitted to exist, for the sake of demonstrating how the most

righteous foresight of God can make a good use even of them, yet good

can exist without evil, as in the true and supreme God Himself, and as

in every invisible and visible celestial creature that exists above

this murky atmosphere; but evil cannot exist without good, because the

natures in which evil exists, in so far as they are natures, are good.

And evil is removed, not by removing any nature, or part of a nature,

which had been introduced by the evil, but by healing and correcting

that which had been vitiated and depraved. The will, therefore, is

then truly free, when it is not the slave of vices and sins. Such was

it given us by God; and this being lost by its own fault, can only be

restored by Him who was able at first to give it. And therefore the

truth says, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;"

[725] which is equivalent to saying, If the Son shall save you, ye

shall be saved indeed. For He is our Liberator, inasmuch as He is our

Saviour.

Man then lived with God for his rule in a paradise at once physical and

spiritual. For neither was it a paradise only physical for the

advantage of the body, and not also spiritual for the advantage of the

mind; nor was it only spiritual to afford enjoyment to man by his

internal sensations, and not also physical to afford him enjoyment

through his external senses. But obviously it was both for both ends.

But after that proud and therefore envious angel (of whose fall I have

said as much as I was able in the eleventh and twelfth books of this

work, as well as that of his fellows, who, from being God's angels,

became his angels), preferring to rule with a kind of pomp of empire

rather than to be another's subject, fell from the spiritual Paradise,

and essaying to insinuate his persuasive guile into the mind of man,

whose unfallen condition provoked him to envy now that himself was

fallen, he chose the serpent as his mouthpiece in that bodily Paradise

in which it and all the other earthly animals were living with those

two human beings, the man and his wife, subject to them, and harmless;

and he chose the serpent because, being slippery, and moving in

tortuous windings, it was suitable for his purpose. And this animal

being subdued to his wicked ends by the presence and superior force of

his angelic nature, he abused as his instrument, and first tried his

deceit upon the woman, making his assault upon the weaker part of that

human alliance, that he might gradually gain the whole, and not

supposing that the man would readily give ear to him, or be deceived,

but that he might yield to the error of the woman. For as Aaron was

not induced to agree with the people when they blindly wished him to

make an idol, and yet yielded to constraint; and as it is not credible

that Solomon was so blind as to suppose that idols should be

worshipped, but was drawn over to such sacrilege by the blandishments

of women; so we cannot believe that Adam was deceived, and supposed the

devil's word to be truth, and therefore transgressed God's law, but

that he by the drawings of kindred yielded to the woman, the husband to

the wife, the one human being to the only other human being. For not

without significance did the apostle say, "And Adam was not deceived,

but the woman being deceived was in the transgression;" [726] but he

speaks thus, because the woman accepted as true what the serpent told

her, but the man could not bear to be severed from his only companion,

even though this involved a partnership in sin. He was not on this

account less culpable, but sinned with his eyes open. And so the

apostle does not say, "He did not sin," but "He was not deceived." For

he shows that he sinned when he says, "By one man sin entered into the

world," [727] and immediately after more distinctly, "In the likeness

of Adam's transgression." But he meant that those are deceived who do

not judge that which they do to be sin; but he knew. Otherwise how

were it true "Adam was not deceived?" But having as yet no experience

of the divine severity, he was possibly deceived in so far as he

thought his sin venial. And consequently he was not deceived as the

woman was deceived, but he was deceived as to the judgment which would

be passed on his apology: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me,

she gave me, and I did eat." [728] What need of saying more?

Although they were not both deceived by credulity, yet both were

entangled in the snares of the devil, and taken by sin.

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[723] Gen. vi. 6, and 1 Sam. xv. 11.

[724] Eccles. vii. 29.

[725] 1 John viii. 36.

[726] 1 Tim. ii. 14.

[727] Rom. v. 12.

[728] Gen. iii. 12.

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Chapter 12.--Of the Nature of Man's First Sin.

If any one finds a difficulty in understanding why other sins do not

alter human nature as it was altered by the transgression of those

first human beings, so that on account of it this nature is subject to

the great corruption we feel and see, and to death, and is distracted

and tossed with so many furious and contending emotions, and is

certainly far different from what it was before sin, even though it

were then lodged in an animal body,--if, I say, any one is moved by

this, he ought not to think that that sin was a small and light one

because it was committed about food, and that not bad nor noxious,

except because it was forbidden; for in that spot of singular felicity

God could not have created and planted any evil thing. But by the

precept He gave, God commended obedience, which is, in a sort, the

mother and guardian of all the virtues in the reasonable creature,

which was so created that submission is advantageous to it, while the

fulfillment of its own will in preference to the Creator's is

destruction. And as this commandment enjoining abstinence from one

kind of food in the midst of great abundance of other kinds was so easy

to keep,--so light a burden to the memory,--and, above all, found no

resistance to its observance in lust, which only afterwards sprung up

as the penal consequence of sin, the iniquity of violating it was all

the greater in proportion to the ease with which it might have been

kept.

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Chapter 13.--That in Adam's Sin an Evil Will Preceded the Evil Act.

Our first parents fell into open disobedience because already they were

secretly corrupted; for the evil act had never been done had not an

evil will preceded it. And what is the origin of our evil will but

pride? For "pride is the beginning of sin." [729] And what is pride

but the craving for undue exaltation? And this is undue exaltation,

when the soul abandons Him to whom it ought to cleave as its end, and

becomes a kind of end to itself. This happens when it becomes its own

satisfaction. And it does so when it falls away from that unchangeable

good which ought to satisfy it more than itself. This falling away is

spontaneous; for if the will had remained steadfast in the love of that

higher and changeless good by which it was illumined to intelligence

and kindled into love, it would not have turned away to find

satisfaction in itself, and so become frigid and benighted; the woman

would not have believed the serpent spoke the truth, nor would the man

have preferred the request of his wife to the command of God, nor have

supposed that it was a venial trangression to cleave to the partner of

his life even in a partnership of sin. The wicked deed, then,--that is

to say, the trangression of eating the forbidden fruit,--was committed

by persons who were already wicked. That "evil fruit" [730] could be

brought forth only by "a corrupt tree." But that the tree was evil was

not the result of nature; for certainly it could become so only by the

vice of the will, and vice is contrary to nature. Now, nature could

not have been depraved by vice had it not been made out of nothing.

Consequently, that it is a nature, this is because it is made by God;

but that it falls away from Him, this is because it is made out of

nothing. But man did not so fall away [731] as to become absolutely

nothing; but being turned towards himself, his being became more

contracted than it was when he clave to Him who supremely is.

Accordingly, to exist in himself, that is, to be his own satisfaction

after abandoning God, is not quite to become a nonentity, but to

approximate to that. And therefore the holy Scriptures designate the

proud by another name, "self-pleasers." For it is good to have the

heart lifted up, yet not to one's self, for this is proud, but to the

Lord, for this is obedient, and can be the act only of the humble.

There is, therefore, something in humility which, strangely enough,

exalts the heart, and something in pride which debases it. This seems,

indeed, to be contradictory, that loftiness should debase and lowliness

exalt. But pious humility enables us to submit to what is above us;

and nothing is more exalted above us than God; and therefore humility,

by making us subject to God, exalts us. But pride, being a defect of

nature, by the very act of refusing subjection and revolting from Him

who is supreme, falls to a low condition; and then comes to pass what

is written: "Thou castedst them down when they lifted up themselves."

[732] For he does not say, "when they had been lifted up," as if

first they were exalted, and then afterwards cast down; but "when they

lifted up themselves" even then they were cast down,--that is to say,

the very lifting up was already a fall. And therefore it is that

humility is specially recommended to the city of God as it sojourns in

this world, and is specially exhibited in the city of God, and in the

person of Christ its King; while the contrary vice of pride, according

to the testimony of the sacred writings, specially rules his adversary

the devil. And certainly this is the great difference which

distinguishes the two cities of which we speak, the one being the

society of the godly men, the other of the ungodly, each associated

with the angels that adhere to their party, and the one guided and

fashioned by love of self, the other by love of God.

The devil, then, would not have ensnared man in the open and manifest

sin of doing what God had forbidden, had man not already begun to live

for himself. It was this that made him listen with pleasure to the

words, "Ye shall be as gods," [733] which they would much more readily

have accomplished by obediently adhering to their supreme and true end

than by proudly living to themselves. For created gods are gods not by

virtue of what is in themselves, but by a participation of the true

God. By craving to be more, man becomes less; and by aspiring to be

self-sufficing, he fell away from Him who truly suffices him.

Accordingly, this wicked desire which prompts man to please himself as

if he were himself light, and which thus turns him away from that light

by which, had he followed it, he would himself have become light,--this

wicked desire, I say, already secretly existed in him, and the open sin

was but its consequence. For that is true which is written, "Pride

goeth before destruction, and before honor is humility;" [734] that is

to say, secret ruin precedes open ruin, while the former is not counted

ruin. For who counts exaltation ruin, though no sooner is the Highest

forsaken than a fall is begun? But who does not recognize it as ruin,

when there occurs an evident and indubitable transgression of the

commandment? And consequently, God's prohibition had reference to such

an act as, when committed, could not be defended on any pretense of

doing what was righteous. [735] And I make bold to say that it is

useful for the proud to fall into an open and indisputable

transgression, and so displease themselves, as already, by pleasing

themselves, they had fallen. For Peter was in a healthier condition

when he wept and was dissatisfied with himself, than when he boldly

presumed and satisfied himself. And this is averred by the sacred

Psalmist when he says, "Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek

Thy name, O Lord;" [736] that is, that they who have pleased themselves

in seeking their own glory may be pleased and satisfied with Thee in

seeking Thy glory.

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[729] Ecclus. x. 13.

[730] Matt. vii. 18.

[731] Defecit.

[732] Ps. lxxiii. 18.

[733] Gen. iii. 5.

[734] Prov. xviii. 12.

[735] That is to say, it was an obvious and indisputable transgression.

[736] Ps. lxxxiii. 16.

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Chapter 14.--Of the Pride in the Sin, Which Was Worse Than the Sin

Itself.

But it is a worse and more damnable pride which casts about for the

shelter of an excuse even in manifest sins, as these our first parents

did, of whom the woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat;"

and the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave

me of the tree, and I did eat." [737] Here there is no word of

begging pardon, no word of entreaty for healing. For though they do

not, like Cain, deny that they have perpetrated the deed, yet their

pride seeks to refer its wickedness to another,--the woman's pride to

the serpent, the man's to the woman. But where there is a plain

trangression of a divine commandment, this is rather to accuse than to

excuse oneself. For the fact that the woman sinned on the serpent's

persuasion, and the man at the woman's offer, did not make the

transgression less, as if there were any one whom we ought rather to

believe or yield to than God.

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[737] Gen. iii. 12, 13.

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Chapter 15.--Of the Justice of the Punishment with Which Our First

Parents Were Visited for Their Disobedience.

Therefore, because the sin was a despising of the authority of

God,--who had created man; who had made him in His own image; who had

set him above the other animals; who had placed him in Paradise; who

had enriched him with abundance of every kind and of safety; who had

laid upon him neither many, nor great, nor difficult commandments, but,

in order to make a wholesome obedience easy to him, had given him a

single very brief and very light precept by which He reminded that

creature whose service was to be free that He was Lord,--it was just

that condemnation followed, and condemnation such that man, who by

keeping the commandments should have been spiritual even in his flesh,

became fleshly even in his spirit; and as in his pride he had sought to

be his own satisfaction, God in His justice abandoned him to himself,

not to live in the absolute independence he affected, but instead of

the liberty he desired, to live dissatisfied with himself in a hard and

miserable bondage to him to whom by sinning he had yielded himself,

doomed in spite of himself to die in body as he had willingly become

dead in spirit, condemned even to eternal death (had not the grace of

God delivered him) because he had forsaken eternal life. Whoever

thinks such punishment either excessive or unjust shows his inability

to measure the great iniquity of sinning where sin might so easily have

been avoided. For as Abraham's obedience is with justice pronounced to

be great, because the thing commanded, to kill his son, was very

difficult, so in Paradise the disobedience was the greater, because the

difficulty of that which was commanded was imperceptible. And as the

obedience of the second Man was the more laudable because He became

obedient even "unto death," [738] so the disobedience of the first man

was the more detestable because he became disobedient even unto death.

For where the penalty annexed to disobedience is great, and the thing

commanded by the Creator is easy, who can sufficiently estimate how

great a wickedness it is, in a matter so easy, not to obey the

authority of so great a power, even when that power deters with so

terrible a penalty?

In short, to say all in a word, what but disobedience was the

punishment of disobedience in that sin? For what else is man's misery

but his own disobedience to himself, so that in consequence of his not

being willing to do what he could do, he now wills to do what he

cannot? For though he could not do all things in Paradise before he

sinned, yet he wished to do only what he could do, and therefore he

could do all things he wished. But now, as we recognize in his

offspring, and as divine Scripture testifies, "Man is like to vanity."

[739] For who can count how many things he wishes which he cannot do,

so long as he is disobedient to himself, that is, so long as his mind

and his flesh do not obey his will? For in spite of himself his mind

is both frequently disturbed, and his flesh suffers, and grows old, and

dies; and in spite of ourselves we suffer whatever else we suffer, and

which we would not suffer if our nature absolutely and in all its parts

obeyed our will. But is it not the infirmities of the flesh which

hamper it in its service? Yet what does it matter how its service is

hampered, so long as the fact remains, that by the just retribution of

the sovereign God whom we refused to be subject to and serve, our

flesh, which was subjected to us, now torments us by insubordination,

although our disobedience brought trouble on ourselves, not upon God?

For He is not in need of our service as we of our body's; and therefore

what we did was no punishment to Him, but what we receive is so to us.

And the pains which are called bodily are pains of the soul in and from

the body. For what pain or desire can the flesh feel by itself and

without the soul? But when the flesh is said to desire or to suffer,

it is meant, as we have explained, that the man does so, or some part

of the soul which is affected by the sensation of the flesh, whether a

harsh sensation causing pain, or gentle, causing pleasure. But pain in

the flesh is only a discomfort of the soul arising from the flesh, and

a kind of shrinking from its suffering, as the pain of the soul which

is called sadness is a shrinking from those things which have happened

to us in spite of ourselves. But sadness is frequently preceded by

fear, which is itself in the soul, not in the flesh; while bodily pain

is not preceded by any kind of fear of the flesh, which can be felt in

the flesh before the pain. But pleasure is preceded by a certain

appetite which is felt in the flesh like a craving, as hunger and

thirst and that generative appetite which is most commonly identified

with the name" lust," though this is the generic word for all desires.

For anger itself was defined by the ancients as nothing else than the

lust of revenge; [740] although sometimes a man is angry even at

inanimate objects which cannot feel his vengeance, as when one breaks a

pen, or crushes a quill that writes badly. Yet even this, though less

reasonable, is in its way a lust of revenge, and is, so to speak, a

mysterious kind of shadow of [the great law of] retribution, that they

who do evil should suffer evil. There is therefore a lust for revenge,

which is called anger; there is a lust of money, which goes by the name

of avarice; there is a lust of conquering, no matter by what means,

which is called opinionativeness; there is a lust of applause, which is

named boasting. There are many and various lusts, of which some have

names of their own, while others have not. For who could readily give

a name to the lust of ruling, which yet has a powerful influence in the

soul of tyrants, as civil wars bear witness?

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[738] Phil. ii. 8.

[739] Ps. cxliv. 4.

[740] Cicero, Tusc. Qu�st. iii. 6 and iv. 9. So Aristotle.

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Chapter 16.--Of the Evil of Lust,--A Word Which, Though Applicable to

Many Vices, is Specially Appropriated to Sexual Uncleanness.

Although, therefore, lust may have many objects, yet when no object is

specified, the word lust usually suggests to the mind the lustful

excitement of the organs of generation. And this lust not only takes

possession of the whole body and outward members, but also makes itself

felt within, and moves the whole man with a passion in which mental

emotion is mingled with bodily appetite, so that the pleasure which

results is the greatest of all bodily pleasures. So possessing indeed

is this pleasure, that at the moment of time in which it is

consummated, all mental activity is suspended. What friend of wisdom

and holy joys, who, being married, but knowing, as the apostle says,

"how to possess his vessel in santification and honor, not in the

disease of desire, as the Gentiles who know not God," [741] would not

prefer, if this were possi ble, to beget children without this lust, so

that in this function of begetting offspring the members created for

this purpose should not be stimulated by the heat of lust, but should

be actuated by his volition, in the same way as his other members serve

him for their respective ends? But even those who delight in this

pleasure are not moved to it at their own will, whether they confine

themselves to lawful or transgress to unlawful pleasures; but sometimes

this lust importunes them in spite of themselves, and sometimes fails

them when they desire to feel it, so that though lust rages in the

mind, it stirs not in the body. Thus, strangely enough, this emotion

not only fails to obey the legitimate desire to beget offspring, but

also refuses to serve lascivious lust; and though it often opposes its

whole combined energy to the soul that resists it, sometimes also it is

divided against itself, and while it moves the soul, leaves the body

unmoved.

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[741] 1 Thess. iv. 4.

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Chapter 17.--Of the Nakedness of Our First Parents, Which They Saw

After Their Base and Shameful Sin.

Justly is shame very specially connected with this lust; justly, too,

these members themselves, being moved and restrained not at our will,

but by a certain independent autocracy, so to speak, are called

"shameful." Their condition was different before sin. For as it is

written, "They were naked and were not ashamed," [742] --not that their

nakedness was unknown to them, but because nakedness was not yet

shameful, because not yet did lust move those members without the

will's consent; not yet did the flesh by its disobedience testify

against the disobedience of man. For they were not created blind, as

the unenlightened vulgar fancy; [743] for Adam saw the animals to whom

he gave names, and of Eve we read, "The woman saw that the tree was

good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes." [744] Their

eyes, therefore were open, but were not open to this, that is to say,

were not observant so as to recognize what was conferred upon them by

the garment of grace, for they had no consciousness of their members

warring against their will. But when they were stripped of this grace,

[745] that their disobedience might be punished by fit retribution,

there began in the movement of their bodily members a shameless novelty

which made nakedness indecent: it at once made them observant and made

them ashamed. And therefore, after they violated God's command by open

transgression, it is written: "And the eyes of them both were opened,

and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together,

and made themselves aprons." [746] "The eyes of them both were

opened," not to see, for already they saw, but to discern between the

good they had lost and the evil into which they had fallen. And

therefore also the tree itself which they were forbidden to touch was

called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from this

circumstance, that if they ate of it it would impart to them this

knowledge. For the discomfort of sickness reveals the pleasure of

health. "They knew," therefore, "that they were naked,"--naked of that

grace which prevented them from being ashamed of bodily nakedness while

the law of sin offered no resistance to their mind. And thus they

obtained a knowledge which they would have lived in blissful ignorance

of, had they, in trustful obedience to God, declined to commit that

offence which involved them in the experience of the hurtful effects of

unfaithfulness and disobedience. And therefore, being ashamed of the

disobedience of their own flesh, which witnessed to their disobedience

while it punished it, "they sewed fig leaves together, and made

themselves aprons," that is, cinctures for their privy parts; for some

interpreters have rendered the word by succinctoria. Campestria is,

indeed, a Latin word, but it is used of the drawers or aprons used for

a similar purpose by the young men who stripped for exercise in the

campus; hence those who were so girt were commonly called campestrati.

Shame modestly covered that which lust disobediently moved in

opposition to the will, which was thus punished for its own

disobedience. Consequently all nations, being propagated from that one

stock, have so strong an instinct to cover the shameful parts, that

some barbarians do not uncover them even in the bath, but wash with

their drawers on. In the dark solitudes of India also, though some

philosophers go naked, and are therefore called gymnosophists, yet they

make an exception in the case of these members and cover them.

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[742] Gen. ii. 25.

[743] An error which arose from the words, The eyes of them both were

opened, Gen. iii. 7.--See De Genesi ad lit. ii. 40.

[744] Gen. iii. 6.

[745] This doctrine and phraseology of Augustin being important in

connection with his whole theory of the fall, we give some parallel

passages to show that the words are not used at random: De Genesi ad

lit. xi. 41; De Corrept. et Gratia, xi. 31; and especially Cont.

Julian. iv. 82.

[746] Gen. iii. 7.

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Chapter 18.--Of the Shame Which Attends All Sexual Intercourse.

Lust requires for its consummation darkness and secrecy; and this not

only when un lawful intercourse is desired, but even such fornication

as the earthly city has legalized. Where there is no fear of

punishment, these permitted pleasures still shrink from the public

eye. Even where provision is made for this lust, secrecy also is

provided; and while lust found it easy to remove the prohibitions of

law, shamelessness found it impossible to lay aside the veil of

retirement. For even shameless men call this shameful; and though they

love the pleasure, dare not display it. What! does not even conjugal

intercourse, sanctioned as it is by law for the propagation of

children, legitimate and honorable though it be, does it not seek

retirement from every eye? Before the bridegroom fondles his bride,

does he not exclude the attendants, and even the paranymphs, and such

friends as the closest ties have admitted to the bridal chamber? The

greatest master of Roman eloquence says, that all right actions wish to

be set in the light, i.e., desire to be known. This right action,

however, has such a desire to be known, that yet it blushes to be

seen. Who does not know what passes between husband and wife that

children may be born? Is it not for this purpose that wives are

married with such ceremony? And yet, when this well-understood act is

gone about for the procreation of children, not even the children

themselves, who may already have been born to them, are suffered to be

witnesses. This right action seeks the light, in so far as it seeks to

be known, but yet dreads being seen. And why so, if not because that

which is by nature fitting and decent is so done as to be accompanied

with a shame-begetting penalty of sin?

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Chapter 19.--That It is Now Necessary, as It Was Not Before Man Sinned,

to Bridle Anger and Lust by the Restraining Influence of Wisdom.

Hence it is that even the philosophers who have approximated to the

truth have avowed that anger and lust are vicious mental emotions,

because, even when exercised towards objects which wisdom does not

prohibit, they are moved in an ungoverned and inordinate manner, and

consequently need the regulation of mind and reason. And they assert

that this third part of the mind is posted as it were in a kind of

citadel, to give rule to these other parts, so that, while it rules and

they serve, man's righteousness is preserved without a breach. [747]

These parts, then, which they acknowledge to be vicious even in a wise

and temperate man, so that the mind, by its composing and restraining

influence, must bridle and recall them from those objects towards which

they are unlawfully moved, and give them access to those which the law

of wisdom sanctions,--that anger, e.g., may be allowed for the

enforcement of a just authority, and lust for the duty of propagating

offspring,--these parts, I say, were not vicious in Paradise before

sin, for they were never moved in opposition to a holy will towards any

object from which it was necessary that they should be withheld by the

restraining bridle of reason. For though now they are moved in this

way, and are regulated by a bridling and restraining power, which those

who live temperately, justly, and godly exercise, sometimes with ease,

and sometimes with greater difficulty, this is not the sound health of

nature, but the weakness which results from sin. And how is it that

shame does not hide the acts and words dictated by anger or other

emotions, as it covers the motions of lust, unless because the members

of the body which we employ for accomplishing them are moved, not by

the emotions themselves, but by the authority of the consenting will?

For he who in his anger rails at or even strikes some one, could not do

so were not his tongue and hand moved by the authority of the will, as

also they are moved when there is no anger. But the organs of

generation are so subjected to the rule of lust, that they have no

motion but what it communicates. It is this we are ashamed of; it is

this which blushingly hides from the eyes of onlookers. And rather

will a man endure a crowd of witnesses when he is unjustly venting his

anger on some one, than the eye of one man when he innocently copulates

with his wife.

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[747] See Plato's Republic, book iv.

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Chapter 20.--Of the Foolish Beastliness of the Cynics.

It is this which those canine or cynic [748] philosophers have

overlooked, when they have, in violation of the modest instincts of

men, boastfully proclaimed their unclean and shameless opinion, worthy

indeed of dogs, viz., that as the matrimonial act is legitimate, no one

should be ashamed to perform it openly, in the street or in any public

place. Instinctive shame has overborne this wild fancy. For though it

is related [749] that Diogenes once dared to put his opinion in

practice, under the impression that his sect would be all the more

famous if his egregious shamelessness were deeply graven in the memory

of mankind, yet this example was not afterwards followed. Shame had

more influence with them, to make them blush before men, than error to

make them affect a resemblance to dogs. And possibly, even in the case

of Diogenes, and those who did imitate him, there was but an appearance

and pretence of copulation, and not the reality. Even at this day

there are still Cynic philosophers to be seen; for these are Cynics who

are not content with being clad in the pallium, but also carry a club;

yet no one of them dares to do this that we speak of. If they did,

they would be spat upon, not to say stoned, by the mob. Human nature,

then, is without doubt ashamed of this lust; and justly so, for the

insubordination of these members, and their defiance of the will, are

the clear testimony of the punishment of man's first sin. And it was

fitting that this should appear specially in those parts by which is

generated that nature which has been altered for the worse by that

first and great sin,--that sin from whose evil connection no one can

escape, unless God's grace expiate in him individually that which was

perpetrated to the destruction of all in common, when all were in one

man, and which was avenged by God's justice.

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[748] The one word being the Latin form, the other the Greek, of the

same adjective.

[749] By Diogenes Laertius, vi. 69, and Cicero, De Offic. i. 41.

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Chapter 21.--That Man's Transgression Did Not Annul the Blessing of

Fecundity Pronounced Upon Man Before He Sinned But Infected It with the

Disease of Lust.

Far be it, then, from us to suppose that our first parents in Paradise

felt that lust which caused them afterwards to blush and hide their

nakedness, or that by its means they should have fulfilled the

benediction of God, "Increase and multiply and replenish the earth;"

[750] for it was after sin that lust began. It was after sin that our

nature, having lost the power it had over the whole body, but not

having lost all shame, perceived, noticed, blushed at, and covered it.

But that blessing upon marriage, which encouraged them to increase and

multiply and replenish the earth, though it continued even after they

had sinned, was yet given before they sinned, in order that the

procreation of children might be recognized as part of the glory of

marriage, and not of the punishment of sin. But now, men being

ignorant of the blessedness of Paradise, suppose that children could

not have been begotten there in any other way than they know them to be

begotten now, i.e., by lust, at which even honorable marriage blushes;

some not simply rejecting, but sceptically deriding the divine

Scriptures, in which we read that our first parents, after they sinned,

were ashamed of their nakedness, and covered it; while others, though

they accept and honor Scripture, yet conceive that this expression,

"Increase and multiply," refers not to carnal fecundity, because a

similar expression is used of the soul in the words, "Thou wilt

multiply me with strength in my soul;" [751] and so, too, in the words

which follow in Genesis, "And replenish the earth, and subdue it," they

understand by the earth the body which the soul fills with its

presence, and which it rules over when it is multiplied in strength.

And they hold that children could no more then than now be begotten

without lust, which, after sin, was kindled, observed, blushed for, and

covered; and even that children would not have been born in Paradise,

but only outside of it, as in fact it turned out. For it was after

they were expelled from it that they came together to beget children,

and begot them.

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[750] Gen. i. 28.

[751] Ps. cxxxviii. 3.

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Chapter 22.--Of the Conjugal Union as It Was Originally Instituted and

Blessed by God.

But we, for our part, have no manner of doubt that to increase and

multiply and replenish the earth in virtue of the blessing of God, is a

gift of marriage as God instituted it from the beginning before man

sinned, when He created them male and female,--in other words, two

sexes manifestly distinct. And it was this work of God on which His

blessing was pronounced. For no sooner had Scripture said, "Male and

female created He them," [752] than it immediately continues, "And God

blessed them, and God said unto them, Increase, and multiply, and

replenish the earth, and subdue it," etc. And though all these things

may not unsuitably be interpreted in a spiritual sense, yet "male and

female" cannot be understood of two things in one man, as if there were

in him one thing which rules, another which is ruled; but it is quite

clear that they were created male and female, with bodies of different

sexes, for the very purpose of begetting offspring, and so increasing,

multiplying, and replenishing the earth; and it is great folly to

oppose so plain a fact. It was not of the spirit which commands and

the body which obeys, nor of the rational soul which rules and the

irrational desire which is ruled, nor of the contemplative virtue which

is supreme and the active which is subject, nor of the understanding of

the mind and the sense of the body, but plainly of the matrimonial

union by which the sexes are mutually bound together, that our Lord,

when asked whether it were lawful for any cause to put away one's wife

(for on account of the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites Moses

permitted a bill of divorcement to be given), answered and said, "Have

ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and

female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother,

and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh?

Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God

hath joined together, let not man put asunder." [753] It is certain,

then, that from the first men were created, as we see and know them to

be now, of two sexes, male and female, and that they are called one,

either on account of the matrimonial union, or on account of the origin

of the woman, who was created from the side of the man. And it is by

this original example, which God Himself instituted, that the apostle

admonishes all husbands to love their own wives in particular. [754]

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[752] Gen. i. 27, 28.

[753] Matt. xix. 4, 5.

[754] Eph. v. 25.

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Chapter 23.--Whether Generation Should Have Taken Place Even in

Paradise Had Man Not Sinned, or Whether There Should Have Been Any

Contention There Between Chastity and Lust.

But he who says that there should have been neither copulation nor

generation but for sin, virtually says that man's sin was necessary to

complete the number of the saints. For if these two by not sinning

should have continued to live alone, because, as is supposed, they

could not have begotten children had they not sinned, then certainly

sin was necessary in order that there might be not only two but many

righteous men. And if this cannot be maintained without absurdity, we

must rather believe that the number of the saints fit to complete this

most blessed city would have been as great though no one had sinned, as

it is now that the grace of God gathers its citizens out of the

multitude of sinners, so long as the children of this world generate

and are generated. [755]

And therefore that marriage, worthy of the happiness of Paradise,

should have had desirable fruit without the shame of lust, had there

been no sin. But how that could be, there is now no example to teach

us. Nevertheless, it ought not to seem incredible that one member

might serve the will without lust then, since so many serve it now. Do

we now move our feet and hands when we will to do the things we would

by means of these members? do we meet with no resistance in them, but

perceive that they are ready servants of the will, both in our own case

and in that of others, and especially of artisans employed in

mechanical operations, by which the weakness and clumsiness of nature

become, through industrious exercise, wonderfully dexterous? and shall

we not believe that, like as all those members obediently serve the

will, so also should the members have discharged the function of

generation, though lust, the award of disobedience, had been awanting?

Did not Cicero, in discussing the difference of governments in his De

Republica, adopt a simile from human nature, and say that we command

our bodily members as children, they are so obedient; but that the

vicious parts of the soul must be treated as slaves, and be coerced

with a more stringent authority? And no doubt, in the order of nature,

the soul is more excellent than the body; and yet the soul commands the

body more easily than itself. Nevertheless this lust, of which we at

present speak, is the more shameful on this account, because the soul

is therein neither master of itself, so as not to lust at all, nor of

the body, so as to keep the members under the control of the will; for

if they were thus ruled, there should be no shame. But now the soul is

ashamed that the body, which by nature is inferior and subject to it,

should resist its authority. For in the resistance experienced by the

soul in the other emotions there is less shame, because the resistance

is from itself, and thus, when it is conquered by itself, itself is the

conqueror, although the conquest is inordinate and vicious, because

accomplished by those parts of the soul which ought to be subject to

reason, yet, being accomplished by its own parts and energies, the

conquest is, as I say, its own. For when the soul conquers itself to a

due subordination, so that its unreasonable motions are controlled by

reason, while it again is subject to God, this is a conquest virtuous

and praiseworthy. Yet there is less shame when the soul is resisted by

its own vicious parts than when its will and order are resisted by the

body, which is distinct from and inferior to it, and dependent on it

for life itself.

But so long as the will retains under its authority the other members,

without which the members excited by lust to resist the will cannot

accomplish what they seek, chastity is preserved, and the delight of

sin foregone. And certainly, had not culpable disobedience been

visited with penal disobedience, the marriage of Paradise should have

been ignorant of this struggle and rebellion, this quarrel between will

and lust, that the will may be satisfied and lust restrained, but those

members, like all the rest, should have obeyed the will. The field of

generation [756] should have been sown by the organ created for this

purpose, as the earth is sown by the hand. And whereas now, as we

essay to investigate this subject more exactly, modesty hinders us, and

compels us to ask pardon of chaste ears, there would have been no cause

to do so, but we could have discoursed freely, and without fear of

seeming obscene, upon all those points which occur to one who meditates

on the subject. There would not have been even words which could be

called obscene, but all that might be said of these members would have

been as pure as what is said of the other parts of the body. Whoever,

then, comes to the perusal of these pages with unchaste mind, let him

blame his disposition, not his nature; let him brand the actings of his

own impurity, not the words which necessity forces us to use, and for

which every pure and pious reader or hearer will very readily pardon

me, while I expose the folly of that scepticism which argues solely on

the ground of its own experience, and has no faith in anything beyond.

He who is not scandalized at the apostle's censure of the horrible

wickedness of the women who "changed the natural use into that which is

against nature," [757] will read all this without being shocked,

especially as we are not, like Paul, citing and censuring a damnable

uncleanness, but are explaining, so far as we can, human generation,

while with Paul we avoid all obscenity of language.

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[755] Luke xx. 34.

[756] See Virgil, Georg. iii. 136.

[757] Rom. i. 26.

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Chapter 24.--That If Men Had Remained Innocent and Obedient in

Paradise, the Generative Organs Should Have Been in Subjection to the

Will as the Other Members are.

The man, then, would have sown the seed, and the woman received it, as

need required, the generative organs being moved by the will, not

excited by lust. For we move at will not only those members which are

furnished with joints of solid bone, as the hands, feet, and fingers,

but we move also at will those which are composed of slack and soft

nerves: we can put them in motion, or stretch them out, or bend and

twist them, or contract and stiffen them, as we do with the muscles of

the mouth and face. The lungs, which are the very tenderest of the

viscera except the brain, and are therefore carefully sheltered in the

cavity of the chest, yet for all purposes of inhaling and exhaling the

breath, and of uttering and modulating the voice, are obedient to the

will when we breathe, exhale, speak, shout, or sing, just as the

bellows obey the smith or the organist. I will not press the fact that

some animals have a natural power to move a single spot of the skin

with which their whole body is covered, if they have felt on it

anything they wish to drive off,--a power so great, that by this

shivering tremor of the skin they can not only shake off flies that

have settled on them, but even spears that have fixed in their flesh.

Man, it is true, has not this power; but is this any reason for

supposing that God could not give it to such creatures as He wished to

possess it? And therefore man himself also might very well have

enjoyed absolute power over his members had he not forfeited it by his

disobedience; for it was not difficult for God to form him so that what

is now moved in his body only by lust should have been moved only at

will.

We know, too, that some men are differently constituted from others,

and have some rare and remarkable faculty of doing with their body what

other men can by no effort do, and, indeed, scarcely believe when they

hear of others doing. There are persons who can move their ears,

either one at a time, or both together. There are some who, without

moving the head, can bring the hair down upon the forehead, and move

the whole scalp backwards and forwards at pleasure. Some, by lightly

pressing their stomach, bring up an incredible quantity and variety of

things they have swallowed, and produce whatever they please, quite

whole, as if out of a bag. Some so accurately mimic the voices of

birds and beasts and other men, that, unless they are seen, the

difference cannot be told. Some have such command of their bowels,

that they can break wind continuously at pleasure, so as to produce the

effect of singing. I myself have known a man who was accustomed to

sweat whenever he wished. It is well known that some weep when they

please, and shed a flood of tears. But far more incredible is that

which some of our brethren saw quite recently. There was a presbyter

called Restitutus, in the parish of the Calamensian [758] Church, who,

as often as he pleased (and he was asked to do this by those who

desired to witness so remarkable a phenomenon), on some one imitating

the wailings of mourners, became so insensible, and lay in a state so

like death, that not only had he no feeling when they pinched and

pricked him, but even when fire was applied to him, and he was burned

by it, he had no sense of pain except afterwards from the wound. And

that his body remained motionless, not by reason of his self-command,

but because he was insensible, was proved by the fact that he breathed

no more than a dead man; and yet he said that, when any one spoke with

more than ordinary distinctness, he heard the voice, but as if it were

a long way off. Seeing, then, that even in this mortal and miserable

life the body serves some men by many remarkable movements and moods

beyond the ordinary course of nature, what reason is there for doubting

that, before man was involved by his sin in this weak and corruptible

condition, his members might have served his will for the propagation

of offspring without lust? Man has been given over to himself because

he abandoned God, while he sought to be self-satisfying; and disobeying

God, he could not obey even himself. Hence it is that he is involved

in the obvious misery of being unable to live as he wishes. For if he

lived as he wished, he would think himself blessed; but he could not be

so if he lived wickedly.

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[758] The position of Calama is described by Augustin as between

Constantine and Hippo, but nearer Hippo.--Contra I.it. Petil. ii. 228.

A full description of it is given in Poujoulat's Histoire de S.

Augustin, i. 340, who says it was one of the most important towns of

Numidia, eighteen leagues south of Hippo, and represented by the modern

Ghelma. It is to its bishop, Possidius, we owe the contemporary Life

of Augustin.

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Chapter 25.--Of True Blessedness, Which This Present Life Cannot Enjoy.

However, if we look at this a little more closely, we see that no one

lives as he wishes but the blessed, and that no one is blessed but the

righteous. But even the righteous himself does not live as he wishes,

until he has arrived where he cannot die, be deceived, or injured, and

until he is assured that this shall be his eternal condition. For this

nature demands; and nature is not fully and perfectly blessed till it

attains what it seeks. But what man is at present able to live as he

wishes, when it is not in his power so much as to live? He wishes to

live, he is compelled to die. How, then, does he live as he wishes who

does not live as long as he wishes? or if he wishes to die, how can he

live as he wishes, since he does not wish even to live? Or if he

wishes to die, not because he dislikes life, but that after death he

may live better, still he is not yet living as he wishes, but only has

the prospect of so living when, through death, he reaches that which he

wishes. But admit that he lives as he wishes, because he has done

violence to himself, and forced himself not to wish what he cannot

obtain, and to wish only what he can (as Terence has it, "Since you

cannot do what you will, will what you can" [759] ), is he therefore

blessed because he is patiently wretched? For a blessed life is

possessed only by the man who loves it. If it is loved and possessed,

it must necessarily be more ardently loved than all besides; for

whatever else is loved must be loved for the sake of the blessed life.

And if it is loved as it deserves to be,--and the man is not blessed

who does not love the blessed life as it deserves,--then he who so

loves it cannot but wish it to be eternal. Therefore it shall then

only be blessed when it is eternal.

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[759] Andr. ii. 1, 5.

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Chapter 26.--That We are to Believe that in Paradise Our First Parents

Begat Offspring Without Blushing.

In Paradise, then, man lived as he desired so long as he desired what

God had commanded. He lived in the enjoyment of God, and was good by

God's goodness; he lived without any want, and had it in his power so

to live eternally. He had food that he might not hunger, drink that he

might not thirst, the tree of life that old age might not waste him.

There was in his body no corruption, nor seed of corruption, which

could produce in him any unpleasant sensation. He feared no inward

disease, no outward accident. Soundest health blessed his body,

absolute tranquillity his soul. As in Paradise there was no excessive

heat or cold, so its inhabitants were exempt from the vicissitudes of

fear and desire. No sadness of any kind was there, nor any foolish

joy; true gladness ceaselessly flowed from the presence of God, who was

loved "out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith

unfeigned." [760] The honest love of husband and wife made a sure

harmony between them. Body and spirit worked harmoniously together,

and the commandment was kept without labor. No languor made their

leisure wearisome; no sleepiness interrupted their desire to labor.

[761] In tanta facilitate rerum et felicitate hominum, absit ut

suspicemur, non potuisse prolem seri sine libidinis morbo: sed eo

voluntatis nutu moverentur illa membra qua c�tera, et sine ardoris

illecebroso stimulo cum tranquillitate animi et corporis nulla

corruptione integritatis infunderetur gremio maritus uxoris. Neque

enim quia experientia probari non potest, ideo credendum non est;

quando illas corporis partes non ageret turbidus calor, sed spontanea

potestas, sicut opus esset, adhiberet; ita tunc potuisse utero conjugis

salva integritate feminei genitalis virile semen immitti, sicut nunc

potest eadem integritate salva ex utero virginis fluxus menstrui

cruoris emitti. Eadem quippe via posset illud injici, qua hoc potest

ejici. Ut enim ad pariendum non doloris gemitus, sed maturitatis

impulsus feminea viscera relaxaret: sic ad foetandum et concipiendum

non libidinis appetitus, sed voluntarius usus naturam utramque

conjungeret. We speak of things which are now shameful, and although

we try, as well as we are able, to conceive them as they were before

they became shameful, yet necessity compels us rather to limit our

discussion to the bounds set by modesty than to extend it as our

moderate faculty of discourse might suggest. For since that which I

have been speaking of was not experienced even by those who might have

experienced it,--I mean our first parents (for sin and its merited

banishment from Paradise anticipated this passionless generation on

their part),--when sexual intercourse is spoken of now, it suggests to

men's thoughts not such a placid obedience to the will as is

conceivable in our first parents, but such violent acting of lust as

they themselves have experienced. And therefore modesty shuts my

mouth, although my mind conceives the matter clearly. But Almighty

God, the supreme and supremely good Creator of all natures, who aids

and rewards good wills, while He abandons and condemns the bad, and

rules both, was not destitute of a plan by which He might people His

city with the fixed number of citizens which His wisdom had

foreordained even out of the condemned human race, discriminating them

not now by merits, since the whole mass was condemned as if in a

vitiated root, but by grace, and showing, not only in the case of the

redeemed, but also in those who were not delivered, how much grace He

has bestowed upon them. For every one acknowledges that he has been

rescued from evil, not by deserved, but by gratuitous goodness, when he

is singled out from the company of those with whom he might justly have

borne a common punishment, and is allowed to go scathless. Why, then,

should God not have created those whom He foresaw would sin, since He

was able to show in and by them both what their guilt merited, and what

His grace bestowed, and since, under His creating and disposing hand,

even the perverse disorder of the wicked could not pervert the right

order of things?

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[760] 1 Tim. i. 5.

[761] Compare Basil's Homily on Paradise, and John Damascene, De Fide

Orthod. ii. 11.

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Chapter 27.--Of the Angels and Men Who Sinned, and that Their

Wickedness Did Not Disturb the Order of God's Providence.

The sins of men and angels do nothing to impede the "great works of the

Lord which accomplish His will." [762] For He who by His providence

and omnipotence distributes to every one his own portion, is able to

make good use not only of the good, but also of the wicked. And thus

making a good use of the wicked angel, who, in punishment of his first

wicked volition, was doomed to an obduracy that prevents him now from

willing any good, why should not God have permitted him to tempt the

first man, who had been created upright, that is to say, with a good

will? For he had been so constituted, that if he looked to God for

help, man's goodness should defeat the angel's wickedness; but if by

proud self-pleasing he abandoned God, his Creator and Sustainer, he

should be conquered. If his will remained upright, through leaning on

God's help, he should be rewarded; if it became wicked, by forsaking

God, he should be punished. But even this trusting in God's help could

not itself be accomplished without God's help, although man had it in

his own power to relinquish the benefits of divine grace by pleasing

himself. For as it is not in our power to live in this world without

sustaining ourselves by food, while it is in our power to refuse this

nourishment and cease to live, as those do who kill themselves, so it

was not in man's power, even in Paradise, to live as he ought without

God's help; but it was in his power to live wickedly, though thus he

should cut short his happiness, and incur very just punishment. Since,

then, God was not ignorant that man would fall, why should He not have

suffered him to be tempted by an angel who hated and envied him? It

was not, indeed, that He was unaware that he should be conquered. but

because He foresaw that by the man's seed, aided by divine grace, this

same devil himself should be conquered, to the greater glory of the

saints. All was brought about in such a manner, that neither did any

future event escape God's foreknowledge, nor did His foreknowledge

compel any one to sin, and so as to demonstrate in the experience of

the intelligent creation, human and angelic, how great a difference

there is between the private presumption of the creature and the

Creator's protection. For who will dare to believe or say that it was

not in God's power to prevent both angels and men from sinning? But

God preferred to leave this in their power, and thus to show both what

evil could be wrought by their pride, and what good by His grace.

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[762] Ps. cxi. 2.

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Chapter 28.--Of the Nature of the Two Cities, the Earthly and the

Heavenly.

Accordingly, two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by

the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love

of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories

in itself, the latter in the Lord. For the one seeks glory from men;

but the greatest glory of the other is God, the witness of conscience.

The one lifts up its head in its own glory; the other says to its God,

"Thou art my glory, and the lifter up of mine head." [763] In the

one, the princes and the nations it subdues are ruled by the love of

ruling; in the other, the princes and the subjects serve one another in

love, the latter obeying, while the former take thought for all. The

one delights in its own strength, represented in the persons of its

rulers; the other says to its God, "I will love Thee, O Lord, my

strength." [764] And therefore the wise men of the one city, living

according to man, have sought for profit to their own bodies or souls,

or both, and those who have known God "glorified Him not as God,

neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their

foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise,"--that

is, glorying in their own wisdom, and being possessed by pride,--"they

became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an

image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed

beasts, and creeping things." For they were either leaders or

followers of the people in adoring images, "and worshipped and served

the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever." [765]

But in the other city there is no human wisdom, but only godliness,

which offers due worship to the true God, and looks for its reward in

the society of the saints, of holy angels as well as holy men, "that

God may be all in all." [766]

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[763] Ps. iii. 3.

[764] Ps. xviii. 1.

[765] Rom. i. 21-25.

[766] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

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[638] This book is referred to in another work of Augustin's (contra

Advers. Legis et Prophet, i. 18), which was written about the year 420.

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Book XV.

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Argument--Having treated in the four preceding books of the origin of

the two cities, the earthly and the heavenly, Augustin explains their

growth and progress in the four books which follow; and, in order to do

so, he explains the chief passages of the sacred history which bear

upon this subject. In this fifteenth book he opens this part of his

work by explaining the events recorded in Genesis from the time of Cain

and Abel to the deluge.

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Chapter 1.--Of the Two Lines of the Human Race Which from First to Last

Divide It.

Of the bliss of Paradise, of Paradise itself, and of the life of our

first parents there, and of their sin and punishment, many have thought

much, spoken much, written much. We ourselves, too, have spoken of

these things in the foregoing books, and have written either what we

read in the Holy Scriptures, or what we could reasonably deduce from

them. And were we to enter into a more detailed investigation of these

matters, an endless number of endless questions would arise, which

would involve us in a larger work than the present occasion admits. We

cannot be expected to find room for replying to every question that may

be started by unoccupied and captious men, who are ever more ready to

ask questions than capable of understanding the answer. Yet I trust we

have already done justice to these great and difficult questions

regarding the beginning of the world, or of the soul, or of the human

race itself. This race we have distributed into two parts, the one

consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who

live according to God. And these we also mystically call the two

cities, or the two communities of men, of which the one is predestined

to reign eternally with God, and the other to suffer eternal punishment

with the devil. This, however, is their end, and of it we are to speak

afterwards. At present, as we have said enough about their origin,

whether among the angels, whose numbers we know not, or in the two

first human beings, it seems suitable to attempt an account of their

career, from the time when our two first parents began to propagate the

race until all human generation shall cease. For this whole time or

world-age, in which the dying give place and those who are born

succeed, is the career of these two cities concerning which we treat.

Of these two first parents of the human race, then, Cain was the

first-born, and he belonged to the city of men; after him was born

Abel, who belonged to the city of God. For as in the individual the

truth of the apostle's statement is discerned, "that is not first which

is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is

spiritual," [767] whence it comes to pass that each man, being derived

from a condemned stock, is first of all born of Adam evil and carnal,

and becomes good and spiritual only afterwards, when he is grafted into

Christ by regeneration: so was it in the human race as a whole. When

these two cities began to run their course by a series of deaths and

births, the citizen of this world was the first-born, and after him the

stranger in this world, the citizen of the city of God, predestinated

by grace, elected by grace, by grace a stranger below, and by grace a

citizen above. By grace,--for so far as regards himself he is sprung

from the same mass, all of which is condemned in its origin; but God,

like a potter (for this comparison is introduced by the apostle

judiciously, and not without thought), of the same lump made one vessel

to honor, another to dishonor. [768] But first the vessel to dishonor

was made, and after it another to honor. For in each individual, as I

have already said, there is first of all that which is reprobate, that

from which we must begin, but in which we need not necessarily remain;

afterwards is that which is well-approved, to which we may by advancing

attain, and in which, when we have reached it we may abide. Not,

indeed, that every wicked man shall be good, but that no one will be

good who was not first of all wicked; but the sooner any one becomes a

good man, the more speedily does he receive this title, and abolish the

old name in the new. Accordingly, it is recorded of Cain that he built

a city, [769] but Abel, being a sojourner, built none. For the city of

the saints is above, although here below it begets citizens, in whom it

sojourns till the time of its reign arrives, when it shall gather

together all in the day of the resurrection; and then shall the

promised kingdom be given to them, in which they shall reign with their

Prince, the King of the ages, time without end.

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[767] 1 Cor. xv. 46.

[768] Rom. ix. 21.

[769] Gen. iv. 17.

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Chapter 2.--Of the Children of the Flesh and the Children of the

Promise.

There was indeed on earth, so long as it was needed, a symbol and

foreshadowing image of this city, which served the purpose of reminding

men that such a city was to be rather than of making it present; and

this image was itself called the holy city, as a symbol of the future

city, though not itself the reality. Of this city which served as an

image, and of that free city it typified, Paul writes to the Galatians

in these terms: "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye

not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the

one by a bond maid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the

bond woman was born after the flesh, but he of the free woman was by

promise. Which things are an allegory: [770] for these are the two

covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage,

which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth

to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But

Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For

it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and

cry, thou that travailest not, for the desolate hath many more children

than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are

the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh

persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond woman and

her son: for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son

of the free woman. And we, brethren, are not children of the bond

woman, but of the free, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us

free." [771] This interpretation of the passage, handed down to us

with apostolic authority, shows how we ought to understand the

Scriptures of the two covenants--the old and the new. One portion of

the earthly city became an image of the heavenly city, not having a

significance of its own, but signifying another city, and therefore

serving, or "being in bondage." For it was founded not for its own

sake, but to prefigure another city; and this shadow of a city was also

itself foreshadowed by another preceding figure. For Sarah's handmaid

Agar, and her son, were an image of this image. And as the shadows

were to pass away when the full light came, Sarah, the free woman, who

prefigured the free city (which again was also prefigured in another

way by that shadow of a city Jerusalem), therefore said, "Cast out the

bond woman and her son; for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir

with my son Isaac," or, as the apostle says, "with the son of the free

woman." In the earthly city, then, we find two things--its own obvious

presence, and its symbolic presentation of the heavenly city. Now

citizens are begotten to the earthly city by nature vitiated by sin,

but to the heavenly city by grace freeing nature from sin; whence the

former are called "vessels of wrath," the latter "vessels of mercy."

[772] And this was typified in the two sons of Abraham,--Ishmael, the

son of Agar the handmaid, being born according to the flesh, while

Isaac was born of the free woman Sarah, according to the promise.

Both, indeed, were of Abraham's seed; but the one was begotten by

natural law, the other was given by gracious promise. In the one

birth, human action is revealed; in the other, a divine kindness comes

to light.

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[770] Comp. De Trin. xv. c. 15.

[771] Gal. iv. 21-31.

[772] Rom. ix. 22, 23.

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Chapter 3.--That Sarah's Barrenness was Made Productive by God's Grace.

Sarah, in fact, was barren; and, despairing of offspring, and being

resolved that she would have at least through her handmaid that

blessing she saw she could not in her own person procure, she gave her

handmaid to her husband, to whom she herself had been unable to bear

children. From him she required this conjugal duty, exercising her own

right in another's womb. And thus Ishmael was born according to the

common law of human generation, by sexual intercourse. Therefore it is

said that he was born "according to the flesh,"--not because such

births are not the gifts of God, nor His handiwork, whose creative

wisdom "reaches," as it is written, "from one end to another mightily,

and sweetly doth she order all things," [773] but because, in a case in

which the gift of God, which was not due to men and was the gratuitous

largess of grace, was to be conspicuous, it was requisite that a son be

given in a way which no effort of nature could compass. Nature denies

children to persons of the age which Abraham and Sarah had now reached;

besides that, in Sarah's case, she was barren even in her prime. This

nature, so constituted that offspring could not be looked for,

symbolized the nature of the human race vitiated by sin and by just

consequence condemned, which deserves no future felicity. Fitly,

therefore, does Isaac, the child of promise, typify the children of

grace, the citizens of the free city, who dwell together in everlasting

peace, in which self-love and self-will have no place, but a

ministering love that rejoices in the common joy of all, of many hearts

makes one, that is to say, secures a perfect concord.

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[773] Wisdom viii. 1.

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Chapter 4.--Of the Conflict and Peace of the Earthly City.

But the earthly city, which shall not be everlasting (for it will no

longer be a city when it has been committed to the extreme penalty),

has its good in this world, and rejoices in it with such joy as such

things can afford. But as this is not a good which can discharge its

devotees of all distresses, this city is often divided against itself

by litigations, wars, quarrels, and such victories as are either

life-destroying or short-lived. For each part of it that arms against

another part of it seeks to triumph over the nations through itself in

bondage to vice. If, when it has conquered, it is inflated with pride,

its victory is life-destroying; but if it turns its thoughts upon the

common casualties of our mortal condition, and is rather anxious

concerning the disasters that may befall it than elated with the

successes already achieved, this victory, though of a higher kind, is

still only short-lived; for it cannot abidingly rule over those whom it

has victoriously subjugated. But the things which this city desires

cannot justly be said to be evil, for it is itself, in its own kind,

better than all other human good. For it desires earthly peace for the

sake of enjoying earthly goods, and it makes war in order to attain to

this peace; since, if it has conquered, and there remains no one to

resist it, it enjoys a peace which it had not while there were opposing

parties who contested for the enjoyment of those things which were too

small to satisfy both. This peace is purchased by toilsome wars; it is

obtained by what they style a glorious victory. Now, when victory

remains with the party which had the juster cause, who hesitates to

congratulate the victor, and style it a desirable peace? These things,

then, are good things, and without doubt the gifts of God. But if they

neglect the better things of the heavenly city, which are secured by

eternal victory and peace never-ending, and so inordinately covet these

present good things that they believe them to be the only desirable

things, or love them better than those things which are believed to be

better,--if this be so, then it is necessary that misery follow and

ever increase.

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Chapter 5.--Of the Fratricidal Act of the Founder of the Earthly City,

and the Corresponding Crime of the Founder of Rome.

Thus the founder of the earthly city was a fratricide. Overcome with

envy, he slew his own brother, a citizen of the eternal city, and a

sojourner on earth. So that we cannot be surprised that this first

specimen, or, as the Greeks say, archetype of crime, should, long

afterwards, find a corresponding crime at the foundation of that city

which was destined to reign over so many nations, and be the head of

this earthly city of which we speak. For of that city also, as one of

their poets has mentioned, "the first walls were stained with a

brother's blood," [774] or, as Roman history records, Remus was slain

by his brother Romulus. And thus there is no difference between the

foundation of this city and of the earthly city, unless it be that

Romulus and Remus were both citizens of the earthly city. Both desired

to have the glory of founding the Roman republic, but both could not

have as much glory as if one only claimed it; for he who wished to have

the glory of ruling would certainly rule less if his power were shared

by a living consort. In order, therefore, that the whole glory might

be enjoyed by one, his consort was removed; and by this crime the

empire was made larger indeed, but inferior, while otherwise it would

have been less, but better. Now these brothers, Cain and Abel, were

not both animated by the same earthly desires, nor did the murderer

envy the other because he feared that, by both ruling, his own dominion

would be curtailed,--for Abel was not solicitous to rule in that city

which his brother built,--he was moved by that diabolical, envious

hatred with which the evil regard the good, for no other reason than

because they are good while themselves are evil. For the possession of

goodness is by no means diminished by being shared with a partner

either permanent or temporarily assumed; on the contrary, the

possession of goodness is increased in proportion to the concord and

charity of each of those who share it. In short, he who is unwilling

to share this possession cannot have it; and he who is most willing to

admit others to a share of it will have the greatest abundance to

himself. The quarrel, then, between Romulus and Remus shows how the

earthly city is divided against itself; that which fell out between

Cain and Abel illustrated the hatred that subsists between the two

cities, that of God and that of men. The wicked war with the wicked;

the good also war with the wicked. But with the good, good men, or at

least perfectly good men, cannot war; though, while only going on

towards perfection, they war to this extent, that every good man

resists others in those points in which he resists himself. And in

each individual "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit

against the flesh." [775] This spiritual lusting, therefore, can be

at war with the carnal lust of another man; or carnal lust may be at

war with the spiritual desires of another, in some such way as good and

wicked men are at war; or, still more certainly, the carnal lusts of

two men, good but not yet perfect, contend together, just as the wicked

contend with the wicked, until the health of those who are under the

treatment of grace attains final victory.

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[774] Lucan, Phar. i. 95.

[775] Gal. v. 17.

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Chapter 6.--Of the Weaknesses Which Even the Citizens of the City of

God Suffer During This Earthly Pilgrimage in Punishment of Sin, and of

Which They are Healed by God's Care.

This sickliness--that is to say, that disobedience of which we spoke in

the fourteenth book--is the punishment of the first disobedience. It

is therefore not nature, but vice; and therefore it is said to the good

who are growing in grace, and living in this pilgrimage by faith, "Bear

ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." [776] ^

In like manner it is said elsewhere, "Warn them that are unruly,

comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all

men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man." [777] And in

another place, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are

spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering

thyself, lest thou also be tempted." [778] And elsewhere, "Let not

the sun go down upon your wrath." [779] And in the Gospel, "If thy

brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between

thee and him alone." [780] So too of sins which may create scandal

the apostle says, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also

may fear." [781] For this purpose, and that we may keep that peace

without which no man can see the Lord, [782] many precepts are given

which carefully inculcate mutual forgiveness; among which we may number

that terrible word in which the servant is ordered to pay his formerly

remitted debt of ten thousand talents, because he did not remit to his

fellow-servant his debt of two hundred pence. To which parable the

Lord Jesus added the words, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do

also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his

brother." [783] It is thus the citizens of the city of God are healed

while still they sojourn in this earth and sigh for the peace of their

heavenly country. The Holy Spirit, too, works within, that the

medicine externally applied may have some good result. Otherwise, even

though God Himself make use of the creatures that are subject to Him,

and in some human form address our human senses, whether we receive

those impressions in sleep or in some external appearance, still, if He

does not by His own inward grace sway and act upon the mind, no

preaching of the truth is of any avail. But this God does,

distinguishing between the vessels of wrath and the vessels of mercy,

by His own very secret but very just providence. When He Himself aids

the soul in His own hidden and wonderful ways, and the sin which dwells

in our members, and is, as the apostle teaches, rather the punishment

of sin, does not reign in our mortal body to obey the lusts of it, and

when we no longer yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness,

[784] then the soul is converted from its own evil and selfish desires,

and, God possessing it, it possesses itself in peace even in this life,

and afterwards, with perfected health and endowed with im mortality,

will reign without sin in peace everlasting.

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[776] Gal. vi. 2.

[777] 1 Thess. v. 14, 15.

[778] Gal. vi. 1.

[779] Eph. iv. 26.

[780] Matt. xviii. 15.

[781] 1 Tim. v. 20.

[782] Heb. xii. 14.

[783] Matt. xviii. 35.

[784] Rom. vi. 12, 13.

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Chapter 7.--Of the Cause of Cain's Crime and His Obstinacy, Which Not

Even the Word of God Could Subdue.

But though God made use of this very mode of address which we have been

endeavoring to explain, and spoke to Cain in that form by which He was

wont to accommodate Himself to our first parents and converse with them

as a companion, what good influence had it on Cain? Did he not fulfill

his wicked intention of killing his brother even after he was warned by

God's voice? For when God had made a distinction between their

sacrifices, neglecting Cain's, regarding Abel's, which was doubtless

intimated by some visible sign to that effect; and when God had done so

because the works of the one were evil but those of his brother good,

Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. For thus it is

written: "And the Lord said unto Cain, Why are thou wroth, and why is

thy countenance fallen? If thou offerest rightly, but dost not rightly

distinguish, hast thou not sinned? Fret not thyself, for unto thee

shall be his turning, and thou shalt rule over him." [785] In this

admonition administered by God to Cain, that clause indeed, "If thou

offerest rightly, but dost not rightly distinguish, hast thou not

sinned?" is obscure, inasmuch as it is not apparent for what reason or

purpose it was spoken, and many meanings have been put upon it, as each

one who discusses it attempts to interpret it according to the rule of

faith. The truth is, that a sacrifice is "rightly offered" when it is

offered to the true God, to whom alone we must sacrifice. And it is

"not rightly distinguished" when we do not rightly distinguish the

places or seasons or materials of the offering, or the person offering,

or the person to whom it is presented, or those to whom it is

distributed for food after the oblation. Distinguishing [786] is here

used for discriminating,--whether when an offering is made in a place

where it ought not or of a material which ought to be offered not there

but elsewhere; or when an offering is made at a wrong time, or of a

material suitable not then but at some other time; or when that is

offered which in no place nor any time ought to be offered; or when a

man keeps to himself choicer specimens of the same kind than he offers

to God; or when he or any other who may not lawfully partake profanely

eats of the oblation. In which of these particulars Cain displeased

God, it is difficult to determine. But the Apostle John, speaking of

these brothers, says, "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and

slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works

were evil, and his brother's righteous." [787] He thus gives us to

understand that God did not respect his offering because it was not

rightly "distinguished" in this, that he gave to God something of his

own but kept himself to himself. For this all do who follow not God's

will but their own, who live not with an upright but a crooked heart,

and yet offer to God such gifts as they suppose will procure from Him

that He aid them not by healing but by gratifying their evil passions.

And this is the characteristic of the earthly city, that it worships

God or gods who may aid it in reigning victoriously and peacefully on

earth not through love of doing good, but through lust of rule. The

good use the world that they may enjoy God: the wicked, on the

contrary, that they may enjoy the world would fain use God,--those of

them, at least, who have attained to the belief that He is and takes an

interest in human affairs. For they who have not yet attained even to

this belief are still at a much lower level. Cain, then, when he saw

that God had respect to his brother's sacrifice, but not to his own,

should have humbly chosen his good brother as his example, and not

proudly counted him his rival. But he was wroth, and his countenance

fell. This angry regret for another person's goodness, even his

brother's, was charged upon him by God as a great sin. And He accused

him of it in the interrogation, "Why are thou wroth, and why is thy

countenance fallen?" For God saw that he envied his brother, and of

this He accused him. For to men, from whom the heart of their fellow

is hid, it might be doubtful and quite uncertain whether that sadness

bewailed his own wickedness by which, as he had learned, he had

displeased God, or his brother's goodness, which had pleased God, and

won His favorable regard to his sacrifice. But God, in giving the

reason why He refused to accept Cain's offering and why Cain should

rather have been displeased at himself than at his brother, shows him

that though he was unjust in "not rightly distinguishing," that is, not

rightly living and being unworthy to have his offering received, he was

more unjust by far in hating his just brother without a cause.

Yet He does not dismiss him without counsel, holy, just, and good.

"Fret not thyself," He says, "for unto thee shall be his turning, and

thou shall rule over him." Over his brother, does He mean? Most

certainly not. Over what, then, but sin? For He had said, "Thou hast

sinned," and then He added, "Fret not thyself, for to thee shall be its

turning, and thou shall rule over it." [788] And the "turning" of sin

to the man can be understood of his conviction that the guilt of sin

can be laid at no other man's door but his own. For this is the

health-giving medicine of penitence, and the fit plea for pardon; so

that, when it is said, "To thee its turning," we must not supply "shall

be," but we must read, "To thee let its turning be," understanding it

as a command, not as a prediction. For then shall a man rule over his

sin when he does not prefer it to himself and defend it, but subjects

it by repentance; otherwise he that becomes protector of it shall

surely become its prisoner. But if we understand this sin to be that

carnal concupiscence of which the apostle says, "The flesh lusteth

against the spirit," [789] among the fruits of which lust he names

envy, by which assuredly Cain was stung and excited to destroy his

brother, then we may properly supply the words "shall be," and read,

"To thee shall be its turning, and thou shalt rule over it." For when

the carnal part which the apostle calls sin, in that place where he

says, "It is not I who do it, but sin that dwelleth in me," [790] that

part which the philosophers also call vicious, and which ought not to

lead the mind, but which the mind ought to rule and restrain by reason

from illicit motions,--when, then, this part has been moved to

perpetrate any wickedness, if it be curbed and if it obey the word of

the apostle, "Yield not your members instruments of unrighteousness

unto sin," [791] it is turned towards the mind and subdued and

conquered by it, so that reason rules over it as a subject. It was

this which God enjoined on him who was kindled with the fire of envy

against his brother, so that he sought to put out of the way him whom

he should have set as an example. "Fret not thyself," or compose

thyself, He says: withhold thy hand from crime; let not sin reign in

your mortal body to fulfill it in the lusts thereof, nor yield your

members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. "For to thee shall be

its turning," so long as you do not encourage it by giving it the rein,

but bridle it by quenching its fire. "And thou shalt rule over it;"

for when it is not allowed any external actings, it yields itself to

the rule of the governing mind and righteous will, and ceases from even

internal motions. There is something similar said in the same divine

book of the woman, when God questioned and judged them after their sin,

and pronounced sentence on them all,--the devil in the form of the

serpent, the woman and her husband in their own persons. For when He

had said to her, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy

conception; in sorrow shall thou bring forth children," then He added,

"and thy turning shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

[792] What is said to Cain about his sin, or about the vicious

concupiscence of his flesh, is here said of the woman who had sinned;

and we are to understand that the husband is to rule his wife as the

soul rules the flesh. And therefore, says the apostle, "He that loveth

his wife, loveth himself; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh."

[793] This flesh, then, is to be healed, because it belongs to

ourselves: is not to be abandoned to destruction as if it were alien

to our nature. But Cain received that counsel of God in the spirit of

one who did not wish to amend. In fact, the vice of envy grew stronger

in him; and, having entrapped his brother, he slew him. Such was the

founder of the earthly city. He was also a figure of the Jews who slew

Christ the Shepherd of the flock of men, prefigured by Abel the

shepherd of sheep: but as this is an allegorical and prophetical

matter, I forbear to explain it now; besides, I remember that I have

made some remarks upon it in writing against Faustus the Manich�an.

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[785] Gen. iv. 6, 7.

[786] Literally, "division."

[787] 1 John iii. 12.

[788] We alter the pronoun to suit Augustin's interpretation.

[789] Gal. v. 17.

[790] Rom. vii. 17.

[791] Rom. vi. 13.

[792] Gen. iii. 16.

[793] Eph. v. 28, 29.

[794] C. Faustum. Man. xii. c. 9.

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Chapter 8.--What Cain's Reason Was for Building a City So Early in the

History of the Human Race.

At present it is the history which I aim at defending, that Scripture

may not be reckoned incredible when it relates that one man built a

city at a time in which there seem to have been but four men upon

earth, or rather indeed but three, after one brother slew the

other,--to wit, the first man the father of all, and Cain himself, and

his son Enoch, by whose name the city was itself called. But they who

are moved by this consideration forget to take into account that the

writer of the sacred history does not necessarily mention all the men

who might be alive at that time, but those only whom the scope of his

work required him to name. The design of that writer (who in this

matter was the instrument of the Holy Ghost) was to descend to Abraham

through the successions of ascertained generations propagated from one

man, and then to pass from Abraham's seed to the people of God, in

whom, separated as they were from other nations, was prefigured and

predicted all that relates to the city whose reign is eternal, and to

its king and founder Christ, which things were foreseen in the Spirit

as destined to come; yet neither is this object so effected as that

nothing is said of the other society of men which we call the earthly

city, but mention is made of it so far as seemed needful to enhance the

glory of the heavenly city by contrast to its opposite. Accordingly,

when the divine Scripture, in mentioning the number of years which

those men lived, concludes its account of each man of whom it speaks,

with the words, "And he begat sons and daughters, and all his days were

so and so, and he died," are we to understand that, because it does not

name those sons and daughters, therefore, during that long term of

years over which one lifetime extended in those early days, there might

not have been born very many men, by whose united numbers not one but

several cities might have been built? But it suited the purpose of

God, by whose inspiration these histories were composed, to arrange and

distinguish from the first these two societies in their several

generations,--that on the one side the generations of men, that is to

say, of those who live according to man, and on the other side the

generations of the sons of God, that is to say, of men living according

to God, might be traced down together and yet apart from one another as

far as the deluge, at which point their dissociation and association

are exhibited: their dissociation, inasmuch as the generations of both

lines are recorded in separate tables, the one line descending from the

fratricide Cain, the other from Seth, who had been born to Adam instead

of him whom his brother slew; their association, inasmuch as the good

so deteriorated that the whole race became of such a character that it

was swept away by the deluge, with the exception of one just man, whose

name was Noah, and his wife and three sons and three daughters-in-law,

which eight persons were alone deemed worthy to escape from that

desolating visitation which destroyed all men.

Therefore, although it is written, "And Cain knew his wife, and she

conceived and bare Enoch, and he builded a city and called the name of

the city after the name of his son Enoch," [795] it does not follow

that we are to believe this to have been his first-born; for we cannot

suppose that this is proved by the expression "he knew his wife," as if

then for the first time he had had intercourse with her. For in the

case of Adam, the father of all, this expression is used not only when

Cain, who seems to have been his first-born, was conceived, but also

afterwards the same Scripture says, "Adam knew Eve his wife, and she

conceived, and bare a son, and called his name Seth." [796] Whence it

is obvious that Scripture employs this expression neither always when a

birth is recorded nor then only when the birth of a first-born is

mentioned. Neither is it necessary to suppose that Enoch was Cain's

first-born because he named his city after him. For it is quite

possible that though he had other sons, yet for some reason the father

loved him more than the rest. Judah was not the first-born, though he

gives his name to Jud�a and the Jews. But even though Enoch was the

first-born of the city's founder, that is no reason for supposing that

the father named the city after him as soon as he was born; for at that

time he, being but a solitary man, could not have founded a civic

community, which is nothing else than a multitude of men bound together

by some associating tie. But when his family increased to such numbers

that he had quite a population, then it became possible to him both to

build a city, and give it, when founded, the name of his son. For so

long was the life of those antediluvians, that he who lived the

shortest time of those whose years are mentioned in Scripture attained

to the age of 753 years. [797] And though no one attained the age of

a thousand years, several exceeded the age of nine hundred. Who then

can doubt that during the lifetime of one man the human race might be

so multiplied that there would be a population to build and occupy not

one but several cities? And this might very readily be conjectured

from the fact that from one man, Abraham, in not much more than four

hundred years, the numbers of the Hebrew race so increased, that in the

exodus of that people from Egypt there are recorded to have been six

hundred thousand men capable of bearing arms, [798] and this over and

above the Idum�ans, who, though not numbered with Israel's descendants,

were yet sprung from his brother, also a grandson of Abraham; and over

and above the other nations which were of the same stock of Abraham,

though not through Sarah,--that is, his descendants by Hagar and

Keturah, the Ishmaelites, Midianites, etc.

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[795] Gen. iv. 17.

[796] Gen. iv. 25.

[797] Lamech, according to the LXX.

[798] Ex. xii. 37.

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Chapter 9.--Of the Long Life and Greater Stature of the Antediluvians.

Wherefore no one who considerately weighs facts will doubt that Cain

might have built a city, and that a large one, when it is observed how

prolonged were the lives of men, unless perhaps some sceptic take

exception to this very length of years which our authors ascribe to the

antediluvians and deny that this is credible. And so, too, they do not

believe that the size of men's bodies was larger then than now, though

the most esteemed of their own poets, Virgil, asserts the same, when he

speaks of that huge stone which had been fixed as a landmark, and which

a strong man of those ancient times snatched up as he fought, and ran,

and hurled, and cast it,--

"Scarce twelve strong men of later mould

That weight could on their necks uphold." [799]

thus declaring his opinion that the earth then produced mightier men.

And if in the more recent times, how much more in the ages before the

world-renowned deluge? But the large size of the primitive human body

is often proved to the incredulous by the exposure of sepulchres,

either through the wear of time or the violence of torrents or some

accident, and in which bones of incredible size have been found or have

rolled out. I myself, along with some others, saw on the shore at

Utica a man's molar tooth of such a size, that if it were cut down into

teeth such as we have, a hundred, I fancy, could have been made out of

it. But that, I believe, belonged to some giant. For though the

bodies of ordinary men were then larger than ours, the giants surpassed

all in stature. And neither in our own age nor any other have there

been altogether wanting instances of gigantic stature, though they may

be few. The younger Pliny, a most learned man, maintains that the

older the world becomes, the smaller will be the bodies of men. [800]

And he mentions that Homer in his poems often lamented the same

decline; and this he does not laugh at as a poetical figment, but in

his character of a recorder of natural wonders accepts it as

historically true. But, as I said, the bones which are from time to

time discovered prove the size of the bodies of the ancients, [801] and

will do so to future ages, for they are slow to decay. But the length

of an antediluvian's life cannot now be proved by any such monumental

evidence. But we are not on this account to withhold our faith from

the sacred history, whose statements of past fact we are the more

inexcusable in discrediting, as we see the accuracy of its prediction

of what was future. And even that same Pliny [802] tells us that there

is still a nation in which men live 200 years. If, then, in places

unknown to us, men are believed to have a length of days which is quite

beyond our own experience, why should we not believe the same of times

distant from our own? Or are we to believe that in other places there

is what is not here, while we do not believe that in other times there

has been anything but what is now?

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[799] Virgil, �n., xii. 899, 900. Compare the Iliad, v. 302, and

Juvenal, xv. 65 et seqq. "Terra malos homines nunc educat

atque pusillos."

[800] Plin. Hist. Nat.. vii. 16.

[801] See the account given by Herodotus (i. 67) of the discovery of

the bones of Orestes, which, as the story goes, gave a stature of seven

cubits.

[802] Pliny, Hist. Nat. vii. 49, merely reports what he had read in

Hellanicus about the Epirotes of Etolia.

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Chapter 10.--Of the Different Computation of the Ages of the

Antediluvians, Given by the Hebrew Manuscripts and by Our Own. [803]

Wherefore, although there is a discrepancy for which I cannot account

between our manuscripts and the Hebrew, in the very number of years

assigned to the antediluvians, yet the discrepancy is not so great that

they do not agree about their longevity. For the very first man, Adam,

before he begot his son Seth, is in our manuscripts found to have lived

230 years, but in the Hebrew mss. 130. But after he begot Seth, our

copies read that he lived 700 years, while the Hebrew give 800. And

thus, when the two periods are taken together, the sum agrees. And so

throughout the succeeding generations, the period before the father

begets a son is always made shorter by 100 years in the Hebrew, but the

period after his son is begotten is longer by 100 years in the Hebrew

than in our copies. And thus, taking the two periods together, the

result is the same in both. And in the sixth generation there is no

discrepancy at all. In the seventh, however, of which Enoch is the

representative, who is recorded to have been translated without death

because he pleased God, there is the same discrepancy as in the first

five generations, 100 years more being ascribed to him by our mss.

before he begat a son. But still the result agrees; for according to

both documents he lived before he was translated 365 years. In the

eighth generation the discrepancy is less than in the others, and of a

different kind. For Methuselah, whom Enoch begat, lived, before he

begat his successor, not 100 years less, but 100 years more, according

to the Hebrew reading; and in our mss. again these years are added to

the period after he begat his son; so that in this case also the

sum-total is the same. And it is only in the ninth generation, that

is, in the age of Lamech, Methuselah's son and Noah's father, that

there is a discrepancy in the sum total; and even in this case it is

slight. For the Hebrew mss. represent him as living twenty-four years

more than ours assign to him. For before he begat his son, who was

called Noah, six years fewer are given to him by the Hebrew mss. than

by ours; but after he begat this son, they give him thirty years more

than ours; so that, deducting the former six, there remains, as we

said, a surplus of twenty-four.

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[803] Our own Mss., of which Augustin here speaks, were the Latin

versions of the Septuagint used by the Church before Jerome's was

received; the "Hebrew Mss." were the versions made from the Hebrew

text. Compare De Doct. Christ. ii. 15 et seqq.

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Chapter 11.--Of Methuselah's Age, Which Seems to Extend Fourteen Years

Beyond the Deluge.

From this discrepancy between the Hebrew books and our own arises the

well-known question as to the age of Methuselah; [804] for it is

computed that he lived for fourteen years after the deluge, though

Scripture relates that of all who were then upon the earth only the

eight souls in the ark escaped destruction by the flood, and of these

Methuselah was not one. For, according to our books, Methuselah,

before he begat the son whom he called Lamech, lived 167 years; then

Lamech himself, before his son Noah was born, lived 188 years, which

together make 355 years. Add to these the age of Noah at the date of

the deluge, 600 years, and this gives a total of 955 from the birth of

Methuselah to the year of the flood. Now all the years of the life of

Methuselah are computed to be 969; for when he had lived 167 years, and

had begotten his son Lamech, he then lived after this 802 years, which

makes a total, as we said, of 969 years. From this, if we deduct 955

years from the birth of Methuselah to the flood, there remains fourteen

years, which he is supposed to have lived after the flood. And

therefore some suppose that, though he was not on earth (in which it is

agreed that every living thing which could not naturally live in water

perished), he was for a time with his father, who had been translated,

and that he lived there till the flood had passed away. This

hypothesis they adopt, that they may not cast a slight on the

trustworthiness of versions which the Church has received into a

position of high authority, [805] and because they believe that the

Jewish mss. rather than our own are in error. For they do not admit

that this is a mistake of the translators, but maintain that there is a

falsified statement in the original, from which, through the Greek, the

Scripture has been translated into our own tongue. They say that it is

not credible that the seventy translators, who simultaneously and

unanimously produced one rendering, could have erred, or, in a case in

which no interest of theirs was involved, could have falsified their

translation; but that the Jews, envying us our translation of their Law

and Prophets, have made alterations in their texts so as to undermine

the authority of ours. This opinion or suspicion let each man adopt

according to his own judgment. Certain it is that Methuselah did not

survive the flood, but died in the very year it occurred, if the

numbers given in the Hebrew mss. are true. My own opinion regarding

the seventy translators I will, with God's help, state more carefully

in its own place, when I have come down (following the order which this

work requires) to that period in which their translation was executed.

[806] For the present question, it is enough that, according to our

versions, the men of that age had lives so long as to make it quite

possible that, during the lifetime of the first-born of the two sole

parents then on earth, the human race multiplied sufficiently to form a

community.

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[804] Jerome (De Qu�st. Heb. in Gen.) says it was a question famous in

all the churches--Vives.

[805] "Quos in auctoritatem celebriorum Ecclesia suscepit."

[806] See below, book xviii. c. 42-44.

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Chapter 12.--Of the Opinion of Those Who Do Not Believe that in These

Primitive Times Men Lived So Long as is Stated.

For they are by no means to be listened to who suppose that in those

times years were differently reckoned, and were so short that one of

our years may be supposed to be equal to ten of theirs. So that they

say, when we read or hear that some man lived 900 years, we should

understand ninety, ten of those years making but one of ours, and ten

of ours equalling 100 of theirs. Consequently, as they suppose, Adam

was twenty-three years of age when he begat Seth, and Seth himself was

twenty years and six months old when his son Enos was born, though the

Scripture calls these months 205 years. For, on the hypothesis of

those whose opinion we are explaining, it was customary to divide one

such year as we have into ten parts, and to call each part a year. And

each of these parts was composed of six days squared; because God

finished His works in six days, that He might rest the seventh. Of

this I disputed according to my ability in the eleventh book. [807]

Now six squared, or six times six, gives thirty-six days; and this

multiplied by ten amounts to 360 days, or twelve lunar months. As for

the five remaining days which are needed to complete the solar year,

and for the fourth part of a day, which requires that into every fourth

or leap-year a day be added, the ancients added such days as the Romans

used to call "intercalary," in order to complete the number of the

years. So that Enos, Seth's son, was nineteen years old when his son

Cainan was born, though Scripture calls these years 190. And so

through all the generations in which the ages of the antediluvians are

given, we find in our versions that almost no one begat a son at the

age of 100 or under, or even at the age of 120 or thereabouts; but the

youngest fathers are recorded to have been 160 years old and upwards.

And the reason of this, they say, is that no one can beget children

when he is ten years old, the age spoken of by those men as 100, but

that sixteen is the age of puberty, and competent now to propagate

offspring; and this is the age called by them 160. And that it may not

be thought incredible that in these days the year was differently

computed from our own, they adduce what is recorded by several writers

of history, that the Egyptians had a year of four months, the

Acarnanians of six, and the Lavinians of thirteen months. [808] The

younger Pliny, after mentioning that some writers reported that one man

had lived 152 years, another ten more, others 200, others 300, that

some had even reached 500 and 600, and a few 800 years of age, gave it

as his opinion that all this must be ascribed to mistaken computation.

For some, he says, make summer and winter each a year; others make each

season a year, like the Arcadians, whose years, he says, were of three

months. He added, too, that the Egyptians, of whose little years of

four months we have spoken already, sometimes terminated their year at

the wane of each moon; so that with them there are produced lifetimes

of 1000 years.

By these plausible arguments certain persons, with no desire to weaken

the credit of this sacred history, but rather to facilitate belief in

it by removing the difficulty of such incredible longevity, have been

themselves persuaded, and think they act wisely in persuading others,

that in these days the year was so brief that ten of their years equal

but one of ours, while ten of ours equal 100 of theirs. But there is

the plainest evidence to show that this is quite false. Before

producing this evidence, however, it seems right to mention a

conjecture which is yet more plausible. From the Hebrew manuscripts we

could at once refute this confident statement; for in them Adam is

found to have lived not 230 but 130 years before he begat his third

son. If, then, this mean thirteen years by our ordinary computation,

then he must have begotten his first son when he was only twelve or

thereabouts. Who can at this age beget children according to the

ordinary and familiar course of nature? But not to mention him, since

it is possible he may have been able to beget his like as soon as he

was created,--for it is not credible that he was created so little as

our infants are,--not to mention him, his son was not 205 years old

when he begot Enos, as our versions have it, but 105, and consequently,

according to this idea, was not eleven years old. But what shall I say

of his son Cainan, who, though by our version 170 years old, was by the

Hebrew text seventy when he beget Mahalaleel? If seventy years in

those times meant only seven of our years, what man of seven years old

begets children?

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[807] C. 8.

[808] On this subject see Wilkinson's note to the second book

(appendix) of Rawlinson's Herodotus, where all available reference are

given.

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Chapter 13.--Whether, in Computing Years, We Ought to Follow the Hebrew

or the Septuagint.

But if I say this, I shall presently be answered, It is one of the

Jews' lies. This, however, we have disposed of above, showing that it

cannot be that men of so just a reputation as the seventy translators

should have falsified their version. However, if I ask them which of

the two is more credible, that the Jewish nation, scattered far and

wide, could have unanimously conspired to forge this lie, and so,

through envying others the authority of their Scriptures, have deprived

themselves of their verity; or that seventy men, who were also

themselves Jews, shut up in one place (for Ptolemy king of Egypt had

got them together for this work), should have envied foreign nations

that same truth, and by common consent inserted these errors: who does

not see which can be more naturally and readily believed? But far be

it from any prudent man to believe either that the Jews, however

malicious and wrong-headed, could have tampered with so many and so

widely-dispersed manuscripts; or that those renowned seventy

individuals had any common purpose to grudge the truth to the nations.

One must therefore more plausibly maintain, that when first their

labors began to be transcribed from the copy in Ptolemy's library, some

such misstatement might find its way into the first copy made, and from

it might be disseminated far and wide; and that this might arise from

no fraud, but from a mere copyist's error. This is a sufficiently

plausible account of the difficulty regarding Methuselah's life, and of

that other case in which there is a difference in the total of

twenty-four years. But in those cases in which there is a methodical

resemblance in the falsification, so that uniformly the one version

allots to the period before a son and successor is born 100 years more

than the other, and to the period subsequent 100 years less, and vice

vers�, so that the totals may agree,--and this holds true of the first,

second, third, fourth, fifth, and seventh generations,--in these cases

error seems to have, if we may say so, a certain kind of constancy, and

savors not of accident, but of design.

Accordingly, that diversity of numbers which distinguishes the Hebrew

from the Greek and Latin copies of Scripture, and which consists of a

uniform addition and deduction of 100 years in each lifetime for

several consecutive generations, is to be attributed neither to the

malice of the Jews nor to men so diligent and prudent as the seventy

translators, but to the error of the copyist who was first allowed to

transcribe the manuscript from the library of the above-mentioned

king. For even now, in cases where numbers contribute nothing to the

easier comprehension or more satisfactory knowledge of anything, they

are both carelessly transcribed, and still more carelessly emended.

For who will trouble himself to learn how many thousand men the several

tribes of Israel contained? He sees no resulting benefit of such

knowledge. Or how many men are there who are aware of the vast

advantage that lies hid in this knowledge? But in this case, in which

during so many consecutive generations 100 years are added in one

manuscript where they are not reckoned in the other, and then, after

the birth of the son and successor, the years which were wanting are

added, it is obvious that the copyist who contrived this arrangement

designed to insinuate that the antediluvians lived an excessive number

of years only because each year was excessively brief, and that he

tried to draw the attention to this fact by his statement of their age

of puberty at which they became able to beget children. For, lest the

incredulous might stumble at the difficulty of so long a lifetime, he

insinuated that 100 of their years equalled but ten of ours; and this

insinuation he conveyed by adding 100 years whenever he found the age

below 160 years or thereabouts, deducting these years again from the

period after the son's birth, that the total might harmonize. By this

means he intended to ascribe the generation of offspring to a fit age,

without diminishing the total sum of years ascribed to the lifetime of

the individuals. And the very fact that in the sixth generation he

departed from this uniform practice, inclines us all the rather to

believe that when the circumstance we have referred to required his

alterations, he made them; seeing that when this circumstance did not

exist, he made no alteration. For in the same generation he found in

the Hebrew ms., that Jared lived before he begat Enoch 162 years,

which, according to the short year computation, is sixteen years and

somewhat less than two months, an age capable of procreation; and

therefore it was not necessary to add 100 short years, and so make the

age twenty-six years of the usual length; and of course it was not

necessary to deduct, after the son's birth, years which he had not

added before it. And thus it comes to pass that in this instance there

is no variation between the two manuscripts.

This is corroborated still further by the fact that in the eighth

generation, while the Hebrew books assign 182 [809] years to Methuselah

before Lamech's birth, ours assign to him twenty less, though usually

100 years are added to this period; then, after Lamech's birth, the

twenty years are restored, so as to equalize the total in the two

books. For if his design was that these 170 years be understood as

seventeen, so as to suit the age of puberty, as there was no need for

him adding anything, so there was none for his subtracting anything;

for in this case he found an age fit for the generation of children,

for the sake of which he was in the habit of adding those 100 years in

cases where he did not find the age already sufficient. This

difference of twenty years we might, indeed, have supposed had happened

accidentally, had he not taken care to restore them afterwards as he

had deducted them from the period before, so that there might be no

deficiency in the total. Or are we perhaps to suppose that there was

the still more astute design of concealing the deliberate and uniform

addition of 100 years to the first period and their deduction from the

subsequent period--did he design to conceal this by doing something

similar, that is to say, adding and deducting, not indeed a century,

but some years, even in a case in which there was no need for his doing

so? But whatever may be thought of this, whether it be believed that

he did so or not, whether, in fine, it be so or not, I would have no

manner of doubt that when any diversity is found in the books, since

both cannot be true to fact, we do well to believe in preference that

language out of which the translation was made into another by

translators. For there are three Greek mss., one Latin, and one

Syriac, which agree with one another, and in all of these Methuselah is

said to have died six years before the deluge.

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[809] One hundred and eighty-seven is the number given in the Hebrew,

and one hundred and sixty-seven in the Septuagint; but notwithstanding

the confusion, the argument of Augustin is easily followed.

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Chapter 14.--That the Years in Those Ancient Times Were of the Same

Length as Our Own.

Let us now see how it can be plainly made out that in the enormously

protracted lives of those men the years were not so short that ten of

their years were equal to only one of ours, but were of as great length

as our own, which are measured by the course of the sun. It is proved

by this, that Scripture states that the flood occurred in the six

hundredth year of Noah's life. But why in the same place is it also

written, "The waters of the flood were upon the earth in the six

hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the twenty-seventh

day of the month," [810] if that very brief year (of which it took ten

to make one of ours) consisted of thirty-six days? For so scant a

year, if the ancient usage dignified it with the name of year, either

has not months, or this month must be three days, so that it may have

twelve of them. How then was it here said, "In the six hundredth year,

the second month, the twenty-seventh day of the month," unless the

months then were of the same length as the months now? For how else

could it be said that the flood began on the twenty-seventh day of the

second month? Then afterwards, at the end of the flood, it is thus

written: "And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the

twenty-seventh day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. And the

waters decreased continually until the eleventh month: on the first

day of the month were the tops of the mountains seen." [811] But if

the months were such as we have, then so were the years. And certainly

months of three days each could not have a twenty-seventh day. Or if

every measure of time was diminished in proportion, and a thirtieth

part of three days was then called a day, then that great deluge, which

is recorded to have lasted forty days and forty nights, was really over

in less than four of our days. Who can away with such foolishness and

absurdity? Far be this error from us,--an error which seeks to build

up our faith in the divine Scriptures on false conjecture only to

demolish our faith at another point. It is plain that the day then was

what it now is, a space of four-and-twenty hours, determined by the

lapse of day and night; the month then equal to the month now, which is

defined by the rise and completion of one moon; the year then equal to

the year now, which is completed by twelve lunar months, with the

addition of five days and a fourth to adjust it with the course of the

sun. It was a year of this length which was reckoned the six hundredth

of Noah's life, and in the second month, the twenty-seventh day of the

month, the flood began,--a flood which, as is recorded, was caused by

heavy rains continuing for forty days, which days had not only two

hours and a little more, but four-and-twenty hours, completing a night

and a day. And consequently those antediluvians lived more than 900

years, which were years as long as those which afterwards Abraham lived

175 of, and after him his son Isaac 180, and his son Jacob nearly 150,

and some time after, Moses 120, and men now seventy or eighty, or not

much longer, of which years it is said, "their strength is labor and

sorrow." [812]

But that discrepancy of numbers which is found to exist between our own

and the Hebrew text does not touch the longevity of the ancients; and

if there is any diversity so great that both versions cannot be true,

we must take our ideas of the real facts from that text out of which

our own version has been translated. However, though any one who

pleases has it in his power to correct this version, yet it is not

unimportant to observe that no one has presumed to emend the Septuagint

from the Hebrew text in the many places where they seem to disagree.

For this difference has not been reckoned a falsification; and for my

own part I am persuaded it ought not to be reckoned so. But where the

difference is not a mere copyist's error, and where the sense is

agreeable to truth and illustrative of truth, we must believe that the

divine Spirit prompted them to give a varying version, not in their

function of translators, but in the liberty of prophesying. And

therefore we find that the apostles justly sanction the Septuagint, by

quoting it as well as the Hebrew when they adduce proofs from the

Scriptures. But as I have promised to treat this subject more

carefully, if God help me, in a more fitting place, I will now go on

with the matter in hand. For there can be no doubt that, the lives of

men being so long, the first-born of the first man could have built a

city,--a city, however, which was earthly, and not that which is called

the city of God, to describe which we have taken in hand this great

work.

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[810] Gen. vii. 10, 11, (in our version the seventeenth day).

[811] Gen. viii. 4, 5.

[812] Ps. xc. 10.

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Chapter 15.--Whether It is Credible that the Men of the Primitive Age

Abstained from Sexual Intercourse Until that Date at Which It is

Recorded that They Begat Children.

Some one, then, will say, Is it to be believed that a man who intended

to beget children, and had no intention of continence, abstained from

sexual intercourse a hundred years and more, or even, according to the

Hebrew version, only a little less, say eighty, seventy, or sixty

years; or, if he did not abstain, was unable to beget offspring? This

question admits of two solutions. For either puberty was so much later

as the whole life was longer, or, which seems to me more likely, it is

not the first-born sons that are here mentioned, but those whose names

were required to fill up the series until Noah was reached, from whom

again we see that the succession is continued to Abraham, and after him

down to that point of time until which it was needful to mark by

pedigree the course of the most glorious city, which sojourns as a

stranger in this world, and seeks the heavenly country. That which is

undeniable is that Cain was the first who was born of man and woman.

For had he not been the first who was added by birth to the two unborn

persons, Adam could not have said what he is recorded to have said, "I

have gotten a man by the Lord." [813] He was followed by Abel, whom

the elder brother slew, and who was the first to show by a kind of

foreshadowing of the sojourning city of God, what iniquitous

persecutions that city would suffer at the hands of wicked and, as it

were, earth-born men, who love their earthly origin, and delight in the

earthly happiness of the earthly city. But how old Adam was when he

begat these sons does not appear. After this the generations diverge,

the one branch deriving from Cain, the other from him whom Adam begot

in the room of Abel slain by his brother, and whom he called Seth,

saying, as it is written, "For God hath raised me up another seed for

Abel whom Cain slew." [814] These two series of generations

accordingly, the one of Cain, the other of Seth, represent the two

cities in their distinctive ranks, the one the heavenly city, which

sojourns on earth, the other the earthly, which gapes after earthly

joys, and grovels in them as if they were the only joys. But though

eight generations, including Adam, are registered before the flood, no

man of Cain's line has his age recorded at which the son who succeeded

him was begotten. For the Spirit of God refused to mark the times

before the flood in the generations of the earthly city, but preferred

to do so in the heavenly line, as if it were more worthy of being

remembered. Further, when Seth was born, the age of his father is

mentioned; but already he had begotten other sons, and who will presume

to say that Cain and Abel were the only ones previously begotten? For

it does not follow that they alone had been begotten of Adam, because

they alone were named in order to continue the series of generations

which it was desirable to mention. For though the names of all the

rest are buried in silence, yet it is said that Adam begot sons and

daughters; and who that cares to be free from the charge of temerity

will dare to say how many his offspring numbered? It was possible

enough that Adam was divinely prompted to say, after Seth was born,

"For God hath raised up to me another seed for Abel," because that son

was to be capable of representing Abel's holiness, not because he was

born first after him in point of time. Then because it is written,

"And Seth lived 205 years," or, according to the Hebrew reading, "105

years, and begat Enos," [815] who but a rash man could affirm that this

was his first-born? Will any man do so to excite our wonder, and cause

us to inquire how for so many years he remained free from sexual

intercourse, though without any purpose of continuing so, or how, if he

did not abstain, he yet had no children? Will any man do so when it is

written of him, "And he begat sons and daughters, and all the days of

Seth were 912 years, and he died?" [816] And similarly regarding

those whose years are afterwards mentioned, it is not disguised that

they begat sons and daughters.

Consequently it does not at all appear whether he who is named as the

son was himself the first begotten. Nay, since it is incredible that

those fathers were either so long in attaining puberty, or could not

get wives, or could not impregnate them, it is also incredible that

those sons were their first-born. But as the writer of the sacred

history designed to descend by well-marked intervals through a series

of generations to the birth and life of Noah, in whose time the flood

occurred, he mentioned not those sons who were first begotten, but

those by whom the succession was handed down.

Let me make this clearer by here inserting an example, in regard to

which no one can have any doubt that what I am asserting is true. The

evangelist Matthew, where he designs to commit to our memories the

generation of the Lord's flesh by a series of parents, beginning from

Abraham and intending to reach David, says, "Abraham begat Isaac;"

[817] why did he not say Ishmael, whom he first begat? Then "Isaac

begat Jacob;" why did he not say Esau, who was the first-born? Simply

because these sons would not have helped him to reach David. Then

follows, "And Jacob begat Judah and his brethren:" was Judah the first

begotten? "Judah," he says, "begat Pharez and Zara;" yet neither were

these twins the first-born of Judah, but before them he had begotten

three other sons. And so in the order of the generations he retained

those by whom he might reach David, so as to proceed onwards to the end

he had in view. And from this we may understand that the antediluvians

who are mentioned were not the first-born, but those through whom the

order of the succeeding generations might be carried on to the

patriarch Noah. We need not, therefore, weary ourselves with

discussing the needless and obscure question as to their lateness of

reaching puberty.

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[813] Gen. iv. 1.

[814] Gen. iv. 25.

[815] Gen. v. 6.

[816] Gen. v. 8.

[817] Matt. i.

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Chapter 16.--Of Marriage Between Blood-Relations, in Regard to Which

the Present Law Could Not Bind the Men of the Earliest Ages.

As, therefore, the human race, subsequently to the first marriage of

the man who was made of dust, and his wife who was made out of his

side, required the union of males and females in order that it might

multiply, and as there were no human beings except those who had been

born of these two, men took their sisters for wives,--an act which was

as certainly dictated by necessity in these ancient days as afterwards

it was condemned by the prohibitions of religion. For it is very

reasonable and just that men, among whom concord is honorable and

useful, should be bound together by various relationships; and one man

should not himself sustain many relationships, but that the various

relationships should be distributed among several, and should thus

serve to bind together the greatest number in the same social

interests. "Father" and "father-in-law" are the names of two

relationships. When, therefore, a man has one person for his father,

another for his father-in-law, friendship extends itself to a larger

number. But Adam in his single person was obliged to hold both

relations to his sons and daughters, for brothers and sisters were

united in marriage. So too Eve his wife was both mother and

mother-in-law to her children of both sexes; while, had there been two

women, one the mother, the other the mother-in-law, the family

affection would have had a wider field. Then the sister herself by

becoming a wife sustained in her single person two relationships,

which, had they been distributed among individuals, one being sister,

and another being wife, the family tie would have embraced a greater

number of persons. But there was then no material for effecting this,

since there were no human beings but the brothers and sisters born of

those two first parents. Therefore, when an abundant population made

it possible, men ought to choose for wives women who were not already

their sisters; for not only would there then be no necessity for

marrying sisters, but, were it done, it would be most abominable. For

if the grandchildren of the first pair, being now able to choose their

cousins for wives, married their sisters, then it would no longer be

only two but three relationships that were held by one man, while each

of these relationships ought to have been held by a separate

individual, so as to bind together by family affection a larger

number. For one man would in that case be both father, and

father-in-law, and uncle [818] to his own children (brother and sister

now man and wife); and his wife would be mother, aunt, and

mother-in-law to them; and they themselves would be not only brother

and sister, and man and wife, but cousins also, being the children of

brother and sister. Now, all these relationships, which combined three

men into one, would have embraced nine persons had each relationship

been held by one individual, so that a man had one person for his

sister, another his wife, another his cousin, another his father,

another his uncle, another his father-in-law, another his mother,

another his aunt, another his mother-in-law; and thus the social bond

would not have been tightened to bind a few, but loosened to embrace a

larger number of relations.

And we see that, since the human race has increased and multiplied,

this is so strictly observed even among the profane worshippers of many

and false gods, that though their laws perversely allow a brother to

marry his sister, [819] yet custom, with a finer morality, prefers to

forego this license; and though it was quite allowable in the earliest

ages of the human race to marry one's sister, it is now abhorred as a

thing which no circumstances could justify. For custom has very great

power either to attract or to shock human feeling. And in this matter,

while it restrains concupiscence within due bounds, the man who

neglects and disobeys it is justly branded as abominable. For if it is

iniquitous to plough beyond our own boundaries through the greed of

gain, is it not much more iniquitous to transgress the recognized

boundaries of morals through sexual lust? And with regard to marriage

in the next degree of consanguinity, marriage between cousins, we have

observed that in our own time the customary morality has prevented this

from being frequent, though the law allows it. It was not prohibited

by divine law, nor as yet had human law prohibited it; nevertheless,

though legitimate, people shrank from it, because it lay so close to

what was illegitimate, and in marrying a cousin seemed almost to marry

a sister,--for cousins are so closely related that they are called

brothers and sisters, [820] and are almost really so. But the ancient

fathers, fearing that near relationship might gradually in the course

of generations diverge, and become distant relationship, or cease to be

relationship at all, religiously endeavored to limit it by the bond of

marriage before it became distant, and thus, as it were, to call it

back when it was escaping them. And on this account, even when the

world was full of people, though they did not choose wives from among

their sisters or half-sisters, yet they preferred them to be of the

same stock as themselves. But who doubts that the modern prohibition

of the marriage even of cousins is the more seemly regulation--not

merely on account of the reason we have been urging, the multiplying of

relationships, so that one person might not absorb two, which might be

distributed to two persons, and so increase the number of people bound

together as a family, but also because there is in human nature I know

not what natural and praiseworthy shamefacedness which restrains us

from desiring that connection which, though for propagation, is yet

lustful and which even conjugal modesty blushes over, with any one to

whom consanguinity bids us render respect?

The sexual intercourse of man and woman, then, is in the case of

mortals a kind of seed-bed of the city; but while the earthly city

needs for its population only generation, the heavenly needs also

regeneration to rid it of the taint of generation. Whether before the

deluge there was any bodily or visible sign of regeneration, such as

was afterwards enjoined upon Abraham when he was circumcised, or what

kind of sign it was, the sacred history does not inform us. But it

does inform us that even these earliest of mankind sacrificed to God,

as appeared also in the case of the two first brothers; Noah, too, is

said to have offered sacrifices to God when he had come forth from the

ark after the deluge. And concerning this subject we have already said

in the foregoing books that the devils arrogate to themselves divinity,

and require sacrifice that they may be esteemed gods, and delight in

these honors on no other account than this, because they know that true

sacrifice is due to the true God.

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[818] His own children being the children of his sister, and therefore

his nephews.

[819] This was allowed by the Egyptians and Athenians, never by the

Romans.

[820] Both in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, though not uniformly, nor in

Latin commonly.

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Chapter 17.--Of the Two Fathers and Leaders Who Sprang from One

Progenitor.

Since, then, Adam was the father of both lines,--the father, that is to

say, both of the line which belonged to the earthly, and of that which

belonged to the heavenly city,--when Abel was slain, and by his death

exhibited a marvellous mystery, there were henceforth two lines

proceeding from two fathers, Cain and Seth, and in those sons of

theirs, whom it behoved to register, the tokens of these two cities

began to appear more distinctly. For Cain begat Enoch, in whose name

he built a city, an earthly one, which was not from home in this world,

but rested satisfied with its temporal peace and happiness. Cain, too,

means "possession;" wherefore at his birth either his father or mother

said," I have gotten a man through God." Then Enoch means

"dedication;" for the earthly city is dedicated in this world in which

it is built, for in this world it finds the end towards which it aims

and aspires. Further, Seth signifies "resurrection," and Enos his son

signifies "man," not as Adam, which also signifies man, but is used in

Hebrew indifferently for man and woman, as it is written, "Male and

female created He them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam,"

[821] leaving no room to doubt that though the woman was distinctively

called Eve, yet the name Adam, meaning man, was common to both. But

Enos means man in so restricted a sense, that Hebrew linguists tell us

it cannot be applied to woman: it is the equivalent of the "child of

the resurrection," when they neither marry nor are given in marriage.

[822] For there shall be no generation in that place to which

regeneration shall have brought us. Wherefore I think it not

immaterial to observe that in those generations which are propagated

from him who is called Seth, although daughters as well as sons are

said to have been begotten, no woman is expressly registered by name;

but in those which sprang from Cain at the very termination to which

the line runs, the last person named as begotten is a woman. For we

read, "Methusael begat Lamech. And Lamech took unto him two wives:

the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. And

Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of the shepherds that dwell in

tents. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all

such as handle the harp and organ. And Zillah, she also bare

Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and

the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah." [823] Here terminate all the

generations of Cain, being eight in number, including Adam,--to wit,

seven from Adam to Lamech, who married two wives, and whose children,

among whom a woman also is named, form the eighth generation. Whereby

it is elegantly signified that the earthly city shall to its

termination have carnal generations proceeding from the intercourse of

males and females. And therefore the wives themselves of the man who

is the last named father of Cain's line, are registered in their own

names,--a practice nowhere followed before the deluge save in Eve's

case. Now as Cain, signifying possession, the founder of the earthly

city, and his son Enoch, meaning dedication, in whose name it was

founded, indicate that this city is earthly both in its beginning and

in its end,--a city in which nothing more is hoped for than can be seen

in this world,--so Seth, meaning resurrection, and being the father of

generations registered apart from the others, we must consider what

this sacred history says of his son.

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[821] Gen. v. 2.

[822] Luke xx. 35, 36.

[823] Gen. iv. 18-22.

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Chapter 18.--The Significance of Abel, Seth, and Enos to Christ and His

Body the Church.

"And to Seth," it is said, "there was born a son, and he called his

name Enos: he hoped to call on the name of the Lord God." [824] Here

we have a loud testimony to the truth. Man, then, the son of the

resurrection, lives in hope: he lives in hope as long as the city of

God, which is begotten by faith in the resurrection, sojourns in this

world. For in these two men, Abel, signifying "grief," and his brother

Seth, signifying "resurrection," the death of Christ and His life from

the dead are prefigured. And by faith in these is begotten in this

world the city of God, that is to say, the man who has hoped to call on

the name of the Lord. "For by hope," says the apostle, "we are

saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why

doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we

with patience wait for it." [825] Who can avoid referring this to a

profound mystery? For did not Abel hope to call upon the name of the

Lord God when his sacrifice is mentioned in Scripture as having been

accepted by God? Did not Seth himself hope to call on the name of the

Lord God, of whom it was said, "For God hath appointed me another seed

instead of Abel?" Why then is this which is found to be common to all

the godly specially attributed to Enos, unless because it was fit that

in him, who is mentioned as the first-born of the father of those

generations which were separated to the better part of the heavenly

city, there should be a type of the man, or society of men, who live

not according to man in contentment with earthly felicity, but

according to God in hope of everlasting felicity? And it was not said,

"He hoped in the Lord God," nor "He called on the name of the Lord

God," but "He hoped to call on the name of the Lord God." And what

does this "hoped to call" mean, unless it is a prophecy that a people

should arise who, according to the election of grace, would call on the

name of the Lord God? It is this which has been said by another

prophet, and which the apostle interprets of the people who belong to

the grace of God: "And it shall be that whosoever shall call upon the

name of the Lord shall be saved." [826] For these two expressions,

"And he called his name Enos, which means man," and "He hoped to call

on the name of the Lord God," are sufficient proof that man ought not

to rest his hopes in himself; as it is elsewhere written, "Cursed is

the man that trusteth in man." [827] Consequently no one ought to

trust in himself that he shall become a citizen of that other city

which is not dedicated in the name of Cain's son in this present time,

that is to say, in the fleeting course of this mortal world, but in the

immortality of perpetual blessedness.

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[824] Gen. iv. 26.

[825] Rom. viii. 24, 25.

[826] Rom. x. 13.

[827] Jer. xvii. 5.

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Chapter 19.--The Significance Of Enoch's Translation.

For that line also of which Seth is the father has the name

"Dedication" in the seventh generation from Adam, counting Adam. For

the seventh from him is Enoch, that is, Dedication. But this is that

man who was translated because he pleased God, and who held in the

order of the generations a remarkable place, being the seventh from

Adam, a number signalized by the consecration of the Sabbath. But,

counting from the diverging point of the two lines, or from Seth, he

was the sixth. Now it was on the sixth day God made man, and

consummated His works. But the translation of Enoch prefigured our

deferred dedication; for though it is indeed already accomplished in

Christ our Head, who so rose again that He shall die no more, and who

was Himself also translated, yet there remains another dedication of

the whole house, of which Christ Himself is the foundation, and this

dedication is deferred till the end, when all shall rise again to die

no more. And whether it is the house of God, or the temple of God, or

the city of God, that is said to be dedicated, it is all the same, and

equally in accordance with the usage of the Latin language. For Virgil

himself calls the city of widest empire "the house of Assaracus," [828]

meaning the Romans, who were descended through the Trojans from

Assaracus. He also calls them the house of �neas, because Rome was

built by those Trojans who had come to Italy under �neas. [829] For

that poet imitated the sacred writings, in which the Hebrew nation,

though so numerous, is called the house of Jacob.

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[828] �neid, i. 288.

[829] �neid, iii. 97.

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Chapter 20.--How It is that Cain's Line Terminates in the Eighth

Generation, While Noah, Though Descended from the Same Father, Adam, is

Found to Be the Tenth from Him.

Some one will say, If the writer of this history intended, in

enumerating the generations from Adam through his son Seth, to descend

through them to Noah, in whose time the deluge occurred, and from him

again to trace the connected generations down to Abraham, with whom

Matthew begins the pedigree of Christ the eternal King of the city of

God, what did he intend by enumerating the generations from Cain, and

to what terminus did he mean to trace them? We reply, To the deluge,

by which the whole stock of the earthly city was destroyed, but

repaired by the sons of Noah. For the earthly city and community of

men who live after the flesh will never fail until the end of this

world, of which our Lord says, "The children of this world generate,

and are generated." [830] But the city of God, which sojourns in this

world, is conducted by regeneration to the world to come, of which the

children neither generate nor are generated. In this world generation

is common to both cities; though even now the city of God has many

thousand citizens who abstain from the act of generation; yet the other

city also has some citizens who imitate these, though erroneously. For

to that city belong also those who have erred from the faith, and

introduced divers heresies; for they live according to man, not

according to God. And the Indian gymnosophists, who are said to

philosophize in the solitudes of India in a state of nudity, are its

citizens; and they abstain from marriage. For continence is not a good

thing, except when it is practised in the faith of the highest good,

that is, God. Yet no one is found to have practised it before the

deluge; for indeed even Enoch himself, the seventh from Adam, who is

said to have been translated without dying, begat sons and daughters

before he was translated, and among these was Methuselah, by whom the

succession of the recorded generations is maintained.

Why, then, is so small a number of Cain's generations registered, if it

was proper to trace them to the deluge, and if there was no such delay

of the date of puberty as to preclude the hope of offspring for a

hundred or more years? For if the author of this book had not in view

some one to whom he might rigidly trace the series of generations, as

he designed in those which sprang from Seth's seed to descend to Noah,

and thence to start again by a rigid order, what need was there of

omitting the first-born sons for the sake of descending to Lamech, in

whose sons that line terminates,--that is to say, in the eighth

generation from Adam, or the seventh from Cain,--as if from this point

he had wished to pass on to another series, by which he might reach

either the Israelitish people, among whom the earthly Jerusalem

presented a prophetic figure of the heavenly city, or to Jesus Christ,

"according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever," [831]

the Maker and Ruler of the heavenly city? What, I say, was the need of

this, seeing that the whole of Cain's posterity were destroyed in the

deluge? From this it is manifest that they are the first-born sons who

are registered in this genealogy. Why, then, are there so few of

them? Their numbers in the period before the deluge must have been

greater, if the date of puberty bore no proportion to their longevity,

and they had children before they were a hundred years old. For

supposing they were on an average thirty years old when they began to

beget children, then, as there are eight generations, including Adam

and Lamech's children, 8 times 30 gives 240 years; did they then

produce no more children in all the rest of the time before the

deluge? With what intention, then, did he who wrote this record make

no mention of subsequent generations? For from Adam to the deluge

there are reckoned, according to our copies of Scripture, 2262 years,

[832] and according to the He brew text, 1656 years. Supposing, then,

the smaller number to be the true one, and subtracting from 1656 years

240, is it credible that during the remaining 1400 and odd years until

the deluge the posterity of Cain begat no children?

But let any one who is moved by this call to mind that when I discussed

the question, how it is credible that those primitive men could abstain

for so many years from begetting children, two modes of solution were

found,--either a puberty late in proportion to their longevity, or that

the sons registered in the genealogies were not the first-born, but

those through whom the author of the book intended to reach the point

aimed at, as he intended to reach Noah by the generations of Seth. So

that, if in the generations of Cain there occurs no one whom the writer

could make it his object to reach by omitting the first-born and

inserting those who would serve such a purpose, then we must have

recourse to the supposition of late puberty, and say that only at some

age beyond a hundred years they became capable of begetting children,

so that the order of the generations ran through the first-born, and

filled up even the whole period before the deluge, long though it was.

It is, however, possible that, for some more secret reason which

escapes me, this city, which we say is earthly, is exhibited in all its

generations down to Lamech and his sons, and that then the writer

withholds from recording the rest which may have existed before the

deluge. And without supposing so late a puberty in these men, there

might be another reason for tracing the generations by sons who were

not first-born, viz., that the same city which Cain built, and named

after his son Enoch, may have had a widely extended dominion and many

kings, not reigning simultaneously, but successively, the reigning king

begetting always his successor. Cain himself would be the first of

these kings; his son Enoch, in whose name the city in which he reigned

was built, would be the second; the third Irad, whom Enoch begat; the

fourth Mehujael, whom Irad begat; the fifth Methusael, whom Mehujael

begat; the sixth Lamech, whom Methusael begat, and who is the seventh

from Adam through Cain. But it was not necessary that the first-born

should succeed their fathers in the kingdom, but those would succeed

who were recommended by the possession of some virtue useful to the

earthly city, or who were chosen by lot, or the son who was best liked

by his father would succeed by a kind of hereditary right to the

throne. And the deluge may have happened during the lifetime and reign

of Lamech, and may have destroyed him along with all other men, save

those who were in the ark. For we cannot be surprised that, during so

long a period from Adam to the deluge, and with the ages of individuals

varying as they did, there should not be an equal number of generations

in both lines, but seven in Cain's, and ten in Seth's; for as I have

already said, Lamech is the seventh from Adam, Noah the tenth; and in

Lamech's case not one son only is registered, as in the former

instances, but more, because it was uncertain which of them would have

succeeded when he died, if there had intervened any time to reign

between his death and the deluge.

But in whatever manner the generations of Cain's line are traced

downwards, whether it be by first-born sons or by the heirs to the

throne, it seems to me that I must by no means omit to notice that,

when Lamech had been set down as the seventh from Adam, there were

named, in addition, as many of his children as made up this number to

eleven, which is the number signifying sin; for three sons and one

daughter are added. The wives of Lamech have another signification,

different from that which I am now pressing. For at present I am

speaking of the children, and not of those by whom the children were

begotten. Since, then, the law is symbolized by the number

ten,--whence that memorable Decalogue,--there is no doubt that the

number eleven, which goes beyond [833] ten, symbolizes the

transgression of the law, and consequently sin. For this reason,

eleven veils of goat's skin were ordered to be hung in the tabernacle

of the testimony, which served in the wanderings of God's people as an

ambulatory temple. And in that haircloth there was a reminder of sins,

because the goats were to be set on the left hand of the Judge; and

therefore, when we confess our sins, we prostrate ourselves in

haircloth, as if we were saying what is written in the psalm, "My sin

is ever before me." [834] The progeny of Adam, then, by Cain the

murderer, is completed in the number eleven, which symbolizes sin; and

this number itself is made up by a woman, as it was by the same sex

that beginning was made of sin by which we all die. And it was

committed that the pleasure of the flesh, which resists the spirit,

might follow; and so Naamah, the daughter of Lamech, means "pleasure."

But from Adam to Noah, in the line of Seth, there are ten generations.

And to Noah three sons are added, of whom, while one fell into sin, two

were blessed by their father; so that, if you deduct the reprobate and

add the gracious sons to the number, you get twelve,--a number

signalized in the case of the patriarchs and of the apostles, and made

up of the parts of the number seven multiplied into one another,--for

three times four, or four times three, give twelve. These things being

so, I see that I must consider and mention how these two lines, which

by their separate genealogies depict the two cities, one of earth-born,

the other of regenerated persons, became afterwards so mixed and

confused, that the whole human race, with the exception of eight

persons, deserved to perish in the deluge.

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[830] Luke xx. 34.

[831] Rom. ix. 5.

[832] Eusebius, Jerome, Bede, and others, who follow the Septuagint,

reckon only 2242 years, which Vives explains by supposing Augustin to

have made a copyist's error.

[833] Transgreditur.

[834] Ps. li. 3.

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Chapter 21.--Why It is That, as Soon as Cain's Son Enoch Has Been

Named, the Genealogy is Forthwith Continued as Far as the Deluge, While

After the Mention of Enos, Seth's Son, the Narrative Returns Again to

the Creation of Man.

We must first see why, in the enumeration of Cain's posterity, after

Enoch, in whose name the city was built, has been first of all

mentioned, the rest are at once enumerated down to that terminus of

which I have spoken, and at which that race and the whole line was

destroyed in the deluge; while, after Enos the son of Seth, has been

mentioned, the rest are not at once named down to the deluge, but a

clause is inserted to the following effect: "This is the book of the

generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness

of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them,

and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." [835]

This seems to me to be inserted for this purpose, that here again the

reckoning of the times may start from Adam himself--a purpose which the

writer had not in view in speaking of the earthly city, as if God

mentioned it, but did not take account of its duration. But why does

he return to this recapitulation after mentioning the son of Seth, the

man who hoped to call on the name of the Lord God, unless because it

was fit thus to present these two cities, the one beginning with a

murderer and ending in a murderer (for Lamech, too, acknowledges to his

two wives that he had committed murder), the other built up by him who

hoped to call upon the name of the Lord God? For the highest and

complete terrestrial duty of the city of God, which is a stranger in

this world, is that which was exemplified in the individual who was

begotten by him who typified the resurrection of the murdered Abel.

That one man is the unity of the whole heavenly city, not yet indeed

complete, but to be completed, as this prophetic figure foreshows. The

son of Cain, therefore, that is, the son of possession (and of what but

an earthly possession?), may have a name in the earthly city which was

built in his name. It is of such the Psalmist says, "They call their

lands after their own names." [836] Wherefore they incur what is

written in another psalm: "Thou, O Lord, in Thy city wilt despise

their image." [837] But as for the son of Seth, the son of the

resurrection, let him hope to call on the name of the Lord God. For he

prefigures that society of men which says, "But I am like a green

olive-tree in the house of God: I have trusted in the mercy of God."

[838] But let him not seek the empty honors of a famous name upon

earth, for "Blessed is the man that maketh the name of the Lord his

trust, and respecteth not vanities nor lying follies." [839] After

having presented the two cities, the one founded in the material good

of this world, the other in hope in God, but both starting from a

common gate opened in Adam into this mortal state, and both running on

and running out to their proper and merited ends, Scripture begins to

reckon the times, and in this reckoning includes other generations,

making a recapitulation from Adam, out of whose condemned seed, as out

of one mass handed over to merited damnation, God made some vessels of

wrath to dishonor and others vessels of mercy to honor; in punishment

rendering to the former what is due, in grace giving to the latter what

is not due: in order that by the very comparison of itself with the

vessels of wrath, the heavenly city, which sojourns on earth, may learn

not to put confidence in the liberty of its own will, but may hope to

call on the name of the Lord God. For will, being a nature which was

made good by the good God, but mutable by the immutable, because it was

made out of nothing, can both decline from good to do evil, which takes

place when it freely chooses, and can also escape the evil and do good,

which takes place only by divine assistance.

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[835] Gen. v. 1.

[836] Ps. xlix. 11.

[837] Ps. lxxiii. 20.

[838] Ps. lii. 8.

[839] Ps. xl. 4.

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Chapter 22.--Of the Fall of the Sons of God Who Were Captivated by the

Daughters of Men, Whereby All, with the Exception of Eight Persons,

Deservedly Perished in the Deluge.

When the human race, in the exercise of this freedom of will, increased

and advanced, there arose a mixture and confusion of the two cities by

their participation in a common iniquity. And this calamity, as well

as the first, was occasioned by woman, though not in the same way; for

these women were not themselves betrayed, neither did they persuade the

men to sin, but having belonged to the earthly city and society of the

earthly, they had been of corrupt manners from the first, and were

loved for their bodily beauty by the sons of God, or the citizens of

the other city which sojourns in this world. Beauty is indeed a good

gift of God; but that the good may not think it a great good, God

dispenses it even to the wicked. And thus, when the good that is great

and proper to the good was abandoned by the sons of God, they fell to a

paltry good which is not peculiar to the good, but common to the good

and the evil; and when they were captivated by the daughters of men,

they adopted the manners of the earthly to win them as their brides,

and forsook the godly ways they had followed in their own holy

society. And thus beauty, which is indeed God's handiwork, but only a

temporal, carnal, and lower kind of good, is not fitly loved in

preference to God, the eternal, spiritual, and unchangeable good. When

the miser prefers his gold to justice, it is through no fault of the

gold, but of the man; and so with every created thing. For though it

be good, it may be loved with an evil as well as with a good love: it

is loved rightly when it is loved ordinately; evilly, when

inordinately. It is this which some one has briefly said in these

verses in praise of the Creator: [840] "These are Thine, they are

good, because Thou art good who didst create them. There is in them

nothing of ours, unless the sin we commit when we forget the order of

things, and instead of Thee love that which Thou hast made."

But if the Creator is truly loved, that is, if He Himself is loved and

not another thing in His stead, He cannot be evilly loved; for love

itself is to be ordinately loved, because we do well to love that

which, when we love it, makes us live well and virtuously. So that it

seems to me that it is a brief but true definition of virtue to say, it

is the order of love; and on this account, in the Canticles, the bride

of Christ, the city of God, sings, "Order love within me." [841] It

was the order of this love, then, this charity or attachment, which the

sons of God disturbed when they forsook God, and were enamored of the

daughters of men. [842] And by these two names (sons of God and

daughters of men) the two cities are sufficiently distinguished. For

though the former were by nature children of men, they had come into

possession of another name by grace. For in the same Scripture in

which the sons of God are said to have loved the daughters of men, they

are also called angels of God; whence many suppose that they were not

men but angels.

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[840] Or, according to another reading, "Which I briefly said in these

verses in praise of a taper."

[841] Cant. ii. 4.

[842] See De Doct. Christ. i. 28.

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Chapter 23.--Whether We are to Believe that Angels, Who are of a

Spiritual Substance, Fell in Love with the Beauty of Women, and Sought

Them in Marriage, and that from This Connection Giants Were Born.

In the third book of this work (c. 5) we made a passing reference to

this question, but did not decide whether angels, inasmuch as they are

spirits, could have bodily intercourse with women. For it is written,

"Who maketh His angels spirits," [843] that is, He makes those who are

by nature spirits His angels by appointing them to the duty of bearing

His messages. For the Greek word angelos, which in Latin appears as

"angelus," means a messenger. But whether the Psalmist speaks of their

bodies when he adds, "and His ministers a flaming fire," or means that

God's ministers ought to blaze with love as with a spiritual fire, is

doubtful. However, the same trustworthy Scripture testifies that

angels have appeared to men in such bodies as could not only be seen,

but also touched. There is, too, a very general rumor, which many have

verified by their own experience, or which trustworthy persons who have

heard the experience of others corroborate, that sylvans and fauns, who

are commonly called "incubi," had often made wicked assaults upon

women, and satisfied their lust upon them; and that certain devils,

called Duses by the Gauls, are constantly attempting and effecting this

impurity is so generally affirmed, that it were impudent to deny it.

[844] From these assertions, indeed, I dare not determine whether

there be some spirits embodied in an aerial substance (for this

element, even when agitated by a fan, is sensibly felt by the body),

and who are capable of lust and of mingling sensibly with women; but

certainly I could by no means believe that God's holy angels could at

that time have so fallen, nor can I think that it is of them the

Apostle Peter said, "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but

cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to

be reserved unto judgment." [845] I think he rather speaks of these

who first apostatized from God, along with their chief the devil, who

enviously deceived the first man under the form of a serpent. But the

same holy Scripture affords the most ample testimony that even godly

men have been called angels; for of John it is written: "Behold, I

send my messenger (angel) before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way."

[846] And the prophet Malachi, by a peculiar grace specially

communicated to him, was called an angel. [847]

But some are moved by the fact that we have read that the fruit of the

connection between those who are called angels of God and the women

they loved were not men like our own breed, but giants; just as if

there were not born even in our own time (as I have mentioned above)

men of much greater size than the ordinary stature. Was there not at

Rome a few years ago, when the destruction of the city now accomplished

by the Goths was drawing near, a woman, with her father and mother, who

by her gigantic size over-topped all others? Surprising crowds from

all quarters came to see her, and that which struck them most was the

circumstance that neither of her parents were quite up to the tallest

ordinary stature. Giants therefore might well be born, even before the

sons of God, who are also called angels of God, formed a connection

with the daughters of men, or of those living according to men, that is

to say, before the sons of Seth formed a connection with the daughters

of Cain. For thus speaks even the canonical Scripture itself in the

book in which we read of this; its words are: "And it came to pass,

when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were

born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they

were fair [good]; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

And the Lord God said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for

that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty

years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after

that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they

bare children to them, the same became the giants, men of renown."

[848] These words of the divine book sufficiently indicate that

already there were giants in the earth in those days, in which the sons

of God took wives of the children of men, when they loved them because

they were good, that is, fair. For it is the custom of this Scripture

to call those who are beautiful in appearance "good." But after this

connection had been formed, then too were giants born. For the words

are: "There were giants in the earth in those days, and also after

that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men."

Therefore there were giants both before, "in those days," and "also

after that." And the words, "they bare children to them," show plainly

enough that before the sons of God fell in this fashion they begat

children to God, not to themselves,--that is to say, not moved by the

lust of sexual intercourse, but discharging the duty of propagation,

intending to produce not a family to gratify their own pride, but

citizens to people the city of God; and to these they as God's angels

would bear the message, that they should place their hope in God, like

him who was born of Seth, the son of resurrection, and who hoped to

call on the name of the Lord God, in which hope they and their

offspring would be co-heirs of eternal blessings, and brethren in the

family of which God is the Father.

But that those angels were not angels in the sense of not being men, as

some suppose, Scripture itself decides, which unambiguously declares

that they were men. For when it had first been stated that "the angels

of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them

wives of all which they chose," it was immediately added, "And the Lord

God said, My Spirit shall not always strive with these men, for that

they also are flesh." For by the Spirit of God they had been made

angels of God, and sons of God; but declining towards lower things,

they are called men, a name of nature, not of grace; and they are

called flesh, as deserters of the Spirit, and by their desertion

deserted [by Him]. The Septuagint indeed calls them both angels of God

and sons of God, though all the copies do not show this, some having

only the name" sons of God." And Aquila, whom the Jews prefer to the

other interpreters, [849] has translated neither angels of God nor sons

of God, but sons of gods. But both are correct. For they were both

sons of God, and thus brothers of their own fathers, who were children

of the same God; and they were sons of gods, because begotten by gods,

together with whom they themselves also were gods, according to that

expression of the psalm: "I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are

children of the Most High." [850] For the Septuagint translators are

justly believed to have received the Spirit of prophecy; so that, if

they made any alterations under His authority, and did not adhere to a

strict translation, we could not doubt that this was divinely

dictated. However, the Hebrew word may be said to be ambiguous, and to

be susceptible of either translation, "sons of God," or "sons of gods."

Let us omit, then, the fables of those scriptures which are called

apocryphal, because their obscure origin was unknown to the fathers

from whom the authority of the true Scriptures has been transmitted to

us by a most certain and well-ascertained succession. For though there

is some truth in these apocryphal writings, yet they contain so many

false statements, that they have no canonical authority. We cannot

deny that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, left some divine writings, for

this is asserted by the Apostle Jude in his canonical epistle. But it

is not without reason that these writings have no place in that canon

of Scripture which was preserved in the temple of the Hebrew people by

the diligence of successive priests; for their antiquity brought them

under suspicion, and it was impossible to ascertain whether these were

his genuine writings, and they were not brought forward as genuine by

the persons who were found to have carefully preserved the canonical

books by a successive transmission. So that the writings which are

produced under his name, and which contain these fables about the

giants, saying that their fathers were not men, are properly judged by

prudent men to be not genuine; just as many writings are produced by

heretics under the names both of other prophets, and more recently,

under the names of the apostles, all of which, after careful

examination, have been set apart from canonical authority under the

title of Apocrypha. There is therefore no doubt that, according to the

Hebrew and Christian canonical Scriptures, there were many giants

before the deluge, and that these were citizens of the earthly society

of men, and that the sons of God, who were according to the flesh the

sons of Seth, sunk into this community when they forsook

righteousness. Nor need we wonder that giants should be born even from

these. For all of their children were not giants; but there were more

then than in the remaining periods since the deluge. And it pleased

the Creator to produce them, that it might thus be demonstrated that

neither beauty, nor yet size and strength, are of much moment to the

wise man, whose blessedness lies in spiritual and immortal blessings,

in far better and more enduring gifts, in the good things that are the

peculiar property of the good, and are not shared by good and bad

alike. It is this which another prophet confirms when he says, "These

were the giants, famous from the beginning, that were of so great

stature, and so expert in war. Those did not the Lord choose, neither

gave He the way of knowledge unto them; but they were destroyed because

they had no wisdom, and perished through their own foolishness." [851]

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[843] Ps. civ. 4.

[844] On these kinds of devils, see the note of Vives in loc., or

Lecky's Hist. of Rationalism, i. 26, who quotes from Maury's Histoire

de la Magie, that the Dusii were Celtic spirits, and are the origin of

our "Deuce."

[845] 2 Pet. ii. 4.

[846] Mark i. 2.

[847] Mal. ii. 7.

[848] Gen. vi. 1-4. Lactantius (Inst. ii. 15), Sulpicius Severus

(Hist. i. 2), and others suppose from this passage that angels had

commerce with the daughters of men. See further references in the

commentary of Pererius in loc.

[849] Aquila lived in the time of Hadrian, to whom he is said to have

been related. He was excommunicated from the Church for the practice

of astrology; and is best known by his translation of the Hebrew

Scriptures into Greek, which he executed with great care and accuracy,

though he has been charged with falsifying passages to support the Jews

in their opposition to Christianity.

[850] Ps. lxxxii. 6.

[851] Baruch iii. 26-28.

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Chapter 24.--How We are to Understand This Which the Lord Said to Those

Who Were to Perish in the Flood: "Their Days Shall Be 120 Years."

But that which God said, "Their days shall be a hundred and twenty

years," is not to be understood as a prediction that henceforth men

should not live longer than 120 years,--for even after the deluge we

find that they lived more than 500 years,--but we are to understand

that God said this when Noah had nearly completed his fifth century,

that is, had lived 480 years, which Scripture, as it frequently uses

the name of the whole of the largest part, calls 500 years. Now the

deluge came in the 600th year of Noah's life, the second month; and

thus 120 years were predicted as being the remaining span of those who

were doomed, which years being spent, they should be destroyed by the

deluge. And it is not unreasonably believed that the deluge came as it

did, because already there were not found upon earth any who were not

worthy of sharing a death so manifestly judicial,--not that a good man,

who must die some time, would be a jot the worse of such a death after

it was past. Nevertheless there died in the deluge none of those

mentioned in the sacred Scripture as descended from Seth. But here is

the divine account of the cause of the deluge: "The Lord God saw that

the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every

imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And it repented [852] the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and

it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man,

whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man and beast,

and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air: for I am angry that

I have made them." [853]

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[852] Lit.: The Lord thought and reconsidered.

[853] Gen. vi. 5-7.

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Chapter 25.--Of the Anger of God, Which Does Not Inflame His Mind, Nor

Disturb His Unchangeable Tranquillity.

The anger of God is not a disturbing emotion of His mind, but a

judgment by which punishment is inflicted upon sin. His thought and

reconsideration also are the unchangeable reason which changes things;

for He does not, like man, repent of anything He has done, because in

all matters His decision is as inflexible as His prescience is

certain. But if Scripture were not to use such expressions as the

above, it would not familiarly insinuate itself into the minds of all

classes of men, whom it seeks access to for their good, that it may

alarm the proud, arouse the careless, exercise the inquisitive, and

satisfy the intelligent; and this it could not do, did it not first

stoop, and in a manner descend, to them where they lie. But its

denouncing death on all the animals of earth and air is a declaration

of the vastness of the disaster that was approaching: not that it

threatens destruction to the irrational animals as if they too had

incurred it by sin.

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Chapter 26.--That the Ark Which Noah Was Ordered to Make Figures In

Every Respect Christ and the Church.

Moreover, inasmuch as God commanded Noah, a just man, and, as the

truthful Scripture says, a man perfect in his generation,--not indeed

with the perfection of the citizens of the city of God in that immortal

condition in which they equal the angels, but in so far as they can be

perfect in their sojourn in this world,--inasmuch as God commanded him,

I say, to make an ark, in which he might be rescued from the

destruction of the flood, along with his family, i.e., his wife, sons,

and daughters-in-law, and along with the animals who, in obedience to

God's command, came to him into the ark: this is certainly a figure of

the city of God sojourning in this world; that is to say, of the

church, which is rescued by the wood on which hung the Mediator of God

and men, the man Christ Jesus. [854] For even its very dimensions, in

length, breadth, and height, represent the human body in which He came,

as it had been foretold. For the length of the human body, from the

crown of the head to the sole of the foot, is six times its breadth

from side to side, and ten times its depth or thickness, measuring from

back to front: that is to say, if you measure a man as he lies on his

back or on his face, he is six times as long from head to foot as he is

broad from side to side, and ten times as long as he is high from the

ground. And therefore the ark was made 300 cubits in length, 50 in

breadth, and 30 in height. And its having a door made in the side of

it certainly signified the wound which was made when the side of the

Crucified was pierced with the spear; for by this those who come to Him

enter; for thence flowed the sacraments by which those who believe are

initiated. And the fact that it was ordered to be made of squared

timbers, signifies the immoveable steadiness of the life of the saints;

for however you turn a cube, it still stands. And the other

peculiarities of the ark's construction are signs of features of the

church.

But we have not now time to pursue this subject; and, indeed, we have

already dwelt upon it in the work we wrote against Faustus the

Manichean, who denies that there is anything prophesied of Christ in

the Hebrew books. It may be that one man's exposition excels

another's, and that ours is not the best; but all that is said must be

referred to this city of God we speak of, which sojourns in this wicked

world as in a deluge, at least if the expositor would not widely miss

the meaning of the author. For example, the interpretation I have

given in the work against Faustus, of the words, "with lower, second,

and third stories shalt thou make it," is, that because the church is

gathered out of all nations, it is said to have two stories, to

represent the two kinds of men,--the circumcision, to wit, and the

uncircumcision, or, as the apostle otherwise calls them, Jews and

Gentiles; and to have three stories, because all the nations were

replenished from the three sons of Noah. Now any one may object to

this interpretation, and may give another which harmonizes with the

rule of faith. For as the ark was to have rooms not only on the lower,

but also on the upper stories, which were called "third stories," that

there might be a habitable space on the third floor from the basement,

some one may interpret these to mean the three graces commended by the

apostle.--faith, hope, and charity. Or even more suitably they may be

supposed to represent those three harvests in the gospel, thirty-fold,

sixty-fold, an hundred-fold,--chaste marriage dwelling in the ground

floor, chaste widowhood in the upper, and chaste virginity in the top

story. Or any better interpretation may be given, so long as the

reference to this city is maintained. And the same statement I would

make of all the remaining particulars in this passage which require

exposition, viz., that although different explanations are given, yet

they must all agree with the one harmonious catholic faith.

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[854] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

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Chapter 27.--Of the Ark and the Deluge, and that We Cannot Agree with

Those Who Receive the Bare History, But Reject the Allegorical

Interpretation, Nor with Those Who Maintain the Figurative and Not the

Historical Meaning.

Yet no one ought to suppose either that these things were written for

no purpose, or that we should study only the historical truth, apart

from any allegorical meanings; or, on the contrary, that they are only

allegories, and that there were no such facts at all, or that, whether

it be so or no, there is here no prophecy of the church. For what

right-minded man will contend that books so religiously preserved

during thousands of years, and transmitted by so orderly a succession,

were written without an object, or that only the bare historical facts

are to be considered when we read them? For, not to mention other

instances, if the number of the animals entailed the construction of an

ark of great size, where was the necessity of sending into it two

unclean and seven clean animals of each species, when both could have

been preserved in equal numbers? Or could not God, who ordered them to

be preserved in order to replenish the race, restore them in the same

way He had created them?

But they who contend that these things never happened, but are only

figures setting forth other things, in the first place suppose that

there could not be a flood so great that the water should rise fifteen

cubits above the highest mountains, because it is said that clouds

cannot rise above the top of Mount Olympus, because it reaches the sky

where there is none of that thicker atmosphere in which winds, clouds,

and rains have their origin. They do not reflect that the densest

element of all, earth, can exist there; or perhaps they deny that the

top of the mountain is earth. Why, then, do these measurers and

weighers of the elements contend that earth can be raised to those

aerial altitudes, and that water cannot, while they admit that water is

lighter, and liker to ascend than earth? What reason do they adduce

why earth, the heavier and lower element, has for so many ages scaled

to the tranquil ether, while water, the lighter, and more likely to

ascend, is not suffered to do the same even for a brief space of time?

They say, too, that the area of that ark could not contain so many

kinds of animals of both sexes, two of the unclean and seven of the

clean. But they seem to me to reckon only one area of 300 cubits long

and 50 broad, and not to remember that there was another similar in the

story above, and yet another as large in the story above that again;

and that there was consequently an area of 900 cubits by 150. And if

we accept what Origen [855] has with some appropriateness suggested,

that Moses the man of God, being, as it is written, "learned in all the

wisdom of the Egyptians," [856] who delighted in geometry, may have

meant geometrical cubits, of which they say that one is equal to six of

our cubits, then who does not see what a capacity these dimensions give

to the ark? For as to their objection that an ark of such size could

not be built, it is a very silly calumny; for they are aware that huge

cities have been built, and they should remember that the ark was an

hundred years in building. Or, perhaps, though stone can adhere to

stone when cemented with nothing but lime, so that a wall of several

miles may be constructed, yet plank cannot be riveted to plank by

mortices, bolts, nails, and pitch-glue, so as to construct an ark which

was not made with curved ribs but straight timbers, which was not to be

launched by its builders, but to be lifted by the natural pressure of

the water when it reached it, and which was to be preserved from

shipwreck as it floated about rather by divine oversight than by human

skill.

As to another customary inquiry of the scrupulous about the very minute

creatures, not only such as mice and lizards, but also locusts,

beetles, flies, fleas, and so forth, whether there were not in the ark

a larger number of them than was determined by God in His command,

those persons who are moved by this difficulty are to be reminded that

the words "every creeping thing of the earth" only indicate that it was

not needful to preserve in the ark the animals that can live in the

water, whether the fishes that live submerged in it, or the sea-birds

that swim on its surface. Then, when it is said "male and female," no

doubt reference is made to the repairing of the races, and consequently

there was no need for those creatures being in the ark which are born

without the union of the sexes from inanimate things, or from their

corruption; or if they were in the ark, they might be there as they

commonly are in houses, not in any determinate numbers; or if it was

necessary that there should be a definite number of all those animals

that cannot naturally live in the water, that so the most sacred

mystery which was being enacted might be bodied forth and perfectly

figured in actual realities, still this was not the care of Noah or his

sons, but of God. For Noah did not catch the animals and put them into

the ark, but gave them entrance as they came seeking it. For this is

the force of the words, "They shall come unto thee," [857] --not, that

is to say, by man's effort, but by God's will. But certainly we are

not required to believe that those which have no sex also came; for it

is expressly and definitely said, "They shall be male and female." For

there are some animals which are born out of corruption, but yet

afterwards they themselves copulate and produce offspring, as flies;

but others, which have no sex, like bees. Then, as to those animals

which have sex, but without ability to propagate their kind, like mules

and she-mules, it is probable that they were not in the ark, but that

it was counted sufficient to preserve their parents, to wit, the horse

and the ass; and this applies to all hybrids. Yet, if it was necessary

for the completeness of the mystery, they were there; for even this

species has "male and female."

Another question is commonly raised regarding the food of the

carnivorous animals,--whether, without transgressing the command which

fixed the number to be preserved, there were necessarily others

included in the ark for their sustenance; or, as is more probable,

there might be some food which was not flesh, and which yet suited

all. For we know how many animals whose food is flesh eat also

vegetable products and fruits, especially figs and chestnuts. What

wonder is it, therefore, if that wise and just man was instructed by

God what would suit each, so that without flesh he prepared and stored

provision fit for every species? And what is there which hunger would

not make animals eat? Or what could not be made sweet and wholesome by

God, who, with a divine facility, might have enabled them to do without

food at all, had it not been requisite to the completeness of so great

a mystery that they should be fed? But none but a contentious man can

suppose that there was no prefiguring of the church in so manifold and

circumstantial a detail. For the nations have already so filled the

church, and are comprehended in the framework of its unity, the clean

and unclean together, until the appointed end, that this one very

manifest fulfillment leaves no doubt how we should interpret even those

others which are somewhat more obscure, and which cannot so readily be

discerned. And since this is so, if not even the most audacious will

presume to assert that these things were written without a purpose, or

that though the events really happened they mean nothing, or that they

did not really happen, but are only allegory, or that at all events

they are far from having any figurative reference to the church; if it

has been made out that, on the other hand, we must rather believe that

there was a wise purpose in their being committed to memory and to

writing, and that they did happen, and have a significance, and that

this significance has a prophetic reference to the church, then this

book, having served this purpose, may now be closed, that we may go on

to trace in the history subsequent to the deluge the courses of the two

cities,--the earthly, that lives according to men, and the heavenly,

that lives according to God.

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[855] In his second homily on Genesis.

[856] Acts vii. 22.

[857] Gen. vi. 19, 20.

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Book XVI.

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Argument--In the former part of this book, from the first to the

twelfth chapter, the progress of the two cities, the earthly and the

heavenly, from Noah to Abraham, is exhibited from Holy Scripture: In

the latter part, the progress of the heavenly alone, from Abraham to

the kings of Israel, is the subject.

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Chapter 1.--Whether, After the Deluge, from Noah to Abraham, Any

Families Can Be Found Who Lived According to God.

It is difficult to discover from Scripture, whether, after the deluge,

traces of the holy city are continuous, or are so interrupted by

intervening seasons of godlessness, that not a single worshipper of the

one true God was found among men; because from Noah, who, with his

wife, three sons, and as many daughters-in-law, achieved deliverance in

the ark from the destruction of the deluge, down to Abraham, we do not

find in the canonical books that the piety of any one is celebrated by

express divine testimony, unless it be in the case of Noah, who

commends with a prophetic benediction his two sons Shem and Japheth,

while he beheld and foresaw what was long afterwards to happen. It was

also by this prophetic spirit that, when his middle son--that is, the

son who was younger than the first and older than the last born--had

sinned against him, he cursed him not in his own person, but in his

son's (his own grandson's), in the words, "Cursed be the lad Canaan; a

servant shall he be unto his brethren." [858] Now Canaan was born of

Ham, who, so far from covering his sleeping father's nakedness, had

divulged it. For the same reason also he subjoins the blessing on his

two other sons, the oldest and youngest, saying, "Blessed be the Lord

God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall gladden

Japheth, and he shall dwell in the houses of Shem." [859] And so,

too, the planting of the vine by Noah, and his intoxication by its

fruit, and his nakedness while he slept, and the other things done at

that time, and recorded, are all of them pregnant with prophetic

meanings, and veiled in mysteries. [860]

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[858] Gen. ix. 25.

[859] Gen. ix. 26, 27.

[860] See Contra Faust. xii. c. 22 sqq.

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Chapter 2.--What Was Prophetically Prefigured in the Sons of Noah.

The things which then were hidden are now sufficiently revealed by the

actual events which have followed. For who can carefully and

intelligently consider these things without recognizing them

accomplished in Christ? Shem, of whom Christ was born in the flesh,

means "named." And what is of greater name than Christ, the fragrance

of whose name is now everywhere perceived, so that even prophecy sings

of it beforehand, comparing it in the Song of Songs, [861] to ointment

poured forth? Is it not also in the houses of Christ, that is, in the

churches, that the "enlargement" of the nations dwells? For Japheth

means "enlargement." And Ham (i.e., hot), who was the middle son of

Noah, and, as it were, separated himself from both, and remained

between them, neither belonging to the first-fruits of Israel nor to

the fullness of the Gentiles, what does he signify but the tribe of

heretics, hot with the spirit, not of patience, but of impatience, with

which the breasts of heretics are wont to blaze, and with which they

disturb the peace of the saints? But even the heretics yield an

advantage to those that make proficiency, according to the apostle's

saying, "There must also be heresies, that they which are approved may

be made manifest among you." [862] Whence, too, it is elsewhere said,

"The son that receives instruction will be wise, and he uses the

foolish as his servant." [863] For while the hot restlessness of

heretics stirs questions about many articles of the catholic faith, the

necessity of defending them forces us both to investigate them more

accurately, to understand them more clearly, and to proclaim them more

earnestly; and the question mooted by an adversary becomes the occasion

of instruction. However, not only those who are openly separated from

the church, but also all who glory in the Christian name, and at the

same time lead abandoned lives, may without absurdity seem to be

figured by Noah's middle son: for the passion of Christ, which was

signified by that man's nakedness, is at once proclaimed by their

profession, and dishonored by their wicked conduct. Of such,

therefore, it has been said, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

[864] And therefore was Ham cursed in his son, he being, as it were,

his fruit. So, too, this son of his, Canaan, is fitly interpreted

"their movement," which is nothing else than their work. But Shem and

Japheth, that is to say, the circumcision and uncircumcision, or, as

the apostle otherwise calls them, the Jews and Greeks, but called and

justified, having somehow discovered the nakedness of their father

(which signifies the Saviour's passion), took a garment and laid it

upon their backs, and entered backwards and covered their father's

nakedness, without their seeing what their reverence hid. For we both

honor the passion of Christ as accomplished for us, and we hate the

crime of the Jews who crucified Him. The garment signifies the

sacrament, their backs the memory of things past: for the church

celebrates the passion of Christ as already accomplished, and no longer

to be looked forward to, now that Japheth already dwells in the

habitations of Shem, and their wicked brother between them.

But the wicked brother is, in the person of his son (i.e., his work),

the boy, or slave, of his good brothers, when good men make a skillful

use of bad men, either for the exercise of their patience or for their

advancement in wisdom. For the apostle testifies that there are some

who preach Christ from no pure motives; "but," says he, "whether in

pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice,

yea, and will rejoice." [865] For it is Christ Himself who planted

the vine of which the prophet says, "The vine of the Lord of hosts is

the house of Israel;" [866] and He drinks of its wine, whether we thus

understand that cup of which He says, "Can ye drink of the cup that I

shall drink of?" [867] and, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup

pass from me," [868] by which He obviously means His passion. Or, as

wine is the fruit of the vine, we may prefer to understand that from

this vine, that is to say, from the race of Israel, He has assumed

flesh and blood that He might suffer; "and he was drunken," that is, He

suffered; "and was naked," that is, His weakness appeared in His

suffering, as the apostle says, "though He was crucified through

weakness." [869] Wherefore the same apostle says, "The weakness of

God is stronger than men; and the foolishness of God is wiser than

men." [870] And when to the expression "he was naked" Scripture adds

"in his house," it elegantly intimates that Jesus was to suffer the

cross and death at the hands of His own household, His own kith and

kin, the Jews. This passion of Christ is only externally and verbally

professed by the reprobate, for what they profess, they do not

understand. But the elect hold in the inner man this so great mystery,

and honor inwardly in the heart this weakness and foolishness of God.

And of this there is a figure in Ham going out to proclaim his father's

nakedness; while Shem and Japheth, to cover or honor it, went in, that

is to say, did it inwardly.

These secrets of divine Scripture we investigate as well as we can.

All will not accept our interpretation with equal confidence, but all

hold it certain that these things were neither done nor recorded

without some foreshadowing of future events, and that they are to be

referred only to Christ and His church, which is the city of God,

proclaimed from the very beginning of human history by figures which we

now see everywhere accomplished. From the blessing of the two sons of

Noah, and the cursing of the middle son, down to Abraham, or for more

than a thousand years, there is, as I have said, no mention of any

righteous persons who worshipped God. I do not therefore conclude that

there were none; but it had been tedious to mention every one, and

would have displayed historical accuracy rather than prophetic

foresight. The object of the writer of these sacred books, or rather

of the Spirit of God in him, is not only to record the past, but to

depict the future, so far as it regards the city of God; for whatever

is said of those who are not its citizens, is given either for her

instruction, or as a foil to enhance her glory. Yet we are not to

suppose that all that is recorded has some signification; but those

things which have no signification of their own are interwoven for the

sake of the things which are significant. It is only the ploughshare

that cleaves the soil; but to effect this, other parts of the plough

are requisite. It is only the strings in harps and other musical

instruments which produce melodious sounds; but that they may do so,

there are other parts of the instrument which are not indeed struck by

those who sing, but are connected with the strings which are struck,

and produce musical notes. So in this prophetic history some things

are narrated which have no significance, but are, as it were, the

framework to which the significant things are attached.

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[861] Song of Solomon i. 3.

[862] 1 Cor. xi. 19.

[863] Prov. x. 5. (LXX.).

[864] Matt. vii. 20.

[865] Phil. i. 18.

[866] Isa. v. 7.

[867] Matt. xx. 22.

[868] Matt. xxvi. 39.

[869] 2 Cor xiii. 4.

[870] 1 Cor. i. 25.

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Chapter 3.--Of the Generations of the Three Sons of Noah.

We must therefore introduce into this work an explanation of the

generations of the three sons of Noah, in so far as that may illustrate

the progress in time of the two cities. Scripture first mentions that

of the youngest son, who is called Japheth: he had eight sons, [871]

and by two of these sons seven grandchildren, three by one son, four by

the other; in all, fifteen descendants. Ham, Noah's middle son, had

four sons, and by one of them five grandsons, and by one of these two

great-grandsons; in all, eleven. After enumerating these, Scripture

returns to the first of the sons, and says, "Cush begat Nimrod; he

began to be a giant on the earth. He was a giant hunter against the

Lord God: wherefore they say, As Nimrod the giant hunter against the

Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, Erech, Accad, and

Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Assur, and

built Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between

Nineveh and Calah: this was a great city." Now this Cush, father of

the giant Nimrod, is the first-named among the sons of Ham, to whom

five sons and two grandsons are ascribed. But he either begat this

giant after his grandsons were born, or, which is more credible,

Scripture speaks of him separately on account of his eminence; for

mention is also made of his kingdom, which began with that magnificent

city Babylon, and the other places, whether cities or districts,

mentioned along with it. But what is recorded of the land of Shinar

which belonged to Nimrod's kingdom, to wit, that Assur went forth from

it and built Nineveh and the other cities mentioned with it, happened

long after; but he takes occasion to speak of it here on account of the

grandeur of the Assyrian kingdom, which was wonderfully extended by

Ninus son of Belus, and founder of the great city Nineveh, which was

named after him, Nineveh, from Ninus. But Assur, father of the

Assyrian, was not one of the sons of Ham, Noah's son, but is found

among the sons of Shem, his eldest son. Whence it appears that among

Shem's offspring there arose men who afterwards took possession of that

giant's kingdom, and advancing from it, founded other cities, the first

of which was called Nineveh, from Ninus. From him Scripture returns to

Ham's other son, Mizraim; and his sons are enumerated, not as seven

individuals, but as seven nations. And from the sixth, as if from the

sixth son, the race called the Philistines are said to have sprung; so

that there are in all eight. Then it returns again to Canaan, in whose

person Ham was cursed; and his eleven sons are named. Then the

territories they occupied, and some of the cities, are named. And

thus, if we count sons and grandsons, there are thirty-one of Ham's

descendants registered.

It remains to mention the sons of Shem, Noah's eldest son; for to him

this genealogical narrative gradually ascends from the youngest. But

in the commencement of the record of Shem's sons there is an obscurity

which calls for explanation, since it is closely connected with the

object of our investigation. For we read, "Unto Shem also, the father

of all the children of Heber, the brother of Japheth the elder, were

children born." [872] This is the order of the words: And to Shem

was born Heber, even to himself, that is, to Shem himself was born

Heber, and Shem is the father of all his children. We are intended to

understand that Shem is the patriarch of all his posterity who were to

be mentioned, whether sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, or descendants

at any remove. For Shem did not beget Heber, who was indeed in the

fifth generation from him. For Shem begat, among other sons, Arphaxad;

Arphaxad begat Cainan, Cainan begat Salah, Salah begat Heber. And it

was with good reason that he was named first among Shem's offspring,

taking precedence even of his sons, though only a grandchild of the

fifth generation; for from him, as tradition says, the Hebrews derived

their name, though the other etymology which derives the name from

Abraham (as if Abrahews) may possibly be correct. But there can be

little doubt that the former is the right etymology, and that they were

called after Heber, Heberews, and then, dropping a letter, Hebrews; and

so was their language called Hebrew, which was spoken by none but the

people of Israel among whom was the city of God, mysteriously

prefigured in all the people, and truly present in the saints. Six of

Shem's sons then are first named, then four grandsons born to one of

these sons; then it mentions another son of Shem, who begat a grandson;

and his son, again, or Shem's great-grandson, was Heber. And Heber

begat two sons, and called the one Peleg, which means "dividing;" and

Scripture subjoins the reason of this name, saying, "for in his days

was the earth divided." What this means will afterwards appear.

Heber's other son begat twelve sons; consequently all Shem's

descendants are twenty-seven. The total number of the progeny of the

three sons of Noah is seventy-three, fifteen by Japheth, thirty-one by

Ham, twenty-seven by Shem. Then Scripture adds, "These are the sons of

Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after

their nations." And so of the whole number "These are the families of

the sons of Noah after their generations, in their nations; and by

these were the isles of the nations dispersed through the earth after

the flood." From which we gather that the seventy-three (or rather, as

I shall presently show, seventy-two) were not individuals, but

nations. For in a former passage, when the sons of Japheth were

enumerated, it is said in conclusion, "By these were the isles of the

nations divided in their lands, every one after his language, in their

tribes, and in their nations."

But nations are expressly mentioned among the sons of Ham, as I showed

above. "Mizraim begat those who are called Ludim;" and so also of the

other seven nations. And after enumerating all of them, it concludes,

"These are the sons of Ham, in their families, according to their

languages, in their territories, and in their nations." The reason,

then, why the children of several of them are not mentioned, is that

they belonged by birth to other nations, and did not themselves become

nations. Why else is it, that though eight sons are reckoned to

Japheth, the sons of only two of these are mentioned; and though four

are reckoned to Ham, only three are spoken of as having sons; and

though six are reckoned to Shem, the descendants of only two of these

are traced? Did the rest remain childless? We cannot suppose so; but

they did not produce nations so great as to warrant their being

mentioned, but were absorbed in the nations to which they belonged by

birth.

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[871] Augustin here follows the Greek version, which introduces the

name Elisa among the sons of Japheth, though not found in the Hebrew.

It is not found in the Complutensian Greek translation, nor in the Mss.

used by Jerome.

[872] Gen. x. 21.

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Chapter 4.--Of the Diversity of Languages, and of the Founding of

Babylon.

But though these nations are said to have been dispersed according to

their languages, yet the narrator recurs to that time when all had but

one language, and explains how it came to pass that a diversity of

languages was introduced. "The whole earth," he says, "was of one lip,

and all had one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from

the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and dwelt

there. And they said one to another, Come, and let us make bricks, and

burn them thoroughly. And they had bricks for stone, and slime for

mortar. And they said, Come, and let us build for ourselves a city,

and a tower whose top shall reach the sky; and let us make us a name,

before we be scattered abroad on the face of all the earth. And the

Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men

builded. And the Lord God said, Behold, the people is one, and they

have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will

be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Come, and let

us go down, and confound there their language, that they may not

understand one another's speech. And God scattered them thence on the

face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city and the

tower. Therefore the name of it is called Confusion; because the Lord

did there confound the language of all the earth: and the Lord God

scattered them thence on the face of all the earth." [873] This city,

which was called Confusion, is the same as Babylon, whose wonderful

construction Gentile history also notices. For Babylon means

Confusion. Whence we conclude that the giant Nimrod was its founder,

as had been hinted a little before, where Scripture, in speaking of

him, says that the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, that is,

Babylon had a supremacy over the other cities as the metropolis and

royal residence; although it did not rise to the grand dimensions

designed by its proud and impious founder. The plan was to make it so

high that it should reach the sky, whether this was meant of one tower

which they intended to build higher than the others, or of all the

towers, which might be signified by the singular number, as we speak of

"the soldier," meaning the army, and of the frog or the locust, when we

refer to the whole multitude of frogs and locusts in the plagues with

which Moses smote the Egyptians. [874] But what did these vain and

presumptuous men intend? How did they expect to raise this lofty mass

against God, when they had built it above all the mountains and the

clouds of the earth's atmosphere? What injury could any spiritual or

material elevation do to God? The safe and true way to heaven is made

by humility, which lifts up the heart to the Lord, not against Him; as

this giant is said to have been a "hunter against the Lord." This has

been misunderstood by some through the ambiguity of the Greek word, and

they have translated it, not "against the Lord," but "before the Lord;"

for enantion means both "before" and "against." In the Psalm this word

is rendered, "Let us weep before the Lord our Maker." [875] The same

word occurs in the book of Job, where it is written, "Thou hast broken

into fury against the Lord." [876] And so this giant is to be

recognized as a "hunter against the Lord." And what is meant by the

term "hunter" but deceiver, oppressor, and destroyer of the animals of

the earth? He and his people therefore, erected this tower against the

Lord, and so gave expression to their impious pride; and justly was

their wicked intention punished by God, even though it was

unsuccessful. But what was the nature of the punishment? As the

tongue is the instrument of domination, in it pride was punished; so

that man, who would not understand God when He issued His commands,

should be misunderstood when he himself gave orders. Thus was that

conspiracy disbanded, for each man retired from those he could not

understand, and associated with those whose speech was intelligible;

and the nations were divided according to their languages, and

scattered over the earth as seemed good to God, who accomplished this

in ways hidden from and incomprehensible to us.

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[873] Gen. xi. 1-9.

[874] Ex. x.

[875] Ps. xcv. 6.

[876] Job xv. 13.

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Chapter 5.--Of God's Coming Down to Confound the Languages of the

Builders of the City.

We read, "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the

sons of men built:" it was not the sons of God, but that society which

lived in a merely human way, and which we call the earthly city. God,

who is always wholly everywhere, does not move locally; but He is said

to descend when He does anything in the earth out of the usual course,

which, as it were, makes His presence felt. And in the same way, He

does not by "seeing" learn some new thing, for He cannot ever be

ignorant of anything; but He is said to see and recognize, in time,

that which He causes others to see and recognize. And therefore that

city was not previously being seen as God made it be seen when He

showed how offensive it was to Him. We might, indeed, interpret God's

descending to the city of the descent of His angels in whom He dwells;

so that the following words, "And the Lord God said, Behold, they are

all one race and of one language," and also what follows, "Come, and

let us go down and confound their speech," are a recapitulation,

explaining how the previously intimated "descent of the Lord" was

accomplished. For if He had already gone down, why does He say, "Come,

and let us go down and confound?"--words which seem to be addressed to

the angels, and to intimate that He who was in the angels descended in

their descent. And the words most appropriately are, not, "Go ye down

and confound," but, "Let us confound their speech;" showing that He so

works by His servants, that they are themselves also fellow-laborers

with God, as the apostle says, "For we are fellow-laborers with God."

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[877] 1 Cor. iii. 9.

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Chapter 6.--What We are to Understand by God's Speaking to the Angels.

We might have supposed that the words uttered at the creation of man,

"Let us," and not Let me, "make man," were addressed to the angels, had

He not added "in our image;" but as we cannot believe that man was made

in the image of angels, or that the image of God is the same as that of

angels, it is proper to refer this expression to the plurality of the

Trinity. And yet this Trinity, being one God, even after saying "Let

us make," goes on to say, "And God made man in His image," [878] and

not "Gods made," or "in their image." And were there any difficulty in

applying to the angels the words, "Come, and let us go down and

confound their speech," we might refer the plural to the Trinity, as if

the Father were addressing the Son and the Holy Spirit; but it rather

belongs to the angels to approach God by holy movements, that is, by

pious thoughts, and thereby to avail themselves of the unchangeable

truth which rules in the court of heaven as their eternal law. For

they are not themselves the truth; but partaking in the creative truth,

they are moved towards it as the fountain of life, that what they have

not in themselves they may obtain in it. And this movement of theirs

is steady, for they never go back from what they have reached. And to

these angels God does not speak, as we speak to one another, or to God,

or to angels, or as the angels speak to us, or as God speaks to us

through them: He speaks to them in an ineffable manner of His own, and

that which He says is conveyed to us in a manner suited to our

capacity. For the speaking of God antecedent and superior to all His

works, is the immutable reason of His work: it has no noisy and

passing sound, but an energy eternally abiding and producing results in

time. Thus He speaks to the holy angels; but to us, who are far off,

He speaks otherwise. When, however, we hear with the inner ear some

part of the speech of God, we approximate to the angels. But in this

work I need not labor to give an account of the ways in which God

speaks. For either the unchangeable Truth speaks directly to the mind

of the rational creature in some indescribable way, or speaks through

the changeable creature, either presenting spiritual images to our

spirit, or bodily voices to our bodily sense.

The words, "Nothing will be restrained from them which they have

imagined to do," [879] are assuredly not meant as an affirmation, but

as an interrogation, such as is used by persons threatening, as e.g.,

when Dido exclaims,

"They will not take arms and pursue?" [880]

We are to understand the words as if it had been said, Shall nothing be

restrained from them which they have imagined to do? [881] From these

three men, therefore, the three sons of Noah we mean, 73, or rather, as

the catalogue will show, 72 nations and as many languages were

dispersed over the earth, and as they increased filled even the

islands. But the nations multiplied much more than the languages. For

even in Africa we know several barbarous nations which have but one

language; and who can doubt that, as the human race increased, men

contrived to pass to the islands in ships?

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[878] Gen. i. 26.

[879] Gen. xi. 6.

[880] Virgil, �n., iv. 592.

[881] Here Augustin remarks on the addition of the particle ne to the

word non, which he has made to bring out the sense.

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Chapter 7.--Whether Even the Remotest Islands Received Their Fauna from

the Animals Which Were Preserved, Through the Deluge, in the Ark.

There is a question raised about all those kinds of beasts which are

not domesticated, nor are produced like frogs from the earth, but are

propagated by male and female parents, such as wolves and animals of

that kind; and it is asked how they could be found in the islands after

the deluge, in which all the animals not in the ark perished, unless

the breed was restored from those which were preserved in pairs in the

ark. It might, indeed, be said that they crossed to the islands by

swimming, but this could only be true of those very near the mainland;

whereas there are some so distant, that we fancy no animal could swim

to them. But if men caught them and took them across with themselves,

and thus propagated these breeds in their new abodes, this would not

imply an incredible fondness for the chase. At the same time, it

cannot be denied that by the intervention of angels they might be

transferred by God's order or permission. If, however, they were

produced out of the earth as at their first creation, when God said,

"Let the earth bring forth the living creature," [882] this makes it

more evident that all kinds of animals were preserved in the ark, not

so much for the sake of renewing the stock, as of prefiguring the

various nations which were to be saved in the church; this, I say, is

more evident, if the earth brought forth many animals in islands to

which they could not cross over.

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[882] Gen. i. 24.

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Chapter 8.--Whether Certain Monstrous Races of Men are Derived from the

Stock of Adam or Noah's Sons.

It is also asked whether we are to believe that certain monstrous races

of men, spoken of in secular history, [883] have sprung from Noah's

sons, or rather, I should say, from that one man from whom they

themselves were descended. For it is reported that some have one eye

in the middle of the forehead; some, feet turned backwards from the

heel; some, a double sex, the right breast like a man, the left like a

woman, and that they alternately beget and bring forth: others are

said to have no mouth, and to breathe only through the nostrils; others

are but a cubit high, and are therefore called by the Greeks "Pigmies:"

[884] they say that in some places the women conceive in their fifth

year, and do not live beyond their eighth. So, too, they tell of a

race who have two feet but only one leg, and are of marvellous

swiftness, though they do not bend the knee: they are called

Skiopodes, because in the hot weather they lie down on their backs and

shade themselves with their feet. Others are said to have no head, and

their eyes in their shoulders; and other human or quasi-human races are

depicted in mosaic in the harbor esplanade of Carthage, on the faith of

histories of rarities. What shall I say of the Cynocephali, whose

dog-like head and barking proclaim them beasts rather than men? But we

are not bound to believe all we hear of these monstrosities. But

whoever is anywhere born a man, that is, a rational, mortal animal, no

matter what unusual appearance he presents in color, movement, sound,

nor how peculiar he is in some power, part, or quality of his nature,

no Christian can doubt that he springs from that one protoplast. We

can distinguish the common human nature from that which is peculiar,

and therefore wonderful.

The same account which is given of monstrous births in individual cases

can be given of monstrous races. For God, the Creator of all, knows

where and when each thing ought to be, or to have been created, because

He sees the similarities and diversities which can contribute to the

beauty of the whole. But He who cannot see the whole is offended by

the deformity of the part, because he is blind to that which balances

it, and to which it belongs. We know that men are born with more than

four fingers on their hands or toes on their feet: this is a smaller

matter; but far from us be the folly of supposing that the Creator

mistook the number of a man's fingers, though we cannot account for the

difference. And so in cases where the divergence from the rule is

greater. He whose works no man justly finds fault with, knows what He

has done. At Hippo-Diarrhytus there is a man whose hands are

crescent-shaped, and have only two fingers each, and his feet similarly

formed. If there were a race like him, it would be added to the

history of the curious and wonderful. Shall we therefore deny that

this man is descended from that one man who was first created? As for

the Androgyni, or Hermaphrodites, as they are called, though they are

rare, yet from time to time there appears persons of sex so doubtful,

that it remains uncertain from which sex they take their name; though

it is customary to give them a masculine name, as the more worthy. For

no one ever called them Hermaphroditesses. Some years ago, quite

within my own memory, a man was born in the East, double in his upper,

but single in his lower half--having two heads, two chests, four hands,

but one body and two feet like an ordinary man; and he lived so long

that many had an opportunity of seeing him. But who could enumerate

all the human births that have differed widely from their ascertained

parents? As, therefore, no one will deny that these are all descended

from that one man, so all the races which are reported to have diverged

in bodily appearance from the usual course which nature generally or

almost universally preserves, if they are embraced in that definition

of man as rational and mortal animals, unquestionably trace their

pedigree to that one first father of all. We are supposing these

stories about various races who differ from one another and from us to

be true; but possibly they are not: for if we were not aware that

apes, and monkeys, and sphinxes are not men, but beasts, those

historians would possibly describe them as races of men, and flaunt

with impunity their false and vainglorious discoveries. But supposing

they are men of whom these marvels are recorded, what if God has seen

fit to create some races in this way, that we might not suppose that

the monstrous births which appear among ourselves are the failures of

that wisdom whereby He fashions the human nature, as we speak of the

failure of a less perfect workman? Accordingly, it ought not to seem

absurd to us, that as in individual races there are monstrous births,

so in the whole race there are monstrous races. Wherefore, to conclude

this question cautiously and guardedly, either these things which have

been told of some races have no existence at all; or if they do exist,

they are not human races; or if they are human, they are descended from

Adam.

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[883] Pliny, Hist. Nat. vii. 2; Aulus Gellius, Noct. Att. ix. 4.

[884] From pugme, a cubit.

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Chapter 9.--Whether We are to Believe in the Antipodes.

But as to the fable that there are Antipodes, that is to say, men on

the opposite side of the earth, where the sun rises when it sets to us,

men who walk with their feet opposite ours, that is on no ground

credible. And, indeed, it is not affirmed that this has been learned

by historical knowledge, but by scientific conjecture, on the ground

that the earth is suspended within the concavity of the sky, and that

it has as much room on the one side of it as on the other: hence they

say that the part which is beneath must also be inhabited. But they do

not remark that, although it be supposed or scientifically demonstrated

that the world is of a round and spherical form, yet it does not follow

that the other side of the earth is bare of water; nor even, though it

be bare, does it immediately follow that it is peopled. For Scripture,

which proves the truth of its historical statements by the

accomplishment of its prophecies, gives no false information; and it is

too absurd to say, that some men might have taken ship and traversed

the whole wide ocean, and crossed from this side of the world to the

other, and that thus even the inhabitants of that distant region are

descended from that one first man. Wherefore let us seek if we can

find the city of God that sojourns on earth among those human races who

are catalogued as having been divided into seventy-two nations and as

many languages. For it continued down to the deluge and the ark, and

is proved to have existed still among the sons of Noah by their

blessings, and chiefly in the eldest son Shem; for Japheth received

this blessing, that he should dwell in the tents of Shem.

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Chapter 10.--Of the Genealogy of Shem, in Whose Line the City of God is

Preserved Till the Time of Abraham.

It is necessary, therefore, to preserve the series of generations

descending from Shem, for the sake of exhibiting the city of God after

the flood; as before the flood it was exhibited in the series of

generations descending from Seth. And therefore does divine Scripture,

after exhibiting the earthly city as Babylon or "Confusion," revert to

the patriarch Shem, and recapitulate the generations from him to

Abraham, specifying besides, the year in which each father begat the

son that belonged to this line, and how long he lived. And

unquestionably it is this which fulfills the promise I made, that it

should appear why it is said of the sons of Heber, "The name of the one

was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided." [885] For what can

we understand by the division of the earth, if not the diversity of

languages? And, therefore, omitting the other sons of Shem, who are

not concerned in this matter, Scripture gives the genealogy of those by

whom the line runs on to Abraham, as before the flood those are given

who carried on the line to Noah from Seth. Accordingly this series of

generations begins thus: "These are the generations of Shem: Shem was

an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood.

And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat

sons and daughters." In like manner it registers the rest, naming the

year of his life in which each begat the son who belonged to that line

which extends to Abraham. It specifies, too, how many years he lived

thereafter, begetting sons and daughters, that we may not childishly

suppose that the men named were the only men, but may understand how

the population increased, and how regions and kingdoms so vast could be

populated by the descendants of Shem; especially the kingdom of

Assyria, from which Ninus subdued the surrounding nations, reigning

with brilliant prosperity, and bequeathing to his descendants a vast

but thoroughly consolidated empire, which held together for many

centuries.

But to avoid needless prolixity, we shall mention not the number of

years each member of this series lived, but only the year of his life

in which he begat his heir, that we may thus reckon the number of years

from the flood to Abraham, and may at the same time leave room to touch

briefly and cursorily upon some other matters necessary to our

argument. In the second year, then, after the flood, Shem when he was

a hundred years old begat Arphaxad; Arphaxad when he was 135 years old

begat Cainan; Cainan when he was 130 years begat Salah. Salah himself,

too, was the same age when he begat Eber. Eber lived 134 years, and

begat Peleg, in whose days the earth was divided. Peleg himself lived

130 years, and begat Reu; and Reu lived 132 years, and begat Serug;

Serug 130, and begat Nahor; and Nahor 79, and begat Terah; and Terah

70, and begat Abram, whose name God afterwards changed into Abraham.

There are thus from the flood to Abraham 1072 years, according to the

Vulgate or Septuagint versions. In the Hebrew copies far fewer years

are given; and for this either no reason or a not very credible one is

given.

When, therefore, we look for the city of God in these seventy-two

nations, we cannot affirm that while they had but one lip, that is, one

language, the human race had departed from the worship of the true God,

and that genuine godliness had survived only in those generations which

descend from Shem through Arphaxad and reach to Abraham; but from the

time when they proudly built a tower to heaven, a symbol of godless

exaltation, the city or society of the wicked becomes apparent.

Whether it was only disguised before, or non-existent; whether both

cities remained after the flood,--the godly in the two sons of Noah who

were blessed, and in their posterity, and the ungodly in the cursed son

and his descendants, from whom sprang that mighty hunter against the

Lord,--is not easily determined. For possibly--and certainly this is

more credible--there were despisers of God among the descendants of the

two sons, even before Babylon was founded, and worshippers of God among

the descendants of Ham. Certainly neither race was ever obliterated

from earth. For in both the Psalms in which it is said, "They are all

gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth

good, no, not one," we read further, "Have all the workers of iniquity

no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon

the Lord." [886] There was then a people of God even at that time.

And therefore the words, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one,"

were said of the sons of men, not of the sons of God. For it had been

previously said, "God looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to

see if any understood and sought after God;" and then follow the words

which demonstrate that all the sons of men, that is, all who belong to

the city which lives according to man, not according to God, are

reprobate.

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[885] Gen. x. 25.

[886] Ps. xiv. 3, 4; liii. 3, 4.

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Chapter 11.--That the Original Language in Use Among Men Was that Which

Was Afterwards Called Hebrew, from Heber, in Whose Family It Was

Preserved When the Confusion of Tongues Occurred.

Wherefore, as the fact of all using one language did not secure the

absence of sin-infected men from the race,--for even before the deluge

there was one language, and yet all but the single family of just Noah

were found worthy of destruction by the flood,--so when the nations, by

a prouder godlessness, earned the punishment of the dispersion and the

confusion of tongues, and the city of the godless was called Confusion

or Babylon, there was still the house of Heber in which the primitive

language of the race survived. And therefore, as I have already

mentioned, when an enumeration is made of the sons of Shem, who each

founded a nation, Heber is first mentioned, although he was of the

fifth generation from Shem. And because, when the other races were

divided by their own peculiar languages, his family preserved that

language which is not unreasonably believed to have been the common

language of the race, it was on this account thenceforth named Hebrew.

For it then became necessary to distinguish this language from the rest

by a proper name; though, while there was only one, it had no other

name than the language of man, or human speech, it alone being spoken

by the whole human race. Some one will say: If the earth was divided

by languages in the days of Peleg, Heber's son, that language, which

was formerly common to all, should rather have been called after

Peleg. But we are to understand that Heber himself gave to his son

this name Peleg, which means Division; because he was born when the

earth was divided, that is, at the very time of the division, and that

this is the meaning of the words, "In his days the earth was divided."

[887] For unless Heber had been still alive when the languages were

multiplied, the language which was preserved in his house would not

have been called after him. We are induced to believe that this was

the primitive and common language, because the multiplication and

change of languages was introduced as a punishment, and it is fit to

ascribe to the people of God an immunity from this punishment. Nor is

it without significance that this is the language which Abraham

retained, and that he could not transmit it to all his descendants, but

only to those of Jacob's line, who distinctively and eminently

constituted God's people, and received His covenants, and were Christ's

progenitors according to the flesh. In the same way, Heber himself did

not transmit that language to all his posterity, but only to the line

from which Abraham sprang. And thus, although it is not expressly

stated, that when the wicked were building Babylon there was a godly

seed remaining, this indistinctness is intended to stimulate research

rather than to elude it. For when we see that originally there was one

common language, and that Heber is mentioned before all Shem's sons,

though he belonged to the fifth generation from him, and that the

language which the patriarchs and prophets used, not only in their

conversation, but in the authoritative language of Scripture, is called

Hebrew, when we are asked where that primitive and common language was

preserved after the confusion of tongues, certainly, as there can be no

doubt that those among whom it was preserved were exempt from the

punishment it embodied, what other suggestion can we make, than that it

survived in the family of him whose name it took, and that this is no

small proof of the righteousness of this family, that the punishment

with which the other families were visited did not fall upon it?

But yet another question is mooted: How did Heber and his son Peleg

each found a nation, if they had but one language? For no doubt the

Hebrew nation propagated from Heber through Abraham, and becoming

through him a great people, is one nation. How, then, are all the sons

of the three branches of Noah's family enumerated as founding a nation

each, if Heber and Peleg did not so? It is very probable that the

giant Nimrod founded also his nation, and that Scripture has named him

separately on account of the extraordinary dimensions of his empire and

of his body, so that the number of seventy-two nations remains. But

Peleg was mentioned, not because he founded a nation (for his race and

language are Hebrew), but on account of the critical time at which he

was born, all the earth being then divided. Nor ought we to be

surprised that the giant Nimrod lived to the time in which Babylon was

founded and the confusion of tongues occurred, and the consequent

division of the earth. For though Heber was in the sixth generation

from Noah, and Nimrod in the fourth, it does not follow that they could

not be alive at the same time. For when the generations are few, they

live longer and are born later; but when they are many, they live a

shorter time, and come into the world earlier. We are to understand

that, when the earth was divided, the descendants of Noah who are

registered as founders of nations were not only already born, but were

of an age to have immense families, worthy to be called tribes or

nations. And therefore we must by no means suppose that they were born

in the order in which they were set down; otherwise, how could the

twelve sons of Joktan, another son of Heber's, and brother of Peleg,

have already founded nations, if Joktan was born, as he is registered,

after his brother Peleg, since the earth was divided at Peleg's birth?

We are therefore to understand that, though Peleg is named first, he

was born long after Joktan, whose twelve sons had already families so

large as to admit of their being divided by different languages. There

is nothing extraordinary in the last born being first named: of the

sons of Noah, the descendants of Japheth are first named; then the sons

of Ham, who was the second son; and last the sons of Shem, who was the

first and oldest. Of these nations the names have partly survived, so

that at this day we can see from whom they have sprung, as the

Assyrians from Assur, the Hebrews from Heber, but partly have been

altered in the lapse of time, so that the most learned men, by profound

research in ancient records, have scarcely been able to discover the

origin, I do not say of all, but of some of these nations. There is,

for example, nothing in the name Egyptians to show that they are

descended from Misraim, Ham's son, nor in the name Ethiopians to show a

connection with Cush, though such is said to be the origin of these

nations. And if we take a general survey of the names, we shall find

that more have been changed than have remained the same.

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[887] Gen. x. 25.

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Chapter 12.--Of the Era in Abraham's Life from Which a New Period in

the Holy Succession Begins.

Let us now survey the progress of the city of God from the era of the

patriarch Abraham, from whose time it begins to be more conspicuous,

and the divine promises which are now fulfilled in Christ are more

fully revealed. We learn, then, from the intimations of holy

Scripture, that Abraham was born in the country of the Chaldeans, a

land belonging to the Assyrian empire. Now, even at that time impious

superstitions were rife with the Chaldeans, as with other nations. The

family of Terah, to which Abraham belonged, was the only one in which

the worship of the true God survived, and the only one, we may suppose,

in which the Hebrew language was preserved; although Joshua the son of

Nun tells us that even this family served other gods in Mesopotamia.

[888] The other descendants of Heber gradually became absorbed in

other races and other languages. And thus, as the single family of

Noah was preserved through the deluge of water to renew the human race,

so, in the deluge of superstition that flooded the whole world, there

remained but the one family of Terah in which the seed of God's city

was preserved. And as, when Scripture has enumerated the generations

prior to Noah, with their ages, and explained the cause of the flood

before God began to speak to Noah about the building of the ark, it is

said, "These are the generations of Noah;" so also now, after

enumerating the generations from Shem, Noah's son, down to Abraham, it

then signalizes an era by saying, "These are the generations of Terah:

Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran

died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the

Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's

wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife Milcah, the daughter of

Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah." [889] This

Iscah is supposed to be the same as Sarah, Abraham's wife.

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[888] Josh. xxiv. 2.

[889] Gen. xi. 27-29.

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Chapter 13.--Why, in the Account of Terah's Emigration, on His

Forsaking the Chaldeans and Passing Over into Mesopotamia, No Mention

is Made of His Son Nahor.

Next it is related how Terah with his family left the region of the

Chaldeans and came into Mesopotamia, and dwelt in Haran. But nothing

is said about one of his sons called Nahor, as if he had not taken him

along with him. For the narrative runs thus: "And Terah took Abram

his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarah his

daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and led them forth out of the

region of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; and he came into

Haran, and dwelt there." [890] Nahor and Milcah his wife are nowhere

named here. But afterwards, when Abraham sent his servant to take a

wife for his son Isaac, we find it thus written: "And the servant took

ten camels of the camels of his lord, and of all the goods of his lord,

with him; and arose, and went into Mesopotamia, into the city of

Nahor." [891] This and other testimonies of this sacred history show

that Nahor, Abraham's brother, had also left the region of the

Chaldeans, and fixed his abode in Mesopotamia, where Abraham dwelt with

his father. Why, then, did the Scripture not mention him, when Terah

with his family went forth out of the Chaldean nation and dwelt in

Haran, since it mentions that he took with him not only Abraham his

son, but also Sarah his daughter-in-law, and Lot his grandson? The

only reason we can think of is, that perhaps he had lapsed from the

piety of his father and brother, and adhered to the superstition of the

Chaldeans, and had afterwards emigrated thence, either through

penitence, or because he was persecuted as a suspected person. For in

the book called Judith, when Holofernes, the enemy of the Israelites,

inquired what kind of nation that might be, and whether war should be

made against them, Achior, the leader of the Ammonites, answered him

thus: "Let our lord now hear a word from the mouth of thy servant, and

I will declare unto thee the truth concerning the people which dwelleth

near thee in this hill country, and there shall no lie come out of the

mouth of thy servant. For this people is descended from the Chaldeans,

and they dwelt heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow

the gods of their fathers, which were glorious in the land of the

Chaldeans, but went out of the way of their ancestors, and adored the

God of heaven, whom they knew; and they cast them out from the face of

their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and dwelt there many days.

And their God said to them, that they should depart from their

habitation, and go into the land of Canaan; and they dwelt," [892]

etc., as Achior the Ammonite narrates. Whence it is manifest that the

house of Terah had suffered persecution from the Chaldeans for the true

piety with which they worshipped the one and true God.

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[890] Gen. xi. 31.

[891] Gen. xxiv. 10.

[892] Judith v. 5-9.

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Chapter 14.--Of the Years of Terah, Who Completed His Lifetime in

Haran.

On Terah's death in Mesopotamia, where he is said to have lived 205

years, the promises of God made to Abraham now begin to be pointed out;

for thus it is written: "And the days of Terah in Haran were two

hundred and five years, and he died in Haran." [893] This is not to

be taken as if he had spent all his days there, but that he there

completed the days of his life, which were two hundred and five years:

otherwise it would not be known how many years Terah lived, since it is

not said in what year of his life he came into Haran; and it is absurd

to suppose that, in this series of generations, where it is carefully

recorded how many years each one lived, his age was the only one not

put on record. For although some whom the same Scripture mentions have

not their age recorded, they are not in this series, in which the

reckoning of time is continuously indicated by the death of the parents

and the succession of the children. For this series, which is given in

order from Adam to Noah, and from him down to Abraham, contains no one

without the number of the years of his life.

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[893] Gen. xi. 32.

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Chapter 15.--Of the Time of the Migration of Abraham, When, According

to the Commandment of God, He Went Out from Haran.

When, after the record of the death of Terah, the father of Abraham, we

next read, "And the Lord said to Abram, Get thee out of thy country,

and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house," [894] etc., it is

not to be supposed, because this follows in the order of the narrative,

that it also followed in the chronological order of events. For if it

were so, there would be an insoluble difficulty. For after these words

of God which were spoken to Abraham, the Scripture says: "And Abram

departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him. Now

Abraham was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran."

[895] How can this be true if he departed from Haran after his

father's death? For when Terah was seventy years old, as is intimated

above, he begat Abraham; and if to this number we add the seventy-five

years which Abraham reckoned when he went out of Haran, we get 145

years. Therefore that was the number of the years of Terah, when

Abraham departed out of that city of Mesopotamia; for he had reached

the seventy-fifth year of his life, and thus his father, who begat him

in the seventieth year of his life, had reached, as was said, his

145th. Therefore he did not depart thence after his father's death,

that is, after the 205 years his father lived; but the year of his

departure from that place, seeing it was his seventy-fifth, is inferred

beyond a doubt to have been the 145th of his father, who begat him in

his seventieth year. And thus it is to be understood that the

Scripture, according to its custom, has gone back to the time which had

already been passed by the narrative; just as above, when it had

mentioned the grandsons of Noah, it said that they were in their

nations and tongues; and yet afterwards, as if this also had followed

in order of time, it says, "And the whole earth was of one lip, and one

speech for all." [896] How, then, could they be said to be in their

own nations and according to their own tongues, if there was one for

all; except because the narrative goes back to gather up what it had

passed over? Here, too, in the same way, after saying, "And the days

of Terah in Haran were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran," the

Scripture, going back to what had been passed over in order to complete

what had been begun about Terah, says, "And the Lord said to Abram, Get

thee out of thy country," [897] etc. After which words of God it is

added, "And Abram departed, as the Lord spake unto him; and Lot went

with him. But Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed out of

Haran." Therefore it was done when his father was in the 145th year of

his age; for it was then the seventy-fifth of his own. But this

question is also solved in another way, that the seventy-five years of

Abraham when he departed out of Haran are reckoned from the year in

which he was delivered from the fire of the Chaldeans, not from that of

his birth, as if he was rather to be held as having been born then.

Now the blessed Stephen, in narrating these things in the Acts of the

Apostles, says: "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham,

when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto

him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy

father's house, and come into the land which I will show thee." [898]

According to these words of Stephen, God spoke to Abraham, not after

the death of his father, who certainly died in Haran, where his son

also dwelt with him, but before he dwelt in that city, although he was

already in Mesopotamia. Therefore he had already departed from the

Chaldeans. So that when Stephen adds, "Then Abraham went out of the

land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran," [899] this does not point

out what took place after God spoke to him (for it was not after these

words of God that he went out of the land of the Chaldeans, since he

says that God spoke to him in Mesopotamia), but the word "then" which

he uses refers to that whole period from his going out of the land of

the Chaldeans and dwelling in Haran. Likewise in what follows, "And

thenceforth, when his father was dead, he settled him in this land,

wherein ye now dwell, and your fathers," he does not say, after his

father was dead he went out from Haran; but thenceforth he settled him

here, after his father was dead. It is to be understood, therefore,

that God had spoken to Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he

dwelt in Haran; but that he came to Haran with his father, keeping in

mind the precept of God, and that he went out thence in his own

seventy-fifth year, which was his father's 145th. But he says that his

settlement in the land of Canaan, not his going forth from Haran, took

place after his father's death; because his father was already dead

when he purchased the land, and personally entered on possession of

it. But when, on his having already settled in Mesopotamia, that is,

already gone out of the land of the Chaldeans, God says, "Get thee out

of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house,"

[900] this means, not that he should cast out his body from thence, for

he had already done that, but that he should tear away his soul. For

he had not gone out from thence in mind, if he was held by the hope and

desire of returning,--a hope and desire which was to be cut off by

God's command and help, and by his own obedience. It would indeed be

no incredible supposition that afterwards, when Nahor followed his

father, Abraham then fulfilled the precept of the Lord, that he should

depart out of Haran with Sarah his wife and Lot his brother's son.

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[894] Gen. xii. 1.

[895] Gen. xii. 4.

[896] Gen. xi. 1.

[897] Gen. xii. 1.

[898] Acts vii. 2, 3.

[899] Acts vii. 4.

[900] Gen. xii. 1.

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Chapter 16.--Of the Order and Nature of the Promises of God Which Were

Made to Abraham.

God's promises made to Abraham are now to be considered; for in these

the oracles of our God, [901] that is, of the true God, began to appear

more openly concerning the godly people, whom prophetic authority

foretold. The first of these reads thus: "And the Lord said unto

Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy

father's house, and go into a land that I will show thee: and I will

make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and magnify thy

name; and thou shall be blessed: and I will bless them that bless

thee, and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all tribes of

the earth be blessed." [902] Now it is to be observed that two things

are promised to Abraham, the one, that his seed should possess the land

of Canaan, which is intimated when it is said, "Go into a land that I

will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation;" but the other

far more excellent, not about the carnal but the spiritual seed,

through which he is the father, not of the one Israelite nation, but of

all nations who follow the footprints of his faith, which was first

promised in these words, "And in thee shall all tribes of the earth be

blessed." Eusebius thought this promise was made in Abraham's

seventy-fifth year, as if soon after it was made Abraham had departed

out of Haran because the Scripture cannot be contradicted in which we

read, "Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of

Haran." But if this promise was made in that year, then of course

Abraham was staying in Haran with his father; for he could not depart

thence unless he had first dwelt there. Does this, then, contradict

what Stephen says, "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham,

when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran?" [903] But it

is to be understood that the whole took place in the same year,--both

the promise of God before Abraham dwelt in Haran, and his dwelling in

Haran, and his departure thence,--not only because Eusebius in the

Chronicles reckons from the year of this promise, and shows that after

430 years the exodus from Egypt took place, when the law was given, but

because the Apostle Paul also mentions it.

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[901] Various reading, "of our Lord Jesus Christ."

[902] Gen. xii. 1-3.

[903] Acts vii. 2.

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Chapter 17.--Of the Three Most Famous Kingdoms of the Nations, of Which

One, that is the Assyrian, Was Already Very Eminent When Abraham Was

Born.

During the same period there were three famous kingdoms of the nations,

in which the city of the earth-born, that is, the society of men living

according to man under the domination of the fallen angels, chiefly

flourished, namely, the three kingdoms of Sicyon, Egypt, and Assyria.

Of these, Assyria was much the most powerful and sublime; for that king

Ninus, son of Belus, had subdued the people of all Asia except India.

By Asia I now mean not that part which is one province of this greater

Asia, but what is called Universal Asia, which some set down as the

half, but most as the third part of the whole world,--the three being

Asia, Europe, and Africa, thereby making an unequal division. For the

part called Asia stretches from the south through the east even to the

north; Europe from the north even to the west; and Africa from the west

even to the south. Thus we see that two, Europe and Africa, contain

one half of the world, and Asia alone the other half. And these two

parts are made by the circumstance, that there enters between them from

the ocean all the Mediterranean water, which makes this great sea of

ours. So that, if you divide the world into two parts, the east and

the west, Asia will be in the one, and Europe and Africa in the other.

So that of the three kingdoms then famous, one, namely Sicyon, was not

under the Assyrians, because it was in Europe; but as for Egypt, how

could it fail to be subject to the empire which ruled all Asia with the

single exception of India? In Assyria, therefore, the dominion of the

impious city had the pre-eminence. Its head was Babylon,--an

earth-born city, most fitly named, for it means confusion. There Ninus

reigned after the death of his father Belus, who first had reigned

there sixty-five years. His son Ninus, who, on his father's death,

succeeded to the kingdom, reigned fifty-two years, and had been king

forty-three years when Abraham was born, which was about the 1200th

year before Rome was founded, as it were another Babylon in the west.

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Chapter 18.--Of the Repeated Address of God to Abraham, in Which He

Promised the Land of Canaan to Him and to His Seed.

Abraham, then, having departed out of Haran in the seventy-fifth year

of his own age, and in the hundred and forty-fifth of his father's,

went with Lot, his brother's son, and Sarah his wife, into the land of

Canaan, and came even to Sichem, where again he received the divine

oracle, of which it is thus written: "And the Lord appeared unto

Abram, and said unto him, Unto thy seed will I give this land." [904]

Nothing is promised here about that seed in which he is made the father

of all nations, but only about that by which he is the father of the

one Israelite nation; for by this seed that land was possessed.

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[904] Gen. xii. 7.

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Chapter 19.--Of the Divine Preservation of Sarah's Chastity in Egypt,

When Abraham Had Called Her Not His Wife But His Sister.

Having built an altar there, and called upon God, Abraham proceeded

thence and dwelt in the desert, and was compelled by pressure of famine

to go on into Egypt. There he called his wife his sister, and told no

lie. For she was this also, because she was near of blood; just as

Lot, on account of the same nearness, being his brother's son, is

called his brother. Now he did not deny that she was his wife, but

held his peace about it, committing to God the defence of his wife's

chastity, and providing as a man against human wiles; because if he had

not provided against the danger as much as he could, he would have been

tempting God rather than trusting in Him. We have said enough about

this matter against the calumnies of Faustus the Manich�an. At last

what Abraham had expected the Lord to do took place. For Pharaoh, king

of Egypt, who had taken her to him as his wife, restored her to her

husband on being severely plagued. And far be it from us to believe

that she was defiled by lying with another; because it is much more

credible that, by these great afflictions, Pharaoh was not permitted to

do this.

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Chapter 20.--Of the Parting of Lot and Abraham, Which They Agreed to

Without Breach of Charity.

On Abraham's return out of Egypt to the place he had left, Lot, his

brother's son, departed from him into the land of Sodom, without breach

of charity. For they had grown rich, and began to have many herdmen of

cattle, and when these strove together, they avoided in this way the

pugnacious discord of their families. Indeed, as human affairs go,

this cause might even have given rise to some strife between

themselves. Consequently these are the words of Abraham to Lot, when

taking precaution against this evil, "Let there be no strife between me

and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

Behold, is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself from me:

if thou wilt go to the left hand, I will go to the right; or if thou

wilt go to the right hand, I will go to the left." [905] From this,

perhaps, has arisen a pacific custom among men, that when there is any

partition of earthly things, the greater should make the division, the

less the choice.

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[905] Gen. xiii. 8, 9.

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Chapter 21.--Of the Third Promise of God, by Which He Assured the Land

of Canaan to Abraham and His Seed in Perpetuity.

Now, when Abraham and Lot had separated, and dwelt apart, owing to the

necessity of supporting their families, and not to vile discord, and

Abraham was in the land of Canaan, but Lot in Sodom, the Lord said to

Abraham in a third oracle, "Lift up thine eyes, and look from the place

where thou now art, to the north, and to Africa, and to the east, and

to the sea; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it,

and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the

earth: if any one can number the dust of the earth, thy seed shall

also be numbered. Arise, and walk through the land, in the length of

it, and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give it." [906] It

does not clearly appear whether in this promise that also is contained

by which he is made the father of all nations. For the clause, "And I

will make thy seed as the dust of the earth," may seem to refer to

this, being spoken by that figure the Greeks call hyperbole, which

indeed is figurative, not literal. But no person of understanding can

doubt in what manner the Scripture uses this and other figures. For

that figure (that is, way of speaking) is used when what is said is far

larger than what is meant by it; for who does not see how incomparably

larger the number of the dust must be than that of all men can be from

Adam himself down to the end of the world? How much greater, then,

must it be than the seed of Abraham,--not only that pertaining to the

nation of Israel, but also that which is and shall be according to the

imitation of faith in all nations of the whole wide world! For that

seed is indeed very small in comparison with the multitude of the

wicked, although even those few of themselves make an innumerable

multitude, which by a hyperbole is compared to the dust of the earth.

Truly that multitude which was promised to Abraham is not innumerable

to God, although to man; but to God not even the dust of the earth is

so. Further, the promise here made may be understood not only of the

nation of Israel, but of the whole seed of Abraham, which may be fitly

compared to the dust for multitude, because regarding it also there is

the promise [907] of many children, not according to the flesh, but

according to the spirit. But we have therefore said that this does not

clearly appear, because the multitude even of that one nation, which

was born according to the flesh of Abraham through his grandson Jacob,

has increased so much as to fill almost all parts of the world.

Consequently, even it might by hyperbole be compared to the dust for

multitude, because even it alone is innumerable by man. Certainly no

one questions that only that land is meant which is called Canaan. But

that saying, "To thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever," may

move some, if by "for ever" they understand "to eternity." But if in

this passage they take "for ever" thus, as we firmly hold it means that

the beginning of the world to come is to be ordered from the end of the

present, there is still no difficulty, because, although the Israelites

are expelled from Jerusalem, they still remain in other cities in the

land of Canaan, and shall remain even to the end; and when that whole

land is inhabited by Christians, they also are the very seed of

Abraham.

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[906] Gen. xiii. 14-17.

[907] Various reading, "the express promise."

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Chapter 22.--Of Abraham's Overcoming the Enemies of Sodom, When He

Delivered Lot from Captivity and Was Blessed by Melchizedek the Priest.

Having received this oracle of promise, Abraham migrated, and remained

in another place of the same land, that is, beside the oak of Mamre,

which was Hebron. Then on the invasion of Sodom, when five kings

carried on war against four, and Lot was taken captive with the

conquered Sodomites, Abraham delivered him from the enemy, leading with

him to battle three hundred and eighteen of his home-born servants, and

won the victory for the kings of Sodom, but would take nothing of the

spoils when offered by the king for whom he had won them. He was then

openly blessed by Melchizedek, who was priest of God Most High, about

whom many and great things are written in the epistle which is

inscribed to the Hebrews, which most say is by the Apostle Paul, though

some deny this. For then first appeared the sacrifice which is now

offered to God by Christians in the whole wide world, and that is

fulfilled which long after the event was said by the prophet to Christ,

who was yet to come in the flesh, "Thou art a priest for ever after the

order of Melchizedek," [908] --that is to say, not after the order of

Aaron, for that order was to be taken away when the things shone forth

which were intimated beforehand by these shadows.

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[908] Ps. cx. 4.

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Chapter 23.--Of the Word of the Lord to Abraham, by Which It Was

Promised to Him that His Posterity Should Be Multiplied According to

the Multitude of the Stars; On Believing Which He Was Declared

Justified While Yet in Uncircumcision.

The word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision also. For when God

promised him protection and exceeding great reward, he, being

solicitous about posterity, said that a certain Eliezer of Damascus,

born in his house, would be his heir. Immediately he was promised an

heir, not that house-born servant, but one who was to come forth of

Abraham himself; and again a seed innumerable, not as the dust of the

earth, but as the stars of heaven,--which rather seems to me a promise

of a posterity exalted in celestial felicity. For, so far as multitude

is concerned, what are the stars of heaven to the dust of the earth,

unless one should say the comparison is like inasmuch as the stars also

cannot be numbered? For it is not to be believed that all of them can

be seen. For the more keenly one observes them, the more does he see.

So that it is to be supposed some remain concealed from the keenest

observers, to say nothing of those stars which are said to rise and set

in another part of the world most remote from us. Finally, the

authority of this book condemns those like Aratus or Eudoxus, or any

others who boast that they have found out and written down the complete

number of the stars. Here, indeed, is set down that sentence which the

apostle quotes in order to commend the grace of God, "Abraham believed

God, and it was counted to him for righteousness;" [909] lest the

circumcision should glory, and be unwilling to receive the

uncircumcised nations to the faith of Christ. For at the time when he

believed, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness, Abraham

had not yet been circumcised.

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[909] Rom. iv. 3; Gen. xv. 6.

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Chapter 24.--Of the Meaning of the Sacrifice Abraham Was Commanded to

Offer When He Supplicated to Be Taught About Those Things He Had

Believed.

In the same vision, God in speaking to him also says, "I am God that

brought thee out of the region of the Chaldees, to give thee this land

to inherit it." [910] And when Abram asked whereby he might know that

he should inherit it, God said to him, "Take me an heifer of three

years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years

old, and a turtle-dove, and a pigeon. And he took unto him all these,

and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another;

but the birds divided he not. And the fowls came down," as it is

written, "on the carcasses, and Abram sat down by them. But about the

going down of the sun, great fear fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror

of great darkness fell upon him. And He said unto Abram, Know of a

surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not theirs, and they

shall reduce them to servitude and shall afflict them four hundred

years: but the nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and

afterward shall they come out hither with great substance. And thou

shalt go to thy fathers in peace; kept in a good old age. But in the

fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of

the Amorites is not yet full. And when the sun was setting, there was

a flame, and a smoking furnace, and lamps of fire, that passed through

between those pieces. In that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram,

saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land, from the river of Egypt

unto the great river Euphrates: the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and

the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,

and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the

Girgashites, and the Jebusites." [911]

All these things were said and done in a vision from God; but it would

take long, and would exceed the scope of this work, to treat of them

exactly in detail. It is enough that we should know that, after it was

said Abram believed in God, and it was counted to him for

righteousness, he did not fail in faith in saying, "Lord God, whereby

shall I know that I shall inherit it?" for the inheritance of that land

was promised to him. Now he does not say, How shall I know, as if he

did not yet believe; but he says, "Whereby shall I know," meaning that

some sign might be given by which he might know the manner of those

things which he had believed, just as it is not for lack of faith the

Virgin Mary says, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" [912]

for she inquired as to the way in which that should take place which

she was certain would come to pass. And when she asked this, she was

told, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the

Highest shall overshadow thee." [913] Here also, in fine, a symbol

was given, consisting of three animals, a heifer, a she-goat, and a

ram, and two birds, a turtle-dove and pigeon, that he might know that

the things which he had not doubted should come to pass were to happen

in accordance with this symbol. Whether, therefore, the heifer was a

sign that the people should be put under the law, the she-goat that the

same people was to become sinful, the ram that they should reign (and

these animals are said to be of three years old for this reason, that

there are three remarkable divisions of time, from Adam to Noah, and

from him to Abraham, and from him to David, who, on the rejection of

Saul, was first established by the will of the Lord in the kingdom of

the Israelite nation: in this third division, which extends from

Abraham to David, that people grew up as if passing through the third

age of life), or whether they had some other more suitable meaning,

still I have no doubt whatever that spiritual things were prefigured by

them as well as by the turtle-dove and pigeon. And it is said, "But

the birds divided he not," because carnal men are divided among

themselves, but the spiritual not at all, whether they seclude

themselves from the busy conversation of men, like the turtle-dove, or

dwell among them, like the pigeon; for both birds are simple and

harmless, signifying that even in the Israelite people, to which that

land was to be given, there would be individuals who were children of

the promise, and heirs of the kingdom that is [914] to remain in

eternal felicity. But the fowls coming down on the divided carcasses

represent nothing good, but the spirits of this air, seeking some food

for themselves in the division of carnal men. But that Abraham sat

down with them, signifies that even amid these divisions of the carnal,

true believers shall persevere to the end. And that about the going

down of the sun great fear fell upon Abraham and a horror of great

darkness, signifies that about the end of this world believers shall be

in great perturbation and tribulation, of which the Lord said in the

gospel, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the

beginning." [915]

But what is said to Abraham, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a

stranger in a land not theirs, and they shall reduce them to servitude,

and shall afflict them 400 years," is most clearly a prophecy about the

people of Israel which was to be in servitude in Egypt. Not that this

people was to be in that servitude under the oppressive Egyptians for

400 years, but it is foretold that this should take place in the course

of those 400 years. For as it is written of Terah the father of

Abraham, "And the days of Terah in Haran were 205 years," [916] not

because they were all spent there, but because they were completed

there, so it is said here also, "And they shall reduce them to

servitude, and shall afflict them 400 years," for this reason, because

that number was completed, not because it was all spent in that

affliction. The years are said to be 400 in round numbers, although

they were a little more,--whether you reckon from this time, when these

things were promised to Abraham, or from the birth of Isaac, as the

seed of Abraham, of which these things are predicted. For, as we have

already said above, from the seventy-fifth year of Abraham, when the

first promise was made to him, down to the exodus of Israel from Egypt,

there are reckoned 430 years, which the apostle thus mentions: "And

this I say, that the covenant confirmed by God, the law, which was made

430 years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of

none effect." [917] So then these 430 years might be called 400,

because they are not much more, especially since part even of that

number had already gone by when these things were shown and said to

Abraham in vision, or when Isaac was born in his father's 100th year,

twenty-five years after the first promise, when of these 430 years

there now remained 405, which God was pleased to call 400. No one will

doubt that the other things which follow in the prophetic words of God

pertain to the people of Israel.

When it is added, "And when the sun was now setting there was a flame,

and lo, a smoking furnace, and lamps of fire, which passed through

between those pieces," this signifies that at the end of the world the

carnal shall be judged by fire. For just as the affliction of the city

of God, such as never was before, which is expected to take place under

Antichrist, was signified by Abraham's horror of great darkness about

the going down of the sun, that is, when the end of the world draws

nigh,--so at the going down of the sun, that is, at the very end of the

world, there is signified by that fire the day of judgment, which

separates the carnal who are to be saved by fire from those who are to

be condemned in the fire. And then the covenant made with Abraham

particularly sets forth the land of Canaan, and names eleven tribes in

it from the river of Egypt even to the great river Euphrates. It is

not then from the great river of Egypt, that is, the Nile, but from a

small one which separates Egypt from Palestine, where the city of

Rhinocorura is.

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[910] Gen. xv. 7.

[911] Gen. xv. 9-21.

[912] Luke i. 34.

[913] Luke i. 35.

[914] Various reading, "who are to remain."

[915] Matt. xxiv. 21.

[916] Gen. xi. 32.

[917] Gal. iii. 17.

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Chapter 25.--Of Sarah's Handmaid, Hagar, Whom She Herself Wished to Be

Abraham's Concubine.

And here follow the times of Abraham's sons, the one by Hagar the bond

maid, the other by Sarah the free woman, about whom we have already

spoken in the previous book. As regards this transaction, Abraham is

in no way to be branded as guilty concerning this concubine, for he

used her for the begetting of progeny, not for the gratification of

lust; and not to insult, but rather to obey his wife, who supposed it

would be solace of her barrenness if she could make use of the fruitful

womb of her handmaid to supply the defect of her own nature, and by

that law of which the apostle says, "Likewise also the husband hath not

power of his own body, but the wife," [918] could, as a wife, make use

of him for childbearing by another, when she could not do so in her own

person. Here there is no wanton lust, no filthy lewdness. The

handmaid is delivered to the husband by the wife for the sake of

progeny, and is received by the husband for the sake of progeny, each

seeking, not guilty excess, but natural fruit. And when the pregnant

bond woman despised her barren mistress, and Sarah, with womanly

jealousy, rather laid the blame of this on her husband, even then

Abraham showed that he was not a slavish lover, but a free begetter of

children, and that in using Hagar he had guarded the chastity of Sarah

his wife, and had gratified her will and not his own,--had received her

without seeking, had gone in to her without being attached, had

impregnated without loving her,--for he says, "Behold thy maid is in

thy hands: do to her as it pleaseth thee;" [919] a man able to use

women as a man should,--his wife temperately, his handmaid compliantly,

neither intemperately!

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[918] 1 Cor. vii. 4.

[919] Gen. xvi. 6.

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Chapter 26.--Of God's Attestation to Abraham, by Which He Assures Him,

When Now Old, of a Son by the Barren Sarah, and Appoints Him the Father

of the Nations, and Seals His Faith in the Promise by the Sacrament of

Circumcision.

After these things Ishmael was born of Hagar; and Abraham might think

that in him was fulfilled what God had promised him, saying, when he

wished to adopt his home-born servant, "This shall not be thine heir;

but he that shall come forth of thee, he shall be thine heir." [920]

Therefore, lest he should think that what was promised was fulfilled in

the handmaid's son, "when Abram was ninety years old and nine, God

appeared to him, and said unto him, I am God; be well-pleasing in my

sight, and be without complaint, and I will make my covenant between me

and thee, and will fill thee exceedingly." [921]

Here there are more distinct promises about the calling of the nations

in Isaac, that is, in the son of the promise, by which grace is

signified, and not nature; for the son is promised from an old man and

a barren old woman. For although God effects even the natural course

of procreation, yet where the agency of God is manifest, through the

decay or failure of nature, grace is more plainly discerned. And

because this was to be brought about, not by generation, but by

regeneration, circumcision was enjoined now, when a son was promised of

Sarah. And by ordering all, not only sons, but also home-born and

purchased servants to be circumcised, he testifies that this grace

pertains to all. For what else does circumcision signify than a nature

renewed on the putting off of the old? And what else does the eighth

day mean than Christ, who rose again when the week was completed, that

is, after the Sabbath? The very names of the parents are changed: all

things proclaim newness, and the new covenant is shadowed forth in the

old. For what does the term old covenant imply but the concealing of

the new? And what does the term new covenant imply but the revealing

of the old? The laughter of Abraham is the exultation of one who

rejoices, not the scornful laughter of one who mistrusts. And those

words of his in his heart, "Shall a son be born to me that am an

hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?"

are not the words of doubt, but of wonder. And when it is said, "And I

will give to thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land in which thou

art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession,"

if it troubles any one whether this is to be held as fulfilled, or

whether its fulfilment may still be looked for, since no kind of

earthly possession can be everlasting for any nation whatever, let him

know that the word translated everlasting, by our writers is what the

Greeks term aio;nion, which is derived from aio;n, the Greek for

s�culum, an age. But the Latins have not ventured to translate this by

secular, lest they should change the meaning into something widely

different. For many things are called secular which so happen in this

world as to pass away even in a short time; but what is termed aio;nion

either has no end, or lasts to the very end of this world.

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[920] Gen. xv. 4.

[921] Gen. xvii. 1-22. The passage is given in full by Augustin.

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Chapter 27.--Of the Male, Who Was to Lose His Soul If He Was Not

Circumcised on the Eighth Day, Because He Had Broken God's Covenant.

When it is said, "The male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his

foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people, because he hath

broken my covenant," [922] some may be troubled how that ought to be

understood, since it can be no fault of the infant whose life it is

said must perish; nor has the covenant of God been broken by him, but

by his parents, who have not taken care to circumcise him. But even

the infants, not personally in their own life, but according to the

common origin of the human race, have all broken God's covenant in that

one in whom all have sinned. [923] Now there are many things called

God's covenants besides those two great ones, the old and the new,

which any one who pleases may read and know. For the first covenant,

which was made with the first man, is just this: "In the day ye eat

thereof, ye shall surely die." [924] Whence it is written in the book

called Ecclesiasticus, "All flesh waxeth old as doth a garment. For

the covenant from the beginning is, Thou shall die the death." [925]

Now, as the law was more plainly given afterward, and the apostle says,

"Where no law is, there is no prevarication," [926] on what supposition

is what is said in the psalm true, "I accounted all the sinners of the

earth prevaricators," [927] except that all who are held liable for any

sin are accused of dealing deceitfully (prevaricating) with some law?

If on this account, then, even the infants are, according to the true

belief, born in sin, not actual but original, so that we confess they

have need of grace for the remission of sins, certainly it must be

acknowledged that in the same sense in which they are sinners they are

also prevaricators of that law which was given in Paradise, according

to the truth of both scriptures, "I accounted all the sinners of the

earth prevaricators," and "Where no law is, there is no

prevarication." And thus, be cause circumcision was the sign of

regeneration, and the infant, on account of the original sin by which

God's covenant was first broken, was not undeservedly to lose his

generation unless delivered by regeneration, these divine words are to

be understood as if it had been said, Whoever is not born again, that

soul shall perish from his people, because he hath broken my covenant,

since he also has sinned in Adam with all others. For had He said,

Because he hath broken this my covenant, He would have compelled us to

understand by it only this of circumcision; but since He has not

expressly said what covenant the infant has broken, we are free to

understand Him as speaking of that covenant of which the breach can be

ascribed to an infant. Yet if any one contends that it is said of

nothing else than circumcision, that in it the infant has broken the

covenant of God because, he is not circumcised, he must seek some

method of explanation by which it may be understood without absurdity

(such as this) that he has broken the covenant, because it has been

broken in him although not by him. Yet in this case also it is to be

observed that the soul of the infant, being guilty of no sin of neglect

against itself, would perish unjustly, unless original sin rendered it

obnoxious to punishment.

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[922] Gen. xvii. 14.

[923] Rom. v. 12, 19.

[924] Gen. ii. 17.

[925] Ecclus. xv. 17.

[926] Rom. iv. 15.

[927] Ps. cxix. 119. Augustin and the Vulgate follow the LXX.

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Chapter 28.--Of the Change of Name in Abraham and Sarah, Who Received

the Gift of Fecundity When They Were Incapable of Regeneration Owing to

the Barrenness of One, and the Old Age of Both.

Now when a promise so great and clear was made to Abraham, in which it

was so plainly said to him, "I have made thee a father of many nations,

and I will increase thee exceedingly, and I will make nations of thee,

and kings shall go forth of thee. And I will give thee a son of Sarah;

and I will bless him, and he shall become nations, and kings of nations

shall be of him," [928] --a promise which we now see fulfilled in

Christ,--from that time forward this couple are not called in

Scripture, as formerly, Abram and Sarai, but Abraham and Sarah, as we

have called them from the first, for every one does so now. The reason

why the name of Abraham was changed is given: "For," He says, "I have

made thee a father of many nations." This, then, is to be understood

to be the meaning of Abraham; but Abram, as he was formerly called,

means "exalted father." The reason of the change of Sarah's name is

not given; but as those say who have written interpretations of the

Hebrew names contained in these books, Sarah means "my princess," and

Sarai "strength." Whence it is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews,

"Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed."

[929] For both were old, as the Scripture testifies; but she was also

barren, and had ceased to menstruate, so that she could no longer bear

children even if she had not been barren. Further, if a woman is

advanced in years, yet still retains the custom of women, she can bear

children to a young man, but not to an old man, although that same old

man can beget, but only of a young woman; as after Sarah's death

Abraham could of Keturah, because he met with her in her lively age.

This, then, is what the apostle mentions as wonderful, saying, besides,

that Abraham's body was now dead; [930] because at that age he was no

longer able to beget children of any woman who retained now only a

small part of her natural vigor. Of course we must understand that his

body was dead only to some purposes, not to all; for if it was so to

all, it would no longer be the aged body of a living man, but the

corpse of a dead one. Although that question, how Abraham begot

children of Keturah, is usually solved in this way, that the gift of

begetting which he received from the Lord, remained even after the

death of his wife, yet I think that solution of the question which I

have followed is preferable, because, although in our days an old man

of a hundred years can beget children of no woman, it was not so then,

when men still lived so long that a hundred years did not yet bring on

them the decrepitude of old age.

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[928] Gen. xvii. 5, 6, 16.

[929] Heb. xi. 11.

[930] Heb. xi. 12.

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Chapter 29.--Of the Three Men or Angels, in Whom the Lord is Related to

Have Appeared to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre.

God appeared again to Abraham at the oak of Mamre in three men, who it

is not to be doubted were angels, although some think that one of them

was Christ, and assert that He was visible before He put on flesh. Now

it belongs to the divine power, and invisible, incorporeal, and

incommutable nature, without changing itself at all, to appear even to

mortal men, not by what it is, but by what is subject to it. And what

is not subject to it? Yet if they try to establish that one of these

three was Christ by the fact that, although he saw three, he addressed

the Lord in the singular, as it is written, "And, lo, three men stood

by him: and, when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door,

and worshipped toward the ground, and said, Lord, if I have found favor

before thee," [931] etc.; why do they not advert to this also, that

when two of them came to destroy the Sodomites, while Abraham still

spoke to one, calling him Lord, and interceding that he would not

destroy the righteous along with the wicked in Sodom, Lot received

these two in such a way that he too in his conversation with them

addressed the Lord in the singular? For after saying to them in the

plural, "Behold, my lords, turn aside into your servant's house," [932]

etc., yet it is afterwards said, "And the angels laid hold upon his

hand, and the hand of his wife, and the hands of his two daughters,

because the Lord was merciful unto him. And it came to pass, whenever

they had led him forth abroad, that they said, Save thy life; look not

behind thee, neither stay thou in all this region: save thyself in the

mountain, lest thou be caught. And Lot said unto them, I pray thee,

Lord, since thy servant hath found grace in thy sight," [933] etc. And

then after these words the Lord also answered him in the singular,

although He was in two angels, saying, "See, I have accepted thy face,"

[934] etc. This makes it much more credible that both Abraham in the

three men and Lot in the two recognized the Lord, addressing Him in the

singular number, even when they were addressing men; for they received

them as they did for no other reason than that they might minister

human refection to them as men who needed it. Yet there was about them

something so excellent, that those who showed them hospitality as men

could not doubt that God was in them as He was wont to be in the

prophets, and therefore sometimes addressed them in the plural, and

sometimes God in them in the singular. But that they were angels the

Scripture testifies, not only in this book of Genesis, in which these

transactions are related, but also in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where

in praising hospitality it is said, "For thereby some have entertained

angels unawares." [935] By these three men, then, when a son Isaac

was again promised to Abraham by Sarah, such a divine oracle was also

given that it was said, "Abraham shall become a great and numerous

nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him."

[936] And here these two things, are promised with the utmost brevity

and fullness,--the nation of Israel according to the flesh, and all

nations according to faith.

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[931] Gen. xviii. 2, 3.

[932] Gen. xix. 2.

[933] Gen. xix. 16-19.

[934] Gen. xix. 21.

[935] Heb. xiii. 2.

[936] Gen. xviii. 18.

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Chapter 30.--Of Lot's Deliverance from Sodom, and Its Consumption by

Fire from Heaven; And of Abimelech, Whose Lust Could Not Harm Sarah's

Chastity.

After this promise Lot was delivered out of Sodom, and a fiery rain

from heaven turned into ashes that whole region of the impious city,

where custom had made sodomy as prevalent as laws have elsewhere made

other kinds of wickedness. But this punishment of theirs was a

specimen of the divine judgment to come. For what is meant by the

angels forbidding those who were delivered to look back, but that we

are not to look back in heart to the old life which, being regenerated

through grace, we have put off, if we think to escape the last

judgment? Lot's wife, indeed, when she looked back, remained, and,

being turned into salt, furnished to believing men a condiment by which

to savor somewhat the warning to be drawn from that example. Then

Abraham did again at Gerar, with Abimelech the king of that city, what

he had done in Egypt about his wife, and received her back untouched in

the same way. On this occasion, when the king rebuked Abraham for not

saying she was his wife, and calling her his sister, he explained what

he had been afraid of, and added this further, "And yet indeed she is

my sister by the father's side, but not by the mother's; [937] for she

was Abraham's sister by his own father, and so near of kin. But her

beauty was so great, that even at that advanced age she could be fallen

in love with.

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[937] Gen. xx. 12.

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Chapter 31.--Of Isaac, Who Was Born According to the Promise, Whose

Name Was Given on Account of the Laughter of Both Parents.

After these things a son was born to Abraham, according to God's

promise, of Sarah, and was called Isaac, which means laughter. For his

father had laughed when he was promised to him, in wondering delight,

and his mother, when he was again promised by those three men, had

laughed, doubting for joy; yet she was blamed by the angel because that

laughter, although it was for joy, yet was not full of faith.

Afterwards she was confirmed in faith by the same angel. From this,

then, the boy got his name. For when Isaac was born and called by that

name, Sarah showed that her laughter was not that of scornful reproach,

but that of joyful praise; for she said, "God hath made me to laugh, so

that every one who hears will laugh with me." [938] Then in a little

while the bond maid was cast out of the house with her son; and,

according to the apostle, these two women signify the old and new

covenants,--Sarah representing that of the Jerusalem which is above,

that is, the city of God. [939]

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[938] Gen. xxi. 6.

[939] Gal. iv. 24-26.

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Chapter 32.--Of Abraham's Obedience and Faith, Which Were Proved by the

Offering Up, of His Son in Sacrifice, and of Sarah's Death.

Among other things, of which it would take too long time to mention the

whole, Abraham was tempted about the offering up of his well-beloved

son Isaac, to prove his pious obedience, and so make it known to the

world, not to God. Now every temptation is not blame-worthy; it may

even be praise-worthy, because it furnishes probation. And, for the

most part, the human mind cannot attain to self-knowledge otherwise

than by making trial of its powers through temptation, by some kind of

experimental and not merely verbal self-interrogation; when, if it has

acknowledged the gift of God, it is pious, and is consolidated by

steadfast grace and not puffed up by vain boasting. Of course Abraham

could never believe that God delighted in human sacrifices; yet when

the divine commandment thundered, it was to be obeyed, not disputed.

Yet Abraham is worthy of praise, because he all along believed that his

son, on being offered up, would rise again; for God had said to him,

when he was unwilling to fulfill his wife's pleasure by casting out the

bond maid and her son, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." No doubt

He then goes on to say, "And as for the son of this bond woman, I will

make him a great nation, because he is thy seed." [940] How then is

it said "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," when God calls Ishmael

also his seed? The apostle, in explaining this, says, "In Isaac shall

thy seed be called, that is, they which are the children of the flesh,

these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are

counted for the seed." [941] In order, then, that the children of the

promise may be the seed of Abraham, they are called in Isaac, that is,

are gathered together in Christ by the call of grace. Therefore the

father, holding fast from the first the promise which behoved to be

fulfilled through this son whom God had ordered him to slay, did not

doubt that he whom he once thought it hopeless he should ever receive

would be restored to him when he had offered him up. It is in this way

the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews is also to be understood and

explained. "By faith," he says, "Abraham overcame, when tempted about

Isaac: and he who had received the promise offered up his only son, to

whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: thinking that God

was able to raise him up, even from the dead;" therefore he has added,

"from whence also he received him in a similitude." [942] In whose

similitude but His of whom the apostle says, "He that spared not His

own Son, but delivered Him up for us all?" [943] And on this account

Isaac also himself carried to the place of sacrifice the wood on which

he was to be offered up, just as the Lord Himself carried His own

cross. Finally, since Isaac was not to be slain, after his father was

forbidden to smite him, who was that ram by the offering of which that

sacrifice was completed with typical blood? For when Abraham saw him,

he was caught by the horns in a thicket. What, then, did he represent

but Jesus, who, before He was offered up, was crowned with thorns by

the Jews?

But let us rather hear the divine words spoken through the angel. For

the Scripture says, "And Abraham stretched forth his hand to take the

knife, that he might slay his son. And the Angel of the Lord called

unto him from heaven, and said, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. And

he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto

him: for now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy

beloved son for my sake." [944] It is said, "Now I know," that is,

Now I have made to be known; for God was not previously ignorant of

this. Then, having offered up that ram instead of Isaac his son,

"Abraham," as we read, "called the name of that place The Lord seeth:

as they say this day, In the mount the Lord hath appeared." [945] As

it is said, "Now I know," for Now I have made to be known, so here,

"The Lord sees," for The Lord hath appeared, that is, made Himself to

be seen. "And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham from heaven

the second time, saying, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord;

because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy beloved son

for my sake; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I

will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is

upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess by inheritance the cities

of the adversaries: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth

be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." [946] In this manner

is that promise concerning the calling of the nations in the seed of

Abraham confirmed even by the oath of God, after that burnt-offering

which typified Christ. For He had often promised, but never sworn.

And what is the oath of God, the true and faithful, but a confirmation

of the promise, and a certain reproof to the unbelieving?

After these things Sarah died, in the 127th year of her life, and the

137th of her husband for he was ten years older than she, as he himself

says, when a son is promised to him by her: "Shall a son be born to me

that am an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years

old, bear?" [947] Then Abraham bought a field, in which he buried his

wife. And then, according to Stephen's account, he was settled in that

land, entering then on actual possession of it,--that is, after the

death of his father, who is inferred to have died two years before.

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[940] Gen. xxi. 12, 13.

[941] Rom. ix. 7, 8.

[942] Heb. xi. 17-19.

[943] Rom. viii. 32.

[944] Gen. xxii. 10-12.

[945] Gen. xxii. 14.

[946] Gen. xxii. 15-18.

[947] Gen. xvii. 17.

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Chapter 33.--Of Rebecca, the Grand-Daughter of Nahor, Whom Isaac Took

to Wife.

Isaac married Rebecca, the grand-daughter of Nahor, his father's

brother, when he was forty years old, that is, in the 140th year of his

father's life, three years after his mother's death. Now when a

servant was sent to Mesopotamia by his father to fetch her, and when

Abraham said to that servant, "Put thy hand under my thigh, and I will

make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the Lord of the

earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son Isaac of the

daughters of the Canaanites," [948] what else was pointed out by this,

but that the Lord, the God of heaven, and the Lord of the earth, was to

come in the flesh which was to be derived from that thigh? Are these

small tokens of the foretold truth which we see fulfilled in Christ?

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[948] Gen. xxiv. 2, 3.

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Chapter 34.--What is Meant by Abraham's Marrying Keturah After Sarah's

Death.

What did Abraham mean by marrying Keturah after Sarah's death? Far be

it from us to suspect him of incontinence, especially when he had

reached such an age and such sanctity of faith. Or was he still

seeking to beget children, though he held fast, with most approved

faith, the promise of God that his children should be multiplied out of

Isaac as the stars of heaven and the dust of the earth? And yet, if

Hagar and Ishmael, as the apostle teaches us, signified the carnal

people of the old covenant, why may not Keturah and her sons also

signify the carnal people who think they belong to the new covenant?

For both are called both the wives and the concubines of Abraham; but

Sarah is never called a concubine (but only a wife). For when Hagar is

given to Abraham, it is written. "And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar

the Egyptian, her handmaid, after Abraham had dwelt ten years in the

land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife."

[949] And of Keturah, whom he took after Sarah's departure, we read,

"Then again Abraham took a wife, whose name was Keturah." [950] Lo!

both are called wives, yet both are found to have been concubines; for

the Scripture afterward says, "And Abraham gave his whole estate unto

Isaac his son. But unto the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts,

and sent them away from his son Isaac, (while he yet lived,) eastward,

unto the east country." [951] Therefore the sons of the concubines,

that is, the heretics and the carnal Jews, have some gifts, but do not

attain the promised kingdom; "For they which are the children of the

flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the

promise are counted for the seed, of whom it was said, In Isaac shall

thy seed be called." [952] For I do not see why Keturah, who was

married after the wife's death, should be called a concubine, except on

account of this mystery. But if any one is unwilling to put such

meanings on these things, he need not calumniate Abraham. For what if

even this was provided against the heretics who were to be the

opponents of second marriages, so that it might be shown that it was no

sin in the case of the father of many nations himself, when, after his

wife's death, he married again? And Abraham died when he was 175 years

old, so that he left his son Isaac seventy-five years old, having

begotten him when 100 years old.

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[949] Gen. xvi. 3.

[950] Gen. xxv. 1.

[951] Gen. xxv. 5, 6.

[952] Rom. ix. 7, 8.

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Chapter 35.--What Was Indicated by the Divine Answer About the Twins

Still Shut Up in the Womb of Rebecca Their Mother.

Let us now see how the times of the city of God run on from this point

among Abraham's descendants. In the time from the first year of

Isaac's life to the seventieth, when his sons were born, the only

memorable thing is, that when he prayed God that his wife, who was

barren, might bear, and the Lord granted what he sought, and she

conceived, the twins leapt while still enclosed in her womb. And when

she was troubled by this struggle, and inquired of the Lord, she

received this answer: "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of

people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall

overcome the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger."

[953] The Apostle Paul would have us understand this as a great

instance of grace; [954] for the children being not yet born, neither

having done any good or evil, the younger is chosen without any good

desert and the elder is rejected, when beyond doubt, as regards

original sin, both were alike, and as regards actual sin, neither had

any. But the plan of the work on hand does not permit me to speak more

fully of this matter now, and I have said much about it in other

works. Only that saying, "The elder shall serve the younger," is

understood by our writers, almost without exception, to mean that the

elder people, the Jews, shall serve the younger people, the

Christians. And truly, although this might seem to be fulfilled in the

Idumean nation, which was born of the elder (who had two names, being

called both Esau and Edom, whence the name Idumeans), because it was

afterwards to be overcome by the people which sprang from the younger,

that is, by the Israelites, and was to become subject to them; yet it

is more suitable to believe that, when it was said, "The one people

shall overcome the other people, and the elder shall serve the

younger," that prophecy meant some greater thing; and what is that

except what is evidently fulfilled in the Jews and Christians?

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[953] Gen. xxv. 23.

[954] Rom. ix. 10-13.

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Chapter 36.--Of the Oracle and Blessing Which Isaac Received, Just as

His Father Did, Being Beloved for His Sake.

Isaac also received such an oracle as his father had often received.

Of this oracle it is thus written: "And there was a famine over the

land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And

Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. And the

Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; but dwell in

the land which I shall tell thee of. And abide in this land, and I

will be with thee, and will bless thee: unto thee and unto thy seed I

will give all this land; and I will establish mine oath, which I sware

unto Abraham thy father: and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of

heaven, and will give unto thy seed all this land: and in thy seed

shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because that Abraham thy

father obeyed my voice, and kept my precepts, my commandments, my

righteousness, and my laws." [955] This patriarch neither had another

wife, nor any concubine, but was content with the twin-children

begotten by one act of generation. He also was afraid, when he lived

among strangers, of being brought into danger owing to the beauty of

his wife, and did like his father in calling her his sister, and not

telling that she was his wife; for she was his near blood-relation by

the father's and mother's side. She also remained untouched by the

strangers, when it was known she was his wife. Yet we ought not to

prefer him to his father because he knew no woman besides his one

wife. For beyond doubt the merits of his father's faith and obedience

were greater, inasmuch as God says it is for his sake He does Isaac

good: "In thy seed," He says, "shall all the nations of the earth be

blessed, because that Abraham thy father obeyed my voice, and kept my

precepts, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." And again in

another oracle He says, "I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not,

for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my

servant Abraham's sake." [956] So that we must understand how

chastely Abraham acted, because imprudent men, who seek some support

for their own wickedness in the Holy Scriptures, think he acted through

lust. We may also learn this, not to compare men by single good

things, but to consider everything in each; for it may happen that one

man has something in his life and character in which he excels another,

and it may be far more excellent than that in which the other excels

him. And thus, according to sound and true judgment, while continence

is preferable to marriage, yet a believing married man is better than a

continent unbeliever; for the unbeliever is not only less praiseworthy,

but is even highly detestable. We must conclude, then, that both are

good; yet so as to hold that the married man who is most faithful and

most obedient is certainly better than the continent man whose faith

and obedience are less. But if equal in other things, who would

hesitate to prefer the continent man to the married?

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[955] Gen. xxvi. 1-5.

[956] Gen. xxvi. 24.

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Chapter 37.--Of the Things Mystically Prefigured in Esau and Jacob.

Isaac's two sons, Esau and Jacob, grew up together. The primacy of the

elder was transferred to the younger by a bargain and agreement between

them, when the elder immoderately lusted after the lentiles the younger

had prepared for food, and for that price sold his birthright to him,

confirming it with an oath. We learn from this that a person is to be

blamed, not for the kind of food he eats, but for immoderate greed.

Isaac grew old, and old age deprived him of his eyesight. He wished to

bless the elder son, and instead of the elder, who was hairy,

unwittingly blessed the younger, who put himself under his father's

hands, having covered himself with kid-skins, as if bearing the sins of

others. Lest we should think this guile of Jacob's was fraudulent

guile, instead of seeking in it the mystery of a great thing, the

Scripture has predicted in the words just before, "Esau was a cunning

hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a simple man, dwelling at

home." [957] Some of our writers have interpreted this, "without

guile." But whether the Greek alastos means "without guile," or

"simple," or rather "without reigning," in the receiving of that

blessing what is the guile of the man without guile? What is the guile

of the simple, what the fiction of the man who does not lie, but a

profound mystery of the truth? But what is the blessing itself?

"See," he says, "the smell of my son is as the smell of a full field

which the Lord hath blessed: therefore God give thee of the dew of

heaven, and of the fruitfulness of the earth, and plenty of corn and

wine: let nations serve thee, and princes adore thee: and be lord of

thy brethren, and let thy father's sons adore thee: cursed be he that

curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." [958] The

blessing of Jacob is therefore a proclamation of Christ to all

nations. It is this which has come to pass, and is now being

fulfilled. Isaac is the law and the prophecy: even by the mouth of

the Jews Christ is blessed by prophecy as by one who knows not, because

it is itself not understood. The world like a field is filled with the

odor of Christ's name: His is the blessing of the dew of heaven, that

is, of the showers of divine words; and of the fruitfulness of the

earth, that is, of the gathering together of the peoples: His is the

plenty of corn and wine, that is, the multitude that gathers bread and

wine in the sacrament of His body and blood. Him the nations serve,

Him princes adore. He is the Lord of His brethren, because His people

rules over the Jews. Him His Father's sons adore, that is, the sons of

Abraham according to faith; for He Himself is the son of Abraham

according to the flesh. He is cursed that curseth Him, and he that

blesseth Him is blessed. Christ, I say, who is ours is blessed, that

is, truly spoken of out of the mouths of the Jews, when, although

erring, they yet sing the law and the prophets, and think they are

blessing another for whom they erringly hope. So, when the elder son

claims the promised blessing, Isaac is greatly afraid, and wonders when

he knows that he has blessed one instead of the other, and demands who

he is; yet he does not complain that he has been deceived, yea, when

the great mystery is revealed to him, in his secret heart he at once

eschews anger, and confirms the blessing. "Who then," he says, "hath

hunted me venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before

thou camest, and have blessed him, and he shall be blessed?" [959]

Who would not rather have expected the curse of an angry man here, if

these things had been done in an earthly manner, and not by inspiration

from above? O things done, yet done prophetically; on the earth, yet

celestially; by men, yet divinely! If everything that is fertile of so

great mysteries should be examined carefully, many volumes would be

filled; but the moderate compass fixed for this work compels us to

hasten to other things.

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[957] Gen. xxv. 27.

[958] Gen. xxvii. 27-29.

[959] Gen. xxvii. 33.

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Chapter 38.--Of Jacob's Mission to Mesopotamia to Get a Wife, and of

the Vision Which He Saw in a Dream by the Way, and of His Getting Four

Women When He Sought One Wife.

Jacob was sent by his parents to Mesopotamia that he might take a wife

there. These were his father's words on sending him: "Thou shall not

take a wife of the daughters of the Canaanites. Arise, fly to

Mesopotamia, to the house of Bethuel, thy mother's father, and take

thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's

brother. And my God bless thee, and increase thee, and multiply thee;

and thou shalt be an assembly of peoples; and give to thee the blessing

of Abraham thy father, and to thy seed after thee; that thou mayest

inherit the land wherein thou dwellest, which God gave unto Abraham."

[960] Now we understand here that the seed of Jacob is separated from

Isaac's other seed which came through Esau. For when it is said, "In

Isaac shall thy seed be called," [961] by this seed is meant solely the

city of God; so that from it is separated Abraham's other seed, which

was in the son of the bond woman, and which was to be in the sons of

Keturah. But until now it had been uncertain regarding Isaac's

twin-sons whether that blessing belonged to both or only to one of

them; and if to one, which of them it was. This is now declared when

Jacob is prophetically blessed by his father, and it is said to him,

"And thou shalt be an assembly of peoples, and God give to thee the

blessing of Abraham thy father."

When Jacob was going to Mesopotamia, he received in a dream an oracle,

of which it is thus written: "And Jacob went out from the well of the

oath, [962] and went to Haran. And he came to a place, and slept

there, for the sun was set; and he took of the stones of the place, and

put them at his head, and slept in that place, and dreamed. And behold

a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and

the angels of God ascended and descended by it. And the Lord stood

above it, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of

Isaac; fear not: the land whereon thou sleepest, to thee will I give

it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth;

and it shall be spread abroad to the sea, and to Africa, and to the

north, and to the east: and all the tribes of the earth shall be

blessed in thee and in thy seed. And, behold, I am with thee, to keep

thee in all thy way wherever thou goest, and I will bring thee back

into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done all which

I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awoke out of his sleep, and said,

Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was

afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but

the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob arose, and

took the stone that he had put under his head there, and set it up for

a memorial, and poured oil upon the top of it. And Jacob called the

name of that place the house of God." [963] This is prophetic. For

Jacob did not pour oil on the stone in an idolatrous way, as if making

it a god; neither did he adore that stone, or sacrifice to it. But

since the name of Christ comes from the chrism or anointing, something

pertaining to the great mystery was certainly represented in this. And

the Saviour Himself is understood to bring this latter to remembrance

in the gospel, when He says of Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed,

in whom is no guile!" [964] because Israel who saw this vision is no

other than Jacob. And in the same place He says, "Verily, verily, I

say unto you, Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending

and descending upon the Son of man."

Jacob went on to Mesopotamia to take a wife from thence. And the

divine Scripture points out how, without unlawfully desiring any of

them, he came to have four women, of whom he begat twelve sons and one

daughter; for he had come to take only one. But when one was falsely

given him in place of the other, he did not send her away after

unwittingly using her in the night, lest he should seem to have put her

to shame; but as at that time, in order to multiply posterity, no law

forbade a plurality of wives, he took her also to whom alone he had

promised marriage. As she was barren, she gave her handmaid to her

husband that she might have children by her; and her elder sister did

the same thing in imitation of her, although she had borne, because she

desired to multiply progeny. We do not read that Jacob sought any but

one, or that he used many, except for the purpose of begetting

offspring, saving conjugal rights; and he would not have done this, had

not his wives, who had legitimate power over their own husband's body,

urged him to do it. So he begat twelve sons and one daughter by four

women. Then he entered into Egypt by his son Joseph, who was sold by

his brethren for envy, and carried there, and who was there exalted.

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[960] Gen. xxviii. 1-4.

[961] Gen. xxi. 12.

[962] Beer-sheba.

[963] Gen. xxviii. 10-19.

[964] John i. 47, 51.

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Chapter 39.--The Reason Why Jacob Was Also Called Israel.

As I said a little ago, Jacob was also called Israel, the name which

was most prevalent among the people descended from him. Now this name

was given him by the angel who wrestled with him on the way back from

Mesopotamia, and who was most evidently a type of Christ. For when

Jacob overcame him, doubtless with his own consent, that the mystery

might be represented, it signified Christ's passion, in which the Jews

are seen overcoming Him. And yet he besought a blessing from the very

angel he had overcome; and so the imposition of this name was the

blessing. For Israel means seeing God, [965] which will at last be the

reward of all the saints. The angel also touched him on the breadth of

the thigh when he was overcoming him, and in that way made him lame.

So that Jacob was at one and the same time blessed and lame: blessed

in those among that people who believed in Christ, and lame in the

unbelieving. For the breadth of the thigh is the multitude of the

family. For there are many of that race of whom it was prophetically

said beforehand, "And they have halted in their paths." [966]

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[965] Gen. xxxii. 28: Israel = a prince of God; ver. 30; Peniel = the

face of God.

[966] Ps. xviii. 45.

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Chapter 40.--How It is Said that Jacob Went into Egypt with

Seventy-Five Souls, When Most of Those Who are Mentioned Were Born at a

Later Period.

Seventy-five men are reported to have entered Egypt along with Jacob,

counting him with his children. In this number only two women are

mentioned, one a daughter, the other a grand-daughter. But when the

thing is carefully considered, it does not appear that Jacob's

offspring was so numerous on the day or year when he entered Egypt.

There are also included among them the great-grandchildren of Joseph,

who could not possibly be born already. For Jacob was then 130 years

old, and his son Joseph thirty-nine and as it is plain that he took a

wife when he was thirty or more, how could he in nine years have

great-grandchildren by the children whom he had by that wife? Now

since, Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, could not even have

children, for Jacob found them boys under nine years old when he

entered Egypt, in what way are not only their sons but their grandsons

reckoned among those seventy-five who then entered Egypt with Jacob?

For there is reckoned there Machir the son of Manasseh, grandson of

Joseph, and Machir's son, that is, Gilead, grandson of Manasseh,

great-grandson of Joseph; there, too, is he whom Ephraim, Joseph's

other son, begot, that is, Shuthelah, grandson of Joseph, and

Shuthelah's son Ezer, grandson of Ephraim, and great-grand-son of

Joseph, who could not possibly be in existence when Jacob came into

Egypt, and there found his grandsons, the sons of Joseph, their

grandsires, still boys under nine years of age. [967] But doubtless,

when the Scripture mentions Jacob's entrance into Egypt with

seventy-five souls, it does not mean one day, or one year, but that

whole time as long as Joseph lived, who was the cause of his entrance.

For the same Scripture speaks thus of Joseph: "And Joseph dwelt in

Egypt, he and his brethren, and all his father's house: and Joseph

lived 110 years, and saw Ephraim's children of the third generation."

[968] That is, his great-grandson, the third from Ephraim; for the

third generation means son, grandson, great-grandson. Then it is

added, "The children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born

upon Joseph's knees." [969] And this is that grandson of Manasseh,

and great-grandson of Joseph. But the plural number is employed

according to scriptural usage; for the one daughter of Jacob is spoken

of as daughters, just as in the usage of the Latin tongue liberi is

used in the plural for children even when there is only one. Now, when

Joseph's own happiness is proclaimed, because he could see his

great-grandchildren, it is by no means to be thought they already

existed in the thirty-ninth year of their great-grandsire Joseph, when

his father Jacob came to him in Egypt. But those who diligently look

into these things will the less easily be mistaken, because it is

written, "These are the names of the sons of Israel who entered into

Egypt along with Jacob their father." [970] For this means that the

seventy-five are reckoned along with him, not that they were all with

him when he entered Egypt; for, as I have said, the whole period during

which Joseph, who occasioned his entrance, lived, is held to be the

time of that entrance.

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[967] Augustin here follows the Septuagint, which at Gen. xlvi. 20 adds

these names to those of Manasseh and Ephraim, and at ver. 27 gives the

whole number as seventy-five. 1 Gen. l. 22, 23.

[968] Gen. l. 22, 23.

[969] Gen. l. 23.

[970] Gen. xlvi. 8.

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Chapter 41.--Of the Blessing Which Jacob Promised in Judah His Son.

If, on account of the Christian people in whom the city of God sojourns

in the earth, we look for the flesh of Christ in the seed of Abraham,

setting aside the sons of the concubines, we have Isaac; if in the seed

of Isaac, setting aside Esau, who is also Edom, we have Jacob, who also

is Israel; if in the seed of Israel himself, setting aside the rest, we

have Judah, because Christ sprang of the tribe of Judah. Let us hear,

then, how Israel, when dying in Egypt, in blessing his sons,

prophetically blessed Judah. He says: "Judah, thy brethren shall

praise thee: thy hands shall be on the back of thine enemies; thy

father's children shall adore thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the

sprouting, my son, thou art gone up: lying down, thou hast slept as a

lion, and as a lion's whelp; who shall awake him? A prince shall not

be lacking out of Judah, and a leader from his thighs, until the things

come that are laid up for him; and He shall be the expectation of the

nations. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's foal to the

choice vine; he shall wash his robe in wine, and his clothes in the

blood of the grape: his eyes are red with wine, and his teeth are

whiter than milk." [971] I have expounded these words in disputing

against Faustus the Manich�an; and I think it is enough to make the

truth of this prophecy shine, to remark that the death of Christ is

predicted by the word about his lying down, and not the necessity, but

the voluntary character of His death, in the title of lion. That power

He Himself proclaims in the gospel, saying, "I have the power of laying

down my life, and I have the power of taking it again. No man taketh

it from me; but I lay it down of myself, and take it again." [972] So

the lion roared, so He fulfilled what He said. For to this power what

is added about the resurrection refers, "Who shall awake him?" This

means that no man but Himself has raised Him, who also said of His own

body, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

[973] And the very nature of His death, that is, the height of the

cross, is understood by the single words "Thou are gone up." The

evangelist explains what is added, "Lying down, thou hast slept," when

he says, "He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." [974] Or at

least His burial is to be understood, in which He lay down sleeping,

and whence no man raised Him, as the prophets did some, and as He

Himself did others; but He Himself rose up as if from sleep. As for

His robe which He washes in wine, that is, cleanses from sin in His own

blood, of which blood those who are baptized know the mystery, so that

he adds, "And his clothes in the blood of the grape," what is it but

the Church? "And his eyes are red with wine," [these are] His

spiritual people drunken with His cup, of which the psalm sings, "And

thy cup that makes drunken, how excellent it is!" "And his teeth are

whiter than milk," [975] --that is, the nutritive words which,

according to the apostle, the babes drink, being as yet unfit for solid

food. [976] And it is He in whom the promises of Judah were laid up,

so that until they come, princes, that is, the kings of Israel, shall

never be lacking out of Judah. "And He is the expectation of the

nations." This is too plain to need exposition.

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[971] Gen. xlix. 8-12.

[972] John x. 18.

[973] John ii. 19.

[974] John xix. 30.

[975] Gen. xlix. 12.

[976] 1 Pet. ii. 2; 1 Cor. iii. 2.

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Chapter 42.--Of the Sons of Joseph, Whom Jacob Blessed, Prophetically

Changing His Hands.

Now, as Isaac's two sons, Esau and Jacob, furnished a type of the two

people, the Jews and the Christians (although as pertains to carnal

descent it was not the Jews but the Idumeans who came of the seed of

Esau, nor the Christian nations but rather the Jews who came of

Jacob's; for the type holds only as regards the saying, "The elder

shall serve the younger" [977] ), so the same thing happened in

Joseph's two sons; for the elder was a type of the Jews, and the

younger of the Christians. For when Jacob was blessing them, and laid

his right hand on the younger, who was at his left, and his left hand

on the elder, who was at his right, this seemed wrong to their father,

and he admonished his father by trying to correct his mistake and show

him which was the elder. But he would not change his hands, but said,

"I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also

shall be exalted; but his younger brother shall be greater than he, and

his seed shall become a multitude of nations." [978] And these two

promises show the same thing. For that one is to become "a people;"

this one "a multitude of nations." And what can be more evident than

that these two promises comprehend the people of Israel, and the whole

world of Abraham's seed, the one according to the flesh, the other

according to faith?

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[977] Gen. xxv. 23.

[978] Gen. xlviii. 19.

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Chapter 43.--Of the Times of Moses and Joshua the Son of Nun, of the

Judges, and Thereafter of the Kings, of Whom Saul Was the First, But

David is to Be Regarded as the Chief, Both by the Oath and by Merit.

Jacob being dead, and Joseph also, during the remaining 144 years until

they went out of the land of Egypt, that nation increased to an

incredible degree, even although wasted by so great persecutions, that

at one time the male children were murdered at their birth, because the

wondering Egyptians were terrified at the too great increase of that

people. Then Moses, being stealthily kept from the murderers of the

infants, was brought to the royal house, God preparing to do great

things by him, and was nursed and adopted by the daughter of Pharaoh

(that was the name of all the kings of Egypt), and became so great a

man that he--yea, rather God, who had promised this to Abraham, by

him--drew that nation, so wonderfully multiplied, out of the yoke of

hardest and most grievous servitude it had borne there. At first,

indeed, he fled thence (we are told he fled into the land of Midian),

because, in defending an Israelite, he had slain an Egyptian, and was

afraid. Afterward, being divinely commissioned in the power of the

Spirit of God, he overcame the magi of Pharaoh who resisted him. Then,

when the Egyptians would not let God's people go, ten memorable plagues

were brought by Him upon them,--the water turned into blood, the frogs

and lice, the flies, the death of the cattle, the boils, the hail, the

locusts, the darkness, the death of the first-born. At last the

Egyptians were destroyed in the Red Sea while pursuing the Israelites,

whom they had let go when at length they were broken by so many great

plagues. The divided sea made a way for the Israelites who were

departing, but, returning on itself, it overwhelmed their pursuers with

its waves. Then for forty years the people of God went through the

desert, under the leadership of Moses, when the tabernacle of testimony

was dedicated, in which God was worshipped by sacrifices prophetic of

things to come, and that was after the law had been very terribly given

in the mount, for its divinity was most plainly attested by wonderful

signs and voices. This took place soon after the exodus from Egypt,

when the people had entered the desert, on the fiftieth day after the

passover was celebrated by the offering up of a lamb, which is so

completely a type of Christ, foretelling that through His sacrificial

passion He should go from this world to the Father (for pascha in, the

Hebrew tongue means transit), that when the new covenant was revealed,

after Christ our passover was offered up, the Holy Spirit came from

heaven on the fiftieth day; and He is called in the gospel the Finger

of God, because He recalls to our remembrance the things done before by

way of types, and because the tables of that law are said to have been

written by the finger of God.

On the death of Moses, Joshua the son of Nun ruled the people, and led

them into the land of promise, and divided it among them. By these two

wonderful leaders wars were also carried on most prosperously and

wonderfully, God calling to witness that they had got these victories

not so much on account of the merit of the Hebrew people as on account

of the sins of the nations they subdued. After these leaders there

were judges, when the people were settled in the land of promise, so

that, in the meantime, the first promise made to Abraham began to be

fulfilled about the one nation, that is, the Hebrew, and about the land

of Canaan; but not as yet the promise about all nations, and the whole

wide world, for that was to be fulfilled, not by the observances of the

old law, but by the advent of Christ in the flesh, and by the faith of

the gospel. And it was to prefigure this that it was not Moses, who

received the law for the people on Mount Sinai, that led the people

into the land of promise, but Joshua, whose name also was changed at

God's command, so that he was called Jesus. But in the times of the

judges prosperity alternated with adversity in war, according as the

sins of the people and the mercy of God were displayed.

We come next to the times of the kings. The first who reigned was

Saul; and when he was rejected and laid low in battle, and his

offspring rejected so that no kings should arise out of it, David

succeeded to the kingdom, whose son Christ is chiefly called. He was

made a kind of starting-point and beginning of the advanced youth of

God's people, who had passed a kind of age of puberty from Abraham to

this David. And it is not in vain that the evangelist Matthew records

the generations in such a way as to sum up this first period from

Abraham to David in fourteen generations. For from the age of puberty

man begins to be capable of generation; therefore he starts the list of

generations from Abraham, who also was made the father of many nations

when he got his name changed. So that previously this family of God's

people was in its childhood, from Noah to Abraham; and for that reason

the first language was then learned, that is, the Hebrew. For man

begins to speak in childhood, the age succeeding infancy, which is so

termed because then he cannot speak. [979] And that first age is

quite drowned in oblivion, just as the first age of the human race was

blotted out by the flood; for who is there that can remember his

infancy? Wherefore in this progress of the city of God, as the

previous book contained that first age, so this one ought to contain

the second and third ages, in which third age, as was shown by the

heifer of three years old, the she-goat of three years old, and the ram

of three years old, the yoke of the law was imposed, and there appeared

abundance of sins, and the beginning of the earthly kingdom arose, in

which there were not lacking spiritual men, of whom the turtledove and

pigeon represented the mystery.

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[979] Infans, from in, not, and fari, to speak.

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Book XVII.

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Argument--In this book the history of the city of God is traced during

the period of the kings and prophets from Samuel to David, even to

Christ; and the prophecies which are recorded in the books of Kings,

Psalms, and those of Solomon, are interpreted of Christ and the church.

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Chapter 1.--Of the Prophetic Age.

By the favor of God we have treated distinctly of His promises made to

Abraham, that both the nation of Israel according to the flesh, and all

nations according to faith, should be his seed, and the City of God,

proceeding according to the order of time, will point [980] out how

they were fulfilled. Having therefore in the previous book come down

to the reign of David, we shall now treat of what remains, so far as

may seem sufficient for the object of this work, beginning at the same

reign. Now, from the time when holy Samuel began to prophesy, and ever

onward until the people of Israel was led captive into Babylonia, and

until, according to the prophecy of holy Jeremiah, on Israel's return

thence after seventy years, the house of God was built anew, this whole

period is the prophetic age. For although both the patriarch Noah

himself, in whose days the whole earth was destroyed by the flood, and

others before and after him down to this time when there began to be

kings over the people of God, may not underservedly be styled prophets,

on account of certain things pertaining to the city of God and the

kingdom of heaven, which they either predicted or in any way signified

should come to pass, and especially since we read that some of them, as

Abraham and Moses, were expressly so styled, yet those are most and

chiefly called the days of the prophets from the time when Samuel began

to prophesy, who at God's command first anointed Saul to be king, and,

on his rejection, David himself, whom others of his issue should

succeed as long as it was fitting they should do so. If, therefore, I

wished to rehearse all that the prophets have predicted concerning

Christ, while the city of God, with its members dying and being born in

constant succession, ran its course through those times, this work

would extend beyond all bounds. First, because the Scripture itself,

even when, in treating in order of the kings and of their deeds and the

events of their reigns, it seems to be occupied in narrating as with

historical diligence the affairs transacted, will be found, if the

things handled by it are considered with the aid of the Spirit of God,

either more, or certainly not less, intent on foretelling things to

come than on relating things past. And who that thinks even a little

about it does not know how laborious and prolix a work it would be, and

how many volumes it would require to search this out by thorough

investigation and demonstrate it by argument? And then, because of

that which without dispute pertains to prophecy, there are so many

things concerning Christ and the kingdom of heaven, which is the city

of God, that to explain these a larger discussion would be necessary

than the due proportion of this work admits of. Therefore I shall, if

I can, so limit myself, that in carrying through this work, I may, with

God's help, neither say what is superfluous nor omit what is necessary.

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[980] Has pointed.

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Chapter 2.--At What Time the Promise of God Was Fulfilled Concerning

the Land of Canaan, Which Even Carnal Israel Got in Possession.

In the preceding book we said, that in the promise of God to Abraham

two things were promised from the beginning, the one, name ly, that his

seed should possess the land of Canaan, which was intimated when it was

said, "Go into a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a

great nation;" [981] but the other far more excellent, concerning not

the carnal but the spiritual seed, by which he is the father, not of

the one nation of Israel, but of all nations who follow the footsteps

of his faith, which began to be promised in these words, "And in thee

shall all families of the earth be blessed." [982] And thereafter we

showed by yet many other proofs that these two things were promised.

Therefore the seed of Abraham, that is, the people of Israel according

to the flesh, already was in the land of promise; and there, not only

by holding and possessing the cities of the enemies, but also by having

kings, had already begun to reign, the promises of God concerning that

people being already in great part fulfilled: not only those that were

made to those three fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and whatever

others were made in their times, but those also that were made through

Moses himself, by whom the same people was set free from servitude in

Egypt, and by whom all bygone things were revealed in his times, when

he led the people through the wilderness. But neither by the

illustrious leader Jesus the son of Nun, who led that people into the

land of promise, and, after driving out the nations, divided it among

the twelve tribes according to God's command, and died; nor after him,

in the whole time of the judges, was the promise of God concerning the

land of Canaan fulfilled, that it should extend from some river of

Egypt even to the great river Euphrates; nor yet was it still

prophesied as to come, but its fulfillment was expected. And it was

fulfilled through David, and Solomon his son, whose kingdom was

extended over the whole promised space; for they subdued all those

nations, and made them tributary. And thus, under those kings, the

seed of Abraham was established in the land of promise according to the

flesh, that is, in the land of Canaan, so that nothing yet remained to

the complete fulfillment of that earthly promise of God, except that,

so far as pertains to temporal prosperity, the Hebrew nation should

remain in the same land by the succession of posterity in an unshaken

state even to the end of this mortal age, if it obeyed the laws of the

Lord its God. But since God knew it would not do this, He used His

temporal punishments also for training His few faithful ones in it, and

for giving needful warning to those who should afterwards be in all

nations, in whom the other promise, revealed in the New Testament, was

about to be fulfilled through the incarnation of Christ.

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[981] Gen. xii. 1, 2.

[982] Gen. xii. 3.

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Chapter 3.--Of the Three-Fold Meaning of the Prophecies, Which are to

Be Referred Now to the Earthly, Now to the Heavenly Jerusalem, and Now

Again to Both.

Wherefore just as that divine oracle to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and

all the other prophetic signs or sayings which are given in the earlier

sacred writings, so also the other prophecies from this time of the

kings pertain partly to the nation of Abraham's flesh, and partly to

that seed of his in which all nations are blessed as fellow-heirs of

Christ by the New Testament, to the possessing of eternal life and the

kingdom of the heavens. Therefore they pertain partly to the bond maid

who gendereth to bondage, that is, the earthly Jerusalem, which is in

bondage with her children; but partly to the free city of God, that is,

the true Jerusalem eternal in the heavens, whose children are all those

that live according to God in the earth: but there are some things

among them which are understood to pertain to both,--to the bond maid

properly, to the free woman figuratively. [983]

Therefore prophetic utterances of three kinds are to be found;

forasmuch as there are some relating to the earthly Jerusalem, some to

the heavenly, and some to both. I think it proper to prove what I say

by examples. The prophet Nathan was sent to convict king David of

heinous sin, and predict to him what future evils should be consequent

on it. Who can question that this and the like pertain to the

terrestrial city, whether publicly, that is, for the safety or help of

the people, or privately, when there are given forth for each one's

private good divine utterances whereby something of the future may be

known for the use of temporal life? But where we read, "Behold, the

days come, saith the Lord, that I will make for the house of Israel,

and for the house of Judah, a new testament: not according to the

testament that I settled for their fathers in the day when I laid hold

of their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they

continued not in my testament, and I regarded them not, saith the

Lord. For this is the testament that I will make for the house of

Israel: after those days, saith the Lord, I will give my laws in their

mind, and will write them upon their hearts, and I will see to them;

and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people;" [984]

--without doubt this is prophesied to the Jerusalem above, whose reward

is God Himself, and whose chief and entire good it is to have Him, and

to be His. But this pertains to both, that the city of God is called

Jerusalem, and that it is prophesied the house of God shall be in it;

and this prophecy seems to be fulfilled when king Solomon builds that

most noble temple. For these things both happened in the earthly

Jerusalem, as history shows, and were types of the heavenly Jerusalem.

And this kind of prophecy, as it were compacted and commingled of both

the others in the ancient canonical books, containing historical

narratives, is of very great significance, and has exercised and

exercises greatly the wits of those who search holy writ. For example,

what we read of historically as predicted and fulfilled in the seed of

Abraham according to the flesh, we must also inquire the allegorical

meaning of, as it is to be fulfilled in the seed of Abraham according

to faith. And so much is this the case, that some have thought there

is nothing in these books either foretold and effected, or effected

although not foretold, that does not insinuate something else which is

to be referred by figurative signification to the city of God on high,

and to her children who are pilgrims in this life. But if this be so,

then the utterances of the prophets, or rather the whole of those

Scriptures that are reckoned under the title of the Old Testament, will

be not of three, but of two different kinds. For there will be nothing

there which pertains to the terrestrial Jerusalem only, if whatever is

there said and fulfilled of or concerning her signifies something which

also refers by allegorical prefiguration to the celestial Jerusalem;

but there will be only two kinds one that pertains to the free

Jerusalem, the other to both. But just as, I think, they err greatly

who are of opinion that none of the records of affairs in that kind of

writings mean anything more than that they so happened, so I think

those very daring who contend that the whole gist of their contents

lies in allegorical significations. Therefore I have said they are

threefold, not two-fold. Yet, in holding this opinion, I do not blame

those who may be able to draw out of everything there a spiritual

meaning, only saving, first of all, the historical truth. For the

rest, what believer can doubt that those things are spoken vainly which

are such that, whether said to have been done or to be yet to come,

they do not beseem either human or divine affairs? Who would not

recall these to spiritual understanding if he could, or confess that

they should be recalled by him who is able?

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[983] Gal. iv. 22-31.

[984] Heb. viii. 8-10.

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Chapter 4.--About the Prefigured Change of the Israelitic Kingdom and

Priesthood, and About the Things Hannah the Mother of Samuel

Prophesied, Personating the Church.

Therefore the advance of the city of God, where it reached the times of

the kings, yielded a figure, when, on the rejection of Saul, David

first obtained the kingdom on such a footing that thenceforth his

descendants should reign in the earthly Jerusalem in continual

succession; for the course of affairs signified and foretold, what is

not to be passed by in silence, concerning the change of things to

come, what belongs to both Testaments, the Old and the New,--where the

priesthood and kingdom are changed by one who is a priest, and at the

same time a king, new and everlasting, even Christ Jesus. For both the

substitution in the ministry of God, on Eli's rejection as priest, of

Samuel, who executed at once the office of priest and judge, and the

establishment of David in the kingdom, when Saul was rejected, typified

this of which I speak. And Hannah herself, the mother of Samuel, who

formerly was barren, and afterwards was gladdened with fertility, does

not seem to prophesy anything else, when she exultingly pours forth her

thanksgiving to the Lord, on yielding up to God the same boy she had

born and weaned with the same piety with which she had vowed him. For

she says, "My heart is made strong in the Lord, and my horn is exalted

in my God; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; I am made glad in

Thy salvation. Because there is none holy as the Lord; and none is

righteous as our God: there is none holy save Thee. Do not glory so

proudly, and do not speak lofty things, neither let vaunting talk come

out of your mouth; for a God of knowledge is the Lord, and a God

preparing His curious designs. The bow of the mighty hath He made

weak, and the weak are girded with strength. They that were full of

bread are diminished; and the hungry have passed beyond the earth: for

the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed

feeble. The Lord killeth and maketh alive: He bringeth down to hell,

and bringeth up again. The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich: He

bringeth low and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,

and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, that He may set him among

the mighty of [His] people, and maketh them inherit the throne of

glory; giving the vow to him that voweth, and He hath blessed the years

of the just: for man is not mighty in strength. The Lord shall make

His adversary weak: the Lord is holy. Let not the prudent glory in

his prudence and let not the mighty glory in his might; and let not the

rich glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, to

understand and know the Lord, and to do judgment and justice in the

midst of the earth. The Lord hath ascended into the heavens, and hath

thundered: He shall judge the ends of the earth, for He is righteous:

and He giveth strength to our kings, and shall exalt the horn of His

Christ." [985]

Do you say that these are the words of a single weak woman giving

thanks for the birth of a son? Can the mind of men be so much averse

to the light of truth as not to perceive that the sayings this woman

pours forth exceed her measure? Moreover, he who is suitably

interested in these things which have already begun to be fulfilled

even in this earthly pilgrimage also, does he not apply his mind, and

perceive, and acknowledge, that through this woman--whose very name,

which is Hannah, means "His grace"--the very Christian religion, the

very city of God, whose king and founder is Christ, in fine, the very

grace of God, hath thus spoken by the prophetic Spirit, whereby the

proud are cut off so that they fall, and the humble are filled so that

they rise, which that hymn chiefly celebrates? Unless perchance any

one will say that this woman prophesied nothing, but only lauded God

with exulting praise on account of the son whom she had obtained in

answer to prayer. What then does she mean when she says, "The bow of

the mighty hath He made weak, and the weak are girded with strength;

they that were full of bread are diminished, and the hungry have gone

beyond the earth; for the barren hath born seven, and she that hath

many children is waxed feeble?" Had she herself born seven, although

she had been barren? She had only one when she said that; neither did

she bear seven afterwards, nor six, with whom Samuel himself might be

the seventh, but three males and two females. And then, when as yet no

one was king over that people, whence, if she did not prophesy, did she

say what she puts at the end, "He giveth strength to our kings, and

shall exalt the horn of His Christ?"

Therefore let the Church of Christ, the city of the great King, [986]

full of grace, prolific of offspring, let her say what the prophecy

uttered about her so long before by the mouth of this pious mother

confesses, "My heart is made strong in the Lord, and my horn is exalted

in my God." Her heart is truly made strong, and her horn is truly

exalted, because not in herself, but in the Lord her God. "My mouth is

enlarged over mine enemies;" because even in pressing straits the word

of God is not bound, not even in preachers who are bound. [987] "I am

made glad," she says, "in Thy salvation." This is Christ Jesus

Himself, whom old Simeon, as we read in the Gospel, embracing as a

little one, yet recognizing as great, said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy

servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." [988]

Therefore may the Church say, "I am made glad in Thy salvation. For

there is none holy as the Lord, and none is righteous as our God;" as

holy and sanctifying, just and justifying. [989] "There is none holy

beside Thee;" because no one becomes so except by reason of Thee. And

then it follows, "Do not glory so proudly, and do not speak lofty

things, neither let vaunting talk come out of your mouth. For a God of

knowledge is the Lord." He knows you even when no one knows; for "he

who thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing deceiveth

himself." [990] These things are said to the adversaries of the city

of God who belong to Babylon, who presume in their own strength, and

glory in themselves, not in the Lord; of whom are also the carnal

Israelites, the earth-born inhabitants of the earthly Jerusalem, who,

as saith the apostle, "being ignorant of the righteousness of God,"

[991] that is, which God, who alone is just, and the justifier, gives

to man, "and wishing to establish their own," that is, which is as it

were procured by their own selves, not bestowed by Him, "are not

subject to the righteousness of God," just because they are proud, and

think they are able to please God with their own, not with that which

is of God, who is the God of knowledge, and therefore also takes the

oversight of consciences, there beholding the thoughts of men that they

are vain, [992] if they are of men, and are not from Him. "And

preparing," she says, "His curious designs." What curious designs do

we think these are, save that the proud must fall, and the humble

rise? These curious designs she recounts, saying, "The bow of the

mighty is made weak, and the weak are girded with strength." The bow

is made weak, that is, the intention of those who think themselves so

powerful, that without the gift and help of God they are able by human

sufficiency to fulfill the divine commandments; and those are girded

with strength whose in ward cry is, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I

am weak." [993]

"They that were full of bread," she says, "are diminished, and the

hungry have gone beyond the earth." Who are to be understood as full

of bread except those same who were as if mighty, that is, the

Israelites, to whom were committed the oracles of God? [994] But

among that people the children of the bond maid were diminished,--by

which word minus, although it is Latin, the idea is well expressed that

from being greater they were made less,--because, even in the very

bread, that is, the divine oracles, which the Israelites alone of all

nations have received, they savor earthly things. But the nations to

whom that law was not given, after they have come through the New

Testament to these oracles, by thirsting much have gone beyond the

earth, because in them they have savored not earthly, but heavenly

things. And the reason why this is done is as it were sought; "for the

barren," she says, "hath born seven, and she that hath many children is

waxed feeble." Here all that had been prophesied hath shone forth to

those who understood the number seven, which signifies the perfection

of the universal Church. For which reason also the Apostle John writes

to the seven churches, [995] showing in that way that he writes to the

totality of the one Church; and in the Proverbs of Solomon it is said

aforetime, prefiguring this, "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath

strengthened her seven pillars." [996] For the city of God was barren

in all nations before that child arose whom we see. [997] We also see

that the temporal Jerusalem, who had many children, is now waxed

feeble. Because, whoever in her were sons of the free woman were her

strength; but now, forasmuch as the letter is there, and not the

spirit, having lost her strength, she is waxed feeble.

"The Lord killeth and maketh alive:" He has killed her who had many

children, and made this barren one alive, so that she has born seven.

Although it may be more suitably understood that He has made those same

alive whom He has killed. For she, as it were, repeats that by adding,

"He bringeth down to hell, and bringeth up." To whom truly the apostle

says, "If ye be dead with Christ, seek those things which are above,

where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." [998] Therefore they

are killed by the Lord in a salutary way, so that he adds, "Savor

things which are above, not things on the earth;" so that these are

they who, hungering, have passed beyond the earth. "For ye are dead,"

he says: behold how God savingly kills! Then there follows, "And your

life is hid with Christ in God:" behold how God makes the same alive!

But does He bring them down to hell and bring them up again? It is

without controversy among believers that we best see both parts of this

work fulfilled in Him, to wit our Head, with whom the apostle has said

our life is hid in God. "For when He spared not His own Son, but

delivered Him up for us all," [999] in that way, certainly, He has

killed Him. And forasmuch as He raised Him up again from the dead, He

has made Him alive again. And since His voice is acknowledged in the

prophecy, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," [1000] He has brought

Him down to hell and brought Him up again. By this poverty of His we

are made rich; [1001] for "the Lord maketh poor and maketh rich." But

that we may know what this is, let us hear what follows: "He bringeth

low and lifteth up;" and truly He humbles the proud and exalts the

humble. Which we also read elsewhere, "God resisteth the proud, but

giveth grace to the humble." [1002] This is the burden of the entire

song of this woman whose name is interpreted "His grace."

Farther, what is added, "He raiseth up the poor from the earth," I

understand of none better than of Him who, as was said a little ago,

"was made poor for us, when He was rich, that by His poverty we might

be made rich." For He raised Him from the earth so quickly that His

flesh did not see corruption. Nor shall I divert from Him what is

added, "And raiseth up the poor from the dunghill." For indeed he who

is the poor man is also the beggar. [1003] But by the dunghill from

which he is lifted up we are with the greatest reason to understand the

persecuting Jews, of whom the apostle says, when telling that when he

belonged to them he persecuted the Church, "What things were gain to

me, those I counted loss for Christ; and I have counted them not only

loss, but even dung, that I might win Christ." [1004] Therefore that

poor one is raised up from the earth above all the rich, and that

beggar is lifted up from that dunghill above all the wealthy, "that he

may sit among the mighty of the people," to whom He says, "Ye shall sit

upon twelve thrones," [1005] "and to make them inherit the throne of

glory." For these mighty ones had said, "Lo, we have forsaken all and

followed Thee." They had most mightily vowed this vow.

But whence do they receive this, except from Him of whom it is here

immediately said, "Giving the vow to him that voweth?" Otherwise they

would be of those mighty ones whose bow is weakened. "Giving," she

saith, "the vow to him that voweth." For no one could vow anything

acceptable to God, unless he received from Him that which he might

vow. There follows, "And He hath blessed the years of the just," to

wit, that he may live for ever with Him to whom it is said, "And Thy

years shall have no end." For there the years abide; but here they

pass away, yea, they perish: for before they come they are not, and

when they shall have come they shall not be, because they bring their

own end with them. Now of these two, that is, "giving the vow to him

that voweth," and "He hath blessed the years of the just," the one is

what we do, the other what we receive. But this other is not received

from God, the liberal giver, until He, the helper, Himself has enabled

us for the former; "for man is not mighty in strength." "The Lord

shall make his adversary weak," to wit, him who envies the man that

vows, and resists him, lest he should fulfill what he has vowed. Owing

to the ambiguity of the Greek, it may also be understood "his own

adversary." For when God has begun to possess us, immediately he who

had been our adversary becomes His, and is conquered by us; but not by

our own strength, "for man is not mighty in strength." Therefore "the

Lord shall make His own adversary weak, the Lord is holy," that he may

be conquered by the saints, whom the Lord, the Holy of holies, hath

made saints. For this reason, "let not the prudent glory in his

prudence, and let not the mighty glory in his might, and let not the

rich glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this,--to

understand and know the Lord, and to do judgment and justice in the

midst of the earth." He in no small measure understands and knows the

Lord who understands and knows that even this, that he can understand

and know the Lord, is given to him by the Lord. "For what hast thou,"

saith the apostle, "that thou hast not received? But if thou hast

received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?"

[1006] That is, as if thou hadst of thine own self whereof thou

mightest glory. Now, he does judgment and justice who lives aright.

But he lives aright who yields obedience to God when He commands. "The

end of the commandment," that is, to which the commandment has

reference, "is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and

faith unfeigned." Moreover, this "charity," as the Apostle John

testifies, "is of God." [1007] Therefore to do justice and judgment

is of God. But what is "in the midst of the earth?" For ought those

who dwell in the ends of the earth not to do judgment and justice? Who

would say so? Why, then, is it added, "In the midst of the earth?"

For if this had not been added, and it had only been said, "To do

judgment and justice," this commandment would rather have pertained to

both kinds of men,--both those dwelling inland and those on the

sea-coast. But lest any one should think that, after the end of the

life led in this body, there remains a time for doing judgment and

justice which he has not done while he was in the flesh, and that the

divine judgment can thus be escaped, "in the midst of the earth"

appears to me to be said of the time when every one lives in the body;

for in this life every one carries about his own earth, which, on a

man's dying, the common earth takes back, to be surely returned to him

on his rising again. Therefore "in the midst of the earth," that is,

while our soul is shut up in this earthly body, judgment and justice

are to be done, which shall be profitable for us hereafter, when "every

one shall receive according to that he hath done in the body, whether

good or bad." [1008] For when the apostle there says "in the body,"

he means in the time he has lived in the body. Yet if any one

blaspheme with malicious mind and impious thought, without any member

of his body being employed in it, he shall not therefore be guiltless

because he has not done it with bodily motion, for he will have done it

in that time which he has spent in the body. In the same way we may

suitably understand what we read in the psalm, "But God, our King

before the worlds, hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth;"

[1009] so that the Lord Jesus may be understood to be our God who is

before the worlds, because by Him the worlds were made, working our

salvation in the midst of the earth, for the Word was made flesh and

dwelt in an earthly body.

Then after Hannah has prophesied in these words, that he who glorieth

ought to glory not in himself at all, but in the Lord, she says, on

account of the retribution which is to come on the day of judgment,

"The Lord hath ascended into the heavens, and hath thundered: He shall

judge the ends of the earth, for He is righteous." Throughout she

holds to the order of the creed of Christians: For the Lord Christ has

ascended into heaven, and is to come thence to judge the quick and

dead. [1010] For, as saith the apostle, "Who hath ascended but He who

hath also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that

descended is the same also that ascended up above all heavens, that He

might fill all things." [1011] Therefore He hath thundered through

His clouds, which He hath filled with His Holy Spirit when He ascended

up. Concerning which the bond maid Jerusalem--that is, the unfruitful

vineyard--is threatened in Isaiah the prophet that they shall rain no

showers upon her. But "He shall judge the ends of the earth" is spoken

as if it had been said, "even the extremes of the earth." For it does

not mean that He shall not judge the other parts of the earth, who,

without doubt, shall judge all men. But it is better to understand by

the extremes of the earth the extremes of man, since those things shall

not be judged which, in the middle time, are changed for the better or

the worse, but the ending in which he shall be found who is judged.

For which reason it is said, "He that shall persevere even unto the

end, the same shall be saved." [1012] He, therefore, who

perseveringly does judgment and justice in the midst of the earth shall

not be condemned when the extremes of the earth shall be judged. "And

giveth," she saith, "strength to our kings," that He may not condemn

them in judging. He giveth them strength whereby as kings they rule

the flesh, and conquer the world in Him who hath poured out His blood

for them. "And shall exalt the horn of His Christ." How shall Christ

exalt the horn of His Christ? For He of whom it was said above, "The

Lord hath ascended into the heavens," meaning the Lord Christ, Himself,

as it is said here, "shall exalt the horn of His Christ." Who,

therefore, is the Christ of His Christ? Does it mean that He shall

exalt the horn of each one of His believing people, as she says in the

beginning of this hymn, "Mine horn is exalted in my God?" For we can

rightly call all those christs who are anointed with His chrism,

forasmuch as the whole body with its head is one Christ. [1013] These

things hath Hannah, the mother of Samuel, the holy and much-praised

man, prophesied, in which, indeed, the change of the ancient priesthood

was then figured and is now fulfilled, since she that had many children

is waxed feeble, that the barren who hath born seven might have the new

priesthood in Christ.

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[985] 1 Sam. ii. 1-10.

[986] Ps. xlviii. 2.

[987] 2 Tim. ii. 9; Eph. vi. 20.

[988] Luke ii. 25-30.

[989] Rom. iii. 26?

[990] Gal. vi. 3.

[991] Rom. x. 3.

[992] Ps. xciv. 11; 1 Cor. iii. 20.

[993] Ps. vi. 2.

[994] Rom. iii. 2.

[995] Rev. i. 4.

[996] Prov. ix. 1.

[997] By whom we see her made fruitful.

[998] Col. iii. 1-3.

[999] Rom. viii. 32.

[1000] Ps. xvi. 10; Acts ii. 27, 31.

[1001] 2 Cor. viii. 9.

[1002] Jas. iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 5.

[1003] For the poor man is the same as the beggar.

[1004] Phil. iii. 7, 8.

[1005] Matt. xix. 27, 28.

[1006] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

[1007] 1 John iv. 7.

[1008] 2 Cor. v. 10.

[1009] Ps. lxxiv. 12.

[1010] Acts x. 42.

[1011] Eph. iv. 9, 10.

[1012] Matt. xxiv. 13.

[1013] 1 Cor. xii. 12.

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Chapter 5.--Of Those Things Which a Man of God Spake by the Spirit to

Eli the Priest, Signifying that the Priesthood Which Had Been Appointed

According to Aaron Was to Be Taken Away.

But this is said more plainly by a man of God sent to Eli the priest

himself, whose name indeed is not mentioned, but whose office and

ministry show him to have been indubitably a prophet. For it is thus

written: "And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said, Thus saith

the Lord, I plainly revealed myself unto thy father's house, when they

were in the land of Egypt slaves in Pharaoh's house; and I chose thy

father's house out of all the sceptres of Israel to fill the office of

priest for me, to go up to my altar, to burn incense and wear the

ephod; and I gave thy father's house for food all the offerings made by

fire of the children of Israel. Wherefore then hast thou looked at

mine incense and at mine offerings with an impudent eye, and hast

glorified thy sons above me, to bless the first-fruits of every

sacrifice in Israel before me? Therefore thus saith the Lord God of

Israel, I said thy house and thy father's house should walk before me

for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that

honor me will I honor, and he that despiseth me shall be despised.

Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thy seed, and the seed of

thy father's house, and thou shalt never have an old man in my house.

And I will cut off the man of thine from mine altar, so that his eyes

shall be consumed, and his heart shall melt away; and every one of thy

house that is left shall fall by the sword of men. And this shall be a

sign unto thee that shall come upon these thy two sons, Hophni and

Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. And I will raise me

up a faithful priest, that shall do according to all that is in mine

heart and in my soul; and I will build him a sure house, and he shall

walk before my Christ for ever. And it shall come to pass that he who

is left in thine house shall come to worship him with a piece of money,

saying, Put me into one part of thy priesthood, that I may eat bread."

[1014]

We cannot say that this prophecy, in which the change of the ancient

priesthood is foretold with so great plainness, was fulfilled in

Samuel; for although Samuel was not of another tribe than that which

had been appointed by God to serve at the altar, yet he was not of the

sons of Aaron, whose offspring was set apart that the priests might be

taken out of it. And thus by that transaction also the same change

which should come to pass through Christ Jesus is shadowed forth, and

the prophecy itself in deed, not in word, belonged to the Old Testament

properly, but figuratively to the New, signifying by the fact just what

was said by the word to Eli the priest through the prophet. For there

were afterwards priests of Aaron's race, such as Zadok and Abiathar

during David's reign, and others in succession, before the time came

when those things which were predicted so long before about the

changing of the priesthood behoved to be fulfilled by Christ. But who

that now views these things with a believing eye does not see that they

are fulfilled? Since, indeed, no tabernacle, no temple, no altar, no

sacrifice, and therefore no priest either, has remained to the Jews, to

whom it was commanded in the law of God that he should be ordained of

the seed of Aaron; which is also mentioned here by the prophet, when he

says, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I said thy house and thy

father's house shall walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith,

That be far from me; for them that honor me will I honor, and he that

despiseth me shall be despised." For that in naming his father's house

he does not mean that of his immediate father, but that of Aaron, who

first was appointed priest, to be succeeded by others descended from

him, is shown by the preceding words, when he says, "I was revealed

unto thy father's house, when they were in the land of Egypt slaves in

Pharaoh's house; and I chose thy father's house out of all the sceptres

of Israel to fill the office of priest for me." Which of the fathers

in that Egyptian slavery, but Aaron, was his father, who, when they

were set free, was chosen to the priesthood? It was of his lineage,

therefore, he has said in this passage it should come to pass that they

should no longer be priests; which already we see fulfilled. If faith

be watchful, the things are before us: they are discerned, they are

grasped, and are forced on the eyes of the unwilling, so that they are

seen: "Behold the days come," he says, "that I will cut off thy seed,

and the seed of thy father's house, and thou shall never have an old

man in mine house. And I will cut off the man of thine from mine

altar, so that his eyes shall be consumed and his heart shall melt

away." Behold the days which were foretold have already come. There

is no priest after the order of Aaron; and whoever is a man of his

lineage, when he sees the sacrifice of the Christians prevailing over

the whole world, but that great honor taken away from himself, his eyes

fail and his soul melts away consumed with grief.

But what follows belongs properly to the house of Eli, to whom these

things were said: "And every one of thine house that is left shall

fall by the sword of men. And this shall be a sign unto thee that

shall come upon these thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas; in one day

they shall die both of them." This, therefore, is made a sign of the

change of the priesthood from this man's house, by which it is

signified that the priesthood of Aaron's house is to be changed. For

the death of this man's sons signified the death not of the men, but of

the priesthood itself of the sons of Aaron. But what follows pertains

to that Priest whom Samuel typified by succeeding this one. Therefore

the things which follow are said of Christ Jesus, the true Priest of

the New Testament: "And I will raise me up a faithful Priest that

shall do according to all that is in mine heart and in my soul; and I

will build Him a sure house." The same is the eternal Jerusalem

above. "And He shall walk," saith He, "before my Christ always." "He

shall walk" means "he shall be conversant with," just as He had said

before of Aaron's house, "I said that thine house and thy father's

house shall walk before me for ever." But what He says, "He shall walk

before my Christ," is to be understood entirely of the house itself,

not of the priest, who is Christ Himself, the Mediator and Saviour.

His house, therefore, shall walk before Him. "Shall walk" may also be

understood to mean from death to life, all the time this mortality

passes through, even to the end of this world. But where God says,

"Who will do all that is in mine heart and in my soul," we must not

think that God has a soul, for He is the Author of souls; but this is

said of God tropically, not properly, just as He is said to have hands

and feet, and other corporal members. And, lest it should be supposed

from such language that man in the form of this flesh is made in the

image of God, wings also are ascribed to Him, which man has not at all;

and it is said to God, "Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings," [1015]

that men may understand that such things are said of that ineffable

nature not in proper but in figurative words.

But what is added, "And it shall come to pass that he who is left in

thine house shall come to worship him," is not said properly of the

house of this Eli, but of that Aaron, the men of which remained even to

the advent of Jesus Christ, of which race there are not wanting men

even to this present. For of that house of Eli it had already been

said above, "And every one of thine house that is left shall fall by

the sword of men." How, therefore, could it be truly said here, "And

it shall come to pass that every one that is left shall come to worship

him," if that is true, that no one shall escape the avenging sword,

unless he would have it understood of those who belong to the race of

that whole priesthood after the order of Aaron? Therefore, if it is of

these the predestinated remnant, about whom another prophet has said,

"The remnant shall be saved;" [1016] whence the apostle also says,

"Even so then at this time also the remnant according to the election

of grace is saved;" [1017] since it is easily understood to be of such

a remnant that it is said, "He that is left in thine house," assuredly

he believes in Christ; just as in the time of the apostle very many of

that nation believed; nor are there now wanting those, although very

few, who yet believe, and in them is fulfilled what this man of God has

here immediately added, "He shall come to worship him with a piece of

money;" to worship whom, if not that Chief Priest, who is also God?

For in that priesthood after the order of Aaron men did not come to the

temple or altar of God for the purpose of worshipping the priest. But

what is that he says, "With a piece of money," if not the short word of

faith, about which the apostle quotes the saying, "A consummating and

shortening word will the Lord make upon the earth?" [1018] But that

money is put for the word the psalm is a witness, where it is sung,

"The words of the Lord are pure words, money tried with the fire."

[1019]

What then does he say who comes to worship the priest of God, even the

Priest who is God? "Put me into one part of Thy priesthood, to eat

bread." I do not wish to be set in the honor of my fathers, which is

none; put me in a part of Thy priesthood. For "I have chosen to be

mean in Thine house;" [1020] I desire to be a member, no matter what,

or how small, of Thy priesthood. By the priesthood he here means the

people itself, of which He is the Priest who is the Mediator between

God and men, the man Christ Jesus. [1021] This people the Apostle

Peter calls "a holy people, a royal priesthood." [1022] But some have

translated, "Of Thy sacrifice," not "Of Thy priesthood," which no less

signifies the same Christian people. Whence the Apostle Paul says, "We

being many are one bread, one body." [1023] [And again he says,

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice." [1024] ] What, therefore, he

has added, to "eat bread," also elegantly expresses the very kind of

sacrifice of which the Priest Himself says, "The bread which I will

give is my flesh for the life of the world." [1025] The same is the

sacrifice not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of

Melchisedec: [1026] let him that readeth understand. [1027]

Therefore this short and salutarily humble confession, in which it is

said, "Put me in a part of Thy priesthood, to eat bread," is itself the

piece of money, for it is both brief, and it is the Word of God who

dwells in the heart of one who believes. For because He had said

above, that He had given for food to Aaron's house the sacrificial

victims of the Old Testament, where He says, "I have given thy father's

house for food all things which are offered by fire of the children of

Israel," which indeed were the sacrifices of the Jews; therefore here

He has said, "To eat bread," which is in the New Testament the

sacrifice of the Christians.

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[1014] 1 Sam. ii. 27-36.

[1015] Ps. xvii. 8.

[1016] Isa. x. 21.

[1017] Rom. xi. 5.

[1018] Isa. xxxviii. 22; Rom. ix. 28.

[1019] Ps. xii. 6.

[1020] Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

[1021] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

[1022] 1 Pet. ii. 9.

[1023] 1 Cor. x. 17.

[1024] Rom. xii. 1.

[1025] John vi. 51.

[1026] Heb. vii. 11, 27.

[1027] Matt. xxiv. 15.

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Chapter 6.--Of the Jewish Priesthood and Kingdom, Which, Although

Promised to Be Established for Ever, Did Not Continue; So that Other

Things are to Be Understood to Which Eternity is Assured.

While, therefore, these things now shine forth as clearly as they were

loftily foretold, still some one may not vainly be moved to ask, How

can we be confident that all things are to come to pass which are

predicted in these books as about to come, if this very thing which is

there divinely spoken, "Thine house and thy father's house shall walk

before me for ever," could not have effect? For we see that priesthood

has been changed; and there can be no hope that what was promised to

that house may some time be fulfilled, because that which succeeds on

its being rejected and changed is rather predicted as eternal. He who

says this does not yet understand, or does not recollect, that this

very priesthood after the order of Aaron was appointed as the shadow of

a future eternal priesthood; and therefore, when eternity is promised

to it, it is not promised to the mere shadow and figure, but to what is

shadowed forth and prefigured by it. But lest it should be thought the

shadow itself was to remain, therefore its mutation also behoved to be

foretold.

In this way, too, the kingdom of Saul himself, who certainly was

reprobated and rejected, was the shadow of a kingdom yet to come which

should remain to eternity. For, indeed, the oil with which he was

anointed, and from that chrism he is called Christ, is to be taken in a

mystical sense, and is to be understood as a great mystery; which David

himself venerated so much in him, that he trembled with smitten heart

when, being hid in a dark cave, which Saul also entered when pressed by

the necessity of nature, he had come secretly behind him and cut off a

small piece of his robe, that he might be able to prove how he had

spared him when he could have killed him, and might thus remove from

his mind the suspicion through which he had vehemently persecuted the

holy David, thinking him his enemy. Therefore he was much afraid lest

he should be accused of violating so great a mystery in Saul, because

he had thus meddled even his clothes. For thus it is written: "And

David's heart smote him because he had taken away the skirt of his

cloak." [1028] But to the men with him, who advised him to destroy

Saul thus delivered up into his hands, he saith, "The Lord forbid that

I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's christ, to lay my hand

upon him, because he is the Lord's christ." Therefore he showed so

great reverence to this shadow of what was to come, not for its own

sake, but for the sake of what it prefigured. Whence also that which

Samuel says to Saul, "Since thou hast not kept my commandment which the

Lord commanded thee, whereas now the Lord would have prepared thy

kingdom over Israel for ever, yet now thy kingdom shall not continue

for thee; and the Lord will seek Him a man after His own heart, and the

Lord will command him to be prince over His people, because thou hast

not kept that which the Lord commanded thee," [1029] is not to be taken

as if God had settled that Saul himself should reign for ever, and

afterwards, on his sinning, would not keep this promise; nor was He

ignorant that he would sin, but He had established his kingdom that it

might be a figure of the eternal kingdom. Therefore he added, "Yet now

thy kingdom shall not continue for thee." Therefore what it signified

has stood and shall stand; but it shall not stand for this man, because

he himself was not to reign for ever, nor his offspring; so that at

least that word "for ever" might seem to be fulfilled through his

posterity one to another. "And the Lord," he saith, "will seek Him a

man," meaning either David or the Mediator of the New Testament, [1030]

who was figured in the chrism with which David also and his offspring

was anointed. But it is not as if He knew not where he was that God

thus seeks Him a man, but, speaking through a man, He speaks as a man,

and in this sense seeks us. For not only to God the Father, but also

to His Only-begotten, who came to seek what was lost, [1031] we had

been known already even so far as to be chosen in Him before the

foundation of the world. [1032] "He will seek Him" therefore means,

He will have His own (just as if He had said, Whom He already has known

to be His own He will show to others to be His friend). Whence in

Latin this word (qu�rit) receives a preposition and becomes acquirit

(acquires), the meaning of which is plain enough; although even without

the addition of the preposition qu�rere is understood as acquirere,

whence gains are called qu�stus.

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[1028] 1 Sam. xxiv. 5, 6.

[1029] 1 Sam. xiii. 13, 14.

[1030] Heb. ix. 15.

[1031] Luke xix. 10.

[1032] Eph. i. 4.

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Chapter 7.--Of the Disruption of the Kingdom of Israel, by Which the

Perpetual Division of the Spiritual from the Carnal Israel Was

Prefigured.

Again Saul sinned through disobedience, and again Samuel says to him in

the word of the Lord, "Because thou hast despised the word of the Lord,

the Lord hath despised thee, that thou mayest not be king over Israel."

[1033] And again for the same sin, when Saul confessed it, and prayed

for pardon, and besought Samuel to return with him to appease the Lord,

he said, "I will not return with thee: for thou hast despised the word

of the Lord, and the Lord will despise thee that thou mayest not be

king over Israel. And Samuel turned his face to go away, and Saul laid

hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and rent it. And Samuel said unto

him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom from Israel out of thine hand this

day, and will give it to thy neighbor, who is good above thee, and will

divide Israel in twain. And He will not be changed, neither will He

repent: for He is not as a man, that He should repent; who threatens

and does not persist." [1034] He to whom it is said, "The Lord will

despise thee that thou mayest not be king over Israel," and "The Lord

hath rent the kingdom from Israel out of thine hand this day," reigned

forty years over Israel,--that is, just as long a time as David

himself,--yet heard this in the first period of his reign, that we may

understand it was said because none of his race was to reign, and that

we may look to the race of David, whence also is sprung, according to

the flesh, [1035] the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ

Jesus. [1036]

But the Scripture has not what is read in most Latin copies, "The Lord

hath rent the kingdom of Israel out of thine hand this day," but just

as we have set it down it is found in the Greek copies, "The Lord hath

rent the kingdom from Israel out of thine hand;" that the words "out of

thine hand" may be understood to mean "from Israel." Therefore this

man figuratively represented the people of Israel, which was to lose

the kingdom, Christ Jesus our Lord being about to reign, not carnally,

but spiritually. And when it is said of Him, "And will give it to thy

neighbor," that is to be referred to the fleshly kinship, for Christ,

according to the flesh, was of Israel, whence also Saul sprang. But

what is added, "Good above thee," may indeed be understood, "Better

than thee," and indeed some have thus translated it; but it is better

taken thus, "Good above thee," as meaning that because He is good,

therefore He must be above thee, according to that other prophetic

saying, "Till I put all Thine enemies under Thy feet." [1037] And

among them is Israel, from whom, as His persecutor, Christ took away

the kingdom; although the Israel in whom there was no guile may have

been there too, a sort of grain, as it were, of that chaff. For

certainly thence came the apostles, thence so many martyrs, of whom

Stephen is the first, thence so many churches, which the Apostle Paul

names, magnifying God in their conversion.

Of which thing I do not doubt what follows is to be understood, "And

will divide Israel in twain," to wit, into Israel pertaining to the

bond woman, and Israel pertaining to the free. For these two kinds

were at first together, as Abraham still clave to the bond woman, until

the barren, made fruitful by the grace of God, cried, "Cast out the

bond woman and her son." [1038] We know, indeed, that on account of

the sin of Solomon, in the reign of his son Rehoboam, Israel was

divided in two, and continued so, the separate parts having their own

kings, until that whole nation was overthrown with a great destruction,

and carried away by the Chaldeans. But what was this to Saul, when, if

any such thing was threatened, it would be threatened against David

himself, whose son Solomon was? Finally, the Hebrew nation is not now

divided internally, but is dispersed through the earth

indiscriminately, in the fellowship of the same error. But that

division with which God threatened the kingdom and people in the person

of Saul, who represented them, is shown to be eternal and unchangeable

by this which is added, "And He will not be changed, neither will He

repent: for He is not as a man, that He should repent; who threatens

and does not persist,"--that is, a man threatens and does not persist,

but not God, who does not repent like man. For when we read that He

repents, a change of circumstance is meant, flowing from the divine

immutable foreknowledge. Therefore, when God is said not to repent, it

is to be understood that He does not change.

We see that this sentence concerning this division of the people of

Israel, divinely uttered in these words, has been altogether

irremediable and quite perpetual. For whoever have turned, or are

turning, or shall turn thence to Christ, it has been according to the

foreknowledge of God, not according to the one and the same nature of

the human race. Certainly none of the Israelites, who, cleaving to

Christ, have continued in Him, shall ever be among those Israelites who

persist in being His enemies even to the end of this life, but shall

for ever remain in the separation which is here foretold. For the Old

Testament, from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, [1039]

profiteth nothing, unless because it bears witness to the New

Testament. Otherwise, however long Moses is read, the veil is put over

their heart; but when any one shall turn thence to Christ, the veil

shall be taken away. [1040] For the very desire of those who turn is

changed from the old to the new, so that each no longer desires to

obtain carnal but spiritual felicity. Wherefore that great prophet

Samuel himself, before he had anointed Saul, when he had cried to the

Lord for Israel, and He had heard him, and when he had offered a whole

burnt-offering, as the aliens were coming to battle against the people

of God, and the Lord thundered above them and they were confused, and

fell before Israel and were overcome; [then] he took one stone and set

it up between the old and new Massephat [Mizpeh], and called its name

Ebenezer, which means "the stone of the helper," and said, "Hitherto

hath the Lord helped us." [1041] Massephat is interpreted "desire."

That stone of the helper is the mediation of the Saviour, by which we

go from the old Massephat to the new,--that is, from the desire with

which carnal happiness was expected in the carnal kingdom to the desire

with which the truest spiritual happiness is expected in the kingdom of

heaven; and since nothing is better than that, the Lord helpeth us

hitherto.

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[1033] 1 Sam. xv. 23.

[1034] 1 Sam. xv. 26-29.

[1035] Rom. i. 3.

[1036] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

[1037] Ps. cx. 1.

[1038] Gen. xxi. 10.

[1039] Gal. iv. 25.

[1040] 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16.

[1041] 1 Sam. vii. 9-12.

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Chapter 8.--Of the Promises Made to David in His Son, Which are in No

Wise Fulfilled in Solomon, But Most Fully in Christ.

And now I see I must show what, pertaining to the matter I treat of,

God promised to David himself, who succeeded Saul in the kingdom, whose

change prefigured that final change on account of which all things were

divinely spoken, all things were committed to writing. When many

things had gone prosperously with king David, he thought to make a

house for God, even that temple of most excellent renown which was

afterwards built by king Solomon his son. While he was thinking of

this, the word of the Lord came to Nathan the prophet, which he brought

to the king, in which, after God had said that a house should not be

built unto Him by David himself, and that in all that long time He had

never commanded any of His people to build Him a house of cedar, he

says, "And now thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith

God Almighty, I took thee from the sheep-cote that thou mightest be for

a ruler over my people in Israel: and I was with thee whithersoever

thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thy face,

and have made thee a name, according to the name of the great ones who

are over the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel,

and will plant him, and he shall dwell apart, and shall be troubled no

more; and the son of wickedness shall not humble him any more, as from

the beginning, from the days when I appointed judges over my people

Israel. And I will give thee rest from all thine enemies, and the Lord

will tell [hath told] thee, because thou shall build an house for Him.

And it shall come to pass when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shall

sleep with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which

shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will prepare his kingdom. He

shall build me an house for my name; and I will order his throne even

to eternity. I will be his Father, and he shall be my son. And if he

commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the

stripes of the sons of men: but my mercy I will not take away from

him, as I took it away from those whom I put away from before my face.

And his house shall be faithful, and his kingdom even for evermore

before me, and his throne shall be set up even for evermore." [1042]

He who thinks this grand promise was fulfilled in Solomon greatly errs;

for he attends to the saying, "He shall build me an house," but he does

not attend to the saying, "His house shall be faithful, and his kingdom

for evermore before me." Let him therefore attend and behold the house

of Solomon full of strange women worshipping false gods, and the king

himself, aforetime wise, seduced by them, and cast down into the same

idolatry: and let him not dare to think that God either promised this

falsely, or was unable to foreknow that Solomon and his house would

become what they did. But we ought not to be in doubt here, or to see

the fulfillment of these things save in Christ our Lord, who was made

of the seed of David according to the flesh, [1043] lest we should

vainly and uselessly look for some other here, like the carnal Jews.

For even they understand this much, that the son whom they read of in

that place as promised to David was not Solomon; so that, with

wonderful blindness to Him who was promised and is now declared with so

great manifestation, they say they hope for another. Indeed, even in

Solomon there appeared some image of the future event, in that he built

the temple, and had peace according to his name (for Solomon means

"pacific"), and in the beginning of his reign was wonderfully

praiseworthy; but while, as a shadow of Him that should come, he

foreshowed Christ our Lord, he did not also in his own person resemble

Him. Whence some things concerning him are so written as if they were

prophesied of himself, while the Holy Scripture, prophesying even by

events, somehow delineates in him the figure of things to come. For,

besides the books of divine history, in which his reign is narrated,

the 72d Psalm also is inscribed in the title with his name, in which so

many things are said which cannot at all apply to him, but which apply

to the Lord Christ with such evident fitness as makes it quite apparent

that in the one the figure is in some way shadowed forth, but in the

other the truth itself is presented. For it is known within what

bounds the kingdom of Solomon was enclosed; and yet in that psalm, not

to speak of other things, we read, "He shall have dominion from sea

even to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," [1044] which

we see fulfilled in Christ. Truly he took the beginning of His

reigning from the river where John baptized; for, when pointed out by

him, He began to be acknowledged by the disciples, who called Him not

only Master, but also Lord.

Nor was it for any other reason that, while his father David was still

living, Solomon began to reign, which happened to none other of their

kings, except that from this also it might be clearly apparent that it

was not himself this prophecy spoken to his father signified

beforehand, saying, "And it shall come to pass when thy days be

fulfilled, and thou shall sleep with thy fathers, that I will raise up

thy seed which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will prepare His

kingdom." How, therefore, shall it be thought on account of what

follows, "He shall build me an house," that this Solomon is prophesied,

and not rather be understood on account of what precedes, "When thy

days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will raise

up thy seed after thee," that another pacific One is promised, who is

foretold as about to be raised up, not before David's death, as he was,

but after it? For however long the interval of time might be before

Jesus Christ came, beyond doubt it was after the death of king David,

to whom He was so promised, that He behoved to come, who should build

an house of God, not of wood and stone, but of men, such as we rejoice

He does build. For to this house, that is, to believers, the apostle

saith, "The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." [1045]

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[1042] 2 Sam. vii. 8-16.

[1043] Rom. i. 3.

[1044] Ps. lxxii. 8.

[1045] 1 Cor. iii. 17.

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Chapter 9.--How Like the Prophecy About Christ in the 89th Psalm is to

the Things Promised in Nathan's Prophecy in the Books of Samuel.

Wherefore also in the 89th Psalm, of which the title is, "An

instruction for himself by Ethan the Israelite," mention is made of the

promises God made to king David, and some things are there added

similar to those found in the Book of Samuel, such as this, "I have

sworn to David my servant that I will prepare his seed for ever."

[1046] And again, "Then thou spakest in vision to thy sons, and

saidst, I have laid help upon the mighty One, and have exalted the

chosen One out of my people. I have found David my servant, and with

my holy oil I have anointed him. For mine hand shall help him, and

mine arm shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not prevail against

him, and the son of iniquity shall harm him no more. And I will beat

down his foes from before his face, and those that hate him will I put

to flight. And my truth and my mercy shall be with him, and in my name

shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and

his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my

Father, my God, and the undertaker of my salvation. Also I will make

him my first-born, high among the kings of the earth. My mercy will I

keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall be faithful (sure)

with him. His seed also will I set for ever and ever, and his throne

as the days of heaven." [1047] Which words, when rightly understood,

are all understood to be about the Lord Jesus Christ, under the name of

David, on account of the form of a servant, which the same Mediator

assumed [1048] from the virgin of the seed of David. [1049] For

immediately something is said about the sins of his children, such as

is set down in the Book of Samuel, and is more readily taken as if of

Solomon. For there, that is, in the Book of Samuel, he says, "And if

he commit iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the

stripes of the sons of men; but my mercy will I not take away from

him," [1050] meaning by stripes the strokes of correction. Hence that

saying, "Touch ye not my christs." [1051] For what else is that than,

Do not harm them? But in the psalm, when speaking as if of David, He

says something of the same kind there too. "If his children," saith

He, "forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they profane my

righteousnesses, and keep not my commandments; I will visit their

iniquities with the rod, and their faults with stripes: but my mercy I

will not make void from him." [1052] He did not say "from them,"

although He spoke of his children, not of himself; but he said "from

him," which means the same thing if rightly understood. For of Christ

Himself, who is the head of the Church, there could not be found any

sins which required to be divinely restrained by human correction,

mercy being still continued; but they are found in His body and

members, which is His people. Therefore in the Book of Samuel it is

said, "iniquity of Him," but in the psalm, "of His children," that we

may understand that what is said of His body is in some way said of

Himself. Wherefore also, when Saul persecuted His body, that is, His

believing people, He Himself saith from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why

persecutest thou me?" [1053] Then in the following words of the psalm

He says, "Neither will I hurt in my truth, nor profane my covenant, and

the things that proceed from my lips I will not disallow. Once have I

sworn by my holiness, if I lie unto David," [1054] --that is, I will in

no wise lie unto David; for Scripture is wont to speak thus. But what

that is in which He will not lie, He adds, saying, "His seed shall

endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me, and as the moon

perfected for ever, and a faithful witness in heaven." [1055]

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[1046] Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4.

[1047] Ps. lxxxix. 19-29.

[1048] Phil. ii. 7.

[1049] Matt. i. 1, 18; Luke i. 27.

[1050] ^ 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15.

[1051] Ps. cv. 15.

[1052] Ps. lxxxix. 30-33.

[1053] Acts ix. 4.

[1054] Ps. lxxxix. 34, 35.

[1055] Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37.

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Chapter 10.--How Different the Acts in the Kingdom of the Earthly

Jerusalem are from Those Which God Had Promised, So that the Truth of

the Promise Should Be Understood to Pertain to the Glory of the Other

King and Kingdom.

That it might not be supposed that a promise so strongly expressed and

confirmed was fulfilled in Solomon, as if he hoped for, yet did not

find it, he says, "But Thou hast cast off, and hast brought to nothing,

O Lord." [1056] This truly was done concerning the kingdom of Solomon

among his posterity, even to the overthrow of the earthly Jerusalem

itself, which was the seat of the kingdom, and especially the

destruction of the very temple which had been built by Solomon. But

lest on this account God should be thought to have done contrary to His

promise, immediately he adds, "Thou hast delayed Thy Christ." [1057]

Therefore he is not Solomon, nor yet David himself, if the Christ of

the Lord is delayed. For while all the kings are called His christs,

who were consecrated with that mystical chrism, not only from king

David downwards, but even from that Saul who first was anointed king of

that same people, David himself indeed calling him the Lord's christ,

yet there was one true Christ, whose figure they bore by the prophetic

unction, who, according to the opinion of men, who thought he was to be

understood as come in David or in Solomon, was long delayed, but who,

according as God had disposed, was to come in His own time. The

following part of this psalm goes on to say what in the meantime, while

He was delayed, was to become of the kingdom of the earthly Jerusalem,

where it was hoped He would certainly reign: "Thou hast overthrown the

covenant of Thy servant; Thou hast profaned in the earth his

sanctuary. Thou hast broken down all his walls; Thou hast put his

strong-holds in fear. All that pass by the way spoil him; he is made a

reproach to his neighbors. Thou hast set up the right hand of his

enemies; Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Thou hast turned

aside the help of his sword, and hast not helped him in war. Thou hast

destroyed him from cleansing; Thou hast dashed down his seat to the

ground. Thou hast shortened the days of his seat; Thou hast poured

confusion over him." [1058] All these things came upon Jerusalem the

bond woman, in which some also reigned who were children of the free

woman, holding that kingdom in temporary stewardship, but holding the

kingdom of the heavenly Jerusalem, whose children they were, in true

faith, and hoping in the true Christ. But how these things came upon

that kingdom, the history of its affairs points out if it is read.

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[1056] Ps. lxxxix. 38.

[1057] Ps. lxxxix. 38.

[1058] Ps. lxxxix. 39-45.

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Chapter 11.--Of the Substance of the People of God, Which Through His

Assumption of Flesh is in Christ, Who Alone Had Power to Deliver His

Own Soul from Hell.

But after having prophesied these things, the prophet betakes him to

praying to God; yet even the very prayer is prophecy: "How long, Lord,

dost Thou turn away in the end?" [1059] "Thy face" is understood, as

it is elsewhere said, "How long dost Thou turn away Thy face from me?"

[1060] For therefore some copies have here not "dost," but "wilt Thou

turn away;" although it could be understood, "Thou turnest away Thy

mercy, which Thou didst promise to David." But when he says, "in the

end," what does it mean, except even to the end? By which end is to be

understood the last time, when even that nation is to believe in Christ

Jesus, before which end what He has just sorrowfully bewailed must come

to pass. On account of which it is also added here, "Thy wrath shall

burn like fire. Remember what is my substance." [1061] This cannot

be better understood than of Jesus Himself, the substance of His

people, of whose nature His flesh is. "For not in vain," he says,

"hast Thou made all the sons of men." [1062] For unless the one Son

of man had been the substance of Israel, through which Son of man many

sons of men should be set free, all the sons of men would have been

made wholly in vain. But now, indeed, all mankind through the fall of

the first man has fallen from the truth into vanity; for which reason

another psalm says, "Man is like to vanity: his days pass away as a

shadow;" [1063] yet God has not made all the sons of men in vain,

because He frees many from vanity through the Mediator Jesus, and those

whom He did not foreknow as to be delivered, He made not wholly in vain

in the most beautiful and most just ordination of the whole rational

creation, for the use of those who were to be delivered, and for the

comparison of the two cities by mutual contrast. Thereafter it

follows, "Who is the man that shall live, and shall not see death?

shall he snatch his soul from the hand of hell?" [1064] Who is this

but that substance of Israel out of the seed of David, Christ Jesus, of

whom the apostle says, that "rising from the dead He now dieth not, and

death shall no more have dominion over Him?" [1065] For He shall so

live and not see death, that yet He shall have been dead; but shall

have delivered His soul from the hand of hell, whither He had descended

in order to loose some from the chains of hell; but He hath delivered

it by that power of which He says in the Gospel, "I have the power of

laying down my life, and I have the power of taking it again." [1066]

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[1059] Ps. lxxxix. 46.

[1060] Ps. xiii. 1.

[1061] Ps. lxxxix. 46, 47.

[1062] Ps. lxxxix. 47.

[1063] Ps. cxliv. 4.

[1064] Ps. lxxxix. 48.

[1065] Rom. vi. 9.

[1066] John x. 18.

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Chapter 12.--To Whose Person the Entreaty for the Promises is to Be

Understood to Belong, When He Says in the Psalm, "Where are Thine

Ancient Compassions, Lord?" Etc.

But the rest of this psalm runs thus: "Where are Thine ancient

compassions, Lord, which Thou swarest unto David in Thy truth?

Remember, Lord, the reproach of Thy servants, which I have borne in my

bosom of many nations; wherewith Thine enemies have reproached, O Lord,

wherewith they have reproached the change of Thy Christ." [1067] Now

it may with very good reason be asked whether this is spoken in the

person of those Israelites who desired that the promise made to David

might be fulfilled to them; or rather of the Christians, who are

Israelites not after the flesh but after the Spirit. [1068] This

certainly was spoken or written in the time of Ethan, from whose name

this psalm gets its title, and that was the same as the time of David's

reign; and therefore it would not have been said, "Where are Thine

ancient compassions, Lord, which Thou hast sworn unto David in Thy

truth?" unless the prophet had assumed the person of those who should

come long afterwards, to whom that time when these things were promised

to David was ancient. But it may be understood thus, that many

nations, when they persecuted the Christians, reproached them with the

passion of Christ, which Scripture calls His change, because by dying

He is made immortal. The change of Christ, according to this passage,

may also be understood to be reproached by the Israelites, because,

when they hoped He would be theirs, He was made the Saviour of the

nations; and many nations who have believed in Him by the New Testament

now reproach them who remain in the old with this: so that it is said,

"Remember, Lord, the reproach of Thy servants;" because through the

Lord's not forgetting, but rather pitying them, even they after this

reproach are to believe. But what I have put first seems to me the

most suitable meaning. For to the enemies of Christ who are reproached

with this, that Christ hath left them, turning to the Gentiles, [1069]

this speech is incongruously assigned, "Remember, Lord, the reproach of

Thy servants," for such Jews are not to be styled the servants of God;

but these words fit those who, if they suffered great humiliations

through persecution for the name of Christ, could call to mind that an

exalted kingdom had been promised to the seed of David, and in desire

of it, could say not despairingly, but as asking, seeking, knocking,

[1070] "Where are Thine ancient compassions, Lord, which Thou swarest

unto David in Thy truth? Remember, Lord, the reproach of Thy servants,

that I have borne in my bosom of many nations;" that is, have patiently

endured in my inward parts. "That Thine enemies have reproached, O

Lord, wherewith they have reproached the change of Thy Christ," not

thinking it a change, but a consumption. [1071] But what does

"Remember, Lord," mean, but that Thou wouldst have compassion, and

wouldst for my patiently borne humiliation reward me with the

excellency which Thou swarest unto David in Thy truth? But if we

assign these words to the Jews, those servants of God who, on the

conquest of the earthly Jerusalem, before Jesus Christ was born after

the manner of men, were led into captivity, could say such things,

understanding the change of Christ, because indeed through Him was to

be surely expected, not an earthly and carnal felicity, such as

appeared during the few years of king Solomon, but a heavenly and

spiritual felicity; and when the nations, then ignorant of this through

unbelief, exulted over and insulted the people of God for being

captives, what else was this than ignorantly to reproach with the

change of Christ those who understand the change of Christ? And

therefore what follows when this psalm is concluded, "Let the blessing

of the Lord be for evermore, amen, amen," is suitable enough for the

whole people of God belonging to the heavenly Jerusalem, whether for

those things that lay hid in the Old Testament before the New was

revealed, or for those that, being now revealed in the New Testament,

are manifestly discerned to belong to Christ. For the blessing of the

Lord in the seed of David does not belong to any particular time, such

as appeared in the days of Solomon, but is for evermore to be hoped

for, in which most certain hope it is said, "Amen, amen;" for this

repetition of the word is the confirmation of that hope. Therefore

David understanding this, says in the second Book of Kings, in the

passage from which we digressed to this psalm, [1072] "Thou hast spoken

also for Thy servant's house for a great while to come." [1073]

Therefore also a little after he says, "Now begin, and bless the house

of Thy servant for evermore," etc., because the son was then about to

be born from whom his posterity should be continued to Christ, through

whom his house should be eternal, and should also be the house of God.

For it is called the house of David on account of David's race; but the

selfsame is called the house of God on account of the temple of God,

made of men, not of stones, where shall dwell for evermore the people

with and in their God, and God with and in His people, so that God may

fill His people, and the people be filled with their God, while God

shall be all in all, Himself their reward in peace who is their

strength in war. Therefore, when it is said in the words of Nathan,

"And the Lord will tell thee what an house thou shalt build for Him,"

[1074] it is afterwards said in the words of David, "For Thou, Lord

Almighty, God of Israel, hast opened the ear of Thy servant, saying, I

will build thee an house." [1075] For this house is built both by us

through living well, and by God through helping us to live well; for

"except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

[1076] And when the final dedication of this house shall take place,

then what God here says by Nathan shall be fulfilled, "And I will

appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant him, and he shall

dwell apart, and shall be troubled no more; and the son of iniquity

shall not humble him any more, as from the beginning, from the days

when I appointed judges over my people Israel." [1077]

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[1067] Ps. lxxxix. 49-51.

[1068] Rom. iii. 28, 29.

[1069] Acts xiii. 46.

[1070] Matt. vii. 7, 8.

[1071] Another reading, "consummation."

[1072] See above, chap. viii.

[1073] 2 Sam. vii. 19.

[1074] 2 Sam. vii. 8.

[1075] 2 Sam. vii. 2.

[1076] Ps. cxxvii. 1.

[1077] 2 Sam. vii. 10, 11.

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Chapter 13.--Whether the Truth of This Promised Peace Can Be Ascribed

to Those Times Passed Away Under Solomon.

Whoever hopes for this so great good in this world, and in this earth,

his wisdom is but folly. Can any one think it was fulfilled in the

peace of Solomon's reign? Scripture certainly commends that peace with

excellent praise as a shadow of that which is to come. But this

opinion is to be vigilantly opposed, since after it is said, "And the

son of iniquity shall not humble him any more," it is immediately

added, "as from the beginning, from the days in which I appointed

judges over my people Israel." [1078] For the judges were appointed

over that people from the time when they received the land of promise,

before kings had begun to be there. And certainly the son of iniquity,

that is, the foreign enemy, humbled him through periods of time in

which we read that peace alternated with wars; and in that period

longer times of peace are found than Solomon had, who reigned forty

years. For under that judge who is called Ehud there were eighty years

of peace. [1079] Be it far from us, therefore, that we should believe

the times of Solomon are predicted in this promise, much less indeed

those of any other king whatever. For none other of them reigned in

such great peace as he; nor did that nation ever at all hold that

kingdom so as to have no anxiety lest it should be subdued by enemies:

for in the very great mutability of human affairs such great security

is never given to any people, that it should not dread invasions

hostile to this life. Therefore the place of this promised peaceful

and secure habitation is eternal, and of right belongs eternally to

Jerusalem the free mother, where the genuine people of Israel shall

be: for this name is interpreted "Seeing God;" in the desire of which

reward a pious life is to be led through faith in this miserable

pilgrimage. [1080]

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[1078] 2 Sam. vii. 10-11.

[1079] Judg. iii. 30.

[1080] Israel--a prince of God; Peniel--the face of God (Gen. xxxii.

28-30).

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Chapter 14.--Of David's Concern in the Writing of the Psalms.

In the progress of the city of God through the ages, therefore, David

first reigned in the earthly Jerusalem as a shadow of that which was to

come. Now David was a man skilled in songs, who dearly loved musical

harmony, not with a vulgar delight, but with a believing disposition,

and by it served his God, who is the true God, by the mystical

representation of a great thing. For the rational and well-ordered

concord of diverse sounds in harmonious variety suggests the compact

unity of the well-ordered city. Then almost all his prophecy is in

psalms, of which a hundred and fifty are contained in what we call the

Book of Psalms, of which some will have it those only were made by

David which are in scribed with his name. But there are also some who

think none of them were made by him except those which are marked "Of

David;" but those which have in the title "For David" have been made by

others who assumed his person. Which opinion is refuted by the voice

of the Saviour Himself in the Gospel, when He says that David himself

by the Spirit said Christ was his Lord; for the 110th Psalm begins

thus, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand, until I

make Thine enemies Thy footstool." [1081] And truly that very psalm,

like many more, has in the title, not "of David," but "for David." But

those seem to me to hold the more credible opinion, who ascribe to him

the authorship of all these hundred and fifty psalms, and think that he

prefixed to some of them the names even of other men, who prefigured

something pertinent to the matter, but chose to have no man's name in

the titles of the rest, just as God inspired him in the management of

this variety, which, although dark, is not meaningless. Neither ought

it to move one not to believe this that the names of some prophets who

lived long after the times of king David are read in the inscriptions

of certain psalms in that book, and that the things said there seem to

be spoken as it were by them. Nor was the prophetic Spirit unable to

reveal to king David, when he prophesied, even these names of future

prophets, so that he might prophetically sing something which should

suit their persons; just as it was revealed to a certain prophet that

king Josiah should arise and reign after more than three hundred years,

who predicted his future deeds also along with his name. [1082]

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[1081] Ps. cx. 1, quoted in Matt. xxii. 44.

[1082] 1 Kings xiii. 2; fulfilled 2 Kings xxiii. 15-17.

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Chapter 15.--Whether All the Things Prophesied in the Psalms Concerning

Christ and His Church Should Be Taken Up in the Text of This Work.

And now I see it may be expected of me that I shall open up in this

part of this book what David may have prophesied in the Psalms

concerning the Lord Jesus Christ or His Church. But although I have

already done so in one instance, I am prevented from doing as that

expectation seems to demand, rather by the abundance than the scarcity

of matter. For the necessity of shunning prolixity forbids my setting

down all things; yet I fear lest if I select some I shall appear to

many, who know these things, to have passed by the more necessary.

Besides, the proof that is adduced ought to be supported by the context

of the whole psalm, so that at least there may be nothing against it if

everything does not support it; lest we should seem, after the fashion

of the centos, to gather for the thing we wish, as it were, verses out

of a grand poem, what shall be found to have been written not about it,

but about some other and widely different thing. But ere this could be

pointed out in each psalm, the whole of it must be expounded; and how

great a work that would be, the volumes of others, as well as our own,

in which we have done it, show well enough. Let him then who will, or

can, read these volumes, and he will find out how many and great things

David, at once king and prophet, has prophesied concerning Christ and

His Church, to wit, concerning the King and the city which He has

built.

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Chapter 16.--Of the Things Pertaining to Christ and the Church, Said

Either Openly or Tropically in the 45th Psalm.

For whatever direct and manifest prophetic utterances there may be

about anything, it is necessary that those which are tropical should be

mingled with them; which, chiefly on account of those of slower

understanding, thrust upon the more learned the laborious task of

clearing up and expounding them. Some of them, indeed, on the very

first blush, as soon as they are spoken, exhibit Christ and the Church,

although some things in them that are less intelligible remain to be

expounded at leisure. We have an example of this in that same Book of

Psalms: "My heart bubbled up a good matter: I utter my words to the

king. My tongue is the pen of a scribe, writing swiftly. Thy form is

beautiful beyond the sons of men; grace is poured out in Thy lips:

therefore God hath blessed Thee for evermore. Gird Thy sword about Thy

thigh, O Most Mighty. With Thy goodliness and Thy beauty go forward,

proceed prosperously, and reign, because of Thy truth, and meekness,

and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall lead Thee forth

wonderfully. Thy sharp arrows are most powerful: in the heart of the

king's enemies. The people shall fall under Thee. Thy throne, O God,

is for ever and ever: a rod of direction is the rod of Thy kingdom.

Thou hast loved righteousness, and hast hated iniquity: therefore God,

Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of exultation above Thy

fellows. Myrrh and drops, and cassia from Thy vestments, from the

houses of ivory: out of which the daughters of kings have delighted

Thee in Thine honor." [1083] Who is there, no matter how slow, but

must here recognize Christ whom we preach, and in whom we believe, if

he hears that He is God, whose throne is for ever and ever, and that He

is anointed by God, as God indeed anoints, not with a visible, but with

a spiritual and intelligible chrism? For who is so untaught in this

religion, or so deaf to its far and wide spread fame, as not to know

that Christ is named from this chrism, that is, from this anointing?

But when it is acknowledged that this King is Christ, let each one who

is already subject to Him who reigns because of truth, meekness, and

righteousness, inquire at his leisure into these other things that are

here said tropically: how His form is beautiful beyond the sons of

men, with a certain beauty that is the more to be loved and admired the

less it is corporeal; and what His sword, arrows, and other things of

that kind may be, which are set down, not properly, but tropically.

Then let him look upon His Church, joined to her so great Husband in

spiritual marriage and divine love, of which it is said in these words

which follow, "The queen stood upon Thy right hand in gold-embroidered

vestments, girded about with variety. Hearken, O daughter, and look,

and incline thine ear; forget also thy people, and thy father's house.

Because the King hath greatly desired thy beauty; for He is the Lord

thy God. And the daughters of Tyre shall worship Him with gifts; the

rich among the people shall entreat Thy face. The daughter of the King

has all her glory within, in golden fringes, girded about with

variety. The virgins shall be brought after her to the King: her

neighbors shall be brought to Thee. They shall be brought with

gladness and exultation: they shall be led into the temple of the

King. Instead of thy fathers, sons shall be born to thee: thou shalt

establish them as princes over all the earth. They shall be mindful of

thy name in every generation and descent. Therefore shall the people

acknowledge thee for evermore, even for ever and ever." [1084] I do

not think any one is so stupid as to believe that some poor woman is

here praised and described, as the spouse, to wit, of Him to whom it is

said, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a rod of direction is

the rod of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated

iniquity: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of

exultation above Thy fellows;" [1085] that is, plainly, Christ above

Christians. For these are His fellows, out of the unity and concord of

whom in all nations that queen is formed, as it is said of her in

another psalm, "The city of the great King." [1086] The same is Sion

spiritually, which name in Latin is interpreted speculatio (discovery);

for she descries the great good of the world to come, because her

attention is directed thither. In the same way she is also Jerusalem

spiritually, of which we have already said many things. Her enemy is

the city of the devil, Babylon, which is interpreted "confusion." Yet

out of this Babylon this queen is in all nations set free by

regeneration, and passes from the worst to the best King,--that is,

from the devil to Christ. Wherefore it is said to her, "Forget thy

people and thy father's house." Of this impious city those also are a

portion who are Israelites only in the flesh and not by faith, enemies

also of this great King Himself, and of His queen. For Christ, having

come to them, and been slain by them, has the more become the King of

others, whom He did not see in the flesh. Whence our King Himself says

through the prophecy of a certain psalm, "Thou wilt deliver me from the

contradictions of the people; Thou wilt make me head of the nations. A

people whom I have not known hath served me: in the hearing of the ear

it hath obeyed me." [1087] Therefore this people of the nations,

which Christ did not know in His bodily presence, yet has believed in

that Christ as announced to it; so that it might be said of it with

good reason, "In the hearing of the ear it hath obeyed me," for "faith

is by hearing." [1088] This people, I say, added to those who are the

true Israelites both by the flesh and by faith, is the city of God,

which has brought forth Christ Himself according to the flesh, since He

was in these Israelites only. For thence came the Virgin Mary, in whom

Christ assumed flesh that He might be man. Of which city another psalm

says, "Mother Sion, shall a man say, and the man is made in her, and

the Highest Himself hath founded her." [1089] Who is this Highest,

save God? And thus Christ, who is God, before He became man through

Mary in that city, Himself founded it by the patriarchs and prophets.

As therefore was said by prophecy so long before to this queen, the

city of God, what we already can see fulfilled, "Instead of thy

fathers, sons are born to thee; thou shall make them princes over all

the earth;" [1090] so out of her sons truly are set up even her fathers

[princes] through all the earth, when the people, coming together to

her, confess to her with the confession of eternal praise for ever and

ever. Beyond doubt, whatever interpretation is put on what is here

expressed somewhat darkly in figurative language, ought to be in

agreement with these most manifest things.

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[1083] Ps. xlv. 1-9.

[1084] Ps. xlv. 9-17.

[1085] Ps. xlv. 7.

[1086] Ps. xlviii. 2.

[1087] Ps. xviii. 43.

[1088] Rom. x. 5.

[1089] Ps. lxxxvii. 5.

[1090] Ps. xlv. 16.

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Chapter 17.--Of Those Things in the 110th Psalm Which Relate to the

Priesthood of Christ, and in the 22d to His Passion.

Just as in that psalm also where Christ is most openly proclaimed as

Priest, even as He is here as King, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit

Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."

[1091] That Christ sits on the right hand of God the Father is

believed, not seen; that His enemies also are put under His feet doth

not yet appear; it is being done, [therefore] it will appear at last:

yea, this is now believed, afterward it shall be seen. But what

follows, "The Lord will send forth the rod of Thy strength out of Sion,

and rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies," [1092] is so clear, that

to deny it would imply not merely unbelief and mistake, but downright

impudence. And even enemies must certainly confess that out of Sion

has been sent the law of Christ which we call the gospel, and

acknowledge as the rod of His strength. But that He rules in the midst

of His enemies, these same enemies among whom He rules themselves bear

witness, gnashing their teeth and consuming away, and having power to

do nothing against Him. Then what he says a little after, "The Lord

hath sworn and will not repent," [1093] by which words He intimates

that what He adds is immutable, "Thou art a priest for ever after the

order of Melchizedek," [1094] who is permitted to doubt of whom these

things are said, seeing that now there is nowhere a priesthood and

sacrifice after the order of Aaron, and everywhere men offer under

Christ as the Priest, which Melchizedek showed when he blessed

Abraham? Therefore to these manifest things are to be referred, when

rightly understood, those things in the same psalm that are set down a

little more obscurely, and we have already made known in our popular

sermons how these things are to be rightly understood. So also in that

where Christ utters through prophecy the humiliation of His passion,

saying, "They pierced my hands and feet; they counted all my bones.

Yea, they looked and stared at me." [1095] By which words he

certainly meant His body stretched out on the cross, with the hands and

feet pierced and perforated by the striking through of the nails, and

that He had in that way made Himself a spectacle to those who looked

and stared. And he adds, "They parted my garments among them, and over

my vesture they cast lots." [1096] How this prophecy has been

fulfilled the Gospel history narrates. Then, indeed, the other things

also which are said there less openly are rightly understood when they

agree with those which shine with so great clearness; especially

because those things also which we do not believe as past, but survey

as present, are beheld by the whole world, being now exhibited just as

they are read of in this very psalm as predicted so long before. For

it is there said a little after, "All the ends of the earth shall

remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations

shall worship before Him; for the kingdom is the Lord's, and He shall

rule the nations."

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[1091] Ps. cx. 1.

[1092] Ps. cx. 2.

[1093] Ps. cx. 4.

[1094] Ps. cx. 4.

[1095] Ps. xxii. 16, 17.

[1096] Ps. xxii. 18, 19.

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Chapter 18.--Of the 3d, 41st, 15th, and 68th Psalms, in Which the Death

and Resurrection of the Lord are Prophesied.

About His resurrection also the oracles of the Psalms are by no means

silent. For what else is it that is sung in His person in the 3d

Psalm, "I laid me down and took a sleep, [and] I awaked, for the Lord

shall sustain me?" [1097] Is there perchance any one so stupid as to

believe that the prophet chose to point it out to us as something great

that He had slept and risen up, unless that sleep had been death, and

that awaking the resurrection, which behoved to be thus prophesied

concerning Christ? For in the 41st Psalm also it is shown much more

clearly, where in the person of the Mediator, in the usual way, things

are narrated as if past which were prophesied as yet to come, since

these things which were yet to come were in the predestination and

foreknowledge of God as if they were done, because they were certain.

He says, "Mine enemies speak evil of me; When shall he die, and his

name perish? And if he came in to see me, his heart spake vain

things: he gathered iniquity to himself. He went out of doors, and

uttered it all at once. Against me all mine enemies whisper together:

against me do they devise evil. They have planned an unjust thing

against me. Shall not he that sleeps also rise again?" [1098] These

words are certainly so set down here that he may be understood to say

nothing else than if he said, Shall not He that died recover life

again? The previous words clearly show that His enemies have mediated

and planned His death, and that this was executed by him who came in to

see, and went out to betray. But to whom does not Judas here occur,

who, from being His disciple, became His betrayer? Therefore because

they were about to do what they had plotted,--that is, were about to

kill Him,--he, to show them that with useless malice they were about to

kill Him who should rise again, so adds this verse, as if he said, What

vain thing are you doing? What will be your crime will be my sleep.

"Shall not He that sleeps also rise again?" And yet he indicates in

the following verses that they should not commit so great an impiety

with impunity, saying, "Yea, the man of my peace in whom I trusted, who

ate my bread, hath enlarged the heel over me;" [1099] that is, hath

trampled me under foot. "But Thou," he saith, "O Lord, be merciful

unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them." [1100] Who can

now deny this who sees the Jews, after the passion and resurrection of

Christ, utterly rooted up from their abodes by warlike slaughter and

destruction? For, being slain by them, He has risen again, and has

requited them meanwhile by temporary discipline, save that for those

who are not corrected He keeps it in store for the time when He shall

judge the quick and the dead. [1101] For the Lord Jesus Himself, in

pointing out that very man to the apostles as His betrayer, quoted this

very verse of this psalm, and said it was fulfilled in Himself: "He

that ate my bread enlarged the heel over me." But what he says, "In

whom I trusted," does not suit the head but the body. For the Saviour

Himself was not ignorant of him concerning whom He had already said

before, "One of you is a devil." [1102] But He is wont to assume the

person of His members, and to ascribe to Himself what should be said of

them, because the head and the body is one Christ; [1103] whence that

saying in the Gospel, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me to eat."

[1104] Expounding which, He says, "Since ye did it to one of the

least of mine, ye did it to me." [1105] Therefore He said that He had

trusted, because his disciples then had trusted concerning Judas; for

he was numbered with the apostles. [1106]

But the Jews do not expect that the Christ whom they expect will die;

therefore they do not think ours to be Him whom the law and the

prophets announced, but feign to themselves I know not whom of their

own, exempt from the suffering of death. Therefore, with wonderful

emptiness and blindness, they contend that the words we have set down

signify, not death and resurrection, but sleep and awaking again. But

the 16th Psalm also cries to them, "Therefore my heart is jocund, and

my tongue hath exulted; moreover, my flesh also shall rest in hope:

for Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt Thou give Thine

Holy One to see corruption." [1107] Who but He that rose again the

third day could say his flesh had rested in this hope; that His soul,

not being left in hell, but speedily returning to it, should revive it,

that it should not be corrupted as corpses are wont to be, which they

can in no wise say of David the prophet and king? The 68th Psalm also

cries out, "Our God is the God of Salvation: even of the Lord the exit

was by death." [1108] What could be more openly said? For the God of

salvation is the Lord Jesus, which is interpreted Saviour, or Healing

One. For this reason this name was given, when it was said before He

was born of the virgin: "Thou shall bring forth a Son, and shalt call

His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." [1109]

Because His blood was shed for the remission of their sins, it behoved

Him to have no other exit from this life than death. Therefore, when

it had been said, "Our God is the God of salvation," immediately it was

added, "Even of the Lord the exit was by death," in order to show that

we were to be saved by His dying. But that saying is marvellous, "Even

of the Lord," as if it was said, Such is that life of mortals, that not

even the Lord Himself could go out of it otherwise save through death.

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[1097] Ps. iii. 5.

[1098] Ps. xli. 5-8.

[1099] Ps. xli. 9.

[1100] Ps. xli. 10.

[1101] 2 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Pet. iv. 5.

[1102] John vi. 70.

[1103] 1 Cor. xii. 12.

[1104] Matt. xxv. 35.

[1105] Matt. xxv. 40.

[1106] Acts. i. 17.

[1107] Ps. xvi. 9, 10.

[1108] Ps. lxviii. 20.

[1109] Matt. i. 21.

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Chapter 19.--Of the 69th Psalm, in Which the Obstinate Unbelief of the

Jews is Declared.

But when the Jews will not in the least yield to the testimonies of

this prophecy, which are so manifest, and are also brought by events to

so clear and certain a completion, certainly that is fulfilled in them

which is written in that psalm which here follows. For when the things

which pertain to His passion are prophetically spoken there also in the

person of Christ, that is mentioned which is unfolded in the Gospel:

"They gave me gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar

for drink." [1110] And as it were after such a feast and dainties in

this way given to Himself, presently He brings in [these words]: "Let

their table become a trap before them, and a retribution, and an

offence: let their eyes be dimmed that they see not, and their back be

always bowed down," [1111] etc. Which things are not spoken as wished

for, but are predicted under the prophetic form of wishing. What

wonder, then, if those whose eyes are dimmed that they see not do not

see these manifest things? What wonder if those do not look up at

heavenly things whose back is always bowed down that they may grovel

among earthly things? For these words transferred from the body

signify mental faults. Let these things which have been said about the

Psalms, that is, about king David's prophecy, suffice, that we may keep

within some bound. But let those readers excuse us who knew them all

before; and let them not complain about those perhaps stronger proofs

which they know or think I have passed by.

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[1110] Ps. lxix. 21; Matt. xxvii. 34, 48.

[1111] Ps. lxix. 22, 23.

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Chapter 20.--Of David's Reign and Merit; And of His Son Solomon, and

that Prophecy Relating to Christ Which is Found Either in Those Books

Which are Joined to Those Written by Him, or in Those Which are

Indubitably His.

David therefore reigned in the earthly Jerusalem, a son of the heavenly

Jerusalem, much praised by the divine testimony; for even his faults

are overcome by great piety, through the most salutary humility of his

repentance, that he is altogether one of those of whom he himself says,

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are

covered." [1112] After him Solomon his son reigned over the same

whole people, who, as was said before, began to reign while his father

was still alive. This man, after good beginnings, made a bad end. For

indeed "prosperity, which wears out the minds of the wise," [1113] hurt

him more than that wisdom profited him, which even yet is and shall

hereafter be renowned, and was then praised far and wide. He also is

found to have prophesied in his books, of which three are received as

of canonical authority, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs.

But it has been customary to ascribe to Solomon other two, of which one

is called Wisdom, the other Ecclesiasticus, on account of some

resemblance of style,--but the more learned have no doubt that they are

not his; yet of old the Church, especially the Western, received them

into authority,--in the one of which, called the Wisdom of Solomon, the

passion of Christ is most openly prophesied. For indeed His impious

murderers are quoted as saying, "Let us lie in wait for the righteous,

for he is unpleasant to us, and contrary to our works; and he

upbraideth us with our transgressions of the law, and objecteth to our

disgrace the transgressions of our education. He professeth to have

the knowledge of God, and he calleth himself the Son of God. He was

made to reprove our thoughts. He is grievous for as even to behold;

for his life is unlike other men's and his ways are different. We are

esteemed of him as counterfeits; and he abstaineth from our ways as

from filthiness. He extols the latter end of the righteous; and

glorieth that he hath God for his Father. Let us see, therefore, if

his words be true; and let us try what shall happen to him, and we

shall know what shall be the end of him. For if the righteous be the

Son of God, He will undertake for him, and deliver him out of the hand

of those that are against him. Let us put him to the question with

contumely and torture, that we may know his reverence, and prove his

patience. Let us condemn him to the most shameful death; for by His

own sayings He shall be respected. These things did they imagine, and

were mistaken; for their own malice hath quite blinded them." [1114]

But in Ecclesiasticus the future faith of the nations is predicted in

this manner: "Have mercy upon us, O God, Ruler of all, and send Thy

fear upon all the nations: lift up Thine hand over the strange

nations, and let them see Thy power. As Thou wast sanctified in us

before them, so be Thou sanctified in them before us, and let them

acknowledge Thee, according as we also have acknowledged Thee; for

there is not a God beside Thee, O Lord." [1115] We see this prophecy

in the form of a wish and prayer fulfilled through Jesus Christ. But

the things which are not written in the canon of the Jews cannot be

quoted against their contradictions with so great validity.

But as regards those three books which it is evident are Solomon's and

held canonical by the Jews, to show what of this kind may be found in

them pertaining to Christ and the Church demands a laborious

discussion, which, if now entered on, would lengthen this work unduly.

Yet what we read in the Proverbs of impious men saying, "Let us

unrighteously hide in the earth the righteous man; yea, let us swallow

him up alive as hell, and let us take away his memory from the earth:

let us seize his precious possession," [1116] is not so obscure that it

may not be understood, without laborious exposition, of Christ and His

possession the Church. Indeed, the gospel parable about the wicked

husbandmen shows that our Lord Jesus Himself said something like it:

"This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be

ours." [1117] In like manner also that passage in this same book, on

which we have already touched [1118] when we were speaking of the

barren woman who hath born seven, must soon after it was uttered have

come to be understood of only Christ and the Church by those who knew

that Christ was the Wisdom of God. "Wisdom hath builded her an house,

and hath set up seven pillars; she hath sacrificed her victims, she

hath mingled her wine in the bowl; she hath also furnished her table.

She hath sent her servants summoning to the bowl with excellent

proclamation, saying, Who is simple, let him turn aside to me. And to

the void of sense she hath said, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of

the wine which I have mingled for you." [1119] Here certainly we

perceive that the Wisdom of God, that is, the Word co-eternal with the

Father, hath builded Him an house, even a human body in the virgin

womb, and hath subjoined the Church to it as members to a head, hath

slain the martyrs as victims, hath furnished a table with wine and

bread, where appears also the priesthood after the order of

Melchizedek, and hath called the simple and the void of sense, because,

as saith the apostle, "He hath chosen the weak things of this world

that He might confound the things which are mighty." [1120] Yet to

these weak ones she saith what follows, "Forsake simplicity, that ye

may live; and seek prudence, that ye may have life." [1121] But to be

made partakers of this table is itself to begin to have life. For when

he says in another book, which is called Ecclesiastes, "There is no

good for a man, except that he should eat and drink," [1122] what can

he be more credibly understood to say, than what belongs to the

participation of this table which the Mediator of the New Testament

Himself, the Priest after the order of Melchizedek, furnishes with His

own body and blood? For that sacrifice has succeeded all the

sacrifices of the Old Testament, which were slain as a shadow of that

which was to come; wherefore also we recognize the voice in the 40th

Psalm as that of the same Mediator speaking through prophesy,

"Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; but a body hast Thou

perfected for me." [1123] Because, instead of all these sacrifices

and oblations, His body is offered, and is served up to the partakers

of it. For that this Ecclesiastes, in this sentence about eating and

drinking, which he often repeats, and very much commends, does not

savor the dainties of carnal pleasures, is made plain enough when he

says, "It is better to go into the house of mourning than to go into

the house of feasting." [1124] And a little after He says, "The heart

of the wise is in the house of mourning, and the heart of the simple in

the house of feasting." [1125] But I think that more worthy of

quotation from this book which relates to both cities, the one of the

devil, the other of Christ, and to their kings, the devil and Christ:

"Woe to thee, O land," he says, "when thy king is a youth, and thy

princes eat in the morning! Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is

the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in season, in fortitude, and not

in confusion!" [1126] He has called the devil a youth, because of the

folly and pride, and rashness and unruliness, and other vices which are

wont to abound at that age; but Christ is the Son of nobles, that is,

of the holy patriarchs, of those belonging to the free city, of whom He

was begotten in the flesh. The princes of that and other cities are

eaters in the morning, that is, before the suitable hour, because they

do not expect the seasonable felicity, which is the true, in the world

to come, desiring to be speedily made happy with the renown of this

world; but the princes of the city of Christ patiently wait for the

time of a blessedness that is not fallacious. This is expressed by the

words, "in fortitude, and not in confusion," because hope does not

deceive them; of which the apostle says, "But hope maketh not ashamed."

[1127] A psalm also saith, "For they that hope in Thee shall not be

put to shame." [1128] But now the Song of Songs is a certain

spiritual pleasure of holy minds, in the marriage of that King and

Queen-city, that is, Christ and the Church. But this pleasure is

wrapped up in allegorical veils, that the Bridegroom may be more

ardently desired, and more joyfully unveiled, and may appear; to whom

it is said in this same song, "Equity hath delighted Thee; [1129] and

the bride who there hears, "Charity is in thy delights." [1130] We

pass over many things in silence, in our desire to finish this work.

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[1112] Ps. xxxii. 1.

[1113] Sallust, Bell. Cat. c. xi.

[1114] Wisd. ii. 12-21.

[1115] Ecclus. xxxvi. 1-5.

[1116] Prov. i. 11-13.

[1117] Matt. xxi. 38.

[1118] Ch. 4.

[1119] Prov. ix. 1-5 (ver. 1 is quoted above in ch. 4).

[1120] 1 Cor. i. 27.

[1121] Prov. ix. 6.

[1122] Eccles. ii. 24; iii. 13; v. 18; viii. 15.

[1123] Ps. xl. 6.

[1124] Eccles. vii. 2.

[1125] Eccles. vii. 4.

[1126] Eccles. x. 16, 17.

[1127] Rom. v. 5.

[1128] Ps. lxix. 6?

[1129] Cant. i. 4.

[1130] Cant. vii. 6.

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Chapter 21.--Of the Kings After Solomon, Both in Judah and Israel.

The other kings of the Hebrews after Solomon are scarcely found to have

prophesied, through certain enigmatic words or actions of theirs, what

may pertain to Christ and the Church, either in Judah or Israel; for so

were the parts of that people styled, when, on account of Solomon's

offence, from the time of Rehoboam his son, who succeeded him in the

kingdom, it was divided by God as a punishment. The ten tribes,

indeed, which Jeroboam the servant of Solomon received, being appointed

the king in Samaria, were distinctively called Israel, although this

had been the name of that whole people; but the two tribes, namely, of

Judah and Benjamin, which for David's sake, lest the kingdom should be

wholly wrenched from his race, remained subject to the city of

Jerusalem, were called Judah, because that was the tribe whence David

sprang. But Benjamin, the other tribe which, as was said, belonged to

the same kingdom, was that whence Saul sprang before David. But these

two tribes together, as was said, were called Judah, and were

distinguished by this name from Israel which was the distinctive title

of the ten tribes under their own king. For the tribe of Levi, because

it was the priestly one, bound to the servitude of God, not of the

kings, was reckoned the thirteenth. For Joseph, one of the twelve sons

of Israel, did not, like the others, form one tribe, but two, Ephraim

and Manasseh. Yet the tribe of Levi also belonged more to the kingdom

of Jerusalem, where was the temple of God whom it served. On the

division of the people, therefore, Rehoboam, son of Solomon, reigned in

Jerusalem as the first king of Judah, and Jeroboam, servant of Solomon,

in Samaria as king of Israel. And when Rehoboam wished as a tyrant to

pursue that separated part with war, the people were prohibited from

fighting with their brethren by God, who told them through a prophet

that He had done this; whence it appeared that in this matter there had

been no sin either of the king or people of Israel, but the

accomplished will of God the avenger. When this was known, both parts

settled down peaceably, for the division made was not religious but

political.

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Chapter 22.--Of Jeroboam, Who Profaned the People Put Under Him by the

Impiety of Idolatry, Amid Which, However, God Did Not Cease to Inspire

the Prophets, and to Guard Many from the Crime of Idolatry.

But Jeroboam king of Israel, with perverse mind, not believing in God,

whom he had proved true in promising and giving him the kingdom, was

afraid lest, by coming to the temple of God which was in Jerusalem,

where, according to the divine law, that whole nation was to come in

order to sacrifice, the people should be seduced from him, and return

to David's line as the seed royal; and set up idolatry in his kingdom,

and with horrible impiety beguiled the people, ensnaring them to the

worship of idols with himself. Yet God did not altogether cease to

reprove by the prophets, not only that king, but also his successors

and imitators in his impiety, and the people too. For there the great

and illustrious prophet Elijah and Elisha his disciple arose, who also

did many wonderful works. Even there, when Elijah said, "O Lord, they

have slain Thy prophets, they have digged down Thine altars; and I am

left alone, and they seek my life," it was answered that seven thousand

men were there who had not bowed the knee to Baal. [1131]

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[1131] 1 Kings xix. 10, 14, 15.

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Chapter 23.--Of the Varying Condition of Both the Hebrew Kingdoms,

Until the People of Both Were at Different Times Led into Captivity,

Judah Being Afterwards Recalled into His Kingdom, Which Finally Passed

into the Power of the Romans.

So also in the kingdom of Judah pertaining to Jerusalem prophets were

not lacking even in the times of succeeding kings, just as it pleased

God to send them, either for the prediction of what was needful, or for

correction of sin and instruction in righteousness; [1132] for there,

too, although far less than in Israel, kings arose who grievously

offended God by their impieties, and, along with their people, who were

like them, were smitten with moderate scourges. The no small merits of

the pious kings there are praised indeed. But we read that in Israel

the kings were, some more, others less, yet all wicked. Each part,

therefore, as the divine providence either ordered or permitted, was

both lifted up by prosperity and weighed down by adversity of various

kinds; and it was afflicted not only by foreign, but also by civil wars

with each other, in order that by certain existing causes the mercy or

anger of God might be manifested; until, by His growing indignation,

that whole nation was by the conquering Chaldeans not only overthrown

in its abode, but also for the most part transported to the lands of

the Assyrians,--first, that part of the thirteen tribes called Israel,

but afterwards Judah also, when Jerusalem and that most noble temple

was cast down,--in which lands it rested seventy years in captivity.

Being after that time sent forth thence, they rebuilt the overthrown

temple. And although very many stayed in the lands of the strangers,

yet the kingdom no longer had two separate parts, with different kings

over each, but in Jerusalem there was one prince over them; and at

certain times, from every direction wherever they were, and from

whatever place they could, they all came to the temple of God which was

there. Yet not even then were they without foreign enemies and

conquerors; yea, Christ found them tributaries of the Romans.

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[1132] 2 Tim. iii. 16.

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Chapter 24.--Of the Prophets, Who Either Were the Last Among the Jews,

or Whom the Gospel History Reports About the Time of Christ's Nativity.

But in that whole time after they returned from Babylon, after Malachi,

Haggai, and Zechariah, who then prophesied, and Ezra, they had no

prophets down to the time of the Saviour's advent except another

Zechariah, the father of John, and Elisabeth his wife, when the

nativity of Christ was already close at hand; and when He was already

born, Simeon the aged, and Anna a widow, and now very old; and, last of

all, John himself, who, being a young man, did not predict that Christ,

now a young man, was to come, but by prophetic knowledge pointed Him

out though unknown; for which reason the Lord Himself says, "The law

and the prophets were until John." [1133] But the prophesying of

these five is made known to us in the gospel, where the virgin mother

of our Lord herself is also found to have prophesied before John. But

this prophecy of theirs the wicked Jews do not receive; but those

innumerable persons received it who from them believed the gospel. For

then truly Israel was divided in two, by that division which was

foretold by Samuel the prophet to king Saul as immutable. But even the

reprobate Jews hold Malachi, Haggai, Zechariah, and Ezra as the last

received into canonical authority. For there are also writings of

these, as of others, who being but a very few in the great multitude of

prophets, have written those books which have obtained canonical

authority, of whose predictions it seems good to me to put in this work

some which pertain to Christ and His Church; and this, by the Lord's

help, shall be done more conveniently in the following book, that we

may not further burden this one, which is already too long.

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[1133] Matt. xi. 13.

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Book XVIII.

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Argument--Augustin traces the parallel courses of the earthly and

heavenly cities from the time of Abraham to the end of the world; and

alludes to the oracles regarding Christ, both those uttered by the

Sibyls, and those of the sacred prophets who wrote after the foundation

of Rome, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Micah, and their successors.

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Chapter 1.--Of Those Things Down to the Times of the Saviour Which Have

Been Discussed in the Seventeen Books.

I Promised to write of the rise, progress, and appointed end of the two

cities, one of which is God's, the other this world's, in which, so far

as mankind is concerned, the former is now a stranger. But first of

all I undertook, so far as His grace should enable me, to refute the

enemies of the city of God, who prefer their gods to Christ its

founder, and fiercely hate Christians with the most deadly malice. And

this I have done in the first ten books. Then, as regards my threefold

promise which I have just mentioned, I have treated distinctly, in the

four books which follow the tenth, of the rise of both cities. After

that, I have proceeded from the first man down to the flood in one

book, which is the fifteenth of this work; and from that again down to

Abraham our work has followed both in chronological order. From the

patriarch Abraham down to the time of the Israelite kings, at which we

close our sixteenth book, and thence down to the advent of Christ

Himself in the flesh, to which period the seventeenth book reaches, the

city of God appears from my way of writing to have run its course

alone; whereas it did not run its course alone in this age, for both

cities, in their course amid mankind, certainly experienced chequered

times together just as from the beginning. But I did this in order

that, first of all, from the time when the promises of God began to be

more clear, down to the virgin birth of Him in whom those things

promised from the first were to be fulfilled, the course of that city

which is God's might be made more distinctly apparent, without

interpolation of foreign matter from the history of the other city,

although down to the revelation of the new covenant it ran its course,

not in light, but in shadow. Now, therefore, I think fit to do what I

passed by, and show, so far as seems necessary, how that other city ran

its course from the times of Abraham, so that attentive readers may

compare the two.

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Chapter 2.--Of the Kings and Times of the Earthly City Which Were

Synchronous with the Times of the Saints, Reckoning from the Rise of

Abraham.

The society of mortals spread abroad through the earth everywhere, and

in the most diverse places, although bound together by a certain

fellowship of our common nature, is yet for the most part divided

against itself, and the strongest oppress the others, because all

follow after their own interests and lusts, while what is longed for

either suffices for none, or not for all, because it is not the very

thing. For the vanquished succumb to the victorious, preferring any

sort of peace and safety to freedom itself; so that they who chose to

die rather than be slaves have been greatly wondered at. For in almost

all nations the very voice of nature somehow proclaims, that those who

happen to be conquered should choose rather to be subject to their

conquerors than to be killed by all kinds of warlike destruction. This

does not take place without the providence of God, in whose power it

lies that any one either subdues or is subdued in war; that some are

endowed with kingdoms, others made subject to kings. Now, among the

very many kingdoms of the earth into which, by earthly interest or

lust, society is divided (which we call by the general name of the city

of this world), we see that two, settled and kept distinct from each

other both in time and place, have grown far more famous than the rest,

first that of the Assyrians, then that of the Romans. First came the

one, then the other. The former arose in the east, and, immediately on

its close, the latter in the west. I may speak of other kingdoms and

other kings as appendages of these.

Ninus, then, who succeeded his father Belus, the first king of Assyria,

was already the second king of that kingdom when Abraham was born in

the land of the Chaldees. There was also at that time a very small

kingdom of Sicyon, with which, as from an ancient date, that most

universally learned man Marcus Varro begins, in writing of the Roman

race. For from these kings of Sicyon he passes to the Athenians, from

them to the Latins, and from these to the Romans. Yet very little is

related about these kingdoms, before the foundation of Rome, in

comparison with that of Assyria. For although even Sallust, the Roman

historian, admits that the Athenians were very famous in Greece, yet he

thinks they were greater in fame than in fact. For in speaking of them

he says, "The deeds of the Athenians, as I think, were very great and

magnificent, but yet somewhat less than reported by fame. But because

writers of great genius arose among them, the deeds of the Athenians

were celebrated throughout the world as very great. Thus the virtue of

those who did them was held to be as great as men of transcendent

genius could represent it to be by the power of laudatory words."

[1134] This city also derived no small glory from literature and

philosophy, the study of which chiefly flourished there. But as

regards empire, none in the earliest times was greater than the

Assyrian, or so widely extended. For when Ninus the son of Belus was

king, he is reported to have subdued the whole of Asia, even to the

boundaries of Libya, which as to number is called the third part, but

as to size is found to be the half of the whole world. The Indians in

the eastern regions were the only people over whom he did not reign;

but after his death Semiramis his wife made war on them. Thus it came

to pass that all the people and kings in those countries were subject

to the kingdom and authority of the Assyrians, and did whatever they

were commanded. Now Abraham was born in that kingdom among the

Chaldees, in the time of Ninus. But since Grecian affairs are much

better known to us than Assyrian, and those who have diligently

investigated the antiquity of the Roman nation's origin have followed

the order of time through the Greeks to the Latins, and from them to

the Romans, who themselves are Latins, we ought on this account, where

it is needful, to mention the Assyrian kings, that it may appear how

Babylon, like a first Rome, ran its course along with the city of God,

which is a stranger in this world. But the things proper for insertion

in this work in comparing the two cities, that is, the earthly and

heavenly, ought to be taken mostly from the Greek and Latin kingdoms,

where Rome herself is like a second Babylon.

At Abraham's birth, then, the second kings of Assyria and Sicyon

respectively were Ninus and Europs, the first having been Belus and

�gialeus. But when God promised Abraham, on his departure from

Babylonia, that he should become a great nation, and that in his seed

all nations of the earth should be blessed, the Assyrians had their

seventh king, the Sicyons their fifth; for the son of Ninus reigned

among them after his mother Semiramis, who is said to have been put to

death by him for attempting to defile him by incestuously lying with

him. Some think that she founded Babylon, and indeed she may have

founded it anew. But we have told, in the sixteenth book, when or by

whom it was founded. Now the son of Ninus and Semiramis, who succeeded

his mother in the kingdom, is also called Ninus by some, but by others

Ninias, a patronymic word. Telexion then held the kingdom of the

Sicyons. In his reign times were quiet and joyful to such a degree,

that after his death they worshipped him as a god by offering

sacrifices and by celebrating games, which are said to have been first

instituted on this occasion.

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[1134] Sallust, Bell. Cat. c. 8.

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Chapter 3.--What Kings Reigned in Assyria and Sicyon When, According to

the Promise, Isaac Was Born to Abraham in His Hundredth Year, and When

the Twins Esau and Jacob Were Born of Rebecca to Isaac in His Sixtieth

Year.

In his times also, by the promise of God, Isaac, the son of Abraham,

was born to his father when he was a hundred years old, of Sarah his

wife, who, being barren and old, had already lost hope of issue.

Aralius was then the fifth king of the Assyrians. To Isaac himself, in

his sixtieth year, were born twin-sons, Esau and Jacob, whom Rebecca

his wife bore to him, their grandfather Abraham, who died on completing

a hundred and seventy years, being still alive, and reckoning his

hundred and sixtieth year. [1135] At that time there reigned as the

seventh kings,--among the Assyrians, that more ancient Xerxes, who was

also called Bal�us; and among the Sicyons, Thuriachus, or, as some

write his name, Thurimachus. The kingdom of Argos, in which Inachus

reigned first, arose in the time of Abraham's grandchildren. And I

must not omit what Varro relates, that the Sicyons were also wont to

sacrifice at the tomb of their seventh king Thuriachus. In the reign

of Armamitres in Assyria and Leucippus in Sicyon as the eighth kings,

and of Inachus as the first in Argos, God spoke to Isaac, and promised

the same two things to him as to his father,--namely, the land of

Canaan to his seed, and the blessing of all nations in his seed. These

same things were promised to his son, Abraham's grandson, who was at

first called Jacob, afterwards Israel, when Belocus was the ninth king

of Assyria, and Phoroneus, the son of Inachus, reigned as the second

king of Argos, Leucippus still continuing king of Sicyon. In those

times, under the Argive king Phoroneus, Greece was made more famous by

the institution of certain laws and judges. On the death of Phoroneus,

his younger brother Phegous built a temple at his tomb, in which he was

worshipped as God, and oxen were sacrificed to him. I believe they

thought him worthy of so great honor, because in his part of the

kingdom (for their father had divided his territories between them, in

which they reigned during his life) he had founded chapels for the

worship of the gods, and had taught them to measure time, by months and

years, and to that extent to keep count and reckoning of events. Men

still uncultivated, admiring him for these novelties, either fancied he

was, or resolved that he should be made, a god after his death. Io

also is said to have been the daughter of Inachus, who was afterwards

called Isis, when she was worshipped in Egypt as a great goddess;

although others write that she came as a queen out of Ethiopia, and

because she ruled extensively and justly, and instituted for her

subjects letters and many useful things, such divine honor was given

her there after she died, that if any one said she had been human, he

was charged with a capital crime.

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[1135] In the Hebrew text, Gen. xxv. 7, a hundred and seventy-five

years.

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Chapter 4.--Of the Times of Jacob and His Son Joseph.

In the reign of Bal�us, the ninth king of Assyria, and Mesappus, the

eighth of Sicyon, who is said by some to have been also called Cephisos

(if indeed the same man had both names, and those who put the other

name in their writings have not rather confounded him with another

man), while Apis was third king of Argos, Isaac died, a hundred and

eighty years old, and left his twin-sons a hundred and twenty years

old. Jacob, the younger of these, belonged to the city of God about

which we write (the elder being wholly rejected), and had twelve sons,

one of whom, called Joseph, was sold by his brothers to merchants going

down to Egypt, while his grandfather Isaac was still alive. But when

he was thirty years of age, Joseph stood before Pharaoh, being exalted

out of the humiliation he endured, because, in divinely interpreting

the king's dreams, he foretold that there would be seven years of

plenty, the very rich abundance of which would be consumed by seven

other years of famine that should follow. On this account the king

made him ruler over Egypt, liberating him from prison, into which he

had been thrown for keeping his chastity intact; for he bravely

preserved it from his mistress, who wickedly loved him, and told lies

to his weakly credulous master, and did not consent to commit adultery

with her, but fled from her, leaving his garment in her hands when she

laid hold of him. In the second of the seven years of famine Jacob

came down into Egypt to his son with all he had, being a hundred and

thirty years old, as he himself said in answer to the king's question.

Joseph was then thirty-nine, if we add seven years of plenty and two of

famine to the thirty he reckoned when honored by the king.

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Chapter 5.--Of Apis King of Argos, Whom the Egyptians Called Serapis,

and Worshipped with Divine Honors.

In these times Apis king of Argos crossed over into Egypt in ships,

and, on dying there, was made Serapis, the chief god of all the

Egyptians. Now Varro gives this very ready reason why, after his

death, he was called, not Apis, but Serapis. The ark in which he was

placed when dead, which every one now calls a sarcophagus, was then

called in Greek soros, and they began to worship him when buried in it

before his temple was built; and from Soros and Apis he was called

first [Sorosapis, or] Sorapis, and then Serapis, by changing a letter,

as easily happens. It was decreed regarding him also, that whoever

should say he had been a man should be capitally punished. And since

in every temple where Isis and Serapis were worshipped there was also

an image which, with finger pressed on the lips, seemed to warn men to

keep silence, Varro thinks this signifies that it should be kept secret

that they had been human. But that bull which, with wonderful folly,

deluded Egypt nourished with abundant delicacies in honor of him, was

not called Serapis, but Apis, because they worshipped him alive without

a sarcophagus. On the death of that bull, when they sought and found a

calf of the same color,--that is, similarly marked with certain white

spots,--they believed it was something miraculous, and divinely

provided for them. Yet it was no great thing for the demons, in order

to deceive them, to show to a cow when she was conceiving and pregnant

the image of such a bull, which she alone could see, and by it attract

the breeding passion of the mother, so that it might appear in a bodily

shape in her young, just as Jacob so managed with the spotted rods that

the sheep and goats were born spotted. For what men can do with real

colors and substances, the demons can very easily do by showing unreal

forms to breeding animals.

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Chapter 6.--Who Were Kings of Argos, and of Assyria, When Jacob Died in

Egypt.

Apis, then, who died in Egypt, was not the king of Egypt, but of

Argos. He was succeeded by his son Argus, from whose name the land was

called Argos and the people Argives, for under the earlier kings

neither the place nor the nation as yet had this name. While he then

reigned over Argos, and Eratus over Sicyon, and Bal�us still remained

king of Assyria, Jacob died in Egypt a hundred and forty-seven years

old, after he had, when dying, blessed his sons and his grandsons by

Joseph, and prophesied most plainly of Christ, saying in the blessing

of Judah, "A prince shall not fail out of Judah, nor a leader from his

thighs, until those things come which are laid up for him; and He is

the expectation of the nations." [1136] In the reign of Argus, Greece

began to use fruits, and to have crops of corn in cultivated fields,

the seed having been brought from other countries. Argus also began to

be accounted a god after his death, and was honored with a temple and

sacrifices. This honor was conferred in his reign, before being given

to him, on a private individual for being the first to yoke oxen in the

plough. This was one Homogyrus, who was struck by lightning.

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[1136] Gen. xlix. 10.

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Chapter 7.--Who Were Kings When Joseph Died in Egypt.

In the reign of Mamitus, the twelfth king of Assyria, and Plemn�us, the

eleventh of Sicyon, while Argus still reigned over the Argives, Joseph

died in Egypt a hundred and ten years old. After his death, the people

of God, increasing wonderfully, remained in Egypt a hundred and

forty-five years, in tranquillity at first, until those who knew Joseph

were dead. Afterward, through envy of their increase, and the

suspicion that they would at length gain their freedom, they were

oppressed with persecutions and the labors of intolerable servitude,

amid which, however, they still grew, being multiplied with God-given

fertility. During this period the same kingdoms continued in Assyria

and Greece.

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Chapter 8.--Who Were Kings When Moses Was Born, and What Gods Began to

Be Worshipped Then.

When Saphrus reigned as the fourteenth king of Assyria, and Orthopolis

as the twelfth of Sicyon, and Criasus as the fifth of Argos, Moses was

born in Egypt, by whom the people of God were liberated from the

Egyptian slavery, in which they behoved to be thus tried that they

might desire the help of their Creator. Some have thought that

Prometheus lived during the reign of the kings now named. He is

reported to have formed men out of clay, because he was esteemed the

best teacher of wisdom; yet it does not appear what wise men there were

in his days. His brother Atlas is said to have been a great

astrologer; and this gave occasion for the fable that he held up the

sky, although the vulgar opinion about his holding up the sky appears

rather to have been suggested by a high mountain named after him.

Indeed, from those times many other fabulous things began to be

invented in Greece; yet, down to Cecrops king of Athens, in whose reign

that city received its name, and in whose reign God brought His people

out of Egypt by Moses, only a few dead heroes are reported to have been

deified according to the vain superstition of the Greeks. Among these

were Melantomice, the wife of king Criasus, and Phorbas their son, who

succeeded his father as sixth king of the Argives, and Iasus, son of

Triopas, their seventh king, and their ninth king, Sthenelas, or

Stheneleus, or Sthenelus,--for his name is given differently by

different authors. In those times also, Mercury, the grandson of Atlas

by his daughter Maia, is said to have lived, according to the common

report in books. He was famous for his skill in many arts, and taught

them to men, for which they resolved to make him, and even believed

that he deserved to be, a god after death. Hercules is said to have

been later, yet belonging to the same period; although some, whom I

think mistaken, assign him an earlier date than Mercury. But at

whatever time they were born, it is agreed among grave historians, who

have committed these ancient things to writing, that both were men, and

that they merited divine honors from mortals because they conferred on

them many benefits to make this life more pleasant to them. Minerva

was far more ancient than these; for she is reported to have appeared

in virgin age in the times of Ogyges at the lake called Triton, from

which she is also styled Tritonia, the inventress truly of many works,

and the more readily believed to be a goddess because her origin was so

little known. For what is sung about her having sprung from the head

of Jupiter belongs to the region of poetry and fable, and not to that

of history and real fact. And historical writers are not agreed when

Ogyges flourished, in whose time also a great flood occurred,--not that

greatest one from which no man escaped except those who could get into

the ark, for neither Greek nor Latin history knew of it, yet a greater

flood than that which happened afterward in Deucalion's time. For

Varro begins the book I have already mentioned at this date, and does

not propose to himself, as the starting-point from which he may arrive

at Roman affairs, anything more ancient than the flood of Ogyges, that

is, which happened in the time of Ogyges. Now our writers of

chronicles--first Eusebius, and afterwards Jerome, who entirely follow

some earlier historians in this opinion--relate that the flood of

Ogyges happened more than three hundred years after, during the reign

of Phoroneus, the second king of Argos. But whenever he may have

lived, Minerva was already worshipped as a goddess when Cecrops reigned

in Athens, in whose reign the city itself is reported to have been

rebuilt or founded.

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Chapter 9.--When the City of Athens Was Founded, and What Reason Varro

Assigns for Its Name.

Athens certainly derived its name from Minerva, who in Greek is called

'Athene, and Varro points out the following reason why it was so

called. When an olive-tree suddenly appeared there, and water burst

forth in another place, these prodigies moved the king to send to the

Delphic Apollo to inquire what they meant and what he should do. He

answered that the olive signified Minerva, the water Neptune, and that

the citizens had it in their power to name their city as they chose,

after either of these two gods whose signs these were. On receiving

this oracle, Cecrops convoked all the citizens of either sex to give

their vote, for it was then the custom in those parts for the women

also to take part in public deliberations. When the multitude was

consulted, the men gave their votes for Neptune, the women for Minerva;

and as the women had a majority of one, Minerva conquered. Then

Neptune, being enraged, laid waste the lands of the Athenians, by

casting up the waves of the sea; for the demons have no difficulty in

scattering any waters more widely. The same authority said, that to

appease his wrath the women should be visited by the Athenians with the

three-fold punishment--that they should no longer have any vote; that

none of their children should be named after their mothers; and that no

one should call them Athenians. Thus that city, the mother and nurse

of liberal doctrines, and of so many and so great philosophers, than

whom Greece had nothing more famous and noble, by the mockery of demons

about the strife of their gods, a male and female, and from the victory

of the female one through the women, received the name of Athens; and,

on being damaged by the vanquished god, was compelled to punish the

very victory of the victress, fearing the waters of Neptune more than

the arms of Minerva. For in the women who were thus punished, Minerva,

who had conquered, was conquered too, and could not even help her

voters so far that, although the right of voting was henceforth lost,

and the mothers could not give their names to the children, they might

at least be allowed to be called Athenians, and to merit the name of

that goddess whom they had made victorious over a male god by giving

her their votes. What and how much could be said about this, if we had

not to hasten to other things in our discourse, is obvious.

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Chapter 10.--What Varro Reports About the Term Areopagus, and About

Deucalion's Flood.

Marcus Varro, however, is not willing to credit lying fables against

the gods, lest he should find something dishonoring to their majesty;

and therefore he will not admit that the Areopagus, the place where the

Apostle Paul disputed with the Athenians, got this name because Mars,

who in Greek is called AAres, when he was charged with the crime of

homicide, and was judged by twelve gods in that field, was acquitted by

the sentence of six; because it was the custom, when the votes were

equal, to acquit rather than condemn. Against this opinion, which is

much most widely published, he tries, from the notices of obscure

books, to support another reason for this name, lest the Athenians

should be thought to have called it Areopagus from the words" Mars" and

"field," [1137] as if it were the field of Mars, to the dishonor of the

gods, forsooth, from whom he thinks lawsuits and judgments far

removed. And he asserts that this which is said about Mars is not less

false than what is said about the three goddesses, to wit, Juno,

Minerva, and Venus, whose contest for the palm of beauty, before Paris

as judge, in order to obtain the golden apple, is not only related, but

is celebrated in songs and dances amid the applause of the theatres, in

plays meant to please the gods who take pleasure in these crimes of

their own, whether real or fabled. Varro does not believe these

things, because they are incompatible with the nature of the gods and

of morality; and yet, in giving not a fabulous but a historic reason

for the name of Athens, he inserts in his books the strife between

Neptune and Minerva as to whose name should be given to that city,

which was so great that, when they contended by the display of

prodigies, even Apollo dared not judge between them when consulted;

but, in order to end the strife of the gods, just as Jupiter sent the

three goddesses we have named to Paris, so he sent them to men, when

Minerva won by the vote, and yet was defeated by the punishment of her

own voters, for she was unable to confer the title of Athenians on the

women who were her friends, although she could impose it on the men who

were her opponents. In these times, when Cranaos reigned at Athens as

the successor of Cecrops, as Varro writes, but, according to our

Eusebius and Jerome, while Cecrops himself still remained, the flood

occurred which is called Deucalion's, because it occurred chiefly in

those parts of the earth in which he reigned. But this flood did not

at all reach Egypt or its vicinity.

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[1137] Ares and pagos.

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Chapter 11.--When Moses Led the People Out of Egypt; And Who Were Kings

When His Successor Joshua the Son of Nun Died.

Moses led the people out of Egypt in the last time of Cecrops king of

Athens, when Ascatades reigned in Assyria, Marathus in Sicyon, Triopas

in Argos; and having led forth the people, he gave them at Mount Sinai

the law he received from God, which is called the Old Testament,

because it has earthly promises, and because, through Jesus Christ,

there was to be a New Testament, in which the kingdom of heaven should

be promised. For the same order behoved to be observed in this as is

observed in each man who prospers in God, according to the saying of

the apostle, "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is

natural," since, as he says, and that truly, "The first man of the

earth, is earthly; the second man, from heaven, is heavenly." [1138]

Now Moses ruled the people for forty years in the wilderness, and died

a hundred and twenty years old, after he had prophesied of Christ by

the types of carnal observances in the tabernacle, priesthood, and

sacrifices, and many other mystic ordinances. Joshua the son of Nun

succeeded Moses, and settled in the land of promise the people he had

brought in, having by divine authority conquered the people by whom it

was formerly possessed. He also died, after ruling the people

twenty-seven years after the death of Moses, when Amyntas reigned in

Assyria as the eighteenth king, Coracos as the sixteenth in Sicyon,

Danaos as the tenth in Argos, Ericthonius as the fourth in Athens.

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[1138] 1 Cor. xv. 46, 47.

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Chapter 12.--Of the Rituals of False Gods Instituted by the Kings of

Greece in the Period from Israel's Exodus from Egypt Down to the Death

of Joshua the Son of Nun.

During this period, that is, from Israel's exodus from Egypt down to

the death of Joshua the son of Nun, through whom that people received

the land of promise, rituals were instituted to the false gods by the

kings of Greece, which, by stated celebration, recalled the memory of

the flood, and of men's deliverance from it, and of that troublous life

they then led in migrating to and fro between the heights and the

plains. For even the Luperci, [1139] when they ascend and descend the

sacred path, are said to represent the men who sought the mountain

summits because of the inundation of water, and returned to the

lowlands on its subsidence. In those times, Dionysus, who was also

called Father Liber, and was esteemed a god after death, is said to

have shown the vine to his host in Attica. Then the musical games were

instituted for the Delphic Apollo, to appease his anger, through which

they thought the regions of Greece were afflicted with barrenness,

because they had not defended his temple which Danaos burnt when he

invaded those lands; for they were warned by his oracle to institute

these games. But king Ericthonius first instituted games to him in

Attica, and not to him only, but also to Minerva, in which games the

olive was given as the prize to the victors, because they relate that

Minerva was the discoverer of that fruit, as Liber was of the grape.

In those years Europa is alleged to have been carried off by Xanthus

king of Crete (to whom we find some give another name), and to have

borne him Rhadamanthus, Sarpedon, and Minos, who are more commonly

reported to have been the sons of Jupiter by the same woman. Now those

who worship such gods regard what we have said about Xanthus king of

Crete as true history; but this about Jupiter, which the poets sing,

the theatres applaud, and the people celebrate, as empty fable got up

as a reason for games to appease the deities, even with the false

ascription of crimes to them. In those times Hercules was held in

honor in Tyre, but that was not the same one as he whom we spoke of

above. In the more secret history there are said to have been several

who were called Father Liber and Hercules. This Hercules, whose great

deeds are reckoned as twelve (not including the slaughter of Ant�us the

African, because that affair pertains to another Hercules), is declared

in their books to have burned himself on Mount OEta, because he was not

able, by that strength with which he had subdued monsters, to endure

the disease under which he languished. At that time the king, or

rather tyrant Busiris, who is alleged to have been the son of Neptune

by Libya the daughter of Epaphus, is said to have offered up his guests

in sacrifice to the gods. Now it must not be believed that Neptune

committed this adultery, lest the gods should be criminated; yet such

things must be ascribed to them by the poets and in the theatres, that

they may be pleased with them. Vulcan and Minerva are said to have

been the parents of Ericthonius king of Athens, in whose last years

Joshua the son of Nun is found to have died. But since they will have

it that Minerva is a virgin, they say that Vulcan, being disturbed in

the struggle between them, poured out his seed into the earth, and on

that account the man born of it received that name; for in the Greek

language eris is "strife," and chthon "earth," of which two words

Ericthonius is a compound. Yet it must be admitted that the more

learned disprove and disown such things concerning their gods, and

declare that this fabulous belief originated in the fact that in the

temple at Athens, which Vulcan and Minerva had in common, a boy who had

been exposed was found wrapped up in the coils of a dragon, which

signified that he would become great, and, as his parents were unknown,

he was called the son of Vulcan and Minerva, because they had the

temple in common. Yet that fable accounts for the origin of his name

better than this history. But what does it matter to us? Let the one

in books that speak the truth edify religious men, and the other in

lying fables delight impure demons. Yet these religious men worship

them as gods. Still, while they deny these things concerning them they

cannot clear them of all crime, because at their demand they exhibit

plays in which the very things they wisely deny are basely done, and

the gods are appeased by these false and base things. Now, even

although the play celebrates an unreal crime of the gods, yet to

delight in the ascription of an unreal crime is a real one.

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[1139] The priests who officiated at the Lupercalia.

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Chapter 13.--What Fables Were Invented at the Time When Judges Began to

Rule the Hebrews.

After the death of Joshua the son of Nun, the people of God had judges,

in whose times they were alternately humbled by afflictions on account

of their sins, and consoled by prosperity through the compassion of

God. In those times were invented the fables about Triptolemus, who,

at the command of Ceres, borne by winged snakes, bestowed corn on the

needy lands in flying over them; about that beast the Minotaur, which

was shut up in the Labyrinth, from which men who entered its

inextricable mazes could find no exit; about the Centaurs, whose form

was a compound of horse and man; about Cerberus, the three-headed dog

of hell; about Phryxus and his sister Hellas, who fled, borne by a

winged ram; about the Gorgon, whose hair was composed of serpents, and

who turned those who looked on her into stone; about Bellerophon, who

was carried by a winged horse called Pegasus; about Amphion, who

charmed and attracted the stones by the sweetness of his harp; about

the artificer D�dalus and his son Icarus, who flew on wings they had

fitted on; about OEdipus, who compelled a certain four-footed monster

with a human face, called a sphynx, to destroy herself by casting

herself headlong, having solved the riddle she was wont to propose as

insoluble; about Ant�us, who was the son of the earth, for which

reason, on falling on the earth, he was wont to rise up stronger, whom

Hercules slew; and perhaps there are others which I have forgotten.

These fables, easily found in histories containing a true account of

events, bring us down to the Trojan war, at which Marcus Varro has

closed his second book about the race of the Roman people; and they are

so skillfully invented by men as to involve no scandal to the gods.

But whoever have pretended as to Jupiter's rape of Ganymede, a very

beautiful boy, that king Tantalus committed the crime, and the fable

ascribed it to Jupiter; or as to his impregnating Dan�e as a golden

shower, that it means that the woman's virtue was corrupted by gold:

whether these things were really done or only fabled in those days, or

were really done by others and falsely ascribed to Jupiter, it is

impossible to tell how much wickedness must have been taken for granted

in men's hearts that they should be thought able to listen to such lies

with patience. And yet they willingly accepted them, when, indeed, the

more devotedly they worshipped Jupiter, they ought the more severely to

have punished those who durst say such things of him. But they not

only were not angry at those who invented these things, but were afraid

that the gods would be angry at them if they did not act such fictions

even in the theatres. In those times Latona bore Apollo, not him of

whose oracle we have spoken above as so often consulted, but him who is

said, along with Hercules, to have fed the flocks of king Admetus; yet

he was so believed to be a god, that very many, indeed almost all, have

believed him to be the selfsame Apollo. Then also Father Liber made

war in India, and led in his army many women called Bacch�, who were

notable not so much for valor as for fury. Some, indeed, write that

this Liber was both conquered and bound and some that he was slain in

Persia, even telling where he was buried; and yet in his name, as that

of a god, the unclean demons have instituted the sacred, or rather the

sacrilegious, Bacchanalia, of the outrageous vileness of which the

senate, after many years, became so much ashamed as to prohibit them in

the city of Rome. Men believed that in those times Perseus and his

wife Andromeda were raised into heaven after their death, so that they

were not ashamed or afraid to mark out their images by constellations,

and call them by their names.

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Chapter 14.--Of the Theological Poets.

During the same period of time arose the poets, who were also called

theologues, because they made hymns about the gods; yet about such gods

as, although great men, were yet but men, or the elements of this world

which the true God made, or creatures who were ordained as

principalities and powers according to the will of the Creator and

their own merit. And if, among much that was vain and false, they sang

anything of the one true God, yet, by worshipping Him along with others

who are not gods, and showing them the service that is due to Him

alone, they did not serve Him at all rightly; and even such poets as

Orpheus, Mus�us, and Linus, were unable to abstain from dishonoring

their gods by fables. But yet these theologues worshipped the gods,

and were not worshipped as gods, although the city of the ungodly is

wont, I know not how, to set Orpheus over the sacred, or rather

sacrilegious, rites of hell. The wife of king Athamas, who was called

Ino, and her son Melicertes, perished by throwing themselves into the

sea, and were, according to popular belief, reckoned among the gods,

like other men of the same times, [among whom were] Castor and Pollux.

The Greeks, indeed, called her who was the mother of Melicertes,

Leucothea, the Latins, Matuta; but both thought her a goddess.

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Chapter 15.--Of the Fall of the Kingdom of Argos, When Picus the Son of

Saturn First Received His Father's Kingdom of Laurentum.

During those times the kingdom of Argos came to an end; being

transferred to Mycene, from which Agamemnon came, and the kingdom of

Laurentum arose, of which Picus son of Saturn was the first king, when

the woman Deborah judged the Hebrews; but it was the Spirit of God who

used her as His agent, for she was also a prophetess, although her

prophecy is so obscure that we could not demonstrate, without a long

discussion, that it was uttered concerning Christ. Now the Laurentes

already reigned in Italy, from whom the origin of the Roman people is

quite evidently derived after the Greeks; yet the kingdom of Assyria

still lasted, in which Lampares was the twenty-third king when Picus

first began to reign at Laurentum. The worshippers of such gods may

see what they are to think of Saturn the father of Picus, who deny that

he was a man; of whom some also have written that he himself reigned in

Italy before Picus his son; and Virgil in his well-known book says,

"That race indocile, and through mountains high

Dispersed, he settled, and endowed with laws,

And named their country Latium, because

Latent within their coasts he dwelt secure.

Tradition says the golden ages pure

Began when he was king." [1140]

But they regard these as poetic fancies, and assert that the father of

Picus was Sterces rather, and relate that, being a most skillful

husbandman, he discovered that the fields could be fertilized by the

dung of animals, which is called stercus from his name. Some say he

was called Stercutius. But for whatever reason they chose to call him

Saturn, it is yet certain they made this Sterces or Stercutius a god

for his merit in agriculture; and they likewise received into the

number of these gods Picus his son, whom they affirm to have been a

famous augur and warrior. Picus begot Faunus, the second king of

Laurentum; and he too is, or was, a god with them. These divine honors

they gave to dead men before the Trojan war.

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[1140] �neid, viii. 321.

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Chapter 16.--Of Diomede, Who After the Destruction of Troy Was Placed

Among the Gods, While His Companions are Said to Have Been Changed into

Birds.

Troy was overthrown, and its destruction was everywhere sung and made

well known even to boys; for it was signally published and spread

abroad, both by its own greatness and by writers of excellent style.

And this was done in the reign of Latinus the son of Faunus, from whom

the kingdom began to be called Latium instead of Laurentum. The

victorious Greeks, on leaving Troy destroyed and returning to their own

countries, were torn and crushed by divers and horrible calamities.

Yet even from among them they increased the number of their gods for

they made Diomede a god. They allege that his return home was

prevented by a divinely imposed punishment, and they prove, not by

fabulous and poetic falsehood, but by historic attestation, that his

companions were turned into birds. Yet they think that, even although

he was made a god, he could neither restore them to the human form by

his own power, nor yet obtain it from Jupiter his king, as a favor

granted to a new inhabitant of heaven. They also say that his temple

is in the island of Diomed�a, not far from Mount Garganus in Apulia,

and that these birds fly round about this temple, and worship in it

with such wonderful obedience, that they fill their beaks with water

and sprinkle it; and if Greeks, or those born of the Greek race, come

there, they are not only still, but fly to meet them; but if they are

foreigners, they fly up at their heads, and wound them with such severe

strokes as even to kill them. For they are said to be well enough

armed for these combats with their hard and large beaks.

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Chapter 17.--What Varro Says of the Incredible Transformations of Men.

In support of this story, Varro relates others no less incredible about

that most famous sorceress Circe, who changed the companions of Ulysses

into beasts, and about the Arcadians, who, by lot, swam across a

certain pool, and were turned into wolves there, and lived in the

deserts of that region with wild beasts like themselves. But if they

never fed on human flesh for nine years, they were restored to the

human form on swimming back again through the same pool. Finally, he

expressly names one Dem�netus, who, on tasting a boy offered up in

sacrifice by the Arcadians to their god Lyc�us according to their

custom, was changed into a wolf, and, being restored to his proper form

in the tenth year, trained himself as a pugilist, and was victorious at

the Olympic games. And the same historian thinks that the epithet

Lyc�us was applied in Arcadia to Pan and Jupiter for no other reason

than this metamorphosis of men into wolves, because it was thought it

could not be wrought except by a divine power. For a wolf is called in

Greek lukos, from which the name Lyc�us appears to be formed. He says

also that the Roman Luperci were as it were sprung of the seed of these

mysteries.

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Chapter 18.--What We Should Believe Concerning the Transformations

Which Seem to Happen to Men Through the Art of Demons.

Perhaps our readers expect us to say something about this so great

delusion wrought by the demons; and what shall we say but that men must

fly out of the midst of Babylon? [1141] For this prophetic precept is

to be understood spiritually in this sense, that by going forward in

the living God, by the steps of faith, which worketh by love, we must

flee out of the city of this world, which is altogether a society of

ungodly angels and men. Yea, the greater we see the power of the

demons to be in these depths, so much the more tenaciously must we

cleave to the Mediator through whom we ascend from these lowest to the

highest places. For if we should say these things are not to be

credited, there are not wanting even now some who would affirm that

they had either heard on the best authority, or even themselves

experienced, something of that kind. Indeed we ourselves, when in

Italy, heard such things about a certain region there where landladies

of inns, imbued with these wicked arts, were said to be in the habit of

giving to such travellers as they chose, or could manage, something in

a piece of cheese by which they were changed on the spot into beasts of

burden, and carried whatever was necessary, and were restored to their

own form when the work was done. Yet their mind did not become

bestial, but remained rational and human, just as Apuleius, in the

books he wrote with the title of The Golden Ass, has told, or feigned,

that it happened to his own self that, on taking poison, he became an

ass, while retaining his human mind.

These things are either false, or so extraordinary as to be with good

reason disbelieved. But it is to be most firmly believed that Almighty

God can do whatever He pleases, whether in punishing or favoring, and

that the demons can accomplish nothing by their natural power (for

their created being is itself angelic, although made malign by their

own fault), except what He may permit, whose judgments are often

hidden, but never unrighteous. And indeed the demons, if they really

do such things as these on which this discussion turns, do not create

real substances, but only change the appearance of things created by

the true God so as to make them seem to be what they are not. I cannot

therefore believe that even the body, much less the mind, can really be

changed into bestial forms and lineaments by any reason, art, or power

of the demons; but the phantasm of a man which even in thought or

dreams goes through innumerable changes may, when the man's senses are

laid asleep or overpowered, be presented to the senses of others in a

corporeal form, in some indescribable way unknown to me, so that men's

bodies themselves may lie somewhere, alive, indeed, yet with their

senses locked up much more heavily and firmly than by sleep, while that

phantasm, as it were embodied in the shape of some animal, may appear

to the senses of others, and may even seem to the man himself to be

changed, just as he may seem to himself in sleep to be so changed, and

to bear burdens; and these burdens, if they are real substances, are

borne by the demons, that men may be deceived by beholding at the same

time the real substance of the burdens and the simulated bodies of the

beasts of burden. For a certain man called Pr�stantius used to tell

that it had happened to his father in his own house, that he took that

poison in a piece of cheese, and lay in his bed as if sleeping, yet

could by no means be aroused. But he said that after a few days he as

it were woke up and related the things he had suffered as if they had

been dreams, namely, that he had been made a sumpter horse, and, along

with other beasts of burden, had carried provisions for the soldiers of

what is called the Rhoetian Legion, because it was sent to Rhoetia.

And all this was found to have taken place just as he told, yet it had

seemed to him to be his own dream. And another man declared that in

his own house at night, before he slept, he saw a certain philosopher,

whom he knew very well, come to him and explain to him some things in

the Platonic philosophy which he had previously declined to explain

when asked. And when he had asked this philosopher why he did in his

house what he had refused to do at home, he said, "I did not do it, but

I dreamed I had done it." And thus what the one saw when sleeping was

shown to the other when awake by a phantasmal image.

These things have not come to us from persons we might deem unworthy of

credit, but from informants we could not suppose to be deceiving us.

Therefore what men say and have committed to writing about the

Arcadians being often changed into wolves by the Arcadian gods, or

demons rather, and what is told in song about Circe transforming the

companions of Ulysses, [1142] if they were really done, may, in my

opinion, have been done in the way I have said. As for Diomede's

birds, since their race is alleged to have been perpetuated by constant

propagation, I believe they were not made through the metamorphosis of

men, but were slyly substituted for them on their removal, just as the

hind was for Iphigenia, the daughter of king Agamemnon. For juggleries

of this kind could not be difficult for the demons if permitted by the

judgment of God; and since that virgin was afterwards, found alive it

is easy to see that a hind had been slyly substituted for her. But

because the companions of Diomede were of a sudden nowhere to be seen,

and afterwards could nowhere be found, being destroyed by bad avenging

angels, they were believed to have been changed into those birds, which

were secretly brought there from other places where such birds were,

and suddenly substituted for them by fraud. But that they bring water

in their beaks and sprinkle it on the temple of Diomede, and that they

fawn on men of Greek race and persecute aliens, is no wonderful thing

to be done by the inward influence of the demons, whose interest it is

to persuade men that Diomede was made a god, and thus to beguile them

into worshipping many false gods, to the great dishonor of the true

God; and to serve dead men, who even in their lifetime did not truly

live, with temples, altars, sacrifices, and priests, all which, when of

the right kind, are due only to the one living and true God.

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[1141] Isa. xlviii. 20.

[1142] Virgil, Eclogue, viii. 70.

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Chapter 19.--That �neas Came into Italy When Abdon the Judge Ruled Over

the Hebrews.

After the capture and destruction of Troy, �neas, with twenty ships

laden with the Trojan relics, came into Italy, when Latinus reigned

there, Menestheus in Athens, Polyphidos in Sicyon, and Tautanos in

Assyria, and Abdon was judge of the Hebrews. On the death of Latinus,

�neas reigned three years, the same kings continuing in the above-named

places, except that Pelasgus was now king in Sicyon, and Samson was

judge of the Hebrews, who is thought to be Hercules, because of his

wonderful strength. Now the Latins made �neas one of their gods,

because at his death he was nowhere to be found. The Sabines also

placed among the gods their first king, Sancus, [Sangus], or Sanctus,

as some call him. At that time Codrus king of Athens exposed himself

incognito to be slain by the Peloponnesian foes of that city, and so

was slain. In this way, they say, he delivered his country. For the

Peloponnesians had received a response from the oracle, that they

should overcome the Athenians only on condition that they did not slay

their king. Therefore he deceived them by appearing in a poor man's

dress, and provoking them, by quarrelling, to murder him. Whence

Virgil says, "Or the quarrels of Codrus." [1143] And the Athenians

worshipped this man as a god with sacrificial honors. The fourth king

of the Latins was Silvius the son of �neas, not by Cre�sa, of whom

Ascanius the third king was born, but by Lavinia the daughter of

Latinus, and he is said to have been his posthumous child. Oneus was

the twenty-ninth king of Assyria, Melanthus the sixteenth of the

Athenians, and Eli the priest was judge of the Hebrews; and the kingdom

of Sicyon then came to an end, after lasting, it is said, for nine

hundred and fifty-nine years.

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[1143] Virgil, Eclogue, v. 11.

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Chapter 20.--Of the Succession of the Line of Kings Among the

Israelites After the Times of the Judges.

While these kings reigned in the places mentioned, the period of the

judges being ended, the kingdom of Israel next began with king Saul,

when Samuel the prophet lived. At that date those Latin kings began

who were surnamed Silvii, having that surname, in addition to their

proper name, from their predecessor, that son of �neas who was called

Silvius; just as, long afterward, the successors of C�sar Augustus were

surnamed C�sars. Saul being rejected, so that none of his issue should

reign, on his death David succeeded him in the kingdom, after he had

reigned forty years. Then the Athenians ceased to have kings after the

death of Codrus, and began to have a magistracy to rule the republic.

After David, who also reigned forty years, his son Solomon was king of

Israel, who built that most noble temple of God at Jerusalem. In his

time Alba was built among the Latins, from which thereafter the kings

began to be styled kings not of the Latins, but of the Albans, although

in the same Latium. Solomon was succeeded by his son Rehoboam, under

whom that people was divided into two kingdoms, and its separate parts

began to have separate kings.

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Chapter 21.--Of the Kings of Latium, the First and Twelfth of Whom,

�neas and Aventinus, Were Made Gods.

After �neas, whom they deified, Latium had eleven kings, none of whom

was deified. But Aventinus, who was the twelfth after �neas, having

been laid low in war, and buried in that hill still called by his name,

was added to the number of such gods as they made for themselves.

Some, indeed, were unwilling to write that he was slain in battle, but

said he was nowhere to be found, and that it was not from his name, but

from the alighting of birds, that hill was called Aventinus. [1144]

After this no god was made in Latium except Romulus the founder of

Rome. But two kings are found between these two, the first of whom I

shall describe in the Virgilian verse:

"Next came that Procas, glory of the Trojan race." [1145]

That greatest of all kingdoms, the Assyrian, had its long duration

brought to a close in his time, the time of Rome's birth drawing nigh.

For the Assyrian empire was transferred to the Medes after nearly

thirteen hundred and five years, if we include the reign of Belus, who

begot Ninus, and, content with a small kingdom, was the first king

there. Now Procas reigned before Amulius. And Amulius had made his

brother Numitor's daughter, Rhea by name, who was also called Ilia, a

vestal virgin, who conceived twin sons by Mars, as they will have it,

in that way honoring or excusing her adultery, adding as a proof that a

she-wolf nursed the infants when exposed. For they think this kind of

beast belongs to Mars so that the she-wolf is believed to have given

her teats to the infants, because she knew they were the sons of Mars

her lord; although there are not wanting persons who say that when the

crying babes lay exposed, they were first of all picked up by I know

not what harlot, and sucked her breasts first (now harlots were called

lup�, she-wolves, from which their vile abodes are even yet called

lupanaria), and that afterwards they came into the hands of the

shepherd Faustulus, and were nursed by Acca his wife. Yet what wonder

is it, if, to rebuke the king who had cruelly ordered them to be thrown

into the water, God was pleased, after divinely delivering them from

the water, to succor, by means of a wild beast giving milk, these

infants by whom so great a city was to be founded? Amulius was

succeeded in the Latian kingdom by his brother Numitor, the grandfather

of Romulus; and Rome was founded in the first year of this Numitor, who

from that time reigned along with his grandson Romulus.

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[1144] Varro, De Lingua Latina, v. 43.

[1145] �neid,vi. 767.

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Chapter 22.--That Rome Was Founded When the Assyrian Kingdom Perished,

at Which Time Hezekiah Reigned in Judah.

To be brief, the city of Rome was founded, like another Babylon, and as

it were the daughter of the former Babylon, by which God was pleased to

conquer the whole world, and subdue it far and wide by bringing it into

one fellowship of government and laws. For there were already powerful

and brave peoples and nations trained to arms, who did not easily

yield, and whose subjugation necessarily involved great danger and

destruction as well as great and horrible labor. For when the Assyrian

kingdom subdued almost all Asia, although this was done by fighting,

yet the wars could not be very fierce or difficult, because the nations

were as yet untrained to resist, and neither so many nor so great as

afterward; forasmuch as, after that greatest and indeed universal

flood, when only eight men escaped in Noah's ark, not much more than a

thousand years had passed when Ninus subdued all Asia with the

exception of India. But Rome did not with the same quickness and

facility wholly subdue all those nations of the east and west which we

see brought under the Roman empire, because, in its gradual increase,

in whatever direction it was extended, it found them strong and

warlike. At the time when Rome was founded, then, the people of Israel

had been in the land of promise seven hundred and eighteen years. Of

these years twenty-seven belong to Joshua the son of Nun, and after

that three hundred and twenty-nine to the period of the judges. But

from the time when the kings began to reign there, three hundred and

sixty-two years had passed. And at that time there was a king in Judah

called Ahaz, or, as others compute, Hezekiah his successor, the best

and most pious king, who it is admitted reigned in the times of

Romulus. And in that part of the Hebrew nation called Israel, Hoshea

had begun to reign.

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Chapter 23.--Of the Erythr�an Sibyl, Who is Known to Have Sung Many

Things About Christ More Plainly Than the Other Sibyls. [1146]

Some say the Erythr�an sibyl prophesied at this time. Now Varro

declares there were many sibyls, and not merely one. This sibyl of

Erythr� certainly wrote some things concerning Christ which are quite

manifest, and we first read them in the Latin tongue in verses of bad

Latin, and unrhythmical, through the unskillfulness, as we afterwards

learned, of some interpreter unknown to me. For Flaccianus, a very

famous man, who was also a proconsul, a man of most ready eloquence and

much learning, when we were speaking about Christ, produced a Greek

manuscript, saying that it was the prophecies of the Erythr�an sibyl,

in which he pointed out a certain passage which had the initial letters

of the lines so arranged that these words could be read in them:

'Iesous Christos Theou uios soter, which means, "Jesus Christ the Son

of God, the Saviour." And these verses, of which the initial letters

yield that meaning, contain what follows as translated by some one into

Latin in good rhythm:

I Judgment shall moisten the earth with the sweat of its

standard,

E Ever enduring, behold the King shall come through the ages,

S Sent to be here in the flesh, and Judge at the last of the world.

O O God, the believing and faithless alike shall behold Thee

U Uplifted with saints, when at last the ages are ended.

S Seated before Him are souls in the flesh for His judgment.

Ch Hid in thick vapors, the while desolate lieth the earth.

R Rejected by men are the idols and long hidden treasures;

E Earth is consumed by the fire, and it searcheth the ocean and

heaven;

I Issuing forth, it destroyeth the terrible portals of hell.

S Saints in their body and soul freedom and light shall inherit;

T Those who are guilty shall burn in fire and brimstone for ever.

O Occult actions revealing, each one shall publish his secrets;

S Secrets of every man's heart God shall reveal in the light.

Th Then shall be weeping and wailing, yea, and gnashing of teeth;

E Eclipsed is the sun, and silenced the stars in their

chorus.

O Over and gone is the splendor of moonlight, melted the heaven,

U Uplifted by Him are the valleys, and cast down the mountains.

U Utterly gone among men are distinctions of lofty and lowly.

I Into the plains rush the hills, the skies and oceans are mingled.

O Oh, what an end of all things! earth broken in pieces shall perish;

S . . . . Swelling together at once shall the waters and

flames flow in rivers.

S Sounding the archangel's trumpet shall peal down from

heaven,

O Over the wicked who groan in their guilt and their manifold

sorrows.

T Trembling, the earth shall be opened, revealing chaos and

hell.

E Every king before God shall stand in that day to be judged.

R Rivers of fire and brimstone shall fall from the heavens.

In these Latin verses the meaning of the Greek is correctly given,

although not in the exact order of the lines as connected with the

initial letters; for in three of them, the fifth, eighteenth, and

nineteenth, where the Greek letter U occurs, Latin words could not be

found beginning with the corresponding letter, and yielding a suitable

meaning. So that, if we note down together the initial letters of all

the lines in our Latin translation except those three in which we

retain the letter U in the proper place, they will express in five

Greek words this meaning, "Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Saviour."

And the verses are twenty-seven, which is the cube of three. For three

times three are nine; and nine itself, if tripled, so as to rise from

the superficial square to the cube, comes to twenty-seven. But if you

join the initial letters of these five Greek words, 'Iesous Christos

Theou uios soter, which mean, "Jesus Christ the Son of God, the

Saviour," they will make the word ichdus, that is, "fish," in which

word Christ is mystically understood, because He was able to live, that

is, to exist, without sin in the abyss of this mortality as in the

depth of waters. [1147]

But this sibyl, whether she is the Erythr�an, or, as some rather

believe, the Cum�an, in her whole poem, of which this is a very small

portion, not only has nothing that can relate to the worship of the

false or feigned gods, but rather speaks against them and their

worshippers in such a way that we might even think she ought to be

reckoned among those who belong to the city of God. Lactantius also

inserted in his work the prophecies about Christ of a certain sibyl, he

does not say which. But I have thought fit to combine in a single

extract, which may seem long, what he has set down in many short

quotations. She says, "Afterward He shall come into the injurious

hands of the unbelieving, and they will give God buffets with profane

hands, and with impure mouth will spit out envenomed spittle; but He

will with simplicity yield His holy back to stripes. And He will hold

His peace when struck with the fist, that no one may find out what

word, or whence, He comes to speak to hell; and He shall be crowned

with a crown of thorns. And they gave Him gall for meat, and vinegar

for His thirst: they will spread this table of inhospitality. For

thou thyself, being foolish, hast not understood thy God, deluding the

minds of mortals, but hast both crowned Him with thorns and mingled for

Him bitter gall. But the veil of the temple shall be rent; and at

midday it shall be darker than night for three hours. And He shall die

the death, taking sleep for three days; and then returning from hell,

He first shall come to the light, the beginning of the resurrection

being shown to the recalled." Lactantius made use of these sibylline

testimonies, introducing them bit by bit in the course of his

discussion as the things he intended to prove seemed to require, and we

have set them down in one connected series, uninterrupted by comment,

only taking care to mark them by capitals, if only the transcribers do

not neglect to preserve them hereafter. Some writers, indeed, say that

the Erythr�an sibyl was not in the time of Romulus, but of the Trojan

war.

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[1146] The Sibylline Oracles are a collection of prophecies and

religious teachings in Greek hexameter under the assumed authority and

inspiration of a Sibyl, i.e., a female prophet. They are partly of

heathen, partly of Jewish-Christian origin. They were used by the

fathers against the heathen as genuine prophecies without critical

discrimination, and they appear also in the famous Dies ir� alongside

with David as witnesses of the future judgment ("teste David cum

Sibylla.") They were edited by Alexander, Paris, 2d. ed. 1869, and by

Friedlieb (in Greek and German), Leipzig, 1852. Comp. Ewald: Ueber

Entstehung, Inhalt und Werth der sibyll. B�cher, 1858, and Sch�rer,

Geschichte der j�d. Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu (Leipzig, 1885), ii. �

33, pp. 700 sqq., Engl. transl. (Hist. of the Jews in the times of

Jesus. Edinburgh and New York, 1886), vol. iii. 271 sqq.--P.S.]

[1147] [Hence the fish was a favorite symbol of the ancient

Christians. See Schaff, Church Hist. (revised ed.), vol. ii. 279

sq.--P.S.]

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Chapter 24.--That the Seven Sages Flourished in the Reign of Romulus,

When the Ten Tribes Which Were Called Israel Were Led into Captivity by

the Chaldeans, and Romulus, When Dead, Had Divine Honors Conferred on

Him.

While Romulus reigned, Thales the Milesian is said to have lived, being

one of the seven sages, who succeeded the theological poets, of whom

Orpheus was the most renowned, and were called Sophoi, that is, sages.

During that time the ten tribes, which on the division of the people

were called Israel, were conquered by the Chaldeans and led captive

into their lands, while the two tribes which were called Judah, and had

the seat of their kingdom in Jerusalem, remained in the land of Judea.

As Romulus, when dead, could nowhere be found, the Romans, as is

everywhere notorious, placed him among the gods,--a thing which by that

time had already ceased to be done, and which was not done afterwards

till the time of the C�sars, and then not through error, but in

flattery; so that Cicero ascribes great praises to Romulus, because he

merited such honors not in rude and unlearned times, when men were

easily deceived, but in times already polished and learned, although

the subtle and acute loquacity of the philosophers had not yet

culminated. But although the later times did not deify dead men, still

they did not cease to hold and worship as gods those deified of old;

nay, by images, which the ancients never had, they even increased the

allurements of vain and impious superstition, the unclean demons

effecting this in their heart, and also deceiving them by lying

oracles, so that even the fabulous crimes of the gods, which were not

once imagined by a more polite age, were yet basely acted in the plays

in honor of these same false deities. Numa reigned after Romulus; and

although he had thought that Rome would be better defended the more

gods there were, yet on his death he himself was not counted worthy of

a place among them, as if it were supposed that he had so crowded

heaven that a place could not be found for him there. They report that

the Samian sibyl lived while he reigned at Rome, and when Manasseh

began to reign over the Hebrews,--an impious king, by whom the prophet

Isaiah is said to have been slain.

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Chapter 25.--What Philosophers Were Famous When Tarquinius Priscus

Reigned Over the Romans, and Zedekiah Over the Hebrews, When Jerusalem

Was Taken and the Temple Overthrown.

When Zedekiah reigned over the Hebrews, and Tarquinius Priscus, the

successor of Ancus Martius, over the Romans, the Jewish people was led

captive into Babylon, Jerusalem and the temple built by Solomon being

overthrown. For the prophets, in chiding them for their iniquity and

impiety, predicted that these things should come to pass, especially

Jeremiah, who even stated the number of years. Pittacus of Mitylene,

another of the sages, is reported to have lived at that time. And

Eusebius writes that, while the people of God were held captive in

Babylon, the five other sages lived, who must be added to Thales, whom

we mentioned above, and Pittacus, in order to make up the seven. These

are Solon of Athens, Chilo of Laced�mon, Periander of Corinth,

Cleobulus of Lindus, and Bias of Priene. These flourished after the

theological poets, and were called sages, because they excelled other

men in a certain laudable line of life, and summed up some moral

precepts in epigrammatic sayings. But they left posterity no literary

monuments, except that Solon is alleged to have given certain laws to

the Athenians, and Thales was a natural philosopher, and left books of

his doctrine in short proverbs. In that time of the Jewish captivity,

Anaximander, Anaximenes, and Xenophanes, the natural philosophers,

flourished. Pythagoras also lived then, and at this time the name

philosopher was first used.

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Chapter 26.--That at the Time When the Captivity of the Jews Was

Brought to an End, on the Completion of Seventy Years, the Romans Also

Were Freed from Kingly Rule.

At this time, Cyrus king of Persia, who also ruled the Chaldeans and

Assyrians, having somewhat relaxed the captivity of the Jews, made

fifty thousand of them return in order to rebuild the temple. They

only began the first foundations and built the altar; but, owing to

hostile invasions, they were unable to go on, and the work was put off

to the time of Darius. During the same time also those things were

done which are written in the book of Judith, which, indeed, the Jews

are said not to have received into the canon of the Scriptures. Under

Darius king of Persia, then, on the completion of the seventy years

predicted by Jeremiah the prophet, the captivity of the Jews was

brought to an end, and they were restored to liberty. Tarquin then

reigned as the seventh king of the Romans. On his expulsion, they also

began to be free from the rule of their kings. Down to this time the

people of Israel had prophets; but, although they were numerous, the

canonical writings of only a few of them have been preserved among the

Jews and among us. In closing the previous book, I promised to set

down something in this one about them, and I shall now do so.

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Chapter 27.--Of the Times of the Prophets Whose Oracles are Contained

in Books and Who Sang Many Things About the Call of the Gentiles at the

Time When the Roman Kingdom Began and the Assyrian Came to an End.

In order that we may be able to consider these times, let us go back a

little to earlier times. At the beginning of the book of the prophet

Hosea, who is placed first of twelve, it is written, "The word of the

Lord which came to Hosea in the days of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz, and

Hezekiah, kings of Judah." [1148] Amos also writes that he prophesied

in the days of Uzziah, and adds the name of Jeroboam king of Israel,

who lived at the same time. [1149] Isaiah the son of Amos--either the

above-named prophet, or, as is rather affirmed, another who was not a

prophet, but was called by the same name--also puts at the head of his

book these four kings named by Hosea, saying by way of preface that he

prophesied in their days. [1150] Micah also names the same times as

those of his prophecy, after the days of Uzziah; [1151] for he names

the same three kings as Hosea named,--Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. We

find from their own writings that these men prophesied

contemporaneously. To these are added Jonah in the reign of Uzziah,

and Joel in that of Jotham, who succeeded Uzziah. But we can find the

date of these two prophets in the chronicles, [1152] not in their own

writings, for they say nothing about it themselves. Now these days

extend from Procas king of the Latins, or his predecessor Aventinus,

down to Romulus king of the Romans, or even to the beginning of the

reign of his successor Numa Pompilius. Hezekiah king of Judah

certainly reigned till then. So that thus these fountains of prophecy,

as I may call them, burst forth at once during those times when the

Assyrian kingdom failed and the Roman began; so that, just as in the

first period of the Assyrian kingdom Abraham arose, to whom the most

distinct promises were made that all nations should be blessed in his

seed, so at the beginning of the western Babylon, in the time of whose

government Christ was to come in whom these promises were to be

fulfilled, the oracles of the prophets were given not only in spoken

but in written words, for a testimony that so great a thing should come

to pass. For although the people of Israel hardly ever lacked prophets

from the time when they began to have kings, these were only for their

own use, not for that of the nations. But when the more manifestly

prophetic Scripture began to be formed, which was to benefit the

nations too, it was fitting that it should begin when this city was

founded which was to rule the nations.

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[1148] Hos. i. 1.

[1149] Amos i. 1.

[1150] Isa. i. 1. Isaiah's father was Amoz, a different name.

[1151] Mic. i. 1.

[1152] The chronicles of Eusebius and Jerome.

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Chapter 28.--Of the Things Pertaining to the Gospel of Christ Which

Hosea and Amos Prohesied.

The prophet Hosea speaks so very profoundly that it is laborious work

to penetrate his meaning. But, according to promise, we must insert

something from his book. He says, "And it shall come to pass that in

the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there they

shall be called the sons of the living God." [1153] Even the apostles

understood this as a prophetic testimony of the calling of the nations

who did not formerly belong to God; and because this same people of the

Gentiles is itself spiritually among the children of Abraham, and for

that reason is rightly called Israel, therefore he goes on to say, "And

the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered

together in one, and shall appoint themselves one headship, and shall

ascend from the earth." [1154] We should but weaken the savor of this

prophetic oracle if we set ourselves to expound it. Let the reader but

call to mind that cornerstone and those two walls of partition, the one

of the Jews, the other of the Gentiles, [1155] and he will recognize

them, the one under the term sons of Judah, the other as sons of

Israel, supporting themselves by one and the same headship, and

ascending from the earth. But that those carnal Israelites who are now

unwilling to believe in Christ shall afterward believe, that is, their

children shall (for they themselves, of course, shall go to their own

place by dying), this same prophet testifies, saying, "For the children

of Israel shall abide many days without a king, without a prince,

without a sacrifice, without an altar, without a priesthood, without

manifestations." [1156] Who does not see that the Jews are now thus?

But let us hear what he adds: "And afterward shall the children of

Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and

shall be amazed at the Lord and at His goodness in the latter days."

[1157] Nothing is clearer than this prophecy, in which by David, as

distinguished by the title of king, Christ is to be understood, "who is

made," as the apostle says, "of the seed of David according to the

flesh." [1158] This prophet has also foretold the resurrection of

Christ on the third day, as it behoved to be foretold, with prophetic

loftiness, when he says, "He will heal us after two days, and in the

third day we shall rise again." [1159] In agreement with this the

apostle says to us, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things

which are above." [1160] Amos also prophesies thus concerning such

things: "Prepare thee, that thou mayst invoke thy God, O Israel; for

lo, I am binding the thunder, and creating the spirit, and announcing

to men their Christ." [1161] And in another place he says, "In that

day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and build

up the breaches thereof: and I will raise up his ruins, and will build

them up again as in the days of old: that the residue of men may

inquire for me, and all the nations upon whom my name is invoked, saith

the Lord that doeth this." [1162]

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[1153] Hos. i. 10.

[1154] Hos. i. 11.

[1155] Gal. ii. 14-20.

[1156] Hos. iii. 4.

[1157] Hos. iii. 5.

[1158] Rom. i. 3.

[1159] Hos. vi. 2.

[1160] Col. iii. 1.

[1161] Amos iv. 12, 13.

[1162] Amos ix. 11, 12; Acts xv. 15-17.

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Chapter 29.--What Things are Predicted by Isaiah Concerning Christ and

the Church.

The prophecy of Isaiah is not in the book of the twelve prophets, who

are called the minor from the brevity of their writings, as compared

with those who are called the greater prophets because they published

larger volumes. Isaiah belongs to the latter, yet I connect him with

the two above named, because he prophesied at the same time. Isaiah,

then, together with his rebukes of wickedness, precepts of

righteousness, and predictions of evil, also prophesied much more than

the rest about Christ and the Church, that is, about the King and that

city which he founded; so that some say he should be called an

evangelist rather than a prophet. But, in order to finish this work, I

quote only one out of many in this place. Speaking in the person of

the Father, he says, "Behold, my servant shall understand, and shall be

exalted and glorified very much. As many shall be astonished at Thee."

[1163] This is about Christ.

But let us now hear what follows about the Church. He says, "Rejoice,

O barren, thou that barest not; break forth and cry, thou that didst

not travail with child: for many more are the children of the desolate

than of her that has an husband." [1164] But these must suffice; and

some things in them ought to be expounded; yet I think those parts

sufficient which are so plain that even enemies must be compelled

against their will to understand them.

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[1163] Isa. lii. 13; liii. 13. Augustin quotes these passages in full.

[1164] Isa. liv. 1-5.

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Chapter 30.--What Micah, Jonah, and Joel Prophesied in Accordance with

the New Testament.

The prophet Micah, representing Christ under the figure of a great

mountain, speaks thus: "It shall come to pass in the last days, that

the manifested mountain of the Lord shall be prepared on the tops of

the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people

shall hasten unto it. Many nations shall go, and shall say, Come, let

us go up into the mountain of the Lord, and into the house of the God

of Jacob; and He will show us His way, and we will go in His paths:

for out of Zion shall proceed the law, and the word of the Lord out of

Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong

nations afar off." [1165] This prophet predicts the very place in

which Christ was born, saying, "And thou, Bethlehem, of the house of

Ephratah, art the least that can be reckoned among the thousands of

Judah; out of thee shall come forth unto me a leader, to be the prince

in Israel; and His going forth is from the beginning, even from the

days of eternity. Therefore will He give them [up] even until the time

when she that travaileth shall bring forth; and the remnant of His

brethren shall be converted to the sons of Israel. And He shall stand,

and see, and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, and in the

dignity of the name of the Lord His God: for now shall He be magnified

even to the utmost of the earth." [1166]

The prophet Jonah, not so much by speech as by his own painful

experience, prophesied Christ's death and resurrection much more

clearly than if he had proclaimed them with his voice. For why was he

taken into the whale's belly and restored on the third day, but that he

might be a sign that Christ should return from the depths of hell on

the third day?

I should be obliged to use many words in explaining all that Joel

prophesies in order to make clear those that pertain to Christ and the

Church. But there is one passage I must not pass by, which the

apostles also quoted when the Holy Spirit came down from above on the

assembled believers according to Christ's promise. He says, "And it

shall come to pass after these things, that I will pour out my Spirit

upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and

your old men shall dream, and your young men shall see visions: and

even on my servants and mine handmaids in those days will I pour out my

Spirit." [1167]

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[1165] Mic. iv. 1-3.

[1166] Mic. v. 2-4.

[1167] Joel ii. 28, 29.

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Chapter 31.--Of the Predictions Concerning the Salvation of the World

in Christ, in Obadiah, Nahum, and Habakkuk.

The date of three of the minor prophets, Obadiah, Nahum, and Habakkuk,

is neither mentioned by themselves nor given in the chronicles of

Eusebius and Jerome. For although they put Obadiah with Micah, yet

when Micah prophesied does not appear from that part of their writings

in which the dates are noted. And this, I think, has happened through

their error in negligently copying the works of others. But we could

not find the two others now mentioned in the copies of the chronicles

which we have; yet because they are contained in the canon, we ought

not to pass them by.

Obadiah, so far as his writings are concerned, the briefest of all the

prophets, speaks against Idumea, that is, the nation of Esau, that

reprobate elder of the twin sons of Isaac and grandsons of Abraham.

Now if, by that form of speech in which a part is put for the whole, we

take Idumea as put for the nations, we may understand of Christ what he

says among other things, "But upon Mount Sion shall be safety, and

there shall be a Holy One." [1168] And a little after, at the end of

the same prophecy, he says, "And those who are saved again shall come

up out of Mount Sion, that they may defend Mount Esau, and it shall be

a kingdom to the Lord." [1169] It is quite evident this was fulfilled

when those saved again out of Mount Sion--that is, the believers in

Christ from Judea, of whom the apostles are chiefly to be

acknowledged--went up to defend Mount Esau. How could they defend it

except by making safe, through the preaching of the gospel, those who

believed that they might be "delivered from the power of darkness and

translated into the kingdom of God?" [1170] This he expressed as an

inference, adding, "And it shall be to the Lord a kingdom." For Mount

Sion signifies Judea, where it is predicted there shall be safety, and

a Holy One, that is, Christ Jesus. But Mount Esau is Idumea, which

signifies the Church of the Gentiles, which, as I have expounded, those

saved again out of Sion have defended that it should be a kingdom to

the Lord. This was obscure before it took place; but what believer

does not find it out now that it is done?

As for the prophet Nahum, through him God says, "I will exterminate the

graven and the molten things: I will make thy burial. For lo, the

feet of Him that bringeth good tidings and announceth peace are swift

upon the mountains! O Judah, celebrate thy festival days, and perform

thy vows; for now they shall not go on any more so as to become

antiquated. It is completed, it is consumed, it is taken away. He

ascendeth who breathes in thy face, delivering thee out of

tribulation." [1171] Let him that remembers the gospel call to mind

who hath ascended from hell and breathed the Holy Spirit in the face of

Judah, that is, of the Jewish disciples; for they belong to the New

Testament, whose festival days are so spiritually renewed that they

cannot become antiquated. Moreover, we already see the graven and

molten things, that is, the idols of the false gods, exterminated

through the gospel, and given up to oblivion as of the grave, and we

know that this prophecy is fulfilled in this very thing.

Of what else than the advent of Christ, who was to come, is Habakkuk

understood to say, "And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the

vision openly on a tablet of boxwood, that he that readeth these things

may understand. For the vision is yet for a time appointed, and it

will arise in the end, and will not become void: if it tarry, wait for

it; because it will surely come, and will not be delayed?" [1172]

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[1168] Obad. 17.

[1169] Obad. 21.

[1170] Col. i. 13.

[1171] Nah. i. 14; ii. 1.

[1172] Hab. ii. 2, 3.

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Chapter 32.--Of the Prophecy that is Contained in the Prayer and Song

of Habakkuk.

In his prayer, with a song, to whom but the Lord Christ does he say, "O

Lord, I have heard Thy hearing, and was afraid: O Lord, I have

considered Thy works, and was greatly afraid?" [1173] What is this

but the inexpressible admiration of the foreknown, new, and sudden

salvation of men? "In the midst of two living creatures thou shalt be

recognized." What is this but either between the two testaments, or

between the two thieves, or between Moses and Elias talking with Him on

the mount? "While the years draw nigh, Thou wilt be recognized; at the

coming of the time Thou wilt be shown," does not even need exposition.

"While my soul shall be troubled at Him, in wrath Thou wilt be mindful

of mercy." What is this but that He puts Himself for the Jews, of

whose nation He was, who were troubled with great anger and crucified

Christ, when He, mindful of mercy, said, "Father, forgive them, for

they know not what they do? [1174] "God shall come from Teman, and

the Holy One from the shady and close mountain." [1175] What is said

here, "He shall come from Teman," some interpret "from the south," or

"from the southwest," by which is signified the noonday, that is, the

fervor of charity and the splendor of truth. "The shady and close

mountain" might be understood in many ways, yet I prefer to take it as

meaning the depth of the divine Scriptures, in which Christ is

prophesied: for in the Scriptures there are many things shady and

close which exercise the mind of the reader; and Christ comes thence

when he who has understanding finds Him there. "His power covereth up

the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise." What is this but

what is also said in the psalm, "Be Thou exalted, O God, above the

heavens; and Thy glory above all the earth?" [1176] "His splendor

shall be as the light." What is it but that the fame of Him shall

illuminate believers? "Horns are in His hands." What is this but the

trophy of the cross? "And He hath placed the firm charity of His

strength" [1177] needs no exposition. "Before His face shall go the

word, and it shall go forth into the field after His feet." What is

this but that He should both be announced before His coming hither and

after His return hence? "He stood, and the earth was moved." What is

this but that "He stood" for succor, "and the earth was moved" to

believe? "He regarded, and the nations melted;" that is, He had

compassion, and made the people penitent. "The mountains are broken

with violence;" that is, through the power of those who work miracles

the pride of the haughty is broken. "The everlasting hills flowed

down;" that is, they are humbled in time that they may be lifted up for

eternity. "I saw His goings [made] eternal for his labors;" that is, I

beheld His labor of love not left without the reward of eternity. "The

tents of Ethiopia shall be greatly afraid, and the tents of the land of

Midian;" that is, even those nations which are not under the Roman

authority, being suddenly terrified by the news of Thy wonderful works,

shall become a Christian people. "Wert Thou angry at the rivers, O

Lord? or was Thy fury against the rivers? or was Thy rage against the

sea?" This is said because He does not now come to condemn the world,

but that the world through Him might be saved. [1178] "For Thou shall

mount upon Thy horses, and Thy riding shall be salvation;" that is,

Thine evangelists shall carry Thee, for they are guided by Thee, and

Thy gospel is salvation to them that believe in Thee. "Bending, Thou

wilt bend Thy bow against the sceptres, saith the Lord;" that is, Thou

wilt threaten even the kings of the earth with Thy judgment. "The

earth shall be cleft with rivers;" that is, by the sermons of those who

preach Thee flowing in upon them, men's hearts shall be opened to make

confession, to whom it is said, "Rend your hearts and not your

garments." [1179] What does "The people shall see Thee and grieve"

mean, but that in mourning they shall be blessed? [1180] What is

"Scattering the waters in marching," but that by walking in those who

everywhere proclaim Thee, Thou wilt scatter hither and thither the

streams of Thy doctrine? What is "The abyss uttered its voice?" Is it

not that the depth of the human heart expressed what it perceived? The

words, "The depth of its phantasy," are an explanation of the previous

verse, for the depth is the abyss; and "Uttered its voice" is to be

understood before them, that is, as we have said, it expressed what it

perceived. Now the phantasy is the vision, which it did not hold or

conceal, but poured forth in confession. "The sun was raised up, and

the moon stood still in her course;" that is, Christ ascended into

heaven, and the Church was established under her King. "Thy darts

shall go in the light;" that is, Thy words shall not be sent in secret,

but openly. For He had said to His own disciples, "What I tell you in

darkness, that speak ye in the light." [1181] "By threatening thou

shall diminish the earth;" that is, by that threatening Thou shall

humble men. "And in fury Thou shall cast down the nations;" for in

punishing those who exalt themselves Thou dashest them one against

another. "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people, that

Thou mightest save Thy Christ; Thou hast sent death on the heads of the

wicked." None of these words require exposition. "Thou hast lifted up

the bonds, even to the neck." This may be understood even of the good

bonds of wisdom, that the feet may be put into its fetters, and the

neck into its collar. "Thou hast struck off in amazement of mind the

bonds" must be understood for, He lifts up the good and strikes off the

bad, about which it is said to Him, "Thou hast broken asunder my

bonds," [1182] and that "in amazement of mind," that is, wonderfully.

"The heads of the mighty shall be moved in it;" to wit, in that

wonder. "They shall open their teeth like a poor man eating

secretly." For some of the mighty among the Jews shall come to the

Lord, admiring His works and words, and shall greedily eat the bread of

His doctrine in secret for fear of the Jews, just as the Gospel has

shown they did. "And Thou hast sent into the sea Thy horses, troubling

many waters," which are nothing else than many people; for unless all

were troubled, some would not be converted with fear, others pursued

with fury. "I gave heed, and my belly trembled at the voice of the

prayer of my lips; and trembling entered into my bones, and my habit of

body was troubled under me." He gave heed to those things which he

said, and was himself terrified at his own prayer, which he had poured

forth prophetically, and in which he discerned things to come. For

when many people are troubled, he saw the threatening tribulation of

the Church, and at once acknowledged himself a member of it, and said,

"I shall rest in the day of tribulation," as being one of those who are

rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation. [1183] "That I may

ascend," he says, "among the people of my pilgrimage," departing quite

from the wicked people of his carnal kinship, who are not pilgrims in

this earth, and do not seek the country above. [1184] "Although the

fig-tree," he says, "shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the

vines; the labor of the olive shall lie, and the fields shall yield no

meat; the sheep shall be cut off from the meat, and there shall be no

oxen in the stalls." He sees that nation which was to slay Christ

about to lose the abundance of spiritual supplies, which, in prophetic

fashion, he has set forth by the figure of earthly plenty. And because

that nation was to suffer such wrath of God, because, being ignorant of

the righteousness of God, it wished to establish its own, [1185] he

immediately says, "Yet will I rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in God my

salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He will set my feet in

completion; He will place me above the heights, that I may conquer in

His song," to wit, in that song of which something similar is said in

the psalm, "He set my feet upon a rock, and directed my goings, and put

in my mouth a new song, a hymn to our God." [1186] He therefore

conquers in the song of the Lord, who takes pleasure in His praise, not

in his own; that "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." [1187]

But some copies have, "I will joy in God my Jesus," which seems to me

better than the version of those who, wishing to put it in Latin, have

not set down that very name which for us it is dearer and sweeter to

name.

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[1173] Hab. iii. 2.

[1174] Luke xxiii. 34.

[1175] Hab. iii. 3.

[1176] Ps. lvii. 5, 11.

[1177] Hab. iii. 4.

[1178] John iii. 17.

[1179] Joel ii. 13.

[1180] Matt. v. 4.

[1181] Matt. x. 27.

[1182] Ps. cxvi. 16.

[1183] Rom. xii. 12.

[1184] Heb. xi. 13, 16.

[1185] Rom. x. 3.

[1186] Ps. xl. 2, 3.

[1187] Jer. ix. 23, 24, as in 1 Cor. i. 31.

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Chapter 33.--What Jeremiah and Zephaniah Have, by the Prophetic Spirit,

Spoken Before Concerning Christ and the Calling of the Nations.

Jeremiah, like Isaiah, is one of the greater prophets, not of the

minor, like the others from whose writings I have just given extracts.

He prophesied when Josiah reigned in Jerusalem, and Ancus Martius at

Rome, when the captivity of the Jews was already at hand; and he

continued to prophesy down to the fifth month of the captivity, as we

find from his writings. Zephaniah, one of the minor prophets, is put

along with him, because he himself says that he prophesied in the days

of Josiah; but he does not say till when. Jeremiah thus prophesied not

only in the times of Ancus Martius, but also in those of Tarquinius

Priscus, whom the Romans had for their fifth king. For he had already

begun to reign when that captivity took place. Jeremiah, in

prophesying of Christ, says, "The breath of our mouth, the Lord Christ,

was taken in our sins," [1188] thus briefly showing both that Christ is

our Lord and that He suffered for us. Also in another place he says,

"This is my God, and there shall none other be accounted of in

comparison of Him; who hath found out all the way of prudence, and hath

given it to Jacob His servant, and to Israel His beloved: afterwards

He was seen on the earth, and conversed with men." [1189] Some

attribute this testimony not to Jeremiah, but to his secretary, who was

called Baruch; but it is more commonly ascribed to Jeremiah. Again the

same prophet says concerning Him, "Behold the days come, saith the

Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous shoot, and a King

shall reign and shall be wise, and shall do judgment and justice in the

earth. In those days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell

confidently: and this is the name which they shall call Him, Our

righteous Lord." [1190] And of the calling of the nations which was

to come to pass, and which we now see fulfilled, he thus spoke: "O

Lord my God, and my refuge in the day of evils, to Thee shall the

nations come from the utmost end of the earth, saying, Truly our

fathers have worshipped lying images, wherein there is no profit."

[1191] But that the Jews, by whom He behoved even to be slain, were

not going to acknowledge Him, this prophet thus intimates: "Heavy is

the heart through all; and He is a man, and who shall know Him?" [1192]

That passage also is his which I have quoted in the seventeenth book

concerning the new testament, of which Christ is the Mediator. For

Jeremiah himself says, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I

will complete over the house of Jacob a new testament," and the rest,

which may be read there. [1193]

For the present I shall put down those predictions about Christ by the

prophet Zephaniah, who prophesied with Jeremiah. "Wait ye upon me,

saith the Lord, in the day of my resurrection, in the future; because

it is my determination to assemble the nations, and gather together the

kingdoms." [1194] And again he says, "The Lord will be terrible upon

them, and will exterminate all the gods of the earth; and they shall

worship Him every man from his place, even all the isles of the

nations." [1195] And a little after he says, "Then will I turn to the

people a tongue, and to His offspring, that they may call upon the name

of the Lord, and serve Him under one yoke. From the borders of the

rivers of Ethiopia shall they bring sacrifices unto me. In that day

thou shall not be confounded for all thy curious inventions, which thou

hast done impiously against me: for then I will take away from thee

the haughtiness of thy trespass; and thou shalt no more magnify thyself

above thy holy mountain. And I will leave in thee a meek and humble

people, and they who shall be left of Israel shall fear the name of the

Lord." [1196] These are the remnant of whom the apostle quotes that

which is elsewhere prophesied: "Though the number of the children of

Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." [1197]

These are the remnant of that nation who have believed in Christ.

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[1188] Lam. iv. 20.

[1189] Bar. iii. 35-37.

[1190] Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

[1191] Jer. xvi. 19.

[1192] Jer. xvii. 9.

[1193] Jer. xxxi. 31; see Bk. xvii. 3.

[1194] Zeph. iii. 8.

[1195] Zeph. ii. 11.

[1196] Zeph. iii. 9-12.

[1197] Isa. x. 22; Rom. ix. 27.

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Chapter 34.--Of the Prophecy of Daniel and Ezekiel, Other Two of the

Greater Prophets.

Daniel and Ezekiel, other two of the greater prophets, also first

prophesied in the very captivity of Babylon. Daniel even defined the

time when Christ was to come and suffer by the exact date. It would

take too long to show this by computation, and it has been done often

by others before us. But of His power and glory he has thus spoken:

"I saw in a night vision, and, behold, one like the Son of man was

coming with the clouds of heaven, and He came even to the Ancient of

days, and He was brought into His presence. And to Him there was given

dominion, and honor, and a kingdom: and all people, tribes, and

tongues shall serve Him. His power is an everlasting power, which

shall not pass away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed." [1198]

Ezekiel also, speaking prophetically in the person of God the Father,

thus foretells Christ, speaking of Him in the prophetic manner as

David, because He assumed flesh of the seed of David, and on account of

that form of a servant in which He was made man, He who is the Son of

God is also called the servant of God. He says, "And I will set up

over my sheep one Shepherd, who will feed them, even my servant David;

and He shall feed them, and He shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord

will be their God, and my servant David a prince in the midst of them.

I the Lord have spoken." [1199] And in another place he says, "And

one King shall be over them all: and they shall no more be two

nations, neither shall they be divided any more into two kingdoms:

neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, and

their abominations, and all their iniquities. And I will save them out

of all their dwelling-places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse

them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And my

servant David shall be king over them, and there shall be one Shepherd

for them all." [1200]

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[1198] Dan. vii. 13, 14.

[1199] Ezek. xxxiv. 23.

[1200] Ezek. xxxvii. 22-24.

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Chapter 35.--Of the Prophecy of the Three Prophets, Haggai, Zechariah,

and Malachi.

There remain three minor prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, who

prophesied at the close of the captivity. Of these Haggai more openly

prophesies of Christ and the Church thus briefly: "Thus saith the Lord

of hosts, Yet one little while, and I will shake the heaven, and the

earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will move all nations, and

the desired of all nations shall come." [1201] The fulfillment of

this prophecy is in part already seen, and in part hoped for in the

end. For He moved the heaven by the testimony of the angels and the

stars, when Christ became incarnate. He moved the earth by the great

miracle of His birth of the virgin. He moved the sea and the dry land,

when Christ was proclaimed both in the isles and in the whole world.

So we see all nations moved to the faith; and the fulfillment of what

follows, "And the desired of all nations shall come," is looked for at

His last coming. For ere men can desire and and wait for Him, they

must believe and love Him.

Zechariah says of Christ and the Church, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter

of Sion; shout joyfully, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King

shall come unto thee, just and the Saviour; Himself poor, and mounting

an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass: and His dominion shall be from

sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." [1202]

How this was done, when the Lord Christ on His journey used a beast of

burden of this kind, we read in the Gospel, where, also, as much of

this prophecy is quoted as appears sufficient for the context. In

another place, speaking in the Spirit of prophecy to Christ Himself of

the remission of sins through His blood, he says, "Thou also, by the

blood of Thy testament, hast sent forth Thy prisoners from the lake

wherein is no water." [1203] Different opinions may be held,

consistently with right belief, as to what he meant by this lake. Yet

it seems to me that no meaning suits better than that of the depth of

human misery, which is, as it were, dry and barren, where there are no

streams of righteousness, but only the mire of iniquity. For it is

said of it in the Psalms, "And He led me forth out of the lake of

misery, and from the miry clay." [1204]

Malachi, foretelling the Church which we now behold propagated through

Christ, says most openly to the Jews, in the person of God, "I have no

pleasure in you, and I will not accept a gift at your hand. For from

the rising even to the going down of the sun, my name is great among

the nations; and in every place sacrifice shall be made, and a pure

oblation shall be offered unto my name: for my name shall be great

among the nations, saith the Lord." [1205] Since we can already see

this sacrifice offered to God in every place, from the rising of the

sun to his going down, through Christ's priesthood after the order of

Melchisedec, while the Jews, to whom it was said, "I have no pleasure

in you, neither will I accept a gift at your hand," cannot deny that

their sacrifice has ceased, why do they still look for another Christ,

when they read this in the prophecy, and see it fulfilled, which could

not be fulfilled except through Him? And a little after he says of

Him, in the person of God, "My covenant was with Him of life and

peace: and I gave to Him that He might fear me with fear, and be

afraid before my name. The law of truth was in His mouth: directing

in peace He hath walked with me, and hath turned many away from

iniquity. For the Priest's lips shall keep knowledge, and they shall

seek the law at His mouth: for He is the Angel of the Lord Almighty."

[1206] Nor is it to be wondered at that Christ Jesus is called the

Angel of the Almighty God. For just as He is called a servant on

account of the form of a servant in which He came to men, so He is

called an angel on account of the evangel which He proclaimed to men.

For if we interpret these Greek words, evangel is "good news," and

angel is "messenger." Again he says of Him, "Behold I will send mine

angel, and He will look out the way before my face: and the Lord, whom

ye seek, shall suddenly come into His temple, even the Angel of the

testament, whom ye desire. Behold, He cometh, saith the Lord Almighty,

and who shall abide the day of His entry, or who shall stand at His

appearing?" [1207] In this place he has foretold both the first and

second advent of Christ: the first, to wit, of which he says, "And He

shall come suddenly into His temple;" that is, into His flesh, of which

He said in the Gospel, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will

raise it up again." [1208] And of the second advent he says, "Behold,

He cometh, saith the Lord Almighty, and who shall abide the day of His

entry, or who shall stand at His appearing?" But what he says, "The

Lord whom ye seek, and the Angel of the testament whom ye desire," just

means that even the Jews, according to the Scriptures which they read,

shall seek and desire Christ. But many of them did not acknowledge

that He whom they sought and desired had come, being blinded in their

hearts, which were preoccupied with their own merits. Now what he here

calls the testament, either above, where he says, "My testament had

been with Him," or here, where he has called Him the Angel of the

testament, we ought, beyond a doubt, to take to be the new testament,

in which the things promised are eternal, and not the old, in which

they are only temporal. Yet many who are weak are troubled when they

see the wicked abound in such temporal things, because they value them

greatly, and serve the true God to be rewarded with them. On this

account, to distinguish the eternal blessedness of the new testament,

which shall be given only to the good, from the earthly felicity of the

old, which for the most part is given to the bad as well, the same

prophet says, "Ye have made your words burdensome to me: yet ye have

said, In what have we spoken ill of Thee? Ye have said, Foolish is

every one who serves God; and what profit is it that we have kept His

observances, and that we have walked as suppliants before the face of

the Lord Almighty? And now we call the aliens blessed; yea, all that

do wicked things are built up again; yea, they are opposed to God and

are saved. They that feared the Lord uttered these reproaches every

one to his neighbor: and the Lord hearkened and heard; and He wrote a

book of remembrance before Him, for them that fear the Lord and that

revere His name." [1209] By that book is meant the New Testament.

Finally, let us hear what follows: "And they shall be an acquisition

for me, saith the Lord Almighty, in the day which I make; and I will

choose them as a man chooseth his son that serveth him. And ye shall

return, and shall discern between the just and the unjust, and between

him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. For, behold, the

day cometh burning as an oven, and it shall burn them up; and all the

aliens and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that

shall come will set them on fire, saith the Lord Almighty, and shall

leave neither root nor branch. And unto you that fear my name shall

the Sun of Righteousness arise, and health shall be in His wings; and

ye shall go forth, and exult as calves let loose from bonds. And ye

shall tread down the wicked, and they shall be ashes under your feet,

in the day in which I shall do [this], saith the Lord Almighty." [1210]

This day is the day of judgment, of which, if God will, we shall

speak more fully in its own place.

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[1201] Hag. ii. 6.

[1202] Zech. ix. 9, 10.

[1203] Zech. ix. 11.

[1204] Ps. xl. 2.

[1205] Mal. i. 10, 11.

[1206] Mal. ii. 5-7.

[1207] Mal. iii. 1, 2.

[1208] John ii. 19.

[1209] Mal. iii. 13-16.

[1210] Mal. iii. 17; iv. 3.

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Chapter 36.--About Esdras and the Books of the Maccabees.

After these three prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, during the

same period of the liberation of the people from the Babylonian

servitude Esdras also wrote, who is historical rather than prophetical,

as is also the book called Esther, which is found to relate, for the

praise of God, events not far from those times; unless, perhaps, Esdras

is to be understood as prophesying of Christ in that passage where, on

a question having arisen among certain young men as to what is the

strongest thing, when one had said kings, another wine, the third

women, who for the most part rule kings, yet that same third youth

demonstrated that the truth is victorious over all. [1211] For by

consulting the Gospel we learn that Christ is the Truth. From this

time, when the temple was rebuilt, down to the time of Aristobulus, the

Jews had not kings but princes; and the reckoning of their dates is

found, not in the Holy Scriptures which are called canonical, but in

others, among which are also the books of the Maccabees. These are

held as canonical, not by the Jews, but by the Church, on account of

the extreme and wonderful sufferings of certain martyrs, who, before

Christ had come in the flesh, contended for the law of God even unto

death, and endured most grievous and horrible evils.

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[1211] Esdras iii. and iv.

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Chapter 37.--That Prophetic Records are Found Which are More Ancient

Than Any Fountain of the Gentile Philosophy.

In the time of our prophets, then, whose writings had already come to

the knowledge of almost all nations, the philosophers of the nations

had not yet arisen,--at least, not those who were called by that name,

which originated with Pythagoras the Samian, who was becoming famous at

the time when the Jewish captivity ended. Much more, then, are the

other philosophers found to be later than the prophets. For even

Socrates the Athenian, the master of all who were then most famous,

holding the pre-eminence in that department that is called the moral or

active, is found after Esdras in the chronicles. Plato also was born

not much later, who far out went the other disciples of Socrates. If,

besides these, we take their predecessors, who had not yet been styled

philosophers, to wit, the seven sages, and then the physicists, who

succeeded Thales, and imitated his studious search into the nature of

things, namely, Anaximander, Anaximenes, and Anaxagoras, and some

others, before Pythagoras first professed himself a philosopher, even

these did not precede the whole of our prophets in antiquity of time,

since Thales, whom the others succeeded, is said to have flourished in

the reign of Romulus, when the stream of prophecy burst forth from the

fountains of Israel in those writings which spread over the whole

world. So that only those theological poets, Orpheus, Linus, and

Mus�us, and, it may be, some others among the Greeks, are found earlier

in date than the Hebrew prophets whose writings we hold as

authoritative. But not even these preceded in time our true divine,

Moses, who authentically preached the one true God, and whose writings

are first in the authoritative canon; and therefore the Greeks, in

whose tongue the literature of this age chiefly appears, have no ground

for boasting of their wisdom, in which our religion, wherein is true

wisdom, is not evidently more ancient at least, if not superior. Yet

it must be confessed that before Moses there had already been, not

indeed among the Greeks, but among barbarous nations, as in Egypt, some

doctrine which might be called their wisdom, else it would not have

been written in the holy books that Moses was learned in all the wisdom

of the Egyptians, [1212] as he was, when, being born there, and adopted

and nursed by Pharaoh's daughter, he was also liberally educated. Yet

not even the wisdom of the Egyptians could be antecedent in time to the

wisdom of our prophets, because even Abraham was a prophet. And what

wisdom could there be in Egypt before Isis had given them letters, whom

they thought fit to worship as a goddess after her death? Now Isis is

declared to have been the daughter of Inachus, who first began to reign

in Argos when the grandsons of Abraham are known to have been already

born.

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[1212] Acts vii. 22.

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Chapter 38.--That the Ecclesiastical Canon Has Not Admitted Certain

Writings on Account of Their Too Great Antiquity, Lest Through Them

False Things Should Be Inserted Instead of True.

If I may recall far more ancient times, our patriarch Noah was

certainly even before that great deluge, and I might not undeservedly

call him a prophet, forasmuch as the ark he made, in which he escaped

with his family, was itself a prophecy of our times. [1213] What of

Enoch, the seventh from Adam? Does not the canonical epistle of the

Apostle Jude declare that he prophesied? [1214] But the writings of

these men could not be held as authoritative either among the Jews or

us, on account of their too great antiquity, which made it seem needful

to regard them with suspicion, lest false things should be set forth

instead of true. For some writings which are said be theirs are quoted

by those who, according to their own humor, loosely believe what they

please. But the purity of the canon has not admitted these writings,

not because the authority of these men who pleased God is rejected, but

because they are not believed to be theirs. Nor ought it to appear

strange if writings for which so great antiquity is claimed are held in

suspicion, seeing that in the very history of the kings of Judah and

Israel containing their acts, which we believe to belong to the

canonical Scripture, very many things are mentioned which are not

explained there, but are said to be found in other books which the

prophets wrote, the very names of these prophets being sometimes given,

and yet they are not found in the canon which the people of God

received. Now I confess the reason of this is hidden from me; only I

think that even those men, to whom certainly the Holy Spirit revealed

those things which ought to be held as of religious authority, might

write some things as men by historical diligence, and others as

prophets by divine inspiration; and these things were so distinct, that

it was judged that the former should be ascribed to themselves, but the

latter to God speaking through them: and so the one pertained to the

abundance of knowledge, the other to the authority of religion. In

that authority the canon is guarded. So that, if any writings outside

of it are now brought forward under the name of the ancient prophets,

they cannot serve even as an aid to knowledge, because it is uncertain

whether they are genuine; and on this account they are not trusted,

especially those of them in which some things are found that are even

contrary to the truth of the canonical books, so that it is quite

apparent they do not belong to them.

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[1213] Heb. xi. 7; 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.

[1214] Jude 14.

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Chapter 39.--About the Hebrew Written Characters Which that Language

Always Possessed.

Now we must not believe that Heber, from whose name the word Hebrew is

derived, preserved and transmitted the Hebrew language to Abraham only

as a spoken language, and that the Hebrew letters began with the giving

of the law through Moses; but rather that this language, along with its

letters, was preserved by that succession of fathers. Moses, indeed,

appointed some among the people of God to teach letters, before they

could know any letters of the divine law. The Scripture calls these

men grammateisagogeis, who may be called in Latin inductores or

introductores of letters, because they, as it were, introduce them into

the hearts of the learners, or rather lead those whom they teach into

them. Therefore no nation could vaunt itself over our patriarchs and

prophets by any wicked vanity for the antiquity of its wisdom; since

not even Egypt, which is wont falsely and vainly to glory in the

antiquity of her doctrines, is found to have preceded in time the

wisdom of our patriarchs in her own wisdom, such as it is. Neither

will any one dare to say that they were most skillful in wonderful

sciences before they knew letters, that is, before Isis came and taught

them there. Besides, what, for the most part, was that memorable

doctrine of theirs which was called wisdom but astronomy, and it may be

some other sciences of that kind, which usually have more power to

exercise men's wit than to enlighten their minds with true wisdom? As

regards philosophy, which professes to teach men something which shall

make them happy, studies of that kind flourished in those lands about

the times of Mercury, whom they called Trismegistus, long before the

sages and philosophers of Greece, but yet after Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,

and Joseph, and even after Moses himself. At that time, indeed, when

Moses was born, Atlas is found to have lived, that great astronomer,

the brother of Prometheus, and maternal grandson of the elder Mercury,

of whom that Mercury Trismegistus was the grandson.

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Chapter 40.--About the Most Mendacious Vanity of the Egyptians, in

Which They Ascribe to Their Science an Antiquity of a Hundred Thousand

Years.

In vain, then, do some babble with most empty presumption, saying that

Egypt has understood the reckoning of the stars for more than a hundred

thousand years. For in what books have they collected that number who

learned letters from Isis their mistress, not much more than two

thousand years ago? Varro, who has declared this, is no small

authority in history, and it does not disagree with the truth of the

divine books. For as it is not yet six thousand years since the first

man, who is called Adam, are not those to be ridiculed rather than

refuted who try to persuade us of anything regarding a space of time so

different from, and contrary to, the ascertained truth? For what

historian of the past should we credit more than him who has also

predicted things to come which we now see fulfilled? And the very

disagreement of the historians among themselves furnishes a good reason

why we ought rather to believe him who does not contradict the divine

history which we hold. But, on the other hand, the citizens of the

impious city, scattered everywhere through the earth, when they read

the most learned writers, none of whom seems to be of contemptible

authority, and find them disagreeing among themselves about affairs

most remote from the memory of our age, cannot find out whom they ought

to trust. But we, being sustained by divine authority in the history

of our religion, have no doubt that whatever is opposed to it is most

false, whatever may be the case regarding other things in secular

books, which, whether true or false, yield nothing of moment to our

living rightly and happily.

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Chapter 41.--About the Discord of Philosophic Opinion, and the Concord

of the Scriptures that are Held as Canonical by the Church.

But let us omit further examination of history, and return to the

philosophers from whom we digressed to these things. They seem to have

labored in their studies for no other end than to find out how to live

in a way proper for laying hold of blessedness. Why, then, have the

disciples dissented from their masters, and the fellow-disciples from

one another, except because as men they have sought after these things

by human sense and human reasonings? Now, although there might be

among them a desire of glory, so that each wished to be thought wiser

and more acute than another, and in no way addicted to the judgment of

others, but the inventor of his own dogma and opinion, yet I may grant

that there were some, or even very many of them, whose love of truth

severed them from their teachers or fellow-disciples, that they might

strive for what they thought was the truth, whether it was so or not.

But what can human misery do, or how or where can it reach forth, so as

to attain blessedness, if divine authority does not lead it? Finally,

let our authors, among whom the canon of the sacred books is fixed and

bounded, be far from disagreeing in any respect. It is not without

good reason, then, that not merely a few people prating in the schools

and gymnasia in captious disputations, but so many and great people,

both learned and unlearned, in countries and cities, have believed that

God spoke to them or by them, i.e. the canonical writers, when they

wrote these books. There ought, indeed, to be but few of them, lest on

account of their multitude what ought to be religiously esteemed should

grow cheap; and yet not so few that their agreement should not be

wonderful. For among the multitude of philosophers, who in their works

have left behind them the monuments of their dogmas, no one will easily

find any who agree in all their opinions. But to show this is too long

a task for this work.

But what author of any sect is so approved in this demon-worshipping

city, that the rest who have differed from or opposed him in opinion

have been disapproved? The Epicureans asserted that human affairs were

not under the providence of the gods; and the Stoics, holding the

opposite opinion, agreed that they were ruled and defended by favora

ble and tutelary gods. Yet were not both sects famous among the

Athenians? I wonder, then, why Anaxagoras was accused of a crime for

saying that the sun was a burning stone, and denying that it was a god

at all; while in the same city Epicurus flourished gloriously and lived

securely, although he not only did not believe that the sun or any star

was a god, but contended that neither Jupiter nor any of the gods dwelt

in the world at all, so that the prayers and supplications of men might

reach them! Were not both Aristippus and Antisthenes there, two noble

philosophers and both Socratic? yet they placed the chief end of life

within bounds so diverse and contradictory, that the first made the

delight of the body the chief good, while the other asserted that man

was made happy mainly by the virtue of the mind. The one also said

that the wise man should flee from the republic; the other, that he

should administer its affairs. Yet did not each gather disciples to

follow his own sect? Indeed, in the conspicuous and well-known porch,

in gymnasia, in gardens, in places public and private, they openly

strove in bands each for his own opinion, some asserting there was one

world, others innumerable worlds; some that this world had a beginning,

others that it had not; some that it would perish, others that it would

exist always; some that it was governed by the divine mind, others by

chance and accident; some that souls are immortal, others that they are

mortal,--and of those who asserted their immortality, some said they

transmigrated through beasts, others that it was by no means so; while

of those who asserted their mortality, some said they perished

immediately after the body, others that they survived either a little

while or a longer time, but not always; some fixing supreme good in the

body, some in the mind, some in both; others adding to the mind and

body external good things; some thinking that the bodily senses ought

to be trusted always, some not always, others never. Now what people,

senate, power, or public dignity of the impious city has ever taken

care to judge between all these and other well-nigh innumerable

dissensions of the philosophers, approving and accepting some, and

disapproving and rejecting others? Has it not held in its bosom at

random, without any judgment, and confusedly, so many controversies of

men at variance, not about fields, houses, or anything of a pecuniary

nature, but about those things which make life either miserable or

happy? Even if some true things were said in it, yet falsehoods were

uttered with the same licence; so that such a city has not amiss

received the title of the mystic Babylon. For Babylon means confusion,

as we remember we have already explained. Nor does it matter to the

devil, its king, how they wrangle among themselves in contradictory

errors, since all alike deservedly belong to him on account of their

great and varied impiety.

But that nation, that people, that city, that republic, these

Israelites, to whom the oracles of God were entrusted, by no means

confounded with similar licence false prophets with the true prophets;

but, agreeing together, and differing in nothing, acknowledged and

upheld the authentic authors of their sacred books. These were their

philosophers, these were their sages, divines, prophets, and teachers

of probity and piety. Whoever was wise and lived according to them was

wise and lived not according to men, but according to God who hath

spoken by them. If sacrilege is forbidden there, God hath forbidden

it. If it is said, "Honor thy father and thy mother," [1215] God hath

commanded it. If it is said, "Thou shall not commit adultery, Thou

shall not kill, Thou shall not steal," [1216] and other similar

commandments, not human lips but the divine oracles have enounced

them. Whatever truth certain philosophers, amid their false opinions,

were able to see, and strove by laborious discussions to persuade men

of,--such as that God had made this world, and Himself most providently

governs it, or of the nobility of the virtues, of the love of country,

of fidelity in friendship, of good works and everything pertaining to

virtuous manners, although they knew not to what end and what rule all

these things were to be referred,--all these, by words prophetic, that

is, divine, although spoken by men, were commended to the people in

that city, and not inculcated by contention in arguments, so that he

who should know them might be afraid of contemning, not the wit of men,

but the oracle of God.

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[1215] Ex. xx. 12.

[1216] Ex. xx. 13-15, the order as in Mark x. 19.

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Chapter 42.--By What Dispensation of God's Providence the Sacred

Scriptures of the Old Testament Were Translated Out of Hebrew into

Greek, that They Might Be Made Known to All the Nations.

One of the Ptolemies, kings of Egypt, desired to know and have these

sacred books. For after Alexander of Macedon, who is also styled the

Great, had by his most wonderful, but by no means enduring power,

subdued the whole of Asia, yea, almost the whole world, partly by force

of arms, partly by terror, and, among other kingdoms of the East, had

entered and obtained Judea also, on his death his generals did not

peaceably divide that most ample kingdom among them for a possession,

but rather dissipated it, wasting all things by wars. Then Egypt began

to have the Ptolemies as her kings. The first of them, the son of

Lagus, carried many captive out of Judea into Egypt. But another

Ptolemy, called Philadelphus, who succeeded him, permitted all whom he

had brought under the yoke to return free; and more than that, sent

kingly gifts to the temple of God, and begged Eleazar, who was the high

priest, to give him the Scriptures, which he had heard by report were

truly divine, and therefore greatly desired to have in that most noble

library he had made. When the high priest had sent them to him in

Hebrew, he afterwards demanded interpreters of him, and there were

given him seventy-two, out of each of the twelve tribes six men, most

learned in both languages, to wit, the Hebrew and Greek and their

translation is now by custom called the Septuagint. It is reported,

indeed, that there was an agreement in their words so wonderful,

stupendous, and plainly divine, that when they had sat at this work,

each one apart (for so it pleased Ptolemy to test their fidelity), they

differed from each other in no word which had the same meaning and

force, or, in the order of the words; but, as if the translators had

been one, so what all had translated was one, because in very deed the

one Spirit had been in them all. And they received so wonderful a gift

of God, in order that the authority of these Scriptures might be

commended not as human but divine, as indeed it was, for the benefit of

the nations who should at some time believe, as we now see them doing.

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Chapter 43.--Of the Authority of the Septuagint Translation, Which,

Saving the Honor of the Hebrew Original, is to Be Preferred to All

Translations.

For while there were other interpreters who translated these sacred

oracles out of the Hebrew tongue into Greek, as Aquila, Symmachus, and

Theodotion, and also that translation which, as the name of the author

is unknown, is quoted as the fifth edition, yet the Church has received

this Septuagint translation just as if it were the only one; and it has

been used by the Greek Christian people, most of whom are not aware

that there is any other. From this translation there has also been

made a translation in the Latin tongue, which the Latin churches use.

Our times, however, have enjoyed the advantage of the presbyter Jerome,

a man most learned, and skilled in all three languages, who translated

these same Scriptures into the Latin speech, not from the Greek, but

from the Hebrew. [1217] But although the Jews acknowledge this very

learned labor of his to be faithful, while they contend that the

Septuagint translators have erred in many places, still the churches of

Christ judge that no one should be preferred to the authority of so

many men, chosen for this very great work by Eleazar, who was then high

priest; for even if there had not appeared in them one spirit, without

doubt divine, and the seventy learned men had, after the manner of men,

compared together the words of their translation, that what pleased

them all might stand, no single translator ought to be preferred to

them; but since so great a sign of divinity has appeared in them,

certainly, if any other translator of their Scriptures from the Hebrew

into any other tongue is faithful, in that case he agrees with these

seventy translators, and if he is not found to agree with them, then we

ought to believe that the prophetic gift is with them. For the same

Spirit who was in the prophets when they spoke these things was also in

the seventy men when they translated them, so that assuredly they could

also say something else, just as if the prophet himself had said both,

because it would be the same Spirit who said both; and could say the

same thing differently, so that, although the words were not the same,

yet the same meaning should shine forth to those of good understanding;

and could omit or add something, so that even by this it might be shown

that there was in that work not human bondage, which the translator

owed to the words, but rather divine power, which filled and ruled the

mind of the translator. Some, however, have thought that the Greek

copies of the Septuagint version should be emended from the Hebrew

copies; yet they did not dare to take away what the Hebrew lacked and

the Septuagint had, but only added what was found in the Hebrew copies

and was lacking in the Septuagint, and noted them by placing at the

beginning of the verses certain marks in the form of stars which they

call asterisks. And those things which the Hebrew copies have not, but

the Septuagint have, they have in like manner marked at the beginning

of the verses by horizontal spit-shaped marks like those by which we

denote ounces; and many copies having these marks are circulated even

in Latin. [1218] But we cannot, without inspecting both kinds of

copies, find out those things which are neither omitted nor added, but

expressed differently, whether they yield another meaning not in itself

unsuitable, or can be shown to explain the same meaning in another

way. If, then, as it behoves us, we behold nothing else in these

Scriptures than what the Spirit of God has spoken through men, if

anything is in the Hebrew copies and is not in the version of the

Seventy, the Spirit of God did not choose to say it through them, but

only through the prophets. But whatever is in the Septuagint and not

in the Hebrew copies, the same Spirit chose rather to say through the

latter, thus showing that both were prophets. For in that manner He

spoke as He chose, some things through Isaiah, some through Jeremiah,

some through several prophets, or else the same thing through this

prophet and through that. Further, whatever is found in both editions,

that one and the same Spirit willed to say through both, but so as that

the former preceded in prophesying, and the latter followed in

prophetically interpreting them; because, as the one Spirit of peace

was in the former when they spoke true and concordant words, so the

selfsame one Spirit hath appeared in the latter, when, without mutual

conference they yet interpreted all things as if with one mouth.

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[1217] [Jerome was an older contemporary of Augustin, and next to him

the most influential of the Latin fathers. He is the author of the

Latin translation of the Scriptures, which under the name of the

Vulgate is still the authorized Bible of the Roman church. He died at

Bethlehem, 419, eleven years before Augustin.--P.S.]

[1218] Var. reading, "both in Greek and Latin."

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Chapter 44.--How the Threat of the Destruction of the Ninevites is to

Be Understood Which in the Hebrew Extends to Forty Days, While in the

Septuagint It is Contracted to Three.

But some one may say, "How shall I know whether the prophet Jonah said

to the Ninevites, Yet three days and Nineveh shall be overthrown,' or

forty days?" [1219] For who does not see that the prophet could not

say both, when he was sent to terrify the city by the threat of

imminent ruin? For if its destruction was to take place on the third

day, it certainly could not be on the fortieth; but if on the fortieth,

then certainly not on the third. If, then, I am asked which of these

Jonah may have said, I rather think what is read in the Hebrew, "Yet

forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Yet the Seventy,

interpreting long afterward, could say what was different and yet

pertinent to the matter, and agree in the self-same meaning, although

under a different signification. And this may admonish the reader not

to despise the authority of either, but to raise himself above the

history, and search for those things which the history itself was

written to set forth. These things, indeed, took place in the city of

Nineveh, but they also signified something else too great to apply to

that city; just as, when it happened that the prophet himself was three

days in the whale's belly, it signified besides, that He who is Lord of

all the prophets should be three days in the depths of hell.

Wherefore, if that city is rightly held as prophetically representing

the Church of the Gentiles, to wit, as brought down by penitence, so as

no longer to be what it had been, since this was done by Christ in the

Church of the Gentiles, which Nineveh represented, Christ Himself was

signified both by the forty and by the three days: by the forty,

because He spent that number of days with His disciples after the

resurrection, and then ascended into heaven, but by the three days,

because He rose on the third day. So that, if the reader desires

nothing else than to adhere to the history of events, he may be aroused

from his sleep by the Septuagint interpreters, as well as the prophets,

to search into the depth of the prophecy, as if they had said, In the

forty days seek Him in whom thou mayest also find the three days,--the

one thou wilt find in His ascension, the other in His resurrection.

Because that which could be most suitably signified by both numbers, of

which one is used by Jonah the prophet, the other by the prophecy of

the Septuagint version, the one and self-same Spirit hath spoken. I

dread prolixity, so that I must not demonstrate this by many instances

in which the seventy interpreters may be thought to differ from the

Hebrew, and yet, when well understood, are found to agree. For which

reason I also, according to my capacity, following the footsteps of the

apostles, who themselves have quoted prophetic testimonies from both,

that is, from the Hebrew and the Septuagint, have thought that both

should be used as authoritative, since both are one, and divine. But

let us now follow out as we can what remains.

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[1219] Jon. iii. 4.

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Chapter 45.--That the Jews Ceased to Have Prophets After the Rebuilding

of the Temple, and from that Time Until the Birth of Christ Were

Afflicted with Continual Adversity, to Prove that the Building of

Another Temple Had Been Promised by Prophetic Voices.

The Jewish nation no doubt became worse after it ceased to have

prophets, just at the very time when, on the rebuilding of the temple

after the captivity in Babylon, it hoped to become better. For so,

indeed, did that car nal people understand what was foretold by Haggai

the prophet, saying, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater

than that of the former." [1220] Now, that this is said of the new

testament, he showed a little above, where he says, evidently promising

Christ, "And I will move all nations, and the desired One shall come to

all nations." [1221] In this passage the Septuagint translators

giving another sense more suitable to the body than the Head, that is,

to the Church than to Christ, have said by prophetic authority, "The

things shall come that are chosen of the Lord from all nations," that

is, men, of whom Jesus saith in the Gospel, "Many are called, but few

are chosen." [1222] For by such chosen ones of the nations there is

built, through the new testament, with living stones, a house of God

far more glorious than that temple was which was constructed by king

Solomon, and rebuilt after the captivity. For this reason, then, that

nation had no prophets from that time, but was afflicted with many

plagues by kings of alien race, and by the Romans themselves, lest they

should fancy that this prophecy of Haggai was fulfilled by that

rebuilding of the temple.

For not long after, on the arrival of Alexander, it was subdued, when,

although there was no pillaging, because they dared not resist him, and

thus, being very easily subdued, received him peaceably, yet the glory

of that house was not so great as it was when under the free power of

their own kings. Alexander, indeed, offered up sacrifices in the

temple of God, not as a convert to His worship in true piety, but

thinking, with impious folly, that He was to be worshipped along with

false gods. Then Ptolemy son of Lagus, whom I have already mentioned,

after Alexander's death carried them captive into Egypt. His

successor, Ptolemy Philadelphus, most benevolently dismissed them; and

by him it was brought about, as I have narrated a little before, that

we should have the Septuagint version of the Scriptures. Then they

were crushed by the wars which are explained in the books of the

Maccabees. Afterward they were taken captive by Ptolemy king of

Alexandria, who was called Epiphanes. Then Antiochus king of Syria

compelled them by many and most grievous evils to worship idols, and

filled the temple itself with the sacrilegious superstitions of the

Gentiles. Yet their most vigorous leader Judas, who is also called

Maccab�us, after beating the generals of Antiochus, cleansed it from

all that defilement of idolatry.

But not long after, one Alcimus, although an alien from the sacerdotal

tribe, was, through ambition, made pontiff, which was an impious

thing. After almost fifty years, during which they never had peace,

although they prospered in some affairs, Aristobulus first assumed the

diadem among them, and was made both king and pontiff. Before that,

indeed, from the time of their return from the Babylonish captivity and

the rebuilding of the temple, they had not kings, but generals or

principes. Although a king himself may be called a prince, from his

principality in governing, and a leader, because he leads the army, but

it does not follow that all who are princes and leaders may also be

called kings, as that Aristobulus was. He was succeeded by Alexander,

also both king and pontiff, who is reported to have reigned over them

cruelly. After him his wife Alexandra was queen of the Jews, and from

her time downwards more grievous evils pursued them; for this

Alexandra's sons, Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, when contending with each

other for the kingdom, called in the Roman forces against the nation of

Israel. For Hyrcanus asked assistance from them against his brother.

At that time Rome had already subdued Africa and Greece, and ruled

extensively in other parts of the world also, and yet, as if unable to

bear her own weight, had, in a manner, broken herself by her own size.

For indeed she had come to grave domestic seditions, and from that to

social wars, and by and by to civil wars, and had enfeebled and worn

herself out so much, that the changed state of the republic, in which

she should be governed by kings, was now imminent. Pompey then, a most

illustrious prince of the Roman people, having entered Judea with an

army, took the city, threw open the temple, not with the devotion of a

suppliant, but with the authority of a conqueror, and went, not

reverently, but profanely, into the holy of holies, where it was lawful

for none but the pontiff to enter. Having established Hyrcanus in the

pontificate, and set Antipater over the subjugated nation as guardian

or procurator, as they were then called, he led Aristobulus with him

bound. From that time the Jews also began to be Roman tributaries.

Afterward Cassius plundered the very temple. Then after a few years it

was their desert to have Herod, a king of foreign birth, in whose reign

Christ was born. For the time had now come signified by the prophetic

Spirit through the mouth of the patriarch Jacob, when he says, "There

shall not be lacking a prince out of Judah, nor a teacher from his

loins, until He shall come for whom it is reserved; and He is the

expectation of the nations." [1223] There lacked not therefore a

Jewish prince of the Jews until that Herod, who was the first king of a

foreign race received by them. Therefore it was now the time when He

should come for whom that was reserved which is promised in the New

Testament, that He should be the expectation of the nations. But it

was not possible that the nations should expect He would come, as we

see they did, to do judgment in the splendor of power, unless they

should first believe in Him when He came to suffer judgment in the

humility of patience.

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[1220] Hag. ii. 9.

[1221] Hag. ii. 7.

[1222] Matt. xxii. 14.

[1223] Gen. xlix. 10.

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Chapter 46.--Of the Birth of Our Saviour, Whereby the Word Was Made

Flesh; And of the Dispersion of the Jews Among All Nations, as Had Been

Prophesied.

While Herod, therefore, reigned in Judea, and C�sar Augustus was

emperor at Rome, the state of the republic being already changed, and

the world being set at peace by him, Christ was born in Bethlehem of

Judah, man manifest out of a human virgin, God hidden out of God the

Father. For so had the prophet foretold: "Behold, a virgin shall

conceive in the womb, and bring forth a Son, and they shall call His

name Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us." [1224] He

did many miracles that He might commend God in Himself, some of which,

even as many as seemed sufficient to proclaim Him, are contained in the

evangelic Scripture. The first of these is, that He was so wonderfully

born, and the last, that with His body raised up again from the dead He

ascended into heaven. But the Jews who slew Him, and would not believe

in Him, because it behoved Him to die and rise again, were yet more

miserably wasted by the Romans, and utterly rooted out from their

kingdom, where aliens had already ruled over them, and were dispersed

through the lands (so that indeed there is no place where they are

not), and are thus by their own Scriptures a testimony to us that we

have not forged the prophecies about Christ. And very many of them,

considering this, even before His passion, but chiefly after His

resurrection, believed on Him, of whom it was predicted, "Though the

number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant

shall be saved." [1225] But the rest are blinded, of whom it was

predicted, "Let their table be made before them a trap, and a

retribution, and a stumbling-block. Let their eyes be darkened lest

they see, and bow down their back alway." [1226] Therefore, when they

do not believe our Scriptures, their own, which they blindly read, are

fulfilled in them, lest perchance any one should say that the

Christians have forged these prophecies about Christ which are quoted

under the name of the sibyl, or of others, if such there be, who do not

belong to the Jewish people. For us, indeed, those suffice which are

quoted from the books of our enemies, to whom we make our

acknowledgment, on account of this testimony which, in spite of

themselves, they contribute by their possession of these books, while

they themselves are dispersed among all nations, wherever the Church of

Christ is spread abroad. For a prophecy about this thing was sent

before in the Psalms, which they also read, where it is written, "My

God, His mercy shall prevent me. My God hath shown me concerning mine

enemies, that Thou shalt not slay them, lest they should at last forget

Thy law: disperse them in Thy might." [1227] Therefore God has shown

the Church in her enemies the Jews the grace of His compassion, since,

as saith the apostle, "their offence is the salvation of the Gentiles."

[1228] And therefore He has not slain them, that is, He has not let

the knowledge that they are Jews be lost in them, although they have

been conquered by the Romans, lest they should forget the law of God,

and their testimony should be of no avail in this matter of which we

treat. But it was not enough that he should say, "Slay them not, lest

they should at last forget Thy law," unless he had also added,

"Disperse them;" because if they had only been in their own land with

that testimony of the Scriptures, and not every where, certainly the

Church which is everywhere could not have had them as witnesses among

all nations to the prophecies which were sent before concerning Christ.

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[1224] Isa. vii. 14, as in Matt. i. 23.

[1225] Isa. x. 22, as in Rom. ix. 27, 28.

[1226] Ps. lxix. 22, 23; Rom. xi. 9, 10.

[1227] Ps. lxix. 10, 11.

[1228] Rom xi. 11.

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Chapter 47.--Whether Before Christian Times There Were Any Outside of

the Israelite Race Who Belonged to the Fellowship of the Heavenly City.

Wherefore if we read of any foreigner--that is, one neither born of

Israel nor received by that people into the canon of the sacred

books--having prophesied something about Christ, if it has come or

shall come to our knowledge, we can refer to it over and above; not

that this is necessary, even if wanting, but because it is not

incongruous to believe that even in other nations there may have been

men to whom this mystery was revealed, and who were also impelled to

proclaim it, whether they were partakers of the same grace or had no

experience of it, but were taught by bad angels, who, as we know, even

confessed the present Christ, whom the Jews did not acknowledge. Nor

do I think the Jews themselves dare contend that no one has belonged to

God except the Israelites, since the increase of Israel began on the

rejection of his elder brother. For in very deed there was no other

people who were specially called the people of God; but they cannot

deny that there have been certain men even of other nations who

belonged, not by earthly but heavenly fellowship, to the true

Israelites, the citizens of the country that is above. Because, if

they deny this, they can be most easily confuted by the case of the

holy and wonderful man Job, who was neither a native nor a proselyte,

that is, a stranger joining the people of Israel, but, being bred of

the Idumean race, arose there and died there too, and who is so praised

by the divine oracle, that no man of his times is put on a level with

him as regards justice and piety. And although we do not find his date

in the chronicles, yet from his book, which for its merit the

Israelites have received as of canonical authority, we gather that he

was in the third generation after Israel. And I doubt not it was

divinely provided, that from this one case we might know that among

other nations also there might be men pertaining to the spiritual

Jerusalem who have lived according to God and have pleased Him. And it

is not to be supposed that this was granted to any one, unless the one

Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, [1229] was divinely

revealed to him; who was pre-announced to the saints of old as yet to

come in the flesh, even as He is announced to us as having come, that

the self-same faith through Him may lead all to God who are

predestinated to be the city of God, the house of God, and the temple

of God. But whatever prophecies concerning the grace of God through

Christ Jesus are quoted, they may be thought to have been forged by the

Christians. So that there is nothing of more weight for confuting all

sorts of aliens, if they contend about this matter, and for supporting

our friends, if they are truly wise, than to quote those divine

predictions about Christ which are written in the books of the Jews,

who have been torn from their native abode and dispersed over the whole

world in order to bear this testimony, so that the Church of Christ has

everywhere increased.

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[1229] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

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Chapter 48.--That Haggai's Prophecy, in Which He Said that the Glory of

the House of God Would Be Greater Than that of the First Had Been,

[1230] Was Really Fulfilled, Not in the Rebuilding of the Temple, But

in the Church of Christ.

This house of God is more glorious than that first one which was

constructed of wood and stone, metals and other precious things.

Therefore the prophecy of Haggai was not fulfilled in the rebuilding of

that temple. For it can never be shown to have had so much glory after

it was rebuilt as it had in the time of Solomon; yea, rather, the glory

of that house is shown to have been diminished, first by the ceasing of

prophecy, and then by the nation itself suffering so great calamities,

even to the final destruction made by the Romans, as the things

above-mentioned prove. But this house which pertains to the new

testament is just as much more glorious as the living stones, even

believing, renewed men, of which it is constructed are better. But it

was typified by the rebuilding of that temple for this reason, because

the very renovation of that edifice typifies in the prophetic oracle

another testament which is called the new. When, therefore, God said

by the prophet just named, "And I will give peace in this place,"

[1231] He is to be understood who is typified by that typical place;

for since by that rebuilt place is typified the Church which was to be

built by Christ, nothing else can be accepted as the meaning of the

saying, "I will give peace in this place," except I will give peace in

the place which that place signifies. For all typical things seem in

some way to personate those whom they typify, as it is said by the

apostle, "That Rock was Christ." [1232] Therefore the glory of this

new testament house is greater than the glory of the old testament

house; and it will show itself as greater when it shall be dedicated.

For then "shall come the desired of all nations," [1233] as we read in

the Hebrew. For before His advent He had not yet been desired by all

nations. For they knew not Him whom they ought to desire, in whom they

had not believed. Then, also, according to the Septuagint

interpretation (for it also is a prophetic meaning), "shall come those

who are elected of the Lord out of all nations." For then indeed there

shall come only those who are elected, whereof the apostle saith,

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the

world." [1234] For the Master Builder who said, "Many are called, but

few are chosen," [1235] did not say this of those who, on being called,

came in such a way as to be cast out from the feast, but would point

out the house built up of the elect, which henceforth shall dread no

ruin. Yet because the churches are also full of those who shall be

separated by the winnowing as in the threshing-floor, the glory of this

house is not so apparent now as it shall be when every one who is there

shall be there always.

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[1230] Hag. ii. 9.

[1231] Hag. ii. 9.

[1232] 1 Cor. x. 4; Ex. xvii. 6.

[1233] Hag. ii. 7.

[1234] Eph. i. 4.

[1235] Matt. xxii. 11-14.

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Chapter 49.--Of the Indiscriminate Increase of the Church, Wherein Many

Reprobate are in This World Mixed with the Elect.

In this wicked world, in these evil days, when the Church measures her

future loftiness by her present humility, and is exercised by goading

fears, tormenting sorrows, disquieting labors, and dangerous

temptations, when she soberly rejoices, rejoicing only in hope, there

are many reprobate mingled with the good, and both are gathered

together by the gospel as in a drag net; [1236] and in this world, as

in a sea, both swim enclosed without distinction in the net, until it

is brought ashore, when the wicked must be separated from the good,

that in the good, as in His temple, God may be all in all. We

acknowledge, indeed, that His word is now fulfilled who spake in the

psalm, and said, "I have announced and spoken; they are multiplied

above number." [1237] This takes place now, since He has spoken,

first by the mouth of his forerunner John, and afterward by His own

mouth, saying, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." [1238]

He chose disciples, whom He also called apostles, [1239] of lowly

birth, unhonored, and illiterate, so that whatever great thing they

might be or do, He might be and do it in them. He had one among them

whose wickedness He could use well in order to accomplish His appointed

passion, and furnish His Church an example of bearing with the wicked.

Having sown the holy gospel as much as that behoved to be done by His

bodily presence, He suffered, died, and rose again, showing by His

passion what we ought to suffer for the truth, and by His resurrection

what we ought to hope for in adversity; saving always the mystery of

the sacrament, by which His blood was shed for the remission of sins.

He held converse on the earth forty days with His disciples, and in

their sight ascended into heaven, and after ten days sent the promised

Holy Spirit. It was given as the chief and most necessary sign of His

coming on those who had believed, that every one of them spoke in the

tongues of all nations; thus signifying that the unity of the catholic

Church would embrace all nations, and would in like manner speak in all

tongues.

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[1236] Matt. xiii. 47-50.

[1237] Ps. xl. 5.

[1238] Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17.

[1239] Luke vi. 13.

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Chapter 50.--Of the Preaching of the Gospel, Which is Made More Famous

and Powerful by the Sufferings of Its Preachers.

Then was fulfilled that prophecy, "Out of Sion shall go forth the law,

and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem;" [1240] and the prediction

of the Lord Christ Himself, when, after the resurrection, "He opened

the understanding" of His amazed disciples "that they might understand

the Scriptures, and said unto them, that thus it is written, and thus

it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day,

and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His

name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." [1241] And again,

when, in reply to their questioning about the day of His last coming,

He said, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the

Father hath put in His own power; but ye shall receive the power of the

Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in

Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even unto the ends of the

earth." [1242] First of all, the Church spread herself abroad from

Jerusalem; and when very many in Judea and Samaria had believed, she

also went into other nations by those who announced the gospel, whom,

as lights, He Himself had both prepared by His word and kindled by His

Holy Spirit. For He had said to them, "Fear ye not them which kill the

body, but are not able to kill the soul." [1243] And that they might

not be frozen with fear, they burned with the fire of charity.

Finally, the gospel of Christ was preached in the whole world, not only

by those who had seen and heard Him both before His passion and after

His resurrection, but also after their death by their successors, amid

the horrible persecutions, diverse torments and deaths of the martyrs,

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and divers

miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, [1244] that the people of the

nations, believing in Him who was crucified for their redemption, might

venerate with Christian love the blood of the martyrs which they had

poured forth with devilish fury, and the very kings by whose laws the

Church had been laid waste might become profitably subject to that name

they had cruelly striven to take away from the earth, and might begin

to persecute the false gods for whose sake the worshippers of the true

God had formerly been persecuted.

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[1240] Isa. ii. 3.

[1241] Luke xxiv. 45-47.

[1242] Acts i. 7, 8.

[1243] Matt. x. 28.

[1244] Heb. ii. 4.

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Chapter 51.--That the Catholic Faith May Be Confirmed Even by the

Dissensions of the Heretics.

But the devil, seeing the temples of the demons deserted, and the human

race running to the name of the liberating Mediator, has moved the

heretics under the Christian name to resist the Christian doctrine, as

if they could be kept in the city of God indifferently without any

correction, just as the city of confusion indifferently held the

philosophers who were of diverse and adverse opinions. Those,

therefore, in the Church of Christ who savor anything morbid and

depraved, and, on being corrected that they may savor what is wholesome

and right, contumaciously resist, and will not amend their pestiferous

and deadly dogmas, but persist in defending them, become heretics, and,

going without, are to be reckoned as enemies who serve for her

discipline. For even thus they profit by their wickedness those true

catholic members of Christ, since God makes a good use even of the

wicked, and all things work together for good to them that love Him.

[1245] For all the enemies of the Church, whatever error blinds or

malice depraves them, exercise her patience if they receive the power

to afflict her corporally; and if they only oppose her by wicked

thought, they exercise her wisdom: but at the same time, if these

enemies are loved, they exercise her benevolence, or even her

beneficence, whether she deals with them by persuasive doctrine or by

terrible discipline. And thus the devil, the prince of the impious

city, when he stirs up his own vessels against the city of God that

sojourns in this world, is permitted to do her no harm. For without

doubt the divine providence procures for her both consolation through

prosperity, that she may not be broken by adversity, and trial through

adversity, that she may not be corrupted by prosperity; and thus each

is tempered by the other, as we recognize in the Psalms that voice

which arises from no other cause, "According to the multitude of my

griefs in my heart, Thy consolations have delighted my soul." [1246]

Hence also is that saying of the apostle, "Rejoicing in hope, patient

in tribulation." [1247]

For it is not to be thought that what the same teacher says can at any

time fail, "Whoever will live piously in Christ shall suffer

persecution." [1248] Because even when those who are without do not

rage, and thus there seems to be, and really is, tranquillity, which

brings very much consolation, especially to the weak, yet there are not

wanting, yea, there are many within who by their abandoned manners

torment the hearts of those who live piously, since by them the

Christian and catholic name is blasphemed; and the dearer that name is

to those who will live piously in Christ, the more do they grieve that

through the wicked, who have a place within, it comes to be less loved

than pious minds desire. The heretics themselves also, since they are

thought to have the Christian name and sacraments, Scriptures, and

profession, cause great grief in the hearts of the pious, both because

many who wish to be Christians are compelled by their dissensions to

hesitate, and many evil-speakers also find in them matter for

blaspheming the Christian name, because they too are at any rate called

Christians. By these and similar depraved manners and errors of men,

those who will live piously in Christ suffer persecution, even when no

one molests or vexes their body; for they suffer this persecution, not

in their bodies, but in their hearts. Whence is that word, "According

to the multitude of my griefs in my heart;" for he does not say, in my

body. Yet, on the other hand, none of them can perish, because the

immutable divine promises are thought of. And because the apostle

says, "The Lord knoweth them that are His; [1249] for whom He did

foreknow, He also predestinated [to be] conformed to the image of His

Son," [1250] none of them can perish; therefore it follows in that

psalm, "Thy consolations have delighted my soul." [1251] But that

grief which arises in the hearts of the pious, who are persecuted by

the manners of bad or false Christians, is profitable to the sufferers,

because it proceeds from the charity in which they do not wish them

either to perish or to hinder the salvation of others. Finally, great

consolations grow out of their chastisement, which imbue the souls of

the pious with a fecundity as great as the pains with which they were

troubled concerning their own perdition. Thus in this world, in these

evil days, not only from the time of the bodily presence of Christ and

His apostles, but even from that of Abel, whom first his wicked brother

slew because he was righteous, [1252] and thenceforth even to the end

of this world, the Church has gone forward on pilgrimage amid the

persecutions of the world and the consolations of God.

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[1245] Rom. viii. 28.

[1246] Ps. xciv. 19.

[1247] Rom. xii. 12.

[1248] 2 Tim. iii. 12.

[1249] 2 Tim. ii. 19.

[1250] Rom. viii. 29.

[1251] Ps. xciv. 19.

[1252] 1 John iii. 12.

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Chapter 52.--Whether We Should Believe What Some Think, That, as the

Ten Persecutions Which are Past Have Been Fulfilled, There Remains No

Other Beyond the Eleventh, Which Must Happen in the Very Time of

Antichrist.

I do not think, indeed, that what some have thought or may think is

rashly said or believed, that until the time of Antichrist the Church

of Christ is not to suffer any persecutions besides those she has

already suffered,--that is, ten,--and that the eleventh and last shall

be inflicted by Antichrist. They reckon as the first that made by

Nero, the second by Domitian, the third by Trajan, the fourth by

Antoninus, the fifth by Severus, the sixth by Maximin, the seventh by

Decius, the eighth by Valerian, the ninth by Aurelian, the tenth by

Diocletian and Maximian. For as there were ten plagues in Egypt before

the people of God could begin to go out, they think this is to be

referred to as showing that the last persecution by Antichrist must be

like the eleventh plague, in which the Egyptians, while following the

Hebrews with hostility, perished in the Red Sea when the people of God

passed through on dry land. Yet I do not think persecutions were

prophetically signified by what was done in Egypt, however nicely and

ingeniously those who think so may seem to have compared the two in

detail, not by the prophetic Spirit, but by the conjecture of the human

mind, which sometimes hits the truth, and sometimes is deceived. But

what can those who think this say of the persecution in which the Lord

Himself was crucified? In which number will they put it? And if they

think the reckoning is to be made exclusive of this one, as if those

must be counted which pertain to the body, and not that in which the

Head Himself was set upon and slain, what can they make of that one

which, after Christ ascended into heaven, took place in Jerusalem, when

the blessed Stephen was stoned; when James the brother of John was

slaughtered with the sword; when the Apostle Peter was imprisoned to be

killed, and was set free by the angel; when the brethren were driven

away and scattered from Jerusalem; when Saul, who afterward became the

Apostle Paul, wasted the Church; and when he himself, publishing the

glad tidings of the faith he had persecuted, suffered such things as he

had inflicted, either from the Jews or from other nations, where he

most fervently preached Christ everywhere? Why, then, do they think

fit to start with Nero, when the Church in her growth had reached the

times of Nero amid the most cruel persecutions; about which it would be

too long to say anything? But if they think that only the persecutions

made by kings ought to be reckoned, it was king Herod who also made a

most grievous one after the ascension of the Lord. And what account do

they give of Julian, whom they do not number in the ten? Did not he

persecute the Church, who forbade the Christians to teach or learn

liberal letters? Under him the elder Valentinian, who was the third

emperor after him, stood forth as a confessor of the Christian faith,

and was dismissed from his command in the army. I shall say nothing of

what he did at Antioch, except to mention his being struck with wonder

at the freedom and cheerfulness of one most faithful and steadfast

young man, who, when many were seized to be tortured, was tortured

during a whole day, and sang under the instrument of torture, until the

emperor feared lest he should succumb under the continued cruelties and

put him to shame at last, which made him dread and fear that he would

be yet more dishonorably put to the blush by the rest. Lastly, within

our own recollection, did not Valens the Arian, brother of the foresaid

Valentinian, waste the catholic Church by great persecution throughout

the East? But how unreasonable it is not to consider that the Church,

which bears fruit and grows through the whole world, may suffer

persecution from kings in some nations even when she does not suffer it

in others! Perhaps, however, it was not to be reckoned a persecution

when the king of the Goths, in Gothia itself, persecuted the Christians

with wonderful cruelty, when there were none but catholics there, of

whom very many were crowned with martyrdom, as we have heard from

certain brethren who had been there at that time as boys, and

unhesitatingly called to mind that they had seen these things? And

what took place in Persia of late? Was not persecution so hot against

the Christians (if even yet it is allayed) that some of the fugitives

from it came even to Roman towns? When I think of these and the like

things, it does not seem to me that the number of persecutions with

which the Church is to be tried can be definitely stated. But, on the

other hand, it is no less rash to affirm that there will be some

persecutions by kings besides that last one, about which no Christian

is in doubt. Therefore we leave this undecided, supporting or refuting

neither side of this question, but only restraining men from the

audacious presumption of affirming either of them.

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Chapter 53.--Of the Hidden Time of the Final Persecution.

Truly Jesus Himself shall extinguish by His presence that last

persecution which is to be made by Antichrist. For so it is written,

that "He shall slay him with the breath of His mouth, and empty him

with the brightness of His presence." [1253] It is customary to ask,

When shall that be? But this is quite unreasonable. For had it been

profitable for us to know this, by whom could it better have been told

than by God Himself, the Master, when the disciples questioned Him?

For they were not silent when with Him, but inquired of Him, saying,

"Lord, wilt Thou at this time present the kingdom to Israel, or when?"

[1254] But He said, "It is not for you to know the times, which the

Father hath put in His own power." When they got that answer, they had

not at all questioned Him about the hour, or day, or year, but about

the time. In vain, then, do we attempt to compute definitely the years

that may remain to this world, when we may hear from the mouth of the

Truth that it is not for us to know this. Yet some have said that four

hundred, some five hundred, others a thousand years, may be completed

from the ascension of the Lord up to His final coming. But to point

out how each of them supports his own opinion would take too long, and

is not necessary; for indeed they use human conjectures, and bring

forward nothing certain from the authority of the canonical

Scriptures. But on this subject He puts aside the figures of the

calculators, and orders silence, who says, "It is not for you to know

the times, which the Father hath put in His own power."

But because this sentence is in the Gospel, it is no wonder that the

worshippers of the many and false gods have been none the less

restrained from feigning that by the responses of the demons, whom they

worship as gods, it has been fixed how long the Christian religion is

to last. For when they saw that it could not be consumed by so many

and great persecutions, but rather drew from them wonderful

enlargements, they invented I know not what Greek verses, as if poured

forth by a divine oracle to some one consulting it, in which, indeed,

they make Christ innocent of this, as it were, sacrilegious crime, but

add that Peter by enchantments brought it about that the name of Christ

should be worshipped for three hundred and sixty-five years, and, after

the completion of that number of years, should at once take end. Oh

the hearts of learned men! Oh, learned wits, meet to believe such

things about Christ as you are not willing to believe in Christ, that

His disciple Peter did not learn magic arts from Him, yet that,

although He was innocent, His disciple was an enchanter, and chose that

His name rather than his own should be worshipped through his magic

arts, his great labors and perils, and at last even the shedding of his

blood! If Peter the enchanter made the world so love Christ, what did

Christ the innocent do to make Peter so love Him? Let them answer

themselves then, and, if they can, let them understand that the world,

for the sake of eternal life, was made to love Christ by that same

supernal grace which made Peter also love Christ for the sake of the

eternal life to be received from Him, and that even to the extent of

suffering temporal death for Him. And then, what kind of gods are

these who are able to predict such things, yet are not able to avert

them, succumbing in such a way to a single enchanter and wicked

magician (who, as they say, having slain a yearling boy and torn him to

pieces, buried him with nefarious rites), that they permitted the sect

hostile to themselves to gain strength for so great a time, and to

surmount the horrid cruelties of so many great persecutions, not by

resisting but by suffering, and to procure the overthrow of their own

images, temples, rituals, and oracles? Finally, what god was it--not

ours, certainly, but one of their own--who was either enticed or

compelled by so great wickedness to perform these things? For those

verses say that Peter bound, not any demon, but a god to do these

things. Such a god have they who have not Christ.

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[1253] Isa. xi. 4; 2 Thess. i. 9.

[1254] Acts i. 6, 7.

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Chapter 54.--Of the Very Foolish Lie of the Pagans, in Feigning that

the Christian Religion Was Not to Last Beyond Three Hundred and

Sixty-Five Years.

I might collect these and many similar arguments, if that year had not

already passed by which lying divination has promised, and deceived

vanity has believed. But as a few years ago three hundred and

sixty-five years were completed since the time when the worship of the

name of Christ was established by His presence in the flesh, and by the

apostles, what other proof need we seek to refute that falsehood? For,

not to place the beginning of this period at the nativity of Christ,

because as an infant and boy He had no disciples, yet, when He began to

have them, beyond doubt the Christian doctrine and religion then became

known through His bodily presence, that is, after He was baptized in

the river Jordan by the ministry of John. For on this account that

prophecy went before concerning Him: "He shall reign from sea even to

sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." [1255] But

since, before He suffered and rose from the dead, the faith had not yet

been defined to all, but was defined in the resurrection of Christ (for

so the Apostle Paul speaks to the Athenians, saying, "But now He

announces to men that all everywhere should repent, because He hath

appointed a day in which to judge the world in equity, by the Man in

whom He hath defined the faith to all men, raising Him from the dead"

[1256] ), it is better that, in settling this question, we should start

from that point, especially because the Holy Spirit was then given,

just as He behoved to be given after the resurrection of Christ in that

city from which the second law, that is, the new testament, ought to

begin. For the first, which is called the old testament was given from

Mount Sinai through Moses. But concerning this which was to be given

by Christ it was predicted, "Out of Sion shall go forth the law and the

word of the Lord out of Jerusalem;" [1257] whence He Himself said that

repentance in His name behoved to be preached among all nations, but

yet beginning at Jerusalem. [1258] There, therefore, the worship of

this name took its rise, that Jesus should be believed in, who died and

rose again. There this faith blazed up with such noble beginnings,

that several thousand men, being converted to the name of Christ with

wonderful alacrity, sold their goods for distribution among the needy,

thus, by a holy resolution and most ardent charity, coming to voluntary

poverty, and prepared themselves, amid the Jews who raged and thirsted

for their blood, to contend for the truth even to death, not with armed

power, but with more powerful patience. If this was accomplished by no

magic arts, why do they hesitate to believe that the other could be

done throughout the whole world by the same divine power by which this

was done? But supposing Peter wrought that enchantment so that so

great a multitude of men at Jerusalem was thus kindled to worship the

name of Christ, who had either seized and fastened Him to the cross, or

reviled Him when fastened there, we must still inquire when the three

hundred and sixty-five years must be completed, counting from that

year. Now Christ died when the Gemini were consuls, on the eighth day

before the kalends of April. He rose the third day, as the apostles

have proved by the evidence of their own senses. Then forty days

after, He ascended into heaven. Ten days after, that is, on the

fiftieth after his resurrection, He sent the Holy Spirit; then three

thousand men believed when the apostles preached Him. Then, therefore,

arose the worship of that name, as we believe, and according to the

real truth, by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, but, as impious vanity

has feigned or thought, by the magic arts of Peter. A little

afterward, too, on a wonderful sign being wrought, when at Peter's own

word a certain beggar, so lame from his mother's womb that he was

carried by others and laid down at the gate of the temple, where he

begged alms, was made whole in the name of Jesus Christ, and leaped up,

five thousand men believed, and thenceforth the Church grew by sundry

accessions of believers. Thus we gather the very day with which that

year began, namely, that on which the Holy Spirit was sent, that is,

during the ides of May. And, on counting the consuls, the three

hundred and sixty-five years are found completed on the same ides in

the consulate of Honorius and Eutychianus. Now, in the following year,

in the consulate of Mallius Theodorus, when, according to that oracle

of the demons or figment of men, there ought already to have been no

Christian religion, it was not necessary to inquire, what perchance was

done in other parts of the earth. But, as we know, in the most noted

and eminent city, Carthage, in Africa, Gaudentius and Jovius, officers

of the Emperor Honorius, on the fourteenth day before the kalends of

April, overthrew the temples and broke the images of the false gods.

And from that time to the present, during almost thirty years, who does

not see how much the worship of the name of Christ has increased,

especially after many of those became Christians who had been kept back

from the faith by thinking that divination true, but saw when that same

number of years was completed that it was empty and ridiculous? We,

therefore, who are called and are Christians, do not believe in Peter,

but in Him whom Peter believed,--being edified by Peter's sermons about

Christ, not poisoned by his incantations; and not deceived by his

enchantments, but aided by his good deeds. Christ Himself, who was

Peter's Master in the doctrine which leads to eternal life, is our

Master too.

But let us now at last finish this book, after thus far treating of,

and showing as far as seemed sufficient, what is the mortal course of

the two cities, the heavenly and the earthly, which are mingled

together from the beginning down to the end. Of these, the earthly one

has made to herself of whom she would, either from any other quarter,

or even from among men, false gods whom she might serve by sacrifice;

but she which is heavenly and is a pilgrim on the earth does not make

false gods, but is herself made by the true God of whom she herself

must be the true sacrifice. Yet both alike either enjoy temporal good

things, or are afflicted with temporal evils, but with diverse faith,

diverse hope, and diverse love, until they must be separated by the

last judgment, and each must receive her own end, of which there is no

end. About these ends of both we must next treat.

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[1255] Ps. lxxii. 8.

[1256] Acts xvii. 30, 31.

[1257] Isa. ii. 3.

[1258] Luke xxiv. 47.

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Book XIX.

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Argument--In this book the end of the two cities, the earthly and the

heavenly, is discussed. Augustin reviews the opinions of the

philosophers regarding the supreme good, and their vain efforts to make

for themselves a happiness in this life; and, while he refutes these,

he takes occasion to show what the peace and happiness belonging to the

heavenly city, or the people of Christ, are both now and hereafter.

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Chapter 1.--That Varro Has Made Out that Two Hundred and Eighty-Eight

Different Sects of Philosophy Might Be Formed by the Various Opinions

Regarding the Supreme Good.

As I see that I have still to discuss the fit destinies of the two

cities, the earthly and the heavenly, I must first explain, so far as

the limits of this work allow me, the reasonings by which men have

attempted to make for themselves a happiness in this unhappy life, in

order that it may be evident, not only from divine authority, but also

from such reasons as can be adduced to unbelievers, how the empty

dreams of the philosophers differ from the hope which God gives to us,

and from the substantial fulfillment of it which He will give us as our

blessedness. Philosophers have expressed a great variety of diverse

opinions regarding the ends of goods and of evils, and this question

they have eagerly canvassed, that they might, if possible, discover

what makes a man happy. For the end of our good is that for the sake

of which other things are to be desired, while it is to be desired for

its own sake; and the end of evil is that on account of which other

things are to be shunned, while it is avoided on its own account.

Thus, by the end of good, we at present mean, not that by which good is

destroyed, so that it no longer exists, but that by which it is

finished, so that it becomes complete; and by the end of evil we mean,

not that which abolishes it, but that which completes its development.

These two ends, therefore, are the supreme good and the supreme evil;

and, as I have said, those who have in this vain life professed the

study of wisdom have been at great pains to discover these ends, and to

obtain the supreme good and avoid the supreme evil in this life. And

although they erred in a variety of ways, yet natural insight has

prevented them from wandering from the truth so far that they have not

placed the supreme good and evil, some in the soul, some in the body,

and some in both. From this tripartite distribution of the sects of

philosophy, Marcus Varro, in his book De Philosophia, [1259] has drawn

so large a variety of opinions, that, by a subtle and minute analysis

of distinctions, he numbers without difficulty as many as 288

sects,--not that these have actually existed, but sects which are

possible.

To illustrate briefly what he means, I must begin with his own

introductory statement in the above-mentioned book, that there are four

things which men desire, as it were by nature without a master, without

the help of any instruction, without industry or the art of living

which is called virtue, and which is certainly learned: [1260] either

pleasure, which is an agreeable stirring of the bodily sense; or

repose, which excludes every bodily inconvenience; or both these, which

Epicurus calls by the one name, pleasure; or the primary objects of

nature, [1261] which comprehend the things already named and other

things, either bodily, such as health, and safety, and integrity of the

members, or spiritual, such as the greater and less mental gifts that

are found in men. Now these four things--pleasure, repose, the two

combined, and the primary objects of nature--exist in us in such sort

that we must either desire virtue on their account, or them for the

sake of virtue, or both for their own sake; and consequently there

arise from this distinction twelve sects, for each is by this

consideration tripled. I will illustrate this in one instance, and,

having done so, it will not be difficult to understand the others.

According, then, as bodily pleasure is subjected, preferred, or united

to virtue, there are three sects. It is subjected to virtue when it is

chosen as subservient to virtue. Thus it is a duty of virtue to live

for one's country, and for its sake to beget children, neither of which

can be done without bodily pleasure. For there is pleasure in eating

and drinking, pleasure also in sexual intercourse. But when it is

preferred to virtue, it is desired for its own sake, and virtue is

chosen only for its sake, and to effect nothing else than the

attainment or preservation of bodily pleasure. And this, indeed, is to

make life hideous; for where virtue is the slave of pleasure it no

longer deserves the name of virtue. Yet even this disgraceful

distortion has found some philosophers to patronize and defend it.

Then virtue is united to pleasure when neither is desired for the

other's sake, but both for their own. And therefore, as pleasure,

according as it is subjected, preferred, or united to virtue, makes

three sects, so also do repose, pleasure and repose combined, and the

prime natural blessings, make their three sects each. For as men's

opinions vary, and these four things are sometimes subjected, sometimes

preferred, and sometimes united to virtue, there are produced twelve

sects. But this number again is doubled by the addition of one

difference, viz., the social life; for whoever attaches himself to any

of these sects does so either for his own sake alone, or for the sake

of a companion, for whom he ought to wish what he desires for himself.

And thus there will be twelve of those who think some one of these

opinions should be held for their own sakes, and other twelve who

decide that they ought to follow this or that philosophy not for their

own sakes only, but also for the sake of others whose good they desire

as their own. These twenty-four sects again are doubled, and become

forty-eight by adding a difference taken from the New Academy. For

each of these four and twenty sects can hold and defend their opinion

as certain, as the Stoics defended the position that the supreme good

of man consisted solely in virtue; or they can be held as probable, but

not certain, as the New Academics did. There are, therefore,

twenty-four who hold their philosophy as certainly true, other

twenty-four who hold their opinions as probable, but not certain.

Again, as each person who attaches himself to any of these sects may

adopt the mode of life either of the Cynics or of the other

philosophers, this distinction will double the number, and so make

ninety-six sects. Then, lastly, as each of these sects may be adhered

to either by men who love a life of ease, as those who have through

choice or necessity addicted themselves to study, or by men who love a

busy life, as those who, while philosophizing, have been much occupied

with state affairs and public business, or by men who choose a mixed

life, in imitation of those who have apportioned their time partly to

erudite leisure, partly to necessary business: by these differences

the number of the sects is tripled, and becomes 288.

I have thus, as briefly and lucidly as I could, given in my own words

the opinions which Varro expresses in his book. But how he refutes all

the rest of these sects, and chooses one, the Old Academy, instituted

by Plato, and continuing to Polemo, the fourth teacher of that school

of philosophy which held that their system was certain; and how on this

ground he distinguishes it from the New Academy, [1262] which began

with Polemo's successor Arcesilaus, and held that all things are

uncertain; and how he seeks to establish that the Old Academy was as

free from error as from doubt,--all this, I say, were too long to enter

upon in detail, and yet I must not altogether pass it by in silence.

Varro then rejects, as a first step, all those differences which have

multiplied the number of sects; and the ground on which he does so is

that they are not differences about the supreme good. He maintains

that in philosophy a sect is created only by its having an opinion of

its own different from other schools on the point of the

ends-in-chief. For man has no other reason for philosophizing than

that he may be happy; but that which makes him happy is itself the

supreme good. In other words, the supreme good is the reason of

philosophizing; and therefore that cannot be called a sect of

philosophy which pursues no way of its own towards the supreme good.

Thus, when it is asked whether a wise man will adopt the social life,

and desire and be interested in the supreme good of his friend as in

his own, or will, on the contrary, do all that he does merely for his

own sake, there is no question here about the supreme good, but only

about the propriety of associating or not associating a friend in its

participation: whether the wise man will do this not for his own sake,

but for the sake of his friend in whose good he delights as in his

own. So, too, when it is asked whether all things about which

philosophy is concerned are to be considered uncertain, as by the New

Academy, or certain, as the other philosophers maintain, the question

here is not what end should be pursued, but whether or not we are to

believe in the substantial existence of that end; or, to put it more

plainly, whether he who pursues the supreme good must maintain that it

is a true good, or only that it appears to him to be true, though

possibly it may be delusive,--both pursuing one and the same good. The

distinction, too, which is founded on the dress and manners of the

Cynics, does not touch the question of the chief good, but only the

question whether he who pursues that good which seems to himself true

should live as do the Cynics. There were, in fact, men who, though

they pursued different things as the supreme good, some choosing

pleasure, others virtue, yet adopted that mode of life which gave the

Cynics their name. Thus, whatever it is which distinguishes the Cynics

from other philosophers, this has no bearing on the choice and pursuit

of that good which constitutes happiness. For if it had any such

bearing, then the same habits of life would necessitate the pursuit of

the same chief good, and diverse habits would necessitate the pursuit

of different ends.

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[1259] Not extant.

[1260] Alluding to the vexed question whether virtue could be taught.

[1261] The prima natur�, or prota kata phusin of the Stoics.

[1262] Frequently called the Middle Academy; the New beginning with

Carneades.

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Chapter 2.--How Varro, by Removing All the Differences Which Do Not

Form Sects, But are Merely Secondary Questions, Reaches Three

Definitions of the Chief Good, of Which We Must Choose One.

The same may be said of those three kinds of life, the life of studious

leisure and search after truth, the life of easy engagement in affairs,

and the life in which both these are mingled. When it is asked, which

of these should be adopted, this involves no controversy about the end

of good, but inquires which of these three puts a man in the best

position for finding and retaining the supreme good. For this good, as

soon as a man finds it, makes him happy; but lettered leisure, or

public business, or the alternation of these, do not necessarily

constitute happiness. Many, in fact, find it possible to adopt one or

other of these modes of life, and yet to miss what makes a man happy.

The question, therefore, regarding the supreme good and the supreme

evil, and which distinguishes sects of philosophy, is one; and these

questions concerning the social life, the doubt of the Academy, the

dress and food of the Cynics, the three modes of life--the active, the

contemplative, and the mixed--these are different questions, into none

of which the question of the chief good enters. And therefore, as

Marcus Varro multiplied the sects to the number of 288 (or whatever

larger number he chose) by introducing these four differences derived

from the social life, the New Academy, the Cynics, and the threefold

form of life, so, by removing these differences as having no bearing on

the supreme good, and as therefore not constituting what can properly

be called sects, he returns to those twelve schools which concern

themselves with inquiring what that good is which makes man happy, and

he shows that one of these is true, the rest false. In other words, he

dismisses the distinction founded on the threefold mode of life, and so

decreases the whole number by two-thirds, reducing the sects to

ninety-six. Then, putting aside the Cynic peculiarities, the number

decreases by a half, to forty-eight. Taking away next the distinction

occasioned by the hesitancy of the New Academy, the number is again

halved, and reduced to twenty-four. Treating in a similar way the

diversity introduced by the consideration of the social life, there are

left but twelve, which this difference had doubled to twenty-four.

Regarding these twelve, no reason can be assigned why they should not

be called sects. For in them the sole inquiry is regarding the supreme

good and the ultimate evil,--that is to say, regarding the supreme

good, for this being found, the opposite evil is thereby found. Now,

to make these twelve sects, he multiplies by three these four

things--pleasure, repose, pleasure and repose combined, and the primary

objects of nature which Varro calls primigenia. For as these four

things are sometimes subordinated to virtue, so that they seem to be

desired not for their own sake, but for virtue's sake; sometimes

preferred to it, so that virtue seems to be necessary not on its own

account, but in order to attain these things; sometimes joined with it,

so that both they and virtue are desired for their own sakes,--we must

multiply the four by three, and thus we get twelve sects. But from

those four things Varro eliminates three--pleasure, repose, pleasure

and repose combined--not because he thinks these are not worthy of the

place assigned them, but because they are included in the primary

objects of nature. And what need is there, at any rate, to make a

threefold division out of these two ends, pleasure and repose, taking

them first severally and then conjunctly, since both they, and many

other things besides, are comprehended in the primary objects of

nature? Which of the three remaining sects must be chosen? This is

the question that Varro dwells upon. For whether one of these three or

some other be chosen, reason forbids that more than one be true. This

we shall afterwards see; but meanwhile let us explain as briefly and

distinctly as we can how Varro makes his selection from these three,

that is, from the sects which severally hold that the primary objects

of nature are to be desired for virtue's sake, that virtue is to be

desired for their sake, and that virtue and these objects are to be

desired each for their own sake.

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Chapter 3.--Which of the Three Leading Opinions Regarding the Chief

Good Should Be Preferred, According to Varro, Who Follows Antiochus and

the Old Academy.

Which of these three is true and to be adopted he attempts to show in

the following manner. As it is the supreme good, not of a tree, or of

a beast, or of a god, but of man that philosophy is in quest of, he

thinks that, first of all, we must define man. He is of opinion that

there are two parts in human nature, body and soul, and makes no doubt

that of these two the soul is the better and by far the more worthy

part. But whether the soul alone is the man, so that the body holds

the same relation to it as a horse to the horseman, this he thinks has

to be ascertained. The horseman is not a horse and a man, but only a

man, yet he is called a horseman, because he is in some relation to the

horse. Again, is the body alone the man, having a relation to the soul

such as the cup has to the drink? For it is not the cup and the drink

it contains which are called the cup, but the cup alone; yet it is so

called because it is made to hold the drink. Or, lastly, is it neither

the soul alone nor the body alone, but both together, which are man,

the body and the soul being each a part, but the whole man being both

together, as we call two horses yoked together a pair, of which pair

the near and the off horse is each a part, but we do not call either of

them, no matter how connected with the other, a pair, but only both

together? Of these three alternatives, then, Varro chooses the third,

that man is neither the body alone, nor the soul alone, but both

together. And therefore the highest good, in which lies the happiness

of man, is composed of goods of both kinds, both bodily and spiritual.

And consequently he thinks that the primary objects of nature are to be

sought for their own sake, and that virtue, which is the art of living,

and can be communicated by instruction, is the most excellent of

spiritual goods. This virtue, then, or art of regulating life, when it

has received these primary objects of nature which existed

independently of it, and prior to any instruction, seeks them all, and

itself also, for its own sake; and it uses them, as it also uses

itself, that from them all it may derive profit and enjoyment, greater

or less, according as they are themselves greater or less; and while it

takes pleasure in all of them, it despises the less that it may obtain

or retain the greater when occasion demands. Now, of all goods,

spiritual or bodily, there is none at all to compare with virtue. For

virtue makes a good use both of itself and of all other goods in which

lies man's happiness; and where it is absent, no matter how many good

things a man has, they are not for his good, and consequently should

not be called good things while they belong to one who makes them

useless by using them badly. The life of man, then, is called happy

when it enjoys virtue and these other spiritual and bodily good things

without which virtue is impossible. It is called happier if it enjoys

some or many other good things which are not essential to virtue; and

happiest of all, if it lacks not one of the good things which pertain

to the body and the soul. For life is not the same thing as virtue,

since not every life, but a wisely regulated life, is virtue; and yet,

while there can be life of some kind without virtue, there cannot be

virtue without life. This I might apply to memory and reason, and such

mental faculties; for these exist prior to instruction, and without

them there cannot be any instruction, and consequently no virtue, since

virtue is learned. But bodily advantages, such as swiftness of foot,

beauty, or strength, are not essential to virtue, neither is virtue

essential to them, and yet they are good things; and, according to our

philosophers, even these advantages are desired by virtue for its own

sake, and are used and enjoyed by it in a becoming manner.

They say that this happy life is also social, and loves the advantages

of its friends as its own, and for their sake wishes for them what it

desires for itself, whether these friends live in the same family, as a

wife, children, domestics; or in the locality where one's home is, as

the citizens of the same town; or in the world at large, as the nations

bound in common human brotherhood; or in the universe itself,

comprehended in the heavens and the earth, as those whom they call

gods, and provide as friends for the wise man, and whom we more

familiarly call angels. Moreover, they say that, regarding the supreme

good and evil, there is no room for doubt, and that they therefore

differ from the New Academy in this respect, and they are not concerned

whether a philosopher pursues those ends which they think true in the

Cynic dress and manner of life or in some other. And, lastly, in

regard to the three modes of life, the contemplative, the active, and

the composite, they declare in favor of the third. That these were the

opinions and doctrines of the Old Academy, Varro asserts on the

authority of Antiochus, Cicero's master and his own, though Cicero

makes him out to have been more frequently in accordance with the

Stoics than with the Old Academy. But of what importance is this to

us, who ought to judge the matter on its own merits, rather than to

understand accurately what different men have thought about it?

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Chapter 4.--What the Christians Believe Regarding the Supreme Good and

Evil, in Opposition to the Philosophers, Who Have Maintained that the

Supreme Good is in Themselves.

If, then, we be asked what the city of God has to say upon these

points, and, in the first place, what its opinion regarding the supreme

good and evil is, it will reply that life eternal is the supreme good,

death eternal the supreme evil, and that to obtain the one and escape

the other we must live rightly. And thus it is written, "The just

lives by faith," [1263] for we do not as yet see our good, and must

therefore live by faith; neither have we in ourselves power to live

rightly, but can do so only if He who has given us faith to believe in

His help do help us when we believe and pray. As for those who have

supposed that the sovereign good and evil are to be found in this life,

and have placed it either in the soul or the body, or in both, or, to

speak more explicitly, either in pleasure or in virtue, or in both; in

repose or in virtue, or in both; in pleasure and repose, or in virtue,

or in all combined; in the primary objects of nature, or in virtue, or

in both,--all these have, with a marvelous shallowness, sought to find

their blessedness in this life and in themselves. Contempt has been

poured upon such ideas by the Truth, saying by the prophet, "The Lord

knoweth the thoughts of men" (or, as the Apostle Paul cites the

passage, "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise") "that they are

vain." [1264]

For what flood of eloquence can suffice to detail the miseries of this

life? Cicero, in the Consolation on the death of his daughter, has

spent all his ability in lamentation; but how inadequate was even his

ability here? For when, where, how, in this life can these primary

objects of nature be possessed so that they may not be assailed by

unforeseen accidents? Is the body of the wise man exempt from any pain

which may dispel pleasure, from any disquietude which may banish

repose? The amputation or decay of the members of the body puts an end

to its integrity, deformity blights its beauty, weakness its health,

lassitude its vigor, sleepiness or sluggishness its activity,--and

which of these is it that may not assail the flesh of the wise man?

Comely and fitting attitudes and movements of the body are numbered

among the prime natural blessings; but what if some sickness makes the

members tremble? what if a man suffers from curvature of the spine to

such an extent that his hands reach the ground, and he goes upon

all-fours like a quadruped? Does not this destroy all beauty and grace

in the body, whether at rest or in motion? What shall I say of the

fundamental blessings of the soul, sense and intellect, of which the

one is given for the perception, and the other for the comprehension of

truth? But what kind of sense is it that remains when a man becomes

deaf and blind? where are reason and intellect when disease makes a man

delirious? We can scarcely, or not at all, refrain from tears, when we

think of or see the actions and words of such frantic persons, and

consider how different from and even opposed to their own sober

judgment and ordinary conduct their present demeanor is. And what

shall I say of those who suffer from demoniacal possession? Where is

their own intelligence hidden and buried while the malignant spirit is

using their body and soul according to his own will? And who is quite

sure that no such thing can happen to the wise man in this life? Then,

as to the perception of truth, what can we hope for even in this way

while in the body, as we read in the true book of Wisdom, "The

corruptible body weigheth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle

presseth down the mind that museth upon many things?" [1265] And

eagerness, or desire of action, if this is the right meaning to put

upon the Greek horme, is also reckoned among the primary advantages of

nature; and yet is it not this which produces those pitiable movements

of the insane, and those actions which we shudder to see, when sense is

deceived and reason deranged?

In fine, virtue itself, which is not among the primary objects of

nature, but succeeds to them as the result of learning, though it holds

the highest place among human good things, what is its occupation save

to wage perpetual war with vices,--not those that are outside of us,

but within; not other men's, but our own,--a war which is waged

especially by that virtue which the Greeks call sophrosune, and we

temperance, [1266] and which bridles carnal lusts, and prevents them

from winning the consent of the spirit to wicked deeds? For we must

not fancy that there is no vice in us, when, as the apostle says, "The

flesh lusteth against the spirit;" [1267] for to this vice there is a

contrary virtue, when, as the same writer says, "The spirit lusteth

against the flesh." "For these two," he says, "are contrary one to the

other, so that you cannot do the things which you would." But what is

it we wish to do when we seek to attain the supreme good, unless that

the flesh should cease to lust against the spirit, and that there be no

vice in us against which the spirit may lust? And as we cannot attain

to this in the present life, however ardently we desire it, let us by

God's help accomplish at least this, to preserve the soul from

succumbing and yielding to the flesh that lusts against it, and to

refuse our consent to the perpetration of sin. Far be it from us,

then, to fancy that while we are still engaged in this intestine war,

we have already found the happiness which we seek to reach by victory.

And who is there so wise that he has no conflict at all to maintain

against his vices?

What shall I say of that virtue which is called prudence? Is not all

its vigilance spent in the discernment of good from evil things, so

that no mistake may be admitted about what we should desire and what

avoid? And thus it is itself a proof that we are in the midst of

evils, or that evils are in us; for it teaches us that it is an evil to

consent to sin, and a good to refuse this consent. And yet this evil,

to which prudence teaches and temperance enables us not to consent, is

removed from this life neither by prudence nor by temperance. And

justice, whose office it is to render to every man his due, whereby

there is in man himself a certain just order of nature, so that the

soul is subjected to God, and the flesh to the soul, and consequently

both soul and flesh to God,--does not this virtue demonstrate that it

is as yet rather laboring towards its end than resting in its finished

work? For the soul is so much the less subjected to God as it is less

occupied with the thought of God; and the flesh is so much the less

subjected to the spirit as it lusts more vehemently against the

spirit. So long, therefore, as we are beset by this weakness, this

plague, this disease, how shall we dare to say that we are safe? and if

not safe, then how can we be already enjoying our final beatitude?

Then that virtue which goes by the name of fortitude is the plainest

proof of the ills of life, for it is these ills which it is compelled

to bear patiently. And this holds good, no matter though the ripest

wisdom co-exists with it. And I am at a loss to understand how the

Stoic philosophers can presume to say that these are no ills, though at

the same time they allow the wise man to commit suicide and pass out of

this life if they become so grievous that he cannot or ought not to

endure them. But such is the stupid pride of these men who fancy that

the supreme good can be found in this life, and that they can become

happy by their own resources, that their wise man, or at least the man

whom they fancifully depict as such, is always happy, even though he

become blind, deaf, dumb, mutilated, racked with pains, or suffer any

conceivable calamity such as may compel him to make away with himself;

and they are not ashamed to call the life that is beset with these

evils happy. O happy life, which seeks the aid of death to end it? If

it is happy, let the wise man remain in it; but if these ills drive him

out of it, in what sense is it happy? Or how can they say that these

are not evils which conquer the virtue of fortitude, and force it not

only to yield, but so to rave that it in one breath calls life happy

and recommends it to be given up? For who is so blind as not to see

that if it were happy it would not be fled from? And if they say we

should flee from it on account of the infirmities that beset it, why

then do they not lower their pride and acknowledge that it is

miserable? Was it, I would ask, fortitude or weakness which prompted

Cato to kill himself? for he would not have done so had he not been too

weak to endure C�sar's victory. Where, then, is his fortitude? It has

yielded, it has succumbed, it has been so thoroughly overcome as to

abandon, forsake, flee this happy life. Or was it no longer happy?

Then it was miserable. How, then, were these not evils which made life

miserable, and a thing to be escaped from?

And therefore those who admit that these are evils, as the Peripatetics

do, and the Old Academy, the sect which Varro advocates, express a more

intelligible doctrine; but theirs also is a surprising mistake, for

they contend that this is a happy life which is beset by these evils,

even though they be so great that he who endures them should commit

suicide to escape them. "Pains and anguish of body," says Varro, "are

evils, and so much the worse in proportion to their severity; and to

escape them you must quit this life." What life, I pray? This life,

he says, which is oppressed by such evils. Then it is happy in the

midst of these very evils on account of which you say we must quit it?

Or do you call it happy because you are at liberty to escape these

evils by death? What, then, if by some secret judgment of God you were

held fast and not permitted to die, nor suffered to live without these

evils? In that case, at least, you would say that such a life was

miserable. It is soon relinquished, no doubt but this does not make it

not miserable; for were it eternal, you yourself would pronounce it

miserable. Its brevity, therefore, does not clear it of misery;

neither ought it to be called happiness because it is a brief misery.

Certainly there is a mighty force in these evils which compel a

man--according to them even a wise man--to cease to be a man that he

may escape them, though they say, and say truly, that it is as it were

the first and strongest demand of nature that a man cherish himself,

and naturally therefore avoid death, and should so stand his own friend

as to wish and vehemently aim at continuing to exist as a living

creature, and subsisting in this union of soul and body. There is a

mighty force in these evils to overcome this natural instinct by which

death is by every means and with all a man's efforts avoided, and to

overcome it so completely that what was avoided is desired, sought

after, and if it cannot in any other way be obtained, is inflicted by

the man on himself. There is a mighty force in these evils which make

fortitude a homicide,--if, indeed, that is to be called fortitude which

is so thoroughly overcome by these evils, that it not only cannot

preserve by patience the man whom it undertook to govern and defend,

but is itself obliged to kill him. The wise man, I admit, ought to

bear death with patience, but when it is inflicted by another. If,

then, as these men maintain, he is obliged to inflict it on himself,

certainly it must be owned that the ills which compel him to this are

not only evils, but intolerable evils. The life, then, which is either

subject to accidents, or environed with evils so considerable and

grievous, could never have been called happy, if the men who give it

this name had condescended to yield to the truth, and to be conquered

by valid arguments, when they inquired after the happy life, as they

yield to unhappiness, and are overcome by overwhelming evils, when they

put themselves to death, and if they had not fancied that the supreme

good was to be found in this mortal life; for the very virtues of this

life, which are certainly its best and most useful possessions, are all

the more telling proofs of its miseries in proportion as they are

helpful against the violence of its dangers, toils, and woes. For if

these are true virtues,--and such cannot exist save in those who have

true piety,--they do not profess to be able to deliver the men who

possess them from all miseries; for true virtues tell no such lies, but

they profess that by the hope of the future world this life, which is

miserably involved in the many and great evils of this world, is happy

as it is also safe. For if not yet safe, how could it be happy? And

therefore the Apostle Paul, speaking not of men without prudence,

temperance, fortitude, and justice, but of those whose lives were

regulated by true piety, and whose virtues were therefore true, says,

"For we are saved by hope: now hope which is seen is not hope; for

what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we

see not, then do we with patience wait for it." [1268] As, therefore,

we are saved, so we are made happy by hope. And as we do not as yet

possess a present, but look for a future salvation, so is it with our

happiness, and this "with patience;" for we are encompassed with evils,

which we ought patiently to endure, until we come to the ineffable

enjoyment of unmixed good; for there shall be no longer anything to

endure. Salvation, such as it shall be in the world to come, shall

itself be our final happiness. And this happiness these philosophers

refuse to believe in, because they do not see it, and attempt to

fabricate for themselves a happiness in this life, based upon a virtue

which is as deceitful as it is proud.

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[1263] Hab. ii. 4.

[1264] Ps. xciv. 11, and 1 Cor. iii. 20.

[1265] Wisdom ix. 15.

[1266] Cicero, Tusc. Qu�st. iii. 8.

[1267] Gal. v. 17.

[1268] Rom. viii. 24.

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Chapter 5.--Of the Social Life, Which, Though Most Desirable, is

Frequently Disturbed by Many Distresses.

We give a much more unlimited approval to their idea that the life of

the wise man must be social. For how could the city of God (concerning

which we are already writing no less than the nineteenth book of this

work) either take a beginning or be developed, or attain its proper

destiny, if the life of the saints were not a social life? But who can

enumerate all the great grievances with which human society abounds in

the misery of this mortal state? Who can weigh them? Hear how one of

their comic writers makes one of his characters express the common

feelings of all men in this matter: "I am married; this is one

misery. Children are born to me; they are additional cares." [1269]

What shall I say of the miseries of love which Terence also

recounts--"slights, suspicions, quarrels, war to-day, peace to-morrow?"

[1270] Is not human life full of such things? Do they not often

occur even in honorable friendships? On all hands we experience these

slights, suspicions, quarrels, war, all of which are undoubted evils;

while, on the other hand, peace is a doubtful good, because we do not

know the heart of our friend, and though we did know it to-day, we

should be as ignorant of what it might be to-morrow. Who ought to be,

or who are more friendly than those who live in the same family? And

yet who can rely even upon this friendship, seeing that secret

treachery has often broken it up, and produced enmity as bitter as the

amity was sweet, or seemed sweet by the most perfect dissimulation? It

is on this account that the words of Cicero so move the heart of every

one, and provoke a sigh: "There are no snares more dangerous than

those which lurk under the guise of duty or the name of relationship.

For the man who is your declared foe you can easily baffle by

precaution; but this hidden, intestine, and domestic danger not merely

exists, but overwhelms you before you can foresee and examine it."

[1271] It is also to this that allusion is made by the divine saying,

"A man's foes are those of his own household," [1272] --words which one

cannot hear without pain; for though a man have sufficient fortitude to

endure it with equanimity, and sufficient sagacity to baffle the malice

of a pretended friend, yet if he himself is a good man, he cannot but

be greatly pained at the discovery of the perfidy of wicked men,

whether they have always been wicked and merely feigned goodness, or

have fallen from a better to a malicious disposition. If, then, home,

the natural refuge from the ills of life, is itself not safe, what

shall we say of the city, which, as it is larger, is so much the more

filled with lawsuits civil and criminal, and is never free from the

fear, if sometimes from the actual outbreak, of disturbing and bloody

insurrections and civil wars?

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[1269] Terent. Adelph. v. 4.

[1270] Eunuch, i. 1.

[1271] In Verrem, ii. 1. 15.

[1272] Matt. x. 36.

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Chapter 6.--Of the Error of Human Judgments When the Truth is Hidden.

What shall I say of these judgments which men pronounce on men, and

which are necessary in communities, whatever outward peace they enjoy?

Melancholy and lamentable judgments they are, since the judges are men

who cannot discern the consciences of those at their bar, and are

therefore frequently compelled to put innocent witnesses to the torture

to ascertain the truth regarding the crimes of other men. What shall I

say of torture applied to the accused himself? He is tortured to

discover whether he is guilty, so that, though innocent, he suffers

most undoubted punishment for crime that is still doubtful, not because

it is proved that he committed it, but because it is not ascertained

that he did not commit it. Thus the ignorance of the judge frequently

involves an innocent person in suffering. And what is still more

unendurable--a thing, indeed, to be bewailed, and, if that were

possible, watered with fountains of tears--is this, that when the judge

puts the accused to the question, that he may not unwittingly put an

innocent man to death, the result of this lamentable ignorance is that

this very person, whom he tortured that he might not condemn him if

innocent, is condemned to death both tortured and innocent. For if he

has chosen, in obedience to the philosophical instructions to the wise

man, to quit this life rather than endure any longer such tortures, he

declares that he has committed the crime which in fact he has not

committed. And when he has been condemned and put to death, the judge

is still in ignorance whether he has put to death an innocent or a

guilty person, though he put the accused to the torture for the very

purpose of saving himself from condemning the innocent; and

consequently he has both tortured an innocent man to discover his

innocence, and has put him to death without discovering it. If such

darkness shrouds social life, will a wise judge take his seat on the

bench or no? Beyond question he will. For human society, which he

thinks it a wickedness to abandon, constrains him and compels him to

this duty. And he thinks it no wickedness that innocent witnesses are

tortured regarding the crimes of which other men are accused; or that

the accused are put to the torture, so that they are often overcome

with anguish, and, though innocent, make false confessions regarding

themselves, and are punished; or that, though they be not condemned to

die, they often die during, or in consequence of, the torture; or that

sometimes the accusers, who perhaps have been prompted by a desire to

benefit society by bringing criminals to justice, are themselves

condemned through the ignorance of the judge, because they are unable

to prove the truth of their accusations though they are true, and

because the witnesses lie, and the accused endures the torture without

being moved to confession. These numerous and important evils he does

not consider sins; for the wise judge does these things, not with any

intention of doing harm, but because his ignorance compels him, and

because human society claims him as a judge. But though we therefore

acquit the judge of malice, we must none the less condemn human life as

miserable. And if he is compelled to torture and punish the innocent

because his office and his ignorance constrain him, is he a happy as

well as a guiltless man? Surely it were proof of more profound

considerateness and finer feeling were he to recognize the misery of

these necessities, and shrink from his own implication in that misery;

and had he any piety about him, he would cry to God "From my

necessities deliver Thou me." [1273]

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[1273] Ps. xxv. 17.

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Chapter 7.--Of the Diversity of Languages, by Which the Intercourse of

Men is Prevented; And of the Misery of Wars, Even of Those Called Just.

After the state or city comes the world, the third circle of human

society,--the first being the house, and the second the city. And the

world, as it is larger, so it is fuller of dangers, as the greater sea

is the more dangerous. And here, in the first place, man is separated

from man by the difference of languages. For if two men, each ignorant

of the other's language, meet, and are not compelled to pass, but, on

the contrary, to remain in company, dumb animals, though of different

species, would more easily hold intercourse than they, human beings

though they be. For their common nature is no help to friendliness

when they are prevented by diversity of language from conveying their

sentiments to one another; so that a man would more readily hold

intercourse with his dog than with a foreigner. But the imperial city

has endeavored to impose on subject nations not only her yoke, but her

language, as a bond of peace, so that interpreters, far from being

scarce, are numberless. This is true; but how many great wars, how

much slaughter and bloodshed, have provided this unity! And though

these are past, the end of these miseries has not yet come. For though

there have never been wanting, nor are yet wanting, hostile nations

beyond the empire, against whom wars have been and are waged, yet,

supposing there were no such nations, the very extent of the empire

itself has produced wars of a more obnoxious description--social and

civil wars--and with these the whole race has been agitated, either by

the actual conflict or the fear of a renewed outbreak. If I attempted

to give an adequate description of these manifold disasters, these

stern and lasting necessities, though I am quite unequal to the task,

what limit could I set? But, say they, the wise man will wage just

wars. As if he would not all the rather lament the necessity of just

wars, if he remembers that he is a man; for if they were not just he

would not wage them, and would therefore be delivered from all wars.

For it is the wrongdoing of the opposing party which compels the wise

man to wage just wars; and this wrong-doing, even though it gave rise

to no war, would still be matter of grief to man because it is man's

wrong-doing. Let every one, then, who thinks with pain on all these

great evils, so horrible, so ruthless, acknowledge that this is

misery. And if any one either endures or thinks of them without mental

pain, this is a more miserable plight still, for he thinks himself

happy because he has lost human feeling.

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Chapter 8.--That the Friendship of Good Men Cannot Be Securely Rested

In, So Long as the Dangers of This Life Force Us to Be Anxious.

In our present wretched condition we frequently mistake a friend for an

enemy, and an enemy for a friend. And if we escape this pitiable

blindness, is not the unfeigned confidence and mutual love of true and

good friends our one solace in human society, filled as it is with

misunderstandings and calamities? And yet the more friends we have,

and the more widely they are scattered, the more numerous are our fears

that some portion of the vast masses of the disasters of life may light

upon them. For we are not only anxious lest they suffer from famine,

war, disease, captivity, or the inconceivable horrors of slavery, but

we are also affected with the much more painful dread that their

friendship may be changed into perfidy, malice, and injustice. And

when these contingencies actually occur,--as they do the more

frequently the more friends we have, and the more widely they are

scattered,--and when they come to our knowledge, who but the man who

has experienced it can tell with what pangs the heart is torn? We

would, in fact, prefer to hear that they were dead, although we could

not without anguish hear of even this. For if their life has solaced

us with the charms of friendship, can it be that their death should

affect us with no sadness? He who will have none of this sadness must,

if possible, have no friendly intercourse. Let him interdict or

extinguish friendly affection; let him burst with ruthless

insensibility the bonds of every human relationship; or let him

contrive so to use them that no sweetness shall distil into his

spirit. But if this is utterly impossible, how shall we contrive to

feel no bitterness in the death of those whose life has been sweet to

us? Hence arises that grief which affects the tender heart like a

wound or a bruise, and which is healed by the application of kindly

consolation. For though the cure is affected all the more easily and

rapidly the better condition the soul is in, we must not on this

account suppose that there is nothing at all to heal. Although, then,

our present life is afflicted, sometimes in a milder, sometimes in a

more painful degree, by the death of those very dear to us, and

especially of useful public men, yet we would prefer to hear that such

men were dead rather than to hear or perceive that they had fallen from

the faith, or from virtue,--in other words, that they were spiritually

dead. Of this vast material for misery the earth is full, and

therefore it is written, "Is not human life upon earth a trial?" [1274]

And with the same reference the Lord says, "Woe to the world because

of offenses!" [1275] and again, "Because iniquity abounded, the love of

many shall wax cold." [1276] And hence we enjoy some gratification

when our good friends die; for though their death leaves us in sorrow,

we have the consolatory assurance that they are beyond the ills by

which in this life even the best of men are broken down or corrupted,

or are in danger of both results.

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[1274] Job vii. 1.

[1275] Matt. xvii. 7.

[1276] Matt. xxiv. 12.

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Chapter 9.--Of the Friendship of the Holy Angels, Which Men Cannot Be

Sure of in This Life, Owing to the Deceit of the Demons Who Hold in

Bondage the Worshippers of a Plurality of Gods.

The philosophers who wished us to have the gods for our friends rank

the friendship of the holy angels in the fourth circle of society,

advancing now from the three circles of society on earth to the

universe, and embracing heaven itself. And in this friendship we have

indeed no fear that the angels will grieve us by their death or

deterioration. But as we cannot mingle with them as familiarly as with

men (which itself is one of the grievances of this life), and as Satan,

as we read, [1277] sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light,

to tempt those whom it is necessary to discipline, or just to deceive,

there is great need of God's mercy to preserve us from making friends

of demons in disguise, while we fancy we have good angels for our

friends; for the astuteness and deceitfulness of these wicked spirits

is equalled by their hurtfulness. And is this not a great misery of

human life, that we are involved in such ignorance as, but for God's

mercy, makes us a prey to these demons? And it is very certain that

the philosophers of the godless city, who have maintained that the gods

were their friends, had fallen a prey to the malignant demons who rule

that city, and whose eternal punishment is to be shared by it. For the

nature of these beings is sufficiently evinced by the sacred or rather

sacrilegious observances which form their worship, and by the filthy

games in which their crimes are celebrated, and which they themselves

originated and exacted from their worshippers as a fit propitiation.

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[1277] 2 Cor. xi. 14.

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Chapter 10.--The Reward Prepared for the Saints After They Have Endured

the Trial of This Life.

But not even the saints and faithful worshippers of the one true and

most high God are safe from the manifold temptations and deceits of the

demons. For in this abode of weakness, and in these wicked days, this

state of anxiety has also its use, stimulating us to seek with keener

longing for that security where peace is complete and unassailable.

There we shall enjoy the gifts of nature, that is to say, all that God

the Creator of all natures has bestowed upon ours,--gifts not only

good, but eternal,--not only of the spirit, healed now by wisdom, but

also of the body renewed by the resurrection. There the virtues shall

no longer be struggling against any vice or evil, but shall enjoy the

reward of victory, the eternal peace which no adversary shall disturb.

This is the final blessedness, this the ultimate consummation, the

unending end. Here, indeed, we are said to be blessed when we have

such peace as can be enjoyed in a good life; but such blessedness is

mere misery compared to that final felicity. When we mortals possess

such peace as this mortal life can afford, virtue, if we are living

rightly, makes a right use of the advantages of this peaceful

condition; and when we have it not, virtue makes a good use even of the

evils a man suffers. But this is true virtue, when it refers all the

advantages it makes a good use of, and all that it does in making good

use of good and evil things, and itself also, to that end in which we

shall enjoy the best and greatest peace possible.

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Chapter 11.--Of the Happiness of the Eternal Peace, Which Constitutes

the End or True Perfection of the Saints.

And thus we may say of peace, as we have said of eternal life, that it

is the end of our good; and the rather because the Psalmist says of the

city of God, the subject of this laborious work, "Praise the Lord, O

Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion: for He hath strengthened the bars

of thy gates; He hath blessed thy children within thee; who hath made

thy borders peace." [1278] For when the bars of her gates shall be

strengthened, none shall go in or come out from her; consequently we

ought to understand the peace of her borders as that final peace we are

wishing to declare. For even the mystical name of the city itself,

that is, Jerusalem, means, as I have already said, "Vision of Peace."

But as the word peace is employed in connection with things in this

world in which certainly life eternal has no place, we have preferred

to call the end or supreme good of this city life eternal rather than

peace. Of this end the apostle says, "But now, being freed from sin,

and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the

end life eternal." [1279] But, on the other hand, as those who are

not familiar with Scripture may suppose that the life of the wicked is

eternal life, either because of the immortality of the soul, which some

of the philosophers even have recognized, or because of the endless

punishment of the wicked, which forms a part of our faith, and which

seems impossible unless the wicked live for ever, it may therefore be

advisable, in order that every one may readily understand what we mean,

to say that the end or supreme good of this city is either peace in

eternal life, or eternal life in peace. For peace is a good so great,

that even in this earthly and mortal life there is no word we hear with

such pleasure, nothing we desire with such zest, or find to be more

thoroughly gratifying. So that if we dwell for a little longer on this

subject, we shall not, in my opinion, be wearisome to our readers, who

will attend both for the sake of understanding what is the end of this

city of which we speak, and for the sake of the sweetness of peace

which is dear to all.

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[1278] Ps. cxlvii. 12-14.

[1279] Rom. vi. 22.

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Chapter 12.--That Even the Fierceness of War and All the Disquietude of

Men Make Towards This One End of Peace, Which Every Nature Desires.

Whoever gives even moderate attention to human affairs and to our

common nature, will recognize that if there is no man who does not wish

to be joyful, neither is there any one who does not wish to have

peace. For even they who make war desire nothing but victory,--desire,

that is to say, to attain to peace with glory. For what else is

victory than the conquest of those who resist us? and when this is done

there is peace. It is therefore with the desire for peace that wars

are waged, even by those who take pleasure in exercising their warlike

nature in command and battle. And hence it is obvious that peace is

the end sought for by war. For every man seeks peace by waging war,

but no man seeks war by making peace. For even they who intentionally

interrupt the peace in which they are living have no hatred of peace,

but only wish it changed into a peace that suits them better. They do

not, therefore, wish to have no peace, but only one more to their

mind. And in the case of sedition, when men have separated themselves

from the community, they yet do not effect what they wish, unless they

maintain some kind of peace with their fellow-conspirators. And

therefore even robbers take care to maintain peace with their comrades,

that they may with greater effect and greater safety invade the peace

of other men. And if an individual happen to be of such unrivalled

strength, and to be so jealous of partnership, that he trusts himself

with no comrades, but makes his own plots, and commits depredations and

murders on his own account, yet he maintains some shadow of peace with

such persons as he is unable to kill, and from whom he wishes to

conceal his deeds. In his own home, too, he makes it his aim to be at

peace with his wife and children, and any other members of his

household; for unquestionably their prompt obedience to his every look

is a source of pleasure to him. And if this be not rendered, he is

angry, he chides and punishes; and even by this storm he secures the

calm peace of his own home, as occasion demands. For he sees that

peace cannot be maintained unless all the members of the same domestic

circle be subject to one head, such as he himself is in his own house.

And therefore if a city or nation offered to submit itself to him, to

serve him in the same style as he had made his household serve him, he

would no longer lurk in a brigand's hiding-places, but lift his head in

open day as a king, though the same coveteousness and wicked ness

should remain in him. And thus all men desire to have peace with their

own circle whom they wish to govern as suits themselves. For even

those whom they make war against they wish to make their own, and

impose on them the laws of their own peace.

But let us suppose a man such as poetry and mythology speak of,--a man

so insociable and savage as to be called rather a semi-man than a man.

[1280] Although, then, his kingdom was the solitude of a dreary cave,

and he himself was so singularly bad-hearted that he was named Kakos,

which is the Greek word for bad; though he had no wife to soothe him

with endearing talk, no children to play with, no sons to do his

bidding, no friend to enliven him with intercourse, not even his father

Vulcan (though in one respect he was happier than his father, not

having begotten a monster like himself); although he gave to no man,

but took as he wished whatever he could, from whomsoever he could, when

he could yet in that solitary den, the floor of which, as Virgil [1281]

says, was always reeking with recent slaughter, there was nothing else

than peace sought, a peace in which no one should molest him, or

disquiet him with any assault or alarm. With his own body he desired

to be at peace, and he was satisfied only in proportion as he had this

peace. For he ruled his members, and they obeyed him; and for the sake

of pacifying his mortal nature, which rebelled when it needed anything,

and of allaying the sedition of hunger which threatened to banish the

soul from the body, he made forays, slew, and devoured, but used the

ferocity and savageness he displayed in these actions only for the

preservation of his own life's peace. So that, had he been willing to

make with other men the same peace which he made with himself in his

own cave, he would neither have been called bad, nor a monster, nor a

semi-man. Or if the appearance of his body and his vomiting smoky

fires frightened men from having any dealings with him, perhaps his

fierce ways arose not from a desire to do mischief, but from the

necessity of finding a living. But he may have had no existence, or,

at least, he was not such as the poets fancifully describe him, for

they had to exalt Hercules, and did so at the expense of Cacus. It is

better, then, to believe that such a man or semi-man never existed, and

that this, in common with many other fancies of the poets, is mere

fiction. For the most savage animals (and he is said to have been

almost a wild beast) encompass their own species with a ring of

protecting peace. They cohabit, beget, produce, suckle, and bring up

their young, though very many of them are not gregarious, but

solitary,--not like sheep, deer, pigeons, starlings, bees, but such as

lions, foxes, eagles, bats. For what tigress does not gently purr over

her cubs, and lay aside her ferocity to fondle them? What kite,

solitary as he is when circling over his prey, does not seek a mate,

build a nest, hatch the eggs, bring up the young birds, and maintain

with the mother of his family as peaceful a domestic alliance as he

can? How much more powerfully do the laws of man's nature move him to

hold fellowship and maintain peace with all men so far as in him lies,

since even wicked men wage war to maintain the peace of their own

circle, and wish that, if possible, all men belonged to them, that all

men and things might serve but one head, and might, either through love

or fear, yield themselves to peace with him! It is thus that pride in

its perversity apes God. It abhors equality with other men under Him;

but, instead of His rule, it seeks to impose a rule of its own upon its

equals. It abhors, that is to say, the just peace of God, and loves

its own unjust peace; but it cannot help loving peace of one kind or

other. For there is no vice so clean contrary to nature that it

obliterates even the faintest traces of nature.

He, then, who prefers what is right to what is wrong, and what is

well-ordered to what is perverted, sees that the peace of unjust men is

not worthy to be called peace in comparison with the peace of the

just. And yet even what is perverted must of necessity be in harmony

with, and in dependence on, and in some part of the order of things,

for otherwise it would have no existence at all. Suppose a man hangs

with his head downwards, this is certainly a perverted attitude of body

and arrangement of its members; for that which nature requires to be

above is beneath, and vice vers�. This perversity disturbs the peace

of the body, and is therefore painful. Nevertheless the spirit is at

peace with its body, and labors for its preservation, and hence the

suffering; but if it is banished from the body by its pains, then, so

long as the bodily framework holds together, there is in the remains a

kind of peace among the members, and hence the body remains suspended.

And inasmuch as the earthly body tends towards the earth, and rests on

the bond by which it is suspended, it tends thus to its natural peace,

and the voice of its own weight demands a place for it to rest; and

though now lifeless and without feeling, it does not fall from the

peace that is natural to its place in creation, whether it already has

it, or is tending towards it. For if you apply embalming preparations

to prevent the bodily frame from mouldering and dissolving, a kind of

peace still unites part to part, and keeps the whole body in a suitable

place on the earth,--in other words, in a place that is at peace with

the body. If, on the other hand, the body receive no such care, but be

left to the natural course, it is disturbed by exhalations that do not

harmonize with one another, and that offend our senses; for it is this

which is perceived in putrefaction until it is assimilated to the

elements of the world, and particle by particle enters into peace with

them. Yet throughout this process the laws of the most high Creator

and Governor are strictly observed, for it is by Him the peace of the

universe is administered. For although minute animals are produced

from the carcass of a larger animal, all these little atoms, by the law

of the same Creator, serve the animals they belong to in peace. And

although the flesh of dead animals be eaten by others, no matter where

it be carried, nor what it be brought into contact with, nor what it be

converted and changed into, it still is ruled by the same laws which

pervade all things for the conservation of every mortal race, and which

bring things that fit one another into harmony.

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[1280] He refers to the giant Cacus.

[1281] �neid, viii. 195.

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Chapter 13.--Of the Universal Peace Which the Law of Nature Preserves

Through All Disturbances, and by Which Every One Reaches His Desert in

a Way Regulated by the Just Judge.

The peace of the body then consists in the duly proportioned

arrangement of its parts. The peace of the irrational soul is the

harmonious repose of the appetites, and that of the rational soul the

harmony of knowledge and action. The peace of body and soul is the

well-ordered and harmonious life and health of the living creature.

Peace between man and God is the well-ordered obedience of faith to

eternal law. Peace between man and man is well-ordered concord.

Domestic peace is the well-ordered concord between those of the family

who rule and those who obey. Civil peace is a similar concord among

the citizens. The peace of the celestial city is the perfectly ordered

and harmonious enjoyment of God, and of one another in God. The peace

of all things is the tranquillity of order. Order is the distribution

which allots things equal and unequal, each to its own place. And

hence, though the miserable, in so far as they are such, do certainly

not enjoy peace, but are severed from that tranquillity of order in

which there is no disturbance, nevertheless, inasmuch as they are

deservedly and justly miserable, they are by their very misery

connected with order. They are not, indeed, conjoined with the

blessed, but they are disjoined from them by the law of order. And

though they are disquieted, their circumstances are notwithstanding

adjusted to them, and consequently they have some tranquillity of

order, and therefore some peace. But they are wretched because,

although not wholly miserable, they are not in that place where any

mixture of misery is impossible. They would, however, be more wretched

if they had not that peace which arises from being in harmony with the

natural order of things. When they suffer, their peace is in so far

disturbed; but their peace continues in so far as they do not suffer,

and in so far as their nature continues to exist. As, then, there may

be life without pain, while there cannot be pain without some kind of

life, so there may be peace without war, but there cannot be war

without some kind of peace, because war supposes the existence of some

natures to wage it, and these natures cannot exist without peace of one

kind or other.

And therefore there is a nature in which evil does not or even cannot

exist; but there cannot be a nature in which there is no good. Hence

not even the nature of the devil himself is evil, in so far as it is

nature, but it was made evil by being perverted. Thus he did not abide

in the truth, [1282] but could not escape the judgment of the Truth; he

did not abide in the tranquillity of order, but did not therefore

escape the power of the Ordainer. The good imparted by God to his

nature did not screen him from the justice of God by which order was

preserved in his punishment; neither did God punish the good which He

had created, but the evil which the devil had committed. God did not

take back all He had imparted to his nature, but something He took and

something He left, that there might remain enough to be sensible of the

loss of what was taken. And this very sensibility to pain is evidence

of the good which has been taken away and the good which has been

left. For, were nothing good left, there could be no pain on account

of the good which had been lost. For he who sins is still worse if he

rejoices in his loss of righteousness. But he who is in pain, if he

derives no benefit from it, mourns at least the loss of health. And as

righteousness and health are both good things, and as the loss of any

good thing is matter of grief, not of joy,--if, at least, there is no

compensation, as spiritual righteousness may compensate for the loss of

bodily health,--certainly it is more suitable for a wicked man to

grieve in punishment than to rejoice in his fault. As, then, the joy

of a sinner who has abandoned what is good is evidence of a bad will,

so his grief for the good he has lost when he is punished is evidence

of a good nature. For he who laments the peace his nature has lost is

stirred to do so by some relics of peace which make his nature friendly

to itself. And it is very just that in the final punishment the wicked

and godless should in anguish bewail the loss of the natural advantages

they enjoyed, and should perceive that they were most justly taken from

them by that God whose benign liberality they had despised. God, then,

the most wise Creator and most just Ordainer of all natures, who placed

the human race upon earth as its greatest ornament, imparted to men

some good things adapted to this life, to wit, temporal peace, such as

we can enjoy in this life from health and safety and human fellowship,

and all things needful for the preservation and recovery of this peace,

such as the objects which are accommodated to our outward senses,

light, night, the air, and waters suitable for us, and everything the

body requires to sustain, shelter, heal, or beautify it: and all under

this most equitable condition, that every man who made a good use of

these advantages suited to the peace of this mortal condition, should

receive ampler and better blessings, namely, the peace of immortality,

accompanied by glory and honor in an endless life made fit for the

enjoyment of God and of one another in God; but that he who used the

present blessings badly should both lose them and should not receive

the others.

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[1282] John viii. 44.

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Chapter 14.--Of the Order and Law Which Obtain in Heaven and Earth,

Whereby It Comes to Pass that Human Society Is Served by Those Who Rule

It.

The whole use, then, of things temporal has a reference to this result

of earthly peace in the earthly community, while in the city of God it

is connected with eternal peace. And therefore, if we were irrational

animals, we should desire nothing beyond the proper arrangement of the

parts of the body and the satisfaction of the appetites,--nothing,

therefore, but bodily comfort and abundance of pleasures, that the

peace of the body might contribute to the peace of the soul. For if

bodily peace be awanting, a bar is put to the peace even of the

irrational soul, since it cannot obtain the gratification of its

appetites. And these two together help out the mutual peace of soul

and body, the peace of harmonious life and health. For as animals, by

shunning pain, show that they love bodily peace, and, by pursuing

pleasure to gratify their appetites, show that they love peace of soul,

so their shrinking from death is a sufficient indication of their

intense love of that peace which binds soul and body in close

alliance. But, as man has a rational soul, he subordinates all this

which he has in common with the beasts to the peace of his rational

soul, that his intellect may have free play and may regulate his

actions, and that he may thus enjoy the well-ordered harmony of

knowledge and action which constitutes, as we have said, the peace of

the rational soul. And for this purpose he must desire to be neither

molested by pain, nor disturbed by desire, nor extinguished by death,

that he may arrive at some useful knowledge by which he may regulate

his life and manners. But, owing to the liability of the human mind to

fall into mistakes, this very pursuit of knowledge may be a snare to

him unless he has a divine Master, whom he may obey without misgiving,

and who may at the same time give him such help as to preserve his own

freedom. And because, so long as he is in this mortal body, he is a

stranger to God, he walks by faith, not by sight; and he therefore

refers all peace, bodily or spiritual or both, to that peace which

mortal man has with the immortal God, so that he exhibits the

well-ordered obedience of faith to eternal law. But as this divine

Master inculcates two precepts,--the love of God and the love of our

neighbor,--and as in these precepts a man finds three things he has to

love,--God, himself, and his neighbor,--and that he who loves God loves

himself thereby, it follows that he must endeavor to get his neighbor

to love God, since he is ordered to love his neighbor as himself. He

ought to make this endeavor in behalf of his wife, his children, his

household, all within his reach, even as he would wish his neighbor to

do the same for him if he needed it; and consequently he will be at

peace, or in well-ordered concord, with all men, as far as in him

lies. And this is the order of this concord, that a man, in the first

place, injure no one, and, in the second, do good to every one he can

reach. Primarily, therefore, his own household are his care, for the

law of nature and of society gives him readier access to them and

greater opportunity of serving them. And hence the apostle says, "Now,

if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own

house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." [1283]

This is the origin of domestic peace, or the well-ordered concord of

those in the family who rule and those who obey. For they who care for

the rest rule,--the husband the wife, the parents the children, the

masters the servants; and they who are cared for obey,--the women their

husbands, the children their parents, the servants their masters. But

in the family of the just man who lives by faith and is as yet a

pilgrim journeying on to the celestial city, even those who rule serve

those whom they seem to command; for they rule not from a love of

power, but from a sense of the duty they owe to others--not because

they are proud of authority, but because they love mercy.

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[1283] 1 Tim. v. 8.

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Chapter 15.--Of the Liberty Proper to Man's Nature, and the Servitude

Introduced by Sin,--A Servitude in Which the Man Whose Will is Wicked

is the Slave of His Own Lust, Though He is Free So Far as Regards Other

Men.

This is prescribed by the order of nature: it is thus that God has

created man. For "let them," He says, "have dominion over the fish of

the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every creeping thing

which creepeth on the earth." [1284] He did not intend that His

rational creature, who was made in His image, should have dominion over

anything but the irrational creation,--not man over man, but man over

the beasts. And hence the righteous men in primitive times were made

shepherds of cattle rather than kings of men, God intending thus to

teach us what the relative position of the creatures is, and what the

desert of sin; for it is with justice, we believe, that the condition

of slavery is the result of sin. And this is why we do not find the

word "slave" in any part of Scripture until righteous Noah branded the

sin of his son with this name. It is a name, therefore, introduced by

sin and not by nature. The origin of the Latin word for slave is

supposed to be found in the circumstance that those who by the law of

war were liable to be killed were sometimes preserved by their victors,

and were hence called servants. [1285] And these circumstances could

never have arisen save through sin. For even when we wage a just war,

our adversaries must be sinning; and every victory, even though gained

by wicked men, is a result of the first judgment of God, who humbles

the vanquished either for the sake of removing or of punishing their

sins. Witness that man of God, Daniel, who, when he was in captivity,

confessed to God his own sins and the sins of his people, and declares

with pious grief that these were the cause of the captivity. [1286]

The prime cause, then, of slavery is sin, which brings man under the

dominion of his fellow,--that which does not happen save by the

judgment of God, with whom is no unrighteousness, and who knows how to

award fit punishments to every variety of offence. But our Master in

heaven says, "Every one who doeth sin is the servant of sin." [1287]

And thus there are many wicked masters who have religious men as their

slaves, and who are yet themselves in bondage; "for of whom a man is

overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." [1288] And beyond

question it is a happier thing to be the slave of a man than of a lust;

for even this very lust of ruling, to mention no others, lays waste

men's hearts with the most ruthless dominion. Moreover, when men are

subjected to one another in a peaceful order, the lowly position does

as much good to the servant as the proud position does harm to the

master. But by nature, as God first created us, no one is the slave

either of man or of sin. This servitude is, however, penal, and is

appointed by that law which enjoins the preservation of the natural

order and forbids its disturbance; for if nothing had been done in

violation of that law, there would have been nothing to restrain by

penal servitude. And therefore the apostle admonishes slaves to be

subject to their masters, and to serve them heartily and with

good-will, so that, if they cannot be freed by their masters, they may

themselves make their slavery in some sort free, by serving not in

crafty fear, but in faithful love, until all unrighteousness pass away,

and all principality and every human power be brought to nothing, and

God be all in all.

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[1284] Gen. i. 26.

[1285] Servus, "a slave," from servare, "to preserve."

[1286] Dan. ix.

[1287] John viii. 34.

[1288] 2 Pet. ii. 19.

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Chapter 16.--Of Equitable Rule.

And therefore, although our righteous fathers [1289] had slaves, and

administered their domestic affairs so as to distinguish between the

condition of slaves and the heirship of sons in regard to the blessings

of this life, yet in regard to the worship of God, in whom we hope for

eternal blessings, they took an equally loving oversight of all the

members of their household. And this is so much in accordance with the

natural order, that the head of the household was called paterfamilias;

and this name has been so generally accepted, that even those whose

rule is unrighteous are glad to apply it to themselves. But those who

are true fathers of their households desire and endeavor that all the

members of their household, equally with their own children, should

worship and win God, and should come to that heavenly home in which the

duty of ruling men is no longer necessary, because the duty of caring

for their everlasting happiness has also ceased; but, until they reach

that home, masters ought to feel their position of authority a greater

burden than servants their service. And if any member of the family

interrupts the domestic peace by disobedience, he is corrected either

by word or blow, or some kind of just and legitimate punishment, such

as society permits, that he may himself be the better for it, and be

readjusted to the family harmony from which he had dislocated himself.

For as it is not benevolent to give a man help at the expense of some

greater benefit he might receive, so it is not innocent to spare a man

at the risk of his falling into graver sin. To be innocent, we must

not only do harm to no man, but also restrain him from sin or punish

his sin, so that either the man himself who is punished may profit by

his experience, or others be warned by his example. Since, then, the

house ought to be the beginning or element of the city, and every

beginning bears reference to some end of its own kind, and every

element to the integrity of the whole of which it is an element, it

follows plainly enough that domestic peace has a relation to civic

peace,--in other words, that the well-ordered concord of domestic

obedience and domestic rule has a relation to the well-ordered concord

of civic obedience and civic rule. And therefore it follows, further,

that the father of the family ought to frame his domestic rule in

accordance with the law of the city, so that the household may be in

harmony with the civic order.

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[1289] The patriarchs.

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Chapter 17.--What Produces Peace, and What Discord, Between the

Heavenly and Earthly Cities.

But the families which do not live by faith seek their peace in the

earthly advantages of this life; while the families which live by faith

look for those eternal blessings which are promised, and use as

pilgrims such advantages of time and of earth as do not fascinate and

divert them from God, but rather aid them to endure with greater ease,

and to keep down the number of those burdens of the corruptible body

which weigh upon the soul. Thus the things necessary for this mortal

life are used by both kinds of men and families alike, but each has its

own peculiar and widely different aim in using them. The earthly city,

which does not live by faith, seeks an earthly peace, and the end it

proposes, in the well-ordered concord of civic obedience and rule, is

the combination of men's wills to attain the things which are helpful

to this life. The heavenly city, or rather the part of it which

sojourns on earth and lives by faith, makes use of this peace only

because it must, until this mortal condition which necessitates it

shall pass away. Consequently, so long as it lives like a captive and

a stranger in the earthly city, though it has already received the

promise of redemption, and the gift of the Spirit as the earnest of it,

it makes no scruple to obey the laws of the earthly city, whereby the

things necessary for the maintenance of this mortal life are

administered; and thus, as this life is common to both cities, so there

is a harmony between them in regard to what belongs to it. But, as the

earthly city has had some philosophers whose doctrine is condemned by

the divine teaching, and who, being deceived either by their own

conjectures or by demons, supposed that many gods must be invited to

take an interest in human affairs, and assigned to each a separate

function and a separate department,--to one the body, to another the

soul; and in the body itself, to one the head, to another the neck, and

each of the other members to one of the gods; and in like manner, in

the soul, to one god the natural capacity was assigned, to another

education, to another anger, to another lust; and so the various

affairs of life were assigned,--cattle to one, corn to another, wine to

another, oil to another, the woods to another, money to another,

navigation to another, wars and victories to another, marriages to

another, births and fecundity to another, and other things to other

gods: and as the celestial city, on the other hand, knew that one God

only was to be worshipped, and that to Him alone was due that service

which the Greeks call latreia, and which can be given only to a god, it

has come to pass that the two cities could not have common laws of

religion, and that the heavenly city has been compelled in this matter

to dissent, and to become obnoxious to those who think differently, and

to stand the brunt of their anger and hatred and persecutions, except

in so far as the minds of their enemies have been alarmed by the

multitude of the Christians and quelled by the manifest protection of

God accorded to them. This heavenly city, then, while it sojourns on

earth, calls citizens out of all nations, and gathers together a

society of pilgrims of all languages, not scrupling about diversities

in the manners, laws, and institutions whereby earthly peace is secured

and maintained, but recognizing that, however various these are, they

all tend to one and the same end of earthly peace. It therefore is so

far from rescinding and abolishing these diversities, that it even

preserves and adopts them, so long only as no hindrance to the worship

of the one supreme and true God is thus introduced. Even the heavenly

city, therefore, while in its state of pilgrimage, avails itself of the

peace of earth, and, so far as it can without injuring faith and

godliness, desires and maintains a common agreement among men regarding

the acquisition of the necessaries of life, and makes this earthly

peace bear upon the peace of heaven; for this alone can be truly called

and esteemed the peace of the reasonable creatures, consisting as it

does in the perfectly ordered and harmonious enjoyment of God and of

one another in God. When we shall have reached that peace, this mortal

life shall give place to one that is eternal, and our body shall be no

more this animal body which by its corruption weighs down the soul, but

a spiritual body feeling no want, and in all its members subjected to

the will. In its pilgrim state the heavenly city possesses this peace

by faith; and by this faith it lives righteously when it refers to the

attainment of that peace every good action towards God and man; for the

life of the city is a social life.

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Chapter 18.--How Different the Uncertainty of the New Academy is from

the Certainty of the Christian Faith.

As regards the uncertainty about everything which Varro alleges to be

the differentiating characteristic of the New Academy, the city of God

thoroughly detests such doubt as madness. Regarding matters which it

apprehends by the mind and reason it has most absolute certainty,

although its knowledge is limited because of the corruptible body

pressing down the mind, for, as the apostle says, "We know in part."

[1290] It believes also the evidence of the senses which the mind

uses by aid of the body; for [if one who trusts his senses is sometimes

deceived], he is more wretchedly deceived who fancies he should never

trust them. It believes also the Holy Scriptures, old and new, which

we call canonical, and which are the source of the faith by which the

just lives [1291] and by which we walk without doubting whilst we are

absent from the Lord. [1292] So long as this faith remains inviolate

and firm, we may without blame entertain doubts regarding some things

which we have neither perceived by sense nor by reason, and which have

not been revealed to us by the canonical Scriptures, nor come to our

knowledge through witnesses whom it is absurd to disbelieve.

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[1290] 1 Cor. xiii. 9.

[1291] Hab. ii. 4.

[1292] 2 Cor. v. 6.

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Chapter 19.--Of the Dress and Habits of the Christian People.

It is a matter of no moment in the city of God whether he who adopts

the faith that brings men to God adopts it in one dress and manner of

life or another, so long only as he lives in conformity with the

commandments of God. And hence, when philosophers themselves become

Christians, they are compelled, indeed, to abandon their erroneous

doctrines, but not their dress and mode of living, which are no

obstacle to religion. So that we make no account of that distinction

of sects which Varro adduced in connection with the Cynic school,

provided always nothing indecent or self-indulgent is retained. As to

these three modes of life, the contemplative, the active, and the

composite, although, so long as a man's faith is preserved, he may

choose any of them without detriment to his eternal interests, yet he

must never overlook the claims of truth and duty. No man has a right

to lead such a life of contemplation as to forget in his own ease the

service due to his neighbor; nor has any man a right to be so immersed

in active life as to neglect the contemplation of God. The charm of

leisure must not be indolent vacancy of mind, but the investigation or

discovery of truth, that thus every man may make solid attainments

without grudging that others do the same. And, in active life, it is

not the honors or power of this life we should covet, since all things

under the sun are vanity, but we should aim at using our position and

influence, if these have been honorably attained, for the welfare of

those who are under us, in the way we have already explained. [1293]

It is to this the apostle refers when he says, "He that desireth the

episcopate desireth a good work." [1294] He wished to show that the

episcopate is the title of a work, not of an honor. It is a Greek

word, and signifies that he who governs superintends or takes care of

those whom he governs: for epi means over, and skopein, to see;

therefore episkopein means "to oversee." [1295] So that he who loves

to govern rather than to do good is no bishop. Accordingly no one is

prohibited from the search after truth, for in this leisure may most

laudably be spent; but it is unseemly to covet the high position

requisite for governing the people, even though that position be held

and that government be administered in a seemly manner. And therefore

holy leisure is longed for by the love of truth; but it is the

necessity of love to undertake requisite business. If no one imposes

this burden upon us, we are free to sift and contemplate truth; but if

it be laid upon us, we are necessitated for love's sake to undertake

it. And yet not even in this case are we obliged wholly to relinquish

the sweets of contemplation; for were these to be withdrawn, the burden

might prove more than we could bear.

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[1293] Ch. 6.

[1294] 1 Tim. iii. 1.

[1295] Augustin's words are: eti, quippe, super; skopos, vero,

intentio est: ergo episkopein, si velimus, latine superintendere

possumus dicere.

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Chapter 20.--That the Saints are in This Life Blessed in Hope.

Since, then, the supreme good of the city of God is perfect and eternal

peace, not such as mortals pass into and out of by birth and death, but

the peace of freedom from all evil, in which the immortals ever abide;

who can deny that that future life is most blessed, or that, in

comparison with it, this life which now we live is most wretched, be it

filled with all blessings of body and soul and external things? And

yet, if any man uses this life with a reference to that other which he

ardently loves and confidently hopes for, he may well be called even

now blessed, though not in reality so much as in hope. But the actual

possession of the happiness of this life, without the hope of what is

beyond, is but a false happiness and profound misery. For the true

blessings of the soul are not now enjoyed; for that is no true wisdom

which does not direct all its prudent observations, manly actions,

virtuous self-restraint, and just arrangements, to that end in which

God shall be all and all in a secure eternity and perfect peace.

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Chapter 21.--Whether There Ever Was a Roman Republic Answering to the

Definitions of Scipio in Cicero's Dialogue.

This, then, is the place where I should fulfill the promise gave in the

second book of this work, [1296] and explain, as briefly and clearly as

possible, that if we are to accept the definitions laid down by Scipio

in Cicero's De Republica, there never was a Roman republic; for he

briefly defines a republic as the weal of the people. And if this

definition be true, there never was a Roman republic, for the people's

weal was never attained among the Romans. For the people, according to

his definition, is an assemblage associated by a common acknowledgment

of right and by a community of interests. And what he means by a

common acknowledgment of right he explains at large, showing that a

republic cannot be administered without justice. Where, therefore,

there is no true justice there can be no right. For that which is done

by right is justly done, and what is unjustly done cannot be done by

right. For the unjust inventions of men are neither to be considered

nor spoken of as rights; for even they themselves say that right is

that which flows from the fountain of justice, and deny the definition

which is commonly given by those who misconceive the matter, that right

is that which is useful to the stronger party. Thus, where there is

not true justice there can be no assemblage of men associated by a

common acknowledgment of right, and therefore there can be no people,

as defined by Scipio or Cicero; and if no people, then no weal of the

people, but only of some promiscuous multitude unworthy of the name of

people. Consequently, if the republic is the weal of the people, and

there is no people if it be not associated by a common acknowledgment

of right, and if there is no right where there is no justice, then most

certainly it follows that there is no republic where there is no

justice. Further, justice is that virtue which gives every one his

due. Where, then, is the justice of man, when he deserts the true God

and yields himself to impure demons? Is this to give every one his

due? Or is he who keeps back a piece of ground from the purchaser, and

gives it to a man who has no right to it, unjust, while he who keeps

back himself from the God who made him, and serves wicked spirits, is

just?

This same book, De Republica, advocates the cause of justice against

injustice with great force and keenness. The pleading for injustice

against justice was first heard, and it was asserted that without

injustice a republic could neither increase nor even subsist, for it

was laid down as an absolutely unassailable position that it is unjust

for some men to rule and some to serve; and yet the imperial city to

which the republic belongs cannot rule her provinces without having

recourse to this injustice. It was replied in behalf of justice, that

this ruling of the provinces is just, because servitude may be

advantageous to the provincials, and is so when rightly

administered,--that is to say, when lawless men are prevented from

doing harm. And further, as they became worse and worse so long as

they were free, they will improve by subjection. To confirm this

reasoning, there is added an eminent example drawn from nature: for

"why," it is asked, "does God rule man, the soul the body, the reason

the passions and other vicious parts of the soul?" This example leaves

no doubt that, to some, servitude is useful; and, indeed, to serve God

is useful to all. And it is when the soul serves God that it exercises

a right control over the body; and in the soul itself the reason must

be subject to God if it is to govern as it ought the passions and other

vices. Hence, when a man does not serve God, what justice can we

ascribe to him, since in this case his soul cannot exercise a just

control over the body, nor his reason over his vices? And if there is

no justice in such an individual, certainly there can be none in a

community composed of such persons. Here, therefore, there is not that

common acknowledgment of right which makes an assemblage of men a

people whose affairs we call a republic. And why need I speak of the

advantageousness, the common participation in which, according to the

definition, makes a people? For although, if you choose to regard the

matter attentively, you will see that there is nothing advantageous to

those who live godlessly, as every one lives who does not serve God but

demons, whose wickedness you may measure by their desire to receive the

worship of men though they are most impure spirits, yet what I have

said of the common acknowledgment of right is enough to demonstrate

that, according to the above definition, there can be no people, and

therefore no republic, where there is no justice. For if they assert

that in their republic the Romans did not serve unclean spirits, but

good and holy gods, must we therefore again reply to this evasion,

though already we have said enough, and more than enough, to expose

it? He must be an uncommonly stupid, or a shamelessly contentious

person, who has read through the foregoing books to this point, and can

yet question whether the Romans served wicked and impure demons. But,

not to speak of their character, it is written in the law of the true

God, "He that sacrificeth unto any god save unto the Lord only, he

shall be utterly destroyed." [1297] He, therefore, who uttered so

menacing a commandment decreed that no worship should be given either

to good or bad gods.

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[1296] Ch. 21.

[1297] Ex. xxii. 20.

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Chapter 22.--Whether the God Whom the Christians Serve is the True God

to Whom Alone Sacrifice Ought to Be Paid.

But it may be replied, Who is this God, or what proof is there that He

alone is worthy to receive sacrifice from the Romans? One must be very

blind to be still asking who this God is. He is the God whose prophets

predicted the things we see accomplished. He is the God from whom

Abraham received the assurance, "In thy seed shall all nations be

blessed." [1298] That this was fulfilled in Christ, who according to

the flesh sprang from that seed, is recognized, whether they will or

no, even by those who have continued to be the enemies of this name.

He is the God whose divine Spirit spake by the men whose predictions I

cited in the preceding books, and which are fulfilled in the Church

which has extended over all the world. This is the God whom Varro, the

most learned of the Romans, supposed to be Jupiter, though he knows not

what he says; yet I think it right to note the circumstance that a man

of such learning was unable to suppose that this God had no existence

or was contemptible, but believed Him to be the same as the supreme

God. In fine, He is the God whom Porphyry, the most learned of the

philosophers, though the bitterest enemy of the Christians, confesses

to be a great God, even according to the oracles of those whom he

esteems gods.

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[1298] Gen. xxii. 18.

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Chapter 23.--Porphyry's Account of the Responses Given by the Oracles

of the gods Concerning Christ.

For in his book called ek logion philosophias, in which he collects and

comments upon the responses which he pretends were uttered by the gods

concerning divine things, he says--I give his own words as they have

been translated from the Greek: "To one who inquired what god he

should propitiate in order to recall his wife from Christianity, Apollo

replied in the following verses." Then the following words are given

as those of Apollo: "You will probably find it easier to write lasting

characters on the water, or lightly fly like a bird through the air,

than to restore right feeling in your impious wife once she has

polluted herself. Let her remain as she pleases in her foolish

deception, and sing false laments to her dead God, who was condemned by

right-minded judges, and perished ignominiously by a violent death."

Then after these verses of Apollo (which we have given in a Latin

version that does not preserve the metrical form), he goes on to say:

"In these verses Apollo exposed the incurable corruption of the

Christians, saying that the Jews, rather than the Christians,

recognized God." See how he misrepresents Christ, giving the Jews the

preference to the Christians in the recognition of God. This was his

explanation of Apollo's verses, in which he says that Christ was put to

death by right-minded or just judges,--in other words, that He deserved

to die. I leave the responsibility of this oracle regarding Christ on

the lying interpreter of Apollo, or on this philosopher who believed it

or possibly himself invented it; as to its agreement with Porphyry's

opinions or with other oracles, we shall in a little have something to

say. In this passage, however, he says that the Jews, as the

interpreters of God, judged justly in pronouncing Christ to be worthy

of the most shameful death. He should have listened, then, to this God

of the Jews to whom he bears this testimony, when that God says, "He

that sacrificeth to any other god save to the Lord alone shall be

utterly destroyed." But let us come to still plainer expressions, and

hear how great a God Porphyry thinks the God of the Jews is. Apollo,

he says, when asked whether word, i.e., reason, or law is the better

thing, replied in the following verses. Then he gives the verses of

Apollo, from which I select the following as sufficient: "God, the

Generator, and the King prior to all things, before whom heaven and

earth, and the sea, and the hidden places of hell tremble, and the

deities themselves are afraid, for their law is the Father whom the

holy Hebrews honor." In this oracle of his god Apollo, Porphyry avowed

that the God of the Hebrews is so great that the deities themselves are

afraid before Him. I am surprised, therefore, that when God said, He

that sacrificeth to other gods shall be utterly destroyed, Porphyry

himself was not afraid lest he should be destroyed for sacrificing to

other gods.

This philosopher, however, has also some good to say of Christ,

oblivious, as it were, of that contumely of his of which we have just

been speaking; or as if his gods spoke evil of Christ only while

asleep, and recognized Him to be good, and gave Him His deserved

praise, when they awoke. For, as if he were about to proclaim some

marvellous thing passing belief, he says, "What we are going to say

will certainly take some by surprise. For the gods have declared that

Christ was very pious, and has become immortal, and that they cherish

his memory: that the Christians, however, are polluted, contaminated,

and involved in error. And many other such things," he says, "do the

gods say against the Christians." Then he gives specimens of the

accusations made, as he says, by the gods against them, and then goes

on: "But to some who asked Hecate whether Christ were a God, she

replied, You know the condition of the disembodied immortal soul, and

that if it has been severed from wisdom it always errs. The soul you

refer to is that of a man foremost in piety: they worship it because

they mistake the truth." To this so-called oracular response he adds

the following words of his own: "Of this very pious man, then, Hecate

said that the soul, like the souls of other good men, was after death

dowered with immortality, and that the Christians through ignorance

worship it. And to those who ask why he was condemned to die, the

oracle of the goddess replied, The body, indeed, is always exposed to

torments, but the souls of the pious abide in heaven. And the soul you

inquire about has been the fatal cause of error to other souls which

were not fated to receive the gifts of the gods, and to have the

knowledge of immortal Jove. Such souls are therefore hated by the

gods; for they who were fated not to receive the gifts of the gods, and

not to know God, were fated to be involved in error by means of him you

speak of. He himself, however, was good, and heaven has been opened to

him as to other good men. You are not, then, to speak evil of him, but

to pity the folly of men: and through him men's danger is imminent."

Who is so foolish as not to see that these oracles were either composed

by a clever man with a strong animus against the Christians, or were

uttered as responses by impure demons with a similar design,--that is

to say, in order that their praise of Christ may win credence for their

vituperation of Christians; and that thus they may, if possible, close

the way of eternal salvation, which is identical with Christianity?

For they believe that they are by no means counter working their own

hurtful craft by promoting belief in Christ, so long as their

calumniation of Christians is also accepted; for they thus secure that

even the man who thinks well of Christ declines to become a Christian,

and is therefore not delivered from their own rule by the Christ he

praises. Besides, their praise of Christ is so contrived that

whosoever believes in Him as thus represented will not be a true

Christian but a Photinian heretic, recognizing only the humanity, and

not also the divinity of Christ, and will thus be precluded from

salvation and from deliverance out of the meshes of these devilish

lies. For our part, we are no better pleased with Hecate's praises of

Christ than with Apollo's calumniation of Him. Apollo says that Christ

was put to death by right-minded judges, implying that He was

unrighteous. Hecate says that He was a most pious man, but no more.

The intention of both is the same, to prevent men from becoming

Christians, because if this be secured, men shall never be rescued from

their power. But it is incumbent on our philosopher, or rather on

those who believe in these pretended oracles against the Christians,

first of all, if they can, to bring Apollo and Hecate to the same mind

regarding Christ, so that either both may condemn or both praise Him.

And even if they succeeded in this, we for our part would

notwithstanding repudiate the testimony of demons, whether favorable or

adverse to Christ. But when our adversaries find a god and goddess of

their own at variance about Christ the one praising, the other

vituperating Him, they can certainly give no credence, if they have any

judgment, to mere men who blaspheme the Christians.

When Porphyry or Hecate praises Christ, and adds that He gave Himself

to the Christians as a fatal gift, that they might be involved in

error, he exposes, as he thinks, the causes of this error. But before

I cite his words to that purpose, I would ask, If Christ did thus give

Himself to the Christians to involve them in error, did He do so

willingly, or against His will? If willingly, how is He righteous? If

against His will, how is He blessed? However, let us hear the causes

of this error. "There are," he says," in a certain place very small

earthly spirits, subject to the power of evil demons. The wise men of

the Hebrews, among whom was this Jesus, as you have heard from the

oracles of Apollo cited above, turned religious persons from these very

wicked demons and minor spirits, and taught them rather to worship the

celestial gods, and especially to adore God the Father. This," he

said, "the gods enjoin; and we have already shown how they admonish the

soul to turn to God, and command it to worship Him. But the ignorant

and the ungodly, who are not destined to receive favors from the gods,

nor to know the immortal Jupiter, not listening to the gods and their

messages, have turned away from all gods, and have not only refused to

hate, but have venerated the prohibited demons. Professing to worship

God, they refuse to do those things by which alone God is worshipped.

For God, indeed, being the Father of all, is in need of nothing; but

for us it is good to adore Him by means of justice, chastity, and other

virtues, and thus to make life itself a prayer to Him, by inquiring

into and imitating His nature. For inquiry," says he, "purifies and

imitation deifies us, by moving us nearer to Him." He is right in so

far as he proclaims God the Father, and the conduct by which we should

worship Him. Of such precepts the prophetic books of the Hebrews are

full, when they praise or blame the life of the saints. But in

speaking of the Christians he is in error, and caluminates them as much

as is desired by the demons whom he takes for gods, as if it were

difficult for any man to recollect the disgraceful and shameful actions

which used to be done in the theatres and temples to please the gods,

and to compare with these things what is heard in our churches, and

what is offered to the true God, and from this comparison to conclude

where character is edified, and where it is ruined. But who but a

diabolical spirit has told or suggested to this man so manifest and

vain a lie, as that the Christians reverenced rather than hated the

demons, whose worship the Hebrews prohibited? But that God, whom the

Hebrew sages worshipped, forbids sacrifice to be offered even to the

holy angels of heaven and divine powers, whom we, in this our

pilgrimage, venerate and love as our most blessed fellow-citizens. For

in the law which God gave to His Hebrew people He utters this menace,

as in a voice of thunder: "He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto

the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed." [1299] And that no one

might suppose that this prohibition extends only to the very wicked

demons and earthly spirits, whom this philosopher calls very small and

inferior,--for even these are in the Scripture called gods, not of the

Hebrews, but of the nations, as the Septuagint translators have shown

in the psalm where it is said, "For all the gods of the nations are

demons," [1300] --that no one might suppose, I say, that sacrifice to

these demons was prohibited, but that sacrifice might be offered to all

or some of the celestials, it was immediately added, "save unto the

Lord alone." [1301] The God of the Hebrews, then, to whom this

renowned philosopher bears this signal testimony, gave to His Hebrew

people a law, composed in the Hebrew language, and not obscure and

unknown, but published now in every nation, and in this law it is

written, "He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord alone,

he shall be utterly destroyed." What need is there to seek further

proofs in the law or the prophets of this same thing? Seek, we need

not say, for the passages are neither few nor difficult to find; but

what need to collect and apply to my argument the proofs which are

thickly sown and obvious, and by which it appears clear as day that

sacrifice may be paid to none but the supreme and true God? Here is

one brief but decided, even menacing, and certainly true utterance of

that God whom the wisest of our adversaries so highly extol. Let this

be listened to, feared, fulfilled, that there may be no disobedient

soul cut off. "He that sacrifices," He says, not because He needs

anything, but because it behoves us to be His possession. Hence the

Psalmist in the Hebrew Scriptures sings, "I have said to the Lord, Thou

art my God, for Thou needest not my good." [1302] For we ourselves,

who are His own city, are His most noble and worthy sacrifice, and it

is this mystery we celebrate in our sacrifices, which are well known to

the faithful, as we have explained in the preceding books. For through

the prophets the oracles of God declared that the sacrifices which the

Jews offered as a shadow of that which was to be would cease, and that

the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun, would offer one

sacrifice. From these oracles, which we now see accomplished, we have

made such selections as seemed suitable to our purpose in this work.

And therefore, where there is not this righteousness whereby the one

supreme God rules the obedient city according to His grace, so that it

sacrifices to none but Him, and whereby, in all the citizens of this

obedient city, the soul consequently rules the body and reason the

vices in the rightful order, so that, as the individual just man, so

also the community and people of the just, live by faith, which works

by love, that love whereby man loves God as He ought to be loved, and

his neighbor as himself,--there, I say, there is not an assemblage

associated by a common acknowledgment of right, and by a community of

interests. But if there is not this, there is not a people, if our

definition be true, and therefore there is no republic; for where there

is no people there can be no republic.

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[1299] Ex. xxii. 20.

[1300] Ps. xcvi. 5.

[1301] Augustin here warns his readers against a possible

misunderstanding of the Latin word for alone (soli), which might be

rendered "the sun."

[1302] Ps. xvi. 2.

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Chapter 24.--The Definition Which Must Be Given of a People and a

Republic, in Order to Vindicate the Assumption of These Titles by the

Romans and by Other Kingdoms.

But if we discard this definition of a people, and, assuming another,

say that a people is an assemblage of reasonable beings bound together

by a common agreement as to the objects of their love, then, in order

to discover the character of any people, we have only to observe what

they love. Yet whatever it loves, if only it is an assemblage of

reasonable beings and not of beasts, and is bound together by an

agreement as to the objects of love, it is reasonably called a people;

and it will be a superior people in proportion as it is bound together

by higher interests, inferior in proportion as it is bound together by

lower. According to this definition of ours, the Roman people is a

people, and its weal is without doubt a commonwealth or republic. But

what its tastes were in its early and subsequent days, and how it

declined into sanguinary seditions and then to social and civil wars,

and so burst asunder or rotted off the bond of concord in which the

health of a people consists, history shows, and in the preceding books

I have related at large. And yet I would not on this account say

either that it was not a people, or that its administration was not a

republic, so long as there remains an assemblage of reasonable beings

bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of love. But

what I say of this people and of this republic I must be understood to

think and say of the Athenians or any Greek state, of the Egyptians, of

the early Assyrian Babylon, and of every other nation, great or small,

which had a public government. For, in general, the city of the

ungodly, which did not obey the command of God that it should offer no

sacrifice save to Him alone, and which, therefore, could not give to

the soul its proper command over the body, nor to the reason its just

authority over the vices, is void of true justice.

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Chapter 25.--That Where There is No True Religion There are No True

Virtues.

For though the soul may seem to rule the body admirably, and the reason

the vices, if the soul and reason do not themselves obey God, as God

has commanded them to serve Him, they have no proper authority over the

body and the vices. For what kind of mistress of the body and the

vices can that mind be which is ignorant of the true God, and which,

instead of being subject to His authority, is prostituted to the

corrupting influences of the most vicious demons? It is for this

reason that the virtues which it seems to itself to possess, and by

which it restrains the body and the vices that it may obtain and keep

what it desires, are rather vices than virtues so long as there is no

reference to God in the matter. For although some suppose that virtues

which have a reference only to themselves, and are desired only on

their own account, are yet true and genuine virtues, the fact is that

even then they are inflated with pride, and are therefore to be

reckoned vices rather than virtues. For as that which gives life to

the flesh is not derived from flesh, but is above it, so that which

gives blessed life to man is not derived from man, but is something

above him; and what I say of man is true of every celestial power and

virtue whatsoever.

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Chapter 26.--Of the Peace Which is Enjoyed by the People that are

Alienated from God, and the Use Made of It by the People of God in the

Time of Its Pilgrimage.

Wherefore, as the life of the flesh is the soul, so the blessed life of

man is God, of whom the sacred writings of the Hebrews say, "Blessed is

the people whose God is the Lord." [1303] Miserable, therefore, is

the people which is alienated from God. Yet even this people has a

peace of its own which is not to be lightly esteemed, though, indeed,

it shall not in the end enjoy it, because it makes no good use of it

before the end. But it is our interest that it enjoy this peace

meanwhile in this life; for as long as the two cities are commingled,

we also enjoy the peace of Babylon. For from Babylon the people of God

is so freed that it meanwhile sojourns in its company. And therefore

the apostle also admonished the Church to pray for kings and those in

authority, assigning as the reason, "that we may live a quiet and

tranquil life in all godliness and love." [1304] And the prophet

Jeremiah, when predicting the captivity that was to befall the ancient

people of God, and giving them the divine command to go obediently to

Babylonia, and thus serve their God, counselled them also to pray for

Babylonia, saying, "In the peace thereof shall ye have peace," [1305]

--the temporal peace which the good and the wicked together enjoy.

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[1303] Ps. cxliv. 15.

[1304] 1 Tim. ii. 2; var. reading, "purity."

[1305] Jer. xxix. 7.

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Chapter 27.--That the Peace of Those Who Serve God Cannot in This

Mortal Life Be Apprehended in Its Perfection.

But the peace which is peculiar to ourselves we enjoy now with God by

faith, and shall hereafter enjoy eternally with Him by sight. But the

peace which we enjoy in this life, whether common to all or peculiar to

ourselves, is rather the solace of our misery than the positive

enjoyment of felicity. Our very righteousness, too, though true in so

far as it has respect to the true good, is yet in this life of such a

kind that it consists rather in the remission of sins than in the

perfecting of virtues. Witness the prayer of the whole city of God in

its pilgrim state, for it cries to God by the mouth of all its members,

"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." [1306] And this

prayer is efficacious not for those whose faith is "without works and

dead," [1307] but for those whose faith "worketh by love." [1308] For

as reason, though subjected to God, is yet "pressed down by the

corruptible body," [1309] so long as it is in this mortal condition, it

has not perfect authority over vice, and therefore this prayer is

needed by the righteous. For though it exercises authority, the vices

do not submit without a struggle. For however well one maintains the

conflict, and however thoroughly he has subdued these enemies, there

steals in some evil thing, which, if it does not find ready expression

in act, slips out by the lips, or insinuates itself into the thought;

and therefore his peace is not full so long as he is at war with his

vices. For it is a doubtful conflict he wages with those that resist,

and his victory over those that are defeated is not secure, but full of

anxiety and effort. Amidst these temptations, therefore, of all which

it has been summarily said in the divine oracles, "Is not human life

upon earth a temptation?" [1310] who but a proud man can presume that

he so lives that he has no need to say to God, "Forgive us our debts?"

And such a man is not great, but swollen and puffed up with vanity, and

is justly resisted by Him who abundantly gives grace to the humble.

Whence it is said, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the

humble." [1311] In this, then, consists the righteousness of a man,

that he submit himself to God, his body to his soul, and his vices,

even when they rebel, to his reason, which either defeats or at least

resists them; and also that he beg from God grace to do his duty,

[1312] and the pardon of his sins, and that he render to God thanks for

all the blessings he receives. But, in that final peace to which all

our righteousness has reference, and for the sake of which it is

maintained, as our nature shall enjoy a sound immortality and

incorruption, and shall have no more vices, and as we shall experience

no resistance either from ourselves or from others, it will not be

necessary that reason should rule vices which no longer exist, but God

shall rule the man, and the soul shall rule the body, with a sweetness

and facility suitable to the felicity of a life which is done with

bondage. And this condition shall there be eternal, and we shall be

assured of its eternity; and thus the peace of this blessedness and the

blessedness of this peace shall be the supreme good.

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[1306] Matt. vi. 12.

[1307] Jas. ii. 17.

[1308] Gal. v. 6.

[1309] Wisdom ix. 15.

[1310] Job vii. 1.

[1311] Jas. iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 5.

[1312] Gratia meritorum.

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Chapter 28.--The End of the Wicked.

But, on the other hand, they who do not belong to this city of God

shall inherit eternal misery, which is also called the second death,

because the soul shall then be separated from God its life, and

therefore cannot be said to live, and the body shall be subjected to

eternal pains. And consequently this second death shall be the more

severe, because no death shall terminate it. But war being contrary to

peace, as misery to happiness, and life to death, it is not without

reason asked what kind of war can be found in the end of the wicked

answering to the peace which is declared to be the end of the

righteous? The person who puts this question has only to observe what

it is in war that is hurtful and destructive, and he shall see that it

is nothing else than the mutual opposition and conflict of things. And

can he conceive a more grievous and bitter war than that in which the

will is so opposed to passion, and passion to the will, that their

hostility can never be terminated by the victory of either, and in

which the violence of pain so conflicts with the nature of the body,

that neither yields to the other? For in this life, when this conflict

has arisen, either pain conquers and death expels the feeling of it, or

nature conquers and health expels the pain. But in the world to come

the pain continues that it may torment, and the nature endures that it

may be sensible of it; and neither ceases to exist, lest punishment

also should cease. Now, as it is through the last judgment that men

pass to these ends, the good to the supreme good, the evil to the

supreme evil, I will treat of this judgment in the following book.

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Book XX.

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Argument--Concerning the last judgment, and the declarations regarding

it in the old and new testaments.

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Chapter 1.--That Although God is Always Judging, It is Nevertheless

Reasonable to Confine Our Attention in This Book to His Last Judgment.

Intending to speak, in dependence on God's grace, of the day of His

final judgment, and to affirm it against the ungodly and incredulous,

we must first of all lay, as it were, in the foundation of the edifice

the divine declarations. Those persons who do not believe such

declarations do their best to oppose to them false and illusive

sophisms of their own, either contending that what is adduced from

Scripture has another meaning, or altogether denying that it is an

utterance of God's. For I suppose no man who understands what is

written, and believes it to be communicated by the supreme and true God

through holy men, refuses to yield and consent to these declarations,

whether he orally confesses his consent, or is from some evil influence

ashamed or afraid to do so; or even, with an opinionativeness closely

resembling madness, makes strenuous efforts to defend what he knows and

believes to be false against what he knows and believes to be true.

That, therefore, which the whole Church of the true God holds and

professes as its creed, that Christ shall come from heaven to judge

quick and dead, this we call the last day, or last time, of the divine

judgment. For we do not know how many days this judgment may occupy;

but no one who reads the Scriptures, however negligently, need be told

that in them "day" is customarily used for "time." And when we speak

of the day of God's judgment, we add the word last or final for this

reason, because even now God judges, and has judged from the beginning

of human history, banishing from paradise, and excluding from the tree

of life, those first men who perpetrated so great a sin. Yea, He was

certainly exercising judgment also when He did not spare the angels who

sinned, whose prince, overcome by envy, seduced men after being himself

seduced. Neither is it without God's profound and just judgment that

the life of demons and men, the one in the air, the other on earth, is

filled with misery, calamities, and mistakes. And even though no one

had sinned, it could only have been by the good and right judgment of

God that the whole rational creation could have been maintained in

eternal blessedness by a persevering adherence to its Lord. He judges,

too, not only in the mass, condemning the race of devils and the race

of men to be miserable on account of the original sin of these races,

but He also judges the voluntary and personal acts of individuals. For

even the devils pray that they may not be tormented, [1313] which

proves that without injustice they might either be spared or tormented

according to their deserts. And men are punished by God for their sins

often visibly, always secretly, either in this life or after death,

although no man acts rightly save by the assistance of divine aid; and

no man or devil acts unrighteously save by the permission of the divine

and most just judgment. For, as the apostle says, "There is no

unrighteousness with God;" [1314] and as he elsewhere says, "His

judgments are inscrutable, and His ways past finding out." [1315] In

this book, then, I shall speak, as God permits, not of those first

judgments, nor of these intervening judgments of God, but of the last

judgment, when Christ is to come from heaven to judge the quick and the

dead. For that day is properly called the day of judgment, because in

it there shall be no room left for the ignorant questioning why this

wicked person is happy and that righteous man unhappy. In that day

true and full happiness shall be the lot of none but the good, while

deserved and supreme misery shall be the portion of the wicked, and of

them only.

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[1313] Matt. viii. 29.

[1314] Rom. ix. 14.

[1315] Rom. xi. 33.

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Chapter 2.--That in the Mingled Web of Human Affairs God's Judgment is

Present, Though It Cannot Be Discerned.

In this present time we learn to bear with equanimity the ills to which

even good men are subject, and to hold cheap the blessings which even

the wicked enjoy. And consequently, even in those conditions of life

in which the justice of God is not apparent, His teaching is salutary.

For we do not know by what judgment of God this good man is poor and

that bad man rich; why he who, in our opinion, ought to suffer acutely

for his abandoned life enjoys himself, while sorrow pursues him whose

praiseworthy life leads us to suppose he should be happy; why the

innocent man is dismissed from the bar not only unavenged, but even

condemned, being either wronged by the iniquity of the judge, or

overwhelmed by false evidence, while his guilty adversary, on the other

hand, is not only discharged with impunity, but even has his claims

admitted; why the ungodly enjoys good health, while the godly pines in

sickness; why ruffians are of the soundest constitution, while they who

could not hurt any one even with a word are from infancy afflicted with

complicated disorders; why he who is useful to society is cut off by

premature death, while those who, as it might seem, ought never to have

been so much as born have lives of unusual length; why he who is full

of crimes is crowned with honors, while the blameless man is buried in

the darkness of neglect. But who can collect or enumerate all the

contrasts of this kind? But if this anomalous state of things were

uniform in this life, in which, as the sacred Psalmist says, "Man is

like to vanity, his days as a shadow that passeth away," [1316] --so

uniform that none but wicked men won the transitory prosperity of

earth, while only the good suffered its ills,--this could be referred

to the just and even benign judgment of God. We might suppose that

they who were not destined to obtain those everlasting benefits which

constitute human blessedness were either deluded by transitory

blessings as the just reward of their wickedness, or were, in God's

mercy, consoled by them, and that they who were not destined to suffer

eternal torments were afflicted with temporal chastisement for their

sins, or were stimulated to greater attainment in virtue. But now, as

it is, since we not only see good men involved in the ills of life, and

bad men enjoying the good of it, which seems unjust, but also that evil

often overtakes evil men, and good surprises the good, the rather on

this account are God's judgments unsearchable, and His ways past

finding out. Although, therefore, we do not know by what judgment

these things are done or permitted to be done by God, with whom is the

highest virtue, the highest wisdom, the highest justice, no infirmity,

no rashness, no unrighteousness, yet it is salutary for us to learn to

hold cheap such things, be they good or evil, as attach indifferently

to good men and bad, and to covet those good things which belong only

to good men, and flee those evils which belong only to evil men. But

when we shall have come to that judgment, the date of which is called

peculiarly the day of judgment, and sometimes the day of the Lord, we

shall then recognize the justice of all God's judgments, not only of

such as shall then be pronounced, but, of all which take effect from

the beginning, or may take effect before that time. And in that day we

shall also recognize with what justice so many, or almost all, the just

judgments of God in the present life defy the scrutiny of human sense

or insight, though in this matter it is not concealed from pious minds

that what is concealed is just.

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[1316] Ps. cxliv. 4.

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Chapter 3.--What Solomon, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, Says Regarding

the Things Which Happen Alike to Good and Wicked Men.

Solomon, the wisest king of Israel, who reigned in Jerusalem, thus

commences the book called Ecclesiastes, which the Jews number among

their canonical Scriptures: "Vanity of vanities, said Ecclesiastes,

vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his

labor which he hath taken under the sun?" [1317] And after going on

to enumerate, with this as his text, the calamities and delusions of

this life, and the shifting nature of the present time, in which there

is nothing substantial, nothing lasting, he bewails, among the other

vanities that are under the sun, this also, that though wisdom

excelleth folly as light excelleth darkness, and though the eyes of the

wise man are in his head, while the fool walketh in darkness, [1318]

yet one event happeneth to them all, that is to say, in this life under

the sun, unquestionably alluding to those evils which we see befall

good and bad men alike. He says, further, that the good suffer the

ills of life as if they were evil doers, and the bad enjoy the good of

life as if they were good. "There is a vanity which is done upon the

earth; that there be just men unto whom it happeneth according to the

work of the wicked: again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth

according to the work of the righteous. I said, that this also is

vanity." [1319] This wisest man devoted this whole book to a full

exposure of this vanity, evidently with no other object than that we

might long for that life in which there is no vanity under the sun, but

verity under Him who made the sun. In this vanity, then, was it not by

the just and righteous judgment of God that man, made like to vanity,

was destined to pass away? But in these days of vanity it makes an

important difference whether he resists or yields to the truth, and

whether he is destitute of true piety or a partaker of it,--important

not so far as regards the acquirement of the blessings or the evasion

of the calamities of this transitory and vain life, but in connection

with the future judgment which shall make over to good men good things,

and to bad men bad things, in permanent, inalienable possession. In

fine, this wise man concludes this book of his by saying, "Fear God,

and keep His commandments: for this is every man. For God shall bring

every work into judgment, with every despised person, whether it be

good, or whether it be evil." [1320] What truer, terser, more

salutary enouncement could be made? "Fear God, he says, and keep His

commandments: for this is every man." For whosoever has real

existence, is this, is a keeper of God's commandments; and he who is

not this, is nothing. For so long as he remains in the likeness of

vanity, he is not renewed in the image of the truth. "For God shall

bring into judgment every work,"--that is, whatever man does in this

life,--"whether it be good or whether it be evil, with every despised

person,"--that is, with every man who here seems despicable, and is

therefore not considered; for God sees even him and does not despise

him nor pass him over in His judgment.

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[1317] Eccles. i. 2. 3.

[1318] Eccles. ii. 13, 14.

[1319] Eccles. viii. 14.

[1320] Eccles. xii. 13, 14.

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Chapter 4.--That Proofs of the Last Judgment Will Be Adduced, First

from the New Testament, and Then from the Old.

The proofs, then, of this last judgment of God which I propose to

adduce shall be drawn first from the New Testament, and then from the

Old. For although the Old Testament is prior in point of time, the New

has the precedence in intrinsic value; for the Old acts the part of

herald to the New. We shall therefore first cite passages from the New

Testament, and confirm them by quotations from the Old Testament. The

Old contains the law and the prophets, the New the gospel and the

apostolic epistles. Now the apostle says "By the law is the knowledge

of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is

manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; now the

righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ upon all them that

believe." [1321] This righteousness of God belongs to the New

Testament, and evidence for it exists in the old books, that is to say,

in the law and the prophets. I shall first, then state the case, and

then call the witnesses. This order Jesus Christ Himself directs us to

observe, saying, "The scribe instructed in the kingdom of God is like a

good householder, bringing out of his treasure things new and old."

[1322] He did not say "old and new," which He certainly would have

said had He not wished to follow the order of merit rather than that of

time.

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[1321] Rom. iii. 20-22.

[1322] Matt. xiii. 52.

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Chapter 5.--The Passages in Which the Saviour Declares that There Shall

Be a Divine Judgment in the End of the World.

The Saviour Himself, while reproving the cities in which He had done

great works, but which had not believed, and while setting them in

unfavorable comparison with foreign cities, says, "But I say unto you,

It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment

than for you." [1323] And a little after He says, "Verily, I say unto

you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of

judgment than for thee." [1324] Here He most plainly predicts that a

day of judgment is to come. And in another place He says, "The men of

Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn

it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a

greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in

the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came

from the utter most parts of the earth to hear the words of Solomon;

and behold, a greater than Solomon is here." [1325] Two things we

learn from this passage, that a judgment is to take place, and that it

is to take place at the resurrection of the dead. For when He spoke of

the Ninevites and the queen of the south, He certainly spoke of dead

persons, and yet He said that they should rise up in the day of

judgment. He did not say, "They shall condemn," as if they themselves

were to be the judges, but because, in comparison with them, the others

shall be justly condemned.

Again, in another passage, in which He was speaking of the present

intermingling and future separation of the good and bad,--the

separation which shall be made in the day of judgment,--He adduced a

comparison drawn from the sown wheat and the tares sown among them, and

gave this explanation of it to His disciples: "He that soweth the good

seed is the Son of man," [1326] etc. Here, indeed, He did not name the

judgment or the day of judgment, but indicated it much more clearly by

describing the circumstances, and foretold that it should take place in

the end of the world.

In like manner He says to His disciples, "Verily I say unto you, That

ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man

shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve

thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." [1327] Here we learn

that Jesus shall judge with His disciples. And therefore He said

elsewhere to the Jews, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do

your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges." [1328]

Neither ought we to suppose that only twelve men shall judge along

with Him, though He says that they shall sit upon twelve thrones; for

by the number twelve is signified the completeness of the multitude of

those who shall judge. For the two parts of the number seven (which

commonly symbolizes totality), that is to say four and three,

multiplied into one another, give twelve. For four times three, or

three times four, are twelve. There are other meanings, too, in this

number twelve. Were not this the right interpretation of the twelve

thrones, then since we read that Matthias was ordained an apostle in

the room of Judas the traitor, the Apostle Paul, though he labored more

than them all, [1329] should have no throne of judgment; but he

unmistakeably considers himself to be included in the number of the

judges when he says, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" [1330]

The same rule is to be observed in applying the number twelve to those

who are to be judged. For though it was said, "judging the twelve

tribes of Israel," the tribe of Levi, which is the thirteenth, shall

not on this account be exempt from judgment, neither shall judgment be

passed only on Israel and not on the other nations. And by the words

"in the regeneration," He certainly meant the resurrection of the dead

to be understood; for our flesh shall be regenerated by incorruption,

as our soul is regenerated by faith.

Many passages I omit, because, though they seem to refer to the last

judgment, yet on a closer examination they are found to be ambiguous,

or to allude rather to some other event,--whether to that coming of the

Saviour which continually occurs in His Church, that is, in His

members, in which comes little by little, and piece by piece, since the

whole Church is His body, or to the destruction of the earthly

Jerusalem. For when He speaks even of this, He often uses language

which is applicable to the end of the world and that last and great day

of judgment, so that these two events cannot be distinguished unless

all the corresponding passages bearing on the subject in the three

evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are compared with one

another,--for some things are put more obscurely by one evangelist and

more plainly by another,--so that it becomes apparent what things are

meant to be referred to one event. It is this which I have been at

pains to do in a letter which I wrote to Hesychius of blessed memory,

bishop of Salon, and entitled, "Of the End of the World." [1331]

I shall now cite from the Gospel according to Matthew the passage which

speaks of the separation of the good from the wicked by the most

efficacious and final judgment of Christ: "When the Son of man," he

says, "shall come in His glory, . . . then shall He say also unto them

on His left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,

prepared for the devil and his angels." [1332] Then He in like manner

recounts to the wicked the things they had not done, but which He had

said those on the right hand had done. And when they ask when they had

seen Him in need of these things, He replies that, inasmuch as they had

not done it to the least of His brethren, they had not done it unto

Him, and concludes His address in the words, "And these shall go away

into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

Moreover, the evangelist John most distinctly states that He had

predicted that the judgment should be at the resurrection of the dead.

For after saying, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all

judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they

honor the Father: he that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the

Father which hath sent Him;" He immediately adds, "Verily, verily, I

say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent

me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is

passed from death to life." [1333] Here He said that believers on Him

should not come into judgment. How, then, shall they be separated from

the wicked by judgment, and be set at His right hand, unless judgment

be in this passage used for condemnation? For into judgment, in this

sense, they shall not come who hear His word, and believe on Him that

sent Him.

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[1323] Matt. xi. 22.

[1324] Matt. xi. 24.

[1325] Matt. xii. 41, 42.

[1326] Augustin quotes the whole passage, Matt. xiii. 37-43.

[1327] Matt. xix. 28.

[1328] Matt. xii. 27.

[1329] 1 Cor. xv. 10.

[1330] 1 Cor. vi. 3.

[1331] Ep.199.

[1332] Matt. xxv. 34-41, given in full.

[1333] John v. 22-24.

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Chapter 6.--What is the First Resurrection, and What the Second.

After that He adds the words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour

is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of

God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in

Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." [1334]

As yet He does not speak of the second resurrection, that is, the

resurrection of the body, which shall be in the end, but of the first,

which now is. It is for the sake of making this distinction that He

says, "The hour is coming, and now is." Now this resurrection regards

not the body, but the soul. For souls, too, have a death of their own

in wickedness and sins, whereby they are the dead of whom the same lips

say, "Suffer the dead to bury their dead," [1335] --that is, let those

who are dead in soul bury them that are dead in body. It is of these

dead, then--the dead in ungodliness and wickedness--that He says, "The

hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the

Son of God; and they that hear shall live." "They that hear," that is,

they who obey, believe, and persevere to the end. Here no difference

is made between the good and the bad. For it is good for all men to

hear His voice and live, by passing to the life of godliness from the

death of ungodliness. Of this death the Apostle Paul says, "Therefore

all are dead, and He died for all, that they which live should not

henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and

rose again." [1336] Thus all, without one exception, were dead in

sins, whether original or voluntary sins, sins of ignorance, or sins

committed against knowledge; and for all the dead there died the one

only person who lived, that is, who had no sin whatever, in order that

they who live by the remission of their sins should live, not to

themselves, but to Him who died for all, for our sins, and rose again

for our justification, that we, believing in Him who justifies the

ungodly, and being justified from ungodliness or quickened from death,

may be able to attain to the first resurrection which now is. For in

this first resurrection none have a part save those who shall be

eternally blessed; but in the second, of which He goes on to speak,

all, as we shall learn, have a part, both the blessed and the

wretched. The one is the resurrection of mercy, the other of

judgment. And therefore it is written in the psalm, "I will sing of

mercy and of judgment: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing." [1337]

And of this judgment He went on to say, "And hath given Him authority

to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." Here He shows

that He will come to judge in that flesh in which He had come to be

judged. For it is to show this He says, "because He is the Son of

man." And then follow the words for our purpose: "Marvel not at

this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves

shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good,

unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the

resurrection of judgment." [1338] This judgment He uses here in the

same sense as a little before, when He says, "He that heareth my word,

and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not

come into judgment, but is passed from death to life;" i.e., by having

a part in the first resurrection, by which a transition from death to

life is made in this present time, he shall not come into damnation,

which He mentions by the name of judgment, as also in the place where

He says, "but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of

judgment," i.e., of damnation. He, therefore, who would not be damned

in the second resurrection, let him rise in the first. For "the hour

is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of

God; and they that hear shall live," i.e., shall not come into

damnation, which is called the second death; into which death, after

the second or bodily resurrection, they shall be hurled who do not rise

in the first or spiritual resurrection. For "the hour is coming" (but

here He does not say, "and now is," because it shall come in the end of

the world in the last and greatest judgment of God) "when all that are

in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth." He does not

say, as in the first resurrection, "And they that Hear shall live."

For all shall not live, at least with such life as ought alone to be

called life because it alone is blessed. For some kind of life they

must have in order to hear, and come forth from the graves in their

rising bodies. And why all shall not live He teaches in the words that

follow: "They that have done good, to the resurrection of

life,"--these are they who shall live; "but they that have done evil,

to the resurrection of judgment,"--these are they who shall not live,

for they shall die in the second death. They have done evil because

their life has been evil; and their life has been evil because it has

not been renewed in the first or spiritual resurrection which now is,

or because they have not persevered to the end in their renewed life.

As, then, there are two regenerations, of which I have already made

mention,--the one according to faith, and which takes place in the

present life by means of baptism; the other according to the flesh, and

which shall be accomplished in its incorruption and immortality by

means of the great and final judgment,--so are there also two

resurrections,--the one the first and spiritual resurrection, which has

place in this life, and preserves us from coming into the second death;

the other the second, which does not occur now, but in the end of the

world, and which is of the body, not of the soul, and which by the last

judgment shall dismiss some into the second death, others into that

life which has no death.

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[1334] John v. 25, 26.

[1335] Matt. viii. 22.

[1336] 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

[1337] Ps. ci. 1.

[1338] John v. 28, 29.

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Chapter 7.--What is Written in the Revelation of John Regarding the Two

Resurrections, and the Thousand Years, and What May Reasonably Be Held

on These Points.

The evangelist John has spoken of these two resurrections in the book

which is called the Apocalypse, but in such a way that some Christians

do not understand the first of the two, and so construe the passage

into ridiculous fancies. For the Apostle John says in the foresaid

book, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven. . . . Blessed and holy

is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second

death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ,

and shall reign with Him a thousand years." [1339] Those who, on the

strength of this passage, have suspected that the first resurrection is

future and bodily, have been moved, among other things, specially by

the number of a thousand years, as if it were a fit thing that the

saints should thus enjoy a kind of Sabbath-rest during that period, a

holy leisure after the labors of the six thousand years since man was

created, and was on account of his great sin dismissed from the

blessedness of paradise into the woes of this mortal life, so that

thus, as it is written, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years,

and a thousand years as one day," [1340] there should follow on the

completion of six thousand years, as of six days, a kind of seventh-day

Sabbath in the succeeding thousand years; and that it is for this

purpose the saints rise, viz., to celebrate this Sabbath. And this

opinion would not be objectionable, if it were believed that the joys

of the saints in that Sabbath shall be spiritual, and consequent on the

presence of God; for I myself, too, once held this opinion. [1341]

But, as they assert that those who then rise again shall enjoy the

leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat

and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but

even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, such assertions can be

believed only by the carnal. They who do believe them are called by

the spiritual Chiliasts, which we may literally reproduce by the name

Millenarians. [1342] It were a tedious process to refute these

opinions point by point: we prefer proceeding to show how that passage

of Scripture should be understood. [1343]

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself says, "No man can enter into a strong

man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man"

[1344] --meaning by the strong man the devil, because he had power to

take captive the human race; and meaning by his goods which he was to

take, those who had been held by the devil in divers sins and

iniquities, but were to become believers in Himself. It was then for

the binding of this strong one that the apostle saw in the Apocalypse

"an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a

chain in his hand. And he laid hold," he says, "on the dragon, that

old serpent, which is called the devil and Satan, and bound him a

thousand years,"--that is, bridled and restrained his power so that he

could not seduce and gain possession of those who were to be freed.

Now the thousand years may be understood in two ways, so far as occurs

to me: either because these things happen in the sixth thousand of

years or sixth millennium (the latter part of which is now passing), as

if during the sixth day, which is to be followed by a Sabbath which has

no evening, the endless rest of the saints, so that, speaking of a part

under the name of the whole, he calls the last part of the

millennium--the part, that is, which had yet to expire before the end

of the world--a thousand years; or he used the thousand years as an

equivalent for the whole duration of this world, employing the number

of perfection to mark the fullness of time. For a thousand is the cube

of ten. For ten times ten makes a hundred, that is; the square on a

plane superficies. But to give this superficies height, and make it a

cube, the hundred is again multiplied by ten, which gives a thousand.

Besides, if a hundred is sometimes used for totality, as when the Lord

said by way of promise to him that left all and followed Him "He shall

receive in this world an hundredfold;" [1345] of which the apostle

gives, as it were, an explanation when he says, "As having nothing, yet

possessing all things," [1346] --for even of old it had been said, The

whole world is the wealth of a believer,--with how much greater reason

is a thousand put for totality since it is the cube, while the other is

only the square? And for the same reason we cannot better interpret

the words of the psalm, "He hath been mindful of His covenant for ever,

the word which He commanded to a thousand generations," [1347] than by

understanding it to mean "to all generations."

"And he cast him into the abyss,"--i.e., cast the devil into the

abyss. By the abyss is meant the countless multitude of the wicked

whose hearts are unfathomably deep in malignity against the Church of

God; not that the devil was not there before, but he is said to be cast

in thither, because, when prevented from harming believers, he takes

more complete possession of the ungodly. For that man is more

abundantly possessed by the devil who is not only alienated from God,

but also gratuitously hates those who serve God. "And shut him up, and

set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till

the thousand years should be fulfilled." "Shut him up,"--i.e.,

prohibited him from going out, from doing what was forbidden. And the

addition of "set a seal upon him" seems to me to mean that it was

designed to keep it a secret who belonged to the devil's party and who

did not. For in this world this is a secret, for we cannot tell

whether even the man who seems to stand shall fall, or whether he who

seems to lie shall rise again. But by the chain and prison-house of

this interdict the devil is prohibited and restrained from seducing

those nations which belong to Christ, but which he formerly seduced or

held in subjection. For before the foundation of the world God chose

to rescue these from the power of darkness, and to translate them into

the kingdom of the Son of His love, as the apostle says. [1348] For

what Christian is not aware that he seduces nations even now, and draws

them with himself to eternal punishment, but not those predestined to

eternal life? And let no one be dismayed by the circumstance that the

devil often seduces even those who have been regenerated in Christ, and

begun to walk in God's way. For "the Lord knoweth them that are His,"

[1349] and of these the devil seduces none to eternal damnation. For

it is as God, from whom nothing is hid even of things future, that the

Lord knows them; not as a man, who sees a man at the present time (if

he can be said to see one whose heart he does not see), but does not

see even himself so far as to be able to know what kind of person he is

to be. The devil, then, is bound and shut up in the abyss that he may

not seduce the nations from which the Church is gathered, and which he

formerly seduced before the Church existed. For it is not said "that

he should not seduce any man," but "that he should not seduce the

nations"--meaning, no doubt, those among which the Church exists--"till

the thousand years should be fulfilled,"--i.e., either what remains of

the sixth day which consists of a thousand years, or all the years

which are to elapse till the end of the world.

The words, "that he should not seduce the nations till the thousand

years should be fulfilled," are not to be understood as indicating that

afterwards he is to seduce only those nations from which the

predestined Church is composed, and from seducing whom he is restrained

by that chain and imprisonment; but they are used in conformity with

that usage frequently employed in Scripture and exemplified in the

psalm, "So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He have mercy

upon us," [1350] --not as if the eyes of His servants would no longer

wait upon the Lord their God when He had mercy upon them. Or the order

of the words is unquestionably this, "And he shut him up and set a seal

upon him, till the thousand years should be fulfilled;" and the

interposed clause, "that he should seduce the nations no more," is not

to be understood in the connection in which it stands, but separately,

and as if added afterwards, so that the whole sentence might be read,

"And He shut him up and set a seal upon him till the thousand years

should be fulfilled, that he should seduce the nations no more,"--i.e.,

he is shut up till the thousand years be fulfilled, on this account,

that he may no more deceive the nations.

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[1339] Rev. xx. 1-6. The whole passage is quoted.

[1340] 2 Pet. iii. 8.

[1341] Serm.259.

[1342] Milliarii.

[1343] [Augustin, who had formerly himself entertained chiliastic

hopes, revolutionized the prevailing ante-Nicene view of the

Apocalyptic millennium by understanding it of the present reign of

Christ in the Church. See Schaff, Church History, vol. ii. 619.--P.S.]

[1344] Mark iii. 27; "Vasa" for "goods."

[1345] Matt. xix. 29.

[1346] 2 Cor. vi. 10.

[1347] Ps. cv. 8.

[1348] Col. i. 13.

[1349] ^ 2 Tim. ii. 19.

[1350] Ps. cxxiii. 2.

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Chapter 8.--Of the Binding and Loosing of the Devil.

"After that," says John, "he must be loosed a little season." If the

binding and shutting up of the devil means his being made unable to

seduce the Church, must his loosing be the recovery of this ability?

By no means. For the Church predestined and elected before the

foundation of the world, the Church of which it is said, "The Lord

knoweth them that are His," shall never be seduced by him. And yet

there shall be a Church in this world even when the devil shall be

loosed, as there has been since the beginning, and shall be always, the

places of the dying being filled by new believers. For a little after

John says that the devil, being loosed, shall draw the nations whom he

has seduced in the whole world to make war against the Church, and that

the number of these enemies shall be as the sand of the sea. "And they

went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the

saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of

heaven and devoured them. And the devil who seduced them was cast into

the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet

are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." [1351]

This relates to the last judgment, but I have thought fit to mention it

now, lest any one might suppose that in that short time during which

the devil shall be loose there shall be no Church upon earth, whether

because the devil finds no Church, or destroys it by manifold

persecutions. The devil, then, is not bound during the whole time

which this book embraces,--that is, from the first coming of Christ to

the end of the world, when He shall come the second time,--not bound in

this sense, that during this interval, which goes by the name of a

thousand years, he shall not seduce the Church, for not even when

loosed shall he seduce it. For certainly if his being bound means that

he is not able or not permitted to seduce the Church, what can the

loosing of him mean but his being able or permitted to do so? But God

forbid that such should be the case! But the binding of the devil is

his being prevented from the exercise of his whole power to seduce men,

either by violently forcing or fraudulently deceiving them into taking

part with him. If he were during so long a period permitted to assail

the weakness of men, very many persons, such as God would not wish to

expose to such temptation, would have their faith overthrown, or would

be prevented from believing; and that this might not happen, he is

bound.

But when the short time comes he shall be loosed. For he shall rage

with the whole force of himself and his angels for three years and six

months; and those with whom he makes war shall have power to withstand

all his violence and stratagems. And if he were never loosed, his

malicious power would be less patent, and less proof would be given of

the steadfast fortitude of the holy city: it would, in short, be less

manifest what good use the Almighty makes of his great evil. For the

Almighty does not absolutely seclude the saints from his temptation,

but shelters only their inner man, where faith resides, that by outward

temptation they may grow in grace. And He binds him that he may not,

in the free and eager exercise of his malice, hinder or destroy the

faith of those countless weak persons, already believing or yet to

believe, from whom the Church must be increased and completed; and he

will in the end loose him, that the city of God may see how mighty an

adversary it has conquered, to the great glory of its Redeemer, Helper,

Deliverer. And what are we in comparison with those believers and

saints who shall then exist, seeing that they shall be tested by the

loosing of an enemy with whom we make war at the greatest peril even

when he is bound? Although it is also certain that even in this

intervening period there have been and are some soldiers of Christ so

wise and strong, that if they were to be alive in this mortal condition

at the time of his loosing, they would both most wisely guard against,

and most patiently endure, all his snares and assaults.

Now the devil was thus bound not only when the Church began to be more

and more widely extended among the nations beyond Judea, but is now and

shall be bound till the end of the world, when he is to be loosed.

Because even now men are, and doubtless to the end of the world shall

be, converted to the faith from the unbelief in which he held them.

And this strong one is bound in each instance in which he is spoiled of

one of his goods; and the abyss in which he is shut up is not at an end

when those die who were alive when first he was shut up in it, but

these have been succeeded, and shall to the end of the world be

succeeded, by others born after them with a like hate of the

Christians, and in the depth of whose blind hearts he is continually

shut up as in an abyss. But it is a question whether, during these

three years and six months when he shall be loose, and raging with all

his force, any one who has not previously believed shall attach himself

to the faith. For how in that case would the words hold good, "Who

entereth into the house of a strong one to spoil his goods, unless

first he shall have bound the strong one?" Consequently this verse

seems to compel us to believe that during that time, short as it is, no

one will be added to the Christian community, but that the devil will

make war with those who have previously become Christians, and that,

though some of these may be conquered and desert to the devil, these do

not belong to the predestinated number of the sons of God. For it is

not without reason that John, the same apostle as wrote this

Apocalypse, says in his epistle regarding certain persons, "They went

out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they

would no doubt have remained with us." [1352] But what shall become

of the little ones? For it is beyond all belief that in these days

there shall not be found some Christian children born, but not yet

baptized, and that there shall not also be some born during that very

period; and if there be such, we cannot believe that their parents

shall not find some way of bringing them to the laver of regeneration.

But if this shall be the case, how shall these goods be snatched from

the devil when he is loose, since into his house no man enters to spoil

his goods unless he has first bound him? On the contrary, we are

rather to believe that in these days there shall be no lack either of

those who fall away from, or of those who attach themselves to the

Church; but there shall be such resoluteness, both in parents to seek

baptism for their little ones, and in those who shall then first

believe, that they shall conquer that strong one, even though

unbound,--that is, shall both vigilantly comprehend, and patiently bear

up against him, though employing such wiles and putting forth such

force as he never before used; and thus they shall be snatched from him

even though unbound. And yet the verse of the Gospel will not be

untrue, "Who entereth into the house of the strong one to spoil his

goods, unless he shall first have bound the strong one?" For in

accordance with this true saying that order is observed--the strong one

first bound, and then his goods spoiled; for the Church is so increased

by the weak and strong from all nations far and near, that by its most

robust faith in things divinely predicted and accomplished, it shall be

able to spoil the goods of even the unbound devil. For as we must own

that, "when iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold," [1353] and

that those who have not been written in the book of life shall in large

numbers yield to the severe and unprecedented persecutions and

stratagems of the devil now loosed, so we cannot but think that not

only those whom that time shall find sound in the faith, but also some

who till then shall be without, shall become firm in the faith they

have hitherto rejected and mighty to conquer the devil even though

unbound, God's grace aiding them to understand the Scriptures, in

which, among other things, there is foretold that very end which they

themselves see to be arriving. And if this shall be so, his binding is

to be spoken of as preceding, that there might follow a spoiling of him

both bound and loosed; for it is of this it is said, "Who shall enter

into the house of the strong one to spoil his goods, unless he shall

first have bound the strong one?"

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[1351] Rev. xx. 9, 10.

[1352] 1 John ii. 19.

[1353] Matt. xxiv. 12.

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Chapter 9.--What the Reign of the Saints with Christ for a Thousand

Years Is, and How It Differs from the Eternal Kingdom.

But while the devil is bound, the saints reign with Christ during the

same thousand years, understood in the same way, that is, of the time

of His first coming. [1354] For, leaving out of account that kingdom

concerning which He shall say in the end, "Come, ye blessed of my

Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you," [1355] the

Church could not now be called His kingdom or the kingdom of heaven

unless His saints were even now reigning with Him, though in another

and far different way; for to His saints He says, "Lo, I am with you

always, even to the end of the world." [1356] Certainly it is in this

present time that the scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God, and

of whom we have already spoken, brings forth from his treasure things

new and old. And from the Church those reapers shall gather out the

tares which He suffered to grow with the wheat till the harvest, as He

explains in the words "The harvest is the end of the world; and the

reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered together

and burned with fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son

of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom

all offenses." [1357] Can He mean out of that kingdom in which are no

offenses? Then it must be out of His present kingdom, the Church, that

they are gathered. So He says, "He that breaketh one of the least of

these commandments, and teacheth men so, shall be called least in the

kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth and teacheth thus shall be called

great in the kingdom of heaven." [1358] He speaks of both as being in

the kingdom of heaven, both the man who does not perform the

commandments which He teaches,--for "to break" means not to keep, not

to perform,--and the man who does and teaches as He did; but the one He

calls least, the other great. And He immediately adds, "For I say unto

you, that except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and

Pharisees,"--that is, the righteousness of those who break what they

teach; for of the scribes and Pharisees He elsewhere says, "For they

say and do not;" [1359] --unless therefore, your righteousness exceed

theirs that is, so that you do not break but rather do what you teach,

"ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." [1360] We must understand

in one sense the kingdom of heaven in which exist together both he who

breaks what he teaches and he who does it, the one being least, the

other great, and in another sense the kingdom of heaven into which only

he who does what he teaches shall enter. Consequently, where both

classes exist, it is the Church as it now is, but where only the one

shall exist, it is the Church as it is destined to be when no wicked

person shall be in her. Therefore the Church even now is the kingdom

of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now His saints

reign with Him, though otherwise than as they shall reign hereafter;

and yet, though the tares grow in the Church along with the wheat, they

do not reign with Him. For they reign with Him who do what the apostle

says, "If ye be risen with Christ, mind the things which are above,

where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Seek those things which

are above, not the things which are on the earth." [1361] Of such

persons he also says that their conversation is in heaven. [1362] In

fine, they reign with Him who are so in His kingdom that they

themselves are His kingdom. But in what sense are those the kingdom of

Christ who, to say no more, though they are in it until all offenses

are gathered out of it at the end of the world, yet seek their own

things in it, and not the things that are Christ's? [1363]

It is then of this kingdom militant, in which conflict with the enemy

is still maintained, and war carried on with warring lusts, or

government laid upon them as they yield, until we come to that most

peaceful kingdom in which we shall reign without an enemy, and it is of

this first resurrection in the present life, that the Apocalypse speaks

in the words just quoted. For, after saying that the devil is bound a

thousand years and is afterwards loosed for a short season, it goes on

to give a sketch of what the Church does or of what is done in the

Church in those days, in the words, "And I saw seats and them that sat

upon them, and judgment was given." It is not to be supposed that this

refers to the last judgment, but to the seats of the rulers and to the

rulers themselves by whom the Church is now governed. And no better

interpretation of judgment being given can be produced than that which

we have in the words, "What ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;

and what ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." [1364] Whence

the apostle says, "What have I to do with judging them that are

without? do not ye judge them that are within?" [1365] "And the

souls," says John, "of those who were slain for the testimony of Jesus

and for the word of God,"--understanding what he afterwards says,

"reigned with Christ a thousand years," [1366] --that is, the souls of

the martyrs not yet restored to their bodies. For the souls of the

pious dead are not separated from the Church, which even now is the

kingdom of Christ; otherwise there would be no remembrance made of them

at the altar of God in the partaking of the body of Christ, nor would

it do any good in danger to run to His baptism, that we might not pass

from this life without it; nor to reconciliation, if by penitence or a

bad conscience any one may be severed from His body. For why are these

things practised, if not because the faithful, even though dead, are

His members? Therefore, while these thousand years run on, their souls

reign with Him, though not as yet in conjunction with their bodies.

And therefore in another part of this same book we read, "Blessed are

the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth and now, saith the Spirit,

that they may rest from their labors; for their works do follow them."

[1367] The Church, then, begins its reign with Christ now in the

living and in the dead. For, as the apostle says, "Christ died that He

might be Lord both of the living and of the dead." [1368] But he

mentioned the souls of the martyrs only, because they who have

contended even to death for the truth, themselves principally reign

after death; but, taking the part for the whole, we understand the

words of all others who belong to the Church, which is the kingdom of

Christ.

As to the words following, "And if any have not worshipped the beast

nor his image, nor have received his inscription on their forehead, or

on their hand," we must take them of both the living and the dead. And

what this beast is, though it requires a more careful investigation,

yet it is not inconsistent with the true faith to understand it of the

ungodly city itself, and the community of unbelievers set in opposition

to the faithful people and the city of God. "His image" seems to me to

mean his simulation, to wit, in those men who profess to believe, but

live as unbelievers. For they pretend to be what they are not, and are

called Christians, not from a true likeness but from a deceitful

image. For to this beast belong not only the avowed enemies of the

name of Christ and His most glorious city, but also the tares which are

to be gathered out of His kingdom, the Church, in the end of the

world. And who are they who do not worship the beast and his image, if

not those who do what the apostle says, "Be not yoked with

unbelievers?" [1369] For such do not worship, i.e., do not consent,

are not subjected; neither do they receive the inscription, the brand

of crime, on their forehead by their profession, on their hand by their

practice. They, then, who are free from these pollutions, whether they

still live in this mortal flesh, or are dead, reign with Christ even

now, through this whole interval which is indicated by the thousand

years, in a fashion suited to this time.

"The rest of them," he says, "did not live." For now is the hour when

the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear

shall live; and the rest of them shall not live. The words added,

"until the thousand years are finished," mean that they did not live in

the time in which they ought to have lived by passing from death to

life. And therefore, when the day of the bodily resurrection arrives,

they shall come out of their graves, not to life, but to judgment,

namely, to damnation, which is called the second death. For whosoever

has not lived until the thousand years be finished, i.e., during this

whole time in which the first resurrection is going on,--whosoever has

not heard the voice of the Son of God, and passed from death to

life,--that man shall certainly in the second resurrection, the

resurrection of the flesh, pass with his flesh into the second death.

For he goes to say "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy

is he that hath part in the first resurrection," or who experiences

it. Now he experiences it who not only revives from the death of sin,

but continues in this renewed life. "In these the second death hath no

power." Therefore it has power in the rest, of whom he said above,

"The rest of them did not live until the thousand years were finished;"

for in this whole intervening time called a thousand years, however

lustily they lived in the body, they were not quickened to life out of

that death in which their wickedness held them, so that by this revived

life they should become partakers of the first resurrection, and so the

second death should have no power over them.

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[1354] Between His first and second coming.

[1355] Matt. xxv. 34.

[1356] Matt. xxviii. 20.

[1357] Matt. xiii. 39-41.

[1358] Matt. v. 19.

[1359] Matt. xxiii. 3.

[1360] Matt. v. 20.

[1361] Col. iii. 1, 2.

[1362] Phil. iii. 20.

[1363] Phil. ii. 21.

[1364] Matt. xviii. 18.

[1365] 1 Cor. v. 12.

[1366] Rev. xx. 4.

[1367] Rev. xiv. 13.

[1368] Rom. xiv. 9.

[1369] ^ 2 Cor. vi. 14.

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Chapter 10.--What is to Be Replied to Those Who Think that Resurrection

Pertains Only to Bodies and Not to Souls.

There are some who suppose that resurrection can be predicated only of

the body, and therefore they contend that this first resurrection (of

the Apocalypse) is a bodily resurrection. For, say they, "to rise

again" can only be said of things that fall. Now, bodies fall in

death. [1370] There cannot, therefore, be a resurrection of souls,

but of bodies. But what do they say to the apostle who speaks of a

resurrection of souls? For certainly it was in the inner and not the

outer man that those had risen again to whom he says, "If ye have risen

with Christ, mind the things that are above." [1371] The same sense

he elsewhere conveyed in other words, saying, "That as Christ has risen

from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in

newness of life." [1372] So, too, "Awake thou that sleepest, and

arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. [1373] " As to

what they say about nothing being able to rise again but what falls,

whence they conclude that resurrection pertains to bodies only, and not

to souls, because bodies fall, why do they make nothing of the words,

"Ye that fear the Lord, wait for His mercy; and go not aside lest ye

fall;" [1374] and "To his own Master he stands or falls;" [1375] and

"He that thinketh he standeth, let him take heed lest he fall?" [1376]

For I fancy this fall that we are to take heed against is a fall of

the soul, not of the body. If, then, rising again belongs to things

that fall, and souls fall, it must be owned that souls also rise

again. To the words, "In them the second death hath no power," are

added the words, "but they shall be priests of God and Christ, and

shall reign with Him a thousand years;" and this refers not to the

bishops alone, and presbyters, who are now specially called priests in

the Church; but as we call all believers Christians on account of the

mystical chrism, so we call all priests because they are members of the

one Priest. Of them the Apostle Peter says, "A holy people, a royal

priesthood." [1377] Certainly he implied, though in a passing and

incidental way, that Christ is God, saying priests of God and Christ,

that is, of the Father and the Son, though it was in His servant-form

and as Son of man that Christ was made a Priest for ever after the

order of Melchisedec. But this we have already explained more than

once.

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[1370] And, as Augustin remarks, are therefore called cadavera, from

cadere, "to fall."

[1371] Col. iii. 1.

[1372] Rom. vi. 4.

[1373] Eph. v. 14.

[1374] Ecclus. ii. 7.

[1375] Rom. xiv. 4.

[1376] 1 Cor. x. 12.

[1377] 1 Peter ii. 9.

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Chapter 11.--Of Gog and Magog, Who are to Be Roused by the Devil to

Persecute the Church, When He is Loosed in the End of the World.

"And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed from

his prison, and shall go out to seduce the nations which are in the

four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, and shall draw them to

battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea." This then, is his

purpose in seducing them, to draw them to this battle. For even before

this he was wont to use as many and various seductions as he could

continue. And the words "he shall go out" mean, he shall burst forth

from lurking hatred into open persecution. For this persecution,

occurring while the final judgment is imminent, shall be the last which

shall be endured by the holy Church throughout the world, the whole

city of Christ being assailed by the whole city of the devil, as each

exists on earth. For these nations which he names Gog and Magog are

not to be understood of some barbarous nations in some part of the

world, whether the Get� and Massaget�, as some conclude from the

initial letters, or some other foreign nations not under the Roman

government. For John marks that they are spread over the whole earth,

when he says, "The nations which are in the four corners of the earth,"

and he added that these are Gog and Magog. The meaning of these names

we find to be, Gog, "a roof," Magog, "from a roof,"--a house, as it

were, and he who comes out of the house. They are therefore the

nations in which we found that the devil was shut up as in an abyss,

and the devil himself coming out from them and going forth, so that

they are the roof, he from the roof. Or if we refer both words to the

nations, not one to them and one to the devil, then they are both the

roof, because in them the old enemy is at present shut up, and as it

were roofed in; and they shall be from the roof when they break forth

from concealed to open hatred. The words, "And they went up on the

breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints and the

beloved city," do not mean that they have come, or shall come, to one

place, as if the camp of the saints and the beloved city should be in

some one place; for this camp is nothing else than the Church of Christ

extending over the whole world. And consequently wherever the Church

shall be,--and it shall be in all nations, as is signified by "the

breadth of the earth,"--there also shall be the camp of the saints and

the beloved city, and there it shall be encompassed by the savage

persecution of all its enemies; for they too shall exist along with it

in all nations,--that is, it shall be straitened, and hard pressed, and

shut up in the straits of tribulation, but shall not desert its

military duty, which is signified by the word "camp."

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Chapter 12.--Whether the Fire that Came Down Out of Heaven and Devoured

Them Refers to the Last Punishment of the Wicked.

The words, "And fire came down out of heaven and devoured them," are

not to be understood of the final punishment which shall be inflicted

when it is said, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;"

[1378] for then they shall be cast into the fire, not fire come down

out of heaven upon them. In this place "fire out of heaven" is well

understood of the firmness of the saints, wherewith they refuse to

yield obedience to those who rage against them. For the firmament is

"heaven," by whose firmness these assailants shall be pained with

blazing zeal, for they shall be impotent to draw away the saints to the

party of Antichrist. This is the fire which shall devour them, and

this is "from God;" for it is by God's grace the saints become

unconquerable, and so torment their enemies. For as in a good sense it

is said, "The zeal of Thine house hath consumed me," [1379] so in a bad

sense it is said, "Zeal hath possessed the uninstructed people, and now

fire shall consume the enemies." [1380] "And now," that is to say,

not the fire of the last judgment. Or if by this fire coming down out

of heaven and consuming them, John meant that blow wherewith Christ in

His coming is to strike those persecutors of the Church whom He shall

then find alive upon earth, when He shall kill Antichrist with the

breath of His mouth, [1381] then even this is not the last judgment of

the wicked; but the last judgment is that which they shall suffer when

the bodily resurrection has taken place.

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[1378] Matt. xxv. 41.

[1379] Ps. lxix. 9.

[1380] Isa. xxvi. 11.

[1381] 2 Thess. ii. 8.

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Chapter 13.--Whether the Time of the Persecution or Antichrist Should

Be Reckoned in the Thousand Years.

This last persecution by Antichrist shall last for three years and six

months, as we have already said, and as is affirmed both in the book of

Revelation and by Daniel the prophet. Though this time is brief, yet

not without reason is it questioned whether it is comprehended in the

thousand years in which the devil is bound and the saints reign with

Christ, or whether this little season should be added over and above to

these years. For if we say that they are included in the thousand

years, then the saints reign with Christ during a more protracted

period than the devil is bound. For they shall reign with their King

and Conqueror mightily even in that crowning persecution when the devil

shall now be unbound and shall rage against them with all his might.

How then does Scripture define both the binding of the devil and the

reign of the saints by the same thousand years, if the binding of the

devil ceases three years and six months before this reign of the saints

with Christ? On the other hand, if we say that the brief space of this

persecution is not to be reckoned as a part of the thousand years, but

rather as an additional period, we shall indeed be able to interpret

the words, "The priests of God and of Christ shall reign with Him a

thousand years; and when the thousand years shall be finished, Satan

shall be loosed out of his prison;" for thus they signify that the

reign of the saints and the bondage of the devil shall cease

simultaneously, so that the time of the persecution we speak of should

be contemporaneous neither with the reign of the saints nor with the

imprisonment of Satan, but should be reckoned over and above as a

superadded portion of time. But then in this case we are forced to

admit that the saints shall not reign with Christ during that

persecution. But who can dare to say that His members shall not reign

with Him at that very juncture when they shall most of all, and with

the greatest fortitude, cleave to Him, and when the glory of resistance

and the crown of martyrdom shall be more conspicuous in proportion to

the hotness of the battle? Or if it is suggested that they may be said

not to reign, because of the tribulations which they shall suffer, it

will follow that all the saints who have formerly, during the thousand

years, suffered tribulation, shall not be said to have reigned with

Christ during the period of their tribulation, and consequently even

those whose souls the author of this book says that he saw, and who

were slain for the testimony of Jesus and the word of God, did not

reign with Christ when they were suffering persecution, and they were

not themselves the kingdom of Christ, though Christ was then

pre-eminently possessing them. This is indeed perfectly absurd, and to

be scouted. But assuredly the victorious souls of the glorious martyrs

having overcome and finished all griefs and toils, and having laid down

their mortal members, have reigned and do reign with Christ till the

thousand years are finished, that they may afterwards reign with Him

when they have received their immortal bodies. And therefore during

these three years and a half the souls of those who were slain for His

testimony, both those which formerly passed from the body and those

which shall pass in that last persecution, shall reign with Him till

the mortal world come to an end, and pass into that kingdom in which

there shall be no death. And thus the reign of the saints with Christ

shall last longer than the bonds and imprisonment of the devil, because

they shall reign with their King the Son of God for these three years

and a half during which the devil is no longer bound. It remains,

therefore, that when we read that "the priests of God and of Christ

shall reign with Him a thousand years; and when the thousand years are

finished, the devil shall be loosed from his imprisonment," that we

understand either that the thousand years of the reign of the saints

does not terminate, though the imprisonment of the devil does,--so that

both parties have their thousand years, that is, their complete time,

yet each with a different actual duration approriate to itself, the

kingdom of the saints being longer, the imprisonment of the devil

shorter, --or at least that, as three years and six months is a very

short time, it is not reckoned as either deducted from the whole time

of Satan's imprisonment, or as added to the whole duration of the reign

of the saints, as we have shown above in the sixteenth book [1382]

regarding the round number of four hundred years, which were specified

as four hundred, though actually somewhat more; and similar expressions

are often found in the sacred writings, if one will mark them.

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[1382] Ch. 24.

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Chapter 14.--Of the Damnation of the Devil and His Adherents; And a

Sketch of the Bodily Resurrection of All the Dead, and of the Final

Retributive Judgment.

After this mention of the closing persecution, he summarily indicates

all that the devil, and the city of which he is the prince, shall

suffer in the last judgment. For he says, "And the devil who seduced

them is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, in which are the

beast and the false prophet, and they shall be tormented day and night

for ever and ever." We have already said that by the beast is well

understood the wicked city. His false prophet is either Antichrist or

that image or figment of which we have spoken in the same place. After

this he gives a brief narrative of the last judgment itself, which

shall take place at the second or bodily resurrection of the dead, as

it had been revealed to him: "I saw a throne great and white, and One

sitting on it from whose face the heaven and the earth fled away, and

their place was not found." He does not say, "I saw a throne great and

white, and One sitting on it, and from His face the heaven and the

earth fled away," for it had not happened then, i.e., before the living

and the dead were judged; but he says that he saw Him sitting on the

throne from whose face heaven and earth fled away, but afterwards. For

when the judgment is finished, this heaven and earth shall cease to be,

and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. For this world shall

pass away by transmutation, not by absolute destruction. And therefore

the apostle says, "For the figure of this world passeth away. I would

have you be without anxiety." [1383] The figure, therefore, passes

away, not the nature. After John had said that he had seen One sitting

on the throne from whose face heaven and earth fled, though not till

afterwards, he said, "And I saw the dead, great and small: and the

books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of

the life of each man: and the dead were judged out of those things

which were written in the books, according to their deeds." He said

that the books were opened, and a book; but he left us at a loss as to

the nature of this book, "which is," he says, "the book of the life of

each man." By those books, then, which he first mentioned, we are to

understand the sacred books old and new, that out of them it might be

shown what commandments God had enjoined; and that book of the life of

each man is to show what commandments each man has done or omitted to

do. If this book be materially considered, who can reckon its size or

length, or the time it would take to read a book in which the whole

life of every man is recorded? Shall there be present as many angels

as men, and shall each man hear his life recited by the angel assigned

to him? In that case there will be not one book containing all the

lives, but a separate book for every life. But our passage requires us

to think of one only. "And another book was opened," it says. We must

therefore understand it of a certain divine power, by which it shall be

brought about that every one shall recall to memory all his own works,

whether good or evil, and shall mentally survey them with a marvellous

rapidity, so that this knowledge will either accuse or excuse

conscience, and thus all and each shall be simultaneously judged. And

this divine power is called a book, because in it we shall as it were

read all that it causes us to remember. That he may show who the dead,

small and great, are who are to be judged, he recurs to this which he

had omitted or rather deferred, and says, "And the sea presented the

dead which were in it; and death and hell gave up the dead which were

in them." This of course took place before the dead were judged, yet

it is mentioned after. And so, I say, he returns again to what he had

omitted. But now he preserves the order of events, and for the sake of

exhibiting it repeats in its own proper place what he had already said

regarding the dead who were judged. For after he had said, "And the

sea presented the dead which were in it, and death and hell gave up the

dead which were in them," he immediately subjoined what he had already

said, "and they were judged every man according to their works." For

this is just what he had said before, "And the dead were judged

according to their works."

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[1383] 1 Cor. vii. 31, 32.

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Chapter 15.--Who the Dead are Who are Given Up to Judgment by the Sea,

and by Death and Hell.

But who are the dead which were in the sea, and which the sea

presented? For we cannot suppose that those who die in the sea are not

in hell, nor that their bodies are preserved in the sea; nor yet, which

is still more absurd, that the sea retained the good, while hell

received the bad. Who could believe this? But some very sensibly

suppose that in this place the sea is put for this world. When John

then wished to signify that those whom Christ should find still alive

in the body were to be judged along with those who should rise again,

he called them dead, both the good to whom it is said, "For ye are

dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," [1384] and the wicked

of whom it is said, "Let the dead bury their dead." [1385] They may

also be called dead, because they wear mortal bodies, as the apostle

says, "The body indeed is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life

because of righteousness;" [1386] proving that in a living man in the

body there is both a body which is dead, and a spirit which is life.

Yet he did not say that the body was mortal, but dead, although

immediately after he speaks in the more usual way of mortal bodies.

These, then, are the dead which were in the sea, and which the sea

presented, to wit, the men who were in this world, because they had not

yet died, and whom the world presented for judgment. "And death and

hell," he says, "gave up the dead which were in them." The sea

presented them because they had merely to be found in the place where

they were; but death and hell gave them up or restored them, because

they called them back to life, which they had already quitted. And

perhaps it was not without reason that neither death nor hell were

judged sufficient alone, and both were mentioned,--death to indicate

the good, who have suffered only death and not hell; hell to indicate

the wicked, who suffer also the punishment of hell. For if it does not

seem absurd to believe that the ancient saints who believed in Christ

and His then future coming, were kept in places far removed indeed from

the torments of the wicked, but yet in hell, [1387] until Christ's

blood and His descent into these places delivered them, certainly good

Christians, redeemed by that precious price already paid, are quite

unacquainted with hell while they wait for their restoration to the

body, and the reception of their reward. After saying, "They were

judged every man according to their works," he briefly added what the

judgment was: "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire;" by

these names designating the devil and the whole company of his angels,

for he is the author of death and the pains of hell. For this is what

he had already, by anticipation, said in clearer language: "The devil

who seduced them was cast into a lake of fire and brimstone." The

obscure addition he had made in the words, "in which were also the

beast and the false prophet," he here explains, "They who were not

found written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire."

This book is not for reminding God, as if things might escape Him by

forgetfulness, but it symbolizes His predestination of those to whom

eternal life shall be given. For it is not that God is ignorant, and

reads in the book to inform Himself, but rather His infallible

prescience is the book of life in which they are written, that is to

say, known beforehand.

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[1384] Col. iii. 3.

[1385] Matt. viii. 22.

[1386] Rom. viii. 10.

[1387] "Apud inferos," i.e. in hell, in the sense in which the word is

used in the Psalms and in the Creed.

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Chapter 16.--Of the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Having finished the prophecy of judgment, so far as the wicked are

concerned, it remains that he speak also of the good. Having briefly

explained the Lord's words, "These will go away into everlasting

punishment," it remains that he explain the connected words, "but the

righteous into life eternal." [1388] "And I saw," he says, "a new

heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth have

passed away; and there is no more sea." [1389] This will take place

in the order which he has by anticipation declared in the words, "I saw

One sitting on the throne, from whose face heaven and earth fled." For

as soon as those who are not written in the book of life have been

judged and cast into eternal fire,--the nature of which fire, or its

position in the world or universe, I suppose is known to no man, unless

perhaps the divine Spirit reveal it to some one,--then shall the figure

of this world pass away in a conflagration of universal fire, as once

before the world was flooded with a deluge of universal water. And by

this universal conflagration the qualities of the corruptible elements

which suited our corruptible bodies shall utterly perish, and our

substance shall receive such qualities as shall, by a wonderful

transmutation, harmonize with our immortal bodies, so that, as the

world itself is renewed to some better thing, it is fitly accommodated

to men, themselves renewed in their flesh to some better thing. As for

the statement, "And there shall be no more sea," I would not lightly

say whether it is dried up with that excessive heat, or is itself also

turned into some better thing. For we read that there shall be a new

heaven and a new earth, but I do not remember to have anywhere read

anything of a new sea, unless what I find in this same book, "As it

were a sea of glass like crystal." [1390] But he was not then

speaking of this end of the world, neither does he seem to speak of a

literal sea, but "as it were a sea." It is possible that, as prophetic

diction delights in mingling figurative and real language, and thus in

some sort veiling the sense, so the words "And there is no more sea"

may be taken in the same sense as the previous phrase, "And the sea

presented the dead which were in it." For then there shall be no more

of this world, no more of the surgings and restlessness of human life,

and it is this which is symbolized by the sea.

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[1388] Matt. xxv. 46.

[1389] Rev. xxi. 1.

[1390] Rev. xv. 2.

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Chapter 17.--Of the Endless Glory of the Church.

"And I saw," he says, "a great city, new Jerusalem, coming down from

God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I

heard a great voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of

God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His

people, and God Himself shall be with them. And God shall wipe away

all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither

sorrow, nor crying, but neither shall there be any more pain: because

the former things have passed away. And He that sat upon the throne

said, Behold, I make all things new." [1391] This city is said to

come down out of heaven, because the grace with which God formed it is

of heaven. Wherefore He says to it by Isaiah, "I am the Lord that

formed thee." [1392] It is indeed descended from heaven from its

commencement, since its citizens during the course of this world grow

by the grace of God, which cometh down from above through the laver of

regeneration in the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. But by God's

final judgment, which shall be administered by His Son Jesus Christ,

there shall by God's grace be manifested a glory so pervading and so

new, that no vestige of what is old shall remain; for even our bodies

shall pass from their old corruption and mortality to new incorruption

and immortality. For to refer this promise to the present time, in

which the saints are reigning with their King a thousand years, seems

to me excessively barefaced, when it is most distinctly said, "God

shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more

death, neither sorrow, nor crying, but there shall be no more pain."

And who is so absurd, and blinded by contentious opinionativeness, as

to be audacious enough to affirm that in the midst of the calamities of

this mortal state, God's people, or even one single saint, does live,

or has ever lived, or shall ever live, without tears or pain,--the fact

being that the holier a man is, and the fuller of holy desire, so much

the more abundant is the tearfulness of his supplication? Are not

these the utterances of a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem: "My tears

have been my meat day and night;" [1393] and "Every night shall I make

my bed to swim; with my tears shall I water my couch;" [1394] and "My

groaning is not hid from Thee;" [1395] and "My sorrow was renewed?"

[1396] Or are not those God's children who groan, being burdened, not

that they wish to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be

swallowed up of life? [1397] Do not they even who have the

first-fruits of the Spirit groan within themselves, waiting for the

adoption, the redemption of their body? [1398] Was not the Apostle

Paul himself a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, and was he not so all

the more when he had heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for his

Israelitish brethren? [1399] But when shall there be no more death in

that city, except when it shall be said, "O death, where is thy

contention? [1400] O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death

is sin." [1401] Obviously there shall be no sin when it can be said,

"Where is"--But as for the present it is not some poor weak citizen of

this city, but this same Apostle John himself who says, "If we say that

we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

[1402] No doubt, though this book is called the Apocalypse, there are

in it many obscure passages to exercise the mind of the reader, and

there are few passages so plain as to assist us in the interpretation

of the others, even though we take pains; and this difficulty is

increased by the repetition of the same things, in forms so different,

that the things referred to seem to be different, although in fact they

are only differently stated. But in the words, "God shall wipe away

all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither

sorrow, nor crying, but there shall be no more pain," there is so

manifest a reference to the future world and the immortality and

eternity of the saints,--for only then and only there shall such a

condition be realized,--that if we think this obscure, we need not

expect to find anything plain in any part of Scripture.

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[1391] Rev. xxi. 2-5.

[1392] Isa. xlv. 8.

[1393] Ps. xlii. 3.

[1394] Ps. vi. 6.

[1395] Ps. xxxviii. 9.

[1396] Ps. xxxix. 2.

[1397] 2 Cor. v. 4.

[1398] Rom. viii. 23.

[1399] Rom. ix. 2.

[1400] Augustin therefore read neikos, and not with the Vulgate nike.

[The correct reading is to nikos, later form for nike, victory.--P.S.]

[1401] l Cor. xv. 55.

[1402] 1 John i. 8.

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Chapter 18.--What the Apostle Peter Predicted Regarding the Last

Judgment.

Let us now see what the Apostle Peter predicted concerning this

judgment. "There shall come," he says, "in the last days scoffers. . .

. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a

new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." [1403] There is nothing

said here about the resurrection of the dead, but enough certainly

regarding the destruction of this world. And by his reference to the

deluge he seems as it were to suggest to us how far we should believe

the ruin of the world will extend in the end of the world. For he says

that the world which then was perished, and not only the earth itself,

but also the heavens, by which we understand the air, the place and

room of which was occupied by the water. Therefore the whole, or

almost the whole, of the gusty atmosphere (which he calls heaven, or

rather the heavens, meaning the earth's atmosphere, and not the upper

air in which sun, moon, and stars are set) was turned into moisture,

and in this way perished together with the earth, whose former

appearance had been destroyed by the deluge. "But the heavens and the

earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto

fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

Therefore the heavens and the earth, or the world which was preserved

from the water to stand in place of that world which perished in the

flood, is itself reserved to fire at last in the day of the judgment

and perdition of ungodly men. He does not hesitate to affirm that in

this great change men also shall perish: their nature, however, shall

notwithstanding continue, though in eternal punishments. Some one will

perhaps put the question, If after judgment is pronounced the world

itself is to burn, where shall the saints be during the conflagration,

and before it is replaced by a new heavens and a new earth, since

somewhere they must be, because they have material bodies? We may

reply that they shall be in the upper regions into which the flame of

that conflagration shall not ascend, as neither did the water of the

flood; for they shall have such bodies that they shall be wherever they

wish. Moreover, when they have become immortal and incorruptible, they

shall not greatly dread the blaze of that conflagration, as the

corruptible and mortal bodies of the three men were able to live unhurt

in the blazing furnace.

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[1403] 2 Pet. iii. 3-13. The whole passage is quoted by Augustin.

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Chapter 19.--What the Apostle Paul Wrote to the Thessalonians About the

Manifestation of Antichrist Which Shall Precede the Day of the Lord.

I see that I must omit many of the statements of the gospels and

epistles about this last judgment, that this volume may not become

unduly long; but I can on no account omit what the Apostle Paul says,

in writing to the Thessalonians, "We beseech you, brethren, by the

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," [1404] etc.

No one can doubt that he wrote this of Antichrist and of the day of

judgment, which he here calls the day of the Lord, nor that he declared

that this day should not come unless he first came who is called the

apostate --apostate, to wit, from the Lord God. And if this may justly

be said of all the ungodly, how much more of him? But it is uncertain

in what temple he shall sit, whether in that ruin of the temple which

was built by Solomon, or in the Church; for the apostle would not call

the temple of any idol or demon the temple of God. And on this account

some think that in this passage Antichrist means not the prince himself

alone, but his whole body, that is, the mass of men who adhere to him,

along with him their prince; and they also think that we should render

the Greek more exactly were we to read, not "in the temple of God," but

"for" or "as the temple of God," as if he himself were the temple of

God, the Church. [1405] Then as for the words, "And now ye know what

withholdeth," i.e., ye know what hindrance or cause of delay there is,

"that he might be revealed in his own time;" they show that he was

unwilling to make an explicit statement, because he said that they

knew. And thus we who have not their knowledge wish and are not able

even with pains to understand what the apostle referred to, especially

as his meaning is made still more obscure by what he adds. For what

does he mean by "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only

he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be taken out of the way: and

then shall the wicked be revealed?" I frankly confess I do not know

what he means. I will nevertheless mention such conjectures as I have

heard or read.

Some think that the Apostle Paul referred to the Roman empire, and that

he was unwilling to use language more explicit, lest he should incur

the calumnious charge of wishing ill to the empire which it was hoped

would be eternal; so that in saying, "For the mystery of iniquity doth

already work," he alluded to Nero, whose deeds already seemed to be as

the deeds of Antichrist. And hence some suppose that he shall rise

again and be Antichrist. Others, again, suppose that he is not even

dead, but that he was concealed that he might be supposed to have been

killed, and that he now lives in concealment in the vigor of that same

age which he had reached when he was believed to have perished, and

will live until he is revealed in his own time and restored to his

kingdom. [1406] But I wonder that men can be so audacious in their

conjectures. However, it is not absurd to believe that these words of

the apostle, "Only he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be taken

out of the way," refer to the Roman empire, as if it were said, "Only

he who now reigneth, let him reign until he be taken out of the way."

"And then shall the wicked be revealed:" no one doubts that this means

Antichrist. But others think that the words, "Ye know what

withholdeth," and "The mystery of iniquity worketh," refer only to the

wicked and the hypocrites who are in the Church, until they reach a

number so great as to furnish Antichrist with a great people, and that

this is the mystery of iniquity, because it seems hidden; also that the

apostle is exhorting the faithful tenaciously to hold the faith they

hold when he says, "Only he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be

taken out of the way," that is, until the mystery of iniquity which now

is hidden departs from the Church. For they suppose that it is to this

same mystery John alludes when in his epistle he says, "Little

children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist

shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that

it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us;

for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with

us." [1407] As therefore there went out from the Church many

heretics, whom John calls "many antichrists," at that time prior to the

end, and which John calls "the last time," so in the end they shall go

out who do not belong to Christ, but to that last Antichrist, and then

he shall be revealed.

Thus various, then, are the conjectural explanations of the obscure

words of the apostle. That which there is no doubt he said is this,

that Christ will not come to judge quick and dead unless Antichrist,

His adversary, first come to seduce those who are dead in soul;

although their seduction is a result of God's secret judgment already

passed. For, as it is said "his presence shall be after the working of

Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all

seduction of unrighteousness in them that perish." For then shall

Satan be loosed, and by means of that Antichrist shall work with all

power in a lying though a wonderful manner. It is commonly questioned

whether these works are called "signs and lying wonders" because he is

to deceive men's senses by false appearances, or because the things he

does, though they be true prodigies, shall be a lie to those who shall

believe that such things could be done only by God, being ignorant of

the devil's power, and especially of such unexampled power as he shall

then for the first time put forth. For when he fell from heaven as

fire, and at a stroke swept away from the holy Job his numerous

household and his vast flocks, and then as a whirlwind rushed upon and

smote the house and killed his children, these were not deceitful

appearances, and yet they were the works of Satan to whom God had given

this power. Why they are called signs and lying wonders, we shall then

be more likely to know when the time itself arrives. But whatever be

the reason of the name, they shall be such signs and wonders as shall

seduce those who shall deserve to be seduced, "because they received

not the love of the truth that they might be saved." Neither did the

apostle scruple to go on to say, "For this cause God shall send upon

them the working of error that they should believe a lie." For God

shall send, because God shall permit the devil to do these things, the

permission being by His own just judgment, though the doing of them is

in pursuance of the devil's unrighteous and malignant purpose, "that

they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure

in unrighteousness." Therefore, being judged, they shall be seduced,

and, being seduced, they shall be judged. But, being judged, they

shall be seduced by those secretly just and justly secret judgments of

God, with which He has never ceased to judge since the first sin of the

rational creatures; and, being seduced, they shall be judged in that

last and manifest judgment administered by Jesus Christ, who was

Himself most unjustly judged and shall most justly judge.

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[1404] 2 Thess. ii. 1-11. Whole passage given in the Latin. In ver. 3

refuga is used instead of the Vulgate's discessio.

[1405] Augustin adds the words, "Sicut dicimus, Sedet in amicum, id

ett, velut amicus; vel si quid aliud isto locutionis genere dici

solet."

[1406] Suetonius' Nero, c. 57.

[1407] 1 John ii. 18, 19.

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Chapter 20.--What the Same Apostle Taught in the First Epistle to the

Thessalonians Regarding the Resurrection of the Dead.

But the apostle has said nothing here regarding the resurrection of the

dead; but in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians he says, "We would

not have you to be ignorant brethren, concerning them which are

asleep," [1408] etc. These words of the apostle most distinctly

proclaim the future resurrection of the dead, when the Lord Christ

shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

But it is commonly asked whether those whom our Lord shall find alive

upon earth, personated in this passage by the apostle and those who

were alive with him, shall never die at all, or shall pass with

incomprehensible swiftness through death to immortality in the very

moment during which they shall be caught up along with those who rise

again to meet the Lord in the air? For we cannot say that it is

impossible that they should both die and revive again while they are

carried aloft through the air. For the words, "And so shall we ever be

with the Lord," are not to be understood as if he meant that we shall

always remain in the air with the Lord; for He Himself shall not remain

there, but shall only pass through it as He comes. For we shall go to

meet Him as He comes, not where He remains; but "so shall we be with

the Lord," that is, we shall be with Him possessed of immortal bodies

wherever we shall be with Him. We seem compelled to take the words in

this sense, and to suppose that those whom the Lord shall find alive

upon earth shall in that brief space both suffer death and receive

immortality: for this same apostle says, "In Christ shall all be made

alive;" [1409] while, speaking of the same resurrection of the body, he

elsewhere says, "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it

die." [1410] How, then, shall those whom Christ shall find alive upon

earth be made alive to immortality in Him if they die not, since on

this very account it is said, "That which thou sowest is not quickened,

except it die?" Or if we cannot properly speak of human bodies as

sown, unless in so far as by dying they do in some sort return to the

earth, as also the sentence pronounced by God against the sinning

father of the human race runs, "Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt

thou return," [1411] we must acknowledge that those whom Christ at His

coming shall find still in the body are not included in these words of

the apostle nor in those of Genesis; for, being caught up into the

clouds, they are certainly not sown, neither going nor returning to the

earth, whether they experience no death at all or die for a moment in

the air.

But, on the other hand, there meets us the saying of the same apostle

when he was speaking to the Corinthians about the resurrection of the

body, "We shall all rise," or, as other mss. read, "We shall all

sleep." [1412] Since, then, there can be no resurrection unless death

has preceded, and since we can in this passage understand by sleep

nothing else than death, how shall all either sleep or rise again if so

many persons whom Christ shall find in the body shall neither sleep nor

rise again? If, then, we believe that the saints who shall be found

alive at Christ's coming, and shall be caught up to meet Him, shall in

that same ascent pass from mortal to immortal bodies, we shall find no

difficulty in the words of the apostle, either when he says, "That

which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die," or when he says,

"We shall all rise," or "all sleep," for not even the saints shall be

quickened to immortality unless they first die, however briefly; and

consequently they shall not be exempt from resurrection which is

preceded by sleep, however brief. And why should it seem to us

incredible that that multitude of bodies should be, as it were, sown in

the air, and should in the air forthwith revive immortal and

incorruptible, when we believe, on the testimony of the same apostle,

that the resurrection shall take place in the twinkling of an eye, and

that the dust of bodies long dead shall return with incomprehensible

facility and swiftness to those members that are now to live

endlessly? Neither do we suppose that in the case of these saints the

sentence, "Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return," is null,

though their bodies do not, on dying, fall to earth, but both die and

rise again at once while caught up into the air. For "Thou shalt

return to earth" means, Thou shalt at death return to that which thou

wert before life began. Thou shalt, when examinate, be that which thou

wert before thou wast animate. For it was into a face of earth that

God breathed the breath of life when man was made a living soul; as if

it were said, Thou art earth with a soul, which thou wast not; thou

shalt be earth without a soul, as thou wast. And this is what all

bodies of the dead are before they rot; and what the bodies of those

saints shall be if they die, no matter where they die, as soon as they

shall give up that life which they are immediately to receive back

again. In this way, then, they return or go to earth, inasmuch as from

being living men they shall be earth, as that which becomes cinder is

said to go to cinder; that which decays, to go to decay; and so of six

hundred other things. But the manner in which this shall take place we

can now only feebly conjecture, and shall understand it only when it

comes to pass. For that there shall be a bodily resurrection of the

dead when Christ comes to judge quick and dead, we must believe if we

would be Christians. But if we are unable perfectly to comprehend the

manner in which it shall take place, our faith is not on this account

vain. Now, however, we ought, as we formerly promised, to show, as far

as seems necessary, what the ancient prophetic books predicted

concerning this final judgment of God; and I fancy no great time need

be spent in discussing and explaining these predictions, if the reader

has been careful to avail himself of the help we have already

furnished.

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[1408] 1 Thess. iv. 13-16.

[1409] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

[1410] 1 Cor. xv. 36.

[1411] Gen. iii. 19.

[1412] 1 Cor. xv. 51.

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Chapter 21.--Utterances of the Prophet Isaiah Regarding the

Resurrection of the Dead and the Retributive Judgment.

The prophet Isaiah says, "The dead shall rise again, and all who were

in the graves shall rise again; and all who are in the earth shall

rejoice: for the dew which is from Thee is their health, and the earth

of the wicked shall fall." [1413] All the former part of this passage

relates to the resurrection of the blessed; but the words, "the earth

of the wicked shall fall," is rightly understood as meaning that the

bodies of the wicked shall fall into the ruin of damnation. And if we

would more exactly and carefully scrutinize the words which refer to

the resurrection of the good, we may refer to the first resurrection

the words, "the dead shall rise again," and to the second the following

words, "and all who were in the graves shall rise again." And if we

ask what relates to those saints whom the Lord at His coming shall find

alive upon earth, the following clause may suitably be referred to

them; "All who are in the earth shall rejoice: for the dew which is

from Thee is their health." By "health" in this place it is best to

understand immortality. For that is the most perfect health which is

not repaired by nourishment as by a daily remedy. In like manner the

same prophet, affording hope to the good and terrifying the wicked

regarding the day of judgment, says, "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I

will flow down upon them as a river of peace, and upon the glory of the

Gentiles as a rushing torrent; their sons shall be carried on the

shoulders, and shall be comforted on the knees. As one whom his mother

comforteth, so shall I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in

Jerusalem. And ye shall see, and your heart shall rejoice, and your

bones shall rise up like a herb; and the hand of the Lord shall be

known by His worshippers, and He shall threaten the contumacious. For,

behold, the Lord shall come as a fire, and as a whirlwind His chariots,

to execute vengeance with indignation, and wasting with a flame of

fire. For with fire of the Lord shall all the earth be judged, and all

flesh with His sword: many shall be wounded by the Lord." [1414] In

His promise to the good he says that He will flow down as a river of

peace, that is to say, in the greatest possible abundance of peace.

With this peace we shall in the end be refreshed; but of this we have

spoken abundantly in the preceding book. It is this river in which he

says He shall flow down upon those to whom He promises so great

happiness, that we may understand that in the region of that felicity,

which is in heaven, all things are satisfied from this river. But

because there shall thence flow, even upon earthly bodies, the peace of

incorruption and immortality, therefore he says that He shall flow down

as this river, that He may as it were pour Himself from things above to

things beneath, and make men the equals of the angels. By "Jerusalem,"

too, we should understand not that which serves with her children, but

that which, according to the apostle, is our free mother, eternal in

the heavens. [1415] In her we shall be comforted as we pass toilworn

from earth's cares and calamities, and be taken up as her children on

her knees and shoulders. Inexperienced and new to such blandishments,

we shall be received into unwonted bliss. There we shall see, and our

heart shall rejoice. He does not say what we shall see; but what but

God, that the promise in the Gospel may be fulfilled in us, "Blessed

are the pure in heart, for they shall see God?" [1416] What shall we

see but all those things which now we see not, but believe in, and of

which the idea we form, according to our feeble capacity, is

incomparably less than the reality? "And ye shall see," he says, "and

your heart shall rejoice." Here ye believe, there ye shall see.

But because he said, "Your heart shall rejoice," lest we should suppose

that the blessings of that Jerusalem are only spiritual, he adds, "And

your bones shall rise up like a herb," alluding to the resurrection of

the body, and as it were supplying an omission he had made. For it

will not take place when we have seen; but we shall see when it has

taken place. For he had already spoken of the new heavens and the new

earth, speaking repeatedly, and under many figures, of the things

promised to the saints, and saying,"There shall be new heavens, and a

new earth: and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind;

but they shall find in it gladness and exultation. Behold, I will make

Jerusalem an exultation, and my people a joy. And I will exult in

Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no

more heard in her;" [1417] and other promises, which some endeavor to

refer to carnal enjoyment during the thousand years. For, in the

manner of prophecy, figurative and literal expressions are mingled, so

that a serious mind may, by useful and salutary effort, reach the

spiritual sense; but carnal sluggishness, or the slowness of an

uneducated and undisciplined mind, rests in the superficial letter, and

thinks there is nothing beneath to be looked for. But let this be

enough regarding the style of those prophetic expressions just quoted.

And now, to return to their interpretation. When he had said, "And

your bones shall rise up like a herb," in order to show that it was the

resurrection of the good, though a bodily resurrection, to which he

alluded, he added, "And the hand of the Lord shall be known by His

worshippers." What is this but the hand of Him who distinguishes those

who worship from those who despise Him? Regarding these the context

immediately adds, "And He shall threaten the contumacious," or, as

another translator has it, "the unbelieving." He shall not actually

threaten then, but the threats which are now uttered shall then be

fulfilled in effect. "For behold," he says, "the Lord shall come as a

fire, and as a whirlwind His chariots, to execute vengeance with

indignation, and wasting with a flame of fire. For with fire of the

Lord shall all the earth be judged, and all flesh with His sword: many

shall be wounded by the Lord." By fire, whirlwind, sword, he means the

judicial punishment of God. For he says that the Lord Himself shall

come as a fire, to those, that is to say, to whom His coming shall be

penal. By His chariots (for the word is plural) we suitably understand

the ministration of angels. And when he says that all flesh and all

the earth shall be judged with His fire and sword, we do not understand

the spiritual and holy to be included, but the earthly and carnal, of

whom it is said that they "mind earthly things," [1418] and "to be

carnally minded is death," [1419] and whom the Lord calls simply flesh

when He says, "My Spirit shall not always remain in these men, for they

are flesh." [1420] As to the words, "Many shall be wounded by the

Lord," this wounding shall produce the second death. It is possible,

indeed, to understand fire, sword, and wound in a good sense. For the

Lord said that He wished to send fire on the earth. [1421] And the

cloven tongues appeared to them as fire when the Holy Spirit came.

[1422] And our Lord says, "I am not come to send peace on earth, but

a sword." [1423] And Scripture says that the word of God is a doubly

sharp sword, [1424] on account of the two edges, the two Testaments.

And in the Song of Songs the holy Church says that she is wounded with

love, [1425] --pierced, as it were, with the arrow of love. But here,

where we read or hear that the Lord shall come to execute vengeance, it

is obvious in what sense we are to understand these expressions.

After briefly mentioning those who shall be consumed in this judgment,

speaking of the wicked and sinners under the figure of the meats

forbidden by the old law, from which they had not abstained, he

summarily recounts the grace of the new testament, from the first

coming of the Saviour to the last judgment, of which we now speak; and

herewith he concludes his prophecy. For he relates that the Lord

declares that He is coming to gather all nations, that they may come

and witness His glory. [1426] For, as the apostle says, "All have

sinned and are in want of the glory of God." [1427] And he says that

He will do wonders among them, at which they shall marvel and believe

in Him; and that from them He will send forth those that are saved into

various nations, and distant islands which have not heard His name nor

seen His glory, and that they shall declare His glory among the

nations, and shall bring the brethren of those to whom the prophet was

speaking, i.e., shall bring to the faith under God the Father the

brethren of the elect Israelites; and that they shall bring from all

nations an offering to the Lord on beasts of burden and waggons (which

are understood to mean the aids furnished by God in the shape of

angelic or human ministry), to the holy city Jerusalem, which at

present is scattered over the earth, in the faithful saints. For where

divine aid is given, men believe, and where they believe, they come.

And the Lord compared them, in a figure, to the children of Israel

offering sacrifice to Him in His house with psalms, which is already

everywhere done by the Church; and He promised that from among them He

would choose for Himself priests and Levites, which also we see already

accomplished. For we see that priests and Levites are now chosen, not

from a certain family and blood, as was originally the rule in the

priesthood according to the order of Aaron, but as befits the new

testament, under which Christ is the High Priest after the order of

Melchisedec, in consideration of the merit which is bestowed upon each

man by divine grace. And these priests are not to be judged by their

mere title, which is often borne by unworthy men, but by that holiness

which is not common to good men and bad.

After having thus spoken of this mercy of God which is now experienced

by the Church, and is very evident and familiar to us, he foretells

also the ends to which men shall come when the last judgment has

separated the good and the bad, saying by the prophet, or the prophet

himself speaking for God, "For as the new heavens and the new earth

shall remain before me, said the Lord, so shall your seed and your name

remain, and there shall be to them month after month, and Sabbath after

Sabbath. All flesh shall come to worship before me in Jerusalem, said

the Lord. And they shall go out, and shall see the members of the men

who have sinned against me: their worm shall not die, neither shall

their fire be quenched; and they shall be for a spectacle to all

flesh." [1428] At this point the prophet closed his book, as at this

point the world shall come to an end. Some, indeed, have translated

"carcases" [1429] instead of "members of the men," meaning by carcases

the manifest punishment of the body, although carcase is commonly used

only of dead flesh, while the bodies here spoken of shall be animated,

else they could not be sensible of any pain; but perhaps they may,

without absurdity, be called carcases, as being the bodies of those who

are to fall into the second death. And for the same reason it is said,

as I have already quoted, by this same prophet, "The earth of the

wicked shall fall." [1430] It is obvious that those translators who

use a different word for men do not mean to include only males, for no

one will say that the women who sinned shall not appear in that

judgment; but the male sex, being the more worthy, and that from which

the woman was derived, is intended to include both sexes. But that

which is especially pertinent to our subject is this, that since the

words "All flesh shall come," apply to the good, for the people of God

shall be composed of every race of men,--for all men shall not be

present, since the greater part shall be in punishment,--but, as I was

saying, since flesh is used of the good, and members or carcases of the

bad, certainly it is thus put beyond a doubt that that judgment in

which the good and the bad shall be allotted to their destinies shall

take place after the resurrection of the body, our faith in which is

thoroughly established by the use of these words.

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[1413] Isa. xxvi. 19.

[1414] Isa. lxvi. 12, 16.

[1415] Gal. iv. 26.

[1416] Matt. v. 8.

[1417] Isa. lxv. 17-19.

[1418] Phil. iii. 19.

[1419] Rom. viii. 6.

[1420] Gen. vi. 3.

[1421] Luke xii. 49.

[1422] Acts ii. 3.

[1423] Matt. x. 34.

[1424] Heb. iv. 12.

[1425] Song of Sol. ii. 5.

[1426] Isa. lxvi. 18.

[1427] Rom. iii. 23.

[1428] Isa. lxvi. 22-24.

[1429] As the Vulgate: cadavera virorum.

[1430] Here Augustin inserts the remark, "Who does not see that

cadavera (carcases) are so called from cadendo (falling)?"

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Chapter 22.--What is Meant by the Good Going Out to See the Punishment

of the Wicked.

But in what way shall the good go out to see the punishment of the

wicked? Are they to leave their happy abodes by a bodily movement, and

proceed to the places of punishment, so as to witness the torments of

the wicked in their bodily presence? Certainly not; but they shall go

out by knowledge. For this expression, go out, signifies that those

who shall be punished shall be without. And thus the Lord also calls

these places "the outer darkness," [1431] to which is opposed that

entrance concerning which it is said to the good servant, "Enter into

the joy of thy Lord," that it may not be supposed that the wicked can

enter thither and be known, but rather that the good by their knowledge

go out to them, because the good are to know that which is without.

For those who shall be in torment shall not know what is going on

within in the joy of the Lord; but they who shall enter into that joy

shall know what is going on outside in the outer darkness. Therefore

it is said, "They shall go out," because they shall know what is done

by those who are without. For if the prophets were able to know things

that had not yet happened, by means of that indwelling of God in their

minds, limited though it was, shall not the immortal saints know things

that have already happened, when God shall be all in all? [1432] The

seed, then, and the name of the saints shall remain in that

blessedness,--the seed, to wit, of which John says, "And his seed

remaineth in him;" [1433] and the name, of which it was said through

Isaiah himself, "I will give them an everlasting name." [1434] "And

there shall be to them month after month, and Sabbath after Sabbath,"

as if it were said, Moon after moon, and rest upon rest, both of which

they shall themselves be when they shall pass from the old shadows of

time into the new lights of eternity. The worm that dieth not, and the

fire that is not quenched, which constitute the punishment of the

wicked, are differently interpreted by different people. For some

refer both to the body, others refer both to the soul; while others

again refer the fire literally to the body, and the worm figuratively

to the soul, which seems the more credible idea. But the present is

not the time to discuss this difference, for we have undertaken to

occupy this book with the last judgment, in which the good and the bad

are separated: their rewards and punishments we shall more carefully

discuss elsewhere.

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[1431] Matt. xxv. 30.

[1432] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

[1433] 1 John iii. 9.

[1434] Isa. lvi. 5.

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Chapter 23.--What Daniel Predicted Regarding the Persecution of

Antichrist, the Judgment of God, and the Kingdom of the Saints.

Daniel prophesies of the last judgment in such a way as to indicate

that Antichrist shall first come, and to carry on his description to

the eternal reign of the saints. For when in prophetic vision he had

seen four beasts, signifying four kingdoms, and the fourth conquered by

a certain king, who is recognized as Antichrist, and after this the

eternal kingdom of the Son of man, that is to say, of Christ, he says,

"My spirit was terrified, I Daniel in the midst of my body, and the

visions of my head troubled me," [1435] etc. Some have interpreted

these four kingdoms as signifying those of the Assyrians, Persians,

Macedonians, and Romans. They who desire to understand the fitness of

this interpretation may read Jerome's book on Daniel, which is written

with a sufficiency of care and erudition. But he who reads this

passage, even half asleep, cannot fail to see that the kingdom of

Antichrist shall fiercely, though for a short time, assail the Church

before the last judgment of God shall introduce the eternal reign of

the saints. For it is patent from the context that the time, times,

and half a time, means a year, and two years, and half a year, that is

to say, three years and a half. Sometimes in Scripture the same thing

is indicated by months. For though the word times seems to be used

here in the Latin indefinitely, that is only because the Latins have no

dual, as the Greeks have, and as the Hebrews also are said to have.

Times, therefore, is used for two times. As for the ten kings, whom,

as it seems, Antichrist is to find in the person of ten individuals

when he comes, I own I am afraid we may be deceived in this, and that

he may come unexpectedly while there are not ten kings living in the

Roman world. For what if this number ten signifies the whole number of

kings who are to precede his coming, as totality is frequently

symbolized by a thousand, or a hundred, or seven, or other numbers,

which it is not necessary to recount?

In another place the same Daniel says, "And there shall be a time of

trouble, such as was not since there was born a nation upon earth until

that time: and in that time all Thy people which shall be found

written in the book shall be delivered. And many of them that sleep in

the mound of earth shall arise, some to everlasting life, and some to

shame and everlasting confusion. And they that be wise shall shine as

the brightness of the firmament; and many of the just as the stars for

ever." [1436] This passage is very similar to the one we have quoted

from the Gospel, [1437] at least so far as regards the resurrection of

dead bodies. For those who are there said to be "in the graves" are

here spoken of as "sleeping in the mound of earth," or, as others

translate, "in the dust of earth." There it is said, "They shall come

forth;" so here, "They shall arise." There, "They that have done good,

to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the

resurrection of judgment;" here, "Some to everlasting life, and some to

shame and everlasting confusion." Neither is it to be supposed a

difference, though in place of the expression in the Gospel, "All who

are in their graves," the prophet does not say "all," but "many of them

that sleep in the mound of earth." For many is sometimes used in

Scripture for all. Thus it was said to Abraham, "I have set thee as

the father of many nations," though in another place it was said to

him, "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed." [1438] Of such a

resurrection it is said a little afterwards to the prophet himself,

"And come thou and rest: for there is yet a day till the completion of

the consummation; and thou shall rest, and rise in thy lot in the end

of the days." [1439]

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[1435] Dan. vii. 15-28. Passage cited at length.

[1436] Dan. xii. 1-3.

[1437] John v. 28.

[1438] Gen. xvii. 5, and xxii. 18.

[1439] Dan. xii. 13.

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Chapter 24.--Passages from the Psalms of David Which Predict the End of

the World and the Last Judgment.

There are many allusions to the last judgment in the Psalms, but for

the most part only casual and slight. I cannot, however, omit to

mention what is said there in express terms of the end of this world:

"In the beginning hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth, O Lord;

and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou

shall endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; and as a

vesture Thou shall change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou

art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." [1440] Why is it that

Porphyry, while he lauds the piety of the Hebrews in worshipping a God

great and true, and terrible to the gods themselves, follows the

oracles of these gods in accusing the Christians of extreme folly

because they say that this world shall perish? For here we find it

said in the sacred books of the Hebrews, to that God whom this great

philosopher acknowledges to be terrible even to the gods themselves,

"The heavens are the work of Thy hands; they shall perish." When the

heavens, the higher and more secure part of the world, perish, shall

the world itself be preserved? If this idea is not relished by

Jupiter, whose oracle is quoted by this philosopher as an

unquestionable authority in rebuke of the credulity of the Christians,

why does he not similarly rebuke the wisdom of the Hebrews as folly,

seeing that the prediction is found in their most holy books? But if

this Hebrew wisdom, with which Porphyry is so captivated that he extols

it through the utterances of his own gods, proclaims that the heavens

are to perish, how is he so infatuated as to detest the faith of the

Christians partly, if not chiefly, on this account, that they believe

the world is to perish?--though how the heavens are to perish if the

world does not is not easy to see. And, indeed, in the sacred writings

which are peculiar to ourselves, and not common to the Hebrews and

us,--I mean the evangelic and apostolic books,--the following

expressions are used: "The figure of this world passeth away;" [1441]

"The world passeth away;" [1442] "Heaven and earth shall pass away,"

[1443] --expressions which are, I fancy, somewhat milder than "They

shall perish." In the Epistle of the Apostle Peter, too, where the

world which then was is said to have perished, being overflowed with

water, it is sufficiently obvious what part of the world is signified

by the whole, and in what sense the word perished is to be taken, and

what heavens were kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of

judgment and perdition of ungodly men. [1444] And when he says a

little afterwards, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the

which the heavens shall pass away with a great rush, and the elements

shall melt with burning heat, and the earth and the works which are in

it shall be burned up and then adds, "Seeing, then, that all these

things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?"

[1445] --these heavens which are to perish may be understood to be the

same which he said were kept in store reserved for fire; and the

elements which are to be burned are those which are full of storm and

disturbance in this lowest part of the world in which he said that

these heavens were kept in store; for the higher heavens in whose

firmament are set the stars are safe, and remain in their integrity.

For even the expression of Scripture, that "the stars shall fall from

heaven," [1446] not to mention that a different interpretation is much

preferable, rather shows that the heavens themselves shall remain, if

the stars are to fall from them. This expression, then, is either

figurative, as is more credible, or this phenomenon will take place in

this lowest heaven, like that mentioned by Virgil,--

"A meteor with a train of light

Athwart the sky gleamed dazzling bright,

Then in Id�an woods was lost." [1447]

But the passage I have quoted from the psalm seems to except none of

the heavens from the destiny of destruction; for he says, "The heavens

are the works of Thy hands: they shall perish;" so that, as none of

them are excepted from the category of God's works, none of them are

excepted from destruction. For our opponents will not condescend to

defend the Hebrew piety, which has won the approbation of their gods,

by the words of the Apostle Peter, whom they vehemently detest; nor

will they argue that, as the apostle in his epistle understands a part

when he speaks of the whole world perishing in the flood, though only

the lowest part of it, and the corresponding heavens were destroyed, so

in the psalm the whole is used for a part, and it is said "They shall

perish," though only the lowest heavens are to perish. But since, as I

said, they will not condescend to reason thus, lest they should seem to

approve of Peter's meaning, or ascribe as much importance to the final

conflagration as we ascribe to the deluge, whereas they contend that no

waters or flames could destroy the whole human race, it only remains to

them to maintain that their gods lauded the wisdom of the Hebrews

because they had not read this psalm.

It is the last judgment of God which is re ferred to also in the 50th

Psalm in the words, "God shall come manifestly, our God, and shall not

keep silence: fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very

tempestuous round about Him. He shall call the heaven above, and the

earth, to judge His people. Gather His saints together to Him; they

who make a covenant with Him over sacrifices." [1448] This we

understand of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we look for from heaven to

judge the quick and the dead. For He shall come manifestly to judge

justly the just and the unjust, who before came hiddenly to be unjustly

judged by the unjust. He, I say, shall come manifestly, and shall not

keep silence, that is, shall make Himself known by His voice of

judgment, who before, when he came hiddenly, was silent before His

judge when He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and, as a lamb

before the shearer, opened not His mouth as we read that it was

prophesied of Him by Isaiah, [1449] and as we see it fulfilled in the

Gospel. [1450] As for the fire and tempest, we have already said how

these are to be interpreted when we were explaining a similar passage

in Isaiah. [1451] As to the expression, "He shall call the heaven

above," as the saints and the righteous are rightly called heaven, no

doubt this means what the apostle says, "We shall be caught up together

with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." [1452] For if

we take the bare literal sense, how is it possible to call the heaven

above, as if the heaven could be anywhere else than above? And the

following expression, "And the earth to judge His people," if we supply

only the words, "He shall call," that is to say, "He shall call the

earth also," and do not supply "above," seems to give us a meaning in

accordance with sound doctrine, the heaven symbolizing those who will

judge along with Christ, and the earth those who shall be judged; and

thus the words, "He shall call the heaven above," would not mean, "He

shall catch up into the air," but "He shall lift up to seats of

judgment." Possibly, too, "He shall call the heaven," may mean, He

shall call the angels in the high and lofty places, that He may descend

with them to do judgment; and "He shall call the earth also" would then

mean, He shall call the men on the earth to judgment. But if with the

words "and the earth" we understand not only "He shall call," but also

"above," so as to make the full sense be, He shall call the heaven

above, and He shall call the earth above, then I think it is best

understood of the men who shall be caught up to meet Christ in the air,

and that they are called the heaven with reference to their souls, and

the earth with reference to their bodies. Then what is "to judge His

people," but to separate by judgment the good from the bad, as the

sheep from the goats? Then he turns to address the angels: "Gather

His saints together unto Him." For certainly a matter so important

must be accomplished by the ministry of angels. And if we ask who the

saints are who are gathered unto Him by the angels, we are told, "They

who make a covenant with Him over sacrifices." This is the whole life

of the saints, to make a covenant with God over sacrifices. For "over

sacrifices" either refers to works of mercy, which are preferable to

sacrifices in the judgment of God, who says, "I desire mercy more than

sacrifices," [1453] or if "over sacrifices" means in sacrifices, then

these very works of mercy are the sacrifices with which God is pleased,

as I remember to have stated in the tenth book of this work; [1454] and

in these works the saints make a covenant with God, because they do

them for the sake of the promises which are contained in His new

testament or covenant. And hence, when His saints have been gathered

to Him and set at His right hand in the last judgment, Christ shall

say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom

prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry,

and ye gave me to eat," [1455] and so on, mentioning the good works of

the good, and their eternal rewards assigned by the last sentence of

the Judge.

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[1440] Ps. cii. 25-27.

[1441] 1 Cor. vii. 31.

[1442] 1 John ii. 17.

[1443] Matt. xxiv. 35.

[1444] 2 Pet. iii. 6.

[1445] 2 Pet. iii. 10, 11.

[1446] Matt. xxiv. 29.

[1447] �neid, ii. 694.

[1448] Ps. l. 3-5.

[1449] Isa. liii. 7.

[1450] Matt. xxvi. 63.

[1451] Ch. 21.

[1452] 1 Thess. iv. 17.

[1453] Hos. vi. 6.

[1454] Ch. 6.

[1455] Matt. xxv. 34.

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Chapter 25.--Of Malachi's Prophecy, in Which He Speaks of the Last

Judgment, and of a Cleansing Which Some are to Undergo by Purifying

Punishments.

The prophet Malachi or Malachias, who is also called Angel, and is by

some (for Jerome [1456] tells us that this is the opinion of the

Hebrews) identified with Ezra the priest, [1457] others of whose

writings have been received into the canon, predicts the last judgment,

saying, "Behold, He cometh, saith the Lord Almighty; and who shall

abide the day of His entrance? . . . for I am the Lord your God, and I

change not." [1458] From these words it more evidently appears that

some shall in the last judgment suffer some kind of purgatorial

punishments; for what else can be understood by the word, "Who shall

abide the day of His entrance, or who shall be able to look upon Him?

for He enters as a moulder's fire, and as the herb of fullers: and He

shall sit fusing and purifying as if over gold and silver: and He

shall purify the sons of Levi, and pour them out like gold and

silver?" Similarly Isaiah says, "The Lord shall wash the filthiness of

the sons and daughters of Zion, and shall cleanse away the blood from

their midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning."

[1459] Unless perhaps we should say that they are cleansed from

filthiness and in a manner clarified, when the wicked are separated

from them by penal judgment, so that the elimination and damnation of

the one party is the purgation of the others, because they shall

henceforth live free from the contamination of such men. But when he

says, "And he shall purify the sons of Levi, and pour them out like

gold and silver, and they shall offer to the Lord sacrifices in

righteousness; and the sacrifices of Judah and Jerusalem shall be

pleasing to the Lord," he declares that those who shall be purified

shall then please the Lord with sacrifices of righteousness, and

consequently they themselves shall be purified from their own

unrighteousness which made them displeasing to God. Now they

themselves, when they have been purified, shall be sacrifices of

complete and perfect righteousness; for what more acceptable offering

can such persons make to God than themselves? But this question of

purgatorial punishments we must defer to another time, to give it a

more adequate treatment. By the sons of Levi and Judah and Jerusalem

we ought to understand the Church herself, gathered not from the

Hebrews only, but from other nations as well; nor such a Church as she

now is, when "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and

the truth is not in us," [1460] but as she shall then be, purged by the

last judgment as a threshing-floor by a winnowing wind, and those of

her members who need it being cleansed by fire, so that there remains

absolutely not one who offers sacrifice for his sins. For all who make

such offerings are assuredly in their sins, for the remission of which

they make offerings, that having made to God an acceptable offering,

they may then be absolved.

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[1456] In his Proem. ad Mal.

[1457] See Smith's Bible Dict.

[1458] Mal. iii. 1-6. Whole passage quoted.

[1459] Isa. iv. 4.

[1460] 1 John i. 8.

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Chapter 26.--Of the Sacrifices Offered to God by the Saints, Which are

to Be Pleasing to Him, as in the Primitive Days and Former Years.

And it was with the design of showing that His city shall not then

follow this custom, that God said that the sons of Levi should offer

sacrifices in righteousness,--not therefore in sin, and consequently

not for sin. And hence we see how vainly the Jews promise themselves a

return of the old times of sacrificing according to the law of the old

testament, grounding on the words which follow, "And the sacrifice of

Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to the Lord, as in the primitive

days, and as in former years." For in the times of the law they

offered sacrifices not in righteousness but in sins, offering

especially and primarily for sins, so much so that even the priest

himself, whom we must suppose to have been their most righteous man,

was accustomed to offer, according to God's commandments, first for his

own sins, and then for the sins of the people. And therefore we must

explain how we are to understand the words, "as in the primitive days,

and as in former years;" for perhaps he alludes to the time in which

our first parents were in paradise. Then, indeed, intact and pure from

all stain and blemish of sin, they offered themselves to God as the

purest sacrifices. But since they were banished thence on account of

their transgression, and human nature was condemned in them, with the

exception of the one Mediator and those who have been baptized, and are

as yet infants, "there is none clean from stain, not even the babe

whose life has been but for a day upon the earth." [1461] But if it

be replied that those who offer in faith may be said to offer in

righteousness, because the righteous lives by faith, [1462] --he

deceives himself, however, if he says that he has no sin, and therefore

he does not say so, because he lives by faith,--will any man say this

time of faith can be placed on an equal footing with that consummation

when they who offer sacrifices in righteousness shall be purified by

the fire of the last judgment? And consequently, since it must be

believed that after such a cleansing the righteous shall retain no sin,

assuredly that time, so far as regards its freedom from sin, can be

compared to no other period, unless to that during which our first

parents lived in paradise in the most innocent happiness before their

transgression. It is this period, then, which is properly understood

when it is said, "as in the primitive days, and as in former years."

For in Isaiah, too, after the new heavens and the new earth have been

promised, among other elements in the blessedness of the saints which

are there depicted by allegories and figures, from giving an adequate

explanation of which I am prevented by a desire to avoid prolixity, it

is said, "According to the days of the tree of life shall be the days

of my people." [1463] And who that has looked at Scripture does not

know where God planted the tree of life, from whose fruit He excluded

our first parents when their own iniquity ejected them from paradise,

and round which a terrible and fiery fence was set?

But if any one contends that those days of the tree of life mentioned

by the prophet Isaiah are the present times of the Church of Christ,

and that Christ Himself is prophetically called the Tree of Life,

because He is Wisdom, and of wisdom Solomon says, "It is a tree of life

to all who embrace it;" [1464] and if they maintain that our first

parents did not pass years in paradise, but were driven from it so soon

that none of their children were begotten there, and that therefore

that time cannot be alluded to in words which run, "as in the primitive

days, and as in former years," I forbear entering on this question,

lest by discussing everything I become prolix, and leave the whole

subject in uncertainty. For I see another meaning, which should keep

us from believing that a restoration of the primitive days and former

years of the legal sacrifices could have been promised to us by the

prophet as a great boon. For the animals selected as victims under the

old law were required to be immaculate, and free from all blemish

whatever, and symbolized holy men free from all sin, the only instance

of which character was found in Christ. As, therefore, after the

judgment those who are worthy of such purification shall be purified

even by fire, and shall be rendered thoroughly sinless, and shall offer

themselves to God in righteousness, and be indeed victims immaculate

and free from all blemish whatever, they shall then certainly be, "as

in the primitive days, and as in former years," when the purest victims

were offered, the shadow of this future reality. For there shall then

be in the body and soul of the saints the purity which was symbolized

in the bodies of these victims.

Then, with reference to those who are worthy not of cleansing but of

damnation, He says, "And I will draw near to you to judgment, and I

will be a swift witness against evildoers and against adulterers;" and

after enumerating other damnable crimes, He adds, "For I am the Lord

your God, and I am not changed." It is as if He said, Though your

fault has changed you for the worse, and my grace has changed you for

the better, I am not changed. And he says that He Himself will be a

witness, because in His judgment He needs no witnesses; and that He

will be "swift," either because He is to come suddenly, and the

judgment which seemed to lag shall be very swift by His unexpected

arrival, or because He will convince the consciences of men directly

and without any prolix harangue. "For," as it is written, "in the

thoughts of the wicked His examination shall be conducted." [1465]

And the apostle says, "The thoughts accusing or else excusing, in the

day in which God shall judge the hidden things of men, according to my

gospel in Jesus Christ." [1466] Thus, then, shall the Lord be a swift

witness, when He shall suddenly bring back into the memory that which

shall convince and punish the conscience.

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[1461] Job. xiv. 4.

[1462] Rom. i. 17.

[1463] Isa. lxv. 22.

[1464] Prov. iii. 18.

[1465] Wisd. i. 9.

[1466] Rom. ii. 15, 16.

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Chapter 27.--Of the Separation of the Good and the Bad, Which Proclaim

the Discriminating Influence of the Last Judgment.

The passage also which I formerly quoted for another purpose from this

prophet refers to the last judgment, in which he says, "They shall be

mine, saith the Lord Almighty, in the day in which I make up my gains,"

[1467] etc. When this diversity between the rewards and punishments

which distinguish the righteous from the wicked shall appear under that

Sun of righteousness in the brightness of life eternal,--a diversity

which is not discerned under this sun which shines on the vanity of

this life,--there shall then be such a judgment as has never before

been.

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[1467] Mal. iii. 17; iv. 3.

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Chapter 28.--That the Law of Moses Must Be Spiritually Understood to

Preclude the Damnable Murmurs of a Carnal Interpretation.

In the succeeding words, "Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I

commanded to him in Horeb for all Israel," [1468] the prophet

opportunely mentions precepts and statutes, after declaring the

important distinction hereafter to be made between those who observe

and those who despise the law. He intends also that they learn to

interpret the law spiritually, and find Christ in it, by whose judgment

that separation between the good and the bad is to be made. For it is

not without reason that the Lord Himself says to the Jews, "Had ye

believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me." [1469]

For by receiving the law carnally without perceiving that its earthly

promises were figures of things spiritual, they fell into such murmur

ings as audaciously to say, "It is vain to serve God; and what profit

is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked

suppliantly before the face of the Lord Almighty? And now we call

aliens happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up." [1470] It

was these words of theirs which in a manner compelled the prophet to

announce the last judgment, in which the wicked shall not even in

appearance be happy, but shall manifestly be most miserable; and in

which the good shall be oppressed with not even a transitory

wretchedness, but shall enjoy unsullied and eternal felicity. For he

had previously cited some similar expressions of those who said, "Every

one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and such are

pleasing to Him." [1471] It was, I say, by understanding the law of

Moses carnally that they had come to murmur thus against God. And

hence, too, the writer of the 73d Psalm says that his feet were almost

gone, his steps had well-nigh slipped, because he was envious of

sinners while he considered their prosperity, so that he said among

other things, How doth God know, and is there knowledge in the Most

High? and again, Have I sanctified my heart in vain, and washed my

hands in innocency? [1472] He goes on to say that his efforts to

solve this most difficult problem, which arises when the good seem to

be wretched and the wicked happy, were in vain until he went into the

sanctuary of God, and understood the last things. [1473] For in the

last judgment things shall not be so; but in the manifest felicity of

the righteous and manifest misery of the wicked quite another state of

things shall appear.

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[1468] Mal. iv. 4.

[1469] John v. 46.

[1470] Mal. iii. 14, 15.

[1471] Mal. ii. 17.

[1472] In innocentibus.

[1473] Ps. lxxiii.

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Chapter 29.--Of the Coming of Elias Before the Judgment, that the Jews

May Be Converted to Christ by His Preaching and Explanation of

Scripture.

After admonishing them to give heed to the law of Moses, as he foresaw

that for a long time to come they would not understand it spiritually

and rightly, he went on to say, "And, behold, I will send to you Elias

the Tishbite before the great and signal day of the Lord come: and he

shall turn the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man

to his next of kin, lest I come and utterly smite the earth." [1474]

It is a familiar theme in the conversation and heart of the faithful,

that in the last days before the judgment the Jews shall believe in the

true Christ, that is, our Christ, by means of this great and admirable

prophet Elias who shall expound the law to them. For not without

reason do we hope that before the coming of our Judge and Saviour Elias

shall come, because we have good reason to believe that he is now

alive; for, as Scripture most distinctly informs us, [1475] he was

taken up from this life in a chariot of fire. When, therefore, he is

come, he shall give a spiritual explanation of the law which the Jews

at present understand carnally, and shall thus "turn the heart of the

father to the son," that is, the heart of fathers to their children;

for the Septuagint translators have frequently put the singular for the

plural number. And the meaning is, that the sons, that is, the Jews,

shall understand the law as the fathers, that is, the prophets, and

among them Moses himself, understood it. For the heart of the fathers

shall be turned to their children when the children understand the law

as their fathers did; and the heart of the children shall be turned to

their fathers when they have the same sentiments as the fathers. The

Septuagint used the expression, "and the heart of a man to his next of

kin," because fathers and children are eminently neighbors to one

another. Another and a preferable sense can be found in the words of

the Septuagint translators, who have translated Scripture with an eye

to prophecy, the sense, viz., that Elias shall turn the heart of God

the Father to the Son, not certainly as if he should bring about this

love of the Father for the Son, but meaning that he should make it

known, and that the Jews also, who had previously hated, should then

love the Son who is our Christ. For so far as regards the Jews, God

has His heart turned away from our Christ, this being their conception

about God and Christ. But in their case the heart of God shall be

turned to the Son when they themselves shall turn in heart, and learn

the love of the Father towards the Son. The words following, "and the

heart of a man to his next of kin,"--that is, Elias shall also turn the

heart of a man to his next of kin,--how can we understand this better

than as the heart of a man to the man Christ? For though in the form

of God He is our God, yet, taking the form of a servant, He

condescended to become also our next of kin. It is this, then, which

Elias will do, "lest," he says, "I come and smite the earth utterly."

For they who mind earthly things are the earth. Such are the carnal

Jews until this day; and hence these murmurs of theirs against God,

"The wicked are pleasing to Him," and "It is a vain thing to serve

God." [1476]

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[1474] Mal. iv. 5, 6.

[1475] 2 Kings ii. 11.

[1476] Mal. ii. 17; iii. 14.

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Chapter 30.--That in the Books of the Old Testament, Where It is Said

that God Shall Judge the World, the Person of Christ is Not Explicitly

Indicated, But It Plainly Appears from Some Passages in Which the Lord

God Speaks that Christ is Meant.

There are many other passages of Scripture bearing on the last judgment

of God,--so many, indeed, that to cite them all would swell this book

to an unpardonable size. Suffice it to have proved that both Old and

New Testament enounce the judgment. But in the Old it is not so

definitely declared as in the New that the judgment shall be

administered by Christ, that is, that Christ shall descend from heaven

as the Judge; for when it is therein stated by the Lord God or His

prophet that the Lord God shall come, we do not necessarily understand

this of Christ. For both the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost

are the Lord God. We must not, however, leave this without proof. And

therefore we must first show how Jesus Christ speaks in the prophetical

books under the title of the Lord God, while yet there can be no doubt

that it is Jesus Christ who speaks; so that in other passages where

this is not at once apparent, and where nevertheless it is said that

the Lord God will come to that last judgment, we may understand that

Jesus Christ is meant. There is a passage in the prophet Isaiah which

illustrates what I mean. For God says by the prophet, "Hear me, Jacob

and Israel, whom I call. I am the first, and I am for ever: and my

hand has founded the earth, and my right hand has established the

heaven. I will call them, and they shall stand together, and be

gathered, and hear. Who has declared to them these things? In love of

thee I have done thy pleasure upon Babylon, that I might take away the

seed of the Chaldeans. I have spoken, and I have called: I have

brought him, and have made his way prosperous. Come ye near unto me,

and hear this. I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; when

they were made, there was I. And now the Lord God and His Spirit hath

sent me." [1477] It was Himself who was speaking as the Lord God; and

yet we should not have understood that it was Jesus Christ had He not

added, "And now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent me." For He said

this with reference to the form of a servant, speaking of a future

event as if it were past, as in the same prophet we read, "He was led

as a sheep to the slaughter," [1478] not "He shall be led;" but the

past tense is used to express the future. And prophecy constantly

speaks in this way.

There is also another passage in Zechariah which plainly declares that

the Almighty sent the Almighty; and of what persons can this be

understood but of God the Father and God the Son? For it is written,

"Thus saith the Lord Almighty, After the glory hath He sent me unto the

nations which spoiled you; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple

of His eye. Behold, I will bring mine hand upon them, and they shall

be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the Lord Almighty

hath sent me." [1479] Observe, the Lord Almighty saith that the Lord

Almighty sent Him. Who can presume to understand these words of any

other than Christ, who is speaking to the lost sheep of the house of

Israel? For He says in the Gospel, "I am not sent save to the lost

sheep of the house of Israel," [1480] which He here compared to the

pupil of God's eye, to signify the profoundest love. And to this class

of sheep the apostles themselves belonged. But after the glory, to

wit, of His resurrection,--for before it happened the evangelist said

that "Jesus was not yet glorified," [1481] --He was sent unto the

nations in the persons of His apostles; and thus the saying of the

psalm was fulfilled, "Thou wilt deliver me from the contradictions of

the people; Thou wilt set me as the head of the nations," [1482] so

that those who had spoiled the Israelites, and whom the Israelites had

served when they were subdued by them, were not themselves to be

spoiled in the same fashion, but were in their own persons to become

the spoil of the Israelites. For this had been promised to the

apostles when the Lord said, "I will make you fishers of men." [1483]

And to one of them He says, "From henceforth thou shalt catch men."

[1484] They were then to become a spoil, but in a good sense, as

those who are snatched from that strong one when he is bound by a

stronger. [1485]

In like manner the Lord, speaking by the same prophet, says, "And it

shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the

nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of

David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and

mercy; and they shall look upon me because they have insulted me, and

they shall mourn for Him as for one very dear, and shall be in

bitterness as for an only-begotten." [1486] To whom but to God does

it belong to destroy all the nations that are hostile to the holy city

Jerusalem, which "come against it," that is, are opposed to it, or, as

some translate, "come upon it," as if putting it down under them; or to

pour out upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the

spirit of grace and mercy? This belongs doubtless to God, and it is to

God the prophet ascribes the words; and yet Christ shows that He is the

God who does these so great and divine things, when He goes on to say,

"And they shall look upon me because they have insulted me, and they

shall mourn for Him as if for one very dear (or beloved), and shall be

in bitterness for Him as for an only-begotten." For in that day the

Jews--those of them, at least, who shall receive the spirit of grace

and mercy--when they see Him coming in His majesty, and recognize that

it is He whom they, in the person of their parents, insulted when He

came before in His humiliation, shall repent of insulting Him in His

passion: and their parents themselves, who were the perpetrators of

this huge impiety, shall see Him when they rise; but this will be only

for their punishment, and not for their correction. It is not of them

we are to understand the words, "And I will pour upon the house of

David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and

mercy, and they shall look upon me because they have insulted me;" but

we are to understand the words of their descendants, who shall at that

time believe through Elias. But as we say to the Jews, You killed

Christ, although it was their parents who did so, so these persons

shall grieve that they in some sort did what their progenitors did.

Although, therefore, those that receive the spirit of mercy and grace,

and believe, shall not be condemned with their impious parents, yet

they shall mourn as if they themselves had done what their parents

did. Their grief shall arise not so much from guilt as from pious

affection. Certainly the words which the Septuagint have translated,

"They shall look upon me because they insulted me," stand in the

Hebrew,"They shall look upon me whom they pierced." [1487] And by

this word the crucifixion of Christ is certainly more plainly

indicated. But the Septuagint translators preferred to allude to the

insult which was involved in His whole passion. For in point of fact

they insulted Him both when He was arrested and when He was bound, when

He was judged, when He was mocked by the robe they put on Him and the

homage they did on bended knee, when He was crowned with thorns and

struck with a rod on the head, when He bore His cross, and when at last

He hung upon the tree. And therefore we recognize more fully the

Lord's passion when we do not confine ourselves to one interpretation,

but combine both, and read both "insulted" and "pierced."

When, therefore, we read in the prophetical books that God is to come

to do judgment at the last, from the mere mention of the judgment, and

although there is nothing else to determine the meaning, we must gather

that Christ is meant; for though the Father will judge, He will judge

by the coming of the Son. For He Himself, by His own manifested

presence, "judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son;"

[1488] for as the Son was judged as a man, He shall also judge in human

form. For it is none but He of whom God speaks by Isaiah under the

name of Jacob and Israel, of whose seed Christ took a body, as it is

written, "Jacob is my servant, I will uphold Him; Israel is mine elect,

my Spirit has assumed Him: I have put my Spirit upon Him; He shall

bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor cease,

neither shall His voice be heard without. A bruised reed shall He not

break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: but in truth shall He

bring forth judgment. He shall shine and shall not be broken, until He

sets judgment in the earth: and the nations shall hope in His name."

[1489] The Hebrew has not "Jacob" and "Israel;" but the Septuagint

translators, wishing to show the significance of the expression "my

servant," and that it refers to the form of a servant in which the Most

High humbled Himself, inserted the name of that man from whose stock He

took the form of a servant. The Holy Spirit was given to Him, and was

manifested, as the evangelist testifies, in the form of a dove. [1490]

He brought forth judgment to the Gentiles, because He predicted what

was hidden from them. In His meekness He did not cry, nor did He cease

to proclaim the truth. But His voice was not heard, nor is it heard,

without, because He is not obeyed by those who are outside of His

body. And the Jews themselves, who persecuted Him, He did not break,

though as a bruised reed they had lost their integrity, and as smoking

flax their light was quenched; for He spared them, having come to be

judged and not yet to judge. He brought forth judgment in truth,

declaring that they should be punished did they persist in their

wickedness. His face shone on the Mount, [1491] His fame in the

world. He is not broken nor overcome, because neither in Himself nor

in His Church has persecution prevailed to annihilate Him. And

therefore that has not, and shall not, be brought about which His

enemies said or say, "When shall He die, and His name perish?" [1492]

"until He set judgment in the earth." Behold, the hidden thing which

we were seeking is discovered. For this is the last judgment, which He

will set in the earth when He comes from heaven. And it is in Him,

too, we already see the concluding expression of the prophecy

fulfilled: "In His name shall the nations hope." And by this

fulfillment, which no one can deny, men are encouraged to believe in

that which is most impudently denied. For who could have hoped for

that which even those who do not yet believe in Christ now see

fulfilled among us, and which is so undeniable that they can but gnash

their teeth and pine away? Who, I say, could have hoped that the

nations would hope in the name of Christ, when He was arrested, bound,

scourged, mocked, crucified, when even the disciples themselves had

lost the hope which they had begun to have in Him? The hope which was

then entertained scarcely by the one thief on the cross, is now

cherished by nations everywhere on the earth, who are marked with the

sign of the cross on which He died that they may not die eternally.

That the last judgment, then, shall be administered by Jesus Christ in

the manner predicted in the sacred writings is denied or doubted by no

one, unless by those who, through some incredible animosity or

blindness, decline to believe these writings, though already their

truth is demonstrated to all the world. And at or in connection with

that judgment the following events shall come to pass, as we have

learned: Elias the Tishbite shall come; the Jews shall believe;

Antichrist shall persecute; Christ shall judge; the dead shall rise;

the good and the wicked shall be separated; the world shall be burned

and renewed. All these things, we believe, shall come to pass; but

how, or in what order, human understanding cannot perfectly teach us,

but only the experience of the events themselves. My opinion, however,

is, that they will happen in the order in which I have related them.

Two books yet remain to be written by me, in order to complete, by

God's help, what I promised. One of these will explain the punishment

of the wicked, the other the happiness of the righteous; and in them I

shall be at special pains to refute, by God's grace, the arguments by

which some unhappy creatures seem to themselves to undermine the divine

promises and threatenings, and to ridicule as empty words statements

which are the most salutary nutriment of faith. But they who are

instructed in divine things hold the truth and omnipotence of God to be

the strongest arguments in favor of those things which, however

incredible they seem to men, are yet contained in the Scriptures, whose

truth has already in many ways been proved; for they are sure that God

can in no wise lie, and that He can do what is impossible to the

unbelieving.

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[1477] Isa. xlviii. 12-16.

[1478] Isa. liii. 7.

[1479] Zech. ii. 8, 9.

[1480] Matt. xv. 24.

[1481] John vii. 39.

[1482] Ps. xviii. 43.

[1483] Matt. iv. 19.

[1484] Luke v. 10.

[1485] Matt. xii. 29.

[1486] Zech. xii. 9, 10.

[1487] So the Vulgate.

[1488] John v. 22.

[1489] Isa. xlii. 1-4.

[1490] John i. 32.

[1491] Matt. xvii. 1, 2.

[1492] Ps. xli. 5.

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Book XXI.

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Argument--Of the end reserved for the city of the devil, namely, the

eternal punishment of the damned; and of the arguments which unbelief

brings against it.

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Chapter 1.--Of the Order of the Discussion, Which Requires that We

First Speak of the Eternal Punishment of the Lost in Company with the

Devil, and Then of the Eternal Happiness of the Saints.

I Propose, with such ability as God may grant me, to discuss in this

book more thoroughly the nature of the punishment which shall be

assigned to the devil and all his retainers, when the two cities, the

one of God, the other of the devil, shall have reached their proper

ends through Jesus Christ our Lord, the Judge of quick and dead. And I

have adopted this order, and preferred to speak, first of the

punishment of the devils, and afterwards of the blessedness of the

saints, because the body partakes of either destiny; and it seems to be

more incredible that bodies endure in everlasting torments than that

they continue to exist without any pain in everlasting felicity.

Consequently, when I shall have demonstrated that that punishment ought

not to be incredible, this will materially aid me in proving that which

is much more credible, viz., the immortality of the bodies of the

saints which are delivered from all pain. Neither is this order out of

harmony with the divine writings, in which sometimes, indeed, the

blessedness of the good is placed first, as in the words, "They that

have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done

evil, unto the resurrection of judgment;" [1493] but sometimes also

last, as, "The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall

gather out of His kingdom all things which offend, and shall cast them

into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth,

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of His

Father;" [1494] and that, "These shall go away into eternal punishment,

but the righteous into life eternal." [1495] And though we have not

room to cite instances, any one who examines the prophets will find

that they adopt now the one arrangement and now the other. My own

reason for following the latter order I have given.

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[1493] John v. 29.

[1494] Matt. xiii. 41-43.

[1495] Matt. xxv. 46.

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Chapter 2.--Whether It is Possible for Bodies to Last for Ever in

Burning Fire.

What, then, can I adduce to convince those who refuse to believe that

human bodies, animated and living, can not only survive death, but also

last in the torments of everlasting fires? They will not allow us to

refer this simply to the power of the Almighty, but demand that we

persuade them by some example. If, then, we reply to them, that there

are animals which certainly are corruptible, because they are mortal,

and which yet live in the midst of flames; and likewise, that in

springs of water so hot that no one can put his hand in it with

impunity a species of worm is found, which not only lives there, but

cannot live elsewhere; they either refuse to believe these facts unless

we can show them, or, if we are in circumstances to prove them by

ocular demonstration or by adequate testimony, they contend, with the

same scepticism, that these facts are not examples of what we seek to

prove, inasmuch as these animals do not live for ever, and besides,

they live in that blaze of heat without pain, the element of fire being

congenial to their nature, and causing it to thrive and not to

suffer,--just as if it were not more incredible that it should thrive

than that it should suffer in such circumstances. It is strange that

anything should suffer in fire and yet live, but stranger that it

should live in fire and not suffer. If, then, the latter be believed,

why not also the former?

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Chapter 3.--Whether Bodily Suffering Necessarily Terminates in the

Destruction of the Flesh.

But, say they, there is no body which can suffer and cannot also die.

How do we know this? For who can say with certainty that the devils do

not suffer in their bodies, when they own that they are grievously

tormented? And if it is replied that there is no earthly body--that is

to say, no solid and perceptible body, or, in one word, no flesh--which

can suffer and cannot die, is not this to tell us only what men have

gathered from experience and their bodily senses? For they indeed have

no acquaintance with any flesh but that which is mortal; and this is

their whole argument, that what they have had no experience of they

judge quite impossible. For we cannot call it reasoning to make pain a

presumption of death, while, in fact, it is rather a sign of life. For

though it be a question whether that which suffers can continue to live

for ever, yet it is certain that everything which suffers pain does

live, and that pain can exist only in a living subject. It is

necessary, therefore, that he who is pained be living, not necessary

that pain kill him; for every pain does not kill even those mortal

bodies of ours which are destined to die. And that any pain kills them

is caused by the circumstance that the soul is so connected with the

body that it succumbs to great pain and withdraws; for the structure of

our members and vital parts is so infirm that it cannot bear up against

that violence which causes great or extreme agony. But in the life to

come this connection of soul and body is of such a kind, that as it is

dissolved by no lapse of time, so neither is it burst asunder by any

pain. And so, although it be true that in this world there is no flesh

which can suffer pain and yet cannot die, yet in the world to come

there shall be flesh such as now there is not, as there will also be

death such as now there is not. For death will not be abolished, but

will be eternal, since the soul will neither be able to enjoy God and

live, nor to die and escape the pains of the body. The first death

drives the soul from the body against her will: the second death holds

the soul in the body against her will. The two have this in common,

that the soul suffers against her will what her own body inflicts.

Our opponents, too, make much of this, that in this world there is no

flesh which can suffer pain and cannot die; while they make nothing of

the fact that there is something which is greater than the body. For

the spirit, whose presence animates and rules the body, can both suffer

pain and cannot die. Here then is something which, though it can feel

pain, is immortal. And this capacity, which we now see in the spirit

of all, shall be hereafter in the bodies of the damned. Moreover, if

we attend to the matter a little more closely, we see that what is

called bodily pain is rather to be referred to the soul. For it is the

soul not the body, which is pained, even when the pain originates with

the body,--the soul feeling pain at the point where the body is hurt.

As then we speak of bodies feeling and living, though the feeling and

life of the body are from the soul, so also we speak of bodies being

pained, though no pain can be suffered by the body apart from the

soul. The soul, then, is pained with the body in that part where

something occurs to hurt it; and it is pained alone, though it be in

the body, when some invisible cause distresses it, while the body is

safe and sound. Even when not associated with the body it is pained;

for certainly that rich man was suffering in hell when he cried, "I am

tormented in this flame." [1496] But as for the body, it suffers no

pain when it is soulless; and even when animate it can suffer only by

the soul's suffering. If, therefore, we might draw a just presumption

from the existence of pain to that of death, and conclude that where

pain can be felt death can occur, death would rather be the property of

the soul, for to it pain more peculiarly belongs. But, seeing that

that which suffers most cannot die, what ground is there for supposing

that those bodies, because destined to suffer, are therefore, destined

to die? The Platonists indeed maintained that these earthly bodies and

dying members gave rise to the fears, desires, griefs, and joys of the

soul. "Hence," says Virgil (i.e., from these earthly bodies and dying

members),

"Hence wild desires and grovelling fears,

And human laughter, human tears." [1497]

But in the fourteenth book of this work [1498] we have proved that,

according to the Platonists' own theory, souls, even when purged from

all pollution of the body, are yet pos sessed by a monstrous desire to

return again into their bodies. But where desire can exist, certainly

pain also can exist; for desire frustrated, either by missing what it

aims at or losing what it had attained, is turned into pain. And

therefore, if the soul, which is either the only or the chief sufferer,

has yet a kind of immortality of its own, it is inconsequent to say

that because the bodies of the damned shall suffer pain, therefore they

shall die. In fine, if the body causes the soul to suffer, why can the

body not cause death as well as suffering, unless because it does not

follow that what causes pain causes death as well? And why then is it

incredible that these fires can cause pain but not death to those

bodies we speak of, just as the bodies themselves cause pain, but not

therefore death, to the souls? Pain is therefore no necessary

presumption of death.

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[1496] Luke xvi. 24.

[1497] �neid, vi. 733.

[1498] Ch. 3, 5, 6.

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Chapter 4.--Examples from Nature Proving that Bodies May Remain

Unconsumed and Alive in Fire.

If, therefore, the salamander lives in fire, as naturalists [1499] have

recorded, and if certain famous mountains of Sicily have been

continually on fire from the remotest antiquity until now, and yet

remain entire, these are sufficiently convincing examples that

everything which burns is not consumed. As the soul too, is a proof

that not everything which can suffer pain can also die, why then do

they yet demand that we produce real examples to prove that it is not

incredible that the bodies of men condemned to everlasting punishment

may retain their soul in the fire, may burn without being consumed, and

may suffer without perishing? For suitable properties will be

communicated to the substance of the flesh by Him who has endowed the

things we see with so marvellous and diverse properties, that their

very multitude prevents our wonder. For who but God the Creator of all

things has given to the flesh of the peacock its antiseptic property?

This property, when I first heard of it, seemed to me incredible; but

it happened at Carthage that a bird of this kind was cooked and served

up to me, and, taking a suitable slice of flesh from its breast, I

ordered it to be kept, and when it had been kept as many days as make

any other flesh stinking, it was produced and set before me, and

emitted no offensive smell. And after it had been laid by for thirty

days and more, it was still in the same state; and a year after, the

same still, except that it was a little more shrivelled, and drier.

Who gave to chaff such power to freeze that it preserves snow buried

under it, and such power to warm that it ripens green fruit?

But who can explain the strange properties of fire itself, which

blackens everything it burns, though itself bright; and which, though

of the most beautiful colors, discolors almost all it touches and feeds

upon, and turns blazing fuel into grimy cinders? Still this is not

laid down as an absolutely uniform law; for, on the contrary, stones

baked in glowing fire themselves also glow, and though the fire be

rather of a red hue, and they white, yet white is congruous with light,

and black with darkness. Thus, though the fire burns the wood in

calcining the stones, these contrary effects do not result from the

contrariety of the materials. For though wood and stone differ, they

are not contraries, like black and white, the one of which colors is

produced in the stones, while the other is produced in the wood by the

same action of fire, which imparts its own brightness to the former,

while it begrimes the latter, and which could have no effect on the one

were it not fed by the other. Then what wonderful properties do we

find in charcoal, which is so brittle that a light tap breaks it and a

slight pressure pulverizes it, and yet is so strong that no moisture

rots it, nor any time causes it to decay. So enduring is it, that it

is customary in laying down landmarks to put charcoal underneath them,

so that if, after the longest interval, any one raises an action, and

pleads that there is no boundary stone, he may be convicted by the

charcoal below. What then has enabled it to last so long without

rotting, though buried in the damp earth in which [its original] wood

rots, except this same fire which consumes all things?

Again, let us consider the wonders of lime; for besides growing white

in fire, which makes other things black, and of which I have already

said enough, it has also a mysterious property of conceiving fire

within it. Itself cold to the touch, it yet has a hidden store of

fire, which is not at once apparent to our senses, but which experience

teaches us, lies as it were slumbering within it even while unseen.

And it is for this reason called "quick lime," as if the fire were the

invisible soul quickening the visible substance or body. But the

marvellous thing is, that this fire is kindled when it is

extinguished. For to disengage the hidden fire the lime is moistened

or drenched with water, and then, though it be cold before, it becomes

hot by that very application which cools what is hot. As if the fire

were departing from the lime and breathing its last, it no longer lies

hid, but appears; and then the lime lying in the coldness of death

cannot be requickened, and what we before called "quick," we now call

"slaked." What can be stranger than this? Yet there is a greater

marvel still. For if you treat the lime, not with water, but with oil,

which is as fuel to fire, no amount of oil will heat it. Now if this

marvel had been told us of some Indian mineral which we had no

opportunity of experimenting upon, we should either have forthwith

pronounced it a falsehood, or certainly should have been greatly

astonished. But things that daily present themselves to our own

observation we despise, not because they are really less marvellous,

but because they are common; so that even some products of India

itself, remote as it is from ourselves, cease to excite our admiration

as soon as we can admire them at our leisure. [1500]

The diamond is a stone possessed by many among ourselves, especially by

jewellers and lapidaries, and the stone is so hard that it can be

wrought neither by iron nor fire, nor, they say, by anything at all

except goat's blood. But do you suppose it is as much admired by those

who own it and are familiar with its properties as by those to whom it

is shown for the first time? Persons who have not seen it perhaps do

not believe what is said of it, or if they do, they wonder as at a

thing beyond their experience; and if they happen to see it, still they

marvel because they are unused to it, but gradually familiar experience

[of it] dulls their admiration. We know that the loadstone has a

wonderful power of attracting iron. When I first saw it I was

thunderstruck, for I saw an iron ring attracted and suspended by the

stone; and then, as if it had communicated its own property to the iron

it attracted, and had made it a substance like itself, this ring was

put near another, and lifted it up; and as the first ring clung to the

magnet, so did the second ring to the first. A third and a fourth were

similarly added, so that there hung from the stone a kind of chain of

rings, with their hoops connected, not interlinking, but attached

together by their outer surface. Who would not be amazed at this

virtue of the stone, subsisting as it does not only in itself, but

transmitted through so many suspended rings, and binding them together

by invisible links? Yet far more astonishing is what I heard about

this stone from my brother in the episcopate, Severus bishop of

Milevis. He told me that Bathanarius, once count of Africa, when the

bishop was dining with him, produced a magnet, and held it under a

silver plate on which he placed a bit of iron; then as he moved his

hand with the magnet underneath the plate, the iron upon the plate

moved about accordingly. The intervening silver was not affected at

all, but precisely as the magnet was moved backwards and forwards below

it, no matter how quickly, so was the iron attracted above. I have

related what I myself have witnessed; I have related what I was told by

one whom I trust as I trust my own eyes. Let me further say what I

have read about this magnet. When a diamond is laid near it, it does

not lift iron; or if it has already lifted it, as soon as the diamond

approaches, it drops it. These stones come from India. But if we

cease to admire them because they are now familiar, how much less must

they admire them who procure them very easily and send them to us?

Perhaps they are held as cheap as we hold lime, which, because it is

common, we think nothing of, though it has the strange property of

burning when water, which is wont to quench fire, is poured on it, and

of remaining cool when mixed with oil, which ordinarily feeds fire.

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[1499] Aristotle does not affirm it as a fact observed by himself, but

as a popular tradition (Hist. anim. v. 19). Pliny is equally cautious

(Hist. nat. xxix. 23). Dioscorides declared the thing impossible (ii.

68).--Saisset.

[1500] So Lucretius, ii. 1025: "Sed neque tam facilis res ulla 'st,

quin ea primum Difficilismagis ad credendum constet: itemque Nil

adeomagnum, nec tam mirabile quicquam Principis, quod non minuant

mirarier omnes Paulatim."

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Chapter 5.--That There are Many Things Which Reason Cannot Account For,

and Which are Nevertheless True.

Nevertheless, when we declare the miracles which God has wrought, or

will yet work, and which we cannot bring under the very eyes of men,

sceptics keep demanding that we shall explain these marvels to reason.

And because we cannot do so, inasmuch as they are above human

comprehension, they suppose we are speaking falsely. These persons

themselves, therefore, ought to account for all these marvels which we

either can or do see. And if they perceive that this is impossible for

man to do, they should acknowledge that it cannot be concluded that a

thing has not been or shall not be because it cannot be reconciled to

reason, since there are things now in existence of which the same is

true. I will not, then, detail the multitude of marvels which are

related in books, and which refer not to things that happened once and

passed away, but that are permanent in certain places, where, if any

one has the desire and opportunity, he may ascertain their truth; but a

few only I recount. The following are some of the marvels men tell

us:--The salt of Agrigentum in Sicily, when thrown into the fire,

becomes fluid as if it were in water, but in the water it crackles as

if it were in the fire. The Garamant� have a fountain so cold by day

that no one can drink it, so hot by night no one can touch it. [1501]

In Epirus, too, there is a fountain which, like all others, quenches

lighted torches, but, unlike all others, lights quenched torches.

There is a stone found in Arcadia, and called asbestos, because once

lit it cannot be put out. The wood of a certain kind of Egyptian

fig-tree sinks in water, and does not float like other wood; and,

stranger still, when it has been sunk to the bottom for some time, it

rises again to the surface, though nature requires that when soaked in

water it should be heavier than ever. Then there are the apples of

Sodom which grow indeed to an appearance of ripeness, but, when you

touch them with hand or tooth, the peal cracks, and they crumble into

dust and ashes. The Persian stone pyrites burns the hand when it is

tightly held in it and so gets its name from fire. In Persia too,

there is found another stone called selenite, because its interior

brilliancy waxes and wanes with the moon. Then in Cappadocia the mares

are impregnated by the wind, and their foals live only three years.

Tilon, an Indian island, has this advantage over all other lands, that

no tree which grows in it ever loses its foliage.

These and numberless other marvels recorded in the history, not of past

events, but of permanent localities, I have no time to enlarge upon and

diverge from my main object; but let those sceptics who refuse to

credit the divine writings give me, if they can, a rational account of

them. For their only ground of unbelief in the Scriptures is, that

they contain incredible things, just such as I have been recounting.

For, say they, reason cannot admit that flesh burn and remain

unconsumed, suffer without dying. Mighty reasoners, indeed, who are

competent to give the reason of all the marvels that exist! Let them

then give us the reason of the few things we have cited, and which, if

they did not know they existed, and were only assured by us they would

at some future time occur, they would believe still less than that

which they now refuse to credit on our word. For which of them would

believe us if, instead of saying that the living bodies of men

hereafter will be such as to endure everlasting pain and fire without

ever dying, we were to say that in the world to come there will be salt

which becomes liquid in fire as if it were in water, and crackles in

water as if it were in fire; or that there will be a fountain whose

water in the chill air of night is so hot that it cannot be touched,

while in the heat of day it is so cold that it cannot be drunk; or that

there will be a stone which by its own heat burns the hand when tightly

held, or a stone which cannot be extinguished if it has been lit in any

part; or any of those wonders I have cited, while omitting numberless

others? If we were to say that these things would be found in the

world to come, and our sceptics were to reply, "If you wish us to

believe these things, satisfy our reason about each of them," we should

confess that we could not, because the frail comprehension of man

cannot master these and such-like wonders of God's working; and that

yet our reason was thoroughly convinced that the Almighty does nothing

without reason, though the frail mind of man cannot explain the reason;

and that while we are in many instances uncertain what He intends, yet

that it is always most certain that nothing which He intends is

impossible to Him; and that when He declares His mind, we believe Him

whom we cannot believe to be either powerless or false. Nevertheless

these cavillers at faith and exactors of reason, how do they dispose of

those things of which a reason cannot be given, and which yet exist,

though in apparent contrariety to the nature of things? If we had

announced that these things were to be, these sceptics would have

demanded from us the reason of them, as they do in the case of those

things which we are announcing as destined to be. And consequently, as

these present marvels are not non-existent, though human reason and

discourse are lost in such works of God, so those things we speak of

are not impossible because inexplicable; for in this particular they

are in the same predicament as the marvels of earth.

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[1501] Alluded to by Moore in his Melodies: "The fount that

played In times of old through Ammon's shade, Though icy cold by day it

ran, Yet still, like souls of mirth, began To burn when night was

near."

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Chapter 6.--That All Marvels are Not of Nature's Production, But that

Some are Due to Human Ingenuity and Others to Diabolic Contrivance.

At this point they will perhaps reply, "These things have no existence;

we don't believe one of them; they are travellers' tales and fictitious

romances;" and they may add what has the appearance of argument, and

say, "If you believe such things as these, believe what is recorded in

the same books, that there was or is a temple of Venus in which a

candelabrum set in the open air holds a lamp, which burns so strongly

that no storm or rain extinguishes it, and which is therefore called,

like the stone mentioned above, the asbestos or inextinguishable

lamp." They may say this with the intention of putting us into a

dilemma: for if we say this is incredible, then we shall impugn the

truth of the other recorded marvels; if, on the other hand, we admit

that this is credible, we shall avouch the pagan deities. But, as I

have already said in the eighteenth book of this work, we do not hold

it necessary to believe all that profane history contains, since, as

Varro says, even historians themselves disagree on so many points, that

one would think they intended and were at pains to do so; but we

believe, if we are disposed, those things which are not contradicted by

these books, which we do not hesitate to say we are bound to believe.

But as to those permanent miracles of nature, whereby we wish to

persuade the sceptical of the miracles of the world to come, those are

quite sufficient for our purpose which we ourselves can observe or of

which it is not difficult to find trustworthy witnesses. Moreover,

that temple of Venus, with its inextinguishable lamp, so far from

hemming us into a corner, opens an advantageous field to our argument.

For to this inextinguishable lamp we add a host of marvels wrought by

men, or by magic,--that is, by men under the influence of devils, or by

the devils directly,--for such marvels we cannot deny without impugning

the truth of the sacred Scriptures we believe. That lamp, therefore,

was either by some mechanical and human device fitted with asbestos, or

it was arranged by magical art in order that the worshippers might be

astonished, or some devil under the name of Venus so signally

manifested himself that this prodigy both began and became permanent.

Now devils are attracted to dwell in certain temples by means of the

creatures (God's creatures, not theirs), who present to them what suits

their various tastes. They are attracted not by food like animals,

but, like spirits, by such symbols as suit their taste, various kinds

of stones, woods, plants, animals, songs, rites. And that men may

provide these attractions, the devils first of all cunningly seduce

them, either by imbuing their hearts with a secret poison, or by

revealing themselves under a friendly guise, and thus make a few of

them their disciples, who become the instructors of the multitude. For

unless they first instructed men, it were impossible to know what each

of them desires, what they shrink from, by what name they should be

invoked or constrained to be present. Hence the origin of magic and

magicians. But, above all, they possess the hearts of men, and are

chiefly proud of this possession when they transform themselves into

angels of light. Very many things that occur, therefore, are their

doing; and these deeds of theirs we ought all the more carefully to

shun as we acknowledge them to be very surprising. And yet these very

deeds forward my present arguments. For if such marvels are wrought by

unclean devils, how much mightier are the holy angels! and what can not

that God do who made the angels themselves capable of working miracles!

If, then, very many effects can be contrived by human art, of so

surprising a kind that the uninitiated think them divine, as when,

e.g., in a certain temple two magnets have been adjusted, one in the

roof, another in the floor, so that an iron image is suspended in

mid-air between them, one would suppose by the power of the divinity,

were he ignorant of the magnets above and beneath; or, as in the case

of that lamp of Venus which we already mentioned as being a skillful

adaptation of asbestos; if, again, by the help of magicians, whom

Scripture calls sorcerers and enchanters, the devils could gain such

power that the noble poet Virgil should consider himself justified in

describing a very powerful magician in these lines:

"Her charms can cure what souls she please,

Rob other hearts of healthful ease,

Turn rivers backward to their source,

And make the stars forget their course,

And call up ghosts from night:

The ground shall bellow 'neath your feet:

The mountain-ash shall quit its seat,

And travel down the height;" [1502] --

if this be so, how much more able is God to do those things which to

sceptics are incredible, but to His power easy, since it is He who has

given to stones and all other things their virtue, and to men their

skill to use them in wonderful ways; He who has given to the angels a

nature more mighty than that of all that lives on earth; He whose power

surpasses all marvels, and whose wisdom in working, ordaining, and

permitting is no less marvellous in its governance of all things than

in its creation of all!

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[1502] �neid, iv. 487-491.

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Chapter 7.--That the Ultimate Reason for Believing Miracles is the

Omnipotence of the Creator.

Why, then, cannot God effect both that the bodies of the dead shall

rise, and that the bodies of the damned shall be tormented in

everlasting fire,--God, who made the world full of countless miracles

in sky, earth, air, and waters, while itself is a miracle

unquestionably greater and more admirable than all the marvels it is

filled with? But those with whom or against whom we are arguing, who

believe both that there is a God who made the world, and that there are

gods created by Him who administer the world's laws as His

viceregents,--our adversaries, I say, who, so far from denying

emphatically, assert that there are powers in the world which effect

marvellous results (whether of their own accord, or because they are

invoked by some rite or prayer, or in some magical way), when we lay

before them the wonderful properties of other things which are neither

rational animals nor rational spirits, but such material objects as

those we have just cited, are in the habit of replying, This is their

natural property, their nature; these are the powers naturally

belonging to them. Thus the whole reason why Agrigentine salt

dissolves in fire and crackles in water is that this is its nature.

Yet this seems rather contrary to nature, which has given not to fire

but to water the power of melting salt, and the power of scorching it

not to water but to fire. But this they say, is the natural property

of this salt, to show effects contrary to these. The same reason,

therefore, is assigned to account for that Garamantian fountain, of

which one and the same runlet is chill by day and boiling by night, so

that in either extreme it cannot be touched. So also of that other

fountain which, though it is cold to the touch, and though it, like

other fountains, extinguishes a lighted torch, yet, unlike other

fountains, and in a surprising manner, kindles an extinguished torch.

So of the asbestos stone, which, though it has no heat of its own, yet

when kindled by fire applied to it, cannot be extinguished. And so of

the rest, which I am weary of reciting, and in which, though there

seems to be an extraordinary property contrary to nature, yet no other

reason is given for them than this, that this is their nature,--a brief

reason truly, and, I own, a satisfactory reply. But since God is the

author of all natures, how is it that our adversaries, when they refuse

to believe what we affirm, on the ground that it is impossible, are

unwilling to accept from us a better explanation than their own, viz.,

that this is the will of Almighty God,--for certainly He is called

Almighty only because He is mighty to do all He will,--He who was able

to create so many marvels, not only unknown, but very well ascertained,

as I have been showing, and which, were they not under our own

observation, or reported by recent and credible witnesses, would

certainly be pronounced impossible? For as for those marvels which

have no other testimony than the writers in whose books we read them,

and who wrote without being divinely instructed, and are therefore

liable to human error, we cannot justly blame any one who declines to

believe them.

For my own part, I do not wish all the marvels I have cited to be

rashly accepted, for I do not myself believe them implicitly, save

those which have either come under my own observation, or which any one

can readily verify, such as the lime which is heated by water and

cooled by oil; the magnet which by its mysterious and insensible

suction attracts the iron, but has no affect on a straw; the peacock's

flesh which triumphs over the corruption from which not the flesh of

Plato is exempt; the chaff so chilling that it prevents snow from

melting, so heating that it forces apples to ripen; the glowing fire,

which, in accordance with its glowing appearance, whitens the stones it

bakes, while, contrary to its glowing appearance, it begrimes most

things it burns (just as dirty stains are made by oil, however pure it

be, and as the lines drawn by white silver are black); the charcoal,

too, which by the action of fire is so completely changed from its

original, that a finely marked piece of wood becomes hideous, the tough

becomes brittle, the decaying incorruptible. Some of these things I

know in common with many other persons, some of them in common with all

men; and there are many others which I have not room to insert in this

book. But of those which I have cited, though I have not myself seen,

but only read about them, I have been unable to find trustworthy

witnesses from whom I could ascertain whether they are facts, except in

the case of that fountain in which burning torches are extinguished and

extinguished torches lit, and of the apples of Sodom, which are ripe to

appearance, but are filled with dust. And indeed I have not met with

any who said they had seen that fountain in Epirus, but with some who

knew there was a similar fountain in Gaul not far from Grenoble. The

fruit of the trees of Sodom, however, is not only spoken of in books

worthy of credit, but so many persons say that they have seen it that I

cannot doubt the fact. But the rest of the prodigies I receive without

definitely affirming or denying them; and I have cited them because I

read them in the authors of our adversaries, and that I might prove how

many things many among themselves believe, because they are written in

the works of their own literary men, though no rational explanation of

them is given, and yet they scorn to believe us when we assert that

Almighty God will do what is beyond their experience and observation;

and this they do even though we assign a reason for His work. For what

better and stronger reason for such things can be given than to say

that the Almighty is able to bring them to pass, and will bring them to

pass, having predicted them in those books in which many other marvels

which have already come to pass were predicted? Those things which are

regarded as impossible will be accomplished according to the word, and

by the power of that God who predicted and effected that the

incredulous nations should believe incredible wonders.

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Chapter 8.--That It is Not Contrary to Nature That, in an Object Whose

Nature is Known, There Should Be Discovered an Alteration of the

Properties Which Have Been Known as Its Natural Properties.

But if they reply that their reason for not believing us when we say

that human bodies will always burn and yet never die, is that the

nature of human bodies is known to be quite otherwise constituted; if

they say that for this miracle we cannot give the reason which was

valid in the case of those natural miracles, viz., that this is the

natural property, the nature of the thing,--for we know that this is

not the nature of human flesh,--we find our answer in the sacred

writings, that even this human flesh was constituted in one fashion

before there was sin,--was constituted, in fact, so that it could not

die,--and in another fashion after sin, being made such as we see it in

this miserable state of mortality, unable to retain enduring life. And

so in the resurrection of the dead shall it be constituted differently

from its present well-known condition. But as they do not believe

these writings of ours, in which we read what nature man had in

paradise, and how remote he was from the necessity of death,--and

indeed, if they did believe them, we should of course have little

trouble in debating with them the future punishment of the damned,--we

must produce from the writings of their own most learned authorities

some instances to show that it is possible for a thing to become

different from what it was formerly known characteristically to be.

From the book of Marcus Varro, entitled, Of the Race of the Roman

People, I cite word for word the following instance: "There occurred a

remarkable celestial portent; for Castor records that, in the brilliant

star Venus, called Vesperugo by Plautus, and the lovely Hesperus by

Homer, there occurred so strange a prodigy, that it changed its color,

size, form, course, which never happened before nor since. Adrastus of

Cyzicus, and Dion of Naples, famous mathematicians, said that this

occurred in the reign of Ogyges." So great an author as Varro would

certainly not have called this a portent had it not seemed to be

contrary to nature. For we say that all portents are contrary to

nature; but they are not so. For how is that contrary to nature which

happens by the will of God, since the will of so mighty a Creator is

certainly the nature of each created thing? A portent, therefore,

happens not contrary to nature, but contrary to what we know as

nature. But who can number the multitude of portents recorded in

profane histories? Let us then at present fix our attention on this

one only which concerns the matter in hand. What is there so arranged

by the Author of the nature of heaven and earth as the exactly ordered

course of the stars? What is there established by laws so sure and

inflexible? And yet, when it pleased Him who with sovereignty and

supreme power regulates all He has created, a star conspicuous among

the rest by its size and splendor changed its color, size, form, and,

most wonderful of all, the order and law of its course! Certainly that

phenomenon disturbed the canons of the astronomers, if there were any

then, by which they tabulate, as by unerring computation, the past and

future movements of the stars, so as to take upon them to affirm that

this which happened to the morning star (Venus) never happened before

nor since. But we read in the divine books that even the sun itself

stood still when a holy man, Joshua the son of Nun, had begged this

from God until victory should finish the battle he had begun; and that

it even went back, that the promise of fifteen years added to the life

of king Hezekiah might be sealed by this additional prodigy. But these

miracles, which were vouchsafed to the merits of holy men, even when

our adversaries believe them, they attribute to magical arts; so

Virgil, in the lines I quoted above, ascribes to magic the power to

"Turn rivers backward to their source,

And make the stars forget their course."

For in our sacred books we read that this also happened, that a river

"turned backward," was stayed above while the lower part flowed on,

when the people passed over under the above-mentioned leader, Joshua

the son of Nun; and also when Elias the prophet crossed; and

afterwards, when his disciple Elisha passed through it: and we have

just mentioned how, in the case of king Hezekiah the greatest of the

"stars forgot its course." But what happened to Venus, according to

Varro, was not said by him to have happened in answer to any man's

prayer.

Let not the sceptics then benight themselves in this knowledge of the

nature of things, as if divine power cannot bring to pass in an object

anything else than what their own experience has shown them to be in

its nature. Even the very things which are most commonly known as

natural would not be less wonderful nor less effectual to excite

surprise in all who beheld them, if men were not accustomed to admire

nothing but what is rare. For who that thoughtfully observes the

countless multitude of men, and their similarity of nature, can fail to

remark with surprise and admiration the individuality of each man's

appearance, suggesting to us, as it does, that unless men were like one

another, they would not be distinguished from the rest of the animals;

while unless, on the other hand, they were unlike, they could not be

distinguished from one another, so that those whom we declare to be

like, we also find to be unlike? And the unlikeness is the more

wonderful consideration of the two; for a common nature seems rather to

require similarity. And yet, because the very rarity of things is that

which makes them wonderful, we are filled with much greater wonder when

we are introduced to two men so like, that we either always or

frequently mistake in endeavoring to distinguish between them.

But possibly, though Varro is a heathen historian, and a very learned

one, they may disbelieve that what I have cited from him truly

occurred; or they may say the example is invalid, because the star did

not for any length of time continue to follow its new course, but

returned to its ordinary orbit. There is, then, another phenomenon at

present open to their observation, and which, in my opinion, ought to

be sufficient to convince them that, though they have observed and

ascertained some natural law, they ought not on that account to

prescribe to God, as if He could not change and turn it into something

very different from what they have observed. The land of Sodom was not

always as it now is; but once it had the appearance of other lands, and

enjoyed equal if not richer fertility; for, in the divine narrative, it

was compared to the paradise of God. But after it was touched [by

fire] from heaven, as even pagan history testifies, and as is now

witnessed by those who visit the spot, it became unnaturally and

horribly sooty in appearance; and its apples, under a deceitful

appearance of ripeness, contain ashes within. Here is a thing which

was of one kind, and is of another. You see how its nature was

converted by the wonderful transmutation wrought by the Creator of all

natures into so very disgusting a diversity,--an alteration which after

so long a time took place, and after so long a time still continues.

As therefore it was not impossible to God to create such natures as He

pleased, so it is not impossible to Him to change these natures of His

own creation into whatever He pleases, and thus spread abroad a

multitude of those marvels which are called monsters, portents,

prodigies, phenomena, [1503] and which if I were minded to cite and

record, what end would there be to this work? They say that they are

called "monsters," because they demonstrate or signify something;

"portents," because they portend something; and so forth. [1504] But

let their diviners see how they are either deceived, or even when they

do predict true things, it is because they are inspired by spirits, who

are intent upon entangling the minds of men (worthy, indeed, of such a

fate) in the meshes of a hurtful curiosity, or how they light now and

then upon some truth, because they make so many predictions. Yet, for

our part, these things which happen contrary to nature, and are said to

be contrary to nature (as the apostle, speaking after the manner of

men, says, that to graft the wild olive into the good olive, and to

partake of its fatness, is contrary to nature), and are called

monsters, phenomena, portents, prodigies, ought to demonstrate,

portend, predict that God will bring to pass what He has foretold

regarding the bodies of men, no difficulty preventing Him, no law of

nature prescribing to Him His limit. How He has foretold what He is to

do, I think I have sufficiently shown in the preceding book, culling

from the sacred Scriptures, both of the New and Old Testaments, not,

indeed, all the passages that relate to this, but as many as I judged

to suffice for this work.

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[1503] See the same collocation of words in Cic. Nat. deor. ii. 3.

[1504] The etymologies given here by Augustin are, "monstra," a

monstrando; "ostenta," ab ostendendo; "portenta," a portendendo, i.e.

pr�ostendendo; "prodigia," quod porro dicant, i.e. futura pr�dicant.

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Chapter 9.--Of Hell, and the Nature of Eternal Punishments.

So then what God by His prophet has said of the everlasting punishment

of the damned shall come to pass--shall without fail come to

pass,--"their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be

quenched." [1505] In order to impress this upon us most forcibly, the

Lord Jesus Himself, when ordering us to cut off our members, meaning

thereby those persons whom a man loves as the most useful members of

his body, says, "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than

having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be

quenched; where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched."

Similarly of the foot: "It is better for thee to enter halt into life,

than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never

shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not

quenched." So, too, of the eye: "It is better for thee to enter into

the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into

hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

[1506] He did not shrink from using the same words three times over

in one passage. And who is not terrified by this repetition, and by

the threat of that punishment uttered so vehemently by the lips of the

Lord Himself?

Now they who would refer both the fire and the worm to the spirit, and

not to the body, affirm that the wicked, who are separated from the

kindgdom of God, shall be burned, as it were, by the anguish of a

spirit repenting too late and fruitlessly; and they contend that fire

is therefore not inappropriately used to express this burning torment,

as when the apostle exclaims "Who is offended, and I burn not?" [1507]

The worm, too, they think, is to be similarly understood. For it is

written they say, "As the moth consumes the garment, and the worm the

wood, so does grief consume the heart of a man." [1508] But they who

make no doubt that in that future punishment both body and soul shall

suffer, affirm that the body shall be burned with fire, while the soul

shall be, as it were, gnawed by a worm of anguish. Though this view is

more reasonable,--for it is absurd to suppose that either body or soul

will escape pain in the future punishment,--yet, for my own part, I

find it easier to understand both as referring to the body than to

suppose that neither does; and I think that Scripture is silent

regarding the spiritual pain of the damned, because, though not

expressed, it is necessarily understood that in a body thus tormented

the soul also is tortured with a fruitless repentance. For we read in

the ancient Scriptures, "The vengeance of the flesh of the ungodly is

fire and worms." [1509] It might have been more briefly said, "The

vengeance of the ungodly." Why, then, was it said, "The flesh of the

ungodly," unless because both the fire and the worm are to be the

punishment of the flesh? Or if the object of the writer in saying,

"The vengeance of the flesh," was to indicate that this shall be the

punishment of those who live after the flesh (for this leads to the

second death, as the apostle intimated when he said, "For if ye live

after the flesh, ye shall die" [1510] , let each one make his own

choice, either assigning the fire to the body and the worm to the

soul,--the one figuratively, the other really,--or assigning both

really to the body. For I have already sufficiently made out that

animals can live in the fire, in burning without being consumed, in

pain without dying, by a miracle of the most omnipotent Creator, to

whom no one can deny that this is possible, if he be not ignorant by

whom has been made all that is wonderful in all nature. For it is God

Himself who has wrought all these miracles, great and small, in this

world which I have mentioned, and incomparably more which I have

omitted, and who has enclosed these marvels in this world, itself the

greatest miracle of all. Let each man, then, choose which he will,

whether he thinks that the worm is real and pertains to the body, or

that spiritual things are meant by bodily representations, and that it

belongs to the soul. But which of these is true will be more readily

discovered by the facts themselves, when there shall be in the saints

such knowledge as shall not require that their own experience teach

them the nature of these punishments, but as shall, by its own fullness

and perfection, suffice to instruct them in this matter. For "now we

know in part, until that which is perfect is come;" [1511] only, this

we believe about those future bodies, that they shall be such as shall

certainly be pained by the fire.

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[1505] Isa. lxvi. 24.

[1506] Mark ix. 43-48.

[1507] 2 Cor. xi. 29.

[1508] Isa. li. 8.

[1509] Ecclus. vii. 17.

[1510] Rom. viii. 13.

[1511] 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10.

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Chapter 10.--Whether the Fire of Hell, If It Be Material Fire, Can Burn

the Wicked Spirits, that is to Say, Devils, Who are Immaterial.

Here arises the question: If the fire is not to be immaterial,

analogous to the pain of the soul, but material, burning by contact, so

that bodies may be tormented in it, how can evil spirits be punished in

it? For it is undoubtedly the same fire which is to serve for the

punishment of men and of devils, according to the words of Christ:

"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the

devil and his angels;" [1512] unless, perhaps, as learned men have

thought, the devils have a kind of body made of that dense and humid

air which we feel strikes us when the wind is blowing. And if this

kind of substance could not be affected by fire, it could not burn when

heated in the baths. For in order to burn, it is first burned, and

affects other things as itself is affected. But if any one maintains

that the devils have no bodies, this is not a matter either to be

laboriously investigated, or to be debated with keenness. For why may

we not assert that even immaterial spirits may, in some extraordinary

way, yet really be pained by the punishment of material fire, if the

spirits of men, which also are certainly immaterial, are both now

contained in material members of the body, and in the world to come

shall be indissolubly united to their own bodies? Therefore, though

the devils have no bodies, yet their spirits, that is, the devils

themselves, shall be brought into thorough contact with the material

fires, to be tormented by them; not that the fires themselves with

which they are brought into contact shall be animated by their

connection with these spirits, and become animals composed of body and

spirit, but, as I said, this junction will be effected in a wonderful

and ineffable way, so that they shall receive pain from the fires, but

give no life to them. And, in truth, this other mode of union, by

which bodies and spirits are bound together and become animals, is

thoroughly marvellous, and beyond the comprehension of man, though this

it is which is man.

I would indeed say that these spirits will burn without any body of

their own, as that rich man was burning in hell when he exclaimed, "I

am tormented in this flame," [1513] were I not aware that it is aptly

said in reply, that that flame was of the same nature as the eyes he

raised and fixed on Lazarus, as the tongue on which he entreated that a

little cooling water might be dropped, or as the finger of Lazarus,

with which he asked that this might be done,--all of which took place

where souls exist without bodies. Thus, therefore, both that flame in

which he burned and that drop he begged were immaterial, and resembled

the visions of sleepers or persons in an ecstasy, to whom immaterial

objects appear in a bodily form. For the man himself who is in such a

state, though it be in spirit only, not in body, yet sees himself so

like to his own body that he cannot discern any difference whatever.

But that hell, which also is called a lake of fire and brimstone,

[1514] will be material fire, and will torment the bodies of the

damned, whether men or devils,--the solid bodies of the one, aerial

bodies of the others; or if only men have bodies as well as souls, yet

the evil spirits, though without bodies, shall be so connected with the

bodily fires as to receive pain without imparting life. One fire

certainly shall be the lot of both, for thus the truth has declared.

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[1512] Matt. xxv. 41.

[1513] Luke xvi. 24.

[1514] Rev. xx. 10.

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Chapter 11.--Whether It is Just that the Punishments of Sins Last

Longer Than the Sins Themselves Lasted.

Some, however, of those against whom we are defending the city of God,

think it unjust that any man be doomed to an eternal punishment for

sins which, no matter how great they were, were perpetrated in a brief

space of time; as if any law ever regulated the duration of the

punishment by the duration of the offence punished! Cicero tells us

that the laws recognize eight kinds of penalty,--damages, imprisonment,

scourging, reparation, [1515] disgrace, exile, death, slavery. Is

there any one of these which may be compressed into a brevity

proportioned to the rapid commission of the offence, so that no longer

time may be spent in its punishment than in its perpetration, unless,

perhaps, reparation? For this requires that the offender suffer what

he did, as that clause of the law says, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth."

[1516] For certainly it is possible for an offender to lose his eye

by the severity of legal retaliation in as brief a time as he deprived

another of his eye by the cruelty of his own lawlessness. But if

scourging be a reasonable penalty for kissing another man's wife, is

not the fault of an instant visited with long hours of atonement, and

the momentary delight punished with lasting pain? What shall we say of

imprisonment? Must the criminal be confined only for so long a time as

he spent on the offence for which he is committed? or is not a penalty

of many years' confinement imposed on the slave who has provoked his

master with a word, or has struck him a blow that is quickly over? And

as to damages, disgrace, exile, slavery, which are commonly inflicted

so as to admit of no relaxation or pardon, do not these resemble

eternal punishments in so far as this short life allows a resemblance?

For they are not eternal only because the life in which they are

endured is not eternal; and yet the crimes which are punished with

these most protracted sufferings are perpetrated in a very brief space

of time. Nor is there any one who would suppose that the pains of

punishment should occupy as short a time as the offense; or that

murder, adultery, sacrilege, or any other crime, should be measured,

not by the enor mity of the injury or wickedness, but by the length of

time spent in its perpetration. Then as to the award of death for any

great crime, do the laws reckon the punishment to consist in the brief

moment in which death is inflicted, or in this, that the offender is

eternally banished from the society of the living? And just as the

punishment of the first death cuts men off from this present mortal

city, so does the punishment of the second death cut men off from that

future immortal city. For as the laws of this present city do not

provide for the executed criminal's return to it, so neither is he who

is condemned to the second death recalled again to life everlasting.

But if temporal sin is visited with eternal punishment, how, then, they

say, is that true which your Christ says, "With the same measure that

ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again?" [1517] and they do

not observe that "the same measure" refers, not to an equal space of

time, but to the retribution of evil or, in other words, to the law by

which he who has done evil suffers evil. Besides, these words could be

appropriately understood as referring to the matter of which our Lord

was speaking when He used them, viz., judgments and condemnation.

Thus, if he who unjustly judges and condemns is himself justly judged

and condemned, he receives "with the same measure" though not the same

thing as he gave. For judgment he gave, and judgment he receives,

though the judgment he gave was unjust, the judgment he receives just.

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[1515] "Talio," i.e. the rendering of like for like, the punishment

being exactly similar to the injury sustained.

[1516] Ex. xxi. 24.

[1517] Luke vi. 38.

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Chapter 12.--Of the Greatness of the First Transgression, on Account of

Which Eternal Punishment is Due to All Who are Not Within the Pale of

the Saviour's Grace.

But eternal punishment seems hard and unjust to human perceptions,

because in the weakness of our mortal condition there is wanting that

highest and purest wisdom by which it can be perceived how great a

wickedness was committed in that first transgression. The more

enjoyment man found in God, the greater was his wickedness in

abandoning Him; and he who destroyed in himself a good which might have

been eternal, became worthy of eternal evil. Hence the whole mass of

the human race is condemned; for he who at first gave entrance to sin

has been punished with all his posterity who were in him as in a root,

so that no one is exempt from this just and due punishment, unless

delivered by mercy and undeserved grace; and the human race is so

apportioned that in some is displayed the efficacy of merciful grace,

in the rest the efficacy of just retribution. For both could not be

displayed in all; for if all had remained [1518] under the punishment

of just condemnation, there would have been seen in no one the mercy of

redeeming grace. And, on the other hand, if all had been transferred

from darkness to light, the severity of retribution would have been

manifested in none. But many more are left under punishment than are

delivered from it, in order that it may thus be shown what was due to

all. And had it been inflicted on all, no one could justly have found

fault with the justice of Him who taketh vengeance; whereas, in the

deliverance of so many from that just award, there is cause to render

the most cordial thanks to the gratuitous bounty of Him who delivers.

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[1518] Remanerent. But Augustin constantly uses the imp. for the plup.

subjunctive.

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Chapter 13.--Against the Opinion of Those Who Think that the

Punishments of the Wicked After Death are Purgatorial.

The Platonists, indeed, while they maintain that no sins are

unpunished, suppose that all punishment is administered for remedial

purposes, [1519] be it inflicted by human or divine law, in this life

or after death; for a man may be scathless here, or, though punished,

may yet not amend. Hence that passage of Virgil, where, when he had

said of our earthly bodies and mortal members, that our souls derive--

"Hence wild desires and grovelling fears,

And human laughter, human tears;

Immured in dungeon-seeming night,

They look abroad, yet see no light,"

goes on to say:

"Nay, when at last the life has fled,

And left the body cold and dead,

Ee'n then there passes not away

The painful heritage of clay;

Full many a long-contracted stain

Perforce must linger deep in grain.

So penal sufferings they endure

For ancient crime, to make them pure;

Some hang aloft in open view,

For winds to pierce them through and through,

While others purge their guilt deep-dyed

In burning fire or whelming tide." [1520]

They who are of this opinion would have all punishments after death to

be purgatorial; and as the elements of air, fire, and water are

superior to earth, one or other of these may be the instrument of

expiating and purging away the stain contracted by the contagion of

earth. So Virgil hints at the air in the words, "Some hang aloft for

winds to pierce;" at the water in "whelming tide;" and at fire in the

expression "in burning fire." For our part, we recognize that even in

this life some punishments are purgatorial,--not, indeed, to those

whose life is none the better, but rather the worse for them, but to

those who are constrained by them to amend their life. All other

punishments, whether temporal or eternal, inflicted as they are on

every one by divine providence, are sent either on account of past

sins, or of sins presently allowed in the life, or to exercise and

reveal a man's graces. They may be inflicted by the instrumentality of

bad men and angels as well as of the good. For even if any one suffers

some hurt through another's wickedness or mistake, the man indeed sins

whose ignorance or injustice does the harm; but God, who by His just

though hidden judgment permits it to be done, sins not. But temporary

punishments are suffered by some in this life only, by others after

death, by others both now and then; but all of them before that last

and strictest judgment. But of those who suffer temporary punishments

after death, all are not doomed to those everlasting pains which are to

follow that judgment; for to some, as we have already said, what is not

remitted in this world is remitted in the next, that is, they are not

punished with the eternal punishment of the world to come.

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[1519] Plato's own theory was that punishment had a twofold purpose, to

reform and to deter. "No one punishes an offender on account of the

past offense, and simply because he has done wrong, but for the sake of

the future, that the offense may not be again committed, either by the

same person or by any one who has seen him punished."--See the

Protagoras, 324, b, and Grote's Plato, ii. 41.

[1520] �neid, vi. 733.

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Chapter 14.--Of the Temporary Punishments of This Life to Which the

Human Condition is Subject.

Quite exceptional are those who are not punished in this life, but only

afterwards. Yet that there have been some who have reached the

decrepitude of age without experiencing even the slightest sickness,

and who have had uninterrupted enjoyment of life, I know both from

report and from my own observation. However, the very life we mortals

lead is itself all punishment, for it is all temptation, as the

Scriptures declare, where it is written, "Is not the life of man upon

earth a temptation?" [1521] For ignorance is itself no slight

punishment, or want of culture, which it is with justice thought so

necessary to escape, that boys are compelled, under pain of severe

punishment, to learn trades or letters; and the learning to which they

are driven by punishment is itself so much of a punishment to them,

that they sometimes prefer the pain that drives them to the pain to

which they are driven by it. And who would not shrink from the

alternative, and elect to die, if it were proposed to him either to

suffer death or to be again an infant? Our infancy, indeed,

introducing us to this life not with laughter but with tears, seems

unconsciously to predict the ills we are to encounter. [1522]

Zoroaster alone is said to have laughed when he was born, and that

unnatural omen portended no good to him. For he is said to have been

the inventor of magical arts, though indeed they were unable to secure

to him even the poor felicity of this present life against the assaults

of his enemies. For, himself king of the Bactrians, he was conquered

by Ninus king of the Assyrians. In short, the words of Scripture, "An

heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, from the day that they go out of

their mother's womb till the day that they return to the mother of all

things," [1523] --these words so infallibly find fulfillment, that even

the little ones, who by the layer of regeneration have been freed from

the bond of original sin in which alone they were held, yet suffer many

ills, and in some instances are even exposed to the assaults of evil

spirits. But let us not for a moment suppose that this suffering is

prejudicial to their future happiness, even though it has so increased

as to sever soul from body, and to terminate their life in that early

age.

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[1521] Job vii. 1.

[1522] Compare Goldsmith's saying, "We begin life in tears, and every

day tells us why."

[1523] Ecclus. xl. 1.

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Chapter 15.--That Everything Which the Grace of God Does in the Way of

Rescuing Us from the Inveterate Evils in Which We are Sunk, Pertains to

the Future World, in Which All Things are Made New.

Nevertheless, in the "heavy yoke that is laid upon the sons of Adam,

from the day that they go out of their mother's womb to the day that

they return to the mother of all things," there is found an admirable

though painful monitor teaching us to be sober-minded, and convincing

us that this life has become penal in consequence of that outrageous

wickedness which was perpetrated in Paradise, and that all to which the

New Testament invites belongs to that future inheritance which awaits

us in the world to come, and is offered for our acceptance, as the

earnest that we may, in its own due time, obtain that of which it is

the pledge. Now, therefore, let us walk in hope, and let us by the

spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh, and so make progress from day to

day. For "the Lord know eth them that are His;" [1524] and "as many as

are led by the Spirit of God, they are sons of God," [1525] but by

grace, not by nature. For there is but one Son of God by nature, who

in His compassion became Son of man for our sakes, that we, by nature

sons of men, might by grace become through Him sons of God. For He,

abiding unchangeable, took upon Him our nature, that thereby He might

take us to Himself; and, holding fast His own divinity, He became

partaker of our infirmity, that we, being changed into some better

thing, might, by participating in His righteousness and immortality,

lose our own properties of sin and mortality, and preserve whatever

good quality He had implanted in our nature perfected now by sharing in

the goodness of His nature. For as by the sin of one man we have

fallen into a misery so deplorable, so by the righteousness of one Man,

who also is God, shall we come to a blessedness inconceivably exalted.

Nor ought any one to trust that he has passed from the one man to the

other until he shall have reached that place where there is no

temptation, and have entered into the peace which he seeks in the many

and various conflicts of this war, in which "the flesh lusteth against

the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." [1526] Now, such a war

as this would have had no existence if human nature had, in the

exercise of free will, continued steadfast in the uprightness in which

it was created. But now in its misery it makes war upon itself,

because in its blessedness it would not continue at peace with God; and

this, though it be a miserable calamity, is better than the earlier

stages of this life, which do not recognize that a war is to be

maintained. For better is it to contend with vices than without

conflict to be subdued by them. Better, I say, is war with the hope of

peace everlasting than captivity without any thought of deliverance.

We long, indeed, for the cessation of this war, and, kindled by the

flame of divine love, we burn for entrance on that well-ordered peace

in which whatever is inferior is for ever subordinated to what is above

it. But if (which God forbid) there had been no hope of so blessed a

consummation, we should still have preferred to endure the hardness of

this conflict, rather than, by our non-resistance, to yield ourselves

to the dominion of vice.

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[1524] 2 Tim. ii. 19.

[1525] Rom. viii. 14.

[1526] Gal. v. 17.

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Chapter 16.--The Laws of Grace, Which Extend to All the Epochs of the

Life of the Regenerate.

But such is God's mercy towards the vessels of mercy which He has

prepared for glory, that even the first age of man, that is, infancy,

which submits without any resistance to the flesh, and the second age,

which is called boyhood, and which has not yet understanding enough to

undertake this warfare, and therefore yields to almost every vicious

pleasure (because though this age has the power of speech, [1527] and

may therefore seem to have passed infancy, the mind is still too weak

to comprehend the commandment), yet if either of these ages has

received the sacraments of the Mediator, then, although the present

life be immediately brought to an end, the child, having been

translated from the power of darkness to the kingdom of Christ, shall

not only be saved from eternal punishments, but shall not even suffer

purgatorial torments after death. For spiritual regeneration of itself

suffices to prevent any evil consequences resulting after death from

the connection with death which carnal generation forms. [1528] But

when we reach that age which can now comprehend the commandment, and

submit to the dominion of law, we must declare war upon vices, and wage

this war keenly, lest we be landed in damnable sins. And if vices have

not gathered strength, by habitual victory they are more easily

overcome and subdued; but if they have been used to conquer and rule,

it is only with difficulty and labor they are mastered. And indeed

this victory cannot be sincerely and truly gained but by delighting in

true righteousness, and it is faith in Christ that gives this. For if

the law be present with its command, and the Spirit be absent with His

help, the presence of the prohibition serves only to increase the

desire to sin, and adds the guilt of transgression. Sometimes, indeed,

patent vices are overcome by other and hidden vices, which are reckoned

virtues, though pride and a kind of ruinous self-sufficiency are their

informing principles. Accordingly vices are then only to be considered

overcome when they are conquered by the love of God, which God Himself

alone gives, and which He gives only through the Mediator between God

and men, the man Christ Jesus, who became a partaker of our mortality

that He might make us partakers of His divinity. But few indeed are

they who are so happy as to have passed their youth without committing

any damnable sins, either by dissolute or violent conduct, or by

following some godless and unlawful opinions, but have subdued by their

greatness of soul everything in them which could make them the slaves

of carnal pleasures. The greater number having first become

transgressors of the law that they have received, and having allowed

vice to have the ascendency in them, then flee to grace for help, and

so, by a penitence more bitter, and a struggle more violent than it

would otherwise have been, they subdue the soul to God, and thus give

it its lawful authority over the flesh, and become victors. Whoever,

therefore, desires to escape eternal punishment, let him not only be

baptized, but also justified in Christ, and so let him in truth pass

from the devil to Christ. And let him not fancy that there are any

purgatorial pains except before that final and dreadful judgment. We

must not, however deny that even the eternal fire will be proportioned

to the deserts of the wicked, so that to some it will be more, and to

others less painful, whether this result be accomplished by a variation

in the temperature of the fire itself, graduated according to every

one's merit, or whether it be that the heat remains the same, but that

all do not feel it with equal intensity of torment.

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[1527] "Fari."

[1528] See Aug. Ep. 98, ad Bonifacium.

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Chapter 17.--Of Those Who Fancy that No Men Shall Be Punished

Eternally.

I must now, I see, enter the lists of amicable controversy with those

tender-hearted Christians who decline to believe that any, or that all

of those whom the infallibly just Judge may pronounce worthy of the

punishment of hell, shall suffer eternally, and who suppose that they

shall be delivered after a fixed term of punishment, longer or shorter

according to the amount of each man's sin. In respect of this matter,

Origen was even more indulgent; for he believed that even the devil

himself and his angels, after suffering those more severe and prolonged

pains which their sins deserved, should be delivered from their

torments, and associated with the holy angels. But the Church, not

without reason, condemned him for this and other errors, especially for

his theory of the ceaseless alternation of happiness and misery, and

the interminable transitions from the one state to the other at fixed

periods of ages; for in this theory he lost even the credit of being

merciful, by allotting to the saints real miseries for the expiation of

their sins, and false happiness, which brought them no true and secure

joy, that is, no fearless assurance of eternal blessedness. Very

different, however, is the error we speak of, which is dictated by the

tenderness of these Christians who suppose that the sufferings of those

who are condemned in the judgment will be temporary, while the

blessedness of all who are sooner or later set free will be eternal.

Which opinion, if it is good and true because it is merciful, will be

so much the better and truer in proportion as it becomes more

merciful. Let, then, this fountain of mercy be extended, and flow

forth even to the lost angels, and let them also be set free, at least

after as many and long ages as seem fit! Why does this stream of mercy

flow to all the human race, and dry up as soon as it reaches the

angelic? And yet they dare not extend their pity further, and propose

the deliverance of the devil himself. Or if any one is bold enough to

do so, he does indeed put to shame their charity, but is himself

convicted of error that is more unsightly, and a wresting of God's

truth that is more perverse, in proportion as his clemency of sentiment

seems to be greater. [1529]

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[1529] On the heresy of Origen, see Epiphanius (Epistola ad Joannem

Hierosol.); Jerome (Epistola 61, ad Pammachium); and Augustin (De

H�res, 43). Origen's opinion was condemned by Anastasius (Jerome,

Apologia adv. Ruffinum and Epistola 78, ad Pammachium), and after

Augustin's death by Vigilius and Emperor Justinian, in the Fifth

(OEcumenical Council, Nicephorus Callistus, xvii. 27, and the Acts of

the Council, iv. 11).--Coqu�us.

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Chapter 18.--Of Those Who Fancy That, on Account of the Saints'

Intercession, Man Shall Be Damned in the Last Judgment.

There are others, again, with whose opinions I have become acquainted

in conversation, who, though they seem to reverence the holy

Scriptures, are yet of reprehensible life, and who accordingly, in

their own interest, attribute to God a still greater compassion towards

men. For they acknowledge that it is truly predicted in the divine

word that the wicked and unbelieving are worthy of punishment, but they

assert that, when the judgment comes, mercy will prevail. For, say

they, God, having compassion on them, will give them up to the prayers

and intercessions of His saints. For if the saints used to pray for

them when they suffered from their cruel hatred, how much more will

they do so when they see them prostrate and humble suppliants? For we

cannot, they say, believe that the saints shall lose their bowels of

compassion when they have attained the most perfect and complete

holiness; so that they who, when still sinners, prayed for their

enemies, should now, when they are freed from sin, withhold from

interceding for their suppliants. Or shall God refuse to listen to so

many of His beloved children, when their holiness has purged their

prayers of all hindrance to His answering them? And the passage of the

psalm which is cited by those who admit that wicked men and infidels

shall be punished for a long time, though in the end delivered from all

sufferings, is claimed also by the persons we are now speaking of as

making much more for them. The verse runs: "Shall God forget to be

gracious? Shall He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" [1530] His

anger, they say, would condemn all that are unworthy of everlasting

happiness to endless punishment. But if He suffer them to be punished

for a long time, or even at all, must He not shut up His tender

mercies, which the Psalmist implies He will not do? For he does not

say, Shall He in anger shut up His tender mercies for a long period?

but he implies that He will not shut them up at all.

And they deny that thus God's threat of judgment is proved to be false

even though He condemn no man, any more than we can say that His threat

to overthrow Nineveh was false, though the destruction which was

absolutely predicted was not accomplished. For He did not say,

"Nineveh shall be overthrown if they do not repent and amend their

ways," but without any such condition He foretold that the city should

be overthrown. And this prediction, they maintain, was true because

God predicted the punishment which they deserved, although He was not

to inflict it. For though He spared them on their repentance yet He

was certainly aware that they would repent, and, notwithstanding,

absolutely and definitely predicted that the city should be

overthrown. This was true, they say, in the truth of severity, because

they were worthy of it; but in respect of the compassion which checked

His anger, so that He spared the suppliants from the punishment with

which He had threatened the rebellious, it was not true. If, then, He

spared those whom His own holy prophet was provoked at His sparing, how

much more shall He spare those more wretched suppliants for whom all

His saints shall intercede? And they suppose that this conjecture of

theirs is not hinted at in Scripture, for the sake of stimulating many

to reformation of life through fear of very protracted or eternal

sufferings, and of stimulating others to pray for those who have not

reformed. However, they think that the divine oracles are not

altogether silent on this point; for they ask to what purpose is it

said, "How great is Thy goodness which Thou hast hidden for them that

fear Thee," [1531] if it be not to teach us that the great and hidden

sweetness of God's mercy is concealed in order that men may fear? To

the same purpose they think the apostle said, "For God hath concluded

all men in unbelief, that He may have mercy upon all," [1532]

signifying that no one should be condemned by God. And yet they who

hold this opinion do not extend it to the acquittal or liberation of

the devil and his angels. Their human tenderness is moved only towards

men, and they plead chiefly their own cause, holding out false hopes of

impunity to their own depraved lives by means of this quasi compassion

of God to the whole race. Consequently they who promise this impunity

even to the prince of the devils and his satellites make a still fuller

exhibition of the mercy of God.

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[1530] Ps. lxxvii. 9.

[1531] Ps. xxxi. 19.

[1532] Rom. xi. 32.

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Chapter 19.--Of Those Who Promise Impunity from All Sins Even to

Heretics, Through Virtue of Their Participation of the Body of Christ.

So, too, there are others who promise this deliverance from eternal

punishment, not, indeed, to all men, but only to those who have been

washed in Christian baptism, and who become partakers of the body of

Christ, no matter how they have lived, or what heresy or impiety they

have fallen into. They ground this opinion on the saying of Jesus,

"This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat

thereof, he shall not die. I am the living bread which came down from

heaven. If a man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." [1533]

Therefore, say they, it follows that these persons must be delivered

from death eternal, and at one time or other be introduced to

everlasting life.

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[1533] John vi. 50, 51.

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Chapter 20.--Of Those Who Promise This Indulgence Not to All, But Only

to Those Who Have Been Baptized as Catholics, Though Afterwards They

Have Broken Out into Many Crimes and Heresies.

There are others still who make this promise not even to all who have

received the sacraments of the baptism of Christ and of His body, but

only to the catholics, however badly they have lived. For these have

eaten the body of Christ, not only sacramentally but really, being

incorporated in His body, as the apostle says, "We, being many, are one

bread, one body;" [1534] so that, though they have afterwards lapsed

into some heresy, or even into heathenism and idolatry, yet by virtue

of this one thing, that they have received the baptism of Christ, and

eaten the body of Christ, in the body of Christ, that is to say, in the

catholic Church, they shall not die eternally, but at one time or other

obtain eternal life; and all that wickedness of theirs shall not avail

to make their punishment eternal, but only proportionately long and

severe.

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[1534] 1 Cor. x. 17.

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Chapter 21.--Of Those Who Assert that All Catholics Who Continue in the

Faith Even Though by the Depravity of Their Lives They Have Merited

Hell Fire, Shall Be Saved on Account of the "Foundation" Of Their

Faith.

There are some, too, who found upon the expression of Scripture, "He

that endureth to the end shall be saved," [1535] and who promise

salvation only to those who continue in the Church catholic; and though

such persons have lived badly, yet, say they, they shall be saved as by

fire through virtue of the foundation of which the apostle says, "For

other foundation hath no man laid than that which is laid, which is

Christ Jesus. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver,

precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made

manifest: for the day of the Lord shall declare it, for it shall be

revealed by fire; and each man's work shall be proved of what sort it

is. If any man's work shall endure which he hath built thereupon, he

shall receive a reward. But if any man's work shall be burned, he

shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through

fire." [1536] They say, accordingly, that the catholic Christian, no

matter what his life be, has Christ as his foundation, while this

foundation is not possessed by any heresy which is separated from the

unity of His body. And therefore, through virtue of this foundation,

even though the catholic Christian by the inconsistency of his life has

been as one building up wood, hay, stubble, upon it, they believe that

he shall be saved by fire, in other words, that he shall be delivered

after tasting the pain of that fire to which the wicked shall be

condemned at the last judgment.

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[1535] Matt. xxiv. 13.

[1536] 1 Cor. iii. 11-15.

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Chapter 22.--Of Those Who Fancy that the Sins Which are Intermingled

with Alms-Deeds Shall Not Be Charged at the Day of Judgment.

I have also met with some who are of opinion that such only as neglect

to cover their sins with alms-deeds shall be punished in everlasting

fire; and they cite the words of the Apostle James, "He shall have

judgment without mercy who hath shown no mercy." [1537] Therefore,

say they, he who has not amended his ways, but yet has intermingled his

profligate and wicked actions with works of mercy, shall receive mercy

in the judgment, so that he shall either quite escape condemnation, or

shall be liberated from his doom after some time shorter or longer.

They suppose that this was the reason why the Judge Himself of quick

and dead declined to mention anything else than works of mercy done or

omitted, when awarding to those on His right hand life eternal, and to

those on His left everlasting punishment. [1538] To the same purpose,

they say, is the daily petition we make in the Lord's prayer, "Forgive

us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." [1539] For, no doubt,

whoever pardons the person who has wronged him does a charitable

action. And this has been so highly commended by the Lord Himself,

that He says, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly

Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their

trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." [1540]

And so it is to this kind of alms-deeds that the saying of the Apostle

James refers, "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath shown no

mercy." And our Lord, they say, made no distinction of great and small

sins, but "Your Father will forgive your sins, if ye forgive men

theirs." Consequently they conclude that, though a man has led an

abandoned life up to the last day of it, yet whatsoever his sins have

been, they are all remitted by virtue of this daily prayer, if only he

has been mindful to attend to this one thing, that when they who have

done him any injury ask his pardon, he forgive them from his heart.

When, by God's help, I have replied to all these errors, I shall

conclude this (twenty-first) book.

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[1537] Jas. ii. 13.

[1538] Matt. xxv. 33.

[1539] Matt. vi. 12.

[1540] Matt. vi. 14, 15.

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Chapter 23.--Against Those Who are of Opinion that the Punishment

Neither of the Devil Nor of Wicked Men Shall Be Eternal.

First of all, it behoves us to inquire and to recognize why the Church

has not been able to tolerate the idea that promises cleansing or

indulgence to the devil even after the most severe and protracted

punishment. For so many holy men, imbued with the spirit of the Old

and New Testament, did not grudge to angels of any rank or character

that they should enjoy the blessedness of the heavenly kingdom after

being cleansed by suffering, but rather they perceived that they could

not invalidate nor evacuate the divine sentence which the Lord

predicted that He would pronounce in the judgment, saying, "Depart from

me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his

angels." [1541] For here it is evident that the devil and his angels

shall burn in everlasting fire. And there is also that declaration in

the Apocalypse, "The devil their deceiver was cast into the lake of

fire and brimstone, where also are the beast and the false prophet.

And they shall be tormented day and night for ever." [1542] In the

former passage "everlasting" is used, in the latter "for ever;" and by

these words Scripture is wont to mean nothing else than endless

duration. And therefore no other reason, no reason more obvious and

just, can be found for holding it as the fixed and immovable belief of

the truest piety, that the devil and his angels shall never return to

the justice and life of the saints, than that Scripture, which deceives

no man, says that God spared them not, and that they were condemned

beforehand by Him, and cast into prisons of darkness in hell, [1543]

being reserved to the judgment of the last day, when eternal fire shall

receive them, in which they shall be tormented world without end. And

if this be so, how can it be believed that all men, or even some, shall

be withdrawn from the endurance of punishment after some time has been

spent in it? how can this be believed without enervating our faith in

the eternal punishment of the devils? For if all or some of those to

whom it shall be said, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting

fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," [1544] are not to be

always in that fire, then what reason is there for believing that the

devil and his angels shall always be there? Or is perhaps the sentence

of God, which is to be pronounced on wicked men and angels alike, to be

true in the case of the angels, false in that of men? Plainly it will

be so if the conjectures of men are to weigh more than the word of

God. But because this is absurd, they who desire to be rid of eternal

punishment ought to abstain from arguing against God, and rather, while

yet there is opportunity, obey the divine commands. Then what a fond

fancy is it to suppose that eternal punishment means long continued

punishment, while eternal life means life without end, since Christ in

the very same passage spoke of both in similar terms in one and the

same sentence, "These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the

righteous into life eternal!" [1545] If both destinies are "eternal,"

then we must either understand both as long-continued but at last

terminating, or both as endless. For they are correlative,--on the one

hand, punishment eternal, on the other hand, life eternal. And to say

in one and the same sense, life eternal shall be endless, punishment

eternal shall come to an end, is the height of absurdity. Wherefore,

as the eternal life of the saints shall be endless, so too the eternal

punishment of those who are doomed to it shall have no end.

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[1541] Matt. xxv. 41.

[1542] Rev. xx. 10.

[1543] 2 Pet. ii. 4.

[1544] Matt. xxv. 41.

[1545] Matt. xxv. 46.

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Chapter 24.--Against Those Who Fancy that in the Judgment of God All

the Accused Will Be Spared in Virtue of the Prayers of the Saints.

And this reasoning is equally conclusive against those who, in their

own interest, but under the guise of a greater tenderness of spirit,

attempt to invalidate the words of God, and who assert that these words

are true, not because men shall suffer those things which are

threatened by God, but because they deserve to suffer them. For God,

they say, will yield them to the prayers of His saints, who will then

the more earnestly pray for their enemies, as they shall be more

perfect in holiness, and whose prayers will be the more efficacious and

the more worthy of God's ear, because now purged from all sin

whatsoever. Why, then, if in that perfected holiness their prayers be

so pure and all-availing, will they not use them in behalf of the

angels for whom eternal fire is prepared, that God may mitigate His

sentence and alter it, and extricate them from that fire? Or will

there, perhaps, be some one hardy enough to affirm that even the holy

angels will make common cause with holy men (then become the equals of

God's angels), and will intercede for the guilty, both men and angels,

that mercy may spare them the punishment which truth has pronounced

them to deserve? But this has been asserted by no one sound in the

faith; nor will be. Otherwise there is no reason why the Church should

not even now pray for the devil and his angels, since God her Master

has ordered her to pray for her enemies. The reason, then, which

prevents the Church from now praying for the wicked angels, whom she

knows to be her enemies, is the identical reason which shall prevent

her, however perfected in holiness, from praying at the last judgment

for those men who are to be punished in eternal fire. At present she

prays for her enemies among men, because they have yet opportunity for

fruitful repentance. For what does she especially beg for them but

that "God would grant them repentance," as the apostle says, "that they

may return to soberness out of the snare of the devil, by whom they are

held captive according to his will?" [1546] But if the Church were

certified who those are, who, though they are still abiding in this

life, are yet predestinated to go with the devil into eternal fire,

then for them she could no more pray than for him. But since she has

this certainty regarding no man, she prays for all her enemies who yet

live in this world; and yet she is not heard in behalf of all. But she

is heard in the case of those only who, though they oppose the Church,

are yet predestinated to become her sons through her intercession. But

if any retain an impenitent heart until death, and are not converted

from enemies into sons, does the Church continue to pray for them, for

the spirits, i.e., of such persons deceased? And why does she cease to

pray for them, unless because the man who was not translated into

Christ's kingdom while he was in the body, is now judged to be of

Satan's following?

It is then, I say, the same reason which prevents the Church at any

time from praying for the wicked angels, which prevents her from

praying hereafter for those men who are to be punished in eternal fire;

and this also is the reason why, though she prays even for the wicked

so long as they live, she yet does not even in this world pray for the

unbelieving and godless who are dead. For some of the dead, indeed,

the prayer of the Church or of pious individuals is heard; but it is

for those who, having been regenerated in Christ, did not spend their

life so wickedly that they can be judged unworthy of such compassion,

nor so well that they can be considered to have no need of it. [1547]

As also, after the resurrection, there will be some of the dead to

whom, after they have endured the pains proper to the spirits of the

dead, mercy shall be accorded, and acquittal from the punishment of the

eternal fire. For were there not some whose sins, though not remitted

in this life, shall be remitted in that which is to come, it could not

be truly said, "They shall not be forgiven, neither in this world,

neither in that which is to come." [1548] But when the Judge of quick

and dead has said, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom

prepared for you from the foundation of the world," and to those on the

other side, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire, which is

prepared for the devil and his angels," and "These shall go away into

eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life," [1549] it

were excessively presumptuous to say that the punishment of any of

those whom God has said shall go away into eternal punishment shall not

be eternal, and so bring either despair or doubt upon the corresponding

promise of life eternal.

Let no man then so understand the words of the Psalmist, "Shall God

forget to be gracious? shall He shut up in His anger His tender

mercies" [1550] as if the sentence of God were true of good men, false

of bad men, or true of good men and wicked angels, but false of bad

men. For the Psalmist's words refer to the vessels of mercy and the

children of the promise, of whom the prophet himself was one; for when

he had said, "Shall God forget to be gracious? shall He shut up in His

anger His tender mercies?" and then immediately subjoins, "And I said,

Now I begin: this is the change wrought by the right hand of the Most

High," [1551] he manifestly explained what he meant by the words,

"Shall he shut up in His anger His tender mercies?" For God's anger is

this mortal life, in which man is made like to vanity, and his days

pass as a shadow. [1552] Yet in this anger God does not forget to be

gracious, causing His sun to shine and His rain to descend on the just

and the unjust; [1553] and thus He does not in His anger cut short His

tender mercies, and especially in what the Psalmist speaks of in the

words, "Now I begin: this change is from the right hand of the Most

High;" for He changes for the better the vessels of mercy, even while

they are still in this most wretched life, which is God's anger, and

even while His anger is manifesting itself in this miserable

corruption; for "in His anger He does not shut up His tender mercies."

And since the truth of this divine canticle is quite satisfied by this

application of it, there is no need to give it a reference to that

place in which those who do not belong to the city of God are punished

in eternal fire. But if any persist in extending its application to

the torments of the wicked, let them at least understand it so that the

anger of God, which has threatened the wicked with eternal punishment,

shall abide, but shall be mixed with mercy to the extent of alleviating

the torments which might justly be inflicted; so that the wicked shall

neither wholly escape, nor only for a time endure these threatened

pains, but that they shall be less severe and more endurable than they

deserve. Thus the anger of God shall continue, and at the same time He

will not in this anger shut up His tender mercies. But even this

hypothesis I am not to be supposed to affirm because I do not

positively oppose it. [1554]

As for those who find an empty threat rather than a truth in such

passages as these: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;"

and "These shall go away into eternal punishment;" [1555] and "They

shall be tormented for ever and ever;" [1556] and "Their worm shall not

die, and their fire shall not be quenched," [1557] --such persons, I

say, are most emphatically and abundantly refuted, not by me so much as

by the divine Scripture itself. For the men of Nineveh repented in

this life, and therefore their repentance was fruitful, inasmuch as

they sowed in that field which the Lord meant to be sown in tears that

it might afterwards be reaped in joy. And yet who will deny that God's

prediction was fulfilled in their case, if at least he observes that

God destroys sinners not only in anger but also in compassion? For

sinners are destroyed in two ways,--either, like the Sodomites, the men

themselves are punished for their sins, or, like the Ninevites, the

men's sins are destroyed by repentance. God's prediction, therefore,

was fulfilled,--the wicked Nineveh was overthrown, and a good Nineveh

built up. For its walls and houses remained standing; the city was

overthrown in its depraved manners. And thus, though the prophet was

provoked that the destruction which the inhabitants dreaded, because of

his prediction, did not take place, yet that which God's foreknowledge

had predicted did take place, for He who foretold the destruction knew

how it should be fulfilled in a less calamitous sense.

But that these perversely compassionate persons may see what is the

purport of these words, "How great is the abundance of Thy sweetness,

Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee," [1558] let them

read what follows: "And Thou hast perfected it for them that hope in

Thee." For what means, "Thou hast hidden it for them that fear Thee,"

"Thou hast perfected it for them that hope in Thee," unless this, that

to those who through fear of punishment seek to establish their own

righteousness by the law, the righteousness of God is not sweet,

because they are ignorant of it? They have not tasted it. For they

hope in themselves, not in Him; and therefore God's abundant sweetness

is hidden from them. They fear God, indeed, but it is with that

servile fear "which is not in love; for perfect love casteth out fear."

[1559] Therefore to them that hope in Him He perfecteth His

sweetness, inspiring them with His own love, so that with a holy fear,

which love does not cast out, but which endureth for ever, they may,

when they glory, glory in the Lord. For the righteousness of God is

Christ, "who is of God made unto us," as the apostle says, "wisdom, and

righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: as it is written,

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." [1560] This

righteousness of God, which is the gift of grace without merits, is not

known by those who go about to establish their own righteousness, and

are therefore not subject to the righteousness of God, which is Christ.

[1561] But it is in this righteousness that we find the great

abundance of God's sweetness, of which the psalm says, "Taste and see

how sweet the Lord is." [1562] And this we rather taste than partake

of to satiety in this our pilgrimage. We hunger and thirst for it now,

that hereafter we may be satisfied with it when we see Him as He is,

and that is fulfilled which is written, "I shall be satisfied when Thy

glory shall be manifested." [1563] It is thus that Christ perfects

the great abundance of His sweetness to them that hope in Him. But if

God conceals His sweetness from them that fear Him in the sense that

these our objectors fancy, so that men's ignorance of His purpose of

mercy towards the wicked may lead them to fear Him and live better, and

so that there may be prayer made for those who are not living as they

ought, how then does He perfect His sweetness to them that hope in Him,

since, if their dreams be true, it is this very sweetness which will

prevent Him from punishing those who do not hope in Him? Let us then

seek that sweetness of His, which He perfects to them that hope in Him,

not that which He is supposed to perfect to those who despise and

blaspheme Him; for in vain, after this life, does a man seek for what

he has neglected to provide while in this life.

Then, as to that saying of the apostle, "For God hath concluded all in

unbelief, that He may have mercy upon all," [1564] it does not mean

that He will condemn no one; but the foregoing context shows what is

meant. The apostle composed the epistle for the Gentiles who were

already believers; and when he was speaking to them of the Jews who

were yet to believe, he says, "For as ye in times past believed not

God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have

these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may

obtain mercy." Then he added the words in question with which these

persons beguile themselves: "For God concluded all in unbelief, that

He might have mercy upon all." All whom, if not all those of whom he

was speaking, just as if he had said, "Both you and them?" God then

concluded all those in unbelief, both Jews and Gentiles, whom He

foreknew and predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, in

order that they might be confounded by the bitterness of unbelief, and

might repent and believingly turn to the sweetness of God's mercy, and

might take up that exclamation of the psalm, "How great is the

abundance of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them

that fear Thee, but hast perfected to them that hope," not in

themselves, but "in Thee." He has mercy, then, on all the vessels of

mercy. And what means "all?" Both those of the Gentiles and those of

the Jews whom He predestinated, called, justified, glorified: none of

these will be condemned by Him; but we cannot say none of all men

whatever.

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[1546] 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

[1547] [This contains the germ of the doctrine of purgatory, which was

afterwards more fully developed by Pope Gregory I., and adopted by the

Roman church, but rejected by the Reformers, as unfounded in Scripture,

though Matt. xii. 32, and 1 Cor. iii. 15, are quoted in support of

it.--P.S.]

[1548] Matt. xii. 32.

[1549] Matt. xxv. 34, 41, 46.

[1550] Ps. lxxvii. 9.

[1551] Ps. lxxvii. 10.

[1552] Ps. cxliv. 4.

[1553] Matt. v. 45.

[1554] It is the theory which Chrysostom adopts.

[1555] Matt. xxv. 41, 46.

[1556] Rev. xx. 10.

[1557] Isa. lxvi. 24.

[1558] Ps. xxxi. 19.

[1559] 1 John iv. 18.

[1560] 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

[1561] Rom. x. 3.

[1562] Ps. xxxiv. 8.

[1563] Ps. xvii. 15.

[1564] Rom. xi. 32.

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Chapter 25.--Whether Those Who Received Heretical Baptism, and Have

Afterwards Fallen Away to Wickedness of Life; Or Those Who Have

Received Catholic Baptism, But Have Afterwards Passed Over to Heresy

and Schism; Or Those Who Have Remained in the Catholic Church in Which

They Were Baptized, But Have Continued to Live Immorally,--May Hope

Through the Virtue of the Sacraments for the Remission of Eternal

Punishment.

But let us now reply to those who promise deliverance from eternal

fire, not to the devil and his angels (as neither do they of whom we

have been speaking), nor even to all men whatever, but only to those

who have been washed by the baptism of Christ, and have become

partakers of His body and blood, no matter how they have lived, no

matter what heresy or impiety they have fallen into. But they are

contradicted by the apostle, where he says, "Now the works of the flesh

are manifest, which are these; fornication, uncleanness,

lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variances, emulations,

wrath, strife, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and the

like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time

past, for they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of

God." [1565] Certainly this sentence of the apostle is false, if such

persons shall be delivered after any lapse of time, and shall then

inherit the kingdom of God. But as it is not false, they shall

certainly never inherit the kingdom of God. And if they shall never

enter that kingdom, then they shall always be retained in eternal

punishment; for there is no middle place where he may live unpunished

who has not been admitted into that kingdom.

And therefore we may reasonably inquire how we are to understand these

words of the Lord Jesus: "This is the bread which cometh down from

heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread

which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall

live for ever." [1566] And those, indeed, whom we are now answering,

are refuted in their interpretation of this passage by those whom we

are shortly to answer, and who do not promise this deliverance to all

who have received the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's body, but

only to the catholics, however wickedly they live; for these, say they,

have eaten the Lord's body not only sacramentally, but really, being

constituted members of His body, of which the apostle says, "We being

many are one bread, one body." [1567] He then who is in the unity of

Christ's body (that is to say, in the Christian membership), of which

body the faithful have been wont to receive the sacrament at the altar,

that man is truly said to eat the body and drink the blood of Christ.

And consequently heretics and schismatics being separate from the unity

of this body, are able to receive the same sacrament, but with no

profit to themselves,--nay, rather to their own hurt, so that they are

rather more severely judged than liberated after some time. For they

are not in that bond of peace which is symbolized by that sacrament.

But again, even those who sufficiently understand that he who is not in

the body of Christ cannot be said to eat the body of Christ, are in

error when they promise liberation from the fire of eternal punishment

to persons who fall away from the unity of that body into heresy, or

even into heathenish superstition. For, in the first place, they ought

to consider how intolerable it is, and how discordant with sound

doctrine, to suppose that many, indeed, or almost all, who have

forsaken the Church catholic, and have originated impious heresies and

become heresiarchs, should enjoy a destiny superior to those who never

were catholics, but have fallen into the snares of these others; that

is to say, if the fact of their catholic baptism and original reception

of the sacrament of the body of Christ in the true body of Christ is

sufficient to deliver these heresiarchs from eternal punishment. For

certainly he who deserts the faith, and from a deserter becomes an

assailant, is worse than he who has not deserted the faith he never

held. And, in the second place, they are contradicted by the apostle,

who, after enumerating the works of the flesh, says with reference to

heresies, "They who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of

God."

And therefore neither ought such persons as lead an abandoned and

damnable life to be confident of salvation, though they persevere to

the end in the communion of the Church catholic, and comfort themselves

with the words, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." By the

iniquity of their life they abandon that very righteousness of life

which Christ is to them, whether it be by fornication, or by

perpetrating in their body the other uncleannesses which the apostle

would not so much as mention, or by a dissolute luxury, or by doing any

one of those things of which he says, "They who do such things shall

not inherit the kingdom of God." Consequently, they who do such things

shall not exist anywhere but in eternal punishment, since they cannot

be in the kingdom of God. For, while they continue in such things to

the very end of life, they cannot be said to abide in Christ to the

end; for to abide in Him is to abide in the faith of Christ. And this

faith, according to the apostle's definition of it, "worketh by love."

[1568] And "love," as he elsewhere says, "worketh no evil." [1569]

Neither can these persons be said to eat the body of Christ, for they

cannot even be reckoned among His members. For, not to mention other

reasons, they cannot be at once the members of Christ and the members

of a harlot. In fine, He Himself, when He says, "He that eateth my

flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him," [1570]

shows what it is in reality, and not sacramentally, to eat His body and

drink His blood; for this is to dwell in Christ, that He also may dwell

in us. So that it is as if He said, He that dwelleth not in me, and in

whom I do not dwell, let him not say or think that he eateth my body or

drinketh my blood. Accordingly, they who are not Christ's members do

not dwell in Him. And they who make themselves members of a harlot,

are not members of Christ unless they have penitently abandoned that

evil, and have returned to this good to be reconciled to it.

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[1565] Gal. v. 19-21.

[1566] John vi. 50, 51.

[1567] 1 Cor. x. 17.

[1568] Gal. v. 6.

[1569] Rom. xiii. 10.

[1570] John vi. 56.

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Chapter 26.--What It is to Have Christ for a Foundation, and Who They

are to Whom Salvation as by Fire is Promised.

But, say they, the catholic Christians have Christ for a foundation,

and they have not fallen away from union with Him, no matter how

depraved a life they have built on this foundation, as wood, hay,

stubble; and accordingly the well-directed faith by which Christ is

their foundation will suffice to deliver them some time from the

continuance of that fire, though it be with loss, since those things

they have built on it shall be burned. Let the Apostle James summarily

reply to them: "If any man say he has faith, and have not works, can

faith save him?" [1571] And who then is it, they ask, of whom the

Apostle Paul says, "But he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire?"

[1572] Let us join them in their inquiry; and one thing is very

certain, that it is not he of whom James speaks, else we should make

the two apostles contradict one another, if the one says, "Though a

man's works be evil, his faith will save him as by fire," while the

other says, "If he have not good works, can his faith save him?"

We shall then ascertain who it is who can be saved by fire, if we first

discover what it is to have Christ for a foundation. And this we may

very readily learn from the image itself. In a building the foundation

is first. Whoever, then, has Christ in his heart, so that no earthly

or temporal things--not even those that are legitimate and allowed--are

preferred to Him, has Christ as a foundation. But if these things be

preferred, then even though a man seem to have faith in Christ, yet

Christ is not the foundation to that man; and much more if he, in

contempt of wholesome precepts, seek forbidden gratifications, is he

clearly convicted of putting Christ not first but last, since he has

despised Him as his ruler, and has preferred to fulfill his own wicked

lusts, in contempt of Christ's commands and allowances. Accordingly,

if any Christian man loves a harlot, and, attaching himself to her,

becomes one body, he has not now Christ for a foundation. But if any

one loves his own wife, and loves her as Christ would have him love

her, who can doubt that he has Christ for a foundation? But if he

loves her in the world's fashion, carnally, as the disease of lust

prompts him, and as the Gentiles love who know not God, even this the

apostle, or rather Christ by the apostle, allows as a venial fault.

And therefore even such a man may have Christ for a foundation. For so

long as he does not prefer such an affection or pleasure to Christ,

Christ is his foundation, though on it he builds wood, hay, stubble;

and therefore he shall be saved as by fire. For the fire of affliction

shall burn such luxurious pleasures and earthly loves, though they be

not damnable, because enjoyed in lawful wedlock. And of this fire the

fuel is bereavement, and all those calamities which consume these

joys. Consequently the superstructure will be loss to him who has

built it, for he shall not retain it, but shall be agonized by the loss

of those things in the enjoyment of which he found pleasure. But by

this fire he shall be saved through virtue of the foundation, because

even if a persecutor demanded whether he would retain Christ or these

things, he would prefer Christ. Would you hear, in the apostle's own

words, who he is who builds on the foundation gold, silver, precious

stones? "He that is unmarried," he says, "careth for the things that

belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord." [1573] Would you

hear who he is that buildeth wood, hay, stubble? "But he that is

married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please

his wife. [1574] "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the

day shall declare it,"--the day, no doubt, of tribulation--"because,"

says he, "it shall be revealed by fire." [1575] He calls tribulation

fire, just as it is elsewhere said, "The furnace proves the vessels of

the potter, and the trial of affliction righteous men." [1576] And

"The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's

work abide"--for a man's care for the things of the Lord, how he may

please the Lord, abides--"which he hath built thereupon, he shall

receive a reward,"--that is, he shall reap the fruit of his care. "But

if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss,"--for what he

loved he shall not retain:--" but he himself shall be saved,"--for no

tribulation shall have moved him from that stable foundation,--"yet so

as by fire;" [1577] for that which he possessed with the sweetness of

love he does not lose without the sharp sting of pain. Here, then, as

seems to me, we have a fire which destroys neither, but enriches the

one, brings loss to the other, proves both.

But if this passage [of Corinthians] is to interpret that fire of which

the Lord shall say to those on His left hand, "Depart from me, ye

cursed, into everlasting fire," [1578] so that among these we are to

believe there are those who build on the foundation wood, hay, stubble,

and that they, through virtue of the good foundation, shall after a

time be liberated from the fire that is the award of their evil

deserts, what then shall we think of those on the right hand, to whom

it shall be said, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom

prepared for you," [1579] unless that they are those who have built on

the foundation gold, silver, precious stones? But if the fire of which

our Lord speaks is the same as that of which the apostle says, "Yet so

as by fire," then both--that is to say, both those on the right as well

as those on the left--are to be cast into it. For that fire is to try

both, since it is said, "For the day of the Lord shall declare it,

because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every

man's work of what sort it is." [1580] If, therefore, the fire shall

try both, in order that if any man's work abide--i.e., if the

superstructure be not consumed by the fire--he may receive a reward,

and that if his work is burned he may suffer loss, certainly that fire

is not the eternal fire itself. For into this latter fire only those

on the left hand shall be cast, and that with final and everlasting

doom; but that former fire proves those on the right hand. But some of

them it so proves that it does not burn and consume the structure which

is found to have been built by them on Christ as the foundation; while

others of them it proves in another fashion, so as to burn what they

have built up, and thus cause them to suffer loss, while they

themselves are saved because they have retained Christ, who was laid as

their sure foundation, and have loved Him above all. But if they are

saved, then certainly they shall stand at the right hand, and shall

with the rest hear the sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father,

inherit the kingdom prepared for you;" and not at the left hand, where

those shall be who shall not be saved, and shall therefore hear the

doom, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." For from

that fire no man shall be saved, because they all shall go away into

eternal punishment, where their worms shall not die, nor their fire be

quenched, in which they shall be tormented day and night for ever.

But if it be said that in the interval of time between the death of

this body and that last day of judgment and retribution which shall

follow the resurrection, the bodies of the dead shall be exposed to a

fire of such a nature that it shall not affect those who have not in

this life indulged in such pleasures and pursuits as shall be consumed

like wood, hay, stubble, but shall affect those others who have carried

with them structures of that kind; if it be said that such worldliness,

being venial, shall be consumed in the fire of tribulation either here

only, or here and hereafter both, or here that it may not be

hereafter,--this I do not contradict, because possibly it is true. For

perhaps even the death of the body is itself a part of this

tribulation, for it results from the first transgression, so that the

time which follows death takes its color in each case from the nature

of the man's building. The persecutions, too, which have crowned the

martyrs, and which Christians of all kinds suffer, try both buildings

like a fire, consuming some, along with the builders themselves, if

Christ is not found in them as their foundation, while others they

consume without the builders, because Christ is found in them, and they

are saved, though with loss; and other buildings still they do not

consume, because such materials as abide for ever are found in them.

In the end of the world there shall be in the time of Antichrist

tribulation such as has never before been. How many edifices there

shall then be, of gold or of hay, built on the best foundation, Christ

Jesus, which that fire shall prove, bringing joy to some, loss to

others, but without destroying either sort, because of this stable

foundation! But whosoever prefers, I do not say his wife, with whom he

lives for carnal pleasure, but any of those relatives who afford no

delight of such a kind, and whom it is right to love,--whosoever

prefers these to Christ, and loves them after a human and carnal

fashion, has not Christ as a foundation, and will therefore not be

saved by fire, nor indeed at all; for he shall not possibly dwell with

the Saviour, who says very explicitly concerning this very matter, "He

that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he

that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." [1581]

But he who loves his relations carnally, and yet so that he does not

prefer them to Christ, but would rather want them than Christ if he

were put to the proof, shall be saved by fire, because it is necessary

that by the loss of these relations he suffer pain in proportion to his

love. And he who loves father, mother, sons, daughters, according to

Christ, so that he aids them in obtaining His kingdom and cleaving to

Him, or loves them because they are members of Christ, God forbid that

this love should be consumed as wood, hay, stubble, and not rather be

reckoned a structure of gold, silver, precious stones. For how can a

man love those more than Christ whom he loves only for Christ's sake?

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[1571] Jas. ii. 14.

[1572] 1 Cor. iii. 15. [This is the chief passage quoted in favor of

purgatory. See note on p. 470. The Apostle uses a figurative term for

narrow escape from perdition.--P.S.]

[1573] 1 Cor. vii. 32.

[1574] 1 Cor. vii. 33.

[1575] 1 Cor. iii. 13.

[1576] Ecclus. xxvii. 5.

[1577] 1 Cor. iii. 14, 15.

[1578] Matt. xxv. 41.

[1579] Matt. xxv. 34.

[1580] 1 Cor. iii. 13.

[1581] Matt. x. 37.

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Chapter 27.--Against the Belief of Those Who Think that the Sins Which

Have Been Accompanied with Almsgiving Will Do Them No Harm.

It remains to reply to those who maintain that those only shall burn in

eternal fire who neglect alms-deeds proportioned to their sins, resting

this opinion on the words of the Apostle James, "He shall have judgment

without mercy that hath showed no mercy." [1582] Therefore, they say,

he that hath showed mercy, though he has not reformed his dissolute

conduct, but has lived wickedly and iniquitously even while abounding

in alms, shall have a merciful judgment, so that he shall either be not

condemned at all, or shall be delivered from final judgment after a

time. And for the same reason they suppose that Christ will

discriminate between those on the right hand and those on the left, and

will send the one party into His kingdom, the other into eternal

punishment, on the sole ground of their attention to or neglect of

works of charity. Moreover, they endeavor to use the prayer which the

Lord Himself taught as a proof and bulwark of their opinion, that daily

sins which are never abandoned can be expiated through alms-deeds, no

matter how offensive or of what sort they be. For, say they, as there

is no day on which Christians ought not to use this prayer, so there is

no sin of any kind which, though committed every day, is not remitted

when we say, "Forgive us our debts," if we take care to fulfill what

follows, "as we forgive our debtors." [1583] For, they go on to say,

the Lord does not say, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your

heavenly Father will forgive you your little daily sins," but "will

forgive you your sins." Therefore, be they of any kind or magnitude

whatever, be they perpetrated daily and never abandoned or subdued in

this life, they can be pardoned, they presume, through alms-deeds.

But they are right to inculcate the giving of aims proportioned to past

sins; for if they said that any kind of alms could obtain the divine

pardon of great sins committed daily and with habitual enormity, if

they said that such sins could thus be daily remitted, they would see

that their doctrine was absurd and ridiculous. For they would thus be

driven to acknowledge that it were possible for a very wealthy man to

buy absolution from murders, adulteries, and all manner of wickedness,

by paying a daily alms of ten paltry coins. And if it be most absurd

and insane to make such an acknowledgment, and if we still ask what are

those fitting alms of which even the forerunner of Christ said, "Bring

forth therefore fruits meet for repentance," [1584] undoubtedly it will

be found that they are not such as are done by men who undermine their

life by daily enormities even to the very end. For they suppose that

by giving to the poor a small fraction of the wealth they acquire by

extortion and spoliation they can propitiate Christ, so that they may

with impunity commit the most damnable sins, in the persuasion that

they have bought from Him a license to transgress, or rather do buy a

daily indulgence. And if they for one crime have distributed all their

goods to Christ's needy members, that could profit them nothing unless

they desisted from all similar actions, and attained charity which

worketh no evil He therefore who does alms-deeds proportioned to his

sins must first begin with himself. For it is not reasonable that a

man who exercises charity towards his neighbor should not do so towards

himself, since he hears the Lord saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor

as thyself," [1585] and again, "Have compassion on thy soul, and please

God." [1586] He then who has not compassion on his own soul that he

may please God, how can he be said to do alms-deeds proportioned to his

sins? To the same purpose is that written, "He who is bad to himself,

to whom can he be good?" [1587] We ought therefore to do alms that we

may be heard when we pray that our past sins may be forgiven, not that

while we continue in them we may think to provide ourselves with a

license for wickedness by alms-deeds.

The reason, therefore, of our predicting that He will impute to those

on His right hand the alms-deeds they have done, and charge those on

His left with omitting the same, is that He may thus show the efficacy

of charity for the deletion of past sins, not for impunity in their

perpetual commission. And such persons, indeed, as decline to abandon

their evil habits of life for a better course cannot be said to do

charitable deeds. For this is the purport of the saying, "Inasmuch as

ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

[1588] He shows them that they do not perform charitable actions even

when they think they are doing so. For if they gave bread to a

hungering Christian because he is a Christian, assuredly they would not

deny to themselves the bread of righteousness, that is, Christ Himself;

for God considers not the person to whom the gift is made, but the

spirit in which it is made. He therefore who loves Christ in a

Christian extends alms to him in the same spirit in which he draws near

to Christ, not in that spirit which would abandon Christ if it could do

so with impunity. For in proportion as a man loves what Christ

disapproves does he himself abandon Christ. For what does it profit a

man that he is baptized, if he is not justified? Did not He who said,

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he shall not enter

into the kingdom of God," [1589] say also, "Except your righteousness

shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall

not enter into the kingdom of heaven?" [1590] Why do many through

fear of the first saying run to baptism, while few through fear of the

second seek to be justified? As therefore it is not to his brother a

man says, "Thou fool," if when he says it he is indignant not at the

brotherhood, but at the sin of the offender,--for otherwise he were

guilty of hell fire,--so he who extends charity to a Christian does not

extend it to a Christian if he does not love Christ in him. Now he

does not love Christ who refuses to be justified in Him. Or, again, if

a man has been guilty of this sin of calling his brother Fool, unjustly

reviling him without any desire to remove his sin, his alms-deeds go a

small way towards expiating this fault, unless he adds to this the

remedy of reconciliation which the same passage enjoins. For it is

there said, "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there

rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy

gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy

brother, and then come and offer thy gift." [1591] Just so it is a

small matter to do alms-deeds, no matter how great they be, for any

sin, so long as the offender continues in the practice of sin.

Then as to the daily prayer which the Lord Himself taught, and which

is therefore called the Lord's prayer, it obliterates indeed the sins

of the day, when day by day we say, "Forgive us our debts," and when we

not only say but act out that which follows, "as we forgive our

debtors;" [1592] but we utter this petition because sins have been

committed, and not that they may be. For by it our Saviour designed to

teach us that, however righteously we live in this life of infirmity

and darkness, we still commit sins for the remission of which we ought

to pray, while we must pardon those who sin against us that we

ourselves also may be pardoned. The Lord then did not utter the words,

"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Father will also forgive you

your trespasses," [1593] in order that we might contract from this

petition such confidence as should enable us to sin securely from day

to day, either putting ourselves above the fear of human laws, or

craftily deceiving men concerning our conduct, but in order that we

might thus learn not to suppose that we are without sins, even though

we should be free from crimes; as also God admonished the priests of

the old law to this same effect regarding their sacrifices, which He

commanded them to offer first for their own sins, and then for the sins

of the people. For even the very words of so great a Master and Lord

are to be intently considered. For He does not say, If ye forgive men

their sins, your Father will also forgive you your sins, no matter of

what sort they be, but He says, your sins; for it was a daily prayer He

was teaching, and it was certainly to disciples already justified He

was speaking. What, then, does He mean by "your sins," but those sins

from which not even you who are justified and sanctified can be free?

While, then, those who seek occasion from this petition to indulge in

habitual sin maintain that the Lord meant to include great sins,

because He did not say, He will forgive you your small sins, but "your

sins," we, on the other hand, taking into account the character of the

persons He was addressing, cannot see our way to interpret the

expression "your sins" of anything but small sins, because such persons

are no longer guilty of great sins. Nevertheless not even great sins

themselves--sins from which we must flee with a total reformation of

life--are forgiven to those who pray, unless they observe the appended

precept, "as ye also forgive your debtors." For if the very small sins

which attach even to the life of the righteous be not remitted without

that condition, how much further from obtaining indulgence shall those

be who are involved in many great crimes, if, while they cease from

perpetrating such enormities, they still inexorably refuse to remit any

debt incurred to themselves, since the Lord says, "But if ye forgive

not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your

trespasses?" [1594] For this is the purport of the saying of the

Apostle James also, "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath

showed no mercy." [1595] For we should remember that servant whose

debt of ten thousand talents his lord cancelled, but afterwards ordered

him to pay up, because the servant himself had no pity for his

fellow-servant, who owed him an hundred pence. [1596] The words which

the Apostle James subjoins,"And mercy rejoiceth against judgment,"

[1597] find their application among those who are the children of the

promise and vessels of mercy. For even those righteous men, who have

lived with such holiness that they receive into the eternal habitations

others also who have won their friendship with the mammon of

unrighteousness, [1598] became such only through the merciful

deliverance of Him who justifies the ungodly, imputing to him a reward

according to grace, not according to debt. For among this number is

the apostle, who says, "I obtained mercy to be faithful." [1599]

But it must be admitted, that those who are thus received into the

eternal habitations are not of such a character that their own life

would suffice to rescue them without the aid of the saints, and

consequently in their case especially does mercy rejoice against

judgment. And yet we are not on this account to suppose that every

abandoned profligate, who has made no amendment of his life, is to be

received into the eternal habitations if only he has assisted the

saints with the mammon of unrighteousness,--that is to say, with money

or wealth which has been unjustly acquired, or, if rightfully acquired,

is yet not the true riches, but only what iniquity counts riches,

because it knows not the true riches in which those persons abound, who

even receive others also into eternal habitations. There is then a

certain kind of life, which is neither, on the one hand, so bad that

those who adopt it are not helped towards the kingdom of heaven by any

bountiful alms-giving by which they may relieve the wants of the

saints, and make friends who could receive them into eternal

habitations, nor, on the other hand, so good that it of itself suffices

to win for them that great blessedness, if they do not obtain mercy

through the merits of those whom they have made their friends. And I

frequently wonder that even Virgil should give expression to this

sentence of the Lord, in which He says, "Make to yourselves friends of

the mammon of unrighteousness, that they may receive you into

everlasting habitations;" [1600] and this very similar saying, "He that

receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a

prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of

a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward." [1601] For

when that poet described the Elysian fields, in which they suppose that

the souls of the blessed dwell, he placed there not only those who had

been able by their own merit to reach that abode, but added,--

"And they who grateful memory won

By services to others done;" [1602]

that is, they who had served others, and thereby merited to be

remembered by them. Just as if they used the expression so common in

Christian lips, where some humble person commends himself to one of the

saints, and says, Remember me, and secures that he do so by deserving

well at his hand. But what that kind of life we have been speaking of

is, and what those sins are which prevent a man from winning the

kingdom of God by himself, but yet permit him to avail himself of the

merits of the saints, it is very difficult to ascertain, very perilous

to define. For my own part, in spite of all investigation, I have been

up to the present hour unable to discover this. And possibly it is

hidden from us, lest we should become careless in avoiding such sins,

and so cease to make progress. For if it were known what these sins

are which, though they continue, and be not abandoned for a higher

life, do yet not prevent us from seeking and hoping for the

intercession of the saints, human sloth would presumptuously wrap

itself in these sins, and would take no steps to be disentangled from

such wrappings by the deft energy of any virtue, but would only desire

to be rescued by the merits of other people, whose friendship had been

won by a bountiful use of the mammon of unrighteousness. But now that

we are left in ignorance of the precise nature of that iniquity which

is venial, even though it be persevered in, certainly we are both more

vigilant in our prayers and efforts for progress, and more careful to

secure with the mammon of unrighteousness friends for ourselves among

the saints.

But this deliverance, which is effected by one's own prayers, or the

intercession of holy men, secures that a man be not cast into eternal

fire, but not that, when once he has been cast into it, he should after

a time be rescued from it. For even those who fancy that what is said

of the good ground bringing forth abundant fruit, some thirty, some

sixty, some an hundred fold, is to be referred to the saints, so that

in proportion to their merits some of them shall deliver thirty men,

some sixty, some an hundred,--even those who maintain this are yet

commonly inclined to suppose that this deliverance will take place at,

and not after the day of judgment. Under this impression, some one who

observed the unseemly folly with which men promise themselves impunity

on the ground that all will be included in this method of deliverance,

is reported to have very happily remarked, that we should rather

endeavor to live so well that we shall be all found among the number of

those who are to intercede for the liberation of others, lest these

should be so few in number, that, after they have delivered one thirty,

another sixty, another a hundred, there should still remain many who

could not be delivered from punishment by their intercessions, and

among them every one who has vainly and rashly promised himself the

fruit of another's labor. But enough has been said in reply to those

who acknowledge the authority of the same sacred Scriptures as

ourselves, but who, by a mistaken interpretation of them, conceive of

the future rather as they themselves wish, than as the Scriptures

teach. And having given this reply, I now, according to promise, close

this book.

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[1582] Jas. ii. 13.

[1583] Matt. vi. 12.

[1584] Matt. iii. 8.

[1585] Matt. xxii. 39.

[1586] Ecclus. xxx. 24.

[1587] Ecclus. xxi. 1.

[1588] Matt. xxv. 45.

[1589] John iii. 5.

[1590] Matt. v. 20.

[1591] Matt. v. 23, 24.

[1592] Matt. vi. 12.

[1593] Matt. vi. 14.

[1594] Matt. vi. 15.

[1595] Jas. ii. 13.

[1596] Matt. xviii. 23.

[1597] Jas. ii. 13.

[1598] Luke xvi. 9.

[1599] 1 Cor. vii. 25.

[1600] Luke xvi. 9.

[1601] Matt. x. 41.

[1602] �n.vi. 664.

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Book XXII.

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Argument--This book treats of the end of the city of God, that is to

say, of the eternal happiness of the saints; the faith of the

resurrection of the body is established and explained; and the work

concludes by showing how the saints, clothed in immortal and spiritual

bodies, shall be employed.

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Chapter 1.--Of the Creation of Angels and Men.

As we promised in the immediately preceeding book, this, the last of

the whole work, shall contain a discussion of the eternal blessedness

of the city of God. This blessedness is named eternal, not because it

shall endure for many ages, though at last it shall come to an end, but

because, according to the words of the gospel, "of His kingdom there

shall be no end." [1603] Neither shall it enjoy the mere appearance

of perpetuity which is maintained by the rise of fresh generations to

occupy the place of those that have died out, as in an evergreen the

same freshness seems to continue permanently, and the same appearance

of dense foliage is preserved by the growth of fresh leaves in the room

of those that have withered and fallen; but in that city all the

citizens shall be immortal, men now for the first time enjoying what

the holy angels have never lost. And this shall be accomplished by

God, the most almighty Founder of the city. For He has promised it,

and cannot lie, and has already performed many of His promises, and has

done many unpromised kindnesses to those whom He now asks to believe

that He will do this also.

For it is He who in the beginning created the world full of all visible

and intelligible beings, among which He created nothing better than

those spirits whom He endowed with intelligence, and made capable of

contemplating and enjoying Him, and united in our society, which we

call the holy and heavenly city, and in which the material of their

sustenance and blessedness is God Himself, as it were their common food

and nourishment. It is He who gave to this intellectual nature

free-will of such a kind, that if he wished to forsake God, i.e., his

blessedness, misery should forthwith result. It is He who, when He

foreknew that certain angels would in their pride desire to suffice for

their own blessedness, and would forsake their great good, did not

deprive them of this power, deeming it to be more befitting His power

and goodness to bring good out of evil than to prevent the evil from

coming into existence. And indeed evil had never been, had not the

mutable nature--mutable, though good, and created by the most high God

and immutable Good, who created all things good--brought evil upon

itself by sin. And this its sin is itself proof that its nature was

originally good. For had it not been very good, though not equal to

its Creator, the desertion of God as its light could not have been an

evil to it. For as blindness is a vice of the eye, and this very fact

indicates that the eye was created to see the light, and as,

consequently, vice itself proves that the eye is more excellent than

the other members, because it is capable of light (for on no other

supposition would it be a vice of the eye to want light), so the nature

which once enjoyed God teaches, even by its very vice, that it was

created the best of all, since it is now miserable because it does not

enjoy God. It is he who with very just punishment doomed the angels

who voluntarily fell to everlasting misery, and rewarded those who

continued in their attachment to the supreme good with the assurance of

endless stability as the meed of their fidelity. It is He who made

also man himself upright, with the same freedom of will,--an earthly

animal, indeed, but fit for heaven if he remained faithful to his

Creator, but destined to the misery appropriate to such a nature if he

forsook Him. It is He who when He foreknew that man would in his turn

sin by abandoning God and breaking His law, did not deprive him of the

power of free-will, because He at the same time foresaw what good He

Himself would bring out of the evil, and how from this mortal race,

deservedly and justly condemned, He would by His grace collect, as now

He does, a people so numerous, that He thus fills up and repairs the

blank made by the fallen angels, and that thus that beloved and

heavenly city is not defrauded of the full number of its citizens, but

perhaps may even rejoice in a still more overflowing population.

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[1603] Luke i. 33.

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Chapter 2.--Of the Eternal and Unchangeable Will of God.

It is true that wicked men do many things contrary to God's will; but

so great is His wisdom and power, that all things which seem adverse to

His purpose do still tend towards those just and good ends and issues

which He Himself has foreknown. And consequently, when God is said to

change His will, as when, e.g., He becomes angry with those to whom He

was gentle, it is rather they than He who are changed, and they find

Him changed in so far as their experience of suffering at His hand is

new, as the sun is changed to injured eyes, and becomes as it were

fierce from being mild, and hurtful from being delightful, though in

itself it remains the same as it was. That also is called the will of

God which He does in the hearts of those who obey His commandments; and

of this the apostle says, "For it is God that worketh in you both to

will." [1604] As God's "righteousness" is used not only of the

righteousness wherewith He Himself is righteous, but also of that which

He produces in the man whom He justifies, so also that is called His

law, which, though given by God, is rather the law of men. For

certainly they were men to whom Jesus said, "It is written in your

law," [1605] though in another place we read, "The law of his God is in

his heart." [1606] According to this will which God works in men, He

is said also to will what He Himself does not will, but causes His

people to will; as He is said to know what He has caused those to know

who were ignorant of it. For when the apostle says, "But now, after

that ye have known God, or rather are known of God," [1607] we cannot

suppose that God there for the first time knew those who were foreknown

by Him before the foundation of the world; but He is said to have known

them then, because then He caused them to know. But I remember that I

discussed these modes of expression in the preceding books. According

to this will, then, by which we say that God wills what He causes to be

willed by others, from whom the future is hidden, He wills many things

which He does not perform.

Thus His saints, inspired by His holy will, desire many things which

never happen. They pray, e.g., for certain individuals--they pray in a

pious and holy manner--but what they request He does not perform,

though He Himself by His own Holy Spirit has wrought in them this will

to pray. And consequently, when the saints, in conformity with God's

mind, will and pray that all men be saved, we can use this mode of

expression: God wills and does not perform,--meaning that He who

causes them to will these things Himself wills them. But if we speak

of that will of His which is eternal as His foreknowledge, certainly He

has already done all things in heaven and on earth that He has

willed,--not only past and present things, but even things still

future. But before the arrival of that time in which He has willed the

occurrence of what He foreknew and arranged before all time, we say, It

will happen when God wills. But if we are ignorant not only of the

time in which it is to be, but even whether it shall be at all, we say,

It will happen if God wills,--not because God will then have a new will

which He had not before, but because that event, which from eternity

has been prepared in His unchangeable will, shall then come to pass.

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[1604] Phil. ii. 13.

[1605] John viii. 17.

[1606] Ps. xxxvii. 31.

[1607] Gal. iv. 9.

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Chapter 3.--Of the Promise of Eternal Blessedness to the Saints, and

Everlasting Punishment to the Wicked.

Wherefore, not to mention many other instances besides, as we now see

in Christ the fulfillment of that which God promised to Abraham when He

said, "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed," [1608] so this also

shall be fulfilled which He promised to the same race, when He said by

the prophet, "They that are in their sepulchres shall rise again,"

[1609] and also, "There shall be a new heaven and a new earth: and the

former shall not be mentioned, nor come into mind; but they shall find

joy and rejoicing in it: for I will make Jerusalem a rejoicing, and my

people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people,

and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her." [1610] And

by another prophet He uttered the same prediction: "At that time thy

people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the

book. And many of them that sleep in the dust" (or, as some interpret

it, "in the mound") "of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting

life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." [1611] And in

another place by the same prophet: "The saints of the Most High shall

take the kingdom, and shall possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever

and ever." [1612] And a little after he says, "His kingdom is an

everlasting kingdom." [1613] Other prophecies referring to the same

subject I have advanced in the twentieth book, and others still which I

have not advanced are found written in the same Scriptures; and these

predictions shall be fulfilled, as those also have been which

unbelieving men supposed would be frustrate. For it is the same God

who promised both, and predicted that both would come to pass,--the God

whom the pagan deities tremble before, as even Porphyry, the noblest of

pagan philosophers, testifies.

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[1608] Gen. xxii. 18.

[1609] Isa. xxvi. 19.

[1610] Isa. lxv. 17-19.

[1611] Dan. xii. 1, 2.

[1612] Dan. vii. 18.

[1613] Dan. vii. 27.

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Chapter 4.--Against the Wise Men of the World, Who Fancy that the

Earthly Bodies of Men Cannot Be Transferred to a Heavenly Habitation.

But men who use their learning and intellectual ability to resist the

force of that great authority which, in fulfillment of what was so long

before predicted, has converted all races of men to faith and hope in

its promises, seem to themselves to argue acutely against the

resurrection of the body while they cite what Cicero mentions in the

third book De Republica. For when he was asserting the apotheosis of

Hercules and Romulus, he says: "Whose bodies were not taken up into

heaven; for nature would not permit a body of earth to exist anywhere

except upon earth." This, forsooth, is the profound reasoning of the

wise men, whose thoughts God knows that they are vain. For if we were

only souls, that is, spirits without any body, and if we dwelt in

heaven and had no knowledge of earthly animals, and were told that we

should be bound to earthly bodies by some wonderful bond of union, and

should animate them, should we not much more vigorously refuse to

believe this, and maintain that nature would not permit an incorporeal

substance to be held by a corporeal bond? And yet the earth is full of

living spirits, to which terrestrial bodies are bound, and with which

they are in a wonderful way implicated. If, then, the same God who has

created such beings wills this also, what is to hinder the earthly body

from being raised to a heavenly body, since a spirit, which is more

excellent than all bodies, and consequently than even a heavenly body,

has been tied to an earthly body? If so small an earthly particle has

been able to hold in union with itself something better than a heavenly

body, so as to receive sensation and life, will heaven disdain to

receive, or at least to retain, this sentient and living particle,

which derives its life and sensation from a substance more excellent

than any heavenly body? If this does not happen now, it is because the

time is not yet come which has been determined by Him who has already

done a much more marvellous thing than that which these men refuse to

believe. For why do we not more intensely wonder that incorporeal

souls, which are of higher rank than heavenly bodies, are bound to

earthly bodies, rather than that bodies, although earthly, are exalted

to an abode which, though heavenly, is yet corporeal, except because we

have been accustomed to see this, and indeed are this, while we are not

as yet that other marvel, nor have as yet ever seen it? Certainly, if

we consult sober reason, the more wonderful of the two divine works is

found to be to attach somehow corporeal things to incorporeal, and not

to connect earthly things with heavenly, which, though diverse, are yet

both of them corporeal.

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Chapter 5.--Of the Resurrection of the Flesh, Which Some Refuse to

Believe, Though the World at Large Believes It.

But granting that this was once incredible, behold, now, the world has

come to the belief that the earthly body of Christ was received up into

heaven. Already both the learned and unlearned have believed in the

resurrection of the flesh and its ascension to the heavenly places,

while only a very few either of the educated or uneducated are still

staggered by it. If this is a credible thing which is believed, then

let those who do not believe see how stolid they are; and if it is

incredible, then this also is an incredible thing, that what is

incredible should have received such credit. Here then we have two

incredibles,--to wit, the resurrection of our body to eternity, and

that the world should believe so incredible a thing; and both these

incredibles the same God predicted should come to pass before either

had as yet occurred. We see that already one of the two has come to

pass, for the world has believed what was incredible; why should we

despair that the remaining one shall also come to pass, and that this

which the world believed, though it was incredible, shall itself

occur? For already that which was equally incredible has come to pass,

in the world's believing an incredible thing. Both were incredible:

the one we see accomplished, the other we believe shall be; for both

were predicted in those same Scriptures by means of which the world

believed. And the very manner in which the world's faith was won is

found to be even more incredible if we consider it. Men uninstructed

in any branch of a liberal education, without any of the refinement of

heathen learning, unskilled in grammar, not armed with dialectic, not

adorned with rhetoric, but plain fishermen, and very few in

number,--these were the men whom Christ sent with the nets of faith to

the sea of this world, and thus took out of every race so many fishes,

and even the philosophers themselves, wonderful as they are rare. Let

us add, if you please, or because you ought to be pleased, this third

incredible thing to the two former. And now we have three incredibles,

all of which have yet come to pass. It is incredible that Jesus Christ

should have risen in the flesh and ascended with flesh into heaven; it

is incredible that the world should have believed so incredible a

thing; it is incredible that a very few men, of mean birth and the

lowest rank, and no education, should have been able so effectually to

persuade the world, and even its learned men, of so incredible a

thing. Of these three incredibles, the parties with whom we are

debating refuse to believe the first; they cannot refuse to see the

second, which they are unable to account for if they do not believe the

third. It is indubitable that the resurrection of Christ, and His

ascension into heaven with the flesh in which He rose, is already

preached and believed in the whole world. If it is not credible, how

is it that it has already received credence in the whole world? If a

number of noble, exalted, and learned men had said that they had

witnessed it, and had been at pains to publish what they had witnessed,

it were not wonderful that the world should have believed it, but it

were very stubborn to refuse credence; but if, as is true, the world

has believed a few obscure, inconsiderable, uneducated persons, who

state and write that they witnessed it, is it not unreasonable that a

handful of wrong-headed men should oppose themselves to the creed of

the whole world, and refuse their belief? And if the world has put

faith in a small number of men, of mean birth and the lowest rank, and

no education, it is because the divinity of the thing itself appeared

all the more manifestly in such contemptible witnesses. The eloquence,

indeed, which lent persuasion to their message, consisted of wonderful

works, not words. For they who had not seen Christ risen in the flesh,

nor ascending into heaven with His risen body, believed those who

related how they had seen these things, and who testified not only with

words but wonderful signs. For men whom they knew to be acquainted

with only one, or at most two languages, they marvelled to hear

speaking in the tongues of all nations. They saw a man, lame from his

mother's womb, after forty years stand up sound at their word in the

name of Christ; that handkerchiefs taken from their bodies had virtue

to heal the sick; that countless persons, sick of various diseases,

were laid in a row in the road where they were to pass, that their

shadow might fall on them as they walked, and that they forthwith

received health; that many other stupendous miracles were wrought by

them in the name of Christ; and, finally, that they even raised the

dead. If it be admitted that these things occurred as they are

related, then we have a multitude of incredible things to add to those

three incredibles. That the one incredibility of the resurrection and

ascension of Jesus Christ may be believed, we accumulate the

testimonies of countless incredible miracles, but even so we do not

bend the frightful obstinacy of these sceptics. But if they do not

believe that these miracles were wrought by Christ's apostles to gain

credence to their preaching of His resurrection and ascension, this one

grand miracle suffices for us, that the whole world has believed

without any miracles.

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Chapter 6.--That Rome Made Its Founder Romulus a God Because It Loved

Him; But the Church Loved Christ Because It Believed Him to Be God.

Let us here recite the passage in which Tully expresses his

astonishment that the apotheosis of Romulus should have been credited.

I shall insert his words as they stand: "It is most worthy of remark

in Romulus, that other men who are said to have become gods lived in

less educated ages, when there was a greater propensity to the

fabulous, and when the uninstructed were easily persuaded to believe

anything. But the age of Romulus was barely six hundred years ago, and

already literature and science had dispelled the errors that attach to

an uncultured age." And a little after he says of the same Romulus

words to this effect: "From this we may perceive that Homer had

flourished long before Romulus, and that there was now so much learning

in individuals, and so generally diffused an enlightenment, that

scarcely any room was left for fable. For antiquity admitted fables,

and sometimes even very clumsy ones; but this age [of Romulus] was

sufficiently enlightened to reject whatever had not the air of truth."

Thus one of the most learned men, and certainly the most eloquent, M.

Tullius Cicero, says that it is surprising that the divinity of Romulus

was believed in, because the times were already so enlightened that

they would not accept a fabulous fiction. But who believed that

Romulus was a god except Rome, which was itself small and in its

infancy? Then afterwards it was necessary that succeeding generations

should preserve the tradition of their ancestors; that, drinking in

this superstition with their mother's milk, the state might grow and

come to such power that it might dictate this belief, as from a point

of vantage, to all the nations over whom its sway extended. And these

nations, though they might not believe that Romulus was a god, at least

said so, that they might not give offence to their sovereign state by

refusing to give its founder that title which was given him by Rome,

which had adopted this belief, not by a love of error, but an error of

love. But though Christ is the founder of the heavenly and eternal

city, yet it did not believe Him to be God because it was founded by

Him, but rather it is founded by Him, in virtue of its belief. Rome,

after it had been built and dedicated, worshipped its founder in a

temple as a god; but this Jerusalem laid Christ, its God, as its

foundation, that the building and dedication might proceed. The former

city loved its founder, and therefore believed him to be a god; the

latter believed Christ to be God, and therefore loved Him. There was

an antecedent cause for the love of the former city, and for its

believing that even a false dignity attached to the object of its love;

so there was an antecedent cause for the belief of the latter, and for

its loving the true dignity which a proper faith, not a rash surmise,

ascribed to its object. For, not to mention the multitude of very

striking miracles which proved that Christ is God, there were also

divine prophecies heralding Him, prophecies most worthy of belief,

which being already accomplished, we have not, like the fathers, to

wait for their verification. Of Romulus, on the other hand, and of his

building Rome and reigning in it, we read or hear the narrative of what

did take place, not prediction which beforehand said that such things

should be. And so far as his reception among the gods is concerned,

history only records that this was believed, and does not state it as a

fact; for no miraculous signs testified to the truth of this. For as

to that wolf which is said to have nursed the twin-brothers, and which

is considered a great marvel, how does this prove him to have been

divine? For even supposing that this nurse was a real wolf and not a

mere courtezan, yet she nursed both brothers, and Remus is not reckoned

a god. Besides, what was there to hinder any one from asserting that

Romulus or Hercules, or any such man, was a god? Or who would rather

choose to die than profess belief in his divinity? And did a single

nation worship Romulus among its gods, unless it were forced through

fear of the Roman name? But who can number the multitudes who have

chosen death in the most cruel shapes rather than deny the divinity of

Christ? And thus the dread of some slight indignation, which it was

supposed, perhaps groundlessly, might exist in the minds of the Romans,

constrained some states who were subject to Rome to worship Romulus as

a god; whereas the dread, not of a slight mental shock, but of severe

and various punishments, and of death itself, the most formidable of

all, could not prevent an immense multitude of martyrs throughout the

world from not merely worshipping but also confessing Christ as God.

The city of Christ, which, although as yet a stranger upon earth, had

countless hosts of citizens, did not make war upon its godless

persecutors for the sake of temporal security, but preferred to win

eternal salvation by abstaining from war. They were bound, imprisoned,

beaten, tortured, burned, torn in pieces, massacred, and yet they

multiplied. It was not given to them to fight for their eternal

salvation except by despising their temporal salvation for their

Saviour's sake.

I am aware that Cicero, in the third book of his De Republica, if I

mistake not, argues that a first-rate power will not engage in war

except either for honor or for safety. What he has to say about the

question of safety, and what he means by safety, he explains in another

place, saying, "Private persons frequently evade, by a speedy death,

destitution, exile, bonds, the scourge, and the other pains which even

the most insensible feel. But to states, death, which seems to

emancipate individuals from all punishments, is itself a punishment;

for a state should be so constituted as to be eternal. And thus death

is not natural to a republic as to a man, to whom death is not only

necessary, but often even desirable. But when a state is destroyed,

obliterated, annihilated, it is as if (to compare great things with

small) this whole world perished and collapsed." Cicero said this

because he, with the Platonists, believed that the world would not

perish. It is therefore agreed that, according to Cicero, a state

should engage in war for the safety which preserves the state

permanently in existence though its citizens change; as the foliage of

an olive or laurel, or any tree of this kind, is perennial, the old

leaves being replaced by fresh ones. For death, as he says, is no

punishment to individuals, but rather delivers them from all other

punishments, but it is a punishment to the state. And therefore it is

reasonably asked whether the Saguntines did right when they chose that

their whole state should perish rather than that they should break

faith with the Roman republic; for this deed of theirs is applauded by

the citizens of the earthly republic. But I do not see how they could

follow the advice of Cicero, who tell us that no war is to be

undertaken save for safety or for honor; neither does he say which of

these two is to be preferred, if a case should occur in which the one

could not be preserved without the loss of the other. For manifestly,

if the Saguntines chose safety, they must break faith; if they kept

faith, they must reject safety; as also it fell out. But the safety of

the city of God is such that it can be retained, or rather acquired, by

faith and with faith; but if faith be abandoned, no one can attain it.

It is this thought of a most steadfast and patient spirit that has made

so many noble martyrs, while Romulus has not had, and could not have,

so much as one to die for his divinity.

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Chapter 7.--That the World's Belief in Christ is the Result of Divine

Power, Not of Human Persuasion.

But it is thoroughly ridiculous to make mention of the false divinity

of Romulus as any way comparable to that of Christ. Nevertheless, if

Romulus lived about six hundred years before Cicero, in an age which

already was so enlightened that it rejected all impossibilities, how

much more, in an age which certainly was more enlightened, being six

hundred years later, the age of Cicero himself, and of the emperors

Augustus and Tiberius, would the human mind have refused to listen to

or believe in the resurrection of Christ's body and its ascension into

heaven, and have scouted it as an impossibility, had not the divinity

of the truth itself, or the truth of the divinity, and corroborating

miraculous signs, proved that it could happen and had happened?

Through virtue of these testimonies, and notwithstanding the opposition

and terror of so many cruel persecutions, the resurrection and

immortality of the flesh, first in Christ, and subsequently in all in

the new world, was believed, was intrepidly proclaimed, and was sown

over the whole world, to be fertilized richly with the blood of the

martyrs. For the predictions of the prophets that had preceded the

events were read, they were corroborated by powerful signs, and the

truth was seen to be not contradictory to reason, but only different

from customary ideas, so that at length the world embraced the faith it

had furiously persecuted.

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Chapter 8.--Of Miracles Which Were Wrought that the World Might Believe

in Christ, and Which Have Not Ceased Since the World Believed.

Why, they say, are those miracles, which you affirm were wrought

formerly, wrought no longer? I might, indeed, reply that miracles were

necessary before the world believed, in order that it might believe.

And whoever now-a-days demands to see prodigies that he may believe, is

himself a great prodigy, because he does not believe, though the whole

world does. But they make these objections for the sole purpose of

insinuating that even those former miracles were never wrought. How,

then, is it that everywhere Christ is celebrated with such firm belief

in His resurrection and ascension? How is it that in enlightened

times, in which every impossibility is rejected, the world has, without

any miracles, believed things marvellously incredible? Or will they

say that these things were credible, and therefore were credited? Why

then do they themselves not believe? Our argument, therefore, is a

summary one--either incredible things which were not witnessed have

caused the world to believe other incredible things which both occurred

and were witnessed, or this matter was so credible that it needed no

miracles in proof of it, and therefore convicts these unbelievers of

unpardonable scepticism. This I might say for the sake of refuting

these most frivolous objectors. But we cannot deny that many miracles

were wrought to confirm that one grand and health-giving miracle of

Christ's ascension to heaven with the flesh in which He rose. For

these most trustworthy books of ours contain in one narrative both the

miracles that were wrought and the creed which they were wrought to

confirm. The miracles were published that they might produce faith,

and the faith which they produced brought them into greater

prominence. For they are read in congregations that they may be

believed, and yet they would not be so read unless they were believed.

For even now miracles are wrought in the name of Christ, whether by His

sacraments or by the prayers or relics of His saints; but they are not

so brilliant and conspicuous as to cause them to be published with such

glory as accompanied the former miracles. For the canon of the sacred

writings, which behoved to be closed, [1614] causes those to be

everywhere recited, and to sink into the memory of all the

congregations; but these modern miracles are scarcely known even to the

whole population in the midst of which they are wrought, and at the

best are confined to one spot. For frequently they are known only to a

very few persons, while all the rest are ignorant of them, especially

if the state is a large one; and when they are reported to other

persons in other localities, there is no sufficient authority to give

them prompt and unwavering credence, although they are reported to the

faithful by the faithful.

The miracle which was wrought at Milan when I was there, and by which a

blind man was restored to sight, could come to the knowledge of many;

for not only is the city a large one, but also the emperor was there at

the time, and the occurrence was witnessed by an immense concourse of

people that had gathered to the bodies of the martyrs Protasius and

Gervasius, which had long lain concealed and unknown, but were now made

known to the bishop Ambrose in a dream, and discovered by him. By

virtue of these remains the darkness of that blind man was scattered,

and he saw the light of day. [1615]

But who but a very small number are aware of the cure which was wrought

upon Innocentius, ex-advocate of the deputy prefecture, a cure wrought

at Carthage, in my presence, and under my own eyes? For when I and my

brother Alypius, [1616] who were not yet clergymen, [1617] though

already servants of God, came from abroad, this man received us, and

made us live with him, for he and all his household were devotedly

pious. He was being treated by medical men for fistul�, of which he

had a large number intricately seated in the rectum. He had already

undergone an operation, and the surgeons were using every means at

their command for his relief. In that operation he had suffered

long-continued and acute pain; yet, among the many folds of the gut,

one had escaped the operators so entirely, that, though they ought to

have laid it open with the knife, they never touched it. And thus,

though all those that had been opened were cured, this one remained as

it was, and frustrated all their labor. The patient, having his

suspicions awakened by the delay thus occasioned, and fearing greatly a

second operation, which another medical man--one of his own

domestics--had told him he must undergo, though this man had not even

been allowed to witness the first operation, and had been banished from

the house, and with difficulty allowed to come back to his enraged

master's presence,--the patient, I say, broke out to the surgeons,

saying, "Are you going to cut me again? Are you, after all, to fulfill

the prediction of that man whom you would not allow even to be

present?" The surgeons laughed at the unskillful doctor, and soothed

their patient's fears with fair words and promises. So several days

passed, and yet nothing they tried did him good. Still they persisted

in promising that they would cure that fistula by drugs, without the

knife. They called in also another old practitioner of great repute in

that department, Ammonius (for he was still alive at that time); and

he, after examining the part, promised the same result as themselves

from their care and skill. On this great authority, the patient became

confident, and, as if already well, vented his good spirits in

facetious remarks at the expense of his domestic physician, who had

predicted a second operation. To make a long story short, after a

number of days had thus uselessly elapsed, the surgeons, wearied and

confused, had at last to confess that he could only be cured by the

knife. Agitated with excessive fear, he was terrified, and grew pale

with dread; and when he collected himself and was able to speak, he

ordered them to go away and never to return. Worn out with weeping,

and driven by necessity, it occurred to him to call in an Alexandrian,

who was at that time esteemed a wonderfully skillful operator, that he

might perform the operation his rage would not suffer them to do. But

when he had come, and examined with a professional eye the traces of

their careful work, he acted the part of a good man, and persuaded his

patient to allow those same hands the satisfaction of finishing his

cure which had begun it with a skill that excited his admiration,

adding that there was no doubt his only hope of a cure was by an

operation, but that it was thoroughly inconsistent with his nature to

win the credit of the cure by doing the little that remained to be

done, and rob of their reward men whose consummate skill, care, and

diligence he could not but admire when be saw the traces of their

work. They were therefore again received to favor; and it was agreed

that, in the presence of the Alexandrian, they should operate on the

fistula, which, by the consent of all, could now only be cured by the

knife. The operation was deferred till the following day. But when

they had left, there arose in the house such a wailing, in sympathy

with the excessive despondency of the master, that it seemed to us like

the mourning at a funeral, and we could scarcely repress it. Holy men

were in the habit of visiting him daily; Saturninus of blessed memory,

at that time bishop of Uzali, and the presbyter Gelosus, and the

deacons of the church of Carthage; and among these was the bishop

Aurelius, who alone of them all survives,--a man to be named by us with

due reverence,--and with him I have often spoken of this affair, as we

conversed together about the wonderful works of God, and I have found

that he distinctly remembers what I am now relating. When these

persons visited him that evening according to their custom, he besought

them, with pitiable tears, that they would do him the honor of being

present next day at what he judged his funeral rather than his

suffering. For such was the terror his former pains had produced, that

he made no doubt he would die in the hands of the surgeons. They

comforted him, and exhorted him to put his trust in God, and nerve his

will like a man. Then we went to prayer; but while we, in the usual

way, were kneeling and bending to the ground, he cast himself down, as

if some one were hurling him violently to the earth, and began to pray;

but in what a manner, with what earnestness and emotion, with what a

flood of tears, with what groans and sobs, that shook his whole body,

and almost prevented him speaking, who can describe! Whether the

others prayed, and had not their attention wholly diverted by this

conduct, I do not know. For myself, I could not pray at all. This

only I briefly said in my heart: "O Lord, what prayers of Thy people

dost Thou hear if Thou hearest not these?" For it seemed to me that

nothing could be added to this prayer, unless he expired in praying.

We rose from our knees, and, receiving the blessing of the bishop,

departed, the patient beseeching his visitors to be present next

morning, they exhorting him to keep up his heart. The dreaded day

dawned. The servants of God were present, as they had promised to be;

the surgeons arrived; all that the circumstances required was ready;

the frightful instruments are produced; all look on in wonder and

suspense. While those who have most influence with the patient are

cheering his fainting spirit, his limbs are arranged on the couch so as

to suit the hand of the operator; the knots of the bandages are untied;

the part is bared; the surgeon examines it, and, with knife in hand,

eagerly looks for the sinus that is to be cut. He searches for it with

his eyes; he feels for it with his finger; he applies every kind of

scrutiny: he finds a perfectly firm cicatrix! No words of mine can

describe the joy, and praise, and thanksgiving to the merciful and

almighty God which was poured from the lips of all, with tears of

gladness. Let the scene be imagined rather than described!

In the same city of Carthage lived Innocentia, a very devout woman of

the highest rank in the state. She had cancer in one of her breasts, a

disease which, as physicians say, is incurable. Ordinarily, therefore,

they either amputate, and so separate from the body the member on which

the disease has seized, or, that the patient's life may be prolonged a

little, though death is inevitable even if somewhat delayed, they

abandon all remedies, following, as they say, the advice of

Hippocrates. This the lady we speak of had been advised to by a

skillful physician, who was intimate with her family; and she betook

herself to God alone by prayer. On the approach of Easter, she was

instructed in a dream to wait for the first woman that came out from

the baptistery [1618] after being baptized, and to ask her to make the

sign of Christ upon her sore. She did so, and was immediately cured.

The physician who had advised her to apply no remedy if she wished to

live a little longer, when he had examined her after this, and found

that she who, on his former examination, was afflicted with that

disease was now perfectly cured, eagerly asked her what remedy she had

used, anxious, as we may well believe, to discover the drug which

should defeat the decision of Hippocrates. But when she told him what

had happened, he is said to have replied, with reli gious politeness,

though with a contemptuous tone, and an expression which made her fear

he would utter some blasphemy against Christ, "I thought you would make

some great discovery to me." She, shuddering at his indifference,

quickly replied, "What great thing was it for Christ to heal a cancer,

who raised one who had been four days dead?" When, therefore, I had

heard this, I was extremely indignant that so great a miracle wrought

in that well-known city, and on a person who was certainly not obscure,

should not be divulged, and I considered that she should be spoken to,

if not reprimanded on this score. And when she replied to me that she

had not kept silence on the subject, I asked the women with whom she

was best acquainted whether they had ever heard of this before. They

told me they knew nothing of it. "See," I said, "what your not keeping

silence amounts to, since not even those who are so familiar with you

know of it." And as I had only briefly heard the story, I made her

tell how the whole thing happened, from beginning to end, while the

other women listened in great astonishment, and glorified God.

A gouty doctor of the same city, when he had given in his name for

baptism, and had been prohibited the day before his baptism from being

baptized that year, by black woolly-haired boys who appeared to him in

his dreams, and whom he understood to be devils, and when, though they

trod on his feet, and inflicted the acutest pain he had ever yet

experienced, he refused to obey them, but overcame them, and would not

defer being washed in the laver of regeneration, was relieved in the

very act of baptism, not only of the extraordinary pain he was tortured

with, but also of the disease itself, so that, though he lived a long

time afterwards, he never suffered from gout; and yet who knows of this

miracle? We, however, do know it, and so, too, do the small number of

brethren who were in the neighborhood, and to whose ears it might come.

An old comedian of Curubis [1619] was cured at baptism not only of

paralysis, but also of hernia, and, being delivered from both

afflictions, came up out of the font of regeneration as if he had had

nothing wrong with his body. Who outside of Curubis knows of this, or

who but a very few who might hear it elsewhere? But we, when we heard

of it, made the man come to Carthage, by order of the holy bishop

Aurelius, although we had already ascertained the fact on the

information of persons whose word we could not doubt.

Hesperius, of a tribunitian family, and a neighbor of our own, [1620]

has a farm called Zubedi in the Fussalian district; [1621] and, finding

that his family, his cattle, and his servants were suffering from the

malice of evil spirits, he asked our presbyters, during my absence,

that one of them would go with him and banish the spirits by his

prayers. One went, offered there the sacrifice of the body of Christ,

praying with all his might that that vexation might cease. It did

cease forthwith, through God's mercy. Now he had received from a

friend of his own some holy earth brought from Jerusalem, where Christ,

having been buried, rose again the third day. This earth he had hung

up in his bedroom to preserve himself from harm. But when his house

was purged of that demoniacal invasion, he began to consider what

should be done with the earth; for his reverence for it made him

unwilling to have it any longer in his bedroom. It so happened that I

and Maximinus bishop of Synita, and then my colleague, were in the

neighborhood. Hesperius asked us to visit him, and we did so. When he

had related all the circumstances, he begged that the earth might be

buried somewhere, and that the spot should be made a place of prayer

where Christians might assemble for the worship of God. We made no

objection: it was done as he desired. There was in that neighborhood

a young countryman who was paralytic, who, when he heard of this,

begged his parents to take him without delay to that holy place. When

he had been brought there, he prayed, and forthwith went away on his

own feet perfectly cured.

There is a country-seat called Victoriana, less than thirty miles from

Hippo-regius. At it there is a monument to the Milanese martyrs,

Protasius and Gervasius. Thither a young man was carried, who, when he

was watering his horse one summer day at noon in a pool of a river, had

been taken possession of by a devil. As he lay at the monument, near

death, or even quite like a dead person, the lady of the manor, with

her maids and religious attendants, entered the place for evening

prayer and praise, as her custom was, and they began to sing hymns. At

this sound the young man, as if electrified, was thoroughly aroused,

and with frightful screaming seized the altar, and held it as if he did

not dare or were not able to let it go, and as if he were fixed or tied

to it; and the devil in him, with loud lamentation, besought that he

might be spared, and confessed where and when and how he took

possession of the youth. At last, declaring that he would go out of

him, he named one by one the parts of his body which he threatened to

mutilate as he went out and with these words he departed from the man.

But his eye, falling out on his cheek, hung by a slender vein as by a

root, and the whole of the pupil which had been black became white.

When this was witnessed by those present (others too had now gathered

to his cries, and had all joined in prayer for him), although they were

delighted that he had recovered his sanity of mind, yet, on the other

hand, they were grieved about his eye, and said he should seek medical

advice. But his sister's husband, who had brought him there, said,

"God, who has banished the devil, is able to restore his eye at the

prayers of His saints." Therewith he replaced the eye that was fallen

out and hanging, and bound it in its place with his handkerchief as

well as he could, and advised him not to loose the bandage for seven

days. When he did so, he found it quite healthy. Others also were

cured there, but of them it were tedious to speak.

I know that a young woman of Hippo was immediately dispossessed of a

devil, on anointing herself with oil, mixed with the tears of the

prebsyter who had been praying for her. I know also that a bishop once

prayed for a demoniac young man whom he never saw, and that he was

cured on the spot.

There was a fellow-townsman of ours at Hippo, Florentius, an old man,

religious and poor, who supported himself as a tailor. Having lost his

coat, and not having means to buy another, he prayed to the Twenty

Martyrs, [1622] who have a very celebrated memorial shrine in our town,

begging in a distinct voice that he might be clothed. Some scoffing

young men, who happened to be present, heard him, and followed him with

their sarcasm as he went away, as if he had asked the martyrs for fifty

pence to buy a coat. But he, walking on in silence, saw on the shore a

great fish, gasping as if just cast up, and having secured it with the

good-natured assistance of the youths, he sold it for curing to a cook

of the name of Catosus, a good Christian man, telling him how he had

come by it, and receiving for it three hundred pence, which he laid out

in wool, that his wife might exercise her skill upon, and make into a

coat for him. But, on cutting up the fish, the cook found a gold ring

in its belly; and forthwith, moved with compassion, and influenced,

too, by religious fear, gave it up to the man, saying, "See how the

Twenty Martyrs have clothed you."

When the bishop Projectus was bringing the relics of the most glorious

martyr Stephen to the waters of Tibilis, a great concourse of people

came to meet him at the shrine. There a blind woman entreated that she

might be led to the bishop who was carrying the relics. He gave her

the flowers he was carrying. She took them, applied them to her eyes,

and forthwith saw. Those who were present were astounded, while she,

with every expression of joy, preceded them, pursuing her way without

further need of a guide.

Lucillus bishop of Sinita, in the neighborhood of the colonial town of

Hippo, was carrying in procession some relics of the same martyr, which

had been deposited in the castle of Sinita. A fistula under which he

had long labored, and which his private physician was watching an

opportunity to cut, was suddenly cured by the mere carrying of that

sacred fardel, [1623] --at least, afterwards there was no trace of it

in his body.

Eucharius, a Spanish priest, residing at Calama, was for a long time a

sufferer from stone. By the relics of the same martyr, which the

bishop Possidius brought him, he was cured. Afterwards the same

priest, sinking under another disease, was lying dead, and already they

were binding his hands. By the succor of the same martyr he was raised

to life, the priest's cloak having been brought from the oratory and

laid upon the corpse.

There was there an old nobleman named Martial, who had a great aversion

to the Christian religion, but whose daughter was a Christian, while

her husband had been baptized that same year. When he was ill, they

besought him with tears and prayers to become a Christian, but he

positively refused, and dismissed them from his presence in a storm of

indignation. It occurred to the son-in-law to go to the oratory of St.

Stephen, and there pray for him with all earnestness that God might

give him a right mind, so that he should not delay believing in

Christ. This he did with great groaning and tears, and the burning

fervor of sincere piety; then, as he left the place, he took some of

the flowers that were lying there, and, as it was already night, laid

them by his father's head, who so slept. And lo! before dawn, he cries

out for some one to run for the bishop; but he happened at that time to

be with me at Hippo. So when he had heard that he was from home, he

asked the presbyters to come. They came. To the joy and amazement of

all, he declared that he believed, and he was baptized. As long as he

remained in life, these words were ever on his lips: "Christ, receive

my spirit," though he was not aware that these were the last words of

the most blessed Stephen when he was stoned by the Jews. They were his

last words also, for not long after he himself also gave up the ghost.

There, too, by the same martyr, two men, one a citizen, the other a

stranger, were cured of gout; but while the citizen was absolutely

cured, the stranger was only informed what he should apply when the

pain returned; and when he followed this advice, the pain was at once

relieved.

Audurus is the name of an estate, where there is a church that contains

a memorial shrine of the martyr Stephen. It happened that, as a little

boy was playing in the court, the oxen drawing a wagon went out of the

track and crushed him with the wheel, so that immediately he seemed at

his last gasp. His mother snatched him up, and laid him at the shrine,

and not only did he revive, but also appeared uninjured.

A religious female, who lived at Caspalium, a neighboring estate, when

she was so ill as to be despaired of, had her dress brought to this

shrine, but before it was brought back she was gone. However, her

parents wrapped her corpse in the dress, and, her breath returning, she

became quite well.

At Hippo a Syrian called Bassus was praying at the relics of the same

martyr for his daughter, who was dangerously ill. He too had brought

her dress with him to the shrine. But as he prayed, behold, his

servants ran from the house to tell him she was dead. His friends,

however, intercepted them, and forbade them to tell him, lest he should

bewail her in public. And when he had returned to his house, which was

already ringing with the lamentations of his family, and had thrown on

his daughter's body the dress he was carrying, she was restored to

life.

There, too, the son of a man, Iren�us, one of our tax-gatherers, took

ill and died. And while his body was lying lifeless, and the last

rites were being prepared, amidst the weeping and mourning of all, one

of the friends who were consoling the father suggested that the body

should be anointed with the oil of the same martyr. It was done, and

he revived.

Likewise Eleusinus, a man of tribunitian rank among us, laid his infant

son, who had died, on the shrine of the martyr, which is in the suburb

where he lived, and, after prayer, which he poured out there with many

tears, he took up his child alive.

What am I to do? I am so pressed by the promise of finishing this

work, that I cannot record all the miracles I know; and doubtless

several of our adherents, when they read what I have narrated, will

regret that I have omitted so many which they, as well as I, certainly

know. Even now I beg these persons to excuse me, and to consider how

long it would take me to relate all those miracles, which the necessity

of finishing the work I have undertaken forces me to omit. For were I

to be silent of all others, and to record exclusively the miracles of

healing which were wrought in the district of Calama and of Hippo by

means of this martyr--I mean the most glorious Stephen--they would fill

many volumes; and yet all even of these could not be collected, but

only those of which narratives have been written for public recital.

For when I saw, in our own times, frequent signs of the presence of

divine powers similar to those which had been given of old, I desired

that narratives might be written, judging that the multitude should not

remain ignorant of these things. It is not yet two years since these

relics were first brought to Hippo-regius, and though many of the

miracles which have been wrought by it have not, as I have the most

certain means of knowing, been recorded, those which have been

published amount to almost seventy at the hour at which I write. But

at Calama, where these relics have been for a longer time, and where

more of the miracles were narrated for public information, there are

incomparably more.

At Uzali, too, a colony near Utica, many signal miracles were, to my

knowledge, wrought by the same martyr, whose relics had found a place

there by direction of the bishop Evodius, long before we had them at

Hippo. But there the custom of publishing narratives does not obtain,

or, I should say, did not obtain, for possibly it may now have been

begun. For, when I was there recently, a woman of rank, Petronia, had

been miraculously cured of a serious illness of long standing, in which

all medical appliances had failed, and, with the consent of the

above-named bishop of the place, I exhorted her to publish an account

of it that might be read to the people. She most promptly obeyed, and

inserted in her narrative a circumstance which I cannot omit to

mention, though I am compelled to hasten on to the subjects which this

work requires me to treat. She said that she had been persuaded by a

Jew to wear next her skin, under all her clothes, a hair girdle, and on

this girdle a ring, which, instead of a gem, had a stone which had been

found in the kidneys of an ox. Girt with this charm, she was making

her way to the threshold of the holy martyr. But, after leaving

Carthage, and when she had been lodging in her own demesne on the river

Bagrada, and was now rising to continue her journey, she saw her ring

lying before her feet. In great surprise she examined the hair girdle,

and when she found it bound, as it had been, quite firmly with knots,

she conjectured that the ring had been worn through and dropped off;

but when she found that the ring was itself also perfectly whole, she

presumed that by this great miracle she had received somehow a pledge

of her cure, whereupon she untied the girdle, and cast it into the

river, and the ring along with it. This is not credited by those who

do not believe either that the Lord Jesus Christ came forth from His

mother's womb without destroying her virginity, and entered among His

disciples when the doors were shut; but let them make strict inquiry

into this miracle, and if they find it true, let them believe those

others. The lady is of distinction, nobly born, married to a

nobleman. She resides at Carthage. The city is distinguished, the

person is distinguished, so that they who make inquiries cannot fail to

find satisfaction. Certainly the martyr himself, by whose prayers she

was healed, believed on the Son of her who remained a virgin; on Him

who came in among the disciples when the doors were shut; in fine,--and

to this tends all that we have been retailing,--on Him who ascended

into heaven with the flesh in which He had risen; and it is because he

laid down his life for this faith that such miracles were done by his

means.

Even now, therefore, many miracles are wrought, the same God who

wrought those we read of still performing them, by whom He will and as

He will; but they are not as well known, nor are they beaten into the

memory, like gravel, by frequent reading, so that they cannot fall out

of mind. For even where, as is now done among ourselves, care is taken

that the pamphlets of those who receive benefit be read publicly, yet

those who are present hear the narrative but once, and many are absent;

and so it comes to pass that even those who are present forget in a few

days what they heard, and scarcely one of them can be found who will

tell what he heard to one who he knows was not present.

One miracle was wrought among ourselves, which, though no greater than

those I have mentioned, was yet so signal and conspicuous, that I

suppose there is no inhabitant of Hippo who did not either see or hear

of it, none who could possibly forget it. There were seven brothers

and three sisters of a noble family of the Cappadocian C�sarea, who

were cursed by their mother, a new-made widow, on account of some wrong

they had done her, and which she bitterly resented, and who were

visited with so severe a punishment from Heaven, that all of them were

seized with a hideous shaking in all their limbs. Unable, while

presenting this loathsome appearance, to endure the eyes of their

fellow-citizens, they wandered over almost the whole Roman world, each

following his own direction. Two of them came to Hippo, a brother and

a sister, Paulus and Palladia, already known in many other places by

the fame of their wretched lot. Now it was about fifteen days before

Easter when they came, and they came daily to church, and specially to

the relics of the most glorious Stephen, praying that God might now be

appeased, and restore their former health. There, and wherever they

went, they attracted the attention of every one. Some who had seen

them elsewhere, and knew the cause of their trembling, told others as

occasion offered. Easter arrived, and on the Lord's day, in the

morning, when there was now a large crowd present, and the young man

was holding the bars of the holy place where the relics were, and

praying, suddenly he fell down, and lay precisely as if asleep, but not

trembling as he was wont to do even in sleep. All present were

astonished. Some were alarmed, some were moved with pity; and while

some were for lifting him up, others prevented them, and said they

should rather wait and see what would result. And behold! he rose up,

and trembled no more, for he was healed, and stood quite well, scanning

those who were scanning him. Who then refrained himself from praising

God? The whole church was filled with the voices of those who were

shouting and congratulating him. Then they came running to me, where I

was sitting ready to come into the church. One after another they

throng in, the last comer telling me as news what the first had told me

already; and while I rejoiced and inwardly gave God thanks, the young

man himself also enters, with a number of others, falls at my knees, is

raised up to receive my kiss. We go in to the congregation: the

church was full, and ringing with the shouts of joy, "Thanks to God!

Praised be God!" every one joining and shouting on all sides, "I have

healed the people," and then with still louder voice shouting again.

Silence being at last obtained, the customary lessons of the divine

Scriptures were read. And when I came to my sermon, I made a few

remarks suitable to the occasion and the happy and joyful feeling, not

desiring them to listen to me, but rather to consider the eloquence of

God in this divine work. The man dined with us, and gave us a careful

ac count of his own, his mother's, and his family's calamity.

Accordingly, on the following day, after delivering my sermon, I

promised that next day I would read his narrative to the people. [1624]

And when I did so, the third day after Easter Sunday, I made the

brother and sister both stand on the steps of the raised place from

which I used to speak; and while they stood there their pamphlet was

read. [1625] The whole congregation, men and women alike, saw the one

standing without any unnatural movement, the other trembling in all her

limbs; so that those who had not before seen the man himself saw in his

sister what the divine compassion had removed from him. In him they

saw matter of congratulation, in her subject for prayer. Meanwhile,

their pamphlet being finished, I instructed them to withdraw from the

gaze of the people; and I had begun to discuss the whole matter

somewhat more carefully, when lo! as I was proceeding, other voices are

heard from the tomb of the martyr, shouting new congratulations. My

audience turned round, and began to run to the tomb. The young woman,

when she had come down from the steps where she had been standing, went

to pray at the holy relics, and no sooner had she touched the bars than

she, in the same way as her brother, collapsed, as if falling asleep,

and rose up cured. While, then, we were asking what had happened, and

what occasioned this noise of joy, they came into the basilica where we

were, leading her from the martyr's tomb in perfect health. Then,

indeed, such a shout of wonder rose from men and women together, that

the exclamations and the tears seemed like never to come to an end.

She was led to the place where she had a little before stood

trembling. They now rejoiced that she was like her brother, as before

they had mourned that she remained unlike him; and as they had not yet

uttered their prayers in her behalf, they perceived that their

intention of doing so had been speedily heard. They shouted God's

praises without words, but with such a noise that our ears could

scarcely bear it. What was there in the hearts of these exultant

people but the faith of Christ, for which Stephen had shed his blood?

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[1614] Another reading has diffamatum, "published."

[1615] A somewhat fuller account of this miracle is given by Augustin

in the Confessions, ix. 16. See also Serm. 286, and Ambrose, Ep. 22.

A translation of this epistle in full is given in Isaac Taylor's

Ancient Christianity, ii. 242, where this miracle is taken as a

specimen of the so-called miracles of that age, and submitted to a

detailed examination. The result arrived at will be gathered from the

following sentence: "In the Nicene Church, so lax were the notions of

common morality, and in so feeble a manner did the fear of God

influence the conduct of leading men, that, on occasions when the

Church was to be served, and her assailants to be confounded, they did

not scruple to take upon themselves the contrivance and execution of

the most degrading impostures."--P. 270. It is to be observed,

however, that Augustin was, at least in this instance, one of the

deceived. [On Augustin's views on post-apostolic miracles see Card.

Newman, Essay on Miracles, Nitzsch, Augustinus Lehre vom Wunder

(Berlin, 1865) and Schaff, Church History, vol. iii. 460, sqq.--P.S.]

[1616] Alypius was a countryman of Augustin, and one of his most

attached friends. See the Confessions, passim.

[1617] Cleros.

[1618] Easter and Whitsuntide were the common seasons for administering

baptism, though no rule was laid down till towards the end of the sixth

century. Tertullian thinks these the most appropriate times, but says

that every time is suitable. See Turtull, de Baptismo, c. 19.

[1619] A town near Carthage.

[1620] This may possibly mean a Christian.

[1621] Near Hippo.

[1622] Augustin's 325th sermon is in honor of these martyrs.

[1623] See Isaac Taylor's Ancient Christianity, ii. 354.

[1624] See Augustin's Sermons, 321.

[1625] Sermon, 322.

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Chapter 9.--That All the Miracles Which are Done by Means of the

Martyrs in the Name of Christ Testify to that Faith Which the Martyrs

Had in Christ.

To what do these miracles witness, but to this faith which preaches

Christ risen in the flesh, and ascended with the same into heaven? For

the martyrs themselves were martyrs, that is to say, witnesses of this

faith, drawing upon themselves by their testimony the hatred of the

world, and conquering the world not by resisting it, but by dying. For

this faith they died, and can now ask these benefits from the Lord in

whose name they were slain. For this faith their marvellous constancy

was exercised, so that in these miracles great power was manifested as

the result. For if the resurrection of the flesh to eternal life had

not taken place in Christ, and were not to be accomplished in His

people, as predicted by Christ, or by the prophets who foretold that

Christ was to come, why do the martyrs who were slain for this faith

which proclaims the resurrection possess such power? For whether God

Himself wrought these miracles by that wonderful manner of working by

which, though Himself eternal, He produces effects in time; or whether

He wrought them by servants, and if so, whether He made use of the

spirits of martyrs as He uses men who are still in the body, or effects

all these marvels by means of angels, over whom He exerts an invisible,

immutable, incorporeal sway, so that what is said to be done by the

martyrs is done not by their operation, but only by their prayer and

request; or whether, finally, some things are done in one way, others

in another, and so that man cannot at all comprehend

them,--nevertheless these miracles attest this faith which preaches the

resurrection of the flesh to eternal life.

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Chapter 10.--That the Martyrs Who Obtain Many Miracles in Order that

the True God May Be Worshipped, are Worthy of Much Greater Honor Than

the Demons, Who Do Some Marvels that They Themselves May Be Supposed to

Be God.

Here perhaps our adversaries will say that their gods also have done

some wonderful things, if now they begin to compare their gods to our

dead men. Or will they also say that they have gods taken from among

dead men, such as Hercules, Romulus, and many others whom they fancy to

have been received into the number of the gods? But our martyrs are

not our gods; for we know that the martyrs and we have both but one

God, and that the same. Nor yet are the miracles which they maintain

to have been done by means of their temples at all comparable to those

which are done by the tombs of our martyrs. If they seem similar,

their gods have been defeated by our martyrs as Pharaoh's magi were by

Moses. In reality, the demons wrought these marvels with the same

impure pride with which they aspired to be the gods of the nations; but

the martyrs do these wonders, or rather God does them while they pray

and assist, in order that an impulse may be given to the faith by which

we believe that they are not our gods, but have, together with

ourselves, one God. In fine, they built temples to these gods of

theirs, and set up altars, and ordained priests, and appointed

sacrifices; but to our martyrs we build, not temples as if they were

gods, but monuments as to dead men whose spirits live with God.

Neither do we erect altars at these monuments that we may sacrifice to

the martyrs, but to the one God of the martyrs and of ourselves; and in

this sacrifice they are named in their own place and rank as men of God

who conquered the world by confessing Him, but they are not invoked by

the sacrificing priest. For it is to God, not to them, he sacrifices,

though he sacrifices at their monument; for he is God's priest, not

theirs. The sacrifice itself, too, is the body of Christ, which is not

offered to them, because they themselves are this body. Which then can

more readily be believed to work miracles? They who wish themselves to

be reckoned gods by those on whom they work miracles, or those whose

sole object in working any miracle is to induce faith in God, and in

Christ also as God? They who wished to turn even their crimes into

sacred rites, or those who are unwilling that even their own praises be

consecrated, and seek that everything for which they are justly praised

be ascribed to the glory of Him in whom they are praised? For in the

Lord their souls are praised. Let us therefore believe those who both

speak the truth and work wonders. For by speaking the truth they

suffered, and so won the power of working wonders. And the leading

truth they professed is that Christ rose from the dead, and first

showed in His own flesh the immortality of the resurrection which He

promised should be ours, either in the beginning of the world to come,

or in the end of this world.

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Chapter 11.--Against the Platonists, Who Argue from the Physical Weight

of the Elements that an Earthly Body Cannot Inhabit Heaven.

But against this great gift of God, these reasoners, "whose thoughts

the Lord knows that they are vain" [1626] bring arguments from the

weights of the elements; for they have been taught by their master

Plato that the two greatest elements of the world, and the furthest

removed from one another, are coupled and united by the two

intermediate, air and water. And consequently they say, since the

earth is the first of the elements, beginning from the base of the

series, the second the water above the earth, the third the air above

the water, the fourth the heaven above the air, it follows that a body

of earth cannot live in the heaven; for each element is poised by its

own weight so as to preserve its own place and rank. Behold with what

arguments human infirmity, possessed with vanity, contradicts the

omnipotence of God! What, then, do so many earthly bodies do in the

air, since the air is the third element from the earth? Unless perhaps

He who has granted to the earthly bodies of birds that they be carried

through the air by the lightness of feathers and wings, has not been

able to confer upon the bodies of men made immortal the power to abide

in the highest heaven. The earthly animals, too, which cannot fly,

among which are men, ought on these terms to live under the earth, as

fishes, which are the animals of the water, live under the water. Why,

then, can an animal of earth not live in the second element, that is,

in water, while it can in the third? Why, though it belongs to the

earth, is it forthwith suffocated if it is forced to live in the second

element next above earth, while it lives in the third, and cannot live

out of it? Is there a mistake here in the order of the elements, or is

not the mistake rather in their reasonings, and not in the nature of

things? I will not repeat what I said in the thirteenth book, [1627]

that many earthly bodies, though heavy like lead, receive from the

workman's hand a form which enables them to swim in water; and yet it

is denied that the omnipotent Worker can confer on the human body a

property which shall enable it to pass into heaven and dwell there.

But against what I have formerly said they can find nothing to say,

even though they introduce and make the most of this order of the

elements in which they confide. For if the order be that the earth is

first, the water second, the air third, the heaven fourth, then the

soul is above all. For Aristotle said that the soul was a fifth body,

while Plato denied that it was a body at all. If it were a fifth body,

then certainly it would be above the rest; and if it is not a body at

all, so much the more does it rise above all. What, then, does it do

in an earthly body? What does this soul, which is finer than all else,

do in such a mass of matter as this? What does the lightest of

substances do in this ponderosity? this swiftest substance in such

sluggishness? Will not the body be raised to heaven by virtue of so

excellent a nature as this? and if now earthly bodies can retain the

souls below, shall not the souls be one day able to raise the earthly

bodies above?

If we pass now to their miracles which they oppose to our martyrs as

wrought by their gods, shall not even these be found to make for us,

and help out our argument? For if any of the miracles of their gods

are great, certainly that is a great one which Varro mentions of a

vestal virgin, who, when she was endangered by a false accusation of

unchastity, filled a sieve with water from the Tiber, and carried it to

her judges without any part of it leaking. Who kept the weight of

water in the sieve? Who prevented any drop from falling from it

through so many open holes? They will answer, Some god or some demon.

If a god, is he greater than the God who made the world? If a demon,

is he mightier than an angel who serves the God by whom the world was

made? If, then, a lesser god, angel, or demon could so sustain the

weight of this liquid element that the water might seem to have changed

its nature, shall not Almighty God, who Himself created all the

elements, be able to eliminate from the earthly body its heaviness, so

that the quickened body shall dwell in whatever element the quickening

spirit pleases?

Then, again, since they give the air a middle place between the fire

above and the water beneath, how is it that we often find it between

water and water, and between the water and the earth? For what do they

make of those watery clouds, between which and the seas air is

constantly found intervening? I should like to know by what weight and

order of the elements it comes to pass that very violent and stormy

torrents are suspended in the clouds above the earth before they rush

along upon the earth under the air. In fine, why is it that throughout

the whole globe the air is between the highest heaven and the earth, if

its place is between the sky and the water, as the place of the water

is between the sky and the earth?

Finally, if the order of the elements is so disposed that, as Plato

thinks, the two extremes, fire and earth, are united by the two means,

air and water, and that the fire occupies the highest part of the sky,

and the earth the lowest part, or as it were the foundation of the

world, and that therefore earth cannot be in the heavens, how is fire

in the earth? For, according to this reasoning, these two elements,

earth and fire, ought to be so restricted to their own places, the

highest and the lowest, that neither the lowest can rise to the place

of the highest, nor the highest sink to that of the lowest. Thus, as

they think that no particle of earth is or shall ever be in the sky so

we ought to see no particle of fire on the earth. But the fact is that

it exists to such an extent, not only on but even under the earth, that

the tops of mountains vomit it forth; besides that we see it to exist

on earth for human uses, and even to be produced from the earth, since

it is kindled from wood and stones, which are without doubt earthly

bodies. But that [upper] fire, they say, is tranquil, pure, harmless,

eternal; but this [earthly] fire is turbid, smoky, corruptible, and

corrupting. But it does not corrupt the mountains and caverns of the

earth in which it rages continually. But grant that the earthly fire

is so unlike the other as to suit its earthly position, why then do

they object to our believing that the nature of earthly bodies shall

some day be made incorruptible and fit for the sky, even as now fire is

corruptible and suited to the earth? They therefore adduce from their

weights and order of the elements nothing from which they can prove

that it is impossible for Almighty God to make our bodies such that

they can dwell in the skies.

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[1626] Ps. xciv. 11.

[1627] C. 18.

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Chapter 12.--Against the Calumnies with Which Unbelievers Throw

Ridicule Upon the Christian Faith in the Resurrection of the Flesh.

But their way is to feign a scrupulous anxiety in investigating this

question, and to cast ridicule on our faith in the resurrection of the

body, by asking, Whether abortions shall rise? And as the Lord says,

"Verily I say unto you, not a hair of your head shall perish," [1628]

shall all bodies have an equal stature and strength, or shall there be

differences in size? For if there is to be equality, where shall those

abortions, supposing that they rise again, get that bulk which they had

not here? Or if they shall not rise because they were not born but

cast out, they raise the same question about children who have died in

childhood, asking us whence they get the stature which we see they had

not here; for we will not say that those who have been not only born,

but born again, shall not rise again. Then, further, they ask of what

size these equal bodies shall be. For if all shall be as tall and

large as were the tallest and largest in this world, they ask us how it

is that not only children but many full-grown persons shall receive

what they here did not possess, if each one is to receive what he had

here. And if the saying of the apostle, that we are all to come to the

"measure of the age of the fullness of Christ," [1629] or that other

saying, "Whom He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His

Son," [1630] is to be understood to mean that the stature and size of

Christ's body shall be the measure of the bodies of all those who shall

be in His kingdom, then, say they, the size and height of many must be

diminished; and if so much of the bodily frame itself be lost, what

becomes of the saying, "Not a hair of your head shall perish?"

Besides, it might be asked regarding the hair itself, whether all that

the barber has cut off shall be restored? And if it is to be restored,

who would not shrink from such deformity? For as the same restoration

will be made of what has been pared off the nails, much will be

replaced on the body which a regard for its appearance had cut off.

And where, then, will be its beauty, which assuredly ought to be much

greater in that immortal condition than it could be in this corruptible

state? On the other hand, if such things are not restored to the body,

they must perish; how, then, they say, shall not a hair of the head

perish? In like manner they reason about fatness and leanness; for if

all are to be equal, then certainly there shall not be some fat, others

lean. Some, therefore, shall gain, others lose something.

Consequently there will not be a simple restoration of what formerly

existed, but, on the one hand, an addition of what had no existence,

and, on the other, a loss of what did before exist.

The difficulties, too, about the corruption and dissolution of dead

bodies,--that one is turned into dust, while another evaporates into

the air; that some are devoured by beasts, some by fire, while some

perish by shipwreck or by drowning in one shape or other, so that their

bodies decay into liquid, these difficulties give them immoderate

alarm, and they believe that all those dissolved elements cannot be

gathered again and reconstructed into a body. They also make eager use

of all the deformities and blemishes which either accident or birth has

produced, and accordingly, with horror and derision, cite monstrous

births, and ask if every deformity will be preserved in the

resurrection. For if we say that no such thing shall be reproduced in

the body of a man, they suppose that they confute us by citing the

marks of the wounds which we assert were found in the risen body of the

Lord Christ. But of all these, the most difficult question is, into

whose body that flesh shall return which has been eaten and assimilated

by another man constrained by hunger to use it so; for it has been

converted into the flesh of the man who used it as his nutriment, and

it filled up those losses of flesh which famine had produced. For the

sake, then, of ridiculing the resurrection, they ask, Shall this return

to the man whose flesh it first was, or to him whose flesh it

afterwards became? And thus, too, they seek to give promise to the

human soul of alternations of true misery and false happiness, in

accordance with Plato's theory; or, in accordance with Porphyry's,

that, after many transmigrations into different bodies, it ends its

miseries, and never more returns to them, not, however, by obtaining an

immortal body, but by escaping from every kind of body.

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[1628] Luke xxi. 18.

[1629] Eph. iv. 13.

[1630] Rom. viii. 29.

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Chapter 13.--Whether Abortions, If They are Numbered Among the Dead,

Shall Not Also Have a Part in the Resurrection.

To these objections, then, of our adversaries which I have thus

detailed, I will now reply, trusting that God will mercifully assist my

endeavors. That abortions, which, even supposing they were alive in

the womb, did also die there, shall rise again, I make bold neither to

affirm nor to deny, although I fail to see why, if they are not

excluded from the number of the dead, they should not attain to the

resurrection of the dead. For either all the dead shall not rise, and

there will be to all eternity some souls without bodies though they

once had them,--only in their mother's womb, indeed; or, if all human

souls shall receive again the bodies which they had wherever they

lived, and which they left when they died, then I do not see how I can

say that even those who died in their mother's womb shall have no

resurrection. But whichever of these opinions any one may adopt

concerning them, we must at least apply to them, if they rise again,

all that we have to say of infants who have been born.

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Chapter 14.--Whether Infants Shall Rise in that Body Which They Would

Have Had Had They Grown Up.

What, then, are we to say of infants, if not that they will not rise in

that diminutive body in which they died, but shall receive by the

marvellous and rapid operation of God that body which time by a slower

process would have given them? For in the Lord's words, where He says,

"Not a hair of your head shall perish," [1631] it is asserted that

nothing which was possessed shall be wanting; but it is not said that

nothing which was not possessed shall be given. To the dead infant

there was wanting the perfect stature of its body; for even the perfect

infant lacks the perfection of bodily size, being capable of further

growth. This perfect stature is, in a sense, so possessed by all that

they are conceived and born with it,--that is, they have it

potentially, though not yet in actual bulk; just as all the members of

the body are potentially in the seed, though, even after the child is

born, some of them, the teeth for example, may be wanting. In this

seminal principle of every substance, there seems to be, as it were,

the beginning of everything which does not yet exist, or rather does

not appear, but which in process of time will come into being, or

rather into sight. In this, therefore, the child who is to be tall or

short is already tall or short. And in the resurrection of the body,

we need, for the same reason, fear no bodily loss; for though all

should be of equal size, and reach gigantic proportions, lest the men

who were largest here should lose anything of their bulk and it should

perish, in contradiction to the words of Christ, who said that not a

hair of their head should perish, yet why should there lack the means

by which that wonderful Worker should make such additions, seeing that

He is the Creator, who Himself created all things out of nothing?

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[1631] Luke xxi. 18

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Chapter 15.--Whether the Bodies of All the Dead Shall Rise the Same

Size as the Lord's Body.

It is certain that Christ rose in the same bodily stature in which He

died, and that it is wrong to say that, when the general resurrection

shall have arrived, His body shall, for the sake of equalling the

tallest, assume proportions which it had not when He appeared to the

disciples in the figure with which they were familiar. But if we say

that even the bodies of taller men are to be reduced to the size of the

Lord's body, there will be a great loss in many bodies, though He

promised that, not a hair of their head should perish. It remains,

therefore, that we conclude that every man shall receive his own size

which he had in youth, though he died an old man, or which he would

have had, supposing he died before his prime. As for what the apostle

said of the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ, we must

either understand him to refer to something else, viz., to the fact

that the measure of Christ will be completed when all the members among

the Christian communities are added to the Head; or if we are to refer

it to the resurrection of the body, the meaning is that all shall rise

neither beyond nor under youth, but in that vigor and age to which we

know that Christ had arrived. For even the world's wisest men have

fixed the bloom of youth at about the age of thirty; and when this

period has been passed, the man begins to decline towards the defective

and duller period of old age. And therefore the apostle did not speak

of the measure of the body, nor of the measure of the stature, but of

"the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ."

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Chapter 16.--What is Meant by the Conforming of the Saints to the Image

of The Son of God.

Then, again, these words, "Predestinate to be conformed to the image of

the Son of God," [1632] may be understood of the inner man. So in

another place He says to us, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye

transformed in the renewing of your mind." [1633] In so far, then, as

we are transformed so as not to be conformed to the world, we are

conformed to the Son of God. It may also be understood thus, that as

He was conformed to us by assuming mortality, we shall be conformed to

Him by immortality; and this indeed is connected with the resurrection

of the body. But if we are also taught in these words what form our

bodies shall rise in, as the measure we spoke of before, so also this

conformity is to be understood not of size, but of age. Accordingly

all shall rise in the stature they either had attained or would have

attained had they lived to their prime, although it will be no great

disadvantage even if the form of the body be infantine or aged, while

no infirmity shall remain in the mind nor in the body itself. So that

even if any one contends that every person will rise again in the same

bodily form in which he died, we need not spend much labor in disputing

with him.

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[1632] Rom. viii. 29.

[1633] Rom. xii. 2.

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Chapter 17.--Whether the Bodies of Women Shall Retain Their Own Sex in

the Resurrection.

From the words, "Till we all come to a perfect man, to the measure of

the age of the fullness of Christ," [1634] and from the words,

"Conformed to the image of the Son of God," [1635] some conclude that

women shall not rise women, but that all shall be men, because God made

man only of earth, and woman of the man. For my part, they seem to be

wiser who make no doubt that both sexes shall rise. For there shall be

no lust, which is now the cause of confusion. For before they sinned,

the man and the woman were naked, and were not ashamed. From those

bodies, then, vice shall be withdrawn, while nature shall be

preserved. And the sex of woman is not a vice, but nature. It shall

then indeed be superior to carnal intercourse and child-bearing;

nevertheless the female members shall remain adapted not to the old

uses, but to a new beauty, which, so far from provoking lust, now

extinct, shall excite praise to the wisdom and clemency of God, who

both made what was not and delivered from corruption what He made. For

at the beginning of the human race the woman was made of a rib taken

from the side of the man while he slept; for it seemed fit that even

then Christ and His Church should be foreshadowed in this event. For

that sleep of the man was the death of Christ, whose side, as He hung

lifeless upon the cross, was pierced with a spear, and there flowed

from it blood and water, and these we know to be the sacraments by

which the Church is "built up." For Scripture used this very word, not

saying "He formed" or "framed," but "built her up into a woman;" [1636]

whence also the apostle speaks of the edification of the body of

Christ, [1637] which is the Church. The woman, therefore, is a

creature of God even as the man; but by her creation from man unity is

commended; and the manner of her creation prefigured, as has been said,

Christ and the Church. He, then, who created both sexes will restore

both. Jesus Himself also, when asked by the Sadducees, who denied the

resurrection, which of the seven brothers should have to wife the woman

whom all in succession had taken to raise up seed to their brother, as

the law enjoined, says, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the

power of God." [1638] And though it was a fit opportunity for His

saying, She about whom you make inquiries shall herself be a man, and

not a woman, He said nothing of the kind; but "In the resurrection they

neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God

in heaven." [1639] They shall be equal to the angels in immortality

and happiness, not in flesh, nor in resurrection, which the angels did

not need, because they could not die. The Lord then denied that there

would be in the resurrection, not women, but marriages; and He uttered

this denial in circumstances in which the question mooted would have

been more easily and speedily solved by denying that the female sex

would exist, if this had in truth been foreknown by Him. But, indeed,

He even affirmed that the sex should exist by saying, "They shall not

be given in marriage," which can only apply to females; "Neither shall

they marry," which applies to males. There shall therefore be those

who are in this world accustomed to marry and be given in marriage,

only they shall there make no such marriages.

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[1634] Eph. iv. 13.

[1635] Rom. viii. 29.

[1636] Gen. ii. 22.

[1637] Eph. iv. 12.

[1638] Matt. xxii. 29.

[1639] Matt. xxii. 30.

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Chapter 18.--Of the Perfect Man, that Is, Christ; And of His Body, that

Is, The Church, Which is His Fullness.

To understand what the apostle means when he says that we shall all

come to a perfect man, we must consider the connection of the whole

passage, which runs thus: "He that descended is the same also that

ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. And

He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and

some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the

work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we

all come to the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to

a perfect man, to the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ:

that we henceforth be no more children, tossed and carried about with

every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness,

whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love,

may grow up in Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from

whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which

every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the

measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying

of itself in love." [1640] Behold what the perfect man is--the head

and the body, which is made up of all the members, which in their own

time shall be perfected. But new additions are daily being made to

this body while the Church is being built up, to which it is said, "Ye

are the body of Christ and His members;" [1641] and again, "For His

body's sake," he says, "which is the Church;" [1642] and again, "We

being many are one head, one body." [1643] It is of the edification

of this body that it is here, too, said, "For the perfecting of the

saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body

of Christ;" and then that passage of which we are now speaking is

added, "Till we all come to the unity of the faith and knowledge of the

Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the age of the fullness

of Christ," and so on. And he shows of what body we are to understand

this to be the measure, when he says, "That we may grow up into Him in

all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body

fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint

supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every

part." As, therefore, there is a measure of every part, so there is a

measure of the fullness of the whole body which is made up of all its

parts, and it is of this measure it is said, "To the measure of the age

of the fullness of Christ." This fullness he spoke of also in the

place where he says of Christ, "And gave Him to be the Head over all

things to the Church, [1644] which is His body, the fullness of Him

that filleth all in all." [1645] But even if this should be referred

to the form in which each one shall rise, what should hinder us from

applying to the woman what is expressly said of the man, understanding

both sexes to be included under the general term "man?" For certainly

in the saying, "Blessed is he who feareth the Lord," [1646] women also

who fear the Lord are included.

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[1640] Eph. iv. 10-16.

[1641] 1 Cor. xii. 27.

[1642] Col. i. 24.

[1643] 1 Cor. x. 17.

[1644] Another reading is, "Head over all the Church."

[1645] Eph. i. 22, 23.

[1646] Ps. cxii. 1.

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Chapter 19.--That All Bodily Blemishes Which Mar Human Beauty in This

Life Shall Be Removed in the Resurrection, the Natural Substance of the

Body Remaining, But the Quality and Quantity of It Being Altered So as

to Produce Beauty.

What am I to say now about the hair and nails? Once it is understood

that no part of the body shall so perish as to produce deformity in the

body, it is at the same time understood that such things as would have

produced a deformity by their excessive proportions shall be added to

the total bulk of the body, not to parts in which the beauty of the

proportion would thus be marred. Just as if, after making a vessel of

clay, one wished to make it over again of the same clay, it would not

be necessary that the same portion of the clay which had formed the

handle should again form the new handle, or that what had formed the

bottom should again do so, but only that the whole clay should go to

make up the whole new vessel, and that no part of it should be left

unused. Wherefore, if the hair that has been cropped and the nails

that have been cut would cause a deformity were they to be restored to

their places, they shall not be restored; and yet no one will lose

these parts at the resurrection, for they shall be changed into the

same flesh, their substance being so altered as to preserve the

proportion of the various parts of the body. However, what our Lord

said, "Not a hair of your head shall perish," might more suitably be

interpreted of the number, and not of the length of the hairs, as He

elsewhere says, "The hairs of your head are all numbered." [1647] Nor

would I say this because I suppose that any part naturally belonging to

the body can perish, but that whatever deformity was in it, and served

to exhibit the penal condition in which we mortals are, should be

restored in such a way that, while the substance is entirely preserved,

the deformity shall perish. For if even a human workman, who has, for

some reason, made a deformed statue, can recast it and make it very

beautiful, and this without suffering any part of the substance, but

only the deformity to be lost,--if he can, for example, remove some

unbecoming or disproportionate part, not by cutting off and separating

this part from the whole, but by so breaking down and mixing up the

whole as to get rid of the blemish without diminishing the quantity of

his material,--shall we not think as highly of the almighty Worker?

Shall He not be able to remove and abolish all deformities of the human

body, whether common ones or rare and monstrous, which, though in

keeping with this miserable life, are yet not to be thought of in

connection with that future blessedness; and shall He not be able so to

remove them that, while the natural but unseemly blemishes are put an

end to, the natural substance shall suffer no diminution?

And consequently overgrown and emaciated persons need not fear that

they shall be in heaven of such a figure as they would not be even in

this world if they could help it. For all bodily beauty consists in

the proportion of the parts, together with a certain agreeableness of

color. Where there is no proportion, the eye is offended, either

because there is something awanting, or too small, or too large. And

thus there shall be no deformity resulting from want of proportion in

that state in which all that is wrong is corrected, and all that is

defective supplied from resources the Creator wots of, and all that is

excessive removed without destroying the integrity of the substance.

And as for the pleasant color, how conspicuous shall it be where "the

just shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father!"

[1648] This brightness we must rather believe to have been concealed

from the eyes of the disciples when Christ rose, than to have been

awanting. For weak human eyesight could not bear it, and it was

necessary that they should so look upon Him as to be able to recognize

Him. For this purpose also He allowed them to touch the marks of His

wounds, and also ate and drank,--not because He needed nourishment, but

because He could take it if He wished. Now, when an object, though

present, is invisible to persons who see other things which are

present, as we say that that brightness was present but invisible by

those who saw other things, this is called in Greek aorasia; and our

Latin translators, for want of a better word, have rendered this

c�citas (blindness) in the book of Genesis. This blindness the men of

Sodom suffered when they sought the just Lot's gate and could not find

it. But if it had been blindness, that is to say, if they could see

nothing, then they would not have asked for the gate by which they

might enter the house, but for guides who might lead them away.

But the love we bear to the blessed martyrs causes us, I know not how,

to desire to see in the heavenly kingdom the marks of the wounds which

they received for the name of Christ, and possibly we shall see them.

For this will not be a deformity, but a mark of honor, and will add

lustre to their appearance, and a spiritual, if not a bodily beauty.

And yet we need not believe that they to whom it has been said, "Not a

hair of your head shall perish," shall, in the resurrection, want such

of their members as they have been deprived of in their martyrdom. But

if it will be seemly in that new kingdom to have some marks of these

wounds still visible in that immortal flesh, the places where they have

been wounded or mutilated shall retain the scars without any of the

members being lost. While, therefore, it is quite true that no

blemishes which the body has sustained shall appear in the

resurrection, yet we are not to reckon or name these marks of virtue

blemishes.

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[1647] Luke xii. 7.

[1648] Matt. xiii. 43.

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Chapter 20.--That, in the Resurrection, the Substance of Our Bodies,

However Disintegrated, Shall Be Entirely Reunited.

Far be it from us to fear that the omnipotence of the Creator cannot,

for the resuscitation and reanimation of our bodies, recall all the

portions which have been consumed by beasts or fire, or have been

dissolved into dust or ashes, or have decomposed into water, or

evaporated into the air. Far from us be the thought, that anything

which escapes our observation in any most hidden recess of nature

either evades the knowledge or transcends the power of the Creator of

all things. Cicero, the great authority of our adversaries, wishing to

define God as accurately as possible, says, "God is a mind free and

independent, without materiality, perceiving and moving all things, and

itself endowed with eternal movement." [1649] This he found in the

systems of the greatest philosophers. Let me ask, then, in their own

language, how anything can either lie hid from Him who perceives all

things, or irrevocably escape Him who moves all things?

This leads me to reply to that question which seems the most difficult

of all,--To whom, in the resurrection, will belong the flesh of a dead

man which has become the flesh of a living man? For if some one,

famishing for want and pressed with hunger, use human flesh as

food,--an extremity not unknown, as both ancient history and the

unhappy experience of our own days have taught us,--can it be

contended, with any show of reason, that all the flesh eaten has been

evacuated, and that none of it has been assimilated to the substance of

the eater though the very emaciation which existed before, and has now

disappeared, sufficiently indicates what large deficiencies have been

filled up with this food? But I have already made some remarks which

will suffice for the solution of this difficulty also. For all the

flesh which hunger has consumed finds its way into the air by

evaporation, whence, as we have said, God Almighty can recall it. That

flesh, therefore, shall be restored to the man in whom it first became

human flesh. For it must be looked upon as borrowed by the other

person, and, like a pecuniary loan, must be returned to the lender.

His own flesh, however, which he lost by famine, shall be restored to

him by Him who can recover even what has evaporated. And though it had

been absolutely annihilated, so that no part of its substance remained

in any secret spot of nature, the Almighty could restore it by such

means as He saw fit. For this sentence, uttered by the Truth, "Not a

hair of your head shall perish," forbids us to suppose that, though no

hair of a man's head can perish, yet the large portions of his flesh

eaten and consumed by the famishing can perish.

From all that we have thus considered, and discussed with such poor

ability as we can command, we gather this conclusion, that in the

resurrection of the flesh the body shall be of that size which it

either had attained or should have attained in the flower of its youth,

and shall enjoy the beauty that arises from preserving symmetry and

proportion in all its members. And it is reasonable to suppose that,

for the preservation of this beauty, any part of the body's substance,

which, if placed in one spot, would produce a deformity, shall be

distributed through the whole of it, so that neither any part, nor the

symmetry of the whole, may be lost, but only the general stature of the

body somewhat increased by the distribution in all the parts of that

which, in one place, would have been unsightly. Or if it is contended

that each will rise with the same stature as that of the body he died

in, we shall not obstinately dispute this, provided only there be no

deformity, no infirmity, no languor, no corruption,--nothing of any

kind which would ill become that kingdom in which the children of the

resurrection and of the promise shall be equal to the angels of God, if

not in body and age, at least in happiness.

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[1649] Cic. Tusc. Qu�st. i. 27.

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Chapter 21.--Of the New Spiritual Body into Which the Flesh of the

Saints Shall Be Transformed.

Whatever, therefore, has been taken from the body, either during life

or after death shall be restored to it, and, in conjunction with what

has remained in the grave, shall rise again, transformed from the

oldness of the animal body into the newness of the spiritual body, and

clothed in incorruption and immortality. But even though the body has

been all quite ground to powder by some severe accident, or by the

ruthlessness of enemies, and though it has been so diligently scattered

to the winds, or into the water, that there is no trace of it left, yet

it shall not be beyond the omnipotence of the Creator,--no, not a hair

of its head shall perish. The flesh shall then be spiritual, and

subject to the spirit, but still flesh, not spirit, as the spirit

itself, when subject to the flesh, was fleshly, but still spirit and

not flesh. And of this we have experimental proof in the deformity of

our penal condition. For those persons were carnal, not in a fleshly,

but in a spiritual way, to whom the apostle said, "I could not speak to

you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal." [1650] And a man is in

this life spiritual in such a way, that he is yet carnal with respect

to his body, and sees another law in his members warring against the

law of his mind; but even in his body he will be spiritual when the

same flesh shall have had that resurrection of which these words speak,

"It is sown an animal body, it shall rise a spiritual body." [1651]

But what this spiritual body shall be and how great its grace, I fear

it were but rash to pronounce, seeing that we have as yet no experience

of it. Nevertheless, since it is fit that the joyfulness of our hope

should utter itself, and so show forth God's praise, and since it was

from the profoundest sentiment of ardent and holy love that the

Psalmist cried, "O Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house," [1652]

we may, with God's help, speak of the gifts He lavishes on men, good

and bad alike, in this most wretched life, and may do our best to

conjecture the great glory of that state which we cannot worthily speak

of, because we have not yet experienced it. For I say nothing of the

time when God made man upright; I say nothing of the happy life of "the

man and his wife" in the fruitful garden, since it was so short that

none of their children experienced it: I speak only of this life which

we know, and in which we now are, from the temptations of which we

cannot escape so long as we are in it, no matter what progress we make,

for it is all temptation, and I ask, Who can describe the tokens of

God's goodness that are extended to the human race even in this life?

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[1650] 1 Cor. iii. 1.

[1651] 1 Cor. xv. 44.

[1652] Ps. xxvi. 8.

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Chapter 22.--Of the Miseries and Ills to Which the Human Race is Justly

Exposed Through the First Sin, and from Which None Can Be Delivered

Save by Christ's Grace.

That the whole human race has been condemned in its first origin, this

life itself, if life it is to be called, bears witness by the host of

cruel ills with which it is filled. Is not this proved by the profound

and dreadful ignorance which produces all the errors that enfold the

children of Adam, and from which no man can be delivered without toil,

pain, and fear? Is it not proved by his love of so many vain and

hurtful things, which produces gnawing cares, disquiet, griefs, fears,

wild joys, quarrels, lawsuits, wars, treasons, angers, hatreds, deceit,

flattery, fraud, theft, robbery, perfidy, pride, ambition, envy,

murders, parricides, cruelty, ferocity, wickedness, luxury, insolence,

impudence, shamelessness, fornications, adulteries, incests, and the

numberless uncleannesses and unnatural acts of both sexes, which it is

shameful so much as to mention; sacrileges, heresies, blasphemies,

perjuries, oppression of the innocent, calumnies, plots, falsehoods,

false witnessings, unrighteous judgments, violent deeds, plunderings,

and whatever similar wickedness has found its way into the lives of

men, though it cannot find its way into the conception of pure minds?

These are indeed the crimes of wicked men, yet they spring from that

root of error and misplaced love which is born with every son of Adam.

For who is there that has not observed with what profound ignorance,

manifesting itself even in infancy, and with what superfluity of

foolish desires, beginning to appear in boyhood, man comes into this

life, so that, were he left to live as he pleased, and to do whatever

he pleased, he would plunge into all, or certainly into many of those

crimes and iniquities which I mentioned, and could not mention?

But because God does not wholly desert those whom He condemns, nor

shuts up in His anger His tender mercies, the human race is restrained

by law and instruction, which keep guard against the ignorance that

besets us, and oppose the assaults of vice, but are themselves full of

labor and sorrow. For what mean those multifarious threats which are

used to restrain the folly of children? What mean pedagogues, masters,

the birch, the strap, the cane, the schooling which Scripture says must

be given a child, "beating him on the sides lest he wax stubborn,"

[1653] and it be hardly possible or not possible at all to subdue him?

Why all these punishments, save to overcome ignorance and bridle evil

desires--these evils with which we come into the world? For why is it

that we remember with difficulty, and without difficulty forget? learn

with difficulty, and without difficulty remain ignorant? are diligent

with difficulty, and without difficulty are indolent? Does not this

show what vitiated nature inclines and tends to by its own weight, and

what succor it needs if it is to be delivered? Inactivity, sloth,

laziness, negligence, are vices which shun labor, since labor, though

useful, is itself a punishment.

But, besides the punishments of childhood, without which there would be

no learning of what the parents wish,--and the parents rarely wish

anything useful to be taught,--who can describe, who can conceive the

number and severity of the punishments which afflict the human

race,--pains which are not only the accompaniment of the wickedness of

godless men, but are a part of the human condition and the common

misery,--what fear and what grief are caused by bereavement and

mourning, by losses and condemnations, by fraud and falsehood, by false

suspicions, and all the crimes and wicked deeds of other men? For at

their hands we suffer robbery, captivity, chains, imprisonment, exile,

torture, mutilation, loss of sight, the violation of chastity to

satisfy the lust of the oppressor, and many other dreadful evils. What

numberless casualties threaten our bodies from without,--extremes of

heat and cold, storms, floods, inundations, lightning, thunder, hail,

earthquakes, houses falling; or from the stumbling, or shying, or vice

of horses; from countless poisons in fruits, water, air, animals; from

the painful or even deadly bites of wild animals; from the madness

which a mad dog communicates, so that even the animal which of all

others is most gentle and friendly to its own master, becomes an object

of intenser fear than a lion or dragon, and the man whom it has by

chance infected with this pestilential contagion becomes so rabid, that

his parents, wife, children, dread him more than any wild beast! What

disasters are suffered by those who travel by land or sea! What man

can go out of his own house without being exposed on all hands to

unforeseen accidents? Returning home sound in limb, he slips on his

own doorstep, breaks his leg, and never recovers. What can seem safer

than a man sitting in his chair? Eli the priest fell from his, and

broke his neck. How many accidents do farmers, or rather all men, fear

that the crops may suffer from the weather, or the soil, or the ravages

of destructive animals? Commonly they feel safe when the crops are

gathered and housed. Yet, to my certain knowledge, sudden floods have

driven the laborers away, and swept the barns clean of the finest

harvest. Is innocence a sufficient protection against the various

assaults of demons? That no man might think so, even baptized infants,

who are certainly unsurpassed in innocence, are sometimes so tormented,

that God, who permits it, teaches us hereby to bewail the calamities of

this life, and to desire the felicity of the life to come. As to

bodily diseases, they are so numerous that they cannot all be contained

even in medical books. And in very many, or almost all of them, the

cures and remedies are themselves tortures, so that men are delivered

from a pain that destroys by a cure that pains. Has not the madness of

thirst driven men to drink human urine, and even their own? Has not

hunger driven men to eat human flesh, and that the flesh not of bodies

found dead, but of bodies slain for the purpose? Have not the fierce

pangs of famine driven mothers to eat their own children, incredibly

savage as it seems? In fine, sleep itself, which is justly called

repose, how little of repose there sometimes is in it when disturbed

with dreams and visions; and with what terror is the wretched mind

overwhelmed by the appearances of things which are so presented, and

which, as it were so stand out before the senses, that we can not

distinguish them from realities! How wretchedly do false appearances

distract men in certain diseases! With what astonishing variety of

appearances are even healthy men sometimes deceived by evil spirits,

who produce these delusions for the sake of perplexing the senses of

their victims, if they cannot succeed in seducing them to their side!

From this hell upon earth there is no escape, save through the grace of

the Saviour Christ, our God and Lord. The very name Jesus shows this,

for it means Saviour; and He saves us especially from passing out of

this life into a more wretched and eternal state, which is rather a

death than a life. For in this life, though holy men and holy pursuits

afford us great consolations, yet the blessings which men crave are not

invariably bestowed upon them, lest religion should be cultivated for

the sake of these temporal advantages, while it ought rather to be

cultivated for the sake of that other life from which all evil is

excluded. Therefore, also, does grace aid good men in the midst of

present calamities, so that they are enabled to endure them with a

constancy proportioned to their faith. The world's sages affirm that

philosophy contributes something to this,--that philosophy which,

according to Cicero, the gods have bestowed in its purity only on a few

men. They have never given, he says, nor can ever give, a greater gift

to men. So that even those against whom we are disputing have been

compelled to acknowledge, in some fashion, that the grace of God is

necessary for the acquisition, not, indeed, of any philosophy, but of

the true philosophy. And if the true philosophy--this sole support

against the miseries of this life--has been given by Heaven only to a

few, it sufficiently appears from this that the human race has been

condemned to pay this penalty of wretchedness. And as, according to

their acknowledgment, no greater gift has been bestowed by God, so it

must be believed that it could be given only by that God whom they

themselves recognize as greater than all the gods they worship.

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[1653] Ecclus. xxx. 12.

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Chapter 23.--Of the Miseries of This Life Which Attach Peculiarly to

the Toil of Good Men, Irrespective of Those Which are Common to the

Good and Bad.

But, irrespective of the miseries which in this life are common to the

good and bad, the righteous undergo labors peculiar to themselves, in

so far as they make war upon their vices, and are involved in the

temptations and perils of such a contest. For though sometimes more

violent and at other times slacker, yet without intermission does the

flesh lust against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, so that

we cannot do the things we would, [1654] and extirpate all lust, but

can only refuse consent to it, as God gives us ability, and so keep it

under, vigilantly keeping watch lest a semblance of truth deceive us,

lest a subtle discourse blind us, lest error involve us in darkness,

lest we should take good for evil or evil for good, lest fear should

hinder us from doing what we ought, or desire precipitate us into doing

what we ought not, lest the sun go down upon our wrath, lest hatred

provoke us to render evil for evil, lest unseemly or immoderate grief

consume us, lest an ungrateful disposition make us slow to recognize

benefits received, lest calumnies fret our conscience, lest rash

suspicion on our part deceive us regarding a friend, or false suspicion

of us on the part of others give us too much uneasiness, lest sin reign

in our mortal body to obey its desires, lest our members be used as the

instruments of unrighteousness, lest the eye follow lust, lest thirst

for revenge carry us away, lest sight or thought dwell too long on some

evil thing which gives us pleasure, lest wicked or indecent language be

willingly listened to, lest we do what is pleasant but unlawful, and

lest in this warfare, filled so abundantly with toil and peril, we

either hope to secure victory by our own strength, or attribute it when

secured to our own strength, and not to His grace of whom the apostle

says, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord

Jesus Christ;" [1655] and in another place he says, "In all these

things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." [1656]

But yet we are to know this, that however valorously we resist our

vices, and however successful we are in overcoming them, yet as long as

we are in this body we have always reason to say to God, Forgive us our

debts." [1657] But in that kingdom where we shall dwell for ever,

clothed in immortal bodies, we shall no longer have either conflicts or

debts,--as indeed we should not have had at any time or in any

condition, had our nature continued upright as it was created.

Consequently even this our conflict, in which we are exposed to peril,

and from which we hope to be delivered by a final victory, belongs to

the ills of this life, which is proved by the witness of so many grave

evils to be a life under condemnation.

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[1654] Gal. v. 17.

[1655] 1 Cor. xv. 57.

[1656] Rom. viii. 37.

[1657] Matt. vi. 12.

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Chapter 24.--Of the Blessings with Which the Creator Has Filled This

Life, Obnoxious Though It Be to the Curse.

But we must now contemplate the rich and countless blessings with which

the goodness of God, who cares for all He has created, has filled this

very misery of the human race, which reflects His retributive justice.

That first blessing which He pronounced before the fall, when He said,

"Increase, and multiply, and replenish the earth," [1658] He did not

inhibit after man had sinned, but the fecundity originally bestowed

remained in the condemned stock; and the vice of sin, which has

involved us in the necessity of dying, has yet not deprived us of that

wonderful power of seed, or rather of that still more marvellous power

by which seed is produced, and which seems to be as it were inwrought

and inwoven in the human body. But in this river, as I may call it, or

torrent of the human race, both elements are carried along

together,--both the evil which is derived from him who begets, and the

good which is bestowed by Him who creates us. In the original evil

there are two things, sin and punishment; in the original good, there

are two other things, propagation and conformation. But of the evils,

of which the one, sin, arose from our audacity, and the other,

punishment, from God's judgment, we have already said as much as suits

our present purpose. I mean now to speak of the blessings which God

has conferred or still confers upon our nature, vitiated and condemned

as it is. For in condemning it He did not withdraw all that He had

given it, else it had been annihilated; neither did He, in penally

subjecting it to the devil, remove it beyond His own power; for not

even the devil himself is outside of God's government, since the

devil's nature subsists only by the supreme Creator who gives being to

all that in any form exists.

Of these two blessings, then, which we have said flow from God's

goodness, as from a fountain, towards our nature, vitiated by sin and

condemned to punishment, the one, propagation, was conferred by God's

benediction when He made those first works, from which He rested on the

seventh day. But the other, conformation, is conferred in that work of

His wherein "He worketh hitherto." [1659] For were He to withdraw His

efficacious power from things, they should neither be able to go on and

complete the periods assigned to their measured movements, nor should

they even continue in possession of that nature they were created in.

God, then, so created man that He gave him what we may call fertility,

whereby he might propagate other men, giving them a congenital capacity

to propagate their kind, but not imposing on them any necessity to do

so. This capacity God withdraws at pleasure from individuals, making

them barren; but from the whole race He has not withdrawn the blessing

of propagation once conferred. But though not withdrawn on account of

sin, this power of propagation is not what it would have been had there

been no sin. For since "man placed in honor fell, he has become like

the beasts," [1660] and generates as they do, though the little spark

of reason, which was the image of God in him, has not been quite

quenched. But if conformation were not added to propagation, there

would be no reproduction of one's kind. For even though there were no

such thing as copulation, and God wished to fill the earth with human

inhabitants, He might create all these as He created one without the

help of human generation. And, indeed, even as it is, those who

copulate can generate nothing save by the creative energy of God. As,

therefore, in respect of that spiritual growth whereby a man is formed

to piety and righteousness, the apostle says, "Neither is he that

planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the

increase," [1661] so also it must be said that it is not he that

generates that is anything, but God that giveth the essential form;

that it is not the mother who carries and nurses the fruit of her womb

that is anything, but God that giveth the increase. For He alone, by

that energy wherewith "He worketh hitherto," causes the seed to

develop, and to evolve from certain secret and invisible folds into the

visible forms of beauty which we see. He alone, coupling and

connecting in some wonderful fashion the spiritual and corporeal

natures, the one to command, the other to obey, makes a living being.

And this work of His is so great and wonderful, that not only man, who

is a rational animal, and consequently more excellent than all other

animals of the earth, but even the most diminutive insect, cannot be

considered attentively without astonishment and without praising the

Creator.

It is He, then, who has given to the human soul a mind, in which reason

and understanding lie as it were asleep during infancy, and as if they

were not, destined, however, to be awakened and exercised as years

increase, so as to become capable of knowledge and of receiving

instruction, fit to understand what is true and to love what is good.

It is by this capacity the soul drinks in wisdom, and becomes endowed

with those virtues by which, in prudence, fortitude, temperance, and

righteousness, it makes war upon error and the other inborn vices, and

conquers them by fixing its desires upon no other object than the

supreme and unchangeable Good. And even though this be not uniformly

the result, yet who can competently utter or even conceive the grandeur

of this work of the Almighty, and the unspeakable boon He has conferred

upon our rational nature, by giving us even the capacity of such

attainment? For over and above those arts which are called virtues,

and which teach us how we may spend our life well, and attain to

endless happiness,--arts which are given to the children of the promise

and the kingdom by the sole grace of God which is in Christ,--has not

the genius of man invented and applied countless astonishing arts,

partly the result of necessity, partly the result of exuberant

invention, so that this vigor of mind, which is so active in the

discovery not merely of superfluous but even of dangerous and

destructive things, betokens an inexhaustible wealth in the nature

which can invent, learn, or employ such arts? What wonderful--one

might say stupefying--advances has human industry made in the arts of

weaving and building, of agriculture and navigation! With what endless

variety are designs in pottery, painting, and sculpture produced, and

with what skill executed! What wonderful spectacles are exhibited in

the theatres, which those who have not seen them cannot credit! How

skillful the contrivances for catching, killing, or taming wild

beasts! And for the injury of men, also, how many kinds of poisons,

weapons, engines of destruction, have been invented, while for the

preservation or restoration of health the appliances and remedies are

infinite! To provoke appetite and please the palate, what a variety of

seasonings have been concocted! To express and gain entrance for

thoughts, what a multitude and variety of signs there are, among which

speaking and writing hold the first place! what ornaments has eloquence

at command to delight the mind! what wealth of song is there to

captivate the ear! how many musical instruments and strains of harmony

have been devised! What skill has been attained in measures and

numbers! with what sagacity have the movements and connections of the

stars been discovered! Who could tell the thought that has been spent

upon nature, even though, despairing of recounting it in detail, he

endeavored only to give a general view of it? In fine, even the

defence of errors and misapprehensions, which has illustrated the

genius of heretics and philosophers, cannot be sufficiently declared.

For at present it is the nature of the human mind which adorns this

mortal life which we are extolling, and not the faith and the way of

truth which lead to immortality. And since this great nature has

certainly been created by the true and supreme God, who administers all

things He has made with absolute power and justice, it could never have

fallen into these miseries, nor have gone out of them to miseries

eternal, --saving only those who are redeemed,--had not an exceeding

great sin been found in the first man from whom the rest have sprung.

Moreover, even in the body, though it dies like that of the beasts, and

is in many ways weaker than theirs, what goodness of God, what

providence of the great Creator, is apparent! The organs of sense and

the rest of the members, are not they so placed, the appearance, and

form, and stature of the body as a whole, is it not so fashioned, as to

indicate that it was made for the service of a reasonable soul? Man

has not been created stooping towards the earth, like the irrational

animals; but his bodily form, erect and looking heavenwards, admonishes

him to mind the things that are above. Then the marvellous nimbleness

which has been given to the tongue and the hands, fitting them to

speak, and write, and execute so many duties, and practise so many

arts, does it not prove the excellence of the soul for which such an

assistant was provided? And even apart from its adaptation to the work

required of it, there is such a symmetry in its various parts, and so

beautiful a proportion maintained, that one is at a loss to decide

whether, in creating the body, greater regard was paid to utility or to

beauty. Assuredly no part of the body has been created for the sake of

utility which does not also contribute something to its beauty. And

this would be all the more apparent, if we knew more precisely how all

its parts are connected and adapted to one another, and were not

limited in our observations to what appears on the surface; for as to

what is covered up and hidden from our view, the intricate web of veins

and nerves, the vital parts of all that lies under the skin, no one can

discover it. For although, with a cruel zeal for science, some medical

men, who are called anatomists, have dissected the bodies of the dead,

and sometimes even of sick persons who died under their knives, and

have inhumanly pried into the secrets of the human body to learn the

nature of the disease and its exact seat, and how it might be cured,

yet those relations of which I speak, and which form the concord,

[1662] or, as the Greeks call it, "harmony," of the whole body outside

and in, as of some instrument, no one has been able to discover,

because no one has been audacious enough to seek for them. But if

these could be known, then even the inward parts, which seem to have no

beauty, would so delight us with their exquisite fitness, as to afford

a profounder satisfaction to the mind--and the eyes are but its

ministers--than the obvious beauty which gratifies the eye. There are

some things, too, which have such a place in the body, that they

obviously serve no useful purpose, but are solely for beauty, as e.g.

the teats on a man's breast, or the beard on his face; for that this is

for ornament, and not for protection, is proved by the bare faces of

women, who ought rather, as the weaker sex, to enjoy such a defence.

If, therefore, of all those members which are exposed to our view,

there is certainly not one in which beauty is sacrificed to utility,

while there are some which serve no purpose but only beauty, I think it

can readily be concluded that in the creation of the human body

comeliness was more regarded than necessity. In truth, necessity is a

transitory thing; and the time is coming when we shall enjoy one

another's beauty without any lust,--a condition which will specially

redound to the praise of the Creator, who, as it is said in the psalm,

has "put on praise and comeliness." [1663]

How can I tell of the rest of creation, with all its beauty and

utility, which the divine goodness has given to man to please his eye

and serve his purposes, condemned though he is, and hurled into these

labors and miseries? Shall I speak of the manifold and various

loveliness of sky, and earth, and sea; of the plentiful supply and

wonderful qualities of the light; of sun, moon, and stars; of the shade

of trees; of the colors and perfume of flowers; of the multitude of

birds, all differing in plumage and in song; of the variety of animals,

of which the smallest in size are often the most wonderful,--the works

of ants and bees astonishing us more than the huge bodies of whales?

Shall I speak of the sea, which itself is so grand a spectacle, when it

arrays itself as it were in vestures of various colors, now running

through every shade of green, and again becoming purple or blue? Is it

not delightful to look at it in storm, and experience the soothing

complacency which it inspires, by suggesting that we ourselves are not

tossed and shipwrecked? [1664] What shall I say of the numberless

kinds of food to alleviate hunger, and the variety of seasonings to

stimulate appetite which are scattered everywhere by nature, and for

which we are not indebted to the art of cookery? How many natural

appliances are there for preserving and restoring health! How grateful

is the alternation of day and night! how pleasant the breezes that cool

the air! how abundant the supply of clothing furnished us by trees and

animals! Who can enumerate all the blessings we enjoy? If I were to

attempt to detail and unfold only these few which I have indicated in

the mass, such an enumeration would fill a volume. And all these are

but the solace of the wretched and condemned, not the rewards of the

blessed. What then shall these rewards be, if such be the blessings of

a condemned state? What will He give to those whom He has predestined

to life, who has given such things even to those whom He has

predestined to death? What blessings will He in the blessed life

shower upon those for whom, even in this state of misery, He has been

willing that His only-begotten Son should endure such sufferings even

to death? Thus the apostle reasons concerning those who are

predestined to that kingdom: "He that spared not His own Son, but

delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also give us all

things?" [1665] When this promise is fulfilled, what shall we be?

What blessings shall we receive in that kingdom, since already we have

received as the pledge of them Christ's dying? In what condition shall

the spirit of man be, when it has no longer any vice at all; when it

neither yields to any, nor is in bondage to any, nor has to make war

against any, but is perfected, and enjoys undisturbed peace with

itself? Shall it not then know all things with certainty, and without

any labor or error, when unhindered and joyfully it drinks the wisdom

of God at the fountain-head? What shall the body be, when it is in

every respect subject to the spirit, from which it shall draw a life so

sufficient, as to stand in need of no other nutriment? For it shall no

longer be animal, but spiritual, having indeed the substance of flesh,

but without any fleshly corruption.

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[1658] Gen. i. 28.

[1659] John v. 17.

[1660] Ps. xlix. 20.

[1661] 1 Cor. iii. 7.

[1662] Coaptatio, a word coined by Augustin, and used by him again in

the De Trin. iv. 2.

[1663] Ps. civ. 1.

[1664] He apparently has in view the celebrated passage in the opening

of the second book of Lucretius. The uses made of this passage are

referred to by Lecky, Hist. of European Morals, i. 74.

[1665] Rom. viii. 32.

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Chapter 25.--Of the Obstinacy of Those Individuals Who Impugn the

Resurrection of the Body, Though, as Was Predicted, the Whole World

Believes It.

The foremost of the philosophers agree with us about the spiritual

felicity enjoyed by the blessed in the life to come; it is only the

resurrection of the flesh they call in question, and with all their

might deny. But the mass of men, learned and unlearned, the world's

wise men and its fools, have believed, and have left in meagre

isolation the unbelievers, and have turned to Christ, who in His own

resurrection demonstrated the reality of that which seems to our

adversaries absurd. For the world has believed this which God

predicted, as it was also predicted that the world would believe,--a

prediction not due to the sorceries of Peter, [1666] since it was

uttered so long before. He who has predicted these things, as I have

already said, and am not ashamed to repeat, is the God before whom all

other divinities tremble, as Porphyry himself owns, and seeks to prove,

by testimonies from the oracles of these gods, and goes so far as to

call Him God the Father and King. Far be it from us to interpret these

predictions as they do who have not believed, along with the whole

world, in that which it was predicted the world would believe in. For

why should we not rather understand them as the world does, whose

belief was predicted, and leave that handful of unbelievers to their

idle talk and obstinate and solitary infidelity? For if they maintain

that they interpret them differently only to avoid charging Scripture

with folly, and so doing an injury to that God to whom they bear so

notable a testimony, is it not a much greater injury they do Him when

they say that His predictions must be understood otherwise than the

world believed them, though He Himself praised, promised, accomplished

this belief on the world's part? And why cannot He cause the body to

rise again, and live for ever? or is it not to be believed that He will

do this, because it is an undesirable thing, and unworthy of God? Of

His omnipotence, which effects so many great miracles, we have already

said enough. If they wish to know what the Almighty cannot do, I shall

tell them He cannot lie. Let us therefore believe what He can do, by

refusing to believe what He cannot do. Refusing to believe that He can

lie, let them believe that He will do what He has promised to do; and

let them believe it as the world has believed it, whose faith He

predicted, whose faith He praised, whose faith He promised, whose faith

He now points to. But how do they prove that the resurrection is an

undesirable thing? There shall then be no corruption, which is the

only evil thing about the body. I have already said enough about the

order of the elements, and the other fanciful objections men raise; and

in the thirteenth book I have, in my own judgment, sufficiently

illustrated the facility of movement which the incorruptible body shall

enjoy, judging from the ease and vigor we experience even now, when the

body is in good health. Those who have either not read the former

books, or wish to refresh their memory, may read them for themselves.

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[1666] VideBook xviii. c. 53.

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Chapter 26.--That the Opinion of Porphyry, that the Soul, in Order to

Be Blessed, Must Be Separated from Every Kind of Body, is Demolished by

Plato, Who Says that the Supreme God Promised the Gods that They Should

Never Be Ousted from Their Bodies.

But, say they, Porphyry tells us that the soul, in order to be blessed,

must escape connection with every kind of body. It does not avail,

therefore, to say that the future body shall be incorruptible, if the

soul cannot be blessed till delivered from every kind of body. But in

the book above mentioned I have already sufficiently discussed this.

This one thing only will I repeat,--let Plato, their master, correct

his writings, and say that their gods, in order to be blessed, must

quit their bodies, or, in other words, die; for he said that they were

shut up in celestial bodies, and that, nevertheless, the God who made

them promised them immortality,--that is to say, an eternal tenure of

these same bodies, such as was not provided for them naturally, but

only by the further intervention of His will, that thus they might be

assured of felicity. In this he obviously overturns their assertion

that the resurrection of the body cannot be believed because it is

impossible; for, according to him, when the uncreated God promised

immortality to the created gods, He expressly said that He would do

what was impossible. For Plato tells us that He said, "As ye have had

a beginning, so you cannot be immortal and incorruptible; yet ye shall

not decay, nor shall any fate destroy you or prove stronger than my

will, which more effectually binds you to immortality than the bond of

your nature keeps you from it." If they who hear these words have, we

do not say understanding, but ears, they cannot doubt that Plato

believed that God promised to the gods He had made that He would effect

an impossibility. For He who says, "Ye cannot be immortal, but by my

will ye shall be immortal," what else does He say than this, "I shall

make you what ye cannot be?" The body, therefore, shall be raised

incorruptible, immortal, spiritual, by Him who, according to Plato, has

promised to do that which is impossible. Why then do they still

exclaim that this which God has promised, which the world has believed

on God's promise as was predicted, is an impossibility? For what we

say is, that the God who, even according to Plato, does impossible

things, will do this. It is not, then, necessary to the blessedness of

the soul that it be detached from a body of any kind whatever, but that

it receive an incorruptible body. And in what incorruptible body will

they more suitably rejoice than in that in which they groaned when it

was corruptible? For thus they shall not feel that dire craving which

Virgil, in imitation of Plato, has ascribed to them when he says that

they wish to return again to their bodies. [1667] They shall not, I

say, feel this desire to return to their bodies, since they shall have

those bodies to which a return was desired, and shall, indeed, be in

such thorough possession of them, that they shall never lose them even

for the briefest moment, nor ever lay them down in death.

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[1667] Virg. �n. vi. 751.

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Chapter 27.--Of the Apparently Conflicting Opinions of Plato and

Porphyry, Which Would Have Conducted Them Both to the Truth If They

Could Have Yielded to One Another.

Statements were made by Plato and Porphyry singly, which if they could

have seen their way to hold in common, they might possibly have became

Christians. Plato said that souls could not exist eternally without

bodies; for it was on this account, he said, that the souls even of

wise men must some time or other return to their bodies. Porphyry,

again, said that the purified soul, when it has returned to the Father,

shall never return to the ills of this world. Consequently, if Plato

had communicated to Porphyry that which he saw to be true, that souls,

though perfectly purified, and belonging to the wise and righteous,

must return to human bodies; and if Porphyry, again, had imparted to

Plato the truth which he saw, that holy soul, shall never return to the

miseries of a corruptible body, so that they should not have each held

only his own opinion, but should both have held both truths, I think

they would have seen that it follows that the souls return to their

bodies, and also that these bodies shall be such as to afford them a

blessed and immortal life. For, according to Plato, even holy souls

shall return to the body; according to Porphyry, holy souls shall not

return to the ills of this world. Let Porphyry then say with Plato,

they shall return to the body; let Plato say with Porphyry, they shall

not return to their old misery: and they will agree that they return

to bodies in which they shall suffer no more. And this is nothing else

than what God has promised,--that He will give eternal felicity to

souls joined to their own bodies. For this, I presume, both of them

would readily concede, that if the souls of the saints are to be

reunited to bodies, it shall be to their own bodies, in which they have

endured the miseries of this life, and in which, to escape these

miseries, they served God with piety and fidelity.

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Chapter 28.--What Plato or Labeo, or Even Varro, Might Have Contributed

to the True Faith of the Resurrection, If They Had Adopted One

Another's Opinions into One Scheme.

Some Christians, who have a liking for Plato on account of his

magnificent style and the truths which he now and then uttered, say

that he even held an opinion similar to our own regarding the

resurrection of the dead. Cicero, however, alluding to this in his

Republic, asserts that Plato meant it rather as a playful fancy than as

a reality; for he introduces a man [1668] who had come to life again,

and gave a narrative of his experience in corroboration of the

doctrines of Plato. Labeo, too, says that two men died on one day, and

met at a cross-road, and that, being afterwards ordered to return to

their bodies, they agreed to be friends for life, and were so till they

died again. But the resurrection which these writers instance

resembles that of those persons whom we have ourselves known to rise

again, and who came back indeed to this life, but not so as never to

die again. Marcus Varro, however, in his work On the Origin of the

Roman People, records something more remarkable; I think his own words

should be given. "Certain astrologers," he says, "have written that

men are destined to a new birth, which the Greeks call palingenesy.

This will take place after four hundred and forty years have elapsed;

and then the same soul and the same body, which were formerly united in

the person, shall again be reunited." This Varro, indeed, or those

nameless astrologers,--for he does not give us the names of the men

whose statement he cites,--have affirmed what is indeed not altogether

true; for once the souls have returned to the bodies they wore, they

shall never afterwards leave them. Yet what they say upsets and

demolishes much of that idle talk of our adversaries about the

impossibility of the resurrection. For those who have been or are of

this opinion, have not thought it possible that bodies which have

dissolved into air, or dust, or ashes, or water, or into the bodies of

the beasts or even of the men that fed on them, should be restored

again to that which they formerly were. And therefore, if Plato and

Porphyry, or rather, if their disciples now living, agree with us that

holy souls shall return to the body, as Plato says, and that,

nevertheless, they shall not return to misery, as Porphyry maintains,

--if they accept the consequence of these two propositions which is

taught by the Christian faith, that they shall receive bodies in which

they may live eternally without suffering any misery,--let them also

adopt from Varro the opinion that they shall return to the same bodies

as they were formerly in, and thus the whole question of the eternal

resurrection of the body shall be resolved out of their own mouths.

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[1668] In the Republic, x.

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Chapter 29.--Of the Beatific Vision.

And now let us consider, with such ability as God may vouchsafe, how

the saints shall be employed when they are clothed in immortal and

spiritual bodies, and when the flesh shall live no longer in a fleshly

but a spiritual fashion. And indeed, to tell the truth, I am at a loss

to understand the nature of that employment, or, shall I rather say,

repose and ease, for it has never come within the range of my bodily

senses. And if I should speak of my mind or understanding, what is our

understanding in comparison of its excellence? For then shall be that

"peace of God which," as the apostle says, "passeth all understanding,"

[1669] --that is to say, all human, and perhaps all angelic

understanding, but certainly not the divine. That it passeth ours

there is no doubt; but if it passeth that of the angels,--and he who

says "all understanding" seems to make no exception in their

favor,--then we must understand him to mean that neither we nor the

angels can understand, as God understands, the peace which God Himself

enjoys. Doubtless this passeth all understanding but His own. But as

we shall one day be made to participate, according to our slender

capacity, in His peace, both in ourselves, and with our neighbor, and

with God our chief good, in this respect the angels understand the

peace of God in their own measure, and men too, though now far behind

them, whatever spiritual advance they have made. For we must remember

how great a man he was who said, "We know in part, and we prophesy in

part, until that which is perfect is come;" [1670] and "Now we see

through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." [1671] Such also is

now the vision of the holy angels, who are also called our angels,

because we, being rescued out of the power of darkness, and receiving

the earnest of the Spirit, are translated into the kingdom of Christ,

and already begin to belong to those angels with whom we shall enjoy

that holy and most delightful city of God of which we have now written

so much. Thus, then, the angels of God are our angels, as Christ is

God's and also ours. They are God's, because they have not abandoned

Him; they are ours, because we are their fellow-citizens. The Lord

Jesus also said, "See that ye despise not one of these little ones:

for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always see the face

of my Father which is in heaven." [1672] As, then, they see, so shall

we also see; but not yet do we thus see. Wherefore the apostle uses

the words cited a little ago, "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but

then face to face." This vision is reserved as the reward of our

faith; and of it the Apostle John also says, "When He shall appear, we

shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." [1673] By "the

face" of God we are to understand His manifestation, and not a part of

the body similar to that which in our bodies we call by that name.

And so, when I am asked how the saints shall be employed in that

spiritual body, I do not say what I see, but I say what I believe,

according to that which I read in the psalm, "I believed, therefore

have I spoken." [1674] I say, then, they shall in the body see God;

but whether they shall see Him by means of the body, as now we see the

sun, moon, stars, sea, earth, and all that is in it, that is a

difficult question. For it is hard to say that the saints shall then

have such bodies that they shall not be able to shut and open their

eyes as they please; while it is harder still to say that every one who

shuts his eyes shall lose the vision of God. For if the prophet

Elisha, though at a distance, saw his servant Gehazi, who thought that

his wickedness would escape his master's observation and accepted gifts

from Naaman the Syrian, whom the prophet had cleansed from his foul

leprosy, how much more shall the saints in the spiritual body see all

things, not only though their eyes be shut, but though they themselves

be at a great distance? For then shall be "that which is perfect," of

which the apostle says, "We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but

when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be

done away." Then, that he may illustrate as well as possible, by a

simile, how superior the future life is to the life now lived, not only

by ordinary men, but even by the foremost of the saints, he says, "When

I was a child, I understood as a child, I spake as a child, I thought

as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. Now

we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in

part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." [1675] If,

then, even in this life, in which the prophetic power of remarkable men

is no more worthy to be compared to the vision of the future life than

childhood is to manhood, Elisha, though distant from his servant, saw

him accepting gifts, shall we say that when that which is perfect is

come, and the corruptible body no longer oppresses the soul, but is

incorruptible and offers no impediment to it, the saints shall need

bodily eyes to see, though Elisha had no need of them to see his

servant? For, following the Septuagint version, these are the

prophet's words: "Did not my heart go with thee, when the man came out

of his chariot to meet thee, and thou tookedst his gifts?" [1676] Or,

as the presbyter Jerome rendered it from the Hebrew, "Was not my heart

present when the man turned from his chariot to meet thee?" The

prophet said that he saw this with his heart, miraculously aided by

God, as no one can doubt. But how much more abundantly shall the

saints enjoy this gift when God shall be all in all? Nevertheless the

bodily eyes also shall have their office and their place, and shall be

used by the spirit through the spiritual body. For the prophet did not

forego the use of his eyes for seeing what was before them, though he

did not need them to see his absent servant, and though he could have

seen these present objects in spirit, and with his eyes shut, as he saw

things far distant in a place where he himself was not. Far be it,

then, from us to say that in the life to come the saints shall not see

God when their eyes are shut, since they shall always see Him with the

spirit.

But the question arises, whether, when their eyes are open, they shall

see Him with the bodily eye? If the eyes of the spiritual body have no

more power than the eyes which we now possess, manifestly God cannot be

seen with them. They must be of a very different power if they can

look upon that incorporeal nature which is not contained in any place,

but is all in every place. For though we say that God is in heaven and

on earth, as He, Himself says by the prophet, "I fill heaven and

earth," [1677] we do not mean that there is one part of God in heaven

and another part on earth; but He is all in heaven and all on earth,

not at alternate intervals of time, but both at once, as no bodily

nature can be. The eye, then, shall have a vastly superior power,--the

power not of keen sight, such as is ascribed to serpents or eagles, for

however keenly these animals see, they can discern nothing but bodily

substances,--but the power of seeing things incorporeal. Possibly it

was this great power of vision which was temporarily communicated to

the eyes of the holy Job while yet in this mortal body, when he says to

God, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye

seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and melt away, and count myself

dust and ashes;" [1678] although there is no reason why we should not

understand this of the eye of the heart, of which the apostle says,

"Having the eyes of your heart illuminated." [1679] But that God

shall be seen with these eyes no Christian doubts who believingly

accepts what our God and Master says, "Blessed are the pure in heart:

for they shall see God." [1680] But whether in the future life God

shall also be seen with the bodily eye, this is now our question.

The expression of Scripture, "And all flesh shall see the salvation of

God," [1681] may without difficulty be understood as if it were said,

"And every man shall see the Christ of God." And He certainly was seen

in the body, and shall be seen in the body when He judges quick and

dead. And that Christ is the salvation of God, many other passages of

Scripture witness, but especially the words of the venerable Simeon,

who, when he had received into his hands the infant Christ, said, "Now

lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for

mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." [1682] As for the words of the

above-mentioned Job, as they are found in the Hebrew manuscripts, "And

in my flesh I shall see God," [1683] no doubt they were a prophecy of

the resurrection of the flesh; yet he does not say "by the flesh." And

indeed, if he had said this, it would still be possible that Christ was

meant by "God;" for Christ shall be seen by the flesh in the flesh.

But even understanding it of God, it is only equivalent to saying, I

shall be in the flesh when I see God. Then the apostle's expression,

"face to face," [1684] does not oblige us to believe that we shall see

God by the bodily face in which are the eyes of the body, for we shall

see Him without intermission in spirit. And if the apostle had not

referred to the face of the inner man, he would not have said, "But we,

with unveiled face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are

transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit

of the Lord." [1685] In the same sense we understand what the

Psalmist sings, "Draw near unto Him, and be enlightened; and your faces

shall not be ashamed." [1686] For it is by faith we draw near to God,

and faith is an act of the spirit, not of the body. But as we do not

know what degree of perfection the spiritual body shall attain,--for

here we speak of a matter of which we have no experience, and upon

which the authority of Scripture does not definitely pronounce,--it is

necessary that the words of the Book of Wisdom be illustrated in us:

"The thoughts of mortal men are timid, and our fore-castings

uncertain." [1687]

For if that reasoning of the philosophers, by which they attempt to

make out that intelligible or mental objects are so seen by the mind,

and sensible or bodily objects so seen by the body, that the former

cannot be discerned by the mind through the body, nor the latter by the

mind itself without the body,--if this reasoning were trustworthy, then

it would certainly follow that God could not be seen by the eye even of

a spiritual body. But this reasoning is exploded both by true reason

and by prophetic authority. For who is so little acquainted with the

truth as to say that God has no cognisance of sensible objects? Has He

therefore a body, the eyes of which give Him this knowledge? Moreover,

what we have just been relating of the prophet Elisha, does this not

sufficiently show that bodily things can be discerned by the spirit

without the help of the body? For when that servant received the

gifts, certainly this was a bodily or material transaction, yet the

prophet saw it not by the body, but by the spirit. As, therefore, it

is agreed that bodies are seen by the spirit, what if the power of the

spiritual body shall be so great that spirit also is seen by the body?

For God is a spirit. Besides, each man recognizes his own life--that

life by which he now lives in the body, and which vivifies these

earthly members and causes them to grow--by an interior sense, and not

by his bodily eye; but the life of other men, though it is invisible,

he sees with the bodily eye. For how do we distinguish between living

and dead bodies, except by seeing at once both the body and the life

which we cannot see save by the eye? But a life without a body we

cannot see thus.

Wherefore it may very well be, and it is thoroughly credible, that we

shall in the future world see the material forms of the new heavens and

the new earth in such a way that we shall most distinctly recognize God

everywhere present and governing all things, material as well as

spiritual, and shall see Him, not as now we understand the invisible

things of God, by the things which are made, [1688] and see Him darkly,

as in a mirror, and in part, and rather by faith than by bodily vision

of material appearances, but by means of the bodies we shall wear and

which we shall see wherever we turn our eyes. As we do not believe,

but see that the living men around us who are exercising vital

functions are alive, though we cannot see their life without their

bodies, but see it most distinctly by means of their bodies, so,

wherever we shall look with those spiritual eyes of our future bodies,

we shall then, too, by means of bodily substances behold God, though a

spirit, ruling all things. Either, therefore, the eyes shall possess

some quality similar to that of the mind, by which they may be able to

discern spiritual things, and among these God,--a supposition for which

it is difficult or even impossible to find any support in

Scripture,--or, which is more easy to comprehend, God will be so known

by us, and shall be so much before us, that we shall see Him by the

spirit in ourselves, in one another, in Himself, in the new heavens and

the new earth, in every created thing which shall then exist; and also

by the body we shall see Him in every body which the keen vision of the

eye of the spiritual body shall reach. Our thoughts also shall be

visible to all, for then shall be fulfilled the words of the apostle,

"Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will

bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest

the thoughts of the heart, and then shall every one have praise of

God." [1689]

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[1669] Phil. iv. 7.

[1670] 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10.

[1671] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

[1672] Matt. xviii. 10.

[1673] 1 John iii. 2.

[1674] Ps. cxvi. 10.

[1675] 1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12.

[1676] 2 Kings v. 26.

[1677] Jer. xxiii. 24.

[1678] Job xlii. 5, 6.

[1679] Eph. i. 18.

[1680] Matt. v. 8.

[1681] Luke iii. 6.

[1682] Luke ii. 29, 30.

[1683] Job xix. 26. [Rev. Vers.; "from my flesh," with the margin:

"without my flesh."--P.S.]

[1684] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

[1685] 2 Cor. iii. 18.

[1686] Ps. xxxiv. 5.

[1687] Wisd. ix. 14.

[1688] Rom. i. 20.

[1689] 1 Cor. iv. 5.

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Chapter 30.--Of the Eternal Felicity of the City of God, and of the

Perpetual Sabbath.

How great shall be that felicity, which shall be tainted with no evil,

which shall lack no good, and which shall afford leisure for the

praises of God, who shall be all in all! For I know not what other

employment there can be where no lassitude shall slacken activity, nor

any want stimulate to labor. I am admonished also by the sacred song,

in which I read or hear the words, "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy

house, O Lord; they will be still praising Thee." [1690] All the

members and organs of the incorruptible body, which now we see to be

suited to various necessary uses, shall contribute to the praises of

God; for in that life necessity shall have no place, but full, certain,

secure, everlasting felicity. For all those parts [1691] of the bodily

harmony, which are distributed through the whole body, within and

without, and of which I have just been saying that they at present

elude our observation, shall then be discerned; and, along with the

other great and marvellous discoveries which shall then kindle rational

minds in praise of the great Artificer, there shall be the enjoyment of

a beauty which appeals to the reason. What power of movement such

bodies shall possess, I have not the audacity rashly to define, as I

have not the ability to conceive. Nevertheless I will say that in any

case, both in motion and at rest, they shall be, as in their

appearance, seemly; for into that state nothing which is unseemly shall

be admitted. One thing is certain, the body shall forthwith be

wherever the spirit wills, and the spirit shall will nothing which is

unbecoming either to the spirit or to the body. True honor shall be

there, for it shall be denied to none who is worthy, nor yielded to any

unworthy; neither shall any unworthy person so much as sue for it, for

none but the worthy shall be there. True peace shall be there, where

no one shall suffer opposition either from himself or any other. God

Himself, who is the Author of virtue, shall there be its reward; for,

as there is nothing greater or better, He has promised Himself. What

else was meant by His word through the prophet, "I will be your God,

and ye shall be my people," [1692] than, I shall be their satisfaction,

I shall be all that men honorably desire,--life, and health, and

nourishment, and plenty, and glory, and honor, and peace, and all good

things? This, too, is the right interpretation of the saying of the

apostle, "That God may be all in all." [1693] He shall be the end of

our desires who shall be seen without end, loved without cloy, praised

without weariness. This outgoing of affection, this employment, shall

certainly be, like eternal life itself, common to all.

But who can conceive, not to say describe, what degrees of honor and

glory shall be awarded to the various degrees of merit? Yet it cannot

be doubted that there shall be degrees. And in that blessed city there

shall be this great blessing, that no inferior shall envy any superior,

as now the archangels are not envied by the angels, because no one will

wish to be what he has not received, though bound in strictest concord

with him who has received; as in the body the finger does not seek to

be the eye, though both members are harmoniously included in the

complete structure of the body. And thus, along with his gift, greater

or less, each shall receive this further gift of contentment to desire

no more than he has.

Neither are we to suppose that because sin shall have no power to

delight them, free will must be withdrawn. It will, on the contrary,

be all the more truly free, because set free from delight in sinning to

take unfailing delight in not sinning. For the first freedom of will

which man received when he was created upright consisted in an ability

not to sin, but also in an ability to sin; whereas this last freedom of

will shall be superior, inasmuch as it shall not be able to sin. This,

indeed, shall not be a natural ability, but the gift of God. For it is

one thing to be God, another thing to be a partaker of God. God by

nature cannot sin, but the partaker of God receives this inability from

God. And in this divine gift there was to be observed this gradation,

that man should first receive a free will by which he was able not to

sin, and at last a free will by which he was not able to sin,--the

former being adapted to the acquiring of merit, the latter to the

enjoying of the reward. [1694] But the nature thus constituted,

having sinned when it had the ability to do so, it is by a more

abundant grace that it is delivered so as to reach that freedom in

which it cannot sin. For as the first immortality which Adam lost by

sinning consisted in his being able not to die, while the last shall

consist in his not being able to die; so the first free will consisted

in his being able not to sin, the last in his not being able to sin.

And thus piety and justice shall be as indefeasible as happiness. For

certainly by sinning we lost both piety and happiness; but when we lost

happiness, we did not lose the love of it. Are we to say that God

Himself is not free because He cannot sin? In that city, then, there

shall be free will, one in all the citizens, and indivisible in each,

delivered from all ill, filled with all good, enjoying indefeasibly the

delights of eternal joys, oblivious of sins, oblivious of sufferings,

and yet not so oblivious of its deliverance as to be ungrateful to its

Deliverer.

The soul, then, shall have an intellectual remembrance of its past

ills; but, so far as regards sensible experience, they shall be quite

forgotten. For a skillful physician knows, indeed, professionally

almost all diseases; but experimentally he is ignorant of a great

number which he himself has never suffered from. As, therefore, there

are two ways of knowing evil things,--one by mental insight, the other

by sensible experience, for it is one thing to understand all vices by

the wisdom of a cultivated mind, another to understand them by the

foolishness of an abandoned life,--so also there are two ways of

forgetting evils. For a well-instructed and learned man forgets them

one way, and he who has experimentally suffered from them forgets them

another,--the former by neglecting what he has learned, the latter by

escaping what he has suffered. And in this latter way the saints shall

forget their past ills, for they shall have so thoroughly escaped them

all, that they shall be quite blotted out of their experience. But

their intellectual knowledge, which shall be great, shall keep them

acquainted not only with their own past woes, but with the eternal

sufferings of the lost. For if they were not to know that they had

been miserable, how could they, as the Psalmist says, for ever sing the

mercies of God? Certainly that city shall have no greater joy than the

celebration of the grace of Christ, who redeemed us by His blood.

There shall be accomplished the words of the psalm, "Be still, and know

that I am God." [1695] There shall be the great Sabbath which has no

evening, which God celebrated among His first works, as it is written,

"And God rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had

made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that

in it He had rested from all His work which God began to make." [1696]

For we shall ourselves be the seventh day, when we shall be filled

and replenished with God's blessing and sanctification. There shall we

be still, and know that He is God; that He is that which we ourselves

aspired to be when we fell away from Him, and listened to the voice of

the seducer, "Ye shall be as gods," [1697] and so abandoned God, who

would have made us as gods, not by deserting Him, but by participating

in Him. For without Him what have we accomplished, save to perish in

His anger? But when we are restored by Him, and perfected with greater

grace, we shall have eternal leisure to see that He is God, for we

shall be full of Him when He shall be all in all. For even our good

works, when they are understood to be rather His than ours, are imputed

to us that we may enjoy this Sabbath rest. For if we attribute them to

ourselves, they shall be servile; for it is said of the Sabbath, "Ye

shall do no servile work in it." [1698] Wherefore also it is said by

Ezekiel the prophet, "And I gave them my Sabbaths to be a sign between

me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctify

them." [1699] This knowledge shall be perfected when we shall be

perfectly at rest, and shall perfectly know that He is God.

This Sabbath shall appear still more clearly if we count the ages as

days, in accordance with the periods of time defined in Scripture, for

that period will be found to be the seventh. The first age, as the

first day, extends from Adam to the deluge; the second from the deluge

to Abraham, equalling the first, not in length of time, but in the

number of generations, there being ten in each. From Abraham to the

advent of Christ there are, as the evangelist Matthew calculates, three

periods, in each of which are fourteen generations,--one period from

Abraham to David, a second from David to the captivity, a third from

the captivity to the birth of Christ in the flesh. There are thus five

ages in all. The sixth is now passing, and cannot be measured by any

number of generations, as it has been said, "It is not for you to know

the times, which the Father hath put in His own power." [1700] After

this period God shall rest as on the seventh day, when He shall give us

(who shall be the seventh day) rest in Himself. [1701] But there is

not now space to treat of these ages; suffice it to say that the

seventh shall be our Sabbath, which shall be brought to a close, not by

an evening, but by the Lord's day, as an eighth and eternal day,

consecrated by the resurrection of Christ, and prefiguring the eternal

repose not only of the spirit, but also of the body. There we shall

rest and see, see and love, love and praise. This is what shall be in

the end without end. For what other end do we propose to ourselves

than to attain to the kingdom of which there is no end?

I think I have now, by God's help, discharged my obligation in writing

this large work. Let those who think I have said too little, or those

who think I have said too much, forgive me; and let those who think I

have said just enough join me in giving thanks to God. Amen.

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[1690] Ps. lxxxiv. 4.

[1691] Numbers.

[1692] Lev. xxvi. 12.

[1693] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

[1694] Or, the former to a state of probation, the latter to a state of

reward.

[1695] Ps. xlvi. 10.

[1696] Gen. ii. 2, 3.

[1697] Gen. iii. 5.

[1698] Deut. v. 14.

[1699] Ezek. xx. 12.

[1700] Acts. i. 7.

[1701] [On Augustin's view of the millennium and the first

resurrection, see Bk. xx. 6-10.--P.S.]

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On Christian Doctrine

In Four Books.

Translated by Rev. Professor J. F. Shaw, of Londonderry.

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Introductory Note by the Editor.

The four books of St. Augustin On Christian Doctrine (De Doctrina

Christiana, iv libri) are a compend of exegetical theology to guide the

reader in the understanding and interpretation of the Sacred

Scriptures, according to the analogy of faith. The first three books

were written a.d. 397; the fourth was added 426.

He speaks of it in his Retractations, Bk. ii., chap. 4, as follows:

"Finding that the books on Christian Doctrine were not finished, I

thought it better to complete them before passing on to the revision of

others. Accordingly, I completed the third book, which had been

written as far as the place where a quotation is made from the Gospel

about the woman who took leaven and hid it in three measures of meal

till the whole was leavened. [1702] I added also the last book, and

finished the whole work in four books [in the year 426]: the first

three affording aids to the interpretation of Scripture, the last

giving directions as to the mode of making known our interpretation.

In the second book, [1703] I made a mistake as to the authorship of the

book commonly called the Wisdom of Solomon. For I have since learnt

that it is not a well-established fact, as I said it was, that Jesus

the son of Sirach, who wrote the book of Ecclesiasticus, wrote this

book also: on the contrary, I have ascertained that it is altogether

more probable that he was not the author of this book. Again, when I

said, The authority of the Old Testament is contained within the limits

of these forty-four books,' [1704] I used the phrase Old Testament' in

accordance with ecclesiastical usage. But the apostle seems to

restrict the application of the name Old Testament' to the law which

was given on Mount Sinai. [1705] And in what I said as to St. Ambrose

having, by his knowledge of chronology, solved a great difficulty, when

he showed that Plato and Jeremiah were contemporaries, [1706] my memory

betrayed me. What that great bishop really did say upon this subject

may be seen in the book which he wrote, On Sacraments or Philosophy.'"

[1707]

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[1702] Bk. iii. chap. 25.

[1703] Chap. 8.

[1704] Bk. ii. chap. 8.

[1705] Gal. iv. 24.

[1706] Book. ii. chap. 28. See p. 547.

[1707] This book is among the lost works of Ambrose.

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Contents of Christian Doctrine.

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Preface, Showing the Utility of the Treatise on Christian Doctrine.

Book I.

Containing a General View of the Subjects Treated in Holy Scripture.

The author divides his work into two parts, one relating to the

discovery, the other to the expression, of the true sense of

Scripture. He shows that to discover the meaning we must attend both

to things and to signs, as it is necessary to know what things we ought

to teach to the Christian people, and also the signs of these things,

that is, where the knowledge of these things is to be sought. In this

first book he treats of things, which he divides into three

classes,--things to be enjoyed, things to be used, and things which use

and enjoy. The only object which ought to be enjoyed is the Triune

God, who is our highest good and our true happiness. We are prevented

by our sins from enjoying God; and that our sins might be taken away,

"The Word was made Flesh," our Lord suffered, and died, and rose again,

and ascended into heaven, taking to Himself as his bride the Church, in

which we receive remission of our sins. And if our sins are remitted

and our souls renewed by grace, we may await with hope the resurrection

of the body to eternal glory; if not, we shall be raised to everlasting

punishment. These matters relating to faith having been expounded, the

author goes on to show that all objects, except God, are for use; for,

though some of them may be loved, yet our love is not to rest in them,

but to have reference to God. And we ourselves are not objects of

enjoyment to God: he uses us, but for our own advantage. He then goes

on to show that love--the love of God for His own sake and the love of

our neighbor for God's sake--is the fulfillment and the end of all

Scripture. After adding a few words about hope, he shows, in

conclusion, that faith, hope, and love are graces essentially necessary

for him who would understand and explain aright the Holy Scriptures.

Book II.

Having completed his exposition of things, the author now proceeds to

discuss the subject of signs. He first defines what a sign is, and

shows that there are two classes of signs, the natural and the

conventional. Of conventional signs (which are the only class here

noticed), words are the most numerous and important, and are those with

which the interpreter of Scripture is chiefly concerned. The

difficulties and obscurities of Scripture spring chiefly from two

sources, unknown and ambiguous signs. The present book deals only with

unknown signs, the ambiguities of language being reserved for treatment

in the next book. The difficulty arising from ignorance of signs is to

be removed by learning the Greek and Hebrew languages, in which

Scripture is written, by comparing the various translations, and by

attending to the context. In the interpretation of figurative

expressions, knowledge of things is as necessary as knowledge of words;

and the various sciences and arts of the heathen, so far as they are

true and useful, may be turned to account in removing our ignorance of

signs, whether these be direct or figurative. Whilst exposing the

folly and futility of many heathen superstitions and practices, the

author points out how all that is sound and useful in their science and

philosophy may be turned to a Christian use. And in conclusion, he

shows the spirit in which it behoves us to address ourselves to the

study and interpretation of the sacred books.

Book III.

The author, having discussed in the preceding book the method of

dealing with unknown signs, goes on in this third book to treat of

ambiguous signs. Such signs may be either direct or figurative. In

the case of direct signs ambiguity may arise from the punctuation, the

pronunciation, or the doubtful signification of the words, and is to be

resolved by attention to the context, a comparison of translations, or

a reference to the original tongue. In the case of figurative signs we

need to guard against two mistakes:--1. the interpreting literal

expressions figuratively; 2. the interpreting figurative expressions

literally. The author lays down rules by which we may decide whether

an expression is literal or figurative; the general rule being, that

whatever can be shown to be in its literal sense inconsistent either

with purity of life or correctness of doctrine must be taken

figuratively. He then goes on to lay down rules for the interpretation

of expressions which have been proved to be figurative; the general

principle being, that no interpretation can be true which does not

promote the love of God and the love of man. The author then proceeds

to expound and illustrate the seven rules of Tichonius the Donatist,

which he commends to the attention of the student of Holy Scripture.

Book IV.

Passing to the second part of his work, that which treats of

expression, the author premises that it is no part of his intention to

write a treatise on the laws of rhetoric. These can be learned

elsewhere, and ought not to be neglected, being indeed specially

necessary for the Christian teacher, whom it behoves to excell in

eloquence and power of speech. After detailing with much care and

minuteness the various qualities of an orator, he recommends the

authors of the Holy Scriptures as the best models of eloquence, far

excelling all others in the combination of eloquence with wisdom. He

points out that perspicuity is the most essential quality of style, and

ought to be cultivated with especial care by the teacher, as it is the

main requisite for instruction, although other qualities are required

for delighting and persuading the hearer. All these gifts are to be

sought in earnest prayer from God, though we are not to forget to be

zealous and diligent in study. He shows that there are three species

of style,--the subdued, the elegant, and the majestic; the first

serving for instruction, the second for praise, and the third for

exhortation: and of each of these he gives examples, selected both

from Scripture and from early teachers of the Church, Cyprian and

Ambrose. He shows that these various styles may be mingled, and when

and for what purposes they are mingled; and that they all have the same

end in view, to bring home the truth to the hearer, so that he may

understand it, hear it with gladness, and practice it in his life.

Finally, he exhorts the Christian teacher himself, pointing out the

dignity and responsibility of the office he holds, to lead a life in

harmony with his own teaching, and to show a good example to all.

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Preface.

Showing that to teach rules for the interpretation of Scripture is not

a superfluous task.

1. There are certain rules for the interpretation of Scripture which I

think might with great advantage be taught to earnest students of the

word, that they may profit not only from reading the works of others

who have laid open the secrets of the sacred writings, but also from

themselves opening such secrets to others. These rules I propose to

teach to those who are able and willing to learn, if God our Lord do

not withhold from me, while I write, the thoughts He is wont to

vouchsafe to me in my meditations on this subject. But before I enter

upon this undertaking, I think it well to meet the objections of those

who are likely to take exception to the work, or who would do so, did I

not conciliate them beforehand. And if, after all, men should still be

found to make objections, yet at least they will not prevail with

others (over whom they might have influence, did they not find them

forearmed against their assaults), to turn them back from a useful

study to the dull sloth of ignorance.

2. There are some, then, likely to object to this work of mine,

because they have failed to understand the rules here laid down.

Others, again, will think that I have spent my labor to no purpose,

because, though they understand the rules, yet in their attempts to

apply them and to interpret Scripture by them, they have failed to

clear up the point they wish cleared up; and these, because they have

received no assistance from this work themselves, will give it as their

opinion that it can be of no use to anybody. There is a third class of

objectors who either really do understand Scripture well, or think they

do, and who, because they know (or imagine) that they have attained a

certain power of interpreting the sacred books without reading any

directions of the kind that I propose to lay down here, will cry out

that such rules are not necessary for any one, but that everything

rightly done towards clearing up the obscurities of Scripture could be

better done by the unassisted grace of God.

3. To reply briefly to all these. To those who do not understand what

is here set down, my answer is, that I am not to be blamed for their

want of understanding. It is just as if they were anxious to see the

new or the old moon, or some very obscure star, and I should point it

out with my finger: if they had not sight enough to see even my

finger, they would surely have no right to fly into a passion with me

on that account. As for those who, even though they know and

understand my directions, fail to penetrate the meaning of obscure

passages in Scripture, they may stand for those who, in the case I have

imagined, are just able to see my finger, but cannot see the stars at

which it is pointed. And so both these classes had better give up

blaming me, and pray instead that God would grant them the sight of

their eyes. For though I can move my finger to point out an object, it

is out of my power to open men's eyes that they may see either the fact

that I am pointing, or the object at which I point.

4. But now as to those who talk vauntingly of Divine Grace, and boast

that they understand and can explain Scripture without the aid of such

directions as those I now propose to lay down, and who think,

therefore, that what I have undertaken to write is entirely

superfluous. I would such persons could calm themselves so far as to

remember that, however justly they may rejoice in God's great gift, yet

it was from human teachers they themselves learnt to read. Now, they

would hardly think it right that they should for that reason be held in

contempt by the Egyptian monk Antony, a just and holy man, who, not

being able to read himself, is said to have committed the Scriptures to

memory through hearing them read by others, and by dint of wise

meditation to have arrived at a thorough understanding of them; or by

that barbarian slave Christianus, of whom I have lately heard from very

respectable and trustworthy witnesses, who, without any teaching from

man, attained a full knowledge of the art of reading simply through

prayer that it might be revealed to him; after three days' supplication

obtaining his request that he might read through a book presented to

him on the spot by the astonished bystanders.

5. But if any one thinks that these stories are false, I do not

strongly insist on them. For, as I am dealing with Christians who

profess to understand the Scriptures without any directions from man

(and if the fact be so, they boast of a real advantage, and one of no

ordinary kind), they must surely grant that every one of us learnt his

own language by hearing it constantly from childhood, and that any

other language we have learnt,--Greek, or Hebrew, or any of the

rest,--we have learnt either in the same way, by hearing it spoken, or

from a human teacher. Now, then, suppose we advise all our brethren

not to teach their children any of these things, because on the

outpouring of the Holy Spirit the apostles immediately began to speak

the language of every race; and warn every one who has not had a like

experience that he need not consider himself a Christian, or may at

least doubt whether he has yet received the Holy Spirit? No, no;

rather let us put away false pride and learn whatever can be learnt

from man; and let him who teaches another communicate what he has

himself received without arrogance and without jealousy. And do not

let us tempt Him in whom we have believed, lest, being ensnared by such

wiles of the enemy and by our own perversity, we may even refuse to go

to the churches to hear the gospel itself, or to read a book, or to

listen to another reading or preaching, in the hope that we shall be

carried up to the third heaven, "whether in the body or out of the

body," as the apostle says, [1708] and there hear unspeakable words,

such as it is not lawful for man to utter, or see the Lord Jesus Christ

and hear the gospel from His own lips rather than from those of men.

6. Let us beware of such dangerous temptations of pride, and let us

rather consider the fact that the Apostle Paul himself, although

stricken down and admonished by the voice of God from heaven, was yet

sent to a man to receive the sacraments and be admitted into the

Church; [1709] and that Cornelius the centurion, although an angel

announced to him that his prayers were heard and his alms had in

remembrance, was yet handed over to Peter for instruction, and not only

received the sacraments from the apostle's hands, but was also

instructed by him as to the proper objects of faith, hope, and love.

[1710] And without doubt it was possible to have done everything

through the instrumentality of angels, but the condition of our race

would have been much more degraded if God had not chosen to make use of

men as the ministers of His word to their fellow-men. For how could

that be true which is written, "The temple of God is holy, which temple

ye are," [1711] if God gave forth no oracles from His human temple, but

communicated everything that He wished to be taught to men by voices

from heaven, or through the ministration of angels? Moreover, love

itself, which binds men together in the bond of unity, would have no

means of pouring soul into soul, and, as it were, mingling them one

with another, if men never learnt anything from their fellow-men.

7. And we know that the eunuch who was reading Isaiah the prophet, and

did not understand what he read, was not sent by the apostle to an

angel, nor was it an angel who explained to him what he did not

understand, nor was he inwardly illuminated by the grace of God without

the interposition of man; on the contrary, at the suggestion of God,

Philip, who did understand the prophet, came to him, and sat with him,

and in human words, and with a human tongue, opened to him the

Scriptures. [1712] Did not God talk with Moses, and yet he, with

great wisdom and entire absence of jealous pride, accepted the plan of

his father-in-law, a man of an alien race, for ruling and administering

the affairs of the great nation entrusted to him? [1713] For Moses

knew that a wise plan, in whatever mind it might originate, was to be

ascribed not to the man who devised it, but to Him who is the Truth,

the unchangeable God.

8. In the last place, every one who boasts that he, through divine

illumination, understands the obscurities of Scripture, though not

instructed in any rules of interpretation, at the same time believes,

and rightly believes, that this power is not his own, in the sense of

originating with himself, but is the gift of God. For so he seeks

God's glory, not his own. But reading and understanding, as he does,

without the aid of any human interpreter, why does he himself undertake

to interpret for others? Why does he not rather send them direct to

God, that they too may learn by the inward teaching of the Spirit

without the help of man? The truth is, he fears to incur the re

proach: "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou oughtest to have put

my money to the exchangers." [1714] Seeing, then, that these men

teach others, either through speech or writing, what they understand,

surely they cannot blame me if I likewise teach not only what they

understand, but also the rules of interpretation they follow. For no

one ought to consider anything as his own, except perhaps what is

false. All truth is of Him who says, "I am the truth." [1715] For

what have we that we did not receive? and if we have received it, why

do we glory, as if we had not received it? [1716]

9. He who reads to an audience pronounces aloud the words he sees

before him: he who teaches reading, does it that others may be able to

read for themselves. Each, however, communicates to others what he has

learnt himself. Just so, the man who explains to an audience the

passages of Scripture he understands is like one who reads aloud the

words before him. On the other hand, the man who lays down rules for

interpretation is like one who teaches reading, that is, shows others

how to read for themselves. So that, just as he who knows how to read

is not dependent on some one else, when he finds a book, to tell him

what is written in it, so the man who is in possession of the rules

which I here attempt to lay down, if he meet with an obscure passage in

the books which he reads, will not need an interpreter to lay open the

secret to him, but, holding fast by certain rules, and following up

certain indications, will arrive at the hidden sense without any error,

or at least without falling into any gross absurdity. And so although

it will sufficiently appear in the course of the work itself that no

one can justly object to this undertaking of mine, which has no other

object than to be of service, yet as it seemed convenient to reply at

the outset to any who might make preliminary objections, such is the

start I have thought good to make on the road I am about to traverse in

this book.

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[1708] 2 Cor. xii. 2-4.

[1709] Acts ix. 3.

[1710] Acts x.

[1711] 1 Cor. iii. 17.

[1712] Acts viii. 26.

[1713] Ex. xviii. 13.

[1714] Matt. xxv. 26, 27.

[1715] John xiv. 6.

[1716] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

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Book I.

Containing a General View of the Subjects Treated in Holy Scripture.

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Argument--The author divides his work into two parts, one relating to

the discovery, the other to the expression, of the true sense of

scripture. He shows that to discover the meaning we must attend both

to things and to signs, as it is necessary to know what things we ought

to teach to the Christian people, and also the signs of these things,

that is, where the knowledge of these things is to be sought. In this

first book he treats of things, which he divides into three

classes,--things to be enjoyed, things to be used, and things which use

and enjoy. The only object which ought to be enjoyed is the triune

God, who is our highest good and our true happiness. We are prevented

by our sins from enjoying God; and that our sins might be taken away,

"the word was made flesh," our Lord suffered, and died, and rose again,

and ascended into heaven, taking to himself as his bride the church, in

which we receive remission of our sins. And if our sins are remitted

and our souls renewed by grace, we may await with hope the resurrection

of the body to eternal glory; if not, we shall be raised to everlasting

punishment. These matters relating to faith having been expounded, the

author goes on to show that all objects, except God, are for use; for,

though some of them may be loved, yet our love is not to rest in them,

but to have reference to God. And we ourselves are not objects of

enjoyment to God; he uses us, but for our own advantage. He then goes

on to show that love--the love of God for his own sake and the love of

our neighbor for God's sake--is the fulfillment and the end of all

Scripture. After adding a few words about hope, he shows, in

conclusion, that faith, hope, and love are graces essentially necessary

for him who would understand and explain aright the Holy Scriptures.

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Chapter 1.--The Interpretation of Scripture Depends on the Discovery

and Enunciation of the Meaning, and is to Be Undertaken in Dependence

on God's Aid.

1. There are two things on which all interpretation of Scripture

depends: the mode of ascertaining the proper meaning, and the mode of

making known the meaning when it is ascertained. We shall treat first

of the mode of ascertaining, next of the mode of making known, the

meaning;--a great and arduous undertaking, and one that, if difficult

to carry out, it is, I fear, presumptuous to enter upon. And

presumptuous it would undoubtedly be, if I were counting on my own

strength; but since my hope of accomplishing the work rests on Him who

has already supplied me with many thoughts on this subject, I do not

fear but that He will go on to supply what is yet wanting when once I

have begun to use what He has already given. For a possession which is

not diminished by being shared with others, if it is possessed and not

shared, is not yet possessed as it ought to be possessed. The Lord

saith "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given." [1717] He will give,

then, to those who have; that is to say, if they use freely and

cheerfully what they have received, He will add to and perfect His

gifts. The loaves in the miracle were only five and seven in number

before the disciples began to divide them among the hungry people. But

when once they began to distribute them, though the wants of so many

thousands were satisfied, they filled baskets with the fragments that

were left. [1718] Now, just as that bread increased in the very act

of breaking it, so those thoughts which the Lord has already vouchsafed

to me with a view to undertaking this work will, as soon as I begin to

impart them to others, be multiplied by His grace, so that, in this

very work of distribution in which I have engaged, so far from

incurring loss and poverty, I shall be made to rejoice in a marvellous

increase of wealth.

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[1717] Matt. xiii. 12.

[1718] Matt. xiv. 17, etc.; xx. 34, etc.

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Chapter 2.--What a Thing Is, and What A Sign.

2. All instruction is either about things or about signs; but things

are learnt by means of signs. I now use the word "thing" in a strict

sense, to signify that which is never employed as a sign of anything

else: for example, wood, stone, cattle, and other things of that

kind. Not, however, the wood which we read Moses cast into the bitter

waters to make them sweet, [1719] nor the stone which Jacob used as a

pillow, [1720] nor the ram which Abraham offered up instead of his son;

[1721] for these, though they are things, are also signs of other

things. There are signs of another kind, those which are never

employed except as signs: for example, words. No one uses words

except as signs of something else; and hence may be understood what I

call signs: those things, to wit, which are used to indicate something

else. Accordingly, every sign is also a thing; for what is not a thing

is nothing at all. Every thing, however, is not also a sign. And so,

in regard to this distinction between things and signs, I shall, when I

speak of things, speak in such a way that even if some of them may be

used as signs also, that will not interfere with the division of the

subject according to which I am to discuss things first and signs

afterwards. But we must carefully remember that what we have now to

consider about things is what they are in themselves, not what other

things they are signs of.

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[1719] Ex. xv. 25.

[1720] Gen. xxviii. 11.

[1721] Gen. xxii. 13.

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Chapter 3.--Some Things are for Use, Some for Enjoyment.

3. There are some things, then, which are to be enjoyed, others which

are to be used, others still which enjoy and use. Those things which

are objects of enjoyment make us happy. Those things which are objects

of use assist, and (so to speak) support us in our efforts after

happiness, so that we can attain the things that make us happy and rest

in them. We ourselves, again, who enjoy and use these things, being

placed among both kinds of objects, if we set ourselves to enjoy those

which we ought to use, are hindered in our course, and sometimes even

led away from it; so that, getting entangled in the love of lower

gratifications, we lag behind in, or even altogether turn back from,

the pursuit of the real and proper objects of enjoyment.

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Chapter 4.--Difference of Use and Enjoyment.

4. For to enjoy a thing is to rest with satisfaction in it for its own

sake. To use, on the other hand, is to employ whatever means are at

one's disposal to obtain what one desires, if it is a proper object of

desire; for an unlawful use ought rather to be called an abuse.

Suppose, then, we were wanderers in a strange country, and could not

live happily away from our fatherland, and that we felt wretched in our

wandering, and wishing to put an end to our misery, determined to

return home. We find, however, that we must make use of some mode of

conveyance, either by land or water, in order to reach that fatherland

where our enjoyment is to commence. But the beauty of the country

through which we pass, and the very pleasure of the motion, charm our

hearts, and turning these things which we ought to use into objects of

enjoyment, we become unwilling to hasten the end of our journey; and

becoming engrossed in a factitious delight, our thoughts are diverted

from that home whose delights would make us truly happy. Such is a

picture of our condition in this life of mortality. We have wandered

far from God; and if we wish to return to our Father's home, this world

must be used, not enjoyed, that so the invisible things of God may be

clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [1722]

--that is, that by means of what is material and temporary we may lay

hold upon that which is spiritual and eternal.

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[1722] Rom. i. 20.

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Chapter 5.--The Trinity the True Object of Enjoyment.

5. The true objects of enjoyment, then, are the Father and the Son and

the Holy Spirit, who are at the same time the Trinity, one Being,

supreme above all, and common to all who enjoy Him, if He is an object,

and not rather the cause of all objects, or indeed even if He is the

cause of all. For it is not easy to find a name that will suitably

express so great excellence, unless it is better to speak in this way:

The Trinity, one God, of whom are all things, through whom are all

things, in whom are all things. [1723] Thus the Father and the Son

and the Holy Spirit, and each of these by Himself, is God, and at the

same time they are all one God; and each of them by Himself is a

complete substance, and yet they are all one substance. The Father is

not the Son nor the Holy Spirit; the Son is not the Father nor the Holy

Spirit; the Holy Spirit is not the Father nor the Son: but the Father

is only Father, the Son is only Son, and the Holy Spirit is only Holy

Spirit. To all three belong the same eternity, the same

unchangeableness, the same majesty, the same power. In the Father is

unity, in the Son equality, in the Holy Spirit the harmony of unity and

equality; and these three attributes are all one because of the Father,

all equal because of the Son, and all harmonious because of the Holy

Spirit.

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[1723] Rom. xi. 36.

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Chapter 6.--In What Sense God is Ineffable.

6. Have I spoken of God, or uttered His praise, in any worthy way?

Nay, I feel that I have done nothing more than desire to speak; and if

I have said anything, it is not what I desired to say. How do I know

this, except from the fact that God is unspeakable? But what I have

said, if it had been unspeakable, could not have been spoken. And so

God is not even to be called "unspeakable," because to say even this is

to speak of Him. Thus there arises a curious contradiction of words,

because if the unspeakable is what cannot be spoken of, it is not

unspeakable if it can be called unspeakable. And this opposition of

words is rather to be avoided by silence than to be explained away by

speech. And yet God, although nothing worthy of His greatness can be

said of Him, has condescended to accept the worship of men's mouths,

and has desired us through the medium of our own words to rejoice in

His praise. For on this principle it is that He is called Deus (God).

For the sound of those two syllables in itself conveys no true

knowledge of His nature; but yet all who know the Latin tongue are led,

when that sound reaches their ears, to think of a nature supreme in

excellence and eternal in existence.

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Chapter 7.--What All Men Understand by the Term God.

7. For when the one supreme God of gods is thought of, even by those

who believe that there are other gods, and who call them by that name,

and worship them as gods, their thought takes the form of an endeavor

to reach the conception of a nature, than which nothing more excellent

or more exalted exists. And since men are moved by different kinds of

pleasures, partly by those which pertain to the bodily senses, partly

by those which pertain to the intellect and soul, those of them who are

in bondage to sense think that either the heavens, or what appears to

be most brilliant in the heavens, or the universe itself, is God of

gods: or if they try to get beyond the universe, they picture to

themselves something of dazzling brightness, and think of it vaguely as

infinite, or of the most beautiful form conceivable; or they represent

it in the form of the human body, if they think that superior to all

others. Or if they think that there is no one God supreme above the

rest, but that there are many or even innumerable gods of equal rank,

still these too they conceive as possessed of shape and form, according

to what each man thinks the pattern of excellence. Those, on the other

hand, who endeavor by an effort of the intelligence to reach a

conception of God, place Him above all visible and bodily natures, and

even above all intelligent and spiritual natures that are subject to

change. All, however, strive emulously to exalt the excellence of

God: nor could any one be found to believe that any being to whom

there exists a superior is God. And so all concur in believing that

God is that which excels in dignity all other objects.

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Chapter 8.--God to Be Esteemed Above All Else, Because He is

Unchangeable Wisdom.

8. And since all who think about God think of Him as living, they only

can form any conception of Him that is not absurd and unworthy who

think of Him as life itself; and, whatever may be the bodily form that

has suggested itself to them, recognize that it is by life it lives or

does not live, and prefer what is living to what is dead; who

understand that the living bodily form itself, however it may outshine

all others in splendor, overtop them in size, and excel them in beauty,

is quite a distinct thing from the life by which it is quickened; and

who look upon the life as incomparably superior in dignity and worth to

the mass which is quickened and animated by it. Then, when they go on

to look into the nature of the life itself, if they find it mere

nutritive life, without sensibility, such as that of plants, they

consider it inferior to sentient life, such as that of cattle; and

above this, again, they place intelligent life, such as that of men.

And, perceiving that even this is subject to change, they are compelled

to place above it, again, that unchangeable life which is not at one

time foolish, at another time wise, but on the contrary is wisdom

itself. For a wise intelligence, that is, one that has attained to

wisdom, was, previous to its attaining wisdom, unwise. But wisdom

itself never was unwise, and never can become so. And if men never

caught sight of this wisdom, they could never with entire confidence

prefer a life which is unchangeably wise to one that is subject to

change. This will be evident, if we consider that the very rule of

truth by which they affirm the unchangeable life to be the more

excellent, is itself unchangeable: and they cannot find such a rule,

except by going beyond their own nature; for they find nothing in

themselves that is not subject to change.

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Chapter 9.--All Acknowledge the Superiority of Unchangeable Wisdom to

that Which is Variable.

9. Now, no one is so egregiously silly as to ask, "How do you know

that a life of unchangeable wisdom is preferable to one of change?"

For that very truth about which he asks, how I know it? is unchangeably

fixed in the minds of all men, and presented to their common

contemplation. And the man who does not see it is like a blind man in

the sun, whom it profits nothing that the splendor of its light, so

clear and so near, is poured into his very eye-balls. The man, on the

other hand, who sees, but shrinks from this truth, is weak in his

mental vision from dwelling long among the shadows of the flesh. And

thus men are driven back from their native land by the contrary blasts

of evil habits, and pursue lower and less valuable objects in

preference to that which they own to be more excellent and more worthy.

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Chapter 10.--To See God, the Soul Must Be Purified.

10. Wherefore, since it is our duty fully to enjoy the truth which

lives unchangeably, and since the triune God takes counsel in this

truth for the things which He has made, the soul must be purified that

it may have power to perceive that light, and to rest in it when it is

perceived. And let us look upon this purification as a kind of journey

or voyage to our native land. For it is not by change of place that we

can come nearer to Him who is in every place, but by the cultivation of

pure desires and virtuous habits.

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Chapter 11.--Wisdom Becoming Incarnate, a Pattern to Us of

Purification.

11. But of this we should have been wholly incapable, had not Wisdom

condescended to adapt Himself to our weakness, and to show us a pattern

of holy life in the form of our own humanity. Yet, since we when we

come to Him do wisely, He when He came to us was considered by proud

men to have done very foolishly. And since we when we come to Him

become strong, He when He came to us was looked upon as weak. But "the

foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is

stronger than men." [1724] And thus, though Wisdom was Himself our

home, He made Himself also the way by which we should reach our home.

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[1724] 1 Cor. i. 25.

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Chapter 12.--In What Sense the Wisdom of God Came to Us.

And though He is everywhere present to the inner eye when it is sound

and clear, He condescended to make Himself manifest to the outward eye

of those whose inward sight is weak and dim. "For after that, in the

wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the

foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." [1725]

12. Not then in the sense of traversing space, but because He appeared

to mortal men in the form of mortal flesh, He is said to have come to

us. For He came to a place where He had always been, seeing that "He

was in the world, and the world was made by Him." But, because men,

who in their eagerness to enjoy the creature instead of the Creator had

grown into the likeness of this world, and are therefore most

appropriately named "the world," did not recognize Him, therefore the

evangelist says, "and the world knew Him not." [1726] Thus, in the

wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God. Why then did He come,

seeing that He was already here, except that it pleased God through the

foolishness of preaching to save them that believe?

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[1725] 1 Cor. i. 21.

[1726] John i. 10.

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Chapter 13.--The Word Was Made Flesh.

In what way did He come but this, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt

among us"? [1727] Just as when we speak, in order that what we have

in our minds may enter through the ear into the mind of the hearer, the

word which we have in our hearts becomes an outward sound and is called

speech; and yet our thought does not lose itself in the sound, but

remains complete in itself, and takes the form of speech without being

modified in its own nature by the change: so the Divine Word, though

suffering no change of nature, yet became flesh, that He might dwell

among us.

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[1727] John i. 14.

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Chapter 14.--How the Wisdom of God Healed Man.

13. Moreover, as the use of remedies is the way to health, so this

remedy took up sinners to heal and restore them. And just as surgeons,

when they bind up wounds, do it not in a slovenly way, but carefully,

that there may be a certain degree of neatness in the binding, in

addition to its mere usefulness, so our medicine, Wisdom, was by His

assumption of humanity adapted to our wounds, curing some of them by

their opposites, some of them by their likes. And just as he who

ministers to a bodily hurt in some cases applies contraries, as cold to

hot, moist to dry, etc., and in other cases applies likes, as a round

cloth to a round wound, or an oblong cloth to an oblong wound, and does

not fit the same bandage to all limbs, but puts like to like; in the

same way the Wisdom of God in healing man has applied Himself to his

cure, being Himself healer and medicine both in one. Seeing, then,

that man fell through pride, He restored him through humility. We were

ensnared by the wisdom of the serpent: we are set free by the

foolishness of God. Moreover, just as the former was called wisdom,

but was in reality the folly of those who despised God, so the latter

is called foolishness, but is true wisdom in those who overcome the

devil. We used our immortality so badly as to incur the penalty of

death: Christ used His mortality so well as to restore us to life.

The disease was brought in through a woman's corrupted soul: the

remedy came through a woman's virgin body. To the same class of

opposite remedies it belongs, that our vices are cured by the example

of His virtues. On the other hand, the following are, as it were,

bandages made in the same shape as the limbs and wounds to which they

are applied: He was born of a woman to deliver us who fell through a

woman: He came as a man to save us who are men, as a mortal to save us

who are mortals, by death to save us who were dead. And those who can

follow out the matter more fully, who are not hurried on by the

necessity of carrying out a set undertaking, will find many other

points of instruction in considering the remedies, whether opposites or

likes, employed in the medicine of Christianity.

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Chapter 15.--Faith is Buttressed by the Resurrection and Ascension of

Christ, and is Stimulated by His Coming to Judgment.

14. The belief of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, and of

His ascension into heaven, has strengthened our faith by adding a great

buttress of hope. For it clearly shows how freely He laid down His

life for us when He had it in His power thus to take it up again. With

what assurance, then, is the hope of believers animated, when they

reflect how great He was who suffered so great things for them while

they were still in unbelief! And when men look for Him to come from

heaven as the judge of quick and dead, it strikes great terror into the

careless, so that they betake themselves to diligent preparation, and

learn by holy living to long for His approach, instead of quaking at it

on account of their evil deeds. And what tongue can tell, or what

imagination can conceive, the reward He will bestow at the last, when

we consider that for our comfort in this earthly journey He has given

us so freely of His Spirit, that in the adversities of this life we may

retain our confidence in, and love for, Him whom as yet we see not; and

that He has also given to each gifts suitable for the building up of

His Church, that we may do what He points out as right to be done, not

only without a murmur, but even with delight?

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Chapter 16.--Christ Purges His Church by Medicinal Afflictions.

15. For the Church is His body, as the apostle's teaching shows us;

[1728] and it is even called His spouse. [1729] His body, then, which

has many members, and all performing different functions, He holds

together in the bond of unity and love, which is its true health.

Moreover He exercises it in the present time, and purges it with many

wholesome afflictions, that when He has transplanted it from this world

to the eternal world, He may take it to Himself as His bride, without

spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

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[1728] Compare Eph. i. 23 with Rom. xii. 5.

[1729] Rev. xix. 7; xxi. 9.

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Chapter 17.--Christ, by Forgiving Our Sins, Opened the Way to Our Home.

16. Further, when we are on the way, and that not a way that lies

through space, but through a change of affections, and one which the

guilt of our past sins like a hedge of thorns barred against us, what

could He, who was willing to lay Himself down as the way by which we

should return, do that would be still gracious and more merciful,

except to forgive us all our sins, and by being crucified for us to

remove the stern decrees that barred the door against our return?

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Chapter 18.--The Keys Given to the Church.

17. He has given, therefore, the keys to His Church, that whatsoever

it should bind on earth might be bound in heaven, and whatsoever it

should loose on earth might be loosed in heaven; [1730] that is to say,

that whosoever in the Church should not believe that his sins are

remitted, they should not be remitted to him; but that whosoever should

believe and should repent, and turn from his sins, should be saved by

the same faith and repentance on the ground of which he is received

into the bosom of the Church. For he who does not believe that his

sins can be pardoned, falls into despair, and becomes worse as if no

greater good remained for him than to be evil, when he has ceased to

have faith in the results of his own repentance.

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[1730] Compare Matt. xvi. 19 with xviii. 18.

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Chapter 19.--Bodily and Spiritual Death and Resurrection.

18. Furthermore, as there is a kind of death of the soul, which

consists in the putting away of former habits and former ways of life,

and which comes through repentance, so also the death of the body

consists in the dissolution of the former principle of life. And just

as the soul, after it has put away and destroyed by repentance its

former habits, is created anew after a better pattern, so we must hope

and believe that the body, after that death which we all owe as a debt

contracted through sin, shall at the resurrection be changed into a

better form;--not that flesh and blood shall inherit the kingdom of God

(for that is impossible), but that this corruptible shall put on

incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. [1731] And

thus the body, being the source of no uneasiness because it can feel no

want, shall be animated by a spirit perfectly pure and happy, and shall

enjoy unbroken peace.

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[1731] 1 Cor. xv. 50-53.

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Chapter 20.--The Resurrection to Damnation.

19. Now he whose soul does not die to this world and begin here to be

conformed to the truth, falls when the body dies into a more terrible

death, and shall revive, not to change his earthly for a heavenly

habitation, but to endure the penalty of his sin.

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Chapter 21.--Neither Body Nor Soul Extinguished at Death.

And so faith clings to the assurance, and we must believe that it is so

in fact, that neither the human soul nor the human body suffers

complete extinction, but that the wicked rise again to endure

inconceivable punishment, and the good to receive eternal life.

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Chapter 22.--God Alone to Be Enjoyed.

20. Among all these things, then, those only are the true objects of

enjoyment which we have spoken of as eternal and unchangeable. The

rest are for use, that we may be able to arrive at the full enjoyment

of the former. We, however, who enjoy and use other things are things

ourselves. For a great thing truly is man, made after the image and

similitude of God, not as respects the mortal body in which he is

clothed, but as respects the rational soul by which he is exalted in

honor above the beasts. And so it becomes an important question,

whether men ought to enjoy, or to use, themselves, or to do both. For

we are commanded to love one another: but it is a question whether man

is to be loved by man for his own sake, or for the sake of something

else. If it is for his own sake, we enjoy him; if it is for the sake

of something else, we use him. It seems to me, then, that he is to be

loved for the sake of something else. For if a thing is to be loved

for its own sake, then in the enjoyment of it consists a happy life,

the hope of which at least, if not yet the reality, is our comfort in

the present time. But a curse is pronounced on him who places his hope

in man. [1732]

21. Neither ought any one to have joy in himself, if you look at the

matter clearly, because no one ought to love even himself for his own

sake, but for the sake of Him who is the true object of enjoyment. For

a man is never in so good a state as when his whole life is a journey

towards the unchangeable life, and his affections are entirely fixed

upon that. If, however, he loves himself for his own sake, he does not

look at himself in relation to God, but turns his mind in upon him

self, and so is not occupied with anything that is unchangeable. And

thus he does not enjoy himself at his best, because he is better when

his mind is fully fixed upon, and his affections wrapped up in, the

unchangeable good, than when he turns from that to enjoy even himself.

Wherefore if you ought not to love even yourself for your own sake, but

for His in whom your love finds its most worthy object, no other man

has a right to be angry if you love him too for God's sake. For this

is the law of love that has been laid down by Divine authority: "Thou

shall love thy neighbor as thyself;" but, "Thou shall love God with all

thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind:" [1733] so

that you are to concentrate all your thoughts, your whole life and your

whole intelligence upon Him from whom you derive all that you bring.

For when He says, "With all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with

all thy mind," He means that no part of our life is to be unoccupied,

and to afford room, as it were, for the wish to enjoy some other

object, but that whatever else may suggest itself to us as an object

worthy of love is to be borne into the same channel in which the whole

current of our affections flows. Whoever, then, loves his neighbor

aright, ought to urge upon him that he too should love God with his

whole heart, and soul, and mind. For in this way, loving his neighbor

as himself, a man turns the whole current of his love both for himself

and his neighbor into the channel of the love of God, which suffers no

stream to be drawn off from itself by whose diversion its own volume

would be diminished.

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[1732] Jer. xvii. 5.

[1733] Matt. xxii. 37-39. Compare Lev. xix. 18; Deut. vi. 5.

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Chapter 23.--Man Needs No Injunction to Love Himself and His Own Body.

22. Those things which are objects of use are not all, however, to be

loved, but those only which are either united with us in a common

relation to God, such as a man or an angel, or are so related to us as

to need the goodness of God through our instrumentality, such as the

body. For assuredly the martyrs did not love the wickedness of their

persecutors, although they used it to attain the favor of God. As,

then, there are four kinds of things that are to be loved,--first, that

which is above us; second, ourselves; third, that which is on a level

with us; fourth, that which is beneath us,--no precepts need be given

about the second and fourth of these. For, however far a man may fall

away from the truth, he still continues to love himself, and to love

his own body. The soul which flies away from the unchangeable Light,

the Ruler of all things, does so that it may rule over itself and over

its own body; and so it cannot but love both itself and its own body.

23. Morever, it thinks it has attained something very great if it is

able to lord it over its companions, that is, other men. For it is

inherent in the sinful soul to desire above all things, and to claim as

due to itself, that which is properly due to God only. Now such love

of itself is more correctly called hate. For it is not just that it

should desire what is beneath it to be obedient to it while itself will

not obey its own superior; and most justly has it been said, "He who

loveth iniquity hateth his own soul." [1734] And accordingly the soul

becomes weak, and endures much suffering about the mortal body. For,

of course, it must love the body, and be grieved at its corruption; and

the immortality and incorruptibility of the body spring out of the

health of the soul. Now the health of the soul is to cling steadfastly

to the better part, that is, to the unchangeable God. But when it

aspires to lord it even over those who are by nature its equals,--that

is, its fellow-men,--this is a reach of arrogance utterly intolerable.

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[1734] Ps. x. 5(LXX.).

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Chapter 24.--No Man Hates His Own Flesh, Not Even Those Who Abuse It.

24. No man, then, hates himself. On this point, indeed, no question

was ever raised by any sect. But neither does any man hate his own

body. For the apostle says truly, "No man ever yet hated his own

flesh." [1735] And when some people say that they would rather be

without a body altogether, they entirely deceive themselves. For it is

not their body, but its corruptions and its heaviness, that they hate.

And so it is not no body, but an uncorrupted and very light body, that

they want. But they think a body of that kind would be no body at all,

because they think such a thing as that must be a spirit. And as to

the fact that they seem in some sort to scourge their bodies by

abstinence and toil, those who do this in the right spirit do it not

that they may get rid of their body, but that they may have it in

subjection and ready for every needful work. For they strive by a kind

of toilsome exercise of the body itself to root out those lusts that

are hurtful to the body, that is, those habits and affections of the

soul that lead to the enjoyment of unworthy objects. They are not

destroying themselves; they are taking care of their health.

25. Those, on the other hand, who do this in a perverse spirit, make

war upon their own body as if it were a natural enemy. And in this

matter they are led astray by a mistaken interpretation of what they

read: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against

the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other." [1736] For

this is said of the carnal habit yet unsubdued, against which the

spirit lusteth, not to destroy the body, but to eradicate the lust of

the body--i.e., its evil habit--and thus to make it subject to the

spirit, which is what the order of nature demands. For as, after the

resurrection, the body, having become wholly subject to the spirit,

will live in perfect peace to all eternity; even in this life we must

make it an object to have the carnal habit changed for the better, so

that its inordinate affections may not war against the soul. And until

this shall take place, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the

spirit against the flesh;" the spirit struggling, not in hatred, but

for the mastery, because it desires that what it loves should be

subject to the higher principle; and the flesh struggling, not in

hatred, but because of the bondage of habit which it has derived from

its parent stock, and which has grown in upon it by a law of nature

till it has become inveterate. The spirit, then, in subduing the

flesh, is working as it were to destroy the ill-founded peace of an

evil habit, and to bring about the real peace which springs out of a

good habit. Nevertheless, not even those who, led astray by false

notions, hate their bodies would be prepared to sacrifice one eye, even

supposing they could do so without suffering any pain, and that they

had as much sight left in one as they formerly had in two, unless some

object was to be attained which would overbalance the loss. This and

other indications of the same kind are sufficient to show those who

candidly seek the truth how well-founded is the statement of the

apostle when he says, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh." He adds

too, "but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church."

[1737]

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[1735] Eph. v. 29.

[1736] Gal. v. 17.

[1737] Eph. v. 29.

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Chapter 25.--A Man May Love Something More Than His Body, But Does Not

Therefore Hate His Body.

26. Man, therefore, ought to be taught the due measure of loving, that

is, in what measure he may love himself so as to be of service to

himself. For that he does love himself, and does desire to do good to

himself, nobody but a fool would doubt. He is to be taught, too, in

what measure to love his body, so as to care for it wisely and within

due limits. For it is equally manifest that he loves his body also,

and desires to keep it safe and sound. And yet a man may have

something that he loves better than the safety and soundness of his

body. For many have been found voluntarily to suffer both pains and

amputations of some of their limbs that they might obtain other objects

which they valued more highly. But no one is to be told not to desire

the safety and health of his body because there is something he desires

more. For the miser, though he loves money, buys bread for

himself,--that is, he gives away money that he is very fond of and

desires to heap up,--but it is because he values more highly the bodily

health which the bread sustains. It is superfluous to argue longer on

a point so very plain, but this is just what the error of wicked men

often compels us to do.

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Chapter 26.--The Command to Love God and Our Neighbor Includes a

Command to Love Ourselves.

27. Seeing, then, that there is no need of a command that every man

should love himself and his own body,--seeing, that is, that we love

ourselves, and what is beneath us but connected with us, through a law

of nature which has never been violated, and which is common to us with

the beasts (for even the beasts love themselves and their own

bodies),--it only remained necessary to lay injunctions upon us in

regard to God above us, and our neighbor beside us. "Thou shalt love,"

He says, "the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul,

and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On

these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." [1738]

Thus the end of the commandment is love, and that twofold, the love of

God and the love of our neighbor. Now, if you take yourself in your

entirety,--that is, soul and body together,--and your neighbor in his

entirety, soul and body together (for man is made up of soul and body),

you will find that none of the classes of things that are to be loved

is overlooked in these two commandments. For though, when the love of

God comes first, and the measure of our love for Him is prescribed in

such terms that it is evident all other things are to find their centre

in Him, nothing seems to be said about our love for ourselves; yet when

it is said, "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself," it at once

becomes evident that our love for ourselves has not been overlooked.

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[1738] Matt. xxii. 37-40.

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Chapter 27.--The Order of Love.

28. Now he is a man of just and holy life who forms an unprejudiced

estimate of things, and keeps his affections also under strict control,

so that he neither loves what he ought not to love, nor fails to love

what he ought to love, nor loves that more which ought to be loved

less, nor loves that equally which ought to be loved either less or

more, nor loves that less or more which ought to be loved equally. No

sinner is to be loved as a sinner; and every man is to be loved as a

man for God's sake; but God is to be loved for His own sake. And if

God is to be loved more than any man, each man ought to love God more

than himself. Likewise we ought to love another man better than our

own body, because all things are to be loved in reference to God, and

another man can have fellowship with us in the enjoyment of God,

whereas our body cannot; for the body only lives through the soul, and

it is by the soul that we enjoy God.

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Chapter 28.--How We are to Decide Whom to Aid.

29. Further, all men are to be loved equally. But since you cannot do

good to all, you are to pay special regard to those who, by the

accidents of time, or place, or circumstance, are brought into closer

connection with you. For, suppose that you had a great deal of some

commodity, and felt bound to give it away to somebody who had none, and

that it could not be given to more than one person; if two persons

presented themselves, neither of whom had either from need or

relationship a greater claim upon you than the other, you could do

nothing fairer than choose by lot to which you would give what could

not be given to both. Just so among men: since you cannot consult for

the good of them all, you must take the matter as decided for you by a

sort of lot, according as each man happens for the time being to be

more closely connected with you.

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Chapter 29.--We are to Desire and Endeavor that All Men May Love God.

30. Now of all who can with us enjoy God, we love partly those to whom

we render services, partly those who render services to us, partly

those who both help us in our need and in turn are helped by us, partly

those upon whom we confer no advantage and from whom we look for none.

We ought to desire, however, that they should all join with us in

loving God, and all the assistance that we either give them or accept

from them should tend to that one end. For in the theatres, dens of

iniquity though they be, if a man is fond of a particular actor, and

enjoys his art as a great or even as the very greatest good, he is fond

of all who join with him in admiration of his favorite, not for their

own sakes, but for the sake of him whom they admire in common; and the

more fervent he is in his admiration, the more he works in every way he

can to secure new admirers for him, and the more anxious he becomes to

show him to others; and if he find any one comparatively indifferent,

he does all he can to excite his interest by urging his favorite's

merits: if, however, he meet with any one who opposes him, he is

exceedingly displeased by such a man's contempt of his favorite, and

strives in every way he can to remove it. Now, if this be so, what

does it become us to do who live in the fellowship of the love of God,

the enjoyment of whom is true happiness of life, to whom all who love

Him owe both their own existence and the love they bear Him, concerning

whom we have no fear that any one who comes to know Him will be

disappointed in Him, and who desires our love, not for any gain to

Himself, but that those who love Him may obtain an eternal reward, even

Himself whom they love? And hence it is that we love even our

enemies. For we do not fear them, seeing they cannot take away from us

what we love; but we pity them rather, because the more they hate us

the more are they separated from Him whom we love. For if they would

turn to Him, they must of necessity love Him as the supreme good, and

love us too as partakers with them in so great a blessing.

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Chapter 30.--Whether Angels are to Be Reckoned Our Neighbors.

31. There arises further in this connection a question about angels.

For they are happy in the enjoyment of Him whom we long to enjoy; and

the more we enjoy Him in this life as through a glass darkly, the more

easy do we find it to bear our pilgrimage, and the more eagerly do we

long for its termination. But it is not irrational to ask whether in

those two commandments is included the love of angels also. For that

He who commanded us to love our neighbor made no exception, as far as

men are concerned, is shown both by our Lord Himself in the Gospel, and

by the Apostle Paul. For when the man to whom our Lord delivered those

two commandments, and to whom He said that on these hang all the law

and the prophets, asked Him, "And who is my neighbor?" He told him of a

certain man who, going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among

thieves, and was severely wounded by them, and left naked and half

dead. [1739] And He showed him that nobody was neighbor to this man

except him who took pity upon him and came forward to relieve and care

for him. And the man who had asked the question admitted the truth of

this when he was himself interrogated in turn. To whom our Lord says,

"Go and do thou likewise;" teaching us that he is our neighbor whom it

is our duty to help in his need, or whom it would be our duty to help

if he were in need. Whence it follows, that he whose duty it would be

in turn to help us is our neighbor. For the name "neighbor" is a

relative one, and no one can be neighbor except to a neighbor. And,

again, who does not see that no exception is made of any one as a

person to whom the offices of mercy may be denied when our Lord extends

the rule even to our enemies? "Love your enemies, do good to them that

hate you." [1740]

32. And so also the Apostle Paul teaches when he says: "For this,

Thou shall not commit adultery, Thou shall not kill, Thou shall not

steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shall not covet; and if

there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this

saying, namely, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh

no ill to his neighbor." [1741] Whoever then supposes that the

apostle did not embrace every man in this precept, is compelled to

admit, what is at once most absurd and most pernicious, that the

apostle thought it no sin, if a man were not a Christian or were an

enemy, to commit adultery with his wife, or to kill him, or to covet

his goods. And as nobody but a fool would say this, it is clear that

every man is to be considered our neighbor, because we are to work no

ill to any man.

33. But now, if every one to whom we ought to show, or who ought to

show to us, the offices of mercy is by right called a neighbor, it is

manifest that the command to love our neighbor embraces the holy angels

also, seeing that so great offices of mercy have been performed by them

on our behalf, as may easily be shown by turning the attention to many

passages of Holy Scripture. And on this ground even God Himself, our

Lord, desired to be called our neighbor. For our Lord Jesus Christ

points to Himself under the figure of the man who brought aid to him

who was lying half dead on the road, wounded and abandoned by the

robbers. And the Psalmist says in his prayer, "I behaved myself as

though he had been my friend or brother." [1742] But as the Divine

nature is of higher excellence than, and far removed above, our nature,

the command to love God is distinct from that to love our neighbor.

For He shows us pity on account of His own goodness, but we show pity

to one another on account of His;--that is, He pities us that we may

fully enjoy Himself; we pity one another that we may fully enjoy Him.

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[1739] Luke x. 29, foll.

[1740] Matt. v. 44.

[1741] Rom. xiii. 9, 10.

[1742] Ps. xxxv. 14.

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Chapter 31.--God Uses Rather Than Enjoys Us.

34. And on this ground, when we say that we enjoy only that which we

love for its own sake, and that nothing is a true object of enjoyment

except that which makes us happy, and that all other things are for

use, there seems still to be something that requires explanation. For

God loves us, and Holy Scripture frequently sets before us the love He

has towards us. In what way then does He love us? As objects of use

or as objects of enjoyment? If He enjoys us, He must be in need of

good from us, and no sane man will say that; for all the good we enjoy

is either Himself, or what comes from Himself. And no one can be

ignorant or in doubt as to the fact that the light stands in no need of

the glitter of the things it has itself lit up. The Psalmist says most

plainly, "I said to the Lord, Thou art my God, for Thou needest not my

goodness." [1743] He does not enjoy us then, but makes use of us.

For if He neither enjoys nor uses us, I am at a loss to discover in

what way He can love us.

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[1743] Ps. xvi. 2 (LXX.).

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Chapter 32.--In What Way God Uses Man.

35. But neither does He use after our fashion of using. For when we

use objects, we do so with a view to the full enjoyment of the goodness

of God. God, however, in His use of us, has reference to His own

goodness. For it is because He is good we exist; and so far as we

truly exist we are good. And, further, because He is also just, we

cannot with impunity be evil; and so far as we are evil, so far is our

existence less complete. Now He is the first and supreme existence,

who is altogether unchangeable, and who could say in the fullest sense

of the words, "I AM That I AM," and "Thou shalt say to them, I AM hath

sent me unto you;" [1744] so that all other things that exist, both owe

their existence entirely to Him, and are good only so far as He has

given it to them to be so. That use, then, which God is said to make

of us has no reference to His own advantage, but to ours only; and, so

far as He is concerned, has reference only to His goodness. When we

take pity upon a man and care for him, it is for his advantage we do

so; but somehow or other our own advantage follows by a sort of natural

consequence, for God does not leave the mercy we show to him who needs

it to go without reward. Now this is our highest reward, that we

should fully enjoy Him, and that all who enjoy Him should enjoy one

another in Him.

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[1744] Ex. iii. 14.

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Chapter 33.--In What Way Man Should Be Enjoyed.

36. For if we find our happiness complete in one another, we stop

short upon the road, and place our hope of happiness in man or angel.

Now the proud man and the proud angel arrogate this to themselves, and

are glad to have the hope of others fixed upon them. But, on the

contrary, the holy man and the holy angel, even when we are weary and

anxious to stay with them and rest in them, set themselves to recruit

our energies with the provision which they have received of God for us

or for themselves; and then urge us thus refreshed to go on our way

towards Him, in the enjoyment of whom we find our common happiness.

For even the apostle exclaims, "Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye

baptized in the name of Paul?" [1745] and again: "Neither is he that

planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the

increase." [1746] And the angel admonisheth the man who is about to

worship him, that he should rather worship Him who is his Master, and

under whom he himself is a fellow-servant. [1747]

37. But when you have joy of a man in God, it is God rather than man

that you enjoy. For you enjoy Him by whom you are made happy, and you

rejoice to have come to Him in whose presence you place your hope of

joy. And accordingly, Paul says to Philemon, "Yea, brother, let me

have joy of thee in the Lord." [1748] For if he had not added "in the

Lord," but had only said, "Let me have joy of thee," he would have

implied that he fixed his hope of happiness upon him, although even in

the immediate context to "enjoy" is used in the sense of to "use with

delight." For when the thing that we love is near us, it is a matter

of course that it should bring delight with it. And if you pass beyond

this delight, and make it a means to that which you are permanently to

rest in, you are using it, and it is an abuse of language to say that

you enjoy it. But if you cling to it, and rest in it, finding your

happiness complete in it, then you may be truly and properly said to

enjoy it. And this we must never do except in the case of the Blessed

Trinity, who is the Supreme and Unchangeable Good.

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[1745] 1 Cor. i. 13.

[1746] 1 Cor. iii. 7.

[1747] Rev. xix. 10.

[1748] Philem. 20.

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Chapter 34.--Christ the First Way to God.

38. And mark that even when He who is Himself the Truth and the Word,

by whom all things were made, had been made flesh that He might dwell

among us, the apostle yet says: "Yea, though we have known Christ

after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." [1749] For

Christ, desiring not only to give the possession to those who had

completed the journey, but also to be Himself the way to those who were

just setting out, determined to take a fleshly body. Whence also that

expression, "The Lord created [1750] me in the beginning of His way,"

[1751] that is, that those who wished to come might begin their journey

in Him. The apostle, therefore, although still on the way, and

following after God who called him to the reward of His heavenly

calling, yet forgetting those things which were behind, and pressing on

towards those things which were before, [1752] had already passed over

the beginning of the way, and had now no further need of it; yet by

this way all must commence their journey who desire to attain to the

truth, and to rest in eternal life. For He says: "I am the way, and

the truth, and the life;" [1753] that is, by me men come, to me they

come, in me they rest. For when we come to Him, we come to the Father

also, because through an equal an equal is known; and the Holy Spirit

binds, and as it were seals us, so that we are able to rest permanently

in the supreme and unchangeable Good. And hence we may learn how

essential it is that nothing should detain us on the way, when not even

our Lord Himself, so far as He has condescended to be our way, is

willing to detain us, but wishes us rather to press on; and, instead of

weakly clinging to temporal things, even though these have been put on

and worn by Him for our salvation, to pass over them quickly, and to

struggle to attain unto Himself, who has freed our nature from the

bondage of temporal things, and has set it down at the right hand of

His Father.

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[1749] 2 Cor. v. 16.

[1750] A.V. possessed.

[1751] Prov. viii. 22.

[1752] Comp. Phil. iii. 13.

[1753] John xiv. 6.

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Chapter 35.--The Fulfillment and End of Scripture is the Love of God

and Our Neighbor.

39. Of all, then, that has been said since we entered upon the

discussion about things, this is the sum: that we should clearly

understand that the fulfillment and the end of the Law, and of all Holy

Scripture, is the love of an object which is to be enjoyed, and the

love of an object which can enjoy that other in fellowship with

ourselves. For there is no need of a command that each man should love

himself. The whole temporal dispensation for our salvation, therefore,

was framed by the providence of God that we might know this truth and

be able to act upon it; and we ought to use that dispensation, not with

such love and delight as if it were a good to rest in, but with a

transient feeling rather, such as we have towards the road, or

carriages, or other things that are merely means. Perhaps some other

comparison can be found that will more suitably express the idea that

we are to love the things by which we are borne only for the sake of

that towards which we are borne.

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Chapter 36.--That Interpretation of Scripture Which Builds Us Up in

Love is Not Perniciously Deceptive Nor Mendacious, Even Though It Be

Faulty. The Interpreter, However, Should Be Corrected.

40. Whoever, then, thinks that he understands the Holy Scriptures, or

any part of them, but puts such an interpretation upon them as does not

tend to build up this twofold love of God and our neighbor, does not

yet understand them as he ought. If, on the other hand, a man draws a

meaning from them that may be used for the building up of love, even

though he does not happen upon the precise meaning which the author

whom he reads intended to express in that place, his error is not

pernicious, and he is wholly clear from the charge of deception. For

there is involved in deception the intention to say what is false; and

we find plenty of people who intend to deceive, but nobody who wishes

to be deceived. Since, then, the man who knows practises deceit, and

the ignorant man is practised upon, it is quite clear that in any

particular case the man who is deceived is a better man than he who

deceives, seeing that it is better to suffer than to commit injustice.

Now every man who lies commits an injustice; and if any man thinks that

a lie is ever useful, he must think that injustice is sometimes

useful. For no liar keeps faith in the matter about which he lies. He

wishes, of course, that the man to whom he lies should place confidence

in him; and yet he betrays his confidence by lying to him. Now every

man who breaks faith is unjust. Either, then, injustice is sometimes

useful (which is impossible), or a lie is never useful.

41. Whoever takes another meaning out of Scripture than the writer

intended, goes astray, but not through any falsehood in Scripture.

Nevertheless, as I was going to say, if his mistaken interpretation

tends to build up love, which is the end of the commandment, he goes

astray in much the same way as a man who by mistake quits the high

road, but yet reaches through the fields the same place to which the

road leads. He is to be corrected, however, and to be shown how much

better it is not to quit the straight road, lest, if he get into a

habit of going astray, he may sometimes take cross roads, or even go in

the wrong direction altogether.

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Chapter 37.--Dangers of Mistaken Interpretation.

For if he takes up rashly a meaning which the author whom he is reading

did not intend, he often falls in with other statements which he cannot

harmonize with this meaning. And if he admits that these statements

are true and certain, then it follows that the meaning he had put upon

the former passage cannot be the true one: and so it comes to pass,

one can hardly tell how, that, out of love for his own opinion, he

begins to feel more angry with Scripture than he is with himself. And

if he should once permit that evil to creep in, it will utterly destroy

him. "For we walk by faith, not by sight." [1754] Now faith will

totter if the authority of Scripture begin to shake. And then, if

faith totter, love itself will grow cold. For if a man has fallen from

faith, he must necessarily also fall from love; for he cannot love what

he does not believe to exist. But if he both believes and loves, then

through good works, and through diligent attention to the precepts of

morality, he comes to hope also that he shall attain the object of his

love. And so these are the three things to which all knowledge and all

prophecy are subservient: faith, hope, love.

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[1754] 2 Cor. v. 7.

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Chapter 38.--Love Never Faileth.

42. But sight shall displace faith; and hope shall be swallowed up in

that perfect bliss to which we shall come: love, on the other hand,

shall wax greater when these others fail. For if we love by faith that

which as yet we see not, how much more shall we love it when we begin

to see! And if we love by hope that which as yet we have not reached,

how much more shall we love it when we reach it! For there is this

great difference between things temporal and things eternal, that a

temporal object is valued more before we possess it, and begins to

prove worthless the moment we attain it, because it does not satisfy

the soul, which has its only true and sure resting-place in eternity:

an eternal object, on the other hand, is loved with greater ardor when

it is in possession than while it is still an object of desire, for no

one in his longing for it can set a higher value on it than really

belongs to it, so as to think it comparatively worthless when he finds

it of less value than he thought; on the contrary, however high the

value any man may set upon it when he is on his way to possess it, he

will find it, when it comes into his possession, of higher value still.

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Chapter 39.--He Who is Mature in Faith, Hope and Love, Needs Scripture

No Longer.

43. And thus a man who is resting upon faith, hope and love, and who

keeps a firm hold upon these, does not need the Scriptures except for

the purpose of instructing others. Accordingly, many live without

copies of the Scriptures, even in solitude, on the strength of these

three graces. So that in their case, I think, the saying is already

fulfilled: "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether

there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it

shall vanish away." [1755] Yet by means of these instruments (as they

may be called), so great an edifice of faith and love has been built up

in them, that, holding to what is perfect, they do not seek for what is

only in part perfect--of course, I mean, so far as is possible in this

life; for, in comparison with the future life, the life of no just and

holy man is perfect here. Therefore the apostle says: "Now abideth

faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is

charity:" [1756] because, when a man shall have reached the eternal

world, while the other two graces will fail, love will remain greater

and more assured.

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[1755] 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

[1756] 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

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Chapter 40.--What Manner of Reader Scripture Demands.

44. And, therefore, if a man fully understands that "the end of the

commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience,

and of faith unfeigned," [1757] and is bent upon making all his

understanding of Scripture to bear upon these three graces, he may come

to the interpretation of these books with an easy mind. For while the

apostle says "love," he adds "out of a pure heart," to provide against

anything being loved but that which is worthy of love. And he joins

with this "a good conscience," in reference to hope; for, if a man has

the burthen of a bad conscience, he despairs of ever reaching that

which he believes in and loves. And in the third place he says: "and

of faith unfeigned." For if our faith is free from all hypocrisy, then

we both abstain from loving what is unworthy of our love, and by living

uprightly we are able to indulge the hope that our hope shall not be in

vain.

For these reasons I have been anxious to speak about the objects of

faith, as far as I thought it necessary for my present purpose; for

much has already been said on this subject in other volumes, either by

others or by myself. And so let this be the end of the present book.

In the next I shall discuss, as far as God shall give me light, the

subject of signs.

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[1757] 1 Tim. i. 5.

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Book II.

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Argument--Having completed his exposition of things, the author now

proceeds to discuss the subject of signs. He first defines what a sign

is, and shows that there are two classes of signs, the natural and the

conventional. Of conventional signs (which are the only class here

noticed), words are the most numerous and important, and are those with

which the interpreter of Scripture is chiefly concerned. The

difficulties and obscurities of Scripture spring chiefly from two

sources, unknown and ambiguous signs. The present book deals only with

unknown signs, the ambiguities of language being reserved for treatment

in the next book. The difficulty arising from ignorance of signs is to

be removed by learning the Greek and Hebrew languages, in which

Scripture is written, by comparing the various translations, and by

attending to the context. In the interpretation of figurative

expressions, knowledge of things is as necessary as knowledge of words;

and the various sciences and arts of the heathen, so far as they are

true and useful, may be turned to account in removing our ignorance of

signs, whether these be direct or figurative. Whilst exposing the

folly and futility of many heathen superstitions and practices, the

author points out how all that is sound and useful in their science and

philosophy may be turned to a Christian use. And in conclusion, he

shows the spirit in which it behoves us to address ourselves to the

study and interpretation of the sacred books.

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Chapter 1.--Signs, Their Nature and Variety.

1. As when I was writing about things, I introduced the subject with a

warning against attending to anything but what they are in themselves,

[1758] even though they are signs of something else, so now, when I

come in its turn to discuss the subject of signs, I lay down this

direction, not to attend to what they are in themselves, but to the

fact that they are signs, that is, to what they signify. For a sign is

a thing which, over and above the impression it makes on the senses,

causes something else to come into the mind as a consequence of

itself: as when we see a footprint, we conclude that an animal whose

footprint this is has passed by; and when we see smoke, we know that

there is fire beneath; and when we hear the voice of a living man, we

think of the feeling in his mind; and when the trumpet sounds, soldiers

know that they are to advance or retreat, or do whatever else the state

of the battle requires.

2. Now some signs are natural, others conventional. Natural signs are

those which, apart from any intention or desire of using them as signs,

do yet lead to the knowledge of something else, as, for example, smoke

when it indicates fire. For it is not from any intention of making it

a sign that it is so, but through attention to experience we come to

know that fire is beneath, even when nothing but smoke can be seen.

And the footprint of an animal passing by belongs to this class of

signs. And the countenance of an angry or sorrowful man indicates the

feeling in his mind, independently of his will: and in the same way

every other emotion of the mind is betrayed by the tell-tale

countenance, even though we do nothing with the intention of making it

known. This class of signs, however, it is no part of my design to

discuss at present. But as it comes under this division of the

subject, I could not altogether pass it over. It will be enough to

have noticed it thus far.

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[1758] See Book i. 519.

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Chapter 2.--Of the Kind of Signs We are Now Concerned with.

3. Conventional signs, on the other hand, are those which living

beings mutually exchange for the purpose of showing, as well as they

can, the feelings of their minds, or their perceptions, or their

thoughts. Nor is there any reason for giving a sign except the desire

of drawing forth and conveying into another's mind what the giver of

the sign has in his own mind. We wish, then, to consider and discuss

this class of signs so far as men are concerned with it, because even

the signs which have been given us of God, and which are contained in

the Holy Scriptures, were made known to us through men--those, namely,

who wrote the Scriptures. The beasts, too, have certain signs among

themselves by which they make known the desires in their mind. For

when the poultry-cock has discovered food, he signals with his voice

for the hen to run to him, and the dove by cooing calls his mate, or is

called by her in turn; and many signs of the same kind are matters of

common observation. Now whether these signs, like the expression or

the cry of a man in grief, follow the movement of the mind

instinctively and apart from any purpose, or whether they are really

used with the purpose of signification, is another question, and does

not pertain to the matter in hand. And this part of the subject I

exclude from the scope of this work as not necessary to my present

object.

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Chapter 3.--Among Signs, Words Hold the Chief Place.

4. Of the signs, then, by which men communicate their thoughts to one

another, some relate to the sense of sight, some to that of hearing, a

very few to the other senses. For, when we nod, we give no sign except

to the eyes of the man to whom we wish by this sign to impart our

desire. And some convey a great deal by the motion of the hands: and

actors by movements of all their limbs give certain signs to the

initiated, and, so to speak, address their conversation to the eyes:

and the military standards and flags convey through the eyes the will

of the commanders. And all these signs are as it were a kind of

visible words. The signs that address themselves to the ear are, as I

have said, more numerous, and for the most part consist of words. For

though the bugle and the flute and the lyre frequently give not only a

sweet but a significant sound, yet all these signs are very few in

number compared with words. For among men words have obtained far and

away the chief place as a means of indicating the thoughts of the

mind. Our Lord, it is true, gave a sign through the odor of the

ointment which was poured out upon His feet; [1759] and in the

sacrament of His body and blood He signified His will through the sense

of taste; and when by touching the hem of His garment the woman was

made whole, the act was not wanting in significance. [1760] But the

countless multitude of the signs through which men express their

thoughts consist of words. For I have been able to put into words all

those signs, the various classes of which I have briefly touched upon,

but I could by no effort express words in terms of those signs.

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[1759] John xii. 3-7; Mark xiv. 8.

[1760] Matt. ix. 20.

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Chapter 4.--Origin of Writing.

5. But because words pass away as soon as they strike upon the air,

and last no longer than their sound, men have by means of letters

formed signs of words. Thus the sounds of the voice are made visible

to the eye, not of course as sounds, but by means of certain signs. It

has been found impossible, however, to make those signs common to all

nations owing to the sin of discord among men, which springs from every

man trying to snatch the chief place for himself. And that celebrated

tower which was built to reach to heaven was an indication of this

arrogance of spirit; and the ungodly men concerned in it justly earned

the punishment of having not their minds only, but their tongues

besides, thrown into confusion and discordance. [1761]

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[1761] Gen. xi.

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Chapter 5.--Scripture Translated into Various Languages.

6. And hence it happened that even Holy Scripture, which brings a

remedy for the terrible diseases of the human will, being at first set

forth in one language, by means of which it could at the fit season be

disseminated through the whole world, was interpreted into various

tongues, and spread far and wide, and thus became known to the nations

for their salvation. And in reading it, men seek nothing more than to

find out the thought and will of those by whom it was written, and

through these to find out the will of God, in accordance with which

they believe these men to have spoken.

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Chapter 6.--Use of the Obscurities in Scripture Which Arise from Its

Figurative Language.

7. But hasty and careless readers are led astray by many and manifold

obscurities and ambiguities, substituting one meaning for another; and

in some places they cannot hit upon even a fair interpretation. Some

of the expressions are so obscure as to shroud the meaning in the

thickest darkness. And I do not doubt that all this was divinely

arranged for the purpose of subduing pride by toil, and of preventing a

feeling of satiety in the intellect, which generally holds in small

esteem what is discovered without difficulty. For why is it, I ask,

that if any one says that there are holy and just men whose life and

conversation the Church of Christ uses as a means of redeeming those

who come to it from all kinds of superstitions, and making them through

their imitation of good men members of its own body; men who, as good

and true servants of God, have come to the baptismal font laying down

the burdens of the world, and who rising thence do, through the

implanting of the Holy Spirit, yield the fruit of a two-fold love, a

love, that is, of God and their neighbor;--how is it, I say, that if a

man says this, he does not please his hearer so much as when he draws

the same meaning from that passage in Canticles, where it is said of

the Church, when it is being praised under the figure of a beautiful

woman, "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are shorn which came

up from the washing, whereof every one bears twins, and none is barren

among them?" [1762] Does the hearer learn anything more than when he

listens to the same thought expressed in the plainest language, without

the help of this figure? And yet, I don't know why, I feel greater

pleasure in contemplating holy men, when I view them as the teeth of

the Church, tearing men away from their errors, and bringing them into

the Church's body, with all their harshness softened down, just as if

they had been torn off and masticated by the teeth. It is with the

greatest pleasure, too, that I recognize them under the figure of sheep

that have been shorn, laying down the burthens of the world like

fleeces, and coming up from the washing, i.e., from baptism, and all

bearing twins, i.e., the twin commandments of love, and none among them

barren in that holy fruit.

8. But why I view them with greater delight under that aspect than if

no such figure were drawn from the sacred books, though the fact would

remain the same and the knowledge the same, is another question, and

one very difficult to answer. Nobody, however, has any doubt about the

facts, both that it is pleasanter in some cases to have knowledge

communicated through figures, and that what is attended with difficulty

in the seeking gives greater pleasure in the finding.--For those who

seek but do not find suffer from hunger. Those, again, who do not seek

at all because they have what they require just beside them often grow

languid from satiety. Now weakness from either of these causes is to

be avoided. Accordingly the Holy Spirit has, with admirable wisdom and

care for our welfare, so arranged the Holy Scriptures as by the plainer

passages to satisfy our hunger, and by the more obscure to stimulate

our appetite. For almost nothing is dug out of those obscure passages

which may not be found set forth in the plainest language elsewhere.

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[1762] Cant. iv. 2.

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Chapter 7.--Steps to Wisdom: First, Fear; Second, Piety; Third,

Knowledge; Fourth, Resolution; Fifth, Counsel; Sixth, Purification of

Heart; Seventh, Stop or Termination, Wisdom.

9. First of all, then, it is necessary that we should be led by the

fear of God to seek the knowledge of His will, what He commands us to

desire and what to avoid. Now this fear will of necessity excite in us

the thought of our mortality and of the death that is before us, and

crucify all the motions of pride as if our flesh were nailed to the

tree. Next it is necessary to have our hearts subdued by piety, and

not to run in the face of Holy Scripture, whether when understood it

strikes at some of our sins, or, when not understood, we feel as if we

could be wiser and give better commands ourselves. We must rather

think and believe that whatever is there written, even though it be

hidden, is better and truer than anything we could devise by our own

wisdom.

10. After these two steps of fear and piety, we come to the third

step, knowledge, of which I have now undertaken to treat. For in this

every earnest student of the Holy Scriptures exercises himself, to find

nothing else in them but that God is to be loved for His own sake, and

our neighbor for God's sake; and that God is to be loved with all the

heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind, and one's neighbor

as one's self--that is, in such a way that all our love for our

neighbor, like all our love for ourselves, should have reference to

God. [1763] And on these two commandments I touched in the previous

book when I was treating about things. [1764] It is necessary, then,

that each man should first of all find in the Scriptures that he,

through being entangled in the love of this world--i.e., of temporal

things--has been drawn far away from such a love for God and such a

love for his neighbor as Scripture enjoins. Then that fear which leads

him to think of the judgment of God, and that piety which gives him no

option but to believe in and submit to the authority of Scripture,

compel him to bewail his condition. For the knowledge of a good hope

makes a man not boastful, but sorrowful. And in this frame of mind he

implores with unremitting prayers the comfort of the Divine help that

he may not be overwhelmed in despair, and so he gradually comes to the

fourth step,--that is, strength and resolution, [1765] --in which he

hungers and thirsts after righteousness. For in this frame of mind he

extricates himself from every form of fatal joy in transitory things,

and turning away from these, fixes his affection on things eternal, to

wit, the unchangeable Trinity in unity.

11. And when, to the extent of his power, he has gazed upon this

object shining from afar, and has felt that owing to the weakness of

his sight he cannot endure that matchless light, then in the fifth

step--that is, in the counsel of compassion [1766] --he cleanses his

soul, which is violently agitated, and disturbs him with base desires,

from the filth it has contracted. And at this stage he exercises

himself diligently in the love of his neighbor; and when he has reached

the point of loving his enemy, full of hopes and unbroken in strength,

he mounts to the sixth step, in which he purifies the eye itself which

can see God, [1767] so far as God can be seen by those who as far as

possible die to this world. For men see Him just so far as they die to

this world; and so far as they live to it they see Him not. But yet,

although that light may begin to appear clearer, and not only more

tolerable, but even more delightful, still it is only through a glass

darkly that we are said to see, because we walk by faith, not by sight,

while we continue to wander as strangers in this world, even though our

conversation be in heaven. [1768] And at this stage, too, a man so

purges the eye of his affections as not to place his neighbor before,

or even in comparison with, the truth, and therefore not himself,

because not him whom he loves as himself. Accordingly, that holy man

will be so single and so pure in heart, that he will not step aside

from the truth, either for the sake of pleasing men or with a view to

avoid any of the annoyances which beset this life. Such a son ascends

to wisdom, which is the seventh and last step, and which he enjoys in

peace and tranquillity. For the fear of God is the beginning of

wisdom. [1769] From that beginning, then, till we reach wisdom

itself, our way is by the steps now described.

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[1763] Comp. Matt. xxii. 37-40.

[1764] See Book 1. c. 22.

[1765] Fortitudo.

[1766] Consilium misericordi�.

[1767] Matt. v. 8.

[1768] 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 2 Cor. v. 7.

[1769] Ps. cxi. 10.

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Chapter 8.--The Canonical Books.

12. But let us now go back to consider the third step here mentioned,

for it is about it that I have set myself to speak and reason as the

Lord shall grant me wisdom. The most skillful interpreter of the

sacred writings, then, will be he who in the first place has read them

all and retained them in his knowledge, if not yet with full

understanding, still with such knowledge as reading gives,--those of

them, at least, that are called canonical. For he will read the others

with greater safety when built up in the belief of the truth, so that

they will not take first possession of a weak mind, nor, cheating it

with dangerous falsehoods and delusions, fill it with prejudices

adverse to a sound understanding. Now, in regard to the canonical

Scriptures, he must follow the judgment of the greater number of

catholic churches; and among these, of course, a high place must be

given to such as have been thought worthy to be the seat of an apostle

and to receive epistles. Accordingly, among the canonical Scriptures

he will judge according to the following standard: to prefer those

that are received by all the catholic churches to those which some do

not receive. Among those, again, which are not received by all, he

will prefer such as have the sanction of the greater number and those

of greater authority, to such as are held by the smaller number and

those of less authority. If, however, he shall find that some books

are held by the greater number of churches, and others by the churches

of greater authority (though this is not a very likely thing to

happen), I think that in such a case the authority on the two sides is

to be looked upon as equal.

13. Now the whole canon of Scripture on which we say this judgment is

to be exercised, is contained in the following books:--Five books of

Moses, that is, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; one

book of Joshua the son of Nun; one of Judges; one short book called

Ruth, which seems rather to belong to the beginning of Kings; next,

four books of Kings, and two of Chronicles--these last not following

one another, but running parallel, so to speak, and going over the same

ground. The books now mentioned are history, which contains a

connected narrative of the times, and follows the order of the events.

There are other books which seem to follow no regular order, and are

connected neither with the order of the preceding books nor with one

another, such as Job, and Tobias, and Esther, and Judith, and the two

books of Maccabees, and the two of Ezra, [1770] which last look more

like a sequel to the continuous regular history which terminates with

the books of Kings and Chronicles. Next are the Prophets, in which

there is one book of the Psalms of David; and three books of Solomon,

viz., Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes. For two books, one

called Wisdom and the other Ecclesiasticus, are ascribed to Solomon

from a certain resemblance of style, but the most likely opinion is

that they were written by Jesus the son of Sirach. [1771] Still they

are to be reckoned among the prophetical books, since they have

attained recognition as being authoritative. The remainder are the

books which are strictly called the Prophets: twelve separate books of

the prophets which are connected with one another, and having never

been disjoined, are reckoned as one book; the names of these prophets

are as follows:--Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum,

Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi; then there are the

four greater prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel. The

authority of the Old Testament [1772] is contained within the limits of

these forty-four books. That of the New Testament, again, is contained

within the following:--Four books of the Gospel, according to Matthew,

according to Mark, according to Luke, according to John; fourteen

epistles of the Apostle Paul--one to the Romans, two to the

Corinthians, one to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the

Philippians, two to the Thessalonians, one to the Colossians, two to

Timothy, one to Titus, to Philemon, to the Hebrews: two of Peter;

three of John; one of Jude; and one of James; one book of the Acts of

the Apostles; and one of the Revelation of John.

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[1770] That is, Ezra and Nehemiah.

[1771] Augustin in his Retractations withdrew this opinion so far as

regards the book of Wisdom.

[1772] This application of the phrase "Old Testament" is withdrawn and

apologized for in the Retractations.

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Chapter 9.--How We Should Proceed in Studying Scripture.

14. In all these books those who fear God and are of a meek and pious

disposition seek the will of God. And in pursuing this search the

first rule to be observed is, as I said, to know these books, if not

yet with the understanding, still to read them so as to commit them to

memory, or at least so as not to remain wholly ignorant of them. Next,

those matters that are plainly laid down in them, whether rules of life

or rules of faith, are to be searched into more carefully and more

diligently; and the more of these a man discovers, the more capacious

does his understanding become. For among the things that are plainly

laid down in Scripture are to be found all matters that concern faith

and the manner of life,--to wit, hope and love, of which I have spoken

in the previous book. After this, when we have made ourselves to a

certain extent familiar with the language of Scripture, we may proceed

to open up and investigate the obscure passages, and in doing so draw

examples from the plainer expressions to throw light upon the more

obscure, and use the evidence of passages about which there is no doubt

to remove all hesitation in regard to the doubtful passages. And in

this matter memory counts for a great deal; but if the memory be

defective, no rules can supply the want.

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Chapter 10.--Unknown or Ambiguous Signs Prevent Scripture from Being

Understood.

15. Now there are two causes which prevent what is written from being

understood: its being vailed either under unknown, or under ambiguous

signs. Signs are either proper or figurative. They are called proper

when they are used to point out the objects they were designed to point

out, as we say bos when we mean an ox, because all men who with us use

the Latin tongue call it by this name. Signs are figurative when the

things themselves which we indicate by the proper names are used to

signify something else, as we say bos, and understand by that syllable

the ox, which is ordinarily called by that name; but then further by

that ox understand a preacher of the gospel, as Scripture signifies,

according to the apostle's explanation, when it says: "Thou shalt not

muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." [1773]

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[1773] Bovem triturantem non infrenabis.--1 Cor. ix. 9.

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Chapter 11.--Knowledge of Languages, Especially of Greek and Hebrew,

Necessary to Remove Ignorance or Signs.

16. The great remedy for ignorance of proper signs is knowledge of

languages. And men who speak the Latin tongue, of whom are those I

have undertaken to instruct, need two other languages for the knowledge

of Scripture, Hebrew and Greek, that they may have recourse to the

original texts if the endless diversity of the Latin translators throw

them into doubt. Although, indeed, we often find Hebrew words

untranslated in the books as for example, Amen, Halleluia, Racha,

Hosanna, and others of the same kind. Some of these, although they

could have been translated, have been preserved in their original form

on account of the more sacred authority that attaches to it, as for

example, Amen and Halleluia. Some of them, again, are said to be

untranslatable into another tongue, of which the other two I have

mentioned are examples. For in some languages there are words that

cannot be translated into the idiom of another language. And this

happens chiefly in the case of interjections, which are words that

express rather an emotion of the mind than any part of a thought we

have in our mind. And the two given above are said to be of this kind,

Racha expressing the cry of an angry man, Hosanna that of a joyful

man. But the knowledge of these languages is necessary, not for the

sake of a few words like these which it is very easy to mark and to ask

about, but, as has been said, on account of the diversities among

translators. For the translations of the Scriptures from Hebrew into

Greek can be counted, but the Latin translators are out of all number.

For in the early days of the faith every man who happened to get his

hands upon a Greek manuscript, and who thought he had any knowledge,

were it ever so little, of the two languages, ventured upon the work of

translation.

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Chapter 12.--A Diversity of Interpretations is Useful. Errors Arising

from Ambiguous Words.

17. And this circumstance would assist rather than hinder the

understanding of Scripture, if only readers were not careless. For the

examination of a number of texts has often thrown light upon some of

the more obscure passages; for example, in that passage of the prophet

Isaiah, [1774] one translator reads: "And do not despise the domestics

of thy seed;" [1775] another reads: "And do not despise thine own

flesh." [1776] Each of these in turn confirms the other. For the one

is explained by the other; because "flesh" may be taken in its literal

sense, so that a man may understand that he is admonished not to

despise his own body; and "the domestics of thy seed" may be understood

figuratively of Christians, because they are spiritually born of the

same seed as ourselves, namely, the Word. When now the meaning of the

two translators is compared, a more likely sense of the words suggests

itself, viz., that the command is not to despise our kinsmen, because

when one brings the expression "domestics of thy seed" into relation

with "flesh," kinsmen most naturally occur to one's mind. Whence, I

think, that expression of the apostle, when he says, "If by any means I

may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some

of them;" [1777] that is, that through emulation of those who had

believed, some of them might believe too. And he calls the Jews his

"flesh," on account of the relationship of blood. Again, that passage

from the same prophet Isaiah: [1778] "If ye will not believe, ye

shall not understand," [1779] another has translated: "If ye will not

believe, ye shall not abide." [1780] Now which of these is the

literal translation cannot be ascertained without reference to the text

in the original tongue. And yet to those who read with knowledge, a

great truth is to be found in each. For it is difficult for

interpreters to differ so widely as not to touch at some point.

Accordingly here, as understanding consists in sight, and is abiding,

but faith feeds us as babes, upon milk, in the cradles of temporal

things (for now we walk by faith, not by sight); [1781] as, moreover,

unless we walk by faith, we shall not attain to sight, which does not

pass away, but abides, our understanding being purified by holding to

the truth;--for these reasons one says, "If ye will not believe, ye

shall not understand;" but the other, "If ye will not believe, ye shall

not abide."

18. And very often a translator, to whom the meaning is not well

known, is deceived by an ambiguity in the original language, and puts

upon the passage a construction that is wholly alien to the sense of

the writer. As for example, some texts read: "Their feet are sharp to

shed blood;" [1782] for the word hozus among the Greeks means both

sharp and swift. And so he saw the true meaning who translated:

"Their feet are swift to shed blood." The other, taking the wrong

sense of an ambiguous word, fell into error. Now translations such as

this are not obscure, but false; and there is a wide difference between

the two things. For we must learn not to interpret, but to correct

texts of this sort. For the same reason it is, that because the Greek

word moschos means a calf, some have not understood that moscheumata

[1783] are shoots of trees, and have translated the word "calves;" and

this error has crept into so many texts, that you can hardly find it

written in any other way. And yet the meaning is very clear; for it is

made evident by the words that follow. For "the plantings of an

adulterer will not take deep root," [1784] is a more suitable form of

expression than the "calves;" [1785] because these walk upon the ground

with their feet, and are not fixed in the earth by roots. In this

passage, indeed, the rest of the context also justifies this

translation.

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[1774] Isa. lviii. 7, "And that thou hide not thyself from thine own

flesh" (A.V.).

[1775] Et domesticos seminis tui ne despexeris.

[1776] Et carnem tuam ne despexeris.

[1777] Rom. xi. 14.

[1778] Isa. vii. 9, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be

established" (A.V.).

[1779] Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis.

[1780] Nisi credideritis, non permanebitis.

[1781] 2 Cor. v. 7.

[1782] Rom. iii. 15.

[1783] Wisd. iv. 3.

[1784] Adulterin� plantationes non dabunt radices altas.

[1785] Vitulamina.

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Chapter 13.--How Faulty Interpretations Can Be Emended.

19. But since we do not clearly see what the actual thought is which

the several translators endeavor to express, each according to his own

ability and judgment, unless we examine it in the language which they

translate; and since the translator, if he be not a very learned man,

often departs from the meaning of his author, we must either endeavor

to get a knowledge of those languages from which the Scriptures are

translated into Latin, or we must get hold of the translations of those

who keep rather close to the letter of the original, not because these

are sufficient, but because we may use them to correct the freedom or

the error of others, who in their translations have chosen to follow

the sense quite as much as the words. For not only single words, but

often whole phrases are translated, which could not be translated at

all into the Latin idiom by any one who wished to hold by the usage of

the ancients who spoke Latin. And though these sometimes do not

interfere with the understanding of the passage, yet they are offensive

to those who feel greater delight in things when even the signs of

those things are kept in their own purity. For what is called a

solecism is nothing else than the putting of words together according

to a different rule from that which those of our predecessors who spoke

with any authority followed. For whether we say inter homines (among

men) or inter hominibus, is of no consequence to a man who only wishes

to know the facts. And in the same way, what is a barbarism but the

pronouncing of a word in a different way from that in which those who

spoke Latin before us pronounced it? For whether the word ignoscere

(to pardon) should be pronounced with the third syllable long or short,

is not a matter of much concern to the man who is beseeching God, in

any way at all that he can get the words out, to pardon his sins. What

then is purity of speech, except the preserving of the custom of

language established by the authority of former speakers?

20. And men are easily offended in a matter of this kind, just in

proportion as they are weak; and they are weak just in proportion as

they wish to seem learned, not in the knowledge of things which tend to

edification, but in that of signs, by which it is hard not to be puffed

up, [1786] seeing that the knowledge of things even would often set up

our neck, if it were not held down by the yoke of our Master. For how

does it prevent our understanding it to have the following passage thus

expressed: "Qu� est terra in quo isti insidunt super eam, si bona est

an nequam; et qu� sunt civitates, in quibus ipsi inhabitant in ipsis?"

[1787] And I am more disposed to think that this is simply the idiom

of another language than that any deeper meaning is intended. Again,

that phrase, which we cannot now take away from the lips of the people

who sing it: "Super ipsum autem floriet sanctificatio mea," [1788]

surely takes away nothing from the meaning. Yet a more learned man

would prefer that this should be corrected, and that we should say, not

floriet, but florebit. Nor does anything stand in the way of the

correction being made, except the usage of the singers. Mistakes of

this kind, then, if a man do not choose to avoid them altogether, it is

easy to treat with indifference, as not interfering with a right

understanding. But take, on the other hand, the saying of the

apostle: "Quod stultum est Dei, sapientius est hominibus, et quod

infirmum est Dei, fortius est hominibus." [1789] If any one should

retain in this passage the Greek idiom, and say, "Quod stultum est Dei,

sapientius est hominum et quod infirmum est Dei fortius est hominum,"

[1790] a quick and careful reader would indeed by an effort attain to

the true meaning, but still a man of slower intelligence either would

not understand it at all, or would put an utterly false construction

upon it. For not only is such a form of speech faulty in the Latin

tongue, but it is ambiguous too, as if the meaning might be, that the

folly of men or the weakness of men is wiser or stronger than that of

God. But indeed even the expression sapientius est hominibus (stronger

than men) is not free from ambiguity, even though it be free from

solecism. For whether hominibus is put as the plural of the dative or

as the plural of the ablative, does not appear, unless by reference to

the meaning. It would be better then to say, sapientius est quam

homines, and fortius est quam homines.

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[1786] Comp. 1 Cor. viii. 1.

[1787] "And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or

bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in."-- Num. xiii.19

(A.V.).

[1788] "But upon himself shall my holiness flourish."-- Ps. cxxxii. 18

(see LXX.). "But upon himself shall his crown flourish" (A.V.).

[1789] "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the

weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. i. 25).

[1790] "What is foolish of God is wiser of men, and what is weak of God

is stronger of men."

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Chapter 14.--How the Meaning of Unknown Words and Idioms is to Be

Discovered.

21. About ambiguous signs, however, I shall speak afterwards. I am

treating at present of unknown signs, of which, as far as the words are

concerned, there are two kinds. For either a word or an idiom, of

which the reader is ignorant, brings him to a stop. Now if these

belong to foreign tongues, we must either make inquiry about them from

men who speak those tongues, or if we have leisure we must learn the

tongues ourselves, or we must consult and compare several translators.

If, however, there are words or idioms in our own tongue that we are

unacquainted with, we gradually come to know them through being

accustomed to read or to hear them. There is nothing that it is better

to commit to memory than those kinds of words and phrases whose meaning

we do not know, so that where we happen to meet either with a more

learned man of whom we can inquire, or with a passage that shows,

either by the preceding or succeeding context, or by both, the force

and significance of the phrase we are ignorant of, we can easily by the

help of our memory turn our attention to the matter and learn all about

it. So great, however, is the force of custom, even in regard to

learning, that those who have been in a sort of way nurtured and

brought up on the study of Holy Scripture, are surprised at other forms

of speech, and think them less pure Latin than those which they have

learnt from Scripture, but which are not to be found in Latin authors.

In this matter, too, the great number of the translators proves a very

great assistance, if they are examined and discussed with a careful

comparison of their texts. Only all positive error must be removed.

For those who are anxious to know, the Scriptures ought in the first

place to use their skill in the correction of the texts, so that the

uncorrected ones should give way to the corrected, at least when they

are copies of the same translation.

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Chapter 15.--Among Versions a Preference is Given to the Septuagint and

the Itala.

22. Now among translations themselves the Italian (Itala) [1791] is to

be preferred to the others, for it keeps closer to the words without

prejudice to clearness of expression. And to correct the Latin we must

use the Greek versions, among which the authority of the Septuagint is

pre-eminent as far as the Old Testament is concerned; for it is

reported through all the more learned churches that the seventy

translators enjoyed so much of the presence and power of the Holy

Spirit in their work of translation, that among that number of men

there was but one voice. And if, as is reported, and as many not

unworthy of confidence assert, [1792] they were separated during the

work of translation, each man being in a cell by himself, and yet

nothing was found in the manuscript of any one of them that was not

found in the same words and in the same order of words in all the rest,

who dares put anything in comparison with an authority like this, not

to speak of preferring anything to it? And even if they conferred

together with the result that a unanimous agreement sprang out of the

common labor and judgment of them all; even so, it would not be right

or becoming for any one man, whatever his experience, to aspire to

correct the unanimous opinion of many venerable and learned men.

Wherefore, even if anything is found in the original Hebrew in a

different form from that in which these men have expressed it, I think

we must give way to the dispensation of Providence which used these men

to bring it about, that books which the Jewish race were unwilling,

either from religious scruple or from jealousy, to make known to other

nations, were, with the assistance of the power of King Ptolemy, made

known so long beforehand to the nations which in the future were to

believe in the Lord. And thus it is possible that they translated in

such a way as the Holy Spirit, who worked in them and had given them

all one voice, thought most suitable for the Gentiles. But

nevertheless, as I said above, a comparison of those translators also

who have kept most closely to the words, is often not without value as

a help to the clearing up of the meaning. The Latin texts, therefore,

of the Old Testament are, as I was about to say, to be corrected if

necessary by the authority of the Greeks, and especially by that of

those who, though they were seventy in number, are said to have

translated as with one voice. As to the books of the New Testament,

again, if any perplexity arises from the diversities of the Latin

texts, we must of course yield to the Greek, especially those that are

found in the churches of greater learning and research.

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[1791] The translation here referred to is the Vetus Latina, as revised

by the Church of Northern Italy in the fourth century, prior to the

final recension of Jerome, commonly called the Vulgate.

[1792] Among these are Justin Martyr, Iren�us, and Clemens

Alexandrinus. Comp. Augustin, De Civ. Dei, xviii. 43, and Epp. 71 and

75.

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Chapter 16.--The Knowledge Both of Language and Things is Helpful for

the Understanding of Figurative Expressions.

23. In the case of figurative signs, again, if ignorance of any of

them should chance to bring the reader to a stand-still, their meaning

is to be traced partly by the knowledge of languages, partly by the

knowledge of things. The pool of Siloam, for example, where the man

whose eyes our Lord had anointed with clay made out of spittle was

commanded to wash, has a figurative significance, and undoubtedly

conveys a secret sense; but yet if the evangelist had not interpreted

that name, [1793] a meaning so important would lie unnoticed. And we

cannot doubt that, in the same way, many Hebrew names which have not

been interpreted by the writers of those books, would, if any one could

interpret them, be of great value and service in solving the enigmas of

Scripture. And a number of men skilled in that language have conferred

no small benefit on posterity by explaining all these words without

reference to their place in Scripture, and telling us what Adam means,

what Eve, what Abraham, what Moses, and also the names of places, what

Jerusalem signifies, or Sion, or Sinai, or Lebanon, or Jordan, and

whatever other names in that language we are not acquainted with. And

when these names have been investigated and explained, many figurative

expressions in Scripture become clear.

24. Ignorance of things, too, renders figurative expressions obscure,

as when we do not know the nature of the animals, or minerals, or

plants, which are frequently referred to in Scripture by way of

comparison. The fact so well known about the serpent, for example,

that to protect its head it will present its whole body to its

assailants--how much light it throws upon the meaning of our Lord's

command, that we should be wise as serpents; [1794] that is to say,

that for the sake of our head, which is Christ, we should willingly

offer our body to the persecutors, lest the Christian faith should, as

it were, be destroyed in us, if to save the body we deny our God! Or

again, the statement that the serpent gets rid of its old skin by

squeezing itself through a narrow hole, and thus acquires new

strength--how appropriately it fits in with the direction to imitate

the wisdom of the serpent, and to put off the old man, as the apostle

says, that we may put on the new; [1795] and to put it off, too, by

coming through a narrow place, according to the saying of our Lord,

"Enter ye in at the strait gate!" [1796] As, then, knowledge of the

nature of the serpent throws light upon many metaphors which Scripture

is accustomed to draw from that animal, so ignorance of other animals,

which are no less frequently mentioned by way of comparison, is a very

great drawback to the reader. And so in regard to minerals and

plants: knowledge of the carbuncle, for instance, which shines in the

dark, throws light upon many of the dark places in books too, where it

is used metaphorically; and ignorance of the beryl or the adamant often

shuts the doors of knowledge. And the only reason why we find it easy

to understand that perpetual peace is indicated by the olive branch

which the dove brought with it when it returned to the ark, [1797] is

that we know both that the smooth touch of olive oil is not easily

spoiled by a fluid of another kind, and that the tree itself is an

evergreen. Many, again, by reason of their ignorance of hyssop, not

knowing the virtue it has in cleansing the lungs, nor the power it is

said to have of piercing rocks with its roots, although it is a small

and insignificant plant, cannot make out why it is said, "Purge me with

hyssop, and I shall be clean." [1798]

25. Ignorance of numbers, too, prevents us from understanding things

that are set down in Scripture in a figurative and mystical way. A

candid mind, if I may so speak, cannot but be anxious, for example, to

ascertain what is meant by the fact that Moses and Elijah, and our Lord

Himself, all fasted for forty days. [1799] And except by knowledge of

and reflection upon the number, the difficulty of explaining the figure

involved in this action cannot be got over. For the number contains

ten four times, indicating the knowledge of all things, and that

knowledge interwoven with time. For both the diurnal and the annual

revolutions are accomplished in periods numbering four each; the

diurnal in the hours of the morning, the noontide, the evening, and the

night; the annual in the spring, summer, autumn, and winter months.

Now while we live in time, we must abstain and fast from all joy in

time, for the sake of that eternity in which we wish to live; al though

by the passage of time we are taught this very lesson of despising time

and seeking eternity. Further, the number ten signifies the knowledge

of the Creator and the creature, for there is a trinity in the Creator;

and the number seven indicates the creature, because of the life and

the body. For the life consists of three parts, whence also God is to

be loved with the whole heart, the whole soul, and the whole mind; and

it is very clear that in the body there are four elements of which it

is made up. In this number ten, therefore, when it is placed before us

in connection with time, that is, when it is taken four times we are

admonished to live unstained by, and not partaking of, any delight in

time, that is, to fast for forty days. Of this we are admonished by

the law personified in Moses, by prophecy personified in Elijah, and by

our Lord Himself, who, as if receiving the witness both of the law and

the prophets, appeared on the mount between the other two, while His

three disciples looked on in amazement. Next, we have to inquire in

the same way, how out of the number forty springs the number fifty,

which in our religion has no ordinary sacredness attached to it on

account of the Pentecost, and how this number taken thrice on account

of the three divisions of time, before the law, under the law, and

under grace, or perhaps on account of the name of the Father, Son, and

Holy Spirit, and the Trinity itself being added over and above, has

reference to the mystery of the most Holy Church, and reaches to the

number of the one hundred and fifty-three fishes which were taken after

the resurrection of our Lord, when the nets were cast out on the

right-hand side of the boat. [1800] And in the same way, many other

numbers and combinations of numbers are used in the sacred writings, to

convey instruction under a figurative guise, and ignorance of numbers

often shuts out the reader from this instruction.

26. Not a few things, too, are closed against us and obscured by

ignorance of music. One man, for example, has not unskillfully

explained some metaphors from the difference between the psaltery and

the harp. [1801] And it is a question which it is not out of place

for learned men to discuss, whether there is any musical law that

compels the psaltery of ten chords to have just so many strings; or

whether, if there be no such law, the number itself is not on that very

account the more to be considered as of sacred significance, either

with reference to the ten commandments of the law (and if again any

question is raised about that number, we can only refer it to the

Creator and the creature), or with reference to the number ten itself

as interpreted above. And the number of years the temple was in

building, which is mentioned in the gospel [1802] --viz.,

forty-six--has a certain undefinable musical sound, and when referred

to the structure of our Lord's body, in relation to which the temple

was mentioned, compels many heretics to confess that our Lord put on,

not a false, but a true and human body. And in several places in the

Holy Scriptures we find both numbers and music mentioned with honor.

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[1793] John ix. 7.

[1794] Matt. x. 16.

[1795] Eph. iv. 22.

[1796] Matt. vii. 13.

[1797] Gen. viii. 11.

[1798] Ps. li. 7.

[1799] Ex. xxiv. 18; 1 Kings xix. 8; Matt. iv. 2.

[1800] John xxi. 11.

[1801] Ps. xxxiii. 2.

[1802] John ii. 20.

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Chapter 17.--Origin of the Legend of the Nine Muses.

27. For we must not listen to the falsities of heathen superstition,

which represent the nine Muses as daughters of Jupiter and Mercury.

Varro refutes these, and I doubt whether any one can be found among

them more curious or more learned in such matters. He says that a

certain state (I don't recollect the name) ordered from each of three

artists a set of statues of the Muses, to be placed as an offering in

the temple of Apollo, intending that whichever of the artists produced

the most beautiful statues, they should select and purchase from him.

It so happened that these artists executed their works with equal

beauty, that all nine pleased the state, and that all were bought to be

dedicated in the temple of Apollo; and he says that afterwards Hesiod

the poet gave names to them all. It was not Jupiter, therefore, that

begat the nine Muses, but three artists created three each. And the

state had originally given the order for three, not because it had seen

them in visions, nor because they had presented themselves in that

number to the eyes of any of the citizens, but because it was obvious

to remark that all sound, which is the material of song, is by nature

of three kinds. For it is either produced by the voice, as in the case

of those who sing with the mouth without an instrument; or by blowing,

as in the case of trumpets and flutes; or by striking, as in the case

of harps and drums, and all other instruments that give their sound

when struck.

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Chapter 18.--No Help is to Be Despised, Even Though It Come from a

Profane Source.

28. But whether the fact is as Varro has related, or is not so, still

we ought not to give up music because of the superstition of the

heathen, if we can derive anything from it that is of use for the

understanding of Holy Scripture; nor does it follow that we must busy

ourselves with their theatrical trumpery because we enter upon an

investigation about harps and other instruments, that may help us to

lay hold upon spiritual things. For we ought not to refuse to learn

letters because they say that Mercury discovered them; nor because they

have dedicated temples to Justice and Virtue, and prefer to worship in

the form of stones things that ought to have their place in the heart,

ought we on that account to forsake justice and virtue. Nay, but let

every good and true Christian understand that wherever truth may be

found, it belongs to his Master; and while he recognizes and

acknowledges the truth, even in their religious literature, let him

reject the figments of superstition, and let him grieve over and avoid

men who, "when they knew God, glorified him not as God, neither were

thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish

heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became

fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image

made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and

creeping things." [1803]

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[1803] Rom. i. 21-23.

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Chapter 19.--Two Kinds Of Heathen Knowledge.

29. But to explain more fully this whole topic (for it is one that

cannot be omitted), there are two kinds of knowledge which are in vogue

among the heathen. One is the knowledge of things instituted by men,

the other of things which they have noted, either as transacted in the

past or as instituted by God. The former kind, that which deals with

human institutions, is partly superstitious, partly not.

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Chapter 20.--The Superstitious Nature of Human Institutions.

30. All the arrangements made by men for the making and worshipping of

idols are superstitious, pertaining as they do either to the worship of

what is created or of some part of it as God, or to consultations and

arrangements about signs and leagues with devils, such, for example, as

are employed in the magical arts, and which the poets are accustomed

not so much to teach as to celebrate. And to this class belong, but

with a bolder reach of deception, the books of the haruspices and

augurs. In this class we must place also all amulets and cures which

the medical art condemns, whether these consist in incantations, or in

marks which they call characters, or in hanging or tying on or even

dancing in a fashion certain articles, not with reference to the

condition of the body, but to certain signs hidden or manifest; and

these remedies they call by the less offensive name of physica, so as

to appear not to be engaged in superstitious observances, but to be

taking advantage of the forces of nature. Examples of these are the

earrings on the top of each ear, or the rings of ostrich bone on the

fingers, or telling you when you hiccup to hold your left thumb in your

right hand.

31. To these we may add thousands of the most frivolous practices,

that are to be observed if any part of the body should jump, or if,

when friends are walking arm-in-arm, a stone, or a dog, or a boy,

should come between them. And the kicking of a stone, as if it were a

divider of friends, does less harm than to cuff an innocent boy if he

happens to run between men who are walking side by side. But it is

delightful that the boys are sometimes avenged by the dogs; for

frequently men are so superstitious as to venture upon striking a dog

who has run between them,--not with impunity however, for instead of a

superstitious remedy, the dog sometimes makes his assailant run in hot

haste for a real surgeon. To this class, too, belong the following

rules: To tread upon the threshold when you go out in front of the

house; to go back to bed if any one should sneeze when you are putting

on your slippers; to return home if you stumble when going to a place;

when your clothes are eaten by mice, to be more frightened at the

prospect of coming misfortune than grieved by your present loss.

Whence that witty saying of Cato, who, when consulted by a man who told

him that the mice had eaten his boots, replied, "That is not strange,

but it would have been very strange indeed if the boots had eaten the

mice."

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Chapter 21.--Superstition of Astrologers.

32. Nor can we exclude from this kind of superstition those who were

called genethliaci, on account of their attention to birthdays, but are

now commonly called mathematici. For these, too, although they may

seek with pains for the true position of the stars at the time of our

birth, and may sometimes even find it out, yet in so far as they

attempt thence to predict our actions, or the consequences of our

actions, grievously err, and sell inexperienced men into a miserable

bondage. For when any freeman goes to an as trologer of this kind, he

gives money that he may come away the slave either of Mars or of Venus,

or rather, perhaps, of all the stars to which those who first fell into

this error, and handed it on to posterity, have given the names either

of beasts on account of their likeness to beasts, or of men with a view

to confer honor on those men. And this is not to be wondered at, when

we consider that even in times more recent and nearer our own, the

Romans made an attempt to dedicate the star which we call Lucifer to

the name and honor of C�sar. And this would, perhaps, have been done,

and the name handed down to distant ages, only that his ancestress

Venus had given her name to this star before him, and could not by any

law transfer to her heirs what she had never possessed, nor sought to

possess, in life. For where a place was vacant, or not held in honor

of any of the dead of former times, the usual proceeding in such cases

was carried out. For example, we have changed the names of the months

Quintilis and Sextilis to July and August, naming them in honor of the

men Julius C�sar and Augustus C�sar; and from this instance any one who

cares can easily see that the stars spoken of above formerly wandered

in the heavens without the names they now bear. But as the men were

dead whose memory people were either compelled by royal power or

impelled by human folly to honor, they seemed to think that in putting

their names upon the stars they were raising the dead men themselves to

heaven. But whatever they may be called by men, still there are stars

which God has made and set in order after His own pleasure, and they

have a fixed movement, by which the seasons are distinguished and

varied. And when any one is born, it is easy to observe the point at

which this movement has arrived, by use of the rules discovered and

laid down by those who are rebuked by Holy Writ in these terms: "For

if they were able to know so much that they could weigh the world, how

did they not more easily find out the Lord thereof?" [1804]

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[1804] Wisd. xiii. 9.

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Chapter 22 .--The Folly of Observing the Stars in Order to Predict the

Events of a Life.

33. But to desire to predict the characters, the acts, and the fate of

those who are born from such an observation, is a great delusion and

great madness. And among those at least who have any sort of

acquaintance with matters of this kind (which, indeed, are only fit to

be unlearnt again), this superstition is refuted beyond the reach of

doubt. For the observation is of the position of the stars, which they

call constellations, at the time when the person was born about whom

these wretched men are consulted by their still more wretched dupes.

Now it may happen that, in the case of twins, one follows the other out

of the womb so closely that there is no interval of time between them

that can be apprehended and marked in the position of the

constellations. Whence it necessarily follows that twins are in many

cases born under the same stars, while they do not meet with equal

fortune either in what they do or what they suffer, but often meet with

fates so different that one of them has a most fortunate life, the

other a most unfortunate. As, for example, we are told that Esau and

Jacob were born twins, and in such close succession, that Jacob, who

was born last, was found to have laid hold with his hand upon the heel

of his brother, who preceded him. [1805] Now, assuredly, the day and

hour of the birth of these two could not be marked in any way that

would not give both the same constellation. But what a difference

there was between the characters, the actions, the labors, and the

fortunes of these two, the Scriptures bear witness, which are now so

widely spread as to be in the mouth of all nations.

34. Nor is it to the point to say that the very smallest and briefest

moment of time that separates the birth of twins, produces great

effects in nature, and in the extremely rapid motion of the heavenly

bodies. For, although I may grant that it does produce the greatest

effects, yet the astrologer cannot discover this in the constellations,

and it is by looking into these that he professes to read the fates.

If, then, he does not discover the difference when he examines the

constellations, which must, of course, be the same whether he is

consulted about Jacob or his brother, what does it profit him that

there is a difference in the heavens, which he rashly and carelessly

brings into disrepute, when there is no difference in his chart, which

he looks into anxiously but in vain? And so these notions also, which

have their origin in certain signs of things being arbitrarily fixed

upon by the presumption of men, are to be referred to the same class as

if they were leagues and covenants with devils.

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[1805] Gen. xxv. 24.

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Chapter 23.--Why We Repudiate Arts of Divination.

35. For in this way it comes to pass that men who lust after evil

things are, by a secret judgment of God, delivered over to be mocked

and deceived, as the just reward of their evil desires. For they are

deluded and imposed on by the false angels, to whom the lowest part of

the world has been put in subjection by the law of God's providence,

and in accordance with His most admirable arrangement of things. And

the result of these delusions and deceptions is, that through these

superstitious and baneful modes of divination many things in the past

and future are made known, and turn out just as they are foretold and

in the case of those who practise superstitious observances, many

things turn out agreeably to their observances, and ensnared by these

successes, they become more eagerly inquisitive, and involve themselves

further and further in a labyrinth of most pernicious error. And to

our advantage, the Word of God is not silent about this species of

fornication of the soul; and it does not warn the soul against

following such practices on the ground that those who profess them

speak lies, but it says, "Even if what they tell you should come to

pass, hearken not unto them." [1806] For though the ghost of the dead

Samuel foretold the truth to King Saul, [1807] that does not make such

sacrilegious observances as those by which his ghost was brought up the

less detestable; and though the ventriloquist woman [1808] in the Acts

of the Apostles bore true testimony to the apostles of the Lord, the

Apostle Paul did not spare the evil spirit on that account, but rebuked

and cast it out, and so made the woman clean. [1809]

36. All arts of this sort, therefore, are either nullities, or are

part of a guilty superstition, springing out of a baleful fellowship

between men and devils, and are to be utterly repudiated and avoided by

the Christian as the covenants of a false and treacherous friendship.

"Not as if the idol were anything," says the apostle; "but because the

things which they sacrifice they sacrifice to devils and not to God;

and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." [1810]

Now what the apostle has said about idols and the sacrifices offered in

their honor, that we ought to feel in regard to all fancied signs which

lead either to the worship of idols, or to worshipping creation or its

parts instead of God, or which are connected with attention to

medicinal charms and other observances for these are not appointed by

God as the public means of promoting love towards God and our neighbor,

but they waste the hearts of wretched men in private and selfish

strivings after temporal things. Accordingly, in regard to all these

branches of knowledge, we must fear and shun the fellowship of demons,

who, with the Devil their prince, strive only to shut and bar the door

against our return. As, then, from the stars which God created and

ordained, men have drawn lying omens of their own fancy, so also from

things that are born, or in any other way come into existence under the

government of God's providence, if there chance only to be something

unusual in the occurrence,--as when a mule brings forth young, or an

object is struck by lightning,--men have frequently drawn omens by

conjectures of their own, and have committed them to writing, as if

they had drawn them by rule.

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[1806] Comp. Deut. xiii. 1-3.

[1807] 1 Sam. xxviii., comp. Ecclus. xlvi. 20.

[1808] Ventriloqua femina. The woman with a familiar spirit to whom

Saul resorted in his extremity is called in the Septuagint translation

engastrimuthos. See 1 Sam. xxviii. 7.

[1809] Acts xvi. 16-18.

[1810] 1 Cor. x. 19, 20.

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Chapter 24.--The Intercourse and Agreement with Demons Which

Superstitious Observances Maintain.

37. And all these omens are of force just so far as has been arranged

with the devils by that previous understanding in the mind which is, as

it were, the common language, but they are all full of hurtful

curiosity, torturing anxiety, and deadly slavery. For it was not

because they had meaning that they were attended to, but it was by

attending to and marking them that they came to have meaning. And so

they are made different for different people, according to their

several notions and prejudices. For those spirits which are bent upon

deceiving, take care to provide for each person the same sort of omens

as they see his own conjectures and preconceptions have already

entangled him in. For, to take an illustration, the same figure of the

letter X, which is made in the shape of a cross, means one thing among

the Greeks and another among the Latins, not by nature, but by

agreement and pre-arrangement as to its signification; and so, any one

who knows both languages uses this letter in a different sense when

writing to a Greek from that in which he uses it when writing to a

Latin. And the same sound, beta, which is the name of a letter among

the Greeks, is the name of a vegetable among the Latins; and when I

say, lege, these two syllables mean one thing to a Greek and another to

a Latin. Now, just as all these signs affect the mind according to the

arrangements of the community in which each man lives, and affect

different men's minds differently, because these arrangements are

different; and as, further, men did not agree upon them as signs

because they were already significant, but on the contrary they are now

significant because men have agreed upon them; in the same way also,

those signs by which the ruinous intercourse with devils is maintained

have meaning just in proportion to each man's observations. And this

appears quite plainly in the rites of the augurs; for they, both before

they observe the omens and after they have completed their

observations, take pains not to see the flight or hear the cries of

birds, because these omens are of no significance apart from the

previous arrangement in the mind of the observer.

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Chapter 25.--In Human Institutions Which are Not Superstitious, There

are Some Things Superfluous and Some Convenient and Necessary.

38. But when all these have been cut away and rooted out of the mind

of the Christian we must then look at human institutions which are not

superstitious, that is, such as are not set up in association with

devils, but by men in association with one another. For all

arrangements that are in force among men, because they have agreed

among themselves that they should be in force, are human institutions;

and of these, some are matters of superfluity and luxury, some of

convenience and necessity. For if those signs which the actors make in

dancing were of force by nature, and not by the arrangement and

agreement of men, the public crier would not in former times have

announced to the people of Carthage, while the pantomime was dancing,

what it was he meant to express,--a thing still remembered by many old

men from whom we have frequently heard it. [1811] And we may well

believe this, because even now, if any one who is unaccustomed to such

follies goes into the theatre, unless some one tells him what these

movements mean, he will give his whole attention to them in vain. Yet

all men aim at a certain degree of likeness in their choice of signs,

that the signs may as far as possible be like the things they signify.

But because one thing may resemble another in many ways, such signs are

not always of the same significance among men, except when they have

mutually agreed upon them.

39. But in regard to pictures and statues, and other works of this

kind, which are intended as representations of things, nobody makes a

mistake, especially if they are executed by skilled artists, but every

one, as soon as he sees the likenesses, recognizes the things they are

likenesses of. And this whole class are to be reckoned among the

superfluous devices of men, unless when it is a matter of importance to

inquire in regard to any of them, for what reason, where, when, and by

whose authority it was made. Finally, the thousands of fables and

fictions, in whose lies men take delight, are human devices, and

nothing is to be considered more peculiarly man's own and derived from

himself than anything that is false and lying. Among the convenient

and necessary arrangements of men with men are to be reckoned whatever

differences they choose to make in bodily dress and ornament for the

purpose of distinguishing sex or rank; and the countless varieties of

signs without which human intercourse either could not be carried on at

all, or would be carried on at great inconvenience; and the

arrangements as to weights and measures, and the stamping and weighing

of coins, which are peculiar to each state and people, and other things

of the same kind. Now these, if they were not devices of men, would

not be different in different nations, and could not be changed among

particular nations at the discretion of their respective sovereigns.

40. This whole class of human arrangements, which are of convenience

for the necessary intercourse of life, the Christian is not by any

means to neglect, but on the contrary should pay a sufficient degree of

attention to them, and keep them in memory.

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[1811] See Tylor's Early History of Mankind, pp. 42, 43.

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Chapter 26.--What Human Contrivances We are to Adopt, and What We are

to Avoid.

For certain institutions of men are in a sort of way representations

and likenesses of natural objects. And of these, such as have relation

to fellowship with devils must, as has been said, be utterly rejected

and held in detestation; those, on the other hand, which relate to the

mutual intercourse of men, are, so far as they are not matters of

luxury and superfluity, to be adopted, especially the forms of the

letters which are necessary for reading, and the various languages as

far as is required--a matter I have spoken of above. [1812] To this

class also belong shorthand characters, [1813] those who are acquainted

with which are called shorthand writers. [1814] All these are useful,

and there is nothing unlawful in learning them, nor do they involve us

in superstition, or enervate us by luxury, if they only occupy our

minds so far as not to stand in the way of more important objects to

which they ought to be subservient.

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[1812] See above, chap. xi.

[1813] Not�.

[1814] Notarii.

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Chapter 27.--Some Departments of Knowledge, Not of Mere Human

Invention, Aid Us in Interpreting Scripture.

41. But, coming to the next point, we are not to reckon among human

institutions those things which men have handed down to us, not as

arrangements of their own, but as the result of investigation into the

occurrences of the past, and into the arrangements of God's

providence. And of these, some pertain to the bodily senses, some to

the intellect. Those which are reached by the bodily senses we either

believe on testimony, or perceive when they are pointed out to us, or

infer from experience.

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Chapter 28.--To What Extent History is an Aid.

42. Anything, then, that we learn from history about the chronology

of past times assists us very much in understanding the Scriptures,

even if it be learnt without the pale of the Church as a matter of

childish instruction. For we frequently seek information about a

variety of matters by use of the Olympiads, and the names of the

consuls; and ignorance of the consulship in which our Lord was born,

and that in which He suffered, has led some into the error of supposing

that He was forty-six years of age when He suffered, that being the

number of years He was told by the Jews the temple (which He took as a

symbol of His body) was in building. [1815] Now we know on the

authority of the evangelist that He was about thirty years of age when

He was baptized; [1816] but the number of years He lived afterwards,

although by putting His actions together we can make it out, yet that

no shadow of doubt might arise from another source, can be ascertained

more clearly and more certainly from a comparison of profane history

with the gospel. It will still be evident, however, that it was not

without a purpose it was said that the temple was forty and six years

in building; so that, as more secret formation of the body which, for

our sakes, the only-begotten Son of God, by whom all things were made,

condescended to put on. [1817]

43. As to the utility of history, moreover, passing over the Greeks,

what a great question our own Ambrose has set at rest! For, when the

readers and admirers of Plato dared calumniously to assert that our

Lord Jesus Christ learnt all those sayings of His, which they are

compelled to admire and praise, from the books of Plato--because (they

urged) it cannot be denied that Plato lived long before the coming of

our Lord!--did not the illustrious bishop, when by his investigations

into profane history he had discovered that Plato made a journey into

Egypt at the time when Jeremiah the prophet was there, [1818] show that

it is much more likely that Plato was through Jeremiah's means

initiated into our literature, so as to be able to teach and write

those views of his which are so justly praised? For not even

Pythagoras himself, from whose successors these men assert Plato learnt

theology, lived at a date prior to the books of that Hebrew race, among

whom the worship of one God sprang up, and of whom as concerning the

flesh our Lord came. And thus, when we reflect upon the dates, it

becomes much more probable that those philosophers learnt whatever they

said that was good and true from our literature, than that the Lord

Jesus Christ learnt from the writings of Plato,--a thing which it is

the height of folly to believe.

44. And even when in the course of an historical narrative former

institutions of men are described, the history itself is not to be

reckoned among human institutions; because things that are past and

gone and cannot be undone are to be reckoned as belonging to the course

of time, of which God is the author and governor. For it is one thing

to tell what has been done, another to show what ought to be done.

History narrates what has been done, faithfully and with advantage; but

the books of the haruspices, and all writings of the same kind, aim at

teaching what ought to be done or observed, using the boldness of an

adviser, not the fidelity of a narrator.

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[1815] John. ii. 19.

[1816] Luke iii. 23.

[1817] See above, chap. xvi.

[1818] Augustin himself corrected this mistake. Retractations, ii. 4.

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Chapter 29.--To What Extent Natural Science is an Exegetical Aid.

45. There is also a species of narrative resembling description, in

which not a past but an existing state of things is made known to those

who are ignorant of it. To this species belongs all that has been

written about the situation of places, and the nature of animals,

trees, herbs, stones, and other bodies. And of this species I have

treated above, and have shown that this kind of knowledge is

serviceable in solving the difficulties of Scripture, not that these

objects are to be used conformably to certain signs as nostrums or the

instruments of superstition; for that kind of knowledge I have already

set aside as distinct from the lawful and free kind now spoken of. For

it is one thing to say: If you bruise down this herb and drink it, it

will remove the pain from your stomach; and another to say: If you

hang this herb round your neck, it will remove the pain from your

stomach. In the former case the wholesome mixture is approved of, in

the latter the superstitious charm is condemned; although indeed, where

incantations and invocations and marks are not used, it is frequently

doubtful whether the thing that is tied or fixed in any way to the body

to cure it, acts by a natural virtue, in which case it may be freely

used; or acts by a sort of charm, in which case it becomes the

Christian to avoid it the more carefully, the more efficacious it may

seem to be. But when the reason why a thing is of virtue does not

appear, the intention with which it is used is of great importance, at

least in healing or in tempering bodies, whether in medicine or in

agriculture.

46. The knowledge of the stars, again, is not a matter of narration,

but of description. Very few of these, however, are mentioned in

Scripture. And as the course of the moon, which is regularly employed

in reference to celebrating the anniversary of our Lord's passion, is

known to most people; so the rising and setting and other movements of

the rest of the heavenly bodies are thoroughly known to very few. And

this knowledge, although in itself it involves no superstition, renders

very little, indeed almost no assistance, in the interpretation of Holy

Scripture, and by engaging the attention unprofitably is a hindrance

rather; and as it is closely related to the very pernicious error of

the diviners of the fates, it is more convenient and becoming to

neglect it. It involves, moreover, in addition to a description of the

present state of things, something like a narrative of the past also;

because one may go back from the present position and motion of the

stars, and trace by rule their past movements. It involves also

regular anticipations of the future, not in the way of forebodings and

omens, but by way of sure calculation; not with the design of drawing

any information from them as to our own acts and fates, in the absurd

fashion of the genethliaci, but only as to the motions of the heavenly

bodies themselves. For, as the man who computes the moon's age can

tell, when he has found out her age today, what her age was any number

of years ago, or what will be her age any number of years hence, in

just the same way men who are skilled in such computations are

accustomed to answer like questions about every one of the heavenly

bodies. And I have stated what my views are about all this knowledge,

so far as regards its utility.

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Chapter 30.--What the Mechanical Arts Contribute to Exegetics.

47. Further, as to the remaining arts, whether those by which

something is made which, when the effort of the workman is over,

remains as a result of his work, as, for example, a house, a bench, a

dish, and other things of that kind; or those which, so to speak,

assist God in His operations, as medicine, and agriculture, and

navigation; or those whose sole result is an action, as dancing, and

racing, and wrestling;--in all these arts experience teaches us to

infer the future from the past. For no man who is skilled in any of

these arts moves his limbs in any operation without connecting the

memory of the past with the expectation of the future. Now of these

arts a very superficial and cursory knowledge is to be acquired, not

with a view to practising them (unless some duty compel us, a matter on

which I do not touch at present), but with a view to forming a judgment

about them, that we may not be wholly ignorant of what Scripture means

to convey when it employs figures of speech derived from these arts.

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Chapter 31.--Use of Dialectics. Of Fallacies.

48. There remain those branches of knowledge which pertain not to the

bodily senses, but to the intellect, among which the science of

reasoning and that of number are the chief. The science of reasoning

is of very great service in searching into and unravelling all sorts of

questions that come up in Scripture, only in the use of it we must

guard against the love of wrangling, and the childish vanity of

entrapping an adversary. For there are many of what are called

sophisms, inferences in reasoning that are false, and yet so close an

imitation of the true, as to deceive not only dull people, but clever

men too, when they are not on their guard. For example, one man lays

before another with whom he is talking, the proposition, "What I am,

you are not." The other assents, for the proposition is in part true,

the one man being cunning and the other simple. Then the first speaker

adds: "I am a man;" and when the other has given his assent to this

also, the first draws his conclusion: "Then you are not a man." Now

of this sort of ensnaring arguments, Scripture, as I judge, expresses

detestation in that place where it is said, "There is one that showeth

wisdom in words, and is hated;" [1819] although, indeed, a style of

speech which is not intended to entrap, but only aims at verbal

ornamentation more than is consistent with seriousness of purpose, is

also called sophistical.

49. There are also valid processes of reasoning which lead to false

conclusions, by following out to its logical consequences the error of

the man with whom one is arguing; and these conclusions are sometimes

drawn by a good and learned man, with the object of making the person

from whose error these consequences result, feel ashamed of them and of

thus leading him to give up his error when he finds that if he wishes

to retain his old opinion, he must of necessity also hold other

opinions which he condemns. For example, the apostle did not draw true

conclusions when he said, "Then is Christ not risen," and again, "Then

is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain;" [1820] and further

on drew other inferences which are all utterly false; for Christ has

risen, the preaching of those who declared this fact was not in vain,

nor was their faith in vain who had believed it. But all these false

inferences followed legitimately from the opinion of those who said

that there is no resurrection of the dead. These inferences, then,

being repudiated as false, it follows that since they would be true if

the dead rise not, there will be a resurrection of the dead. As, then,

valid conclusions may be drawn not only from true but from false

propositions, the laws of valid reasoning may easily be learnt in the

schools, outside the pale of the Church. But the truth of propositions

must be inquired into in the sacred books of the Church.

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[1819] Qui sophistice loquitur, odibilis est. Ecclus. xxxvii. 20.

[1820] 1 Cor. xv. 13, 14.

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Chapter 32.--Valid Logical Sequence is Not Devised But Only Observed by

Man.

50. And yet the validity of logical sequences is not a thing devised

by men, but is observed and noted by them that they may be able to

learn and teach it; for it exists eternally in the reason of things,

and has its origin with God. For as the man who narrates the order of

events does not himself create that order; and as he who describes the

situations of places, or the natures of animals, or roots, or minerals,

does not describe arrangements of man; and as he who points out the

stars and their movements does not point out anything that he himself

or any other man has ordained;--in the same way, he who says, "When the

consequent is false, the antecedent must also be false," says what is

most true; but he does not himself make it so, he only points out that

it is so. And it is upon this rule that the reasoning I have quoted

from the Apostle Paul proceeds. For the antecedent is, "There is no

resurrection of the dead,"--the position taken up by those whose error

the apostle wished to overthrow. Next, from this antecedent, the

assertion, viz., that there is no resurrection of the dead, the

necessary consequence is, "Then Christ is not risen." But this

consequence is false, for Christ has risen; therefore the antecedent is

also false. But the antecedent is, that there is no resurrection of

the dead. We conclude, therefore, that there is a resurrection of the

dead. Now all this is briefly expressed thus: If there is no

resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; but Christ is

risen, therefore there is a resurrection of the dead. This rule, then,

that when the consequent is removed, the antecedent must also be

removed, is not made by man, but only pointed out by him. And this

rule has reference to the validity of the reasoning, not to the truth

of the statements.

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Chapter 33.--False Inferences May Be Drawn from Valid Reasonings, and

Vice Versa.

51. In this passage, however, where the argument is about the

resurrection, both the law of the inference is valid, and the

conclusion arrived at is true. But in the case of false conclusions,

too, there is a validity of inference in some such way as the

following. Let us suppose some man to have admitted: If a snail is an

animal, it has a voice. This being admitted, then, when it has been

proved that the snail has no voice, it follows (since when the

consequent is proved false, the antecedent is also false) that the

snail is not an animal. Now this conclusion is false, but it is a true

and valid inference from the false admission. Thus, the truth of a

statement stands on its own merits; the validity of an inference

depends on the statement or the admission of the man with whom one is

arguing. And thus, as I said above, a false inference may be drawn by

a valid process of reasoning, in order that he whose error we wish to

correct may be sorry that he has admitted the antecedent, when he sees

that its logical consequences are utterly untenable. And hence it is

easy to understand that as the inferences may be valid where the

opinions are false, so the inferences may be unsound where the opinions

are true. For example, suppose that a man propounds the statement, "If

this man is just, he is good," and we admit its truth. Then he adds,

"But he is not just;" and when we admit this too, he draws the

conclusion, "Therefore he is not good." Now although every one of

these statements may be true, still the principle of the inference is

unsound. For it is not true that, as when the consequent is proved

false the antecedent is also false, so when the antecedent is proved

false the consequent is false. For the statement is true, "If he is an

orator, he is a man." But if we add, "He is not an orator," the

consequence does not follow, "He is not a man."

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Chapter 34.--It is One Thing to Know the Laws of Inference, Another to

Know the Truth of Opinions.

52. Therefore it is one thing to know the laws of inference, and

another to know the truth of opinions. In the former case we learn

what is consequent, what is inconsequent, and what is incompatible. An

example of a consequent is, "If he is an orator, he is a man;" of an

inconsequent, "If he is a man, he is an orator;" of an incompatible,

"If he is a man, he is a quadruped." In these instances we judge of

the connection. In regard to the truth of opinions, however, we must

consider propositions as they stand by themselves, and not in their

connection with one another; but when propositions that we are not sure

about are joined by a valid inference to propositions that are true and

certain, they themselves, too, necessarily become certain. Now some,

when they have ascertained the validity of the inference, plume

themselves as if this involved also the truth of the propositions.

Many, again, who hold the true opinions have an unfounded contempt for

themselves, because they are ignorant of the laws of inference; whereas

the man who knows that there is a resurrection of the dead is assuredly

better than the man who only knows that it follows that if there is no

resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.

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Chapter 35 .--The Science of Definition is Not False, Though It May Be

Applied to Falsities.

53. Again, the science of definition, of division, and of partition,

although it is frequently applied to falsities, is not itself false,

nor framed by man's device, but is evolved from the reason of things.

For although poets have applied it to their fictions, and false

philosophers, or even heretics--that is, false Christians--to their

erroneous doctrines, that is no reason why it should be false, for

example, that neither in definition, nor in division, nor in partition,

is anything to be included that does not pertain to the matter in hand,

nor anything to be omitted that does. This is true, even though the

things to be defined or divided are not true. For even falsehood

itself is defined when we say that falsehood is the declaration of a

state of things which is not as we declare it to be; and this

definition is true, although falsehood itself cannot be true. We can

also divide it, saying that there are two kinds of falsehood, one in

regard to things that cannot be true at all, the other in regard to

things that are not, though it is possible they might be, true. For

example, the man who says that seven and three are eleven, says what

cannot be true under any circumstances; but he who says that it rained

on the kalends of January, although perhaps the fact is not so, says

what posssibly might have been. The definition and division,

therefore, of what is false may be perfectly true, although what is

false cannot, of course, itself be true.

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Chapter 36.--The Rules of Eloquence are True, Though Sometimes Used to

Persuade Men of What is False.

54. There are also certain rules for a more copious kind of argument,

which is called eloquence, and these rules are not the less true that

they can be used for persuading men of what is false; but as they can

be used to enforce the truth as well, it is not the faculty itself that

is to be blamed, but the perversity of those who put it to a bad use.

Nor is it owing to an arrangement among men that the expression of

affection conciliates the hearer, or that a narrative, when it is short

and clear, is effective, and that variety arrests men's attention

without wearying them. And it is the same with other directions of the

same kind, which, whether the cause in which they are used be true or

false, are themselves true just in so far as they are effective in

producing knowledge or belief, or in moving men's minds to desire and

aversion. And men rather found out that these things are so, than

arranged that they should be so.

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Chapter 37.--Use of Rhetoric and Dialectic.

55. This art, however, when it is learnt, is not to be used so much

for ascertaining the meaning as for setting forth the meaning when it

is ascertained. But the art previously spoken of, which deals with

inferences, and definitions, and divisions, is of the greatest

assistance in the discovery of the meaning, provided only that men do

not fall into the error of supposing that when they have learnt these

things they have learnt the true secret of a happy life. Still, it

sometimes happens that men find less difficulty in attaining the ob

ject for the sake of which these sciences are learnt, than in going

through the very intricate and thorny discipline of such rules. It is

just as if a man wishing to give rules for walking should warn you not

to lift the hinder foot before you set down the front one, and then

should describe minutely the way you ought to move the hinges of the

joints and knees. For what he says is true, and one cannot walk in any

other way; but men find it easier to walk by executing these movements

than to attend to them while they are going through them, or to

understand when they are told about them. Those, on the other hand,

who cannot walk, care still less about such directions, as they cannot

prove them by making trial of them. And in the same way a clever man

often sees that an inference is unsound more quickly than he apprehends

the rules for it. A dull man, on the other hand, does not see the

unsoundness, but much less does he grasp the rules. And in regard to

all these laws, we derive more pleasure from them as exhibitions of

truth, than assistance in arguing or forming opinions, except perhaps

that they put the intellect in better training. We must take care,

however that they do not at the same time make it more inclined to

mischief or vanity,--that is to say, that they do not give those who

have learnt them an inclination to lead people astray by plausible

speech and catching questions, or make them think that they have

attained some great thing that gives them an advantage over the good

and innocent.

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Chapter 38.--The Science of Numbers Not Created, But Only Discovered,

by Man.

56. Coming now to the science of number, it is clear to the dullest

apprehension that this was not created by man, but was discovered by

investigation. For, though Virgil could at his own pleasure make the

first syllable of Italia long, while the ancients pronounced it short,

it is not in any man's power to determine at his pleasure that three

times three are not nine, or do not make a square, or are not the

triple of three, nor one and a half times the number six, or that it is

not true that they are not the double of any number because odd numbers

[1821] have no half. Whether, then, numbers are considered in

themselves, or as applied to the laws of figures, or of sounds, or of

other motions, they have fixed laws which were not made by man, but

which the acuteness of ingenious men brought to light.

57. The man, however, who puts so high a value on these things as to

be inclined to boast himself one of the learned, and who does not

rather inquire after the source from which those things which he

perceives to be true derive their truth, and from which those others

which he perceives to be unchangeable also derive their truth and

unchangeableness, and who, mounting up from bodily appearances to the

mind of man, and finding that it too is changeable (for it is sometimes

instructed, at other times uninstructed), although it holds a middle

place between the unchangeable truth above it and the changeable things

beneath it, does not strive to make all things redound to the praise

and love of the one God from whom he knows that all things have their

being;--the man, I say, who acts in this way may seem to be learned,

but wise he cannot in any sense be deemed.

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[1821] Intelligibiles numeri.

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Chapter 39.--To Which of the Above-Mentioned Studies Attention Should

Be Given, and in What Spirit.

58. Accordingly, I think that it is well to warn studious and able

young men, who fear God and are seeking for happiness of life, not to

venture heedlessly upon the pursuit of the branches of learning that

are in vogue beyond the pale of the Church of Christ, as if these could

secure for them the happiness they seek; but soberly and carefully to

discriminate among them. And if they find any of those which have been

instituted by men varying by reason of the varying pleasure of their

founders, and unknown by reason of erroneous conjectures, especially if

they involve entering into fellowship with devils by means of leagues

and covenants about signs, let these be utterly rejected and held in

detestation. Let the young men also withdraw their attention from such

institutions of men as are unnecessary and luxurious. But for the sake

of the necessities of this life we must not neglect the arrangements of

men that enable us to carry on intercourse with those around us. I

think, however, there is nothing useful in the other branches of

learning that are found among the heathen, except information about

objects, either past or present, that relate to the bodily senses, in

which are included also the experiments and conclusions of the useful

mechanical arts, except also the sciences of reasoning and of number.

And in regard to all these we must hold by the maxim, "Not too much of

anything;" especially in the case of those which, pertaining as they do

to the senses, are subject to the relations of space and time. [1822]

59. What, then, some men have done in regard to all words and names

found in Scripture, in the Hebrew, and Syriac, and Egyptian, and other

tongues, taking up and interpreting separately such as were left in

Scripture without interpretation; and what Eusebius has done in regard

to the history of the past with a view to the questions arising in

Scripture that require a knowledge of history for their

solution;--what, I say, these men have done in regard to matters of

this kind, making it unnecessary for the Christian to spend his

strength on many subjects for the sake of a few items of knowledge, the

same, I think, might be done in regard to other matters, if any

competent man were willing in a spirit of benevolence to undertake the

labor for the advantage of his brethren. In this way he might arrange

in their several classes, and give an account of the unknown places,

and animals, and plants, and trees, and stones, and metals, and other

species of things that are mentioned in Scripture, taking up these

only, and committing his account to writing. This might also be done

in relation to numbers, so that the theory of those numbers, and those

only, which are mentioned in Holy Scripture, might be explained and

written down. And it may happen that some or all of these things have

been done already (as I have found that many things I had no notion of

have been worked out and committed to writing by good and learned

Christians), but are either lost amid the crowds of the careless, or

are kept out of sight by the envious. And I am not sure whether the

same thing can be done in regard to the theory of reasoning; but it

seems to me it cannot, because this runs like a system of nerves

through the whole structure of Scripture, and on that account is of

more service to the reader in disentangling and explaining ambiguous

passages, of which I shall speak hereafter, than in ascertaining the

meaning of unknown signs, the topic I am now discussing.

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[1822] Ne quid nimis.--Terence, Andria, act i. scene 1.

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Chapter 40.--Whatever Has Been Rightly Said by the Heathen, We Must

Appropriate to Our Uses.

60. Moreover, if those who are called philosophers, and especially the

Platonists, have said aught that is true and in harmony with our faith,

we are not only not to shrink from it, but to claim it for our own use

from those who have unlawful possession of it. For, as the Egyptians

had not only the idols and heavy burdens which the people of Israel

hated and fled from, but also vessels and ornaments of gold and silver,

and garments, which the same people when going out of Egypt

appropriated to themselves, designing them for a better use, not doing

this on their own authority, but by the command of God, the Egyptians

themselves, in their ignorance, providing them with things which they

themselves were not making a good use of; [1823] in the same way all

branches of heathen learning have not only false and superstitious

fancies and heavy burdens of unnecessary toil, which every one of us,

when going out under the leadership of Christ from the fellowship of

the heathen, ought to abhor and avoid; but they contain also liberal

instruction which is better adapted to the use of the truth, and some

most excellent precepts of morality; and some truths in regard even to

the worship of the One God are found among them. Now these are, so to

speak, their gold and silver, which they did not create themselves, but

dug out of the mines of God's providence which are everywhere scattered

abroad, and are perversely and unlawfully prostituting to the worship

of devils. These, therefore, the Christian, when he separates himself

in spirit from the miserable fellowship of these men, ought to take

away from them, and to devote to their proper use in preaching the

gospel. Their garments, also,--that is, human institutions such as are

adapted to that intercourse with men which is indispensable in this

life,--we must take and turn to a Christian use.

61. And what else have many good and faithful men among our brethren

done? Do we not see with what a quantity of gold and silver and

garments Cyprian, that most persuasive teacher and most blessed martyr,

was loaded when he came out of Egypt? How much Lactantius brought with

him? And Victorinus, and Optatus, and Hilary, not to speak of living

men! How much Greeks out of number have borrowed! And prior to all

these, that most faithful servant of God, Moses, had done the same

thing; for of him it is written that he was learned in all the wisdom

of the Egyptians. [1824] And to none of all these would heathen

superstition (especially in those times when, kicking against the yoke

of Christ, it was persecuting the Christians) have ever furnished

branches of knowledge it held useful, if it had suspected they were

about to turn them to the use of worshipping the One God, and thereby

overturning the vain worship of idols. But they gave their gold and

their silver and their garments to the people of God as they were going

out of Egypt, not knowing how the things they gave would be turned to

the service of Christ. For what was done at the time of the exodus was

no doubt a type prefiguring what happens now. And this I say without

prejudice to any other interpretation that may be as good, or better.

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[1823] Ex. iii. 21, 22; xii. 35, 36.

[1824] Acts vii. 22.

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Chapter 41.--What Kind of Spirit is Required for the Study of Holy

Scripture.

62. But when the student of the Holy Scriptures, prepared in the way I

have indicated, shall enter upon his investigations, let him constantly

meditate upon that saying of the apostle's, "Knowledge puffeth up, but

charity edifieth." [1825] For so he will feel that, whatever may be

the riches he brings with him out of Egypt, yet unless he has kept the

passover, he cannot be safe. Now Christ is our passover sacrificed for

us, [1826] and there is nothing the sacrifice of Christ more clearly

teaches us than the call which He himself addresses to those whom He

sees toiling in Egypt under Pharaoh: "Come unto me, all ye that labor

and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you,

and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find

rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

[1827] To whom is it light but to the meek and lowly in heart, whom

knowledge doth not puff up, but charity edifieth? Let them remember,

then, that those who celebrated the passover at that time in type and

shadow, when they were ordered to mark their door-posts with the blood

of the lamb, used hyssop to mark them with. [1828] Now this is a meek

and lowly herb, and yet nothing is stronger and more penetrating than

its roots; that being rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to

comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth,

and height, [1829] --that is, to comprehend the cross of our Lord, the

breadth of which is indicated by the transverse wood on which the hands

are stretched, its length by the part from the ground up to the

cross-bar on which the whole body from the head downwards is fixed, its

height by the part from the crossbar to the top on which the head lies,

and its depth by the part which is hidden, being fixed in the earth.

And by this sign of the cross all Christian action is symbolized, viz.,

to do good works in Christ, to cling with constancy to Him, to hope for

heaven, and not to desecrate the sacraments. And purified by this

Christian action, we shall be able to know even "the love of Christ

which passeth knowledge," who is equal to the Father, by whom all

things, were made, "that we may be filled with all the fullness of

God." [1830] There is besides in hyssop a purgative virtue, that the

breast may not be swollen with that knowledge which puffeth up, nor

boast vainly of the riches brought out from Egypt. "Purge me with

hyssop," the psalmist says, [1831] "and I shall be clean; wash me, and

I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness." Then

he immediately adds, to show that it is purifying from pride that is

indicated by hyssop, "that the bones which Thou hast broken [1832] may

rejoice."

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[1825] 1 Cor. viii. 1.

[1826] 1 Cor. v. 7.

[1827] Matt. xi. 28-30.

[1828] Ex. xii. 22.

[1829] Eph. iii. 17, 18.

[1830] Eph. iii. 19.

[1831] Ps. li. 7, 8.

[1832] Ossa humiliata, Vulgate.

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Chapter 42.--Sacred Scripture Compared with Profane Authors.

63. But just as poor as the store of gold and silver and garments

which the people of Israel brought with them out of Egypt was in

comparison with the riches which they afterwards attained at Jerusalem,

and which reached their height in the reign of King Solomon, so poor is

all the useful knowledge which is gathered from the books of the

heathen when compared with the knowledge of Holy Scripture. For

whatever man may have learnt from other sources, if it is hurtful, it

is there condemned; if it is useful, it is therein contained. And

while every man may find there all that he has learnt of useful

elsewhere, he will find there in much greater abundance things that are

to be found nowhere else, but can be learnt only in the wonderful

sublimity and wonderful simplicity of the Scriptures.

When, then, the reader is possessed of the instruction here pointed

out, so that unknown signs have ceased to be a hindrance to him; when

he is meek and lowly of heart, subject to the easy yoke of Christ, and

loaded with His light burden, rooted and grounded and built up in

faith, so that knowledge cannot puff him up, let him then approach the

consideration and discussion of ambiguous signs in Scripture. And

about these I shall now, in a third book, endeavor to say what the Lord

shall be pleased to vouchsafe.

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Book III.

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Argument--The author, having discussed in the preceding book the method

of dealing with unknown signs, goes on in this third book to treat of

ambiguous signs. Such signs may be either direct or figurative. In

the case of direct signs ambiguity may arise from the punctuation, the

pronunciation, or the doubtful signification of the words, and is to be

resolved by attention to the context, a comparison of translations, or

a reference to the original tongue. In the case of figurative signs we

need to guard against two mistakes:--1. the interpreting literal

expressions figuratively; 2. the interpreting figurative expressions

literally. The author lays down rules by which we may decide whether

an expression is literal or figurative; the general rule being, that

whatever can be shown to be in its literal sense inconsistent either

with purity of life or correctness of doctrine must be taken

figuratively. He then goes on to lay down rules for the interpretation

of expressions which have been proved to be figurative; the general

principle being, that no interpretation can be true which does not

promote the love of God and the love of man. The author then proceeds

to expound and illustrate the seven rules of Tichonius the Donatist,

which he commends to the attention of the student of Holy Scripture.

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Chapter 1 .--Summary of the Foregoing Books, and Scope of that Which

Follows.

I. The man who fears God seeks diligently in Holy Scripture for a

knowledge of His will. And when he has become meek through piety, so

as to have no love of strife; when furnished also with a knowledge of

languages, so as not to be stopped by unknown words and forms of

speech, and with the knowledge of certain necessary objects, so as not

to be ignorant of the force and nature of those which are used

figuratively; and assisted, besides, by accuracy in the texts, which

has been secured by skill and care in the matter of correction;--when

thus prepared, let him proceed to the examination and solution of the

ambiguities of Scripture. And that he may not be led astray by

ambiguous signs, so far as I can give him instruction (it may happen,

however, that either from the greatness of his intellect, or the

greater clearness of the light he enjoys, he shall laugh at the methods

I am going to point out as childish),--but yet, as I was going to say,

so far as I can give instruction, let him who is in such a state of

mind that he can be instructed by me know, that the ambiguity of

Scripture lies either in proper words or in metaphorical, classes which

I have already described in the second book. [1833]

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[1833] See Book ii. chap.x.

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Chapter 2.--Rule for Removing Ambiguity by Attending to Punctuation.

2. But when proper words make Scripture ambiguous, we must see in the

first place that there is nothing wrong in our punctuation or

pronunciation. Accordingly, if, when attention is given to the

passage, it shall appear to be uncertain in what way it ought to be

punctuated or pronounced, let the reader consult the rule of faith

which he has gathered from the plainer passages of Scripture, and from

the authority of the Church, and of which I treated at sufficient

length when I was speaking in the first book about things. But if both

readings, or all of them (if there are more than two), give a meaning

in harmony with the faith, it remains to consult the context, both what

goes before and what comes after, to see which interpretation, out of

many that offer themselves, it pronounces for and permits to be

dovetailed into itself.

3. Now look at some examples. The heretical pointing, [1834] "In

principio erat verbum, et verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat," [1835]

so as to make the next sentence run, "Verbum hoc erat in principio apud

Deum," [1836] arises out of unwillingness to confess that the Word was

God. But this must be rejected by the rule of faith, which, in

reference to the equality of the Trinity, directs us to say: "et Deus

erat verbum;" [1837] and then to add: "hoc erat in principio apud

Deum." [1838]

4. But the following ambiguity of punctuation does not go against the

faith in either way you take it, and therefore must be decided from the

context. It is where the apostle says: "What I shall choose I wot

not: for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and

to be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the

flesh is more needful for you." [1839] Now it is uncertain whether we

should read, "ex duobus concupiscentiam habens" [having a desire for

two things], or "compellor autem ex duobus" [I am in a strait betwixt

two]; and so to add: "concupiscentiam habens dissolvi, et esse cum

Christo" [having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ]. But since

there follows "multo enim magis optimum" [for it is far better], it is

evident that he says he has a desire for that which is better; so that,

while he is in a strait betwixt two, yet he has a desire for one and

sees a necessity for the other;