

THE LIBRARY OF CHRISTIAN CLASSICS

ICHTHUS EDITION

AUGUSTINE:  
EARLIER  
WRITINGS

*Selected and translated*

*with Introductions by*

JOHN H. S. BURLEIGH

*Philadelphia*

THE WESTMINSTER PRESS

Published simultaneously in Great Britain and the United States of America  
by the S.G.M. Press, Ltd., London, and The Westminster Press, Philadelphia.

*First published MCMLIII*

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 53-13043

9 8 7 6 5

*Printed in the United States of America*

## GENERAL EDITORS' PREFACE

The Christian Church possesses in its literature an abundant and incomparable treasure. But it is an inheritance that must be reclaimed by each generation. THE LIBRARY OF CHRISTIAN CLASSICS is designed to present in the English language, and in twenty-six volumes of convenient size, a selection of the most indispensable Christian treatises written prior to the end of the sixteenth century.

The practice of giving circulation to writings selected for superior worth or special interest was adopted at the beginning of Christian history. The canonical Scriptures were themselves a selection from a much wider literature. In the Patristic era there began to appear a class of works of compilation (often designed for ready reference in controversy) of the opinions of well-reputed predecessors, and in the Middle Ages many such works were produced. These medieval anthologies actually preserve some noteworthy materials from works otherwise lost.

In modern times, with the increasing inability even of those trained in universities and theological colleges to read Latin and Greek texts with ease and familiarity, the translation of selected portions of earlier Christian literature into modern languages has become more necessary than ever; while the wide range of distinguished books written in vernaculars such as English makes selection there also needful. The efforts that have been made to meet this need are too numerous to be noted here, but none of these collections serves the purpose of the reader who desires a library of representative treatises spanning the Christian centuries as a whole. Most of them embrace only the age of the Church Fathers, and some of them have long been out of print. A fresh translation of a work already

translated may shed much new light upon its meaning. This is true even of Bible translations despite the work of many experts through the centuries. In some instances old translations have been adopted in this series, but wherever necessary or desirable, new ones have been made. Notes have been supplied where these were needed to explain the author's meaning. The introductions provided for the several treatises and extracts will, we believe, furnish welcome guidance.

JOHN BAILLIE  
JOHN T. MCNEILL  
HENRY P. VAN DUSEN

## CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . .	page 13
THE SOLILOQUIES ( <i>Soliloquia</i> )	17
Introduction . . . . .	19
Analysis . . . . .	20
Text . . . . .	23
THE TEACHER ( <i>De Magistro</i> )	64
Introduction . . . . .	64
Analysis . . . . .	66
Text . . . . .	69
ON FREE WILL ( <i>De Libero Arbitrio</i> )	102
Introduction . . . . .	106
Analysis . . . . .	107
Text . . . . .	113
OF TRUE RELIGION ( <i>De Vera Religione</i> )	218
Introduction . . . . .	222
Analysis . . . . .	223
Text . . . . .	225
THE USEFULNESS OF BELIEF ( <i>De Utilitate Credendi</i> )	284
Introduction . . . . .	287
Analysis . . . . .	289
Text . . . . .	291

## Of True Religion

*St. Augustine's Review of "De Vera Religione."  
Retractations I, xiii*

1. At that time also I wrote a book *Concerning True Religion* in which I argued at great length and in many ways that true religion means the worship of the one true God, that is, the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I pointed out how great was his mercy in granting to men by a temporal dispensation the Christian religion, which is true religion, and how man is to adjust his life to the worship of God. But the book is written chiefly against the two natures of the Manichees.

2. In a passage in that book (chap. x) I say, "There could have been no error in religion had not the soul worshipped in place of God either soul or body or its own phantasms." By "soul," here, I meant the whole incorporeal creation. I was not using the language of Scripture which, when it speaks of soul, under that name seems to mean nothing but that which animates living beings including men so long as they are mortal. A little later I put my meaning better and more briefly, "Let us not serve the creature rather than the Creator, nor become vain in our thoughts." By "creature" I indicated by one word both spiritual and corporeal creation. And "Let us not become vain in our thoughts" corresponds to "the phantasms of the soul."

3. Again, in the same chapter, I said, "That is the Christian religion in our times, which to know and follow is most sure and certain salvation." I was speaking of the name, here, and not of the thing so named. For what is now called the Christian religion existed of old and was never absent from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh. Then true religion which already existed began to be called Christian. After the resurrection and ascension of Christ into heaven, the apostles began to preach him and many believed, and the dis-

ciples were first called Christians in Antioch, as it is written. When I said, "This is the Christian religion in our times," I did not mean that it had not existed in former times, but that it received that name later.

4. In another place I say, "Listen to what follows as diligently and as piously as you can; for God aids such." This is not to be understood as if he aids the diligent and pious only. He aids those who are not such to be such, and to seek diligently and piously. Those who do so he aids so that they may find. Again, I say (chap. xii), "After the death of the body which we owe to the first sin, in its own time and order this body will be restored to its pristine stability." That is to be accepted as partially true. The pristine stability of the body, which by sinning we lost, had so great felicity that it would not fall into the decline of old age. To this state the body will be restored at the resurrection of the dead. But it will have more; for it will not need to be sustained by material food. It will be sufficiently animated by spirit alone when it is resurrected as a vivifying spirit. For this reason also it will be spiritual. Man's original nature, though it would not have died if man had not sinned, yet was made a living soul.

5. In another place (chap. xiv) I say, "Sin is so much voluntary evil, that there would be no such thing as sin unless it were voluntary." That may appear a false definition; but if it is diligently discussed it will be found to be quite true. We are to consider as sin simply sin and not what is really the penalty of sin, as I showed above when I was dealing with passages from the third book of the *De Libero Arbitrio*. Sins which are not unjustifiably said to be non-voluntary because they are committed in ignorance or under compulsion cannot be said to be committed entirely involuntarily. He who sins in ignorance uses his will to some extent, for he thinks he should do what in fact ought not to be done. He who does not the things that he would because the flesh lusteth against the spirit, may be unwilling but he lusts all the same, and thereby does not the things he would. If he is overcome he voluntarily consents to lust, and thereby does what he wishes, being free from righteousness and the servant of sin. What we call original sin in infants, who have not yet the use of free choice, may not absurdly also be called voluntary, because it originated in man's first evil will and has become in a manner hereditary. So my statement was not false. By the grace of God not only is the guilt of past sins done away in all who are baptized in Christ, by the spirit of regeneration;

but also in grown-up people the will itself is healed and made ready by the Lord, by the spirit of faith and love.

6. In another place (chap. xvi) I said of the Lord Jesus Christ that "He did nothing by violence, but everything by persuasion and advice." I had forgotten that he used a whip to drive the buyers and sellers from the Temple. But what does this amount to? He also drove demons from men against their will, not by persuasive speech but by the might of his power. Again, I say (chap. xxv), "These are first to be followed who say that the most high true God is alone to be worshipped. If the truth does not shine out among them, then we must go elsewhere." That would seem to suggest that there is some doubt about the truth of this religion. I was adapting my words to the situation of him whom I was addressing. I had no doubt myself that the truth *would* shine out among them. The apostle says, "If Christ be not raised," never doubting that he was raised.

7. Again, I said (chap. xxv), "These miracles were not permitted to last till our times, lest the soul should always seek visible things, and the human race should grow cold by becoming accustomed to things which stirred it when they were novel." That is true. When hands are laid on in Baptism people do not receive the Holy Spirit in such a way that they speak with the tongues of all the nations. Nor are the sick now healed by the shadow of Christ's preachers as they pass by. Clearly such things which happened then have later ceased. But I should not be understood to mean that to-day no miracles are to be believed to happen in the name of Christ. For when I wrote that book I myself had just heard that a blind man in Milan had received his sight beside the bodies of the Milanese martyrs, Protasius and Gervasius. And many others happen even in these times, so that it is impossible to know them all or to enumerate those we do know.

8. In another place (chap. xli) I said, "As the apostle says, all order is of God." But the apostle does not use these very words, though his meaning seems to be the same. He actually says "the things that are ordained of God." Again I say, "Let no one deceive us. Whatever is rightly blamed is rejected by comparison with what is better." This is said of substances and natures which were under discussion, not of good and bad actions. Again (chap. xlvi) I say, "Man is not to be loved by man, as brothers after the flesh love, or sons, spouses, relatives, citizens. That is temporal love. We should not have any such

relationships, which are contingent on birth and death, if our nature had remained in the precepts and image of God, and had not been condemned to corruption." I completely disapprove of this notion, of which I have already disapproved in reviewing the first book of my *On Genesis, against the Manichees*. It leads to the conclusion that the first pair would not have begotten offspring unless they had sinned, as if it were necessary that the offspring of intercourse between man and woman should be born to die. I had not yet seen that it was possible that children who would not die might be born of parents who would not die, if human nature had not been changed for the worse by the first great sin. In that case, if fertility and felicity remained both in parents and in children, men would have been born who were destined, not to succeed parents who die, but to reign with their parents in life, up to the fixed number of the saints which God has predetermined. If there were no sin or death, these kinships and relationships would exist.

9. In another place (chap. lv) I say, "Tending to One God, and binding our souls to him alone [*religantes*], whence religion is supposed to be derived, let us be without superstition." The account which is given in these words of the derivation of the word "religion" pleased me best. To be sure I was not unaware that authors of Latin tongue have given another derivation, from *religere* which is a composite verb from *legere*, to choose. *Religo* seems the proper Latin form, following the analogy of *eligo*.

## Of True Religion

### INTRODUCTION

THE *De Vera Religione* IS DEDICATED TO ROMANIANUS, and was sent to him with a brief epistle (*Epist.* 15) in 390. Romanianus, a wealthy citizen of Tagaste, had befriended the young Augustine and contributed financially to enable him to study in Carthage. During a business visit to Milan he met Augustine again, and was one of those who discussed a plan to form a quasi-monastic community for religious and philosophic inquiry (*Conf.* vi, 14). His son, Licentius, was left with Augustine as a pupil, accompanied him to Cassiciacum and took part in the early dialogues. The *Contra Academicos* is also dedicated to Romanianus, and there (II, iii, 8) reference is made to the abilities and progress of his son. There too the promise is given to discuss true religion with him, should opportunity offer. On Augustine's return to Africa Romanianus pressed for a fulfilment of the promise, and offered to put his house at Tagaste at the disposal of Augustine and his friends. The offer was gracefully refused. The *De Vera Religione* was one of the five works of Augustine sent to Paulinus of Nola in 394, which the latter delightedly hailed as his "Pentateuch against the Manichees" (*Epist.* 25). In 415, in answer to queries addressed to him by Evodius, Augustine refers to this work, as also to the *De Libero Arbitrio*, as containing in principle at least the solution to Evodius' difficulties (*Epist.* 162).

Of the *De Vera Religione* it has been said, "Scarcely any other of Augustine's works is of more value in demonstrating the greatness of his genius." At the same time it must be admitted that it is extremely diffuse, almost defying analysis. The inference Augustine wishes Evodius to draw from it, viz., that reason cannot afford compelling proof of the existence of God,

hardly seems to emerge from the argument, which is that God's temporal dispensation in nature and in history is congruous with, supports and makes available for all men the Platonic teaching with regard to nature and the Good. The Christian religion, now graciously revealed by God for man's salvation, is the true religion ineffectively glimpsed by Plato and his followers, giving a true account of man's fall, present condition and way of regeneration. Those who accept this can live the good life even under earthly conditions, provided they look for blessedness to God alone, the supreme Good. One may note the seminal idea of the *De Civitate Dei* in xxvii, 50.

### ANALYSIS

i, 1—vi, 11. Christ has achieved what Plato sought in vain to do.

(1) True religion is the way of the blessed life, and is incompatible with polytheism and idolatry. (2–6) Plato saw this afar off; Christ has made it generally available. (7) Platonists, unless smitten with envy, are becoming Christians. (8–11) Philosophers, Jews, heretics, schismatics, only stimulate the thought of the Catholic Church.

vii, 12—x, 20. Address to Romanianus; and Outline of the Argument.

(13) God's temporal dispensation for man's salvation rightly understood provides (14–16) a sure defence against all heresies, especially Manicheism. (18) Root of all heresy is failure to distinguish between Creator and creature. (19) All creation, obedient to the law of God, bears witness to the eternal Creator. God has come to man's aid in giving the Christian religion. (20) Augustine's varied experience in commending it.

xi, 21—xxiii, 44. The Fall and Redemption of Man.

(21–25) The soul by disobedience is involved in material things and becomes "carnal." By God's grace it can return to God. Even the body can be renewed. (27) Sin is voluntary, and its penalty, which includes moral inability, is just. But salvation is possible. (30) Christ honoured human nature by assuming it in order to liberate it. (31–34) He taught and set the standard of the perfect life. (35 ff.) Sin is loving the lower in place of the higher good, and its cause is the mutability of the creature and disobedience to God's command. (42) Beauty even in transient things, e.g., a poem. (43) So also in

history; only we are involved in history as parts of it, and cannot see it whole. (44) History is a process of purgation, making for the salvation of the righteous and the final damnation of the impious.

xxiv, 45—xxxviii, 71. God's Methods of winning men from the Temporal to the Eternal. A. Authority (45-51).

B. Reason (52-71).

A. Authority. (45) Authority prior in time to reason. (46) Belongs to those who call us to worship one God, for unity is supreme. (47) Miracles necessary at the beginning of the Church but not now. (48) Five stages of the natural life of the individual. (49) Seven stages of the spiritual life, i.e., putting off "the old man" and putting on "the new man." (50) World history from Adam to the Judgment; Two classes of men, the regenerate and the impious. Their final destiny. (51) The economy of the divine education of the human race in Israel and in the Church.

B. Reason. (52) Life superior to the inanimate. (53) Reason superior to Life. (54-58) Above reason is the ideal world; Truth, the eternal law, God. (59-64) Difficulty in getting men to transcend sense-knowledge. (68-69) Hence all idolatry, and worse still, the worship of the vices. (71) The Three Temptations of Christ show how vices are to be overcome.

xxxix, 72—liv, 106. Reason sees the created universe as pointing to God. (72) Vestiges of truth everywhere, even in bodily pleasures. Things enjoyed are good; evil only as compared with what is better. (73) Even to know that one doubts, is the beginning of truth. (74) There is good in all material processes even the lowest. (76) The universe as a whole is beautiful. Even a worm has a beauty of its own. (79) Number in all things. (84) The desire to excel is good; even pride is a perverted imitation of almighty God. (85 ff.) The desire to be unconquered has good in it, especially if what is desired is to be unconquered by vice. By loving men as they ought to be loved we conquer anger, jealousy and partiality. (94) Curiosity is a perversion of the laudable desire to know the truth. Idle curiosity is sin. But the desire to know God and the meaning of Scripture is entirely good and the way of salvation. (106) The Five Talents in the parable are the five senses. When they are well used an extra talent is given, i.e., power to understand eternal things.

lv, 107-113. Final Exhortation to the Worship of the One True God.

## *Of True Religion*

### THE TEXT

i, 1. The way of the good and blessed life is to be found entirely in the true religion wherein one God is worshipped and acknowledged with purest piety to be the beginning of all existing things, originating, perfecting and containing the universe. Thus it becomes easy to detect the error of the peoples who have preferred to worship many gods rather than the true God and Lord of all things, because their wise men whom they call philosophers used to have schools in disagreement one with another, while all made common use of the temples. The peoples and the priests knew quite well how divergent were the views of the philosophers concerning the nature of the gods, for none shrank from publicly professing his opinion, and indeed each endeavoured as far as he could to persuade everybody. And yet all of them with their co-sectaries, in spite of their diverse and mutually hostile opinions, came to the common religious rites, none saying them nay. Now the question is not, Whose opinion was nearest to the truth? But one thing, so far as I can see, is abundantly clear. What the philosophers observed along with the people in the way of religious rites was something quite different from what they defended in private, or even in the hearing of the people.

ii, 2. Socrates is said to have been somewhat bolder than the others. He swore by a dog or a stone or any other object that happened to be near him or came to hand, so to speak, when he was to take an oath. I suppose he knew how many natural objects, produced and governed by divine providence, are much better than the works of human artificers, and therefore worthier of divine honours than are the images which are worshipped in the temples. Not that dogs and stones were rightly to be



worshipped by wise men; but that in this way all who had intelligence might understand how sunk in superstition men are. He wanted to show that an oath of this kind did represent an advance though not a very great one. If men were ashamed to take this step, they might at least see how shameful it was to remain in the still baser condition of religious practice to which they were accustomed. At the same time those who supposed that the visible world was the supreme God were given to realize their turpitude, for they were taught that any stone might be rightly worshipped as a particle of God most high. If they saw that that was offensive, they might change their minds and seek the one God who alone is superior to our minds, and by whom clearly every soul and the whole world has been created. Plato afterwards wrote all this down, making it pleasant to read rather than potent to persuade. These men were not fit to change the minds of their fellow-citizens, and convert them from idolatrous superstition and worldly vanity to the true worship of the true God. Thus Socrates himself venerated images along with his people, and after his condemnation and death no one dared to swear by a dog or to call a stone Jupiter. These things were merely recorded and handed down to memory. Whether this was due to fear of punishment or to the influence of the times it is not for me to judge.

iii, 3. This, however, I will say with complete confidence, in spite of all who love so obstinately the books of the philosophers. In Christian times there can be no doubt at all as to which religion is to be received and held fast, and as to where is the way that leads to truth and beatitude. Suppose Plato were alive and would not spurn a question I would put to him; or rather suppose one of his own disciples, who lived at the same time as he did, had addressed him thus: "You have persuaded me that truth is seen not with the bodily eyes but by the pure mind, and that any soul that cleaves to truth is thereby made happy and perfect. Nothing hinders the perception of truth more than a life devoted to lusts, and the false images of sensible things, derived from the sensible world and impressed on us by the agency of the body, which beget various opinions and errors. Therefore the mind has to be healed so that it may behold the immutable form of things which remains ever the same, preserving its beauty unchanged and unchangeable, knowing no spatial distance or temporal variation, abiding absolutely one and the same. Men do not believe in its existence, though it alone truly and supremely exists. Other things are born, die, are dissolved

or broken up. But so far as they do exist they have existence from the eternal God, being created by his truth. To the rational and intellectual soul is given to enjoy the contemplation of his eternity, and by that contemplation it is armed and equipped so that it may obtain eternal life. So long as it is weakened by love of things that come to be and pass away, or by pain at losing them, so long as it is devoted to the custom of this life and to the bodily senses, and becomes vain among vain images, it laughs at those who say that there is something which cannot be seen by the eyes, or conjured up by any phantasm, but can be beheld by the mind alone, by the intelligence. You, my master, have persuaded me to believe these things. Now, if some great and divine man should arise to persuade the peoples that such things were to be at least believed if they could not grasp them with the mind, or that those who could grasp them should not allow themselves to be implicated in the depraved opinions of the multitude or to be overborne by vulgar errors, would you not judge that such a man is worthy of divine honours?" I believe Plato's answer would be: "That could not be done by man, unless the very virtue and wisdom of God delivered him from natural environment, illumined him from his cradle not by human teaching but by personal illumination, honoured him with such grace, strengthened him with such firmness and exalted him with such majesty, that he should be able to despise all that wicked men desire, to suffer all that they dread, to do all that they marvel at, and so with the greatest love and authority to convert the human race to so sound a faith. But it is needless to ask me about the honours that would be due to such a man. It is easy to calculate what honours are due to the wisdom of God. Being the bearer and instrument of the wisdom of God on behalf of the true salvation of the human race, such a man would have earned a place all his own, a place above all humanity."

4. Now this very thing has come to pass. It is celebrated in books and documents. From one particular region of the earth in which alone the one God was worshipped and where alone such a man could be born, chosen men were sent throughout the entire world, and by their virtues and words have kindled the fires of the divine love. Their sound teaching has been confirmed and they have left to posterity a world illumined. But not to speak of ancient history, which anyone may refuse to believe, to-day throughout the nations and peoples the proclamation is made: "In the beginning was the Word, and the



Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God, and all things were made by him, and without him was nothing made" (John 1:1). In order that men may receive the Word, love him, and enjoy him so that the soul may be healed and the eye of the mind receive power to use the light, to the greedy it is declared: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19). To the wanton it is said: "He who sows in the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. He who sows in the spirit shall of the spirit reap eternal life" (Gal. 6:8). To the proud it is said: "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased and whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11). To the wrathful it is said: "Thou hast received a blow. Turn the other cheek" (Matt. 5:39). To those who strive it is said: "Love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44). To the superstitious: "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). To the curious: "Look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4:18). Finally, to all it is said: "Love not the world nor the things which are in the world. For everything that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the ambition of this world" (I John 2:15).

5. These things are read to the peoples throughout all the earth and are listened to most gladly and with veneration. After all the Christian blood shed, after all the burnings and crucifixions of the martyrs, fertilized by these things churches have sprung up as far afield as among barbarian nations. That thousands of young men and maidens condemn marriage and live in chastity causes no one surprise. Plato might have suggested that, but he so dreaded the perverse opinion of his times that he is said to have given in to nature and declared continence to be no sin. Views are accepted which it was once monstrous to maintain, even as it is monstrous now to dispute them. All over the inhabited world the Christian rites are entrusted to men who are willing to make profession and to undertake the obligations required. Every day the precepts of Christianity are read in the churches and expounded by the priests. Those who try to fulfil them beat their breasts in contrition. Multitudes enter upon this way of life from every race, forsaking the riches

and honours of the present world, desirous of dedicating their whole life to the one most high God. Islands once deserted and many lands formerly left in solitude are filled with monks. In cities and towns, castles and villages, country places and private estates, there is openly preached and practised such a renunciation of earthly things and conversion to the one true God that daily throughout the entire world with almost one voice the human race makes response: Lift up your hearts to the Lord. Why, then, do we still admiringly yearn for the darkness of yesterday, and look for divine oracles in the entrails of dead cattle? Why, when it comes to disputation, are we so eager to mouth the name of Plato rather than to have the truth in our hearts?

iv, 6. Those who think it a vain or even a wicked thing to despise the world of sense, and to subject the soul to God most high that he may purge it with virtue, must be refuted with a different argument; if indeed they are worth disputing with. But those who admit that that is a good ideal to be pursued should acknowledge God and submit to him who has brought it to pass that all nations now are persuaded that these things ought to be believed. They would themselves have brought this to pass if they had had the power. Seeing they had not the power, they cannot avoid the charge of envy. Let them, then, submit to him who has brought it to pass. Let them not be prevented by inquisitiveness or by vain-glory from recognizing the gap that subsists between the timid guesses of the few and the obvious salvation and correction of whole peoples. If Plato and the rest of them, in whose names men glory, were to come to life again and find the churches full and the temples empty, and that the human race was being called away from desire for temporal and transient goods to spiritual and intelligible goods and to the hope of eternal life, and was actually giving its attention to these things, they would perhaps say (if they really were the men they are said to have been): That is what we did not dare to preach to the people. We preferred to yield to popular custom rather than to bring the people over to our way of thinking and living.

7. So if these men could live their lives again to-day, they would see by whose authority measures are best taken for man's salvation, and, with the change of a few words and sentiments, they would become Christians, as many Platonists of recent times have done. If they would not admit this or do this, but remained in their pride and envy, I know not whether it would

be possible for them, encumbered with these rags and bird-lime, to resort to the things they once said were to be sought and striven for. I do not know whether such great men would have been prevented by the other vice which prevents present-day pagans, who now concern us, from accepting the Christian salvation, for indeed it is utterly puerile. I mean, of course, their curiosity in inquiring at demons.

v, 8. However philosophers may boast, anyone can easily understand that religion is not to be sought from them. For they take part in the religious rites of their fellow-citizens, but in their schools teach divergent and contrary opinions about the nature of their gods and of the chief good, as the multitude can testify. If we could see this one great vice healed by the Christian discipline, no one should deny that that would be an achievement worthy of all possible praise. Innumerable heresies that turn aside from the rule of Christianity testify that men are not admitted to sacramental communion who think and endeavour to persuade others to think otherwise of God the Father, of his wisdom and of the divine gift [the Holy Spirit] than as the truth demands. So it is taught and believed as a chief point in man's salvation that philosophy, i.e., the pursuit of wisdom, cannot be quite divorced from religion, for those whose doctrine we do not approve do not share in *our* sacramental rites.

9. There is little to be surprised at in this in the case of men who have chosen to have different religious rites from ours such as the Ophites whoever they may be, or the Manichaeans and others. It is more noticeable in the case of those who celebrate similar religious rites but differ from us in doctrine and are more vigorous in defending their errors than careful to have them corrected. These are excluded from Catholic communion and from participation in our rites in spite of their similarity. They have deserved to have names of their own and separate meetings, being different not only in matters of words, but also because of their superstition; like the Photinians, the Arians and many others. It is another matter with those who have caused schisms. The Lord's threshing-floor might have kept them as chaff until the time of the last winnowing, had they not in their levity been carried off by the wind of pride, and separated from us of their own accord. The Jews, it is true, worship the one omnipotent God, but they expect from him only temporal and visible goods. Being too secure they were unwilling to observe in their own Scriptures the indications of a new people of God arising out of humble estate, and so they remained in "the old

man." This being so, religion is to be sought neither in the confusion of the pagans, nor in the offscourings of the heretics, nor in the insipidity of schismatics, nor in the blindness of the Jews, but only among those who are called Catholic or orthodox Christians, that is, guardians of truth and followers of right.

vi, 10. This Catholic Church, strongly and widely spread throughout the world, makes use of all who err, to correct them if they are willing to be aroused, and to assist its own progress. It makes use of the nations as material for its operations, of heretics to try its own doctrine, of schismatics to prove its stability, of the Jews as a foil to its own beauty. Some it invites, others it excludes, some it leaves behind, others it leads. To all it gives power to participate in the grace of God, whether they are as yet to be formed or reformed, admitted for the first time or gathered in anew. Its own carnal members, i.e., those whose lives or opinions are carnal, it tolerates as chaff by which the corn is protected on the floor until it is separated from its covering. On this floor everyone voluntarily makes himself either corn or chaff. Therefore every man's sin or error is tolerated until he finds an accuser or defends his wicked opinion with pertinacious animosity. Those who are excluded return by way of penitence, or in baleful liberty sink into wickedness as a warning to us to be diligent; or they cause schisms to exercise our patience; or they beget a heresy to try our intelligence or to quicken it. By such ways carnal Christians leave us, for they could neither be corrected nor endured.

11. Often, too, divine providence permits even good men to be driven from the congregation of Christ by the turbulent seditions of carnal men. When for the sake of the peace of the Church they patiently endure that insult or injury, and attempt no novelties in the way of heresy or schism, they will teach men how God is to be served with a true disposition and with great and sincere charity. The intention of such men is to return when the tumult has subsided. But if that is not permitted because the storm continues or because a fiercer one might be stirred up by their return, they hold fast to their purpose to look to the good even of those responsible for the tumults and commotions that drove them out. They form no separate conventicles of their own, but defend to the death and assist by their testimony the faith which they know is preached in the Catholic Church. These the Father who seeth in secret crowns secretly. It appears that this is a rare kind of Christian, but examples are not lacking. Indeed there are more than can be believed. So divine

providence uses all kinds of men as examples for the oversight of souls and for the building up of his spiritual people.

vii, 12. A few years ago, my dear Romanianus, I promised to write down for you my sentiments concerning true religion. I think the time has now come to do so. In view of the love wherewith I am bound to you I can no longer allow your eager questions to run on endlessly. Repudiating all who do not carry philosophy into religious observance or philosophize in a religious spirit; those also who wax proud in wicked opinions or some other cause of dissension and so deviate from the Rule of Faith and from the communion of the Catholic Church; and those who refuse to own the light of the Holy Scripture and the grace of the spiritual people of God, which we call the New Testament—all of whom I have censured as briefly as I could—we must hold fast the Christian religion and the communion of the Church which is Catholic, and is called Catholic not only by its own members but also by all its enemies. Whether they will or no, heretics and schismatics use no other name for it than the name of Catholic, when they speak of it not among themselves but with outsiders. They cannot make themselves understood unless they designate it by this name which is in universal use.

13. In following this religion our chief concern is with the prophetic history of the dispensation of divine providence in time—what God has done for the salvation of the human race, renewing and restoring it unto eternal life. When once this is believed, a way of life agreeable to the divine commandments will purge the mind and make it fit to perceive spiritual things which are neither past nor future but abide ever the same, liable to no change. There is one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When this Trinity is known as far as it can be in this life, it is perceived without the slightest doubt that every creature, intellectual, animal and corporeal, derives such existence as it has from that same creative Trinity, has its own form, and is subject to the most perfect order. It is not as if the Father were understood to have made one part of creation, the Son another, and the Holy Spirit another, but the Father through the Son in the gift of the Holy Spirit together made all things and every particular thing. For every thing, substance, essence or nature, or whatever better word there may be, possesses at once these three qualities: it is a particular thing; it is distinguished from other things by its own proper form; and it does not transgress the order of nature.

viii, 14. When this is known it will be as clear as it can be to men that all things are subject by necessary, indefeasible and just laws to their Lord God. Hence all those things which to begin with we simply believed, following authority only, we come to understand. Partly we see them as certain, partly as possible and fitting, and we become sorry for those who do not believe them, and have preferred to mock at us for believing rather than to share our belief. The Holy Incarnation, the birth from a virgin, the death of the Son of God for us, his resurrection from the dead, ascension into heaven and sitting at the right hand of the Father, the forgiveness of sins, the day of judgment, the resurrection of the body are not merely believed, when the eternity of the Trinity and the mutability of created things are known. They are also judged to be part and parcel of the mercy of the most high God, which he has shown towards the human race.

15. It has been truly said: "There must be many heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (I Cor. 11:19). Let us also make use of that gift of divine providence. Men become heretics who would have no less held wrong opinions even within the Church. Now that they are outside they do us more good, not by teaching the truth, for they do not know it, but by provoking carnal Catholics to seek the truth and spiritual Catholics to expound it. There are in the Holy Church innumerable men approved by God, but they do not become manifest among us so long as we are delighted with the darkness of our ignorance, and prefer to sleep rather than to behold the light of truth. So, many are awakened from sleep by the heretics, so that they may see God's light and be glad. Let us therefore use even heretics, not to approve their errors, but to assert the Catholic discipline against their wiles, and to become more vigilant and cautious, even if we cannot recall them to salvation.

ix, 16. I believe that God will lend us his aid so that Scripture, being read by good men inspired by piety, may avail not against one false and bad opinion only but against all. But chiefly it is set against those who think that there are two natures or substances at war with one another, each with its own principle. Some things they like and others they dislike, and they will have God to be the author of the things they like, but not of those they dislike. When they cannot overcome temptation and are snared in carnal traps, they think there are two souls in one body, one from God and sharing his nature, the other from

the race of darkness which God neither begat, nor made, nor produced, nor cast from him; which has its own independent life, its territory, its offspring and living things, in short its kingdom and unbegotten principle. At a certain time it rebelled against God, and God, having no other resource and finding no other means of resisting the enemy, under dire necessity, sent the good soul hither, a particle of his substance. They fondly imagine that the enemy was subdued and the world fabricated by this soul becoming mixed up with the elements of darkness.

17. I am not now refuting their opinions, partly because I have already done so and partly because I intend to do so again, if God permit. In this work I am showing as far as I can with the arguments God deigns to supply, how secure the Catholic faith is against them, and how the things which move men to give in to their opinions need not disturb the mind. You know my mind very well, and I want you above all to believe firmly that I do not make this solemn declaration with an arrogance which ought to be avoided. I say, whatever error is to be found in this book it alone is to be attributed to me. Whatever is truly and suitably expounded I owe entirely to God, the giver of all good gifts.

x, 18. Let it be clearly understood that there could have been no error in religion had not the soul worshipped in place of its God either a soul or a body or some phantasm of its own, possibly two of these together or all of them at once. In this life the soul should have frankly accepted the temporal condition of human society but should have directed its regard to eternal things and worshipped the one God without whose changeless permanence no mutable thing could have any abiding existence. Anyone who studies his own emotions can learn that the soul is mutable, not in space certainly but in time. That body is mutable both in space and time is easy for anyone to observe. Phantasms are nothing but figments of corporeal shapes appearing to bodily sense. It is the easiest thing in the world to commit them to memory as they appear or, by thinking about them, to divide or multiply, contract or expand, set in order or disturb, or give them any kind of shape. But when truth is being sought it is difficult to be on one's guard against them and to avoid them.

19. Do not, then, let us serve the creature rather than the Creator, or become vain in our thoughts. That is the rule of perfect religion. If we cleave to the eternal Creator we must neces-

sarily be somehow affected by eternity. But because the soul, implicated in and overwhelmed by its sins, cannot by itself see and grasp this truth, if in human experience there were no intermediate stage whereby man might strive to rise above his earthly life and reach likeness to God, God in his ineffable mercy by a temporal dispensation has used the mutable creation, obedient however to his eternal laws, to remind the soul of its original and perfect nature, and so has come to the aid of individual men and indeed of the whole human race. That is the Christian religion in our times. To know and follow it is the most secure and most certain way of salvation.

20. This religion can be defended against loquacious persons and expounded to seekers in many ways. Omnipotent God may himself show the truth, or he may use good angels or men to assist men of good will to behold and grasp the truth. Everyone uses the method which he sees to be suitable to those with whom he has to do. I have given much consideration for a long time to the nature of the people I have met with either as carping critics or as genuine seekers of the truth. I have also considered my own case both when I was a critic and when I was a seeker; and I have come to the conclusion that this is the method I must use. Hold fast whatever truth you have been able to grasp, and attribute it to the Catholic Church. Reject what is false and pardon me who am but a man. What is doubtful believe until either reason teaches or authority lays down that it is to be rejected or that it is true, or that it has to be believed always. Listen to what follows as diligently and as piously as you can. For God helps men like that.

xi, 21. There is no life which is not of God, for God is supreme life and the fount of life. No life is evil as life but only as it tends to death. Life knows no death save wickedness [*nequitia*] which derives its name from nothingness [*ne quidquam*]. For this reason wicked men are called men of no worth. A life, therefore, which by voluntary defect falls away from him who made it, whose essence it enjoyed, and, contrary to the law of God, seeks to enjoy bodily objects which God made to be inferior to it, tends to nothingness. This is wickedness, but not because the body as such is nothing. A corporeal object has some concord between its parts, otherwise it could not exist at all. Therefore it was made by him who is the head of all concord. A corporeal object enjoys a certain degree of peace, due to its having form. Without that it would be nothing. Therefore he is the creator of matter, from whom all peace comes, and who is

the uncreated and most perfect form. Matter participates in something belonging to the ideal world, otherwise it would not be matter. To ask, therefore, who created matter is to ask for him who is supreme in the ideal world. For every idea comes from him. Who is he, then, save the one God, the one truth, the one salvation of all, the first and highest essence from which all that exists derives existence as such? For all existence as such is good.

22. For that reason death does not come from God. "God did not create death, nor does he take pleasure in the destruction of the living" (Wisdom 1:13). The highest essence imparts existence to all that exists. That is why it is called essence. Death imparts no actual existence to anything which has died. If it is really dead it has indubitably been reduced to nothingness. For things die only in so far as they have a decreasing part in existence. That can be more briefly put in this way: things die according as they become less. Matter is less than any kind of life, since it is life that keeps even the tiniest quantity of matter together in any thing, whether it be the life that governs any particular living thing, or that which governs the entire universe of natural things. Matter is therefore subject to death, and is thereby nearer to nothingness. Life which delights in material joys and neglects God tends to nothingness and is thereby iniquity.

xii, 23. In this way life becomes earthly and carnal. So long as it is so it will not possess the kingdom of God, and what it loves will be snatched from it. It loves what, being matter, is less than life, and, on account of the sinfulness of so doing, the beloved object becomes corruptible, is dissolved and lost to its lover, even as it, in loving a material thing, has abandoned God. It neglected his precepts: Eat this and do not eat that. Therefore it is punished; for by loving inferior things it is given a place among the inferior creatures, being deprived of its pleasures and afflicted with grief. What is bodily grief but the sudden loss of integrity in something which the soul has made a bad use of, so rendering it liable to corruption? And what is spiritual grief but to lose mutable things which the soul enjoyed or hoped to be able to enjoy? This covers the whole range of evil, i.e., sin and its penalty.

24. If the soul, while it continues in the course of human life, overcomes the desires which it has fed to its own undoing by enjoying mortal things, and believes that it has the aid of God's grace enabling it to overcome them, if it serves God with the mind and a good will, it will undoubtedly be restored, and will

return from the mutable many to the immutable One. It will be re-formed by the Wisdom which is not formed but has formed all things, and will enjoy God through the spirit, which is the gift of God. It becomes "spiritual man, judging all things and judged of none," "loving the Lord its God with all its heart and all its soul and all its mind, and loving its neighbour not carnally but as itself. He loves himself spiritually who loves God with all that lives within him. On these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:40).

25. The consequence will be that after the death of the body, which we owe to the primal sin, in its own time and order the body will be restored to its pristine stability; but it will owe its stability not to itself but to the soul whose stability is in God. For the soul too owes its stability not to itself but to God whom it enjoys. Thus it has an ampler life than the body. For the body lives by the soul and the soul by the immutable truth, who is the only Son of God. So even the body lives by the Son of God, because all things live by him. By God's gift, given to the soul, i.e., the Holy Spirit, not only does the soul, which receives it, become sound and peaceful and holy, but the body also will be vivified and will be cleansed completely. The Master himself said: "Cleanse that which is within and that which is without shall be clean" (Matt. 23:26). And the apostle says: "He shall quicken your mortal bodies on account of the Spirit that abideth in you." (Rom. 8:11). Take away sin, and sin's penalty goes too. And where is evil? "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Being overcomes nothingness, and so death is swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. 15:54-55).

xiii, 26. The evil angel, who is called the devil, will have no power over the sanctified. Even he, so far as he is angel, is not evil, but only so far as he has been perverted by his own will. We must admit that even angels are mutable if God alone is immutable. By willing to love God rather than themselves angels abide firm and stable in him and enjoy his majesty, being gladly subject to him alone. The bad angel loved himself more than God, refused to be subject to God, swelled with pride, came short of supreme being and fell. He became less than he had been, because, in wishing to enjoy his own power rather than God's, he wished to enjoy what was less. He never had supreme existence for that belongs to God alone, but he had an ampler existence than he has now, when he enjoyed that which supremely is. His present existence is not evil *quâ* existence, but so far as it is less ample than it formerly was. To that extent he



tends towards extinction. It is no marvel that his loss occasioned poverty, and poverty envy, which is the truly diabolical characteristic of the devil.

xiv, 27. If the defect we call sin overtook a man against his will, like a fever, the penalty which follows the sinner and is called condemnation would rightly seem to be unjust. But in fact sin is so much a voluntary evil that it is not sin at all unless it is voluntary. This is so obvious that no one denies it, either of the handful of the learned or of the mass of the unlearned. We must either say that no sin has been committed or confess that it has been willingly committed. No one can rightly deny that a soul has sinned who admits that it can be corrected by penitence, that the penitent should be pardoned, or that he who continues in sin is condemned by the just law of God. Lastly if it is not by the exercise of will that we do wrong, no one at all is to be censured or warned. If you take away censure and warning the Christian law and the whole discipline of religion is necessarily abolished. Therefore, it is by the will that sin is committed. And since there is no doubt that sins are committed, I cannot see that it can be doubted that souls have free choice in willing. God judged that men would serve him better if they served him freely. That could not be so if they served him by necessity and not by free will.

28. The angels accordingly serve God freely. That is to their advantage, not God's. God needs no good thing from others, for all good comes from himself. What is begotten of him is equally divine, begotten not made. Things which are made need his good, i.e., the chief good, the supreme essence. They become less when by sin they are less attracted to him. But they are never entirely separated from him. Otherwise they would not exist at all. Movements of the soul are the affections, depending on the will. Bodily movements are movements in space. Man is said to have been persuaded by the wicked angel, but even so it was his will that consented. If he had consented by necessity, he would have been held guilty of no sin.

xv, 29. The human body was perfect of its kind before man sinned, but after he had sinned it became weak and mortal. Though that was the just punishment for sin, nevertheless it showed more of the clemency of the Lord than of his severity. We are thus admonished that we ought to turn our love from bodily pleasures to the eternal essence of truth. The beauty of justice is in complete accord with the grace of loving-kindness, seeing that we who were deceived by the sweetness of inferior

goods should be taught by the bitterness of penalties. For divine providence has so moderated our punishment that even in this corruptible body it is permitted to us to work towards righteousness, to lay aside all pride and submit to God alone, not to trust in ourselves but to commit ourselves to be ruled and defended by him alone. So with God's guidance a man of good will can turn the troubles of this present life to the advantage of courage. Among abounding pleasures and temporal prosperity, he may prove and strengthen temperance. In temptations he may sharpen his prudence, that he may not only not be led into them, but may also become more vigilant and more eager in his love of truth which alone never deceives.

xvi, 30. To heal souls God adopts all kinds of means suitable to the times which are ordered by his marvellous wisdom. I must not speak of these, or at least they must be spoken of only among the pious and the perfect. But in no way did he show greater loving-kindness in his dealings with the human race for its good, than when the Wisdom of God, his only Son, co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father, deigned to assume human nature; when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. For thus he showed to carnal people, given over to bodily sense and unable with the mind to behold the truth, how lofty a place among creatures belonged to human nature, in that he appeared to men not merely visibly—for he could have done that in some ethereal body adapted to our weak powers of vision—but as a true man. The assuming of our nature was to be also its liberation. And that no one should perchance suppose that the creator of sex despised sex, he became a man born of a woman.

31. He did nothing by violence, but everything by persuasion and warning. The old servitude was past and the day of liberty had dawned and man was fitly and helpfully taught how he had been created with free will. By his miracles he, being God, produced faith in God, and by his passion, in the human nature he had assumed, he furthered respect for human nature. Speaking to the multitudes as God he refused to recognize his mother when her coming was announced, and yet, as the Gospel says, he was obedient to his parents (Matt. 12:48, Luke 2:51). In his doctrine the God appeared, and the Man in the various stages of his life. When, as God, he was about to turn water into wine, he said: "Woman, depart from me; what have I to do with thee? My hour is not yet come" (John 2:4). But when his hour had come when, as man, he should die, he recognized his mother

from the Cross and commended her to the disciple whom he loved more than the others (John 19:26-27). The peoples to their own destruction sought riches that minister to pleasures: He determined to be poor. They panted for honours and empires: He refused to be made a king. They thought it a great boon to have sons after the flesh. He scorned marriage and offspring. In their great pride they dreaded insults: He bore with insults of every kind. They thought injuries were not to be endured: what greater injury can there be than that a just and innocent man should be condemned. They execrated bodily pain: He was beaten and tortured. They feared to die: He was condemned to death. They thought a cross the most shameful form of death: He was crucified. All the things which men unrighteously desired to possess, he did without and so made them of no account. All the things which men sought to avoid and so deviated from the search for truth, he endured and so robbed them of their power over us. There is no sin that men can commit which is not either a seeking of what he avoided, or an avoiding of what he bore.

32. His whole life on earth as Man, in the humanity he designed to assume, was an education in morals. His resurrection from the dead showed that nothing of human nature can perish, for all is safe with God. It showed also how all things serve the Creator either for the punishment of sin or for the liberation of man, and how the body can serve the soul when the soul is subject to God. When the body perfectly obeys the soul and the soul perfectly serves God, not only is there no evil substance, for that there can never be, but, better still, substance cannot be affected by evil, for it can be so affected only by sin or its punishment. This natural discipline is worthy of the complete faith of less intelligent Christians, and for intelligent Christians it is free from all error.

xvii, 33. This method of teaching fulfils the rule of all rational discipline. For as it teaches partly quite openly and partly by similitudes in word, deed and sacrament, it is adapted to the complete instruction and exercise of the soul. The exposition of mysteries is guided by what is clearly stated. If there was nothing that could not be understood with perfect ease, there would be no studious search for truth and no pleasure in finding it. If there were sacraments in Scripture, and if they were not signs and tokens of truth, action would not be properly related to knowledge. Piety begins with fear and is perfected in love. So in the time of servitude under the old Law the people were

constrained by fear and burdened with many sacraments. That was advantageous for them in that they might desire the grace of God which the prophets foretold would come. When it came, the wisdom of God having assumed human nature and called us into liberty, few most salutary sacraments were appointed to maintain the society of the Christian people, i.e., of the multitude of those set free to serve the one God. Many things which were imposed upon the Hebrew people, i.e., a multitude bound by Law under the same God, are no longer observed in practice, but they remain valid for faith and are susceptible of (allegorical) interpretation. They do not now bind in servile bonds, but they afford the mind exercise in its freedom.

34. Whoever denies that both Testaments come from the same God for the reason that our people are not bound by the same sacraments as those by which the Jews were bound and still are bound, cannot deny that it would be perfectly just and possible for one father of a family to lay one set of commands upon those for whom he judged a harsher servitude to be useful, and a different set on those whom he deigned to adopt into the position of sons. If the trouble is that the moral precepts under the old Law are lower and in the Gospel higher, and that therefore both cannot come from the same God, whoever thinks in this way may find difficulty in explaining how a single physician prescribes one medicine to weaker patients through his assistants, and another by himself to stronger patients, all to restore health. The art of medicine remains the same and quite unchanged, but it changes its prescriptions for the sick, since the state of their health changes. So divine providence remains entirely without change, but comes to the aid of mutable creatures in various ways, and commands or forbids different things at different times according to the different stages of their disease, whether it be the vice which is the beginning of death, or the final stage when death itself is imminent. In all cases divine providence recalls to its true and essential nature whatever manifests defect, i.e., tends to nothingness, and so strengthens it.

xviii, 35. But you say, Why do they become defective? Because they are mutable. Why are they mutable? Because they have not supreme existence. And why so? Because they are inferior to him who made them. Who made them? He who supremely is. Who is he? God, the immutable Trinity, made them through his supreme wisdom and preserves them by his supreme loving-kindness. Why did he make them? In order that



they might exist. Existence as such is good, and supreme existence is the chief good. From what did he make them? Out of nothing. Whatever is must have some form, and though it be but a minimal good it will be good and will be of God. The highest form is the highest good, and the lowest form is the lowest good. Every good thing is either God or derived from God. Therefore even the lowest form is of God. And the same may be said of species. We rightly praise alike that which has form and that which has species. That out of which God created all things had neither form nor species, and was simply nothing. That which by comparison with perfect things is said to be without form, but which has any form at all, however small or inchoate, is not nothing. It, too, in so far as it has any being at all, is of God.

36. Therefore, if the world was made out of some unformed matter, that matter was made out of absolutely nothing. If it was as yet unformed, still it was at least capable of receiving form. By God's goodness it is "formable." Even capacity for form is good. The author of all good things, who gives form, also gives the capacity for form. All that exists receives existence from God, and that which does not as yet exist but may do so, receives its potential existence from God. In other words, all that is formed receives its form from God, and from him all that is not yet formed receives power to be formed. Nothing has integrity of nature unless it be whole of its kind. From God comes all wholeness as every good thing comes from him.

xix, 37. He whose mental eyes are open and are not darkened or confused by zeal for vain verbal victory, understands easily that all things are good even though they become vitiated and die; whereas vice and death are evil. Vice and death do no damage to anything except by depriving it of soundness, and vice would not be vice if it did no damage. If vice is the opposite of wholeness no doubt wholeness is good. All things are good which have vice opposed to them, and vice vitiates them. Things which are vitiated are therefore good, but are vitiated because they are not supremely good. Because they are good they are of God. Because they are not supremely good they are not God. The good which cannot be vitiated is God. All other good things are of him. They can of themselves be vitiated because by themselves they are nothing. God keeps them from being wholly vitiated, or, if vitiated, makes them whole.

xx, 38. The primal vice of the rational soul is the will to do

what the highest and inmost truth forbids. Thus was man driven from paradise into the present world, i.e., from eternal things to temporal, from abundance to poverty, from strength to weakness. Not, however, from substantial good to substantial evil, for there is no substantial evil; but from eternal good to temporal good, from spiritual to carnal good, from intelligible to sensible good, from the highest to the lowest good. There is therefore a good which it is sin for the rational soul to love because it belongs to a lower order of being. The sin is evil, not the substance that is sinfully loved. The tree was not evil which, we read, was planted in the midst of paradise, but the transgression of the divine command was evil, and as a consequence had its just condemnation. But from the tree which was touched contrary to the prohibition came the power to distinguish between good and evil. When the soul has become involved in its sin, it learns, by paying the penalty, the difference between the precept it refused to obey and the sin which it committed. In this way it learns by suffering to know the evil it did not learn to know by avoiding it. By making comparison between its former and its present state it loves more earnestly the good which it loved too little, as is seen from its failure to obey.

39. Vice in the soul arises from its own doing; and the moral difficulty that ensues from vice is the penalty which it suffers. That is the sum-total of evil. To do and to suffer have nothing to do with substance; hence substance is not evil. Water is not evil, nor is a creature that lives in the air. But to throw oneself voluntarily into water and be suffocated, as the drowned man is, is evil. An iron style which has one part for writing with and another part for making deletions is ingeniously manufactured and beautiful in its own way, and most useful to us. But if one wanted to write with the part intended for making deletions, or to make a deletion with the writing end, one would not cause the style to be evil. One would rightly blame one's own action. Correct the action and where will be the evil? Suppose one were suddenly to turn one's eyes to look at the mid-day sun. The eyes would be dazzled and pained; but neither the sun nor the eyes would for that reason be evil. They are substances. Careless looking at the sun and the disturbance that is its consequence is evil. And there would be no evil if the eyes had been practised and made fit to look at the light. Nor is light evil when the light we see with our eyes is worshipped instead of the light of wisdom which is seen by the mind. The superstition is evil that serves the creature rather than the Creator; and there

would be no such evil if the soul recognized its Creator, subjected itself to him alone, and understood that other things were made subject to it by him.

40. Every corporeal creature, when possessed by a soul that loves God, is a good thing of the lowest order, and beautiful in its own way, for it is held together by form and species. If it is loved by a soul that neglects God, not even so is it evil in itself. But the sin of so loving it brings a penalty to him who so loves it. It involves him in miseries, and feeds him with fallacious pleasures which neither abide nor satisfy, but beget torturing sorrows. Time in all the beauty of its changefulness holds on its appointed course, and the thing desired escapes him who loved it. It torments him by passing beyond his power to sense it, and disturbs his mind with errors. For it makes him suppose that the material object which the flesh had wrongly delighted in, and which he had known through the uncertain senses, was the primal form, when in fact it was the lowest form of all; so that, when he thinks, he believes he understands, being deluded by shadowy phantasms. If he does not hold fast to the whole discipline of divine providence but imagines he does, and tries to resist the flesh, he merely reaches the images of visible things. He vainly excogitates vast spaces of light exactly like ordinary light which he sees has fixed limits here, and promises himself a future habitation there. He does not know that he is still entangled in the lust of the eye, and that he is carrying this world with him in his endeavour to go beyond it. He thinks he has reached another world simply by falsely imagining the bright part of this world infinitely extended. One could do the same not only with light but also with water, wine, honey, gold, silver, even with the flesh, blood and bones of animals, and other like things. There is no bodily object seen singly which cannot in thought be infinitely multiplied, and there is nothing which, as we see it, occupies a small space, which cannot by the same faculty of imagination be infinitely extended. It is very easy to execrate the flesh, but very difficult not to be carnally minded.

xxi, 41. By this perversity of the soul, due to sin and punishment, the whole corporeal creation becomes, as Solomon says: "Vanity of them that are vain, all is vanity. What advantage has man in all his labour which he does under the sun?" (Eccl. 1:2). Not for nothing does he say, "of them that are vain," for if you take away vain persons who pursue that which is last as if it were first, matter will not be vanity but will show its own beauty in its own way, a low type of beauty, of course, but not

deceptive. When man fell away from the unity of God the multitude of temporal forms was distributed among his carnal senses, and his sensibilities were multiplied by the changeful variety. So abundance became laborious, and his needs, if one may say so, became abundant, for he pursues one thing after another, and nothing remains permanently with him. So what with his corn and wine and oil, his needs are so multiplied that he cannot find the one thing needful, a single and unchangeable nature, seeking which he would not err, and attaining which he would cease from grief and pain. For then he would have as a consequence the redemption of his body, which no longer would be corrupted. As it is, the corruption of the body burdens the soul, and its earthly habitation forces it to think of many things; for the humble beauty of material objects is hurried along in the order in which one thing succeeds another. The reason why corporeal beauty is the lowest beauty is that its parts cannot all exist simultaneously. Some things give place and others succeed them, and all together complete the number of temporal forms and make of them a single beauty.

xxii, 42. But all this is not evil because it is transient. A line of poetry is beautiful in its own way though no two syllables can be spoken at the same time. The second cannot be spoken till the first is finished. So in due order the end of the line is reached. When the last syllable is spoken the previous ones are not heard at the same time, and yet along with the preceding ones it makes the form and metrical arrangement complete. The art of versifying is not subject to change with time as if its beauty was made up of measured quantities. It possesses, at one and the same time, all the rules for making the verse which consists of successive syllables of which the later ones follow those which had come earlier. In spite of this the verse is beautiful as exhibiting the faint traces of the beauty which the art of poetry keeps steadfastly and unchangeably.

43. Some perverse persons prefer a verse to the art of versifying, because they set more store by their ears than by their intelligence. So many love temporal things and do not look for divine providence which is the maker and governor of time. Loving temporal things they do not want the things they love to pass away. They are just as absurd as anyone would be who, when a famous poem was being recited, wanted to hear one single syllable all the time. There are no such hearers of poems, but there are multitudes of people who think in this way about historical events. There is no one who cannot easily hear a whole

verse or even a whole poem; but there is no one who can grasp the whole order of the ages. Besides, we are not involved as parts in a poem, but for our sins we are made to be parts of the secular order. The poem is read for us to judge of it. The course of history is made up of our labours. No one who is vanquished in competitive games finds pleasure in them, but they are honourable because of his dishonour. Here is a sort of parable of the truth. For no other reason are we kept from such spectacles than lest we should be deceived by the shadows of things and wander from the things themselves whereof they are shadows. So the condition and government of the universe displeases only impious and damned souls, and, in spite of their misery, it pleases many who are victorious upon earth, or who look on in heaven without any risk. Nothing that is just displeases a just man.

xxiii, 44. Every rational soul is made unhappy by its sins or happy by its well-doing. Every irrational soul yields to one that is more powerful, or obeys one that is better, or is on terms of equality with its equals, exercising rivals, or harming any it has overcome. Every body is obedient to its soul so far as permitted by the merits of the latter or the orderly arrangement of things. There is no evil in the universe, but in individuals there is evil due to their own fault. When the soul has been regenerated by the grace of God and restored to its integrity, and made subject to him alone by whom it was created, its body too will be restored to its original strength, and it will receive power to possess the world, not to be possessed by the world. Then it will have no evil. For the lowly beauty of temporal changes will not involve it, for it will have been raised above change. There will be, as it is written, a New Heaven and a New Earth, and there souls will not have to do their part in toiling, but will reign over the universe. "All things are yours," says the apostle, "and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's" (I Cor. 3:21-23). And again: "The head of the woman is the man, the head of the man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God" (I Cor. 11:3). Accordingly, since the vice of the soul is not its nature but contrary to its nature, and is nothing else than sin and sin's penalty, we understand that no nature, or, if you prefer it, no substance or essence, is evil. Nor does the universe suffer any deformity from the sins and punishments of its soul. Rational substance which is clear of all sin and subject to God dominates other things which are subject to it. But rational substance which has committed sin is appointed to be where it is fitting, so that all things should be glorious, God being the maker and ruler of the

universe. The beauty of the created universe is free from all fault because of these three things—the condemnation of sinners, the proving of the just, and the perfecting of the blessed.

xxiv, 45. The treatment of the soul, which God's providence and ineffable loving-kindness administers, is most beautiful in its steps and stages. There are two different methods, authority and reason. Authority demands belief and prepares man for reason. Reason leads to understanding and knowledge. But reason is not entirely absent from authority, for we have got to consider whom we have to believe, and the highest authority belongs to truth when it is clearly known. But because we dwell among temporal things, and love of them is an obstacle to our reaching eternal things, a kind of temporal medicine, calling not those who know but those who believe back to health, has priority by the order, not of nature or its inherent excellence, but of time. Wherever a man falls there he must lie until he is raised up. So we must strive, by means of the carnal forms which detain us, to come to know those of which carnal sense can bring us no knowledge. And by carnal sense I mean eyes, ears, and other bodily senses. To carnal or corporeal forms boys must necessarily and lovingly adhere, adolescents almost necessarily. But with increasing years the necessity disappears.

xxv, 46. Divine providence not only looks after individuals as it were privately but also after the whole human race publicly. How it deals with individuals God knows, who does it, and they also know, with whom he deals. But how he deals with the human race God has willed to be handed down through history and prophecy. The trustworthiness of temporal things whether past or future can be believed rather than known by the intelligence. It is our duty to consider what men or what books we are to believe in order that we may rightly worship God, wherein lies our sole salvation. Here the first decision must be this: Are we to believe those who summon us to the worship of many gods or those who summon us to worship one God? Who can doubt that we ought rather to follow those who summon us to worship one God, especially since the worshippers of many gods agree that there is one God who rules all things? At least the numerical series begins from the number one. Those, therefore, are to be followed who say that the one most high God is the only true God and is to be worshipped alone. If the truth does not shine out brightly among them, then, but not till then, must we go elsewhere. In the realm of nature there is a presumption of greater authority when all things are

brought into unity. In the human race a multitude has no power unless by consent, i.e., agreement in unity. So in religion the authority of those who summon us to unity ought to be greater and more worthy of being believed.

47. Another thing which must be considered is the dissension that has arisen among men concerning the worship of the one God. We have heard that our predecessors, at a stage in faith on the way from temporal things up to eternal things, followed visible miracles. They could do nothing else. And they did so in such a way that it should not be necessary for those who came after them. When the Catholic Church had been founded and diffused throughout the whole world, on the one hand miracles were not allowed to continue till our time, lest the mind should always seek visible things, and the human race should grow cold by becoming accustomed to things which when they were novelties kindled its faith. On the other hand we must not doubt that those are to be believed who proclaimed miracles, which only a few had actually seen, and yet were able to persuade whole peoples to follow them. At that time the problem was to get people to believe before anyone was fit to reason about divine and invisible things. No human authority is set over the reason of a purified soul, for it is able to arrive at clear truth. But pride does not lead to the perception of truth. If there were no pride there would be no heretics, no schismatics, no circumcised, no worshippers of creatures or of images. If there had not been such classes of opponents before the people was made perfect as promised, truth would be sought much less eagerly.

xxvi, 48. This is the tradition concerning God's temporal dispensation and his providential care for those who by sin had deservedly become mortal. First, consider the nature and education of any individual man who is born. His first age, infancy, is spent in receiving bodily nourishment, and it is to be entirely forgotten when he grows up. Then follows childhood when we begin to have some memories. To this, adolescence succeeds, when nature allows propagation of offspring and fatherhood. After adolescence comes young manhood, which must take part in public duties and be brought under the laws. Now sins are more strictly forbidden, and sinners have to undergo the servile coercion of penalty. In carnal souls this of itself causes more dreadful onsets of lust, and wrong-doing is redoubled. For sin has a double aspect. It is not merely wrong-doing. It is disobedience. After the labours of young manhood, a little peace

is given to old age. But it is an inferior age, lacking in lustre, weak and more subject to disease, and it leads to death. This is the life of man so far as he lives in the body and is bound by desires for temporal things. This is called "the old man" and "the exterior or earthly man," even if he obtain what the vulgar call felicity in a well-ordered earthly city, whether ruled by kings or princes or laws or all of them together. For without these things no people can be well-ordered, not even a people that pursues earthly goods. Even such a people has a measure of beauty of its own.

49. I have described "the old or exterior or earthly man." He may be a moderate man after his kind, or he may transgress the measure of servile justice. Some live thus from the beginning to the end of their days. But some begin in that way, as they necessarily must, but they are reborn inwardly, and with their spiritual strength and increase of wisdom they overcome "the old man" and put him to death, and bring him into subjection to the celestial laws, until after visible death the whole is restored. This is called "the new man," "the inward and heavenly man," whose spiritual ages are marked, not according to years, but according to his spiritual advance. In the first stage he is taught by the rich stores of history which nourish by examples. In the second stage he forgets human affairs and tends towards divine things. He is no longer kept in the bosom of human authority, but step by step by the use of reason he strives to reach the highest unchangeable law. In the third stage he confidently marries carnal appetite to strong reason, and inwardly rejoices in the sweetness of the union. Soul and mind are joined together in chaste union. There is as yet no compulsion to do right, but, even though no one forbids sin, he has no pleasure in sinning. The fourth stage is similar, only now he acts much more firmly, and springs forth as the perfect man, ready to endure and overcome all the persecutions, tempests and billows of this world. In the fifth stage he has peace and tranquillity on all sides. He lives among the abundant resources of the unchangeable realm of supreme ineffable wisdom. The sixth stage is complete transformation into life eternal, a total forgetfulness of temporal life passing into the perfect form which is made according to the image and likeness of God. The seventh is eternal rest and perpetual beatitude with no distinguishable ages. As the end of "the old man" is death, so the end of "the new man" is eternal life. The "old man" is the man of sin, but the "new man" is the man of righteousness.

xxvii, 50. No one doubts that these two lives are related as follows: A man can live the whole of this life as "the old and earthly man." But no one in this life can live as "the new and heavenly man," but must associate with the "old man." For he must begin there, and must so continue till death, though the old grows weaker and the new progresses. Similarly, the entire human race, whose life, like the life of an individual from Adam to the end of the world, is so arranged by the laws of divine providence that it appears divided among two classes. In one of these is the multitude of the impious who bear the image of the earthly man from the beginning to the end of the world. In the other is the succession of the people devoted to the one God. But from Adam to John the Baptist they live the life of the earthly man under a certain form of righteousness. Their history is called the Old Testament having the promise of a kind of earthly kingdom, which is nothing but the image of the new people and the New Testament, with the promise of the kingdom of heaven. Meantime the life of this people begins with the coming of the Lord in humility and goes on till the day of judgment, when he will come in all clearness. After the judgment the "old man" will come to an end, and there will take place the change that betokens the angelic life. For we shall all be raised, but we shall not all be changed (I Cor. 15:51). The pious people will be raised as they transform the remnants of the "old man" that cling to them into the "new man." The impious people who have kept the "old man" from the beginning to the end, will be raised in order to be precipitated into the second death. Those who read diligently can make out the divisions of the ages. They have no horror of tares or chaff. For the impious lives with the pious, and the sinner with the righteous, so that, by comparing the two, men may more eagerly rise to seek perfection.

xxviii, 51. If any of the earthly people at any time had the merit of reaching the illumination of the inward man, he gave to the human race in his day his aid showing it what that age required, hinting by prophecy what it was not opportune to show clearly. Such were the patriarchs and the prophets. So those discover who do not behave like children, but who diligently and piously handle this good and great secret of the divine-human relations. In the time of the new people I see that this has been most carefully provided by great and spiritual men for the nurselings of the Catholic Church. They are not to treat publicly of what they know is not seasonable to be handled before the people. They earnestly feed the multitude of

those who are weak and needy with copious supplies of milky food; and the few who are wise they feed with stronger meats. They speak wisdom among the perfect, but from the carnal and the psychics, though they be "new men," they keep some things back, because they are still children, but they never lie. They do not look to vain honours and vain praise for themselves, but to the advantage of those with whom they have deserved to be associated in this life. This is the law of divine providence that no one is to receive assistance from his superiors to know and grasp the grace of God, unless he is prepared with a pure affection to assist his inferiors to the same. So out of our sin, which our nature committed in the first sinful man, the human race is made the great glory and ornament of the world, and is so properly governed by the provisions of divine providence that the art of God's ineffable healing turns even the foulness of sin into something that has a beauty of its own.

xxix, 52. We have said enough for the present about the benefit of authority. Let us see how far reason can advance from visible to invisible things in its ascent from temporal to eternal things. We should not vainly behold the beauty of the sky, the order of the stars, the brightness of light, the alternations of day and night, the monthly courses of the moon, the fourfold seasons of the year, the meeting of the four elements, the life-force of seeds begetting forms and numbers, and all things that keep their nature and their appropriate measure each in its own kind. In considering these things there should be no exercise of vain and perishing curiosity, but a step should be taken towards immortal things that abide for ever. The first thing to notice is living nature which senses all these things. Because it gives life to the body it must necessarily excel the body. No mass of matter, however great or however bright, is to be held of much account if it is without life. Any living substance is by the law of nature to be preferred to any inanimate substance.

53. No one doubts that irrational animals also live and feel. So in the human mind the most excellent part is not that which perceives sensible objects but that which judges of sensible objects. Many animals see more sharply and have a keener sense of corporeal objects than men have. But to judge of bodies belongs not to life that is merely sentient, but to life that has also the power of reasoning. Where the animals are lacking, there is our excellence. It is easy to see that that which judges is superior to that which is judged. For living reason judges not only of sensible things but also of the senses themselves. It knows why



the oar dipped in water must appear crooked though it is really straight, and why the eyes must see it in that way. Ocular vision can only tell us that it is so but cannot judge. Wherefore it is manifest that as the life of sense excels the body the life of reason excels both.

xxx, 54. If rational life judges by itself alone, then there is nothing more excellent. But clearly it is mutable, since it can be skilled at one moment and unskilled at another. The more skilled it is the better it judges, and its skill is in proportion to its participation in some art, discipline or wisdom. Now we must ask what is the nature of an art. By an art in this context I would have you understand not something that is observed by experience but something that is found out by reason. There is nothing very remarkable in knowing that sand and lime bind stones more securely together than mud, or that he who would build elegantly, must put a feature that is to be unique in the middle of the building, and, if there are several features, they must be made to correspond, like with like. That is sense-knowledge, but it is not far from reason and truth. We must indeed inquire what is the cause of our being dissatisfied if two windows are placed not one above the other but side by side, and one of them is greater or less than the other, for they ought to have been equal; while, if they are placed one directly above the other, even though they are unlike, the inequality does not offend us in the same way. Why don't we notice very much how much the one is greater or less than the other? If there are three windows, sense itself seems to demand either that they should not be unequal, or that between the largest and the smallest there should be an intermediate one as much larger than the smallest as it is smaller than the largest. In this way we take counsel with nature, as it were, to see what she approves. And here we must observe how that which displeases us only a little when we simply look at it, is rejected when we compare it with what is better. Thus we discover that art in the popular sense is nothing but the memory of things we have experienced and which have given us pleasure, with the addition of some skilled bodily activity. If you lack the skill you can still judge of the works produced even though you cannot produce them. And the power of judging is much better.

55. In all the arts it is symmetry that gives pleasure, preserving unity and making the whole beautiful. Symmetry demands unity and equality, the similarity of like parts, or the graded arrangements of parts which are dissimilar. But who can

find absolute equality or similarity in bodily objects? Who would venture to say, after due consideration, that any body is truly and simply one? All are changed by passing from form to form or from place to place, and consist of parts each occupying its own place and extended in space. True equality and similitude, true and primal unity, are not perceived by the eye of flesh or by any bodily sense, but are known by the mind. How is equality of any kind demanded in bodies, and how are we convinced that any equality that may be seen there is far different from perfect equality, unless the mind sees that which is perfect? If indeed that which is not made [*facta*] can be called perfect [*perfecta*].

56. All things which are beautiful to the senses, whether they are produced by nature or are worked out by the arts, have a spatial or temporal beauty, as for example the body and its movements. But the equality and unity which are known only by the mind, and according to which the mind judges of corporeal beauty by the intermediary of the senses, are not extended in space or unstable in time. It would be wrong to say that a wheel can be judged to be round by this standard, while a little jar cannot, or a jar can but a penny cannot. So in the case of times and motions of corporeal things, it would be ridiculous to say that years can be judged by any standard to be of equal length but months cannot, or that months can and days cannot. Whether a proper movement occupies a larger space of time or is measured by hours or brief minutes, all are judged by one and the same standard of changeless equality. If greater and smaller movements and spatial figures are all judged according to the same standard of equality or similitude or fitness, the standard is greater than all of them in potency. But it is neither greater nor less in a spatial or a temporal sense. If it were greater we should not use the whole of it to judge things that are less. If it were smaller we could not use it to judge things that are larger. As it is, we use the absolute standard of squareness to judge the squareness of a market-place, a stone, a table or a gem. And we use the absolute standard of equality to judge the movements of the feet of a running ant and those of an elephant on the march. Who then can doubt that it is neither greater nor less in a spatial or temporal sense, but in potency surpasses all else? This standard of all the arts is absolutely unchangeable, but the human mind, which is given the power to see the standard, can suffer the mutability of error. Clearly, then, the standard which is called truth is higher than our minds.