

De Principiis (Book I)

Origen

Early Church (pre-Nicene) · Ante-Nicene · Treatise

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INTRODUCTION

Opening the first book of a work composed at Alexandria around 229, the reader encounters the earliest sustained attempt to organize Christian doctrine into a coherent system — God, the rational creatures, the world, and Scripture treated in order, from stated first principles. The argument here begins by prying believers loose from the assumption that God is a body, working outward from the scriptural images of fire, spirit, and light toward a wholly incorporeal deity known only through the Son. Origen's speculative reach on preexistent souls and final restoration would later draw the condemnations of 553, and much of the treatise survives only in Rufinus's softened Latin, a fact worth keeping in mind as one reads. Expect disciplined philosophical argument in the Alexandrian mode — exegesis and metaphysics pressed together, more probing than settled.

De Principiis (Book I)

Chapter 1. On God.

1\ I know that some will attempt to say that, even according to the declarations of our own Scriptures, God is a body, because in the writings of Moses they find it said, that our God is a consuming fire; and in the Gospel according to John, that God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Fire and spirit, according to them, are to be regarded as nothing else than a body. Now, I should like to ask these persons what they have to say respecting that passage where it is declared that God is light; as John writes in his Epistle, God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. Truly He is that light which illuminates the whole understanding of those who are capable of receiving truth, as is said in the thirty-sixth Psalm, In Your light we shall see light. For what other light of God can be named, in which any one sees light, save an influence of God, by which a man, being enlightened, either thoroughly sees the truth of all things, or comes to know God Himself, who is called the truth? Such is the meaning of the expression, In Your light we shall see light; i.e., in Your word and wisdom which is Your Son, in Himself we shall see You the Father. Because He is called light, shall He be supposed to have any resemblance to the light of the sun? Or how should there be the slightest ground for imagining, that from that corporeal light any one could derive the cause of knowledge, and come to the understanding of the truth?

2\ If, then, they acquiesce in our assertion, which reason itself has demonstrated, regarding the nature of light, and acknowledge that God cannot be understood to be a body in the sense that light is, similar reasoning will hold true of the expression a consuming fire. For what will God consume in respect of His being fire? Shall He be thought to consume material substance, as wood, or hay, or stubble? And what in this view can be called worthy of the glory of God, if He be a fire, consuming materials of that kind? But let us reflect that God does indeed consume and utterly destroy; that He consumes evil thoughts, wicked actions, and sinful desires, when they find their way into the minds of believers; and that, inhabiting along with His Son those souls which are rendered capable of receiving His word and wisdom, according to His own declaration, I and the Father shall come, and We shall make our abode with him? He makes them, after all their vices and passions have been consumed, a holy temple, worthy of Himself. Those, moreover, who, on account of the expression God is a Spirit, think that He is a body, are to be answered, I think, in the following manner. It is the custom of sacred Scripture, when it wishes to designate anything opposed to this gross and solid body, to call it spirit, as in the expression, The letter kills, but the spirit gives life, where there can be no doubt that by letter are meant bodily things, and by spirit intellectual things, which we also term spiritual. The apostle, moreover, says, Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart: nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. For so long as any one is not converted to a spiritual understanding, a veil is placed over his heart, with which veil, i.e., a gross understanding, Scripture itself is said or thought to be covered: and this is the meaning of the statement that a veil was placed over the countenance of Moses when he spoke to the people, i.e., when the law was publicly read aloud. But if we turn to the Lord, where also is the word of God, and where the Holy Spirit reveals spiritual knowledge, then the veil is taken away, and with unveiled face we shall behold the glory of the Lord in the holy Scriptures.

3\ And since many saints participate in the Holy Spirit, He cannot therefore be understood to be a body, which being divided into corporeal parts, is partaken of by each one of the saints; but He is manifestly

a sanctifying power, in which all are said to have a share who have deserved to be sanctified by His grace. And in order that what we say may be more easily understood, let us take an illustration from things very dissimilar. There are many persons who take a part in the science or art of medicine: are we therefore to suppose that those who do so take to themselves the particles of some body called medicine, which is placed before them, and in this way participate in the same? Or must we not rather understand that all who with quick and trained minds come to understand the art and discipline itself, may be said to be partakers of the art of healing? But these are not to be deemed altogether parallel instances in a comparison of medicine to the Holy Spirit, as they have been adduced only to establish that that is not necessarily to be considered a body, a share in which is possessed by many individuals. For the Holy Spirit differs widely from the method or science of medicine, in respect that the Holy Spirit is an intellectual existence and subsists and exists in a peculiar manner, whereas medicine is not at all of that nature.

4\). But we must pass on to the language of the Gospel itself, in which it is declared that God is a Spirit, and where we have to show how that is to be understood agreeably to what we have stated. For let us inquire on what occasion these words were spoken by the Saviour, before whom He uttered them, and what was the subject of investigation. We find, without any doubt, that He spoke these words to the Samaritan woman, saying to her, who thought, agreeably to the Samaritan view, that God ought to be worshipped on Mount Gerizim, that God is a Spirit. For the Samaritan woman, believing Him to be a Jew, was inquiring of Him whether God ought to be worshipped in Jerusalem or on this mountain; and her words were, All our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where we ought to worship. To this opinion of the Samaritan woman, therefore, who imagined that God was less rightly or duly worshipped, according to the privileges of the different localities, either by the Jews in Jerusalem or by the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim, the Saviour answered that he who would follow the Lord must lay aside all preference for particular places, and thus expressed Himself: The hour is coming when neither in Jerusalem nor on this mountain shall the true worshippers worship the Father. God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. And observe how logically He has joined together the spirit and the truth: He called God a Spirit, that He might distinguish Him from bodies; and He named Him the truth, to distinguish Him from a shadow or an image. For they who worshipped in Jerusalem worshipped God neither in truth nor in spirit, being in subjection to the shadow or image of heavenly things; and such also was the case with those who worshipped on Mount Gerizim.

5\). Having refuted, then, as well as we could, every notion which might suggest that we were to think of God as in any degree corporeal, we go on to say that, according to strict truth, God is incomprehensible, and incapable of being measured. For whatever be the knowledge which we are able to obtain of God, either by perception or reflection, we must of necessity believe that He is by many degrees far better than what we perceive Him to be. For, as if we were to see any one unable to bear a spark of light, or the flame of a very small lamp, and were desirous to acquaint such a one, whose vision could not admit a greater degree of light than what we have stated, with the brightness and splendour of the sun, would it not be necessary to tell him that the splendour of the sun was unspeakably and incalculably better and more glorious than all this light which he saw? So our understanding, when shut in by the fetters

of flesh and blood, and rendered, on account of its participation in such material substances, duller and more obtuse, although, in comparison with our bodily nature, it is esteemed to be far superior, yet, in its efforts to examine and behold incorporeal things, scarcely holds the place of a spark or lamp. But among all intelligent, that is, incorporeal beings, what is so superior to all others — so unspeakably and incalculably superior — as God, whose nature cannot be grasped or seen by the power of any human understanding, even the purest and brightest?

6\.

But it will not appear absurd if we employ another similitude to make the matter clearer. Our eyes frequently cannot look upon the nature of the light itself — that is, upon the substance of the sun; but when we behold his splendour or his rays pouring in, perhaps, through windows or some small openings to admit the light, we can reflect how great is the supply and source of the light of the body. So, in like manner, the works of Divine Providence and the plan of this whole world are a sort of rays, as it were, of the nature of God, in comparison with His real substance and being. As, therefore, our understanding is unable of itself to behold God Himself as He is, it knows the Father of the world from the beauty of His works and the comeliness of His creatures. God, therefore, is not to be thought of as being either a body or as existing in a body, but as an uncompounded intellectual nature, admitting within Himself no addition of any kind; so that He cannot be believed to have within him a greater and a less, but is such that He is in all parts ~~and so~~ to speak, ~~and so~~ the mind and source from which all intellectual nature or mind takes its beginning. But mind, for its movements or operations, needs no physical space, nor sensible magnitude, nor bodily shape, nor color, nor any other of those adjuncts which are the properties of body or matter. Wherefore that simple and wholly intellectual nature can admit of no delay or hesitation in its movements or operations, lest the simplicity of the divine nature should appear to be circumscribed or in some degree hampered by such adjuncts, and lest that which is the beginning of all things should be found composite and differing, and that which ought to be free from all bodily intermixture, in virtue of being the one sole species of Deity, so to speak, should prove, instead of being one, to consist of many things. That mind, moreover, does not require space in order to carry on its movements agreeably to its nature, is certain from observation of our own mind. For if the mind abide within its own limits, and sustain no injury from any cause, it will never, from diversity of situation, be retarded in the discharge of its functions; nor, on the other hand, does it gain any addition or increase of mobility from the nature of particular places. And here, if any one were to object, for example, that among those who are at sea, and tossed by its waves the mind is considerably less vigorous than it is wont to be on land, we are to believe that it is in this state, not from diversity of situation, but from the commotion or disturbance of the body to which the mind is joined or attached. For it seems to be contrary to nature, as it were, for a human body to live at sea; and for that reason it appears, by a sort of inequality of its own, to enter upon its mental operations in a slovenly and irregular manner, and to perform the acts of the intellect with a duller sense, in as great degree as those who on land are prostrated with fever; with respect to whom it is certain, that if the mind do not discharge its functions as well as before, in consequence of the attack of disease, the blame is to be laid not upon the place, but upon the bodily malady, by which the body, being disturbed and disordered, renders to the mind its customary services under by no means the well-known and natural conditions: for we human beings are animals composed of a union of body and soul, and in this way (only) was it possible for us to live upon the earth. But God, who is the beginning of all things, is not to be regarded as a composite being, lest perchance there should be found to exist elements prior to the beginning itself, out of which everything is composed, whatever that be which is called composite. Neither does the mind require bodily magnitude in order to perform any act or movement; as when the eye by gazing upon bodies of larger size is dilated, but is compressed and contracted in order to see smaller objects. The mind, indeed, requires magnitude of an intellectual kind, because it grows, not after the fashion of a body, but after that of intelligence. For the mind is not enlarged, together with the body, by means of corporal

additions, up to the twentieth or thirtieth year of life; but the intellect is sharpened by exercises of learning, and the powers implanted within it for intelligent purposes are called forth; and it is rendered capable of greater intellectual efforts, not being increased by bodily additions, but carefully polished by learned exercises. But these it cannot receive immediately from boyhood, or from birth, because the framework of limbs which the mind employs as organs for exercising itself is weak and feeble; and it is unable to bear the weight of its own operations, or to exhibit a capacity for receiving training.

7\.. If there are any now who think that the mind itself and the soul is a body, I wish they would tell me by way of answer how it receives reasons and assertions on subjects of such importance — of such difficulty and such subtlety? Whence does it derive the power of memory? And whence comes the contemplation of invisible things? How does the body possess the faculty of understanding incorporeal existences? How does a bodily nature investigate the processes of the various arts, and contemplate the reasons of things? How, also, is it able to perceive and understand divine truths, which are manifestly incorporeal? Unless, indeed, some should happen to be of opinion, that as the very bodily shape and form of the ears or eyes contributes something to hearing and to sight, and as the individual members, formed by God, have some adaptation, even from the very quality of their form, to the end for which they were naturally appointed; so also he may think that the shape of the soul or mind is to be understood as if created purposely and designedly for perceiving and understanding individual things, and for being set in motion by vital movements. I do not perceive, however, who shall be able to describe or state what is the color of the mind, in respect of its being mind, and acting as an intelligent existence. Moreover, in confirmation and explanation of what we have already advanced regarding the mind or soul — to the effect that it is better than the whole bodily nature — the following remarks may be added. There underlies every bodily sense a certain peculiar sensible substance, on which the bodily sense exerts itself. For example, colors, form, size, underlie vision; voices and sound, the sense of hearing; odours, good or bad, that of smell; savours, that of taste; heat or cold, hardness or softness, roughness or smoothness, that of touch. Now, of those senses enumerated above, it is manifest to all that the sense of mind is much the best. How, then, should it not appear absurd, that under those senses which are inferior, substances should have been placed on which to exert their powers, but that under this power, which is far better than any other, i.e., the sense of mind, nothing at all of the nature of a substance should be placed, but that a power of an intellectual nature should be an accident, or consequent upon bodies? Those who assert this, doubtless do so to the disparagement of that better substance which is within them; nay, by so doing, they even do wrong to God Himself, when they imagine He may be understood by means of a bodily nature, so that according to their view He is a body, and that which may be understood or perceived by means of a body; and they are unwilling to have it understood that the mind bears a certain relationship to God, of whom the mind itself is an intellectual image, and that by means of this it may come to some knowledge of the nature of divinity, especially if it be purified and separated from bodily matter.

8\.. But perhaps these declarations may seem to have less weight with those who wish to be instructed in divine things out of the holy Scriptures, and who seek to have it proved to them from that source how the nature of God surpasses the nature of bodies. See, therefore, if the apostle does not say the same thing, when, speaking of Christ, he declares, that He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of

every creature. Not, as some suppose, that the nature of God is visible to some and invisible to others: for the apostle does not say the image of God invisible to men or invisible to sinners, but with unvarying constancy pronounces on the nature of God in these words: the image of the invisible God. Moreover, John, in his Gospel, when asserting that no one has seen God at any time, manifestly declares to all who are capable of understanding, that there is no nature to which God is visible: not as if, He were a being who was visible by nature, and merely escaped or baffled the view of a frailer creature, but because by the nature of His being it is impossible for Him to be seen. And if you should ask of me what is my opinion regarding the Only-begotten Himself, whether the nature of God, which is naturally invisible, be not visible even to Him, let not such a question appear to you at once to be either absurd or impious, because we shall give you a logical reason. It is one thing to see, and another to know: to see and to be seen is a property of bodies; to know and to be known, an attribute of intellectual being. Whatever, therefore, is a property of bodies, cannot be predicated either of the Father or of the Son; but what belongs to the nature of deity is common to the Father and the Son. Finally, even He Himself, in the Gospel, did not say that no one has seen the Father, save the Son, nor any one the Son, save the Father; but His words are: No one knows the Son, save the Father; nor any one the Father, save the Son. By which it is clearly shown, that whatever among bodily natures is called seeing and being seen, is termed, between the Father and the Son, a knowing and being known, by means of the power of knowledge, not by the frailness of the sense of sight. Because, then, neither seeing nor being seen can be properly applied to an incorporeal and invisible nature, neither is the Father, in the Gospel, said to be seen by the Son, nor the Son by the Father, but the one is said to be known by the other.

9\ Here, if any one lay before us the passage where it is said, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, from that very passage, in my opinion, will our position derive additional strength; for what else is seeing God in heart, but, according to our exposition as above, understanding and knowing Him with the mind? For the names of the organs of sense are frequently applied to the soul, so that it may be said to see with the eyes of the heart, i.e., to perform an intellectual act by means of the power of intelligence. So also it is said to hear with the ears when it perceives the deeper meaning of a statement. So also we say that it makes use of teeth, when it chews and eats the bread of life which comes down from heaven. In like manner, also, it is said to employ the services of other members, which are transferred from their bodily appellations, and applied to the powers of the soul, according to the words of Solomon, You will find a divine sense. For he knew that there were within us two kinds of senses: the one mortal, corruptible, human; the other immortal and intellectual, which he now termed divine. By this divine sense, therefore, not of the eyes, but of a pure heart, which is the mind, God may be seen by those who are worthy. For you will certainly find in all the Scriptures, both old and new, the term heart repeatedly used instead of mind, i.e., intellectual power. In this manner, therefore, although far below the dignity of the subject, have we spoken of the nature of God, as those who understand it under the limitation of the human understanding. In the next place, let us see what is meant by the name of Christ.

Chapter 2. On Christ.

1\). In the first place, we must note that the nature of that deity which is in Christ in respect of His being the only-begotten Son of God is one thing, and that human nature which He assumed in these last times for the purposes of the dispensation (of grace) is another. And therefore we have first to ascertain what the only-begotten Son of God is, seeing He is called by many different names, according to the circumstances and views of individuals. For He is termed Wisdom, according to the expression of Solomon: The Lord created me — the beginning of His ways, and among His works, before He made any other thing; He founded me before the ages. In the beginning, before He formed the earth, before He brought forth the fountains of waters, before the mountains were made strong, before all the hills, He brought me forth. He is also styled First-born, as the apostle has declared: who is the first-born of every creature. The first-born, however, is not by nature a different person from the Wisdom, but one and the same. Finally, the Apostle Paul says that Christ (is) the power of God and the wisdom of God.

2\). Let no one, however, imagine that we mean anything impersonal when we call Him the wisdom of God; or suppose, for example, that we understand Him to be, not a living being endowed with wisdom, but something which makes men wise, giving itself to, and implanting itself in, the minds of those who are made capable of receiving His virtues and intelligence. If, then, it is once rightly understood that the only-begotten Son of God is His wisdom hypostatically existing, I know not whether our curiosity ought to advance beyond this, or entertain any suspicion that that Q\A\A\A\A\A contains anything of a bodily nature, since everything that is corporeal is distinguished either by form, or color, or magnitude. And who in his sound senses ever sought for form, or color, or size, in wisdom, in respect of its being wisdom? And who that is capable of entertaining reverential thoughts or feelings regarding God, can suppose or believe that God the Father ever existed, even for a moment of time, without having generated this Wisdom? For in that case he must say either that God was unable to generate Wisdom before He produced her, so that He afterwards called into being her who formerly did not exist, or that He possessed the power indeed, but — what cannot be said of God without impiety — was unwilling to use it; both of which suppositions, it is patent to all, are alike absurd and impious: for they amount to this, either that God advanced from a condition of inability to one of ability, or that, although possessed of the power, He concealed it, and delayed the generation of Wisdom. Wherefore we have always held that God is the Father of His only-begotten Son, who was born indeed of Him, and derives from Him what He is, but without any beginning, not only such as may be measured by any divisions of time, but even that which the mind alone can contemplate within itself, or behold, so to speak, with the naked powers of the understanding. And therefore we must believe that Wisdom was generated before any beginning that can be either comprehended or expressed. And since all the creative power of the coming creation was included in this very existence of Wisdom (whether of those things which have an original or of those which have a derived existence), having been formed beforehand and arranged by the power of foreknowledge; on account of these very creatures which had been described, as it were, and prefigured in Wisdom herself, does Wisdom say, in the words of Solomon, that she was created the beginning of the ways of God, inasmuch as she contained within herself either the beginnings, or forms, or species of all creation.

3\ Now, in the same way in which we have understood that Wisdom was the beginning of the ways of God, and is said to be created, forming beforehand and containing within herself the species and beginnings of all creatures, must we understand her to be the Word of God, because of her disclosing to all other beings, i.e., to universal creation, the nature of the mysteries and secrets which are contained within the divine wisdom; and on this account she is called the Word, because she is, as it were, the interpreter of the secrets of the mind. And therefore that language which is found in the Acts of Paul, where it is said that here is the Word a living being, appears to me to be rightly used. John, however, with more sublimity and propriety, says in the beginning of his Gospel, when defining God by a special definition to be the Word, And God was the Word, and this was in the beginning with God. Let him, then, who assigns a beginning to the Word or Wisdom of God, take care that he be not guilty of impiety against the unbegotten Father Himself, seeing he denies that He had always been a Father, and had generated the Word, and had possessed wisdom in all preceding periods, whether they be called times or ages, or anything else that can be so entitled.

4\ This Son, accordingly, is also the truth and life of all things which exist. And with reason. For how could those things which were created live, unless they derived their being from life? Or how could those things which are, truly exist, unless they came down from the truth? Or how could rational beings exist, unless the Word or reason had previously existed? Or how could they be wise, unless there were wisdom? But since it was to come to pass that some also should fall away from life, and bring death upon themselves by their declension — for death is nothing else than a departure from life — and as it was not to follow that those beings which had once been created by God for the enjoyment of life should utterly perish, it was necessary that, before death, there should be in existence such a power as would destroy the coming death, and that there should be a resurrection, the type of which was in our Lord and Saviour, and that this resurrection should have its ground in the wisdom and word and life of God. And then, in the next place, since some of those who were created were not to be always willing to remain unchangeable and unalterable in the calm and moderate enjoyment of the blessings which they possessed, but, in consequence of the good which was in them being theirs not by nature or essence, but by accident, were to be perverted and changed, and to fall away from their position, therefore was the Word and Wisdom of God made the Way. And it was so termed because it leads to the Father those who walk along it.

Whatever, therefore, we have predicated of the wisdom of God, will be appropriately applied and understood of the Son of God, in virtue of His being the Life, and the Word, and the Truth and the Resurrection: for all these titles are derived from His power and operations, and in none of them is there the slightest ground for understanding anything of a corporeal nature which might seem to denote either size, or form, or color; for those children of men which appear among us, or those descendants of other living beings, correspond to the seed of those by whom they were begotten, or derive from those mothers, in whose wombs they are formed and nourished, whatever that is, which they bring into this life, and carry with them when they are born. But it is monstrous and unlawful to compare God the Father, in the generation of His only-begotten Son, and in the substance of the same, to any man or other living thing engaged in such an act; for we must of necessity hold that there is something exceptional and worthy of God which does not admit of any comparison at all, not merely in things, but

which cannot even be conceived by thought or discovered by perception, so that a human mind should be able to apprehend how the unbegotten God is made the Father of the only-begotten Son. Because His generation is as eternal and everlasting as the brilliancy which is produced from the sun. For it is not by receiving the breath of life that He is made a Son, by _any outward act_, but by His own nature.

5\ Let us now ascertain how those statements which we have advanced are supported by the authority of holy Scripture. The Apostle Paul says, that the only-begotten Son is the image of the invisible God, and the first-born of every creature. And when writing to the Hebrews, he says of Him that He is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person. Now, we find in the treatise called the Wisdom of Solomon the following description of the wisdom of God: For she is the breath of the power of God, and the purest efflux of the glory of the Almighty. Nothing that is polluted can therefore come upon her. For she is the splendour of the eternal light, and the stainless mirror of God's working, and the image of His goodness. Now we say, as before, that Wisdom has her existence nowhere else save in Him who is the beginning of all things: from whom also is derived everything that is wise, because He Himself is the only one who is by nature a Son, and is therefore termed the Only-begotten.

6\.. Let us now see how we are to understand the expression invisible image, that we may in this way perceive how God is rightly called the Father of His Son; and let us, in the first place, draw our conclusions from what are customarily called images among men. That is sometimes called an image which is painted or sculptured on some material substance, such as wood or stone; and sometimes a child is called the image of his parent, when the features of the child in no respect belie their resemblance to the father. I think, therefore, that that man who was formed after the image and likeness of God may be fittingly compared to the first illustration. Respecting him, however, we shall see more precisely, God willing, when we come to expound the passage in Genesis. But the image of the Son of God, of whom we are now speaking, may be compared to the second of the above examples, even in respect of this, that He is the invisible image of the invisible God, in the same manner as we say, according to the sacred history, that the image of Adam is his son Seth. The words are, And Adam begot Seth in his own likeness, and after his own image. Now this image contains the unity of nature and substance belonging to Father and Son. For if the Son do, in like manner, all those things which the Father does, then, in virtue of the Son doing all things like the Father, is the image of the Father formed in the Son, who is born of Him, like an act of His will proceeding from the mind. And I am therefore of opinion that the will of the Father ought alone to be sufficient for the existence of that which He wishes to exist. For in the exercise of His will He employs no other way than that which is made known by the counsel of His will. And thus also the existence of the Son is generated by Him. For this point must above all others be maintained by those who allow nothing to be unbegotten, i.e., unborn, save God the Father only. And we must be careful not to fall into the absurdities of those who picture to themselves certain emanations, so as to divide the divine nature into parts, and who divide God the Father as far as they can, since even to entertain the remotest suspicion of such a thing regarding an incorporeal being is not only the height of impiety, but a mark of the greatest folly, it being most remote from any intelligent conception that there should be any physical division of any incorporeal nature. Rather, therefore, as an act of the will proceeds from the understanding, and neither cuts off any part nor is separated or divided from it, so after some such fashion is the Father to be supposed as having begotten the Son, His own image; namely, so that, as He is Himself invisible by nature, He also begot an image that was invisible. For the Son is the Word, and therefore we are not to understand that anything in Him is cognisable by the senses. He is wisdom, and in wisdom there can be no suspicion of anything corporeal. He is the true light, which enlightens every man that comes into this world; but He has nothing in common with the light of this sun. Our Saviour, therefore, is the image of the invisible God, inasmuch as compared with the Father Himself He is the truth: and as compared with us, to whom He reveals the Father, He is the image by which we come to the knowledge of the Father, whom no one knows save the Son, and he to whom the Son is pleased to reveal Him. And the method of revealing Him is through the understanding. For He by whom the Son Himself is understood, understands, as a consequence, the Father also, according to His own words: He that has seen Me, has seen the Father also.

7\.. But since we quoted the language of Paul regarding Christ, where He says of Him that He is the brightness of the glory of God, and the express figure of His person, let us see what idea we are to form of this. According to John, God is light. The only-begotten Son, therefore, is the glory of this light, proceeding inseparably from (God) Himself, as brightness does from light, and illuminating the whole of creation. For, agreeably to what we have already explained as to the manner in which He is

the Way, and conducts to the Father; and in which He is the Word, interpreting the secrets of wisdom, and the mysteries of knowledge, making them known to the rational creation; and is also the Truth, and the Life, and the Resurrection, — in the same way ought we to understand also the meaning of His being the brightness: for it is by its splendour that we understand and feel what light itself is. And this splendour, presenting itself gently and softly to the frail and weak eyes of mortals, and gradually training, as it were, and accustoming them to bear the brightness of the light, when it has put away from them every hindrance and obstruction to vision, according to the Lord's own precept, Cast forth the beam out of your eye, renders them capable of enduring the splendour of the light, being made in this respect also a sort of mediator between men and the light.

8\ But since He is called by the apostle not only the brightness of His glory, but also the express figure of His person or _subsistence_, it does not seem idle to inquire how there can be said to be another figure of that person besides the person of God Himself, whatever be the meaning of person and subsistence. Consider, then, whether the Son of God, seeing He is His Word and Wisdom, and alone knows the Father, and reveals Him to whom He will (i.e., to those who are capable of receiving His word and wisdom), may not, in regard of this very point of making God to be understood and acknowledged, be called the figure of His person and subsistence; that is, when that Wisdom, which desires to make known to others the means by which God is acknowledged and understood by them, describes Himself first of all, it may by so doing be called the express figure of the person of God. In order, however, to arrive at a fuller understanding of the manner in which the Saviour is the figure of the person or subsistence of God, let us take an instance, which, although it does not describe the subject of which we are treating either fully or appropriately, may nevertheless be seen to be employed for this purpose only, to show that the Son of God, who was in the form of God, divesting Himself (of His glory), makes it His object, by this very divesting of Himself, to demonstrate to us the fullness of His deity. For instance, suppose that there were a statue of so enormous a size as to fill the whole world, and which on that account could be seen by no one; and that another statue were formed altogether resembling it in the shape of the limbs, and in the features of the countenance, and in form and material, but without the same immensity of size, so that those who were unable to behold the one of enormous proportions, should, on seeing the latter, acknowledge that they had seen the former, because it preserved all the features of its limbs and countenance, and even the very form and material, so closely, as to be altogether undistinguishable from it; by some such similitude, the Son of God, divesting Himself of His equality with the Father, and showing to us the way to the knowledge of Him, is made the express image of His person: so that we, who were unable to look upon the glory of that marvellous light when placed in the greatness of His Godhead, may, by His being made to us brightness, obtain the means of beholding the divine light by looking upon the brightness. This comparison, of course, of statues, as belonging to material things, is employed for no other purpose than to show that the Son of God, though placed in the very insignificant form of a human body, in consequence of the resemblance of His works and power to the Father, showed that there was in Him an immense and invisible greatness, inasmuch as He said to His disciples, He who sees Me, sees the Father also; and, I and the Father are one. And to these belong also the similar expression, The Father is in Me, and I in the Father.

9\). Let us see now what is the meaning of the expression which is found in the Wisdom of Solomon, where it is said of Wisdom that it is a kind of breath of the power of God, and the purest efflux of the glory of the Omnipotent, and the splendour of eternal light, and the spotless mirror of the working or power of God, and the image of His goodness. These, then, are the definitions which he gives of God, pointing out by each one of them certain attributes which belong to the Wisdom of God, calling wisdom the power, and the glory, and the everlasting light, and the working, and the goodness of God. He does not say, however, that wisdom is the breath of the glory of the Almighty, nor of the everlasting light, nor of the working of the Father, nor of His goodness, for it was not appropriate that breath should be ascribed to any one of these; but, with all propriety, he says that wisdom is the breath of the power of God. Now, by the power of God is to be understood that by which He is strong; by which He appoints, restrains, and governs all things visible and invisible; which is sufficient for all those things which He rules over in His providence; among all which He is present, as if one individual. And although the breath of all this mighty and immeasurable power, and the vigour itself produced, so to speak, by its own existence, proceed from the power itself, as the will does from the mind, yet even this will of God is nevertheless made to become the power of God.

Another power accordingly is produced, which exists with properties of its own — a kind of breath, as Scripture says, of the primal and unbegotten power of God, deriving from Him its being, and never at any time non-existent. For if any one were to assert that it did not formerly exist, but came afterwards into existence, let him explain the reason why the Father, who gave it being, did not do so before. And if he shall grant that there was once a beginning, when that breath proceeded from the power of God, we shall ask him again, why not even before the beginning, which he has allowed; and in this way, ever demanding an earlier date, and going upwards with our interrogations, we shall arrive at this conclusion, that as God was always possessed of power and will, there never was any reason of propriety or otherwise, why He may not have always possessed that blessing which He desired. By which it is shown that that breath of God's power always existed, having no beginning save God Himself. Nor was it fitting that there should be any other beginning save God Himself, from whom it derives its birth. And according to the expression of the apostle, that Christ is the power of God, it ought to be termed not only the breath of the power of God, but power out of power.

10\.

Let us now examine the expression, Wisdom is the purest efflux of the glory of the Almighty; and let us first consider what the glory of the omnipotent God is, and then we shall also understand what is its efflux. As no one can be a father without having a son, nor a master without possessing a servant, so even God cannot be called omnipotent unless there exist those over whom He may exercise His power; and therefore, that God may be shown to be almighty, it is necessary that all things should exist. For if any one would have some ages or portions of time, or whatever else he likes to call them, to have passed away, while those things which were afterwards made did not yet exist, he would undoubtedly show that during those ages or periods God was not omnipotent, but became so afterwards, viz., from the time that He began to have persons over whom to exercise power; and in this way He will appear to have received a certain increase, and to have risen from a lower to a higher condition; since there can be no doubt that it is better for Him to be omnipotent than not to be so. And now how can it appear otherwise than absurd, that when God possessed none of those things which it was befitting for Him to possess, He should afterwards, by a kind of progress, come into the possession of them? But if there never was a time when He was not omnipotent, of necessity those things by which He receives that title must also exist; and He must always have had those over whom He exercised power, and which were governed by Him either as king or prince, of which we shall speak more fully in the proper place, when we come to discuss the subject of the creatures. But even now I think it necessary to drop a word, although cursorily, of warning, since the question before us is, how wisdom is the purest efflux of the glory of the Almighty, lest any one should think that the title of Omnipotent was anterior in God to the birth of Wisdom, through whom He is called Father, seeing that Wisdom, which is the Son of God, is the purest efflux of the glory of the Almighty. Let him who is inclined to entertain this suspicion hear the undoubted declaration of Scripture pronouncing, In wisdom have You made them all, and the teaching of the Gospel, that by Him were all things made, and without Him nothing was made; and let him understand from this that the title of Omnipotent in God cannot be older than that of Father; for it is through the Son that the Father is almighty. But from the expression glory of the Almighty, of which glory Wisdom is the efflux, this is to be understood, that Wisdom, through which God is called omnipotent, has a share in the glory of the Almighty. For through Wisdom, which is Christ, God has power over all things, not only by the authority of a ruler, but also by the voluntary obedience of subjects. And that you may understand that the omnipotence of Father and Son is one and the same, as God and the Lord are one and the same with the Father, listen to the manner in which John speaks in the Apocalypse: Thus says the Lord God, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. For who else was He which is to come than Christ? And as no one ought to be offended, seeing God is the Father, that the Saviour is also God; so also, since the Father is called omnipotent, no one ought to be offended that the Son of God is also called omnipotent. For in this way will that saying be true which He utters to the Father, All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now, if all things which are the Father's are also Christ's, certainly among those things which exist is the omnipotence of the Father; and doubtless the only-begotten Son ought to be omnipotent, that the Son also may have all things which the Father possesses. And I am glorified in them, He declares. For at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that the Lord Jesus is in the glory of God the Father. Therefore He is the efflux of the glory of God in this respect, that He is omnipotent—the pure and limpid Wisdom herself

— glorified as the efflux of omnipotence or of glory. And that it may be more clearly understood what the glory of omnipotence is, we shall add the following. God the Father is omnipotent, because He has power over all things, i.e., over heaven and earth, sun, moon, and stars, and all things in them. And He exercises His power over them by means of His Word, because at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, both of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth. And if every knee is bent to Jesus, then, without doubt, it is Jesus to whom all things are subject, and He it is who exercises power over all things, and through whom all things are subject to the Father; for through wisdom, i.e., by word and reason, not by force and necessity, are all things subject. And therefore His glory consists in this very thing, that He possesses all things, and this is the purest and most limpid glory of omnipotence, that by reason and wisdom, not by force and necessity, all things are subject. Now the purest and most limpid glory of wisdom is a convenient expression to distinguish it from that glory which cannot be called pure and sincere. But every nature which is convertible and changeable, although glorified in the works of righteousness or wisdom, yet by the fact that righteousness or wisdom are accidental qualities, and because that which is accidental may also fall away, its glory cannot be called sincere and pure. But the Wisdom of God, which is His only-begotten Son, being in all respects incapable of change or alteration, and every good quality in Him being essential, and such as cannot be changed and converted, His glory is therefore declared to be pure and sincere.

11\ In the third place, wisdom is called the splendour of eternal light. The force of this expression we have explained in the preceding pages, when we introduced the similitude of the sun and the splendour of its rays, and showed to the best of our power how this should be understood. To what we then said we shall add only the following remark. That is properly termed everlasting or eternal which neither had a beginning of existence, nor can ever cease to be what it is. And this is the idea conveyed by John when he says that God is light. Now His wisdom is the splendour of that light, not only in respect of its being light, but also of being everlasting light, so that His wisdom is eternal and everlasting splendour. If this be fully understood, it clearly shows that the existence of the Son is derived from the Father but not in time, nor from any other beginning, except, as we have said, from God Himself.

12\ But wisdom is also called the stainless mirror of the ~~power~~^{working} of God. We must first understand, then, what the working of the power of God is. It is a sort of vigour, so to speak, by which God operates either in creation, or in providence, or in judgment, or in the disposal and arrangement of individual things, each in its season. For as the image formed in a mirror unerringly reflects all the acts and movements of him who gazes on it, so would Wisdom have herself to be understood when she is called the stainless mirror of the power and working of the Father: as the Lord Jesus Christ also, who is the Wisdom of God, declares of Himself when He says, The works which the Father does, these also does the Son likewise. And again He says, that the Son cannot do anything of Himself, save what He sees the Father do. As therefore the Son in no respect differs from the Father in the power of His works, and the work of the Son is not a different thing from that of the Father, but one and the same movement, so to speak, is in all things, He therefore named Him a stainless mirror, that by such an expression it might be understood that there is no dissimilarity whatever between the Son and the Father. How, indeed, can those things which are said by some to be done after the manner in which a disciple resembles or imitates his master, or according to the view that those things are made by the Son in bodily material

which were first formed by the Father in their spiritual essence, agree with the declarations of Scripture, seeing in the Gospel the Son is said to do not similar things, but the _same_ things in a similar manner?

13\). It remains that we inquire what is the image of His goodness; and here, I think, we must understand the same thing which we expressed a little ago, in speaking of the image formed by the mirror. For He is the primal goodness, doubtless, out of which the Son is born, who, being in all respects the image of the Father, may certainly also be called with propriety the image of His goodness. For there is no other second goodness existing in the Son, save that which is in the Father. And therefore also the Saviour Himself rightly says in the Gospel, There is none good save one only, God the Father, that by such an expression it may be understood that the Son is not of a different goodness, but of that only which exists in the Father, of whom He is rightly termed the image, because He proceeds from no other source but from that primal goodness, lest there might appear to be in the Son a different goodness from that which is in the Father. Nor is there any dissimilarity or difference of goodness in the Son. And therefore it is not to be imagined that there is a kind of blasphemy, as it were, in the words, There is none good save one only, God the Father, as if thereby it may be supposed to be denied that either Christ or the Holy Spirit was good. But, as we have already said, the primal goodness is to be understood as residing in God the Father, from whom both the Son is born and the Holy Spirit proceeds, retaining within them, without any doubt, the nature of that goodness which is in the source whence they are derived. And if there be any other things which in Scripture are called good, whether angel, or man, or servant, or treasure, or a good heart, or a good tree, all these are so termed catachrestically, having in them an accidental, not an essential goodness. But it would require both much time and labour to collect together all the titles of the Son of God, such, e.g., as the true light, or the door, or the righteousness, or the sanctification, or the redemption, and countless others; and to show for what reasons each one of them is so given. Satisfied, therefore, with what we have already advanced, we go on with our inquiries into those other matters which follow.

Chapter 3. On the Holy Spirit.

1\ The next point is to investigate as briefly as possible the subject of the Holy Spirit. All who perceive, in whatever manner, the existence of Providence, confess that God, who created and disposed all things, is unbegotten, and recognise Him as the parent of the universe. Now, that to Him belongs a Son, is a statement not made by us only; although it may seem a sufficiently marvellous and incredible assertion to those who have a reputation as philosophers among Greeks and Barbarians, by some of whom, however, an idea of His existence seems to have been entertained, in their acknowledging that all things were created by the word or reason of God. We, however, in conformity with our belief in that doctrine, which we assuredly hold to be divinely inspired, believe that it is possible in no other way to explain and bring within the reach of human knowledge this higher and diviner reason as the Son of God, than by means of those Scriptures alone which were inspired by the Holy Spirit, i.e., the Gospels and Epistles, and the law and the prophets, according to the declaration of Christ Himself. Of the existence of the Holy Spirit no one indeed could entertain any suspicion, save those who were familiar with the law and the prophets, or those who profess a belief in Christ. For although no one is able to speak with certainty of God the Father, it is nevertheless possible for some knowledge of Him to be gained by means of the visible creation and the natural feelings of the human mind; and it is possible, moreover, for such knowledge to be confined from the sacred Scriptures. But with respect to the Son of God, although no one knows the Son save the Father, yet it is from sacred Scripture also that the human mind is taught how to think of the Son; and that not only from the New, but also from the Old Testament, by means of those things which, although done by the saints, are figuratively referred to Christ, and from which both His divine nature, and that human nature which was assumed by Him, may be discovered.

2\ Now, what the Holy Spirit is, we are taught in many passages of Scripture, as by David in the fifty-first Psalm, when he says, And take not Your Holy Spirit from me; and by Daniel, where it is said, The Holy Spirit which is in you. And in the New Testament we have abundant testimonies, as when the Holy Spirit is described as having descended upon Christ, and when the Lord breathed upon His apostles after His resurrection, saying, Receive the Holy Spirit; and the saying of the angel to Mary, The Holy Spirit will come upon you; the declaration by Paul, that no one can call Jesus Lord, save by the Holy Spirit. In the Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit was given by the imposition of the apostles' hands in baptism. From all which we learn that the person of the Holy Spirit was of such authority and dignity, that saving baptism was not complete except by the authority of the most excellent Trinity of them all, i.e., by the naming of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and by joining to the unbegotten God the Father, and to His only-begotten Son, the name also of the Holy Spirit. Who, then, is not amazed at the exceeding majesty of the Holy Spirit, when he hears that he who speaks a word against the Son of man may hope for forgiveness; but that he who is guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit has not forgiveness, either in the present world or in that which is to come!

3\ That all things were created by God, and that there is no creature which exists but has derived from Him its being, is established from many declarations of Scripture; those assertions being refuted and rejected which are falsely alleged by some respecting the existence either of a matter co-eternal with God, or of unbegotten souls, in which they would have it that God implanted not so much the power of existence, as equality and order. For even in that little treatise called _The Pastor or Angel of

Repentance_, composed by Hermas, we have the following: First of all, believe that there is one God who created and arranged all things; who, when nothing formerly existed, caused all things to be; who Himself contains all things, but Himself is contained by none. And in the Book of Enoch also we have similar descriptions. But up to the present time we have been able to find no statement in holy Scripture in which the Holy Spirit could be said to be made or created, not even in the way in which we have shown above that the divine wisdom is spoken of by Solomon, or in which those expressions which we have discussed are to be understood of the life, or the word, or the other appellations of the Son of God. The Spirit of God, therefore, which was borne upon the waters, as is written in the beginning of the creation of the world, is, I am of opinion, no other than the Holy Spirit, so far as I can understand; as indeed we have shown in our exposition of the passages themselves, not according to the historical, but according to the spiritual method of interpretation.

4\). Some indeed of our predecessors have observed, that in the New Testament, whenever the Spirit is named without that adjunct which denotes quality, the Holy Spirit is to be understood; as e.g., in the expression, Now the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace; and, Seeing you began in the Spirit, are you now made perfect in the flesh? We are of opinion that this distinction may be observed in the Old Testament also, as when it is said, He that gives His Spirit to the people who are upon the earth, and Spirit to them who walk thereon. For, without doubt, every one who walks upon the earth (i.e., earthly and corporeal beings) is a partaker also of the Holy Spirit, receiving it from God. My Hebrew master also used to say that those two seraphim in Isaiah, which are described as having each six wings, and calling to one another, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts, were to be understood of the only-begotten Son of God and of the Holy Spirit. And we think that that expression also which occurs in the hymn of Habakkuk, In the midst either of the two living things, or of the two lives, You will be known, ought to be understood of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. For all knowledge of the Father is obtained by revelation of the Son through the Holy Spirit, so that both of these beings which, according to the prophet, are called either living things or lives, exist as the ground of the knowledge of God the Father. For as it is said of the Son, that no one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him, the same also is said by the apostle of the Holy Spirit, when He declares, God has revealed them to us by His Holy Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God; and again in the Gospel, when the Saviour, speaking of the divine and profounder parts of His teaching, which His disciples were not yet able to receive, thus addresses them: I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now; but when the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, has come, He will teach you all things, and will bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you. We must understand, therefore, that as the Son, who alone knows the Father, reveals Him to whom He will, so the Holy Spirit, who alone searches the deep things of God, reveals God to whom He will: For the Spirit blows where He lists. We are not, however, to suppose that the Spirit derives His knowledge through revelation from the Son. For if the Holy Spirit knows the Father through the Son's revelation, He passes from a state of ignorance into one of knowledge; but it is alike impious and foolish to confess the Holy Spirit, and yet to ascribe to Him ignorance. For even although something else existed before the Holy Spirit, it was not by progressive advancement that He came to be the Holy Spirit; as if any one should venture to say, that at the time when He was not yet the Holy Spirit He was ignorant of the Father, but that after He had received knowledge He was made the Holy Spirit. For if this were the case, the Holy

Spirit would never be reckoned in the Unity of the Trinity, i.e., along with the unchangeable Father and His Son, unless He had always been the Holy Spirit. When we use, indeed, such terms as always or was, or any other designation of time, they are not to be taken absolutely, but with due allowance; for while the significations of these words relate to time, and those subjects of which we speak are spoken of by a stretch of language as existing in time, they nevertheless surpass in their real nature all conception of the finite understanding.

5\ Nevertheless it seems proper to inquire what is the reason why he who is regenerated by God unto salvation has to do both with Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and does not obtain salvation unless with the co-operation of the entire Trinity; and why it is impossible to become partaker of the Father or the Son without the Holy Spirit. And in discussing these subjects, it will undoubtedly be necessary to describe the special working of the Holy Spirit, and of the Father and the Son. I am of opinion, then, that the working of the Father and of the Son takes place as well in saints as in sinners, in rational beings and in dumb animals; nay, even in those things which are without life, and in all things universally which exist; but that the operation of the Holy Spirit does not take place at all in those things which are without life, or in those which, although living, are yet dumb; nay, is not found even in those who are endued indeed with reason, but are engaged in evil courses, and not at all converted to a better life. In those persons alone do I think that the operation of the Holy Spirit takes place, who are already turning to a better life, and walking along the way which leads to Jesus Christ, i.e., who are engaged in the performance of good actions, and who abide in God.

6\.. That the working of the Father and the Son operates both in saints and in sinners, is manifest from this, that all who are rational beings are partakers of the word, i.e., of reason, and by this means bear certain seeds, implanted within them, of wisdom and justice, which is Christ. Now, in Him who truly exists, and who said by Moses, I Am Who I Am, all things, whatever they are, participate; which participation in God the Father is shared both by just men and sinners, by rational and irrational beings, and by all things universally which exist. The Apostle Paul also shows truly that all have a share in Christ, when he says, Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (i.e., to bring Christ down from above;) or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what says the Scripture? The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart. By which he means that Christ is in the heart of all, in respect of His being the word or reason, by participating in which they are rational beings. That declaration also in the Gospel, If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin, renders it manifest and patent to all who have a rational knowledge of how long a time man is without sin, and from what period he is liable to it, how, by participating in the word or reason, men are said to have sinned, viz., from the time they are made capable of understanding and knowledge, when the reason implanted within has suggested to them the difference between good and evil; and after they have already begun to know what evil is, they are made liable to sin, if they commit it. And this is the meaning of the expression, that men have no excuse for their sin, viz., that, from the time the divine word or reason has begun to show them internally the difference between good and evil, they ought to avoid and guard against that which is wicked: For to him who knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin. Moreover, that all men are not without communion with God, is taught in the Gospel thus, by the Saviour's words: The kingdom of God comes not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! Or, lo there! But the kingdom of God is within you. But here we must see whether this does not bear the same meaning with the expression in Genesis: And He breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. For if this be understood as applying generally to all men, then all men have a share in God.

7\.. But if this is to be understood as spoken of the Spirit of God, since Adam also is found to have prophesied of some things, it may be taken not as of general application, but as confined to those who are saints. Finally, also, at the time of the flood, when all flesh had corrupted their way before God, it is recorded that God spoke thus, as of undeserving men and sinners: My Spirit shall not abide with those men for ever, because they are flesh. By which, it is clearly shown that the Spirit of God is taken away from all who are unworthy. In the Psalms also it is written: You will take away their spirit, and they will die, and return to their earth. You will send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created, and You will renew the face of the earth; which is manifestly intended of the Holy Spirit, who, after sinners and unworthy persons have been taken away and destroyed, creates for Himself a new people, and renews the face of the earth, when, laying aside, through the grace of the Spirit, the old man with his deeds, they begin to walk in newness of life. And therefore the expression is competently applied to the Holy Spirit, because He will take up His dwelling, not in all men, nor in those who are flesh, but in those whose land has been renewed. Lastly, for this reason was the grace and revelation of the Holy Spirit bestowed by the imposition of the apostles' hands after baptism. Our Saviour also, after the resurrection, when old things had already passed away, and all things had become new, Himself a new man, and the first-born from the dead, His apostles also being renewed by faith in His resurrection, says, Receive

the Holy Spirit. This is doubtless what the Lord the Saviour meant to convey in the Gospel, when He said that new wine cannot be put into old bottles, but commanded that the bottles should be made new, i.e., that men should walk in newness of life, that they might receive the new wine, i.e., the newness of grace of the Holy Spirit. In this manner, then, is the working of the power of God the Father and of the Son extended without distinction to every creature; but a share in the Holy Spirit we find possessed only by the saints. And therefore it is said, No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. And on one occasion, scarcely even the apostles themselves are deemed worthy to hear the words, You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you. For this reason, also, I think it follows that he who has committed a sin against the Son of man is deserving of forgiveness; because if he who is a participator of the word or reason of God cease to live agreeably to reason, he seems to have fallen into a state of ignorance or folly, and therefore to deserve forgiveness; whereas he who has been deemed worthy to have a portion of the Holy Spirit, and who has relapsed, is, by this very act and work, said to be guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Let no one indeed suppose that we, from having said that the Holy Spirit is conferred upon the saints alone, but that the benefits or operations of the Father and of the Son extend to good and bad, to just and unjust, by so doing give a preference to the Holy Spirit over the Father and the Son, or assert that His dignity is greater, which certainly would be a very illogical conclusion. For it is the peculiarity of His grace and operations that we have been describing. Moreover, nothing in the Trinity can be called greater or less, since the fountain of divinity alone contains all things by His word and reason, and by the Spirit of His mouth sanctifies all things which are worthy of sanctification, as it is written in the Psalm: By the word of the Lord were the heavens strengthened, and all their power by the Spirit of His mouth. There is also a special working of God the Father, besides that by which He bestowed upon all things the gift of natural life. There is also a special ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ to those upon whom he confers by nature the gift of reason, by means of which they are enabled to be rightly what they are. There is also another grace of the Holy Spirit, which is bestowed upon the deserving, through the ministry of Christ and the working of the Father, in proportion to the merits of those who are rendered capable of receiving it. This is most clearly pointed out by the Apostle Paul, when demonstrating that the power of the Trinity is one and the same, in the words, There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. From which it most clearly follows that there is no difference in the Trinity, but that which is called the gift of the Spirit is made known through the Son, and operated by God the Father. But all these works that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every one severally as He will.

8\ Having made these declarations regarding the Unity of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, let us return to the order in which we began the discussion. God the Father bestows upon all, existence; and participation in Christ, in respect of His being the word of reason, renders them rational beings. From which it follows that they are deserving either of praise or blame, because capable of virtue and vice. On this account, therefore, is the grace of the Holy Ghost present, that those beings which are not holy in their essence may be rendered holy by participating in it. Seeing, then, that firstly, they derive their existence from God the Father; secondly, their rational nature from the Word; thirdly, their holiness from the Holy Spirit — those who have been previously sanctified by the Holy Spirit are

again made capable of receiving Christ, in respect that He is the righteousness of God; and those who have earned advancement to this grade by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, will nevertheless obtain the gift of wisdom according to the power and working of the Spirit of God. And this I consider is Paul's meaning, when he says that to some is given the word of wisdom, to others the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit. And while pointing out the individual distinction of gifts, he refers the whole of them to the source of all things, in the words, There are diversities of operations, but one God who works all in all. Whence also the working of the Father, which confers existence upon all things, is found to be more glorious and magnificent, while each one, by participation in Christ, as being wisdom, and knowledge, and sanctification, makes progress, and advances to higher degrees of perfection; and seeing it is by partaking of the Holy Spirit that any one is made purer and holier, he obtains, when he is made worthy, the grace of wisdom and knowledge, in order that, after all stains of pollution and ignorance are cleansed and taken away, he may make so great an advance in holiness and purity, that the nature which he received from God may become such as is worthy of Him who gave it to be pure and perfect, so that the being which exists may be as worthy as He who called it into existence. For, in this way, he who is such as his Creator wished him to be, will receive from God power always to exist, and to abide forever. That this may be the case, and that those whom He has created may be unceasingly and inseparably present with Him, Who IS, it is the business of wisdom to instruct and train them, and to bring them to perfection by confirmation of His Holy Spirit and unceasing sanctification, by which alone are they capable of receiving God. In this way, then, by the renewal of the ceaseless working of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in us, in its various stages of progress, shall we be able at some future time perhaps, although with difficulty, to behold the holy and the blessed life, in which (as it is only after many struggles that we are able to reach it) we ought so to continue, that no satiety of that blessedness should ever seize us; but the more we perceive its blessedness, the more should be increased and intensified within us the longing for the same, while we ever more eagerly and freely receive and hold fast the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But if satiety should ever take hold of any one of those who stand on the highest and perfect summit of attainment, I do not think that such an one would suddenly be deposed from his position and fall away, but that he must decline gradually and little by little, so that it may sometimes happen that if a brief lapsus take place, and the individual quickly repent and return to himself, he may not utterly fall away, but may retrace his steps, and return to his former place, and again make good that which had been lost by his negligence.

Chapter 4. On Defection, or Falling Away.

1\.. To exhibit the nature of defection or falling away, on the part of those who conduct themselves carelessly, it will not appear out of place to employ a similitude by way of illustration. Suppose, then, the case of one who had become gradually acquainted with the art or science, say of geometry or medicine, until he had reached perfection, having trained himself for a lengthened time in its principles and practice, so as to attain a complete mastery over the art: to such an one it could never happen, that, when he lay down to sleep in the possession of his skill, he should awake in a state of ignorance. It is not our purpose to adduce or to notice here those accidents which are occasioned by any injury or weakness, for they do not apply to our present illustration. According to our point of view, then, so long as that geometer or physician continues to exercise himself in the study of his art and in the practice of its principles, the knowledge of his profession abides with him; but if he withdraw from its practice, and lay aside his habits of industry, then, by his neglect, at first a few things will gradually escape him, then by and by more and more, until in course of time everything will be forgotten, and be completely effaced from the memory. It is possible, indeed, that when he has first begun to fall away, and to yield to the corrupting influence of a negligence which is small as yet, he may, if he be aroused and return speedily to his senses, repair those losses which up to that time are only recent, and recover that knowledge which hitherto had been only slightly obliterated from his mind. Let us apply this now to the case of those who have devoted themselves to the knowledge and wisdom of God, whose learning and diligence incomparably surpass all other training; and let us contemplate, according to the form of the similitude employed, what is the acquisition of knowledge, or what is its disappearance, especially when we hear from the apostle what is said of those who are perfect, that they shall behold face to face the glory of the Lord in the revelation of His mysteries.

2\.. But in our desire to show the divine benefits bestowed upon us by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which Trinity is the fountain of all holiness, we have fallen, in what we have said, into a digression, having considered that the subject of the soul, which accidentally came before us, should be touched on, although cursorily, seeing we were discussing a cognate topic relating to our rational nature. We shall, however, with the permission of God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, more conveniently consider in the proper place the subject of all rational beings, which are distinguished into three genera and species.

Chapter 5. On Rational Natures.

1\.. After the dissertation, which we have briefly conducted to the best of our ability, regarding the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it follows that we offer a few remarks upon the subject of rational natures, and on their species and orders, or on the offices as well of holy as of malignant powers, and also on those which occupy an intermediate position between these good and evil powers, and as yet are placed in a state of struggle and trial. For we find in holy Scripture numerous names of certain orders and offices, not only of holy beings, but also of those of an opposite description, which we shall bring before us, in the first place; and the meaning of which we shall endeavour, in the second place, to the best of our ability, to ascertain. There are certain holy angels of God whom Paul terms ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. In the writings also of St. Paul himself we find him designating them, from some unknown source, as thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and

powers; and after this enumeration, as if knowing that there were still other rational offices and orders besides those which he had named, he says of the Saviour: Who is above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. From which he shows that there were certain beings besides those which he had mentioned, which may be named indeed in this world, but were not now enumerated by him, and perhaps were not known by any other individual; and that there were others which may not be named in this world, but will be named in the world to come.

2\ Then, in the next place, we must know that every being which is endowed with reason, and transgresses its statutes and limitations, is undoubtedly involved in sin by swerving from rectitude and justice. Every rational creature, therefore, is capable of earning praise and censure: of praise, if, in conformity to that reason which he possesses, he advance to better things; of censure, if he fall away from the plan and course of rectitude, for which reason he is justly liable to pains and penalties. And this also is to be held as applying to the devil himself, and those who are with him, and are called his angels. Now the titles of these beings have to be explained, that we may know what they are of whom we have to speak. The name, then, of Devil, and Satan, and Wicked One, who is also described as Enemy of God, is mentioned in many passages of Scripture. Moreover, certain angels of the devil are mentioned, and also a prince of this world, who, whether the devil himself or some one else, is not yet clearly manifest. There are also certain princes of this world spoken of as possessing a kind of wisdom which will come to nought; but whether these are those princes who are also the principalities with whom we have to wrestle, or other beings, seems to me a point on which it is not easy for any one to pronounce. After the principalities, certain powers also are named with whom we have to wrestle, and carry on a struggle even against the princes of this world and the rulers of this darkness. Certain spiritual powers of wickedness also, in heavenly places, are spoken of by Paul himself. What, moreover, are we to say of those wicked and unclean spirits mentioned in the Gospel? Then we have certain heavenly beings called by a similar name, but which are said to bend the knee, or to be about to bend the knee, at the name of Jesus; nay, even things on earth and things under the earth, which Paul enumerates in order. And certainly, in a place where we have been discussing the subject of rational natures, it is not proper to be silent regarding ourselves, who are human beings, and are called rational animals; nay, even this point is not to be idly passed over, that even of us human beings certain different orders are mentioned in the words, The portion of the Lord is His people Jacob; Israel is the cord of His inheritance. Other nations, moreover, are called a part of the angels; since when the Most High divided the nations, and dispersed the sons of Adam, He fixed the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the angels of God. And therefore, with other rational natures, we must also thoroughly examine the reason of the human soul.

3\ After the enumeration, then, of so many and so important names of orders and offices, underlying which it is certain that there are personal existences, let us inquire whether God, the creator and founder of all things, created certain of them holy and happy, so that they could admit no element at all of an opposite kind, and certain others so that they were made capable both of virtue and vice; or whether we are to suppose that He created some so as to be altogether incapable of virtue, and others again altogether incapable of wickedness, but with the power of abiding only in a state of happiness, and others

again such as to be capable of either condition. In order, now, that our first inquiry may begin with the names themselves, let us consider whether the holy angels, from the period of their first existence, have always been holy, and are holy still, and will be holy, and have never either admitted or had the power to admit any occasion of sin. Then in the next place, let us consider whether those who are called holy principalities began from the moment of their creation by God to exercise power over some who were made subject to them, and whether these latter were created of such a nature, and formed for the very purpose of being subject and subordinate. In like manner, also, whether those which are called powers were created of such a nature and for the express purpose of exercising power, or whether their arriving at that power and dignity is a reward and desert of their virtue. Moreover, also, whether those which are called thrones or seats gained that stability of happiness at the same time with their coming forth into being, so as to have that possession from the will of the Creator alone; or whether those which are called dominions had their dominion conferred on them, not as a reward for their proficiency, but as the peculiar privilege of their creation, so that it is something which is in a certain degree inseparable from them, and natural. Now, if we adopt the view that the holy angels, and the holy powers, and the blessed seats, and the glorious virtues, and the magnificent dominions, are to be regarded as possessing those powers and dignities and glories in virtue of their nature, it will doubtless appear to follow that those beings which have been mentioned as holding offices of an opposite kind must be regarded in the same manner; so that those principalities with whom we have to struggle are to be viewed, not as having received that spirit of opposition and resistance to all good at a later period, or as falling away from good through the freedom of the will, but as having had it in themselves as the essence of their being from the beginning of their existence. In like manner also will it be the case with the powers and virtues, in none of which was wickedness subsequent or posterior to their first existence. Those also whom the apostle termed rulers and princes of the darkness of this world, are said, with respect to their rule and occupation of darkness, to fall not from perversity of intention, but from the necessity of their creation. Logical reasoning will compel us to take the same view with regard to wicked and malignant spirits and unclean demons. But if to entertain this view regarding malignant and opposing powers seem to be absurd, as it is certainly absurd that the cause of their wickedness should be removed from the purpose of their own will, and ascribed of necessity to their Creator, why should we not also be obliged to make a similar confession regarding the good and holy powers, that, viz., the good which is in them is not theirs by essential being, which we have manifestly shown to be the case with Christ and the Holy Spirit alone, as undoubtedly with the Father also? For it was proved that there was nothing compound in the nature of the Trinity, so that these qualities might seem to belong to it as accidental consequences. From which it follows, that in the case of every creature it is a result of his own works and movements, that those powers which appear either to hold sway over others or to exercise power or dominion, have been preferred to and placed over those whom they are said to govern or exercise power over, and not in consequence of a peculiar privilege inherent in their constitutions, but on account of merit.

4\). But that we may not appear to build our assertions on subjects of such importance and difficulty on the ground of inference alone, or to require the assent of our hearers to what is only conjectural, let us see whether we can obtain any declarations from holy Scripture, by the authority of which these positions may be more credibly maintained. And, firstly, we shall adduce what holy Scripture contains regarding wicked powers; we shall next continue our investigation with regard to the others, as the Lord shall be pleased to enlighten us, that in matters of such difficulty we may ascertain what is nearest to the truth, or what ought to be our opinions agreeably to the standard of religion. Now we find in the prophet Ezekiel two prophecies written to the prince of Tyre, the former of which might appear to any one, before he heard the second also, to be spoken of some man who was prince of the Tyrians. In the meantime, therefore, we shall take nothing from that first prophecy; but as the second is manifestly of such a kind as cannot be at all understood of a man, but of some superior power which had fallen away from a higher position, and had been reduced to a lower and worse condition, we shall from it take an illustration, by which it may be demonstrated with the utmost clearness, that those opposing and malignant powers were not formed or created so by nature, but fell from a better to a worse position, and were converted into wicked beings; that those blessed powers also were not of such a nature as to be unable to admit what was opposed to them if they were so inclined and became negligent, and did not guard most carefully the blessedness of their condition. For if it is related that he who is called the prince of Tyre was among the saints, and was without stain, and was placed in the paradise of God, and adorned also with a crown of comeliness and beauty, is it to be supposed that such an one could be in any degree inferior to any of the saints? For he is described as having been adorned with a crown of comeliness and beauty, and as having walked stainless in the paradise of God: and how can any one suppose that such a being was not one of those holy and blessed powers which, as being placed in a state of happiness, we must believe to be endowed with no other honour than this? But let us see what we are taught by the words of the prophecy themselves. The word of the Lord, says the prophet, came to me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation over the prince of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord God, You have been the seal of a similitude, and a crown of comeliness among the delights of paradise; you were adorned with every good stone or gem, and were clothed with sardonyx, and topaz, and emerald, and carbuncle, and sapphire, and jasper, set in gold and silver, and with agate, amethyst, and chrysolite, and beryl, and onyx: with gold also did you fill your treasures, and your storehouses within you. From the day when you were created along with the cherubim, I placed you in the holy mount of God. You were in the midst of the fiery stones: you were stainless in your days, from the day when you were created, until iniquities were found in you: from the greatness of your trade, you filled your storehouses with iniquity, and sinned, and were wounded from the mount of God. And a cherub drove you forth from the midst of the burning stones; and your heart was elated because of your comeliness, your discipline was corrupted along with your beauty: on account of the multitude of your sins, I cast you forth to the earth before kings; I gave you for a show and a mockery on account of the multitude of your sins, and of your iniquities: because of your trade you have polluted your holy places. And I shall bring forth fire from the midst of you, and it shall devour you, and I shall give you for ashes and cinders on the earth in the sight of all who see you: and all who know you among the nations shall mourn over you. You have been made destruction, and you shall exist no longer forever. Seeing, then, that such are the words of the prophet, who is there that on hearing, You were a seal of a similitude,

and a crown of comeliness among the delights of paradise, or that From the day when you were created with the cherubim, I placed you in the holy mount of God, can so enfeeble the meaning as to suppose that this language is used of some man or saint, not to say the prince of Tyre? Or what fiery stones can he imagine in the midst of which any man could live? Or who could be supposed to be stainless from the very day of his creation, and wickedness being afterwards discovered in him, it be said of him then that he was cast forth upon the earth? For the meaning of this is, that He who was not yet on the earth is said to be cast forth upon it: whose holy places also are said to be polluted. We have shown, then, that what we have quoted regarding the prince of Tyre from the prophet Ezekiel refers to an adverse power, and by it it is most clearly proved that that power was formerly holy and happy; from which state of happiness it fell from the time that iniquity was found in it, and was hurled to the earth, and was not such by nature and creation. We are of opinion, therefore, that these words are spoken of a certain angel who had received the office of governing the nation of the Tyrians, and to whom also their souls had been entrusted to be taken care of. But what Tyre, or what souls of Tyrians, we ought to understand, whether that Tyre which is situated within the boundaries of the province of Phœnicia, or some other of which, this one which we know on earth is the model; and the souls of the Tyrians, whether they are those of the former or those which belong to that Tyre which is spiritually understood, does not seem to be a matter requiting examination in this place; lest perhaps we should appear to investigate subjects of so much mystery and importance in a cursory manner, whereas they demand a labour and work of their own.

5\ . Again, we are taught as follows by the prophet Isaiah regarding another opposing power. The prophet says, How is Lucifer, who used to arise in the morning, fallen from heaven! He who assailed all nations is broken and beaten to the ground. You indeed said in your heart, I shall ascend into heaven; above the stars of heaven shall I place my throne; I shall sit upon a lofty mountain, above the lofty mountains which are towards the north; I shall ascend above the clouds; I shall be like the Most High. Now shall you be brought down to the lower world, and to the foundations of the earth. They who see you shall be amazed at you, and shall say, This is the man who harassed the whole earth, who moved kings, who made the whole world a desert, who destroyed cities, and did not unloose those who were in chains. All the kings of the nations have slept in honour, every one in his own house; but you shall be cast forth on the mountains, accursed with the many dead who have been pierced through with swords, and have descended to the lower world. As a garment cloned with blood, and stained, will not be clean; neither shall you be clean, because you have destroyed my land and slain my people: you shall not remain for ever, most wicked seed. Prepare your sons for death on account of the sins of your father, lest they rise again and inherit the earth, and fill the earth with wars. And I shall rise against them, says the Lord of hosts, and I shall cause their name to perish, and their remains, and their seed. Most evidently by these words is he shown to have fallen from heaven, who formerly was Lucifer, and who used to arise in the morning. For if, as some think, he was a nature of darkness, how is Lucifer said to have existed before? Or how could he arise in the morning, who had in himself nothing of the light? Nay, even the Saviour Himself teaches us, saying of the devil, Behold, I see Satan fallen from heaven like lightning. For at one time he was light. Moreover our Lord, who is the truth, compared the power of His own glorious advent to lightning, in the words, For as the lightning shines from the height of heaven even to its height again, so will the coming of the Son of man be. And notwithstanding He compares him to

lightning, and says that he fell from heaven, that He might show by this that he had been at one time in heaven, and had had a place among the saints, and had enjoyed a share in that light in which all the saints participate, by which they are made angels of light, and by which the apostles are termed by the Lord the light of the world. In this manner, then, did that being once exist as light before he went astray, and fell to this place, and had his glory turned into dust, which is peculiarly the mark of the wicked, as the prophet also says; whence, too, he was called the prince of this world, i.e., of an earthly habitation: for he exercised power over those who were obedient to his wickedness, since the whole of this world — for I term this place of earth, world — lies in the wicked one, and in this apostate. That he is an apostate, i.e., a fugitive, even the Lord in the book of Job says, You will take with a hook the apostate dragon, i.e., a fugitive. Now it is certain that by the dragon is understood the devil himself. If then they are called opposing powers, and are said to have been once without stain, while spotless purity exists in the essential being of none save the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but is an accidental quality in every created thing; and since that which is accidental may also fall away, and since those opposite powers once were spotless, and were once among those which still remain unstained, it is evident from all this that no one is pure either by essence or nature, and that no one was by nature polluted. And the consequence of this is, that it lies within ourselves and in our own actions to possess either happiness or holiness; or by sloth and negligence to fall from happiness into wickedness and ruin, to such a degree that, through too great proficiency, so to speak, in wickedness (if a man be guilty of so great neglect), he may descend even to that state in which he will be changed into what is called an opposing power.

Chapter 6. On the End or Consummation.

1\.. An end or consummation would seem to be an indication of the perfection and completion of things. And this reminds us here, that if there be any one imbued with a desire of reading and understanding subjects of such difficulty and importance, he ought to bring to the effort a perfect and instructed understanding, lest perhaps, if he has had no experience in questions of this kind, they may appear to him as vain and superfluous; or if his mind be full of preconceptions and prejudices on other points, he may judge these to be heretical and opposed to the faith of the Church, yielding in so doing not so much to the convictions of reason as to the dogmatism of prejudice. These subjects, indeed, are treated by us with great solicitude and caution, in the manner rather of an investigation and discussion, than in that of fixed and certain decision. For we have pointed out in the preceding pages those questions which must be set forth in clear dogmatic propositions, as I think has been done to the best of my ability when speaking of the Trinity. But on the present occasion our exercise is to be conducted, as we best may, in the style of a disputation rather than of strict definition.

The end of the world, then, and the final consummation, will take place when every one shall be subjected to punishment for his sins; a time which God alone knows, when He will bestow on each one what he deserves. We think, indeed, that the goodness of God, through His Christ, may recall all His creatures to one end, even His enemies being conquered and subdued. For thus says holy Scripture, The Lord said to My Lord, Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool. And if the meaning of the prophet's language here be less clear, we may ascertain it from the Apostle Paul, who speaks more openly, thus: For Christ must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. But if even that unreserved declaration of the apostle do not sufficiently inform us what is meant by enemies being placed under His feet, listen to what he says in the following words, For all things must be put under Him. What, then, is this putting under by which all things must be made subject to Christ? I am of opinion that it is this very subjection by which we also wish to be subject to Him, by which the apostles also were subject, and all the saints who have been followers of Christ. For the name subjection, by which we are subject to Christ, indicates that the salvation which proceeds from Him belongs to His subjects, agreeably to the declaration of David, Shall not my soul be subject unto God? From Him comes my salvation.

2\ Seeing, then, that such is the end, when all enemies will be subdued to Christ, when death — the last enemy — shall be destroyed, and when the kingdom shall be delivered up by Christ (to whom all things are subject) to God the Father; let us, I say, from such an end as this, contemplate the beginnings of things. For the end is always like the beginning: and, therefore, as there is one end to all things, so ought we to understand that there was one beginning; and as there is one end to many things, so there spring from one beginning many differences and varieties, which again, through the goodness of God, and by subjection to Christ, and through the unity of the Holy Spirit, are recalled to one end, which is like the beginning: all those, viz., who, bending the knee at the name of Jesus, make known by so doing their subjection to Him: and these are they who are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: by which three classes the whole universe of things is pointed out, those, viz., who from that one beginning were arranged, each according to the diversity of his conduct, among the different orders, in accordance with their desert; for there was no goodness in them by essential being, as in God and His Christ, and in the Holy Spirit. For in the Trinity alone, which is the author of all things, does goodness exist in virtue of essential being; while others possess it as an accidental and perishable quality, and only then enjoy blessedness, when they participate in holiness and wisdom, and in divinity itself. But if they neglect and despise such participation, then is each one, by fault of his own slothfulness, made, one more rapidly, another more slowly, one in a greater, another in a less degree, the cause of his own downfall. And since, as we have remarked, the lapse by which an individual falls away from his position is characterized by great diversity, according to the movements of the mind and will, one man falling with greater ease, another with more difficulty, into a lower condition; in this is to be seen the just judgment of the providence of God, that it should happen to every one according to the diversity of his conduct, in proportion to the desert of his declension and defection. Certain of those, indeed, who remained in that beginning which we have described as resembling the end which is to come, obtained, in the ordering and arrangement of the world, the rank of angels; others that of influences, others of principalities, others of powers, that they may exercise power over those who need to have power upon their head. Others, again, received the rank of thrones, having the office of judging or ruling those who

require this; others dominion, doubtless, over slaves; all of which are conferred by Divine Providence in just and impartial judgment according to their merits, and to the progress which they had made in the participation and imitation of God. But those who have been removed from their primal state of blessedness have not been removed irrecoverably, but have been placed under the rule of those holy and blessed orders which we have described; and by availing themselves of the aid of these, and being remoulded by salutary principles and discipline, they may recover themselves, and be restored to their condition of happiness. From all which I am of opinion, so far as I can see, that this order of the human race has been appointed in order that in the future world, or in ages to come, when there shall be the new heavens and new earth, spoken of by Isaiah, it may be restored to that unity promised by the Lord Jesus in His prayer to God the Father on behalf of His disciples: I do not pray for these alone, but for all who shall believe in Me through their word: that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us; and again, when He says: That they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one. And this is further confirmed by the language of the Apostle Paul: Until we all come in the unity of the faith to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. And in keeping with this is the declaration of the same apostle, when he exhorts us, who even in the present life are placed in the Church, in which is the form of that kingdom which is to come, to this same similitude of unity: That you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

3\ It is to be borne in mind, however, that certain beings who fell away from that one beginning of which we have spoken, have sunk to such a depth of unworthiness and wickedness as to be deemed altogether undeserving of that training and instruction by which the human race, while in the flesh, are trained and instructed with the assistance of the heavenly powers; and continue, on the contrary, in a state of enmity and opposition to those who are receiving this instruction and teaching. And hence it is that the whole of this mortal life is full of struggles and trials, caused by the opposition and enmity of those who fell from a better condition without at all looking back, and who are called the devil and his angels, and the other orders of evil, which the apostle classed among the opposing powers. But whether any of these orders who act under the government of the devil, and obey his wicked commands, will in a future world be converted to righteousness because of their possessing the faculty of freedom of will, or whether persistent and inveterate wickedness may be changed by the power of habit into nature, is a result which you yourself, reader, may approve of, if neither in these present worlds which are seen and temporal, nor in those which are unseen and are eternal, that portion is to differ wholly from the final unity and fitness of things. But in the meantime, both in those temporal worlds which are seen, as well as in those eternal worlds which are invisible, all those beings are arranged, according to a regular plan, in the order and degree of their merits; so that some of them in the first, others in the second, some even in the last times, after having undergone heavier and severer punishments, endured for a lengthened period, and for many ages, so to speak, improved by this stern method of training, and restored at first by the instruction of the angels, and subsequently by the powers of a higher grade, and thus advancing through each stage to a better condition, reach even to that which is invisible and eternal, having travelled through, by a kind of training, every single office of the heavenly powers. From which, I think, this will appear to follow as an inference, that every rational nature may, in passing from

one order to another, go through each to all, and advance from all to each, while made the subject of various degrees of proficiency and failure according to its own actions and endeavours, put forth in the enjoyment of its power of freedom of will.

4\ But since Paul says that certain things are visible and temporal, and others besides these invisible and eternal, we proceed to inquire how those things which are seen are temporal — whether because there will be nothing at all after them in all those periods of the coming world, in which that dispersion and separation from the one beginning is undergoing a process of restoration to one and the same end and likeness; or because, while the form of those things which are seen passes away, their essential nature is subject to no corruption. And Paul seems to confirm the latter view, when he says, For the fashion of this world passes away. David also appears to assert the same in the words, The heavens shall perish, but You shall endure; and they all shall wax old as a garment, and You shall change them like a vesture, and like a vestment they shall be changed. For if the heavens are to be changed, assuredly that which is changed does not perish, and if the fashion of the world passes away, it is by no means an annihilation or destruction of their material substance that is shown to take place, but a kind of change of quality and transformation of appearance. Isaiah also, in declaring prophetically that there will be a new heaven and a new earth, undoubtedly suggests a similar view. For this renewal of heaven and earth, and this transmutation of the form of the present world, and this changing of the heavens will undoubtedly be prepared for those who are walking along that way which we have pointed out above, and are tending to that goal of happiness to which, it is said, even enemies themselves are to be subjected, and in which God is said to be all and in all. And if any one imagine that at the end material, i.e., bodily, nature will be entirely destroyed, he cannot in any respect meet my view, how beings so numerous and powerful are able to live and to exist without bodies, since it is an attribute of the divine nature alone — i.e., of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit— to exist without any material substance, and without partaking in any degree of a bodily adjunct. Another, perhaps, may say that in the end every bodily substance will be so pure and refined as to be like the æther, and of a celestial purity and clearness. How things will be, however, is known with certainty to God alone, and to those who are His friends through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 7. On Incorporeal and Corporeal Beings.

1\ The subjects considered in the previous chapter have been spoken of in general language, the nature of rational beings being discussed more by way of intelligent inference than strict dogmatic definition, with the exception of the place where we treated, to the best of our ability, of the persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We have now to ascertain what those matters are which it is proper to treat in the following pages according to our dogmatic belief, i.e., in agreement with the creed of the Church. All souls and all rational natures, whether holy or wicked, were formed or created, and all these, according to their proper nature, are incorporeal; but although incorporeal, they were nevertheless created, because all things were made by God through Christ, as John teaches in a general way in his Gospel, saying, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made. The Apostle Paul, moreover, describing created things by species and numbers and orders, speaks as follows, when showing that all things were made through Christ: And in Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and in Him: and He is before all, and He is the head. He therefore manifestly declares that in Christ and through Christ were all things made and created, whether things visible, which are corporeal, or things invisible, which I regard as none other than incorporeal and spiritual powers. But of those things which he had termed generally corporeal or incorporeal, he seems to me, in the words that follow, to enumerate the various kinds, viz., thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, influences.

These matters now have been previously mentioned by us, as we are desirous to come in an orderly manner to the investigation of the sun, and moon, and stars by way of logical inference, and to ascertain whether they also ought properly to be reckoned among the principalities on account of their being said to be created in *ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ* the government of day and night; or whether they are to be regarded as having only that government of day and night which they discharge by performing the office of illuminating them, and are not in reality chief of that order of principalities.

2\ Now, when it is said that all things were made by Him, and that in Him were all things created, both things in heaven and things on earth, there can be no doubt that also those things which are in the firmament, which is called heaven, and in which those luminaries are said to be placed, are included among the number of heavenly things. And secondly, seeing that the course of the discussion has manifestly discovered that all things were made or created, and that among created things there is nothing which may not admit of good and evil, and be capable of either, what are we to think of the following opinion which certain of our friends entertain regarding sun, moon, and stars, viz., that they are unchangeable, and incapable of becoming the opposite of what they are? Not a few have held that view even regarding the holy angels, and certain heretics also regarding souls, which they call spiritual natures.

In the first place, then, let us see what reason itself can discover respecting sun, moon, and stars — whether the opinion, entertained by some, of their unchangeableness be correct — and let the declarations of holy Scripture, as far as possible, be first adduced. For Job appears to assert that not only may the stars be subject to sin, but even that they are actually not clean from the contagion of it. The following are his words: The stars also are not clean in Your sight. Nor is this to be understood of the splendour of their physical substance, as if one were to say, for example, of a garment, that it is not

clean; for if such were the meaning, then the accusation of a want of cleanness in the splendour of their bodily substance would imply an injurious reflection upon their Creator. For if they are unable, through their own diligent efforts, either to acquire for themselves a body of greater brightness, or through their sloth to make the one they have less pure, how should they incur censure for being stars that are not clean, if they receive no praise because they are so?

3\ But to arrive at a clearer understanding on these matters, we ought first to inquire after this point, whether it is allowable to suppose that they are living and rational beings; then, in the next place, whether their souls came into existence at the same time with their bodies, or seem to be anterior to them; and also whether, after the end of the world, we are to understand that they are to be released from their bodies; and whether, as we cease to live, so they also will cease from illuminating the world. Although this inquiry may seem to be somewhat bold, yet, as we are incited by the desire of ascertaining the truth as far as possible, there seems no absurdity in attempting an investigation of the subject agreeably to the grace of the Holy Spirit.

We think, then, that they may be designated as living beings, for this reason, that they are said to receive commandments from God, which is ordinarily the case only with rational beings. I have given a commandment to all the stars, says the Lord. What, now, are these commandments? Those, namely, that each star, in its order and course, should bestow upon the world the amount of splendour which has been entrusted to it. For those which are called planets move in orbits of one kind, and those which are termed ~~Are difficult~~ *Asteroids*. Now it manifestly follows from this, that neither can the movement of that body take place without a soul, nor can living things be at any time without motion. And seeing that the stars move with such order and regularity, that their movements never appear to be at any time subject to derangement, would it not be the height of folly to say that so orderly an observance of method and plan could be carried out or accomplished by irrational beings? In the writings of Jeremiah, indeed, the moon is called the queen of heaven. Yet if the stars are living and rational beings, there will undoubtedly appear among them both an advance and a falling back. For the language of Job, the stars are not clean in His sight, seems to me to convey some such idea.

4\ And now we have to ascertain whether those beings which in the course of the discussion we have discovered to possess life and reason, were endowed with a soul along with their bodies at the time mentioned in Scripture, when God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, and the stars also, or whether their spirit was implanted in them, not at the creation of their bodies, but from without, after they had been already made. I, for my part, suspect that the spirit was implanted in them from without; but it will be worth while to prove this from Scripture: for it will seem an easy matter to make the assertion on conjectural grounds, while it is more difficult to establish it by the testimony of Scripture. Now it may be established conjecturally as follows. If the soul of a man, which is certainly inferior while it remains the soul of a man, was not formed along with his body, but is proved to have been implanted strictly from without, much more must this be the case with those living beings which are called heavenly. For, as regards man, how could the soul of him, viz., Jacob, who supplanted his brother in the womb, appear to be formed along with his body? Or how could his soul, or its images, be formed along with his body, who, while lying in his mother's womb, was filled with the Holy Ghost? I refer to John leaping in his mother's womb, and exulting because the

voice of the salutation of Mary had come to the ears of his mother Elisabeth. How could his soul and its images be formed along with his body, who, before he was created in the womb, is said to be known to God, and was sanctified by Him before his birth? Some, perhaps, may think that God fills individuals with His Holy Spirit, and bestows upon them sanctification, not on grounds of justice and according to their deserts; but undeservedly. And how shall we escape that declaration: Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid! or this: Is there respect of persons with God? For such is the defense of those who maintain that souls come into existence with bodies. So far, then, as we can form an opinion from a comparison with the condition of man, I think it follows that we must hold the same to hold good with heavenly beings, which reason itself and scriptural authority show us to be the case with men.

5\). But let us see whether we can find in holy Scripture any indications properly applicable to these heavenly existences. The following is the statement of the Apostle Paul: The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. To what vanity, pray, was the creature made subject, or what creature is referred to, or how is it said not willingly, or in hope of what? And in what way is the creature itself to be delivered from the bondage of corruption? Elsewhere, also, the same apostle says: For the expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. And again in another passage, And not only we, but the creation itself groans together, and is in pain until now. And hence we have to inquire what are the groanings, and what are the pains. Let us see then, in the first place, what is the vanity to which the creature is subject. I apprehend that it is nothing else than the body; for although the body of the stars is ethereal, it is nevertheless material. Whence also Solomon appears to characterize the whole of corporeal nature as a kind of burden which enfeebles the vigour of the soul in the following language: Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity. I have looked, and seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity. To this vanity, then, is the creature subject, that creature especially which, being assuredly the greatest in this world, holds also a distinguished principality of labour, i.e., the sun, and moon, and stars, are said to be subject to vanity, because they are clothed with bodies, and set apart to the office of giving light to the human race. And this creature, he remarks, was subjected to vanity not willingly. For it did not undertake a voluntary service to vanity, but because it was the will of Him who made it subject, and because of the promise of the Subjector to those who were reduced to this unwilling obedience, that when the ministry of their great work was performed, they were to be freed from this bondage of corruption and vanity when the time of the glorious redemption of God's children should have arrived. And the whole of creation, receiving this hope, and looking for the fulfilment of this promise now, in the meantime, as having an affection for those whom it serves, groans along with them, and patiently suffers with them, hoping for the fulfilment of the promises. See also whether the following words of Paul can apply to those who, although not willingly, yet in accordance with the will of Him who subjected them, and in hope of the promises, were made subject to vanity, when he says, For I could wish to be dissolved, or to return and be with Christ, which is far better. For I think that the sun might say in like manner, I would desire to be dissolved, or to return and be with Christ, which is far better. Paul indeed adds, Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you; while the sun may say, To abide in this bright and heavenly body is more necessary, on account of the manifestation of the sons of God. The same views are to be believed and expressed regarding the moon and stars.

Let us see now what is the freedom of the creature, or the termination of its bondage. When Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father, then also those living things, when they shall have first been made the kingdom of Christ, shall be delivered, along with the whole of that kingdom, to the rule of the Father, that when God shall be all in all, they also, since they are a part of all things, may have God in themselves, as He is in all things.

Chapter 8. On the Angels.

1\ A similar method must be followed in treating of the angels; nor are we to suppose that it is the result of accident that a particular office is assigned to a particular angel: as to Raphael, e.g., the work of curing and healing; to Gabriel, the conduct of wars; to Michael, the duty of attending to the prayers and supplications of mortals. For we are not to imagine that they obtained these offices otherwise than by their own merits, and by the zeal and excellent qualities which they severally displayed before this world was formed; so that afterwards in the order of archangels, this or that office was assigned to each one, while others deserved to be enrolled in the order of angels, and to act under this or that archangel, or that leader or head of an order. All of which things were disposed, as I have said, not indiscriminately and fortuitously, but by a most appropriate and just decision of God, who arranged them according to deserts, in accordance with His own approval and judgment: so that to one angel the Church of the Ephesians was to be entrusted; to another, that of the Smyrnæans; one angel was to be Peter's, another Paul's; and so on through every one of the little ones that are in the Church, for such and such angels as even daily behold the face of God must be assigned to each one of them; and there must also be some angel that encamps round about them that fear God. All of which things, assuredly, it is to be believed, are not performed by accident or chance, or because they (the angels) were so created, lest on that view the Creator should be accused of partiality; but it is to be believed that they were conferred by God, the just and impartial Ruler of all things, agreeably to the merits and good qualities and mental vigour of each individual spirit.

2\ And now let us say something regarding those who maintain the existence of a diversity of spiritual natures, that we may avoid falling into the silly and impious fables of such as pretend that there is a diversity of spiritual natures both among heavenly existences and human souls, and for that reason allege that they were called into being by different creators; for while it seems, and is really, absurd that to one and the same Creator should be ascribed the creation of different natures of rational beings, they are nevertheless ignorant of the cause of that diversity. For they say that it seems inconsistent for one and the same Creator, without any existing ground of merit, to confer upon some beings the power of dominion, and to subject others again to authority; to bestow a principality upon some, and to render others subordinate to rulers. Which opinions indeed, in my judgment, are completely rejected by following out the reasoning explained above, and by which it was shown that the cause of the diversity and variety among these beings is due to their conduct, which has been marked either with greater earnestness or indifference, according to the goodness or badness of their nature, and not to any partiality on the part of the Disposer. But that this may more easily be shown to be the case with heavenly beings, let us borrow an illustration from what either has been done or is done among men, in order that from visible things we may, by way of consequence, behold also things invisible.

Paul and Peter are undoubtedly proved to have been men of a spiritual nature. When, therefore, Paul is found to have acted contrary to religion, in having persecuted the Church of God, and Peter to have committed so grave a sin as, when questioned by the maid-servant, to have asserted with an oath that he did not know who Christ was, how is it possible that these — who, according to those persons of whom we speak, were spiritual beings — should fall into sins of such a nature, especially as they are frequently in the habit of saying that a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruits? And if a good tree cannot produce evil fruit, and as, according to them, Peter and Paul were sprung from the root of a good tree,

how should they be deemed to have brought forth fruits so wicked? And if they should return the answer which is generally invented, that it was not Paul who persecuted, but some other person, I know not whom, who was in Paul; and that it was not Peter who uttered the denial, but some other individual in him; how should Paul say, if he had not sinned, that I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God? Or why did Peter weep most bitterly, if it were another than he who sinned? From which all their silly assertions will be proved to be baseless.

3\.. According to our view, there is no rational creature which is not capable both of good and evil. But it does not follow, that because we say there is no nature which may not admit evil, we therefore maintain that every nature has admitted evil, i.e., has become wicked. As we may say that the nature of every man admits of his being a sailor, but it does not follow from that, that every man will become so; or, again, it is possible for every one to learn grammar or medicine, but it is not therefore proved that every man is either a physician or a grammarian; so, if we say that there is no nature which may not admit evil, it is not necessarily indicated that it has done so. For, in our view, not even the devil himself was incapable of good; but although capable of admitting good, he did not therefore also desire it, or make any effort after virtue. For, as we are taught by those quotations which we adduced from the prophets, there was once a time when he was good, when he walked in the paradise of God between the cherubim. As he, then, possessed the power either of receiving good or evil, but fell away from a virtuous course, and turned to evil with all the powers of his mind, so also other creatures, as having a capacity for either condition, in the exercise of the freedom of their will, flee from evil, and cleave to good. There is no nature, then, which may not admit of good or evil, except the nature of God — the fountain of all good things — and of Christ; for it is wisdom, and wisdom assuredly cannot admit folly; and it is righteousness, and righteousness will never certainly admit of unrighteousness; and it is the Word, or Reason, which certainly cannot be made irrational; nay, it is also the light, and it is certain that the darkness does not receive the light. In like manner, also, the nature of the Holy Spirit, being holy, does not admit of pollution; for it is holy by nature, or essential being. If there is any other nature which is holy, it possesses this property of being made holy by the reception or inspiration of the Holy Spirit, not having it by nature, but as an accidental quality, for which reason it may be lost, in consequence of being accidental. So also a man may possess an accidental righteousness, from which it is possible for him to fall away. Even the wisdom which a man has is still accidental, although it be within our own power to become wise, if we devote ourselves to wisdom with the zeal and effort of our life; and if we always pursue the study of it, we may always be participators of wisdom: and that result will follow either in a greater or less degree, according to the desert of our life or the amount of our zeal. For the goodness of God, as is worthy of Him, incites and attracts all to that blissful end, where all pain, and sadness, and sorrow fall away and disappear.

4\ I am of opinion, then, so far as appears to me, that the preceding discussion has sufficiently proved that it is neither from want of discrimination, nor from any accidental cause, either that the principalities hold their dominion, or the other orders of spirits have obtained their respective offices; but that they have received the steps of their rank on account of their merits, although it is not our privilege to know or inquire what those acts of theirs were, by which they earned a place in any particular order. It is sufficient only to know this much, in order to demonstrate the impartiality and righteousness of God, that, conformably with the declaration of the Apostle Paul, there is no acceptance of persons with Him, who rather disposes everything according to the deserts and moral progress of each individual. So, then, the angelic office does not exist except as a consequence of their desert; nor do powers exercise power except in virtue of their moral progress; nor do those which are called seats, i.e., the powers of judging and ruling, administer their powers unless by merit; nor do dominions rule undeservedly, for that great and distinguished order of rational creatures among celestial existences is arranged in a glorious variety of offices. And the same view is to be entertained of those opposing influences which have given themselves up to such places and offices, that they derive the property by which they are made principalities, or powers, or rulers of the darkness of the world, or spirits of wickedness, or malignant spirits, or unclean demons, not from their essential nature, nor from their being so created, but have obtained these degrees in evil in proportion to their conduct, and the progress which they made in wickedness. And that is a second order of rational creatures, who have devoted themselves to wickedness in so headlong a course, that they are unwilling rather than unable to recall themselves; the thirst for evil being already a passion, and imparting to them pleasure. But the third order of rational creatures is that of those who are judged fit by God to replenish the human race, i.e., the souls of men, assumed in consequence of their moral progress into the order of angels; of whom we see some assumed into the number: those, viz., who have been made the sons of God, or the children of the resurrection, or who have abandoned the darkness, and have loved the light, and have been made children of the light; or those who, proving victorious in every struggle, and being made men of peace, have been the sons of peace, and the sons of God; or those who, mortifying their members on the earth, and, rising above not only their corporeal nature, but even the uncertain and fragile movements of the soul itself, have united themselves to the Lord, being made altogether spiritual, that they may be for ever one spirit with Him, discerning along with Him each individual thing, until they arrive at a condition of perfect spirituality, and discern all things by their perfect illumination in all holiness through the word and wisdom of God, and are themselves altogether undistinguishable by any one.

We think that those views are by no means to be admitted, which some are wont unnecessarily to advance and maintain, viz., that souls descend to such a pitch of abasement that they forget their rational nature and dignity, and sink into the condition of irrational animals, either large or small; and in support of these assertions they generally quote some pretended statements of Scripture, such as, that a beast, to which a woman has unnaturally prostituted herself, shall be deemed equally guilty with the woman, and shall be ordered to be stoned; or that a bull which strikes with its horn, shall be put to death in the same way; or even the speaking of Balaam's ass, when God opened its mouth, and the dumb beast of burden, answering with human voice, reproved the madness of the prophet. All of which assertions we not only do not receive, but, as being contrary to our belief, we refute and reject. After the refutation and

rejection of such perverse opinions, we shall show, at the proper time and place, how those passages which they quote from the sacred Scriptures ought to be understood.

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