The Great Catechism

Gregory of Nyssa (c. AD 335–395)

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Contents

Introduction **1**

Chapter I. **6**

Chapter II. **9**

Chapter III. **10**

Chapter IV. **11**

Chapter V. **12**

Chapter VI. **15**

Chapter VII. **18**

Chapter VIII. **20**

Chapter IX. **24**

Chapter X. **25**

Chapter XI. **26**

Chapter XII. **27**

Chapter XIII. **28**

Chapter XIV. **30**

Chapter XV. **31**

Chapter XVI. **33**

Chapter XVII. **35**

Chapter XVIII. **36**

Chapter XIX. 38

Chapter XX. 39

Chapter XXI. 41

Chapter XXII. 43

Chapter XXIII. 44

Chapter XXIV. 46

Chapter XXV. 48

Chapter XXVI. 49

Chapter XXVII 51

Chapter XXVIII. 53

Chapter XXIX. 55

Chapter XXX. 56

Chapter XXXI. 58

Chapter XXXII. 59

Chapter XXXIII. 62

Chapter XXXIV. 64

Chapter XXXV 66

Chapter XXXVI. 69

Chapter XXXVII. 70

Chapter XXXVIII. 73

Chapter XXXIX. 74

Chapter XL. 76

Introduction

Summary
The Trinity

Prologue and Chapter 1.-The belief in God rests on the art and wisdom displayed in the order of the world: the belief in the Unity of God, on the perfection that must belong to Him in respect of power, goodness, wisdom, etc. Still, the Christian who combats polytheism has need of care lest in contending against Hellenism he should fall unconsciously into Judaism. For God has a Logos: else He would be without reason. And this Logos cannot be merely an attribute of God. We are led to a more exalted conception of the Logos by the consideration that in the measure in which God is greater than we, all His predicates must also be higher than those which belong to us. Our logos is limited and transient; but the subsistence of the Divine Logos must be indestructible; and at the same time living, since the rational cannot be lifeless, like a stone. It must also have an independent life, not a participated life, else it would lose its simplicity; and, as living, it must also have the faculty of will. This will of the Logos must be equalled by his power: for a mixture of choice and impotence would, again, destroy the simplicity. His will, as being Divine, must be also good. From this ability and will to work there follows the realization of the good; hence the bringing into existence of the wisely and artfully adjusted world.

But since, still further, the logical conception of the Word is in a certain sense a relative one, it follows that together with the Word He Who speaks it, i. e. the Father of the Word, must be recognized as existing. Thus the mystery of the faith avoids equally the absurdity of Jewish monotheism, and that of heathen polytheism. On the one hand, we say that the Word has life and activity; on the other, we affirm that we find in the Logoj, whose existence is derived from the Father, all the attributes of the Father's nature.

Chapter II.-By the analogy of human breath, which is nothing but inhaled and exhaled fire, i. e. an object foreign to us, is demonstrated the community of the Divine Spirit with the essence of God, and yet the independence of Its existence. Chapter III.-From the Jewish doctrine, then, the unity of the Divine nature has been retained: from Hellenism the distinction into hypostases. Chapter IV.-The Jew convicted from Scripture. Reasonableness of the Incarnation.

Chapters V. and VI.- God created the world by His reason and wisdom; for He cannot have proceeded irrationally in that work; but His reason and wisdom are, as above shown, not to be conceived as a spoken word, or as the mere possession of knowledge, but as a personal and willing potency. If the entire world was created by this second Divine hypostasis, then certainly was man also thus created; yet not in view of any necessity, but from superabounding love, that there might exist a being who should participate in the Divine perfections. If man was to be receptive of these, it was necessary that his nature should contain an element akin to God; and, in particular, that he should be immortal. Thus, then, man was created in the image of God. He could not therefore be without the gifts of freedom, independence, self-determination; and his participation in the Divine gifts was consequently made dependent on his virtue. Owing to this freedom he could decide in favour of evil, which cannot have its origin in the Divine will, but only in our inner selves, where it arises in the form of a deviation from good, and so a privation of it. Vice is opposed to virtue only as the absence of the better. Since, then, all that is created is subject to change, it was possible that, in the first instance, one of the created spirits should turn his eye away from the good, and become envious, and that from this envy should arise a leaning towards badness, which should, in natural sequence, prepare the way for all other evil. He seduced the first men into the folly of turning away from goodness, by disturbing the Divinely ordered harmony between their sensuous and intellectual natures; and guilefully tainting their wills with evil.

Chapters VII. and VIII.-God did not, on account of His foreknowledge of the evil that would result from man's creation, leave man uncreated; for it was better to bring back sinners to original grace by the way of repentance and physical suffering than not to create man at all. The raising up of the fallen was a work befitting the Giver of life, Who is the wisdom and power of God; and for this purpose He became man. Chapter IX.-The Incarnation was not unworthy of Him; for only evil brings degradation. Chapter X.-The objection that the finite cannot contain the infinite, and that therefore the human nature could not receive into itself the Divine, is founded on the false supposition that the Incarnation of the Word means that the infinity of God was contained in the limits of the flesh, as in a vessel.-Comparison of the flame and wick. Chapters XI., XII., XIII.-For the rest, the manner in which the Divine nature was united to the human surpasses our power of comprehension; although we are not permitted to doubt the fact of that union in Jesus, on account of the miracles which He wrought. The supernatural character of those miracles bears witness to their Divine origin.

Chapters XIV., XV., XVI., XVII.-The scheme of the Incarnation is still further drawn out, to show that this way for man's salvation was preferable to a single fiat of God's will. Christ took human weakness upon Him; but it was physical, not moral, weakness. In other words the Divine goodness did not change to its opposite, which is only vice. In Him soul and body were united, and then separated, according to the course of nature; but after He had thus purged human life, He reunited them upon a more general scale, for all, and for ever, in the Resurrection. Chapter XVIII.-The ceasing of demon-worship, the Christian martyrdoms, and the devastation of Jerusalem, are accepted by some as proofs of the Incarnation- Chapters XIX., XX.-But not by the Greek and the Jew. To return, then, to its reasonableness.

Whether we regard the goodness, the power, the wisdom, or the justice of God, it displays a combination of all these acknowledged attributes, which, if one be wanting, cease to be Divine. It is therefore true to the Divine perfection.

Chapters XXI., XXII., XXIII.-What, then, is the justice in it? We must remember that man was necessarily created subject to change (to better or to worse). Moral beauty was to be the direction in which his free will was to move; but then he was deceived, to his ruin, by an illusion of that beauty. After we had thus freely sold ourselves to the deceiver, He who of His goodness sought to restore us to liberty could not, because He was just too, for this end have recourse to measures of arbitrary violence. It was necessary therefore that a ransom should be paid, which should exceed in value that which was to be ransomed; and hence it was necessary that the Son of God should surrender Himself to the power of death. God's justice then impelled Him to choose a method of exchange, as His wisdom was seen in executing it.Chapters XXIV., XXV.-But how about the power? That was more conspicuously displayed in Deity descending to lowliness, than in all the natural wonders of the universe. It was like flame being made to stream downwards. Then, after such a birth, Christ conquered death.

Chapter XXVI.-A certain deception was indeed practised upon the Evil one, by concealing the Divine nature within the human; but for the latter, as himself a deceiver, it was only a just recompense that he should be deceived himself: the great adversary must himself at last find that what has been done is just and salutary, when he also shall experience the benefit of the Incarnation. He, as well as humanity, will be purged. Chapters XXVII., XXVIII.-A patient, to be healed, must be touched; and humanity had to be touched by Christ. It was not in "heaven"; so only through the Incarnation could it be healed.-It was, besides, no more inconsistent with His Divinity to assume a human than a "heavenly" body; all created beings are on a level beneath Deity. Even "abundant honour" is due to the instruments of human birth. Chapters XXIX., XXX., XXXI.-As to the delay of the Incarnation, it was necessary that human degeneracy should have reached the lowest point, before the work of salvation could enter in. That, however, grace through faith has not come to all must be laid to the account of human freedom; if God were to break down our opposition by violent means, the praise-worthiness of human conduct would be destroyed.

Chapter XXXII.-Even the death on the Cross was sublime: for it was the culminating and necessary point in that scheme of Love in which death was to be followed by blessed resurrection for the whole "lump" of humanity: and the Cross itself has a mystic meaning. The Sacraments. Chapters XXXIII., XXXIV., XXXV., XXXVI.-The saving nature of Baptism depends on three things; Prayer, Water, and Faith. 1. It is shown how Prayer secures the Divine Presence. God is a God of truth; and He has promised to come (as Miracles prove that He has come already) if invoked in a particular way. 2. It is shown how the Deity gives life from water. In human generation, even without prayer, He gives life from a small beginning. In a higher generation He transforms matter, not into soul, but into spirit. 3. Human freedom, as evinced in faith and repentance, is also necessary to Regeneration. Be-

ing thrice dipped in the water is our earliest mortification; coming out of it is a forecast of the ease with which the pure shall rise in a blessed resurrection: the whole process is an imitation of Christ.

Chapter XXXVII.-The Eucharist unites the body, as Baptism the soul, to God. Our bodies, having received poison, need an Antidote; and only by eating and drinking can it enter. One Body, the receptacle of Deity, is this Antidote, thus received. But how can it enter whole into each one of the Faithful? This needs an illustration. Water gives its own body to a skin-bottle. So nourishment (bread and wine) by becoming flesh and blood gives bulk to the human frame: the nourishment is the body. Just as in the case of other men, our Saviour's nourishment (bread and wine) was His Body; but these, nourishment and Body, were in Him changed into the Body of God by the Word indwelling. So now repeatedly the bread and wine, sanctified by the Word (the sacred Benediction), is at the same time changed into the Body of that Word; and this Flesh is disseminated amongst all the Faithful.

Chapters XXXVIII., XXXIX.-It is essential for Regeneration to believe that the Son and the Spirit are not created spirits, but of like nature with God the Father; for he who would make his salvation dependent (in the baptismal Invocation) on anything created would trust to an imperfect nature, and one itself needing a saviour. Chapter XL.-He alone has truly become a child of God who gives evidence of his regeneration by putting away from himself all vice

Prologue.

The presiding ministers of the "mystery of godliness" have need of a system in their instructions, in order that the Church may be replenished by the accession of such as should be saved , through the teaching of the word of Faith being brought home to the hearing of unbelievers. Not that the same method of instruction will be suitable in the case of all who approach the word. The catechism must be adapted to the diversities of their religious worship; with an eye, indeed, to the one aim and end of the system, but not using the same method of preparation in each individual case. The Judaizer has been preoccupied with one set of notions, one conversant with Hellenism, with others; while the Anomoean, and the Manichee, with the followers of Marcion , Valentinus, and Basilides , and the rest on the list of those who have wandered into heresy, each of them being prepossessed with their peculiar notions, necessitate a special controversy with their several. opinions. The method of recovery must be adapted to the form of the disease. You will not by the same means cure the polytheism of the Greek, and the unbelief of the Jew as to the Only-begotten God: nor as regards those who have wandered into heresy will you, by the same arguments in each case, upset their misleading romances as to the tenets of the Faith. No one could set Sabellius right by the same instruction as would benefit the Anomoean .

The controversy with the Manichee is profitless against the Jew . It is necessary, therefore, as I have said, to regard the opinions which the persons have taken up, and to frame your argument in accordance with the error into which each has fallen, by advancing in each discussion certain principles and reasonable propositions, that thus, through what is agreed upon on both sides, the truth may conclusively be brought to light. When, then, a

discussion is held with one of those who favour Greek ideas, it would be well to make the ascertaining of this the commencement of the reasoning, i.e. whether he presupposes the existence of a God, or concurs with the atheistic view. Should he say there is no God, then, from the consideration of the skilful and wise economy of the Universe he will be brought to acknowledge that there is a certain overmastering power manifested through these channels. If, on the other hand, he should have no doubt as to the existence of Deity, but should be inclined to entertain the presumption of a plurality of Gods, then we will adopt against him some such train of reasoning as this: ”does he think Deity is perfect or defective? and if, as is likely, he bears testimony to the perfection in the Divine nature, then we will demand of him to grant a perfection throughout in everything that is observable in that divinity, in order that Deity may not be regarded as a mixture of opposites, defect and perfection.

But whether as respects power, or the conception of goodness, or wisdom and imperishability and eternal existence, or any other notion besides suitable to the nature of Deity, that is found to lie close to the subject of our contemplation, in all he will agree that perfection is the idea to be entertained of the Divine nature, as being a just inference from these premises. If this, then, be granted us, it would not be difficult to bring round these scattered notions of a plurality of Gods to the acknowledgment of a unity of Deity. For if he admits that perfection is in every respect to be ascribed to the subject before us, though there is a plurality of these perfect things which are marked with the same character, he must be required by a logical necessity, either to point out the particularity in each of these things which present no distinctive variation, but are found always with the same marks, or, if (he cannot do that, and) the mind can grasp nothing in them in the way of particular, to give up the idea of any distinction.

For if neither as regards ”more and less” a person can detect a difference (in as much as the idea of perfection does not admit of it), nor as regards ”worse” and ”better” (for he cannot entertain a notion of Deity at all where the term ”worse” is not got rid of), nor as regards ”ancient” and ”modern” (for what exists not for ever is foreign to the notion of Deity), but on the contrary the idea of Godhead is one and the same, no peculiarity being on any ground of reason to be discovered in any one point, it is an absolute necessity that the mistaken fancy of a plurality of Gods would be forced to the acknowledgment of a unity of Deity. For if goodness, and justice, and wisdom, and power may be equally predicated of it, then also imperishability and eternal existence, and every orthodox idea would be in the same way admitted. As then all distinctive difference in any aspect whatever has been gradually removed, it necessarily follows that together with it a plurality of Gods has been removed from his belief, the general identity bringing round conviction to the Unity.

Chapter I.

But since our system of religion is wont to observe a distinction of persons in the unity of the Nature, to prevent our argument in our contention with Greeks sinking to the level of Judaism there is need again of a distinct technical statement in order to correct all error on this point.

For not even by those who are external to our doctrine is the Deity held to be without Logos . Now this admission of theirs will quite enable our argument to be unfolded. For he who admits that God is not without Logos, will agree that a being who is not without Logos (or word) certainly possesses Logos. Now it is to be observed that the utterance of man is expressed by the same term. If, then, he should say that he understands what the Logos of God is according to the analogy of things with us, he will thus be led on to a loftier idea, it being an absolute necessity for him to believe that the utterance, just as everything else, corresponds with the nature. Though, that is, there is a certain sort of force, and life, and wisdom, observed in the human subject, yet no one from the similarity of the terms would suppose that the life, or power, or wisdom, were in the case of God of such a sort as that, but the significations of all such terms are lowered to accord with the standard of our nature. For since our nature is liable to corruption and weak, therefore is our life short, our strength unsubstantial, our word unstable . But in that transcendent nature, through the greatness of the subject contemplated, every thing that is said about it is elevated with it.

Therefore though mention be made of God's Word it will not be thought of as having its realization in the utterance of what is spoken, and as then vanishing away, like our speech, into the nonexistent. On the contrary, as our nature, liable as it is to come to an end, is endued with speech which likewise comes to an end, so that, imperishable and ever-existing nature has eternal, and substantial speech. If, then, logic requires him to admit this eternal subsistence of God's Word, it is altogether necessary to admit also that the subsistence of that word consists in a living state; for it is an impiety to suppose that the Word has a soulless subsistence after the manner of stones. But if it subsists, being as it is something with intellect and without body, then certainly it lives, whereas if it be divorced from life, then as certainly it does not subsist; but this idea that the Word of God does not subsist, has been shown to be blasphemy. By consequence, therefore, it has also been shown that the Word is to be considered as in a living condition. And since the nature of the Logos is

reasonably believed to be simple, and exhibits in itself no duplicity or combination, no one would contemplate the existence of the living Logos as dependent on a mere participation of life, for such a supposition, which is to say that one thing is within another, would not exclude the idea of compositeness;

but, since the simplicity has been admitted, we are compelled to think that the Logos has an independent life, and not a mere participation of life. If, then, the Logos, as being life, lives , it certainly has the faculty of will, for no one of living creatures is without such a faculty. Moreover that such a will has also capacity to act must be the conclusion of a devout mind. For if you admit not this potency, you prove the reverse to exist. But no; impotence is quite removed from our conception of Deity. Nothing of incongruity is to be observed in connection with the Divine nature, but it is absolutely necessary to admit that the power of that word is as great as the purpose, lest mixture, or concurrence, of contradictions be found in an existence that is incomposite, as would be the case if, in the same purpose, we were to detect both impotence and power, if, that is, there were power to do one thing, but no power to do something else. Also we must suppose that this will in its power to do all things will have no tendency to anything that is evil (for impulse towards evil is foreign to the Divine nature), but that whatever is good, this it also wishes, and, wishing, is able to perform, and, being able, will not fail to perform ; but that it will bring all its proposals for good to effectual accomplishment.

Now the world is good, and all its contents are seen to be wisely and skilfully ordered. All of them, therefore, are the works of the Word, of one who, while He lives and subsists, in that He is God's Word, has a will too, in that He lives; of one too who has power to effect what He wills, and who wills what is absolutely good and wise and all else that connotes superiority. Whereas, then, the world is admitted to be something good, and from what has been said the world has been shown to be the work of the Word, who both wills and is able to effect the good, this Word is other than He of whom He is the Word. For this, too, to a certain extent is a term of "relation," inasmuch as the Father of the Word must needs be thought of with the Word, for it would not be word were it not a word of some one. If, then, the mind of the hearers, from the relative meaning of the term, makes a distinction between the Word and Him from whom He proceeds, we should find that the Gospel mystery, in its contention with the Greek conceptions, would not be in danger of coinciding with those who prefer the beliefs of the Jews.

But it will equally escape the absurdity of either party, by acknowledging both that the living Word of God is an effective and creative being, which is what the Jew refuses to receive, and also that the Word itself,and He from whom He is, do not differ in their nature. As in our own case we say that the word is from the mind, and no more entirely the same as the mind, than altogether other than it (for, by its being from it, it is something else, and not it; still by its bringing the mind in evidence it can no longer be considered as something other than it; and so it is in its essence one with mind, while as a subject it is different), in like manner, too, the Word of God by its self-subsistence is distinct from Him from whom it has

its subsistence; and yet by exhibiting in itself those qualities which are recognized in God it is the same in nature with Him who is recognizable by the same distinctive marks. For whether one adopts goodness , or power, or wisdom, or eternal existence, or the incapability of vice, death, and decay, or an entire perfection, or anything whatever of the kind, to mark one's conception of the Father, by means of the same marks he will find the Word that subsists from Him.

Chapter II.

As, then, by the higher mystical ascent from matters that concern ourselves to that transcendent nature we gain a knowledge of the Word, by the same method we shall be led on to a conception of the Spirit, by observing in our own nature certain shadows and resemblances of His ineffable power. Now in us the spirit (or breath) is the drawing of the air, a matter other than ourselves, inhaled and breathed out for the necessary sustainment of the body. This, on the occasion of uttering the word, becomes an utterance which expresses in itself the meaning of the word. And in the case of the Divine nature it has been deemed a point of our religion that there is a Spirit of God, just as it has been allowed that there is a Word of God, because of the inconsistency of the Word of God being deficient as compared with our word, if, while this word of ours is contemplated in connection with spirit, that other Word were to be believed to be quite unconnected with spirit. Not indeed that it is a thought proper to entertain of Deity, that after the manner of our breath something foreign from without flows into God, and in Him becomes the Spirit;

but when we think of God's Word we do not deem the Word to be something unsubstantial, nor the result of instruction, nor an utterance of the voice, nor what after being uttered passes away, nor what is subject to any other condition such as those which are observed in our word, but to be essentially self-subsisting, with a faculty of will ever-working, all-powerful. The like doctrine have we received as to God's Spirit; we regard it as that which goes with the Word and manifests its energy, and not as a mere effluence of the breath; for by such a conception the grandeur of the Divine power would be reduced and humiliated, that is, if the Spirit that is in it were supposed to resemble ours. But we conceive of it as an essential power, regarded as self-centred in its own proper person, yet equally incapable of being separated from God in Whom it is, or from the Word of God whomit accompanies, as from melting into nothingness; but as being, after the likeness of God's Word, existing as a person , able to will, self-moved, efficient, ever choosing the good, and for its every purpose having its power concurrent with its will.

Chapter III.

And so one who severely studies the depths of the mystery, receives secretly in his spirit, indeed, a moderate amount of apprehension of the doctrine of God's nature, yet he is unable to explain clearly in words the ineffable depth of this mystery. As, for instance, how the same thing is capable of being numbered and yet rejects numeration, how it is observed with distinctions yet is apprehended as a monad, how it is separate as to personality yet is not divided as to subject matter . For, in personality, the Spirit is one thing and the Word another, and yet again that from which the Word and Spirit is, another. But when you have gained the conception of what the distinction is in these, the oneness, again, of the nature admits not division, so that the supremacy of the one First Cause is not split and cut up into differing Godships, neither does the statement harmonize with the Jewish dogma, but the truth passes in the mean between these two conceptions, destroying each heresy, and yet accepting what is useful to it from each. The Jewish dogma is destroyed by the acceptance of the Word, and by the belief in the Spirit; while the polytheistic error of the Greek school is made to vanish by the unity of the Nature abrogating this imagination of plurality. While yet again, of the Jewish conception, let the unity of the Nature stand; and of the Hellenistic, only the distinction as to persons; the remedy against a profane view being thus applied, as required, on either side. For it is as if the number of the triad were a remedy in the case of those who are in error as to the One, and the assertion of the unity for those whose beliefs are dispersed among a number of divinities.

Chapter IV.

But should it be the Jew who gainsays these arguments, our discussion with him will no longer present equal difficulty , since the truth will be made manifest out of those doctrines on which he has been brought up. For that there is a Word of God, and a Spirit of God, powers essentially subsisting, both creative of whatever has come into being, and comprehensive of things that exist, is shown in the clearest light out of the Divinely-inspired Scriptures. It is enough if we call to mind one testimony, and leave the discovery of more to those who are inclined to take the trouble. ”By the Word of the Lord,” it is said, ”the heavens were established, and all the power of them by the breath of His mouth . What word and what breath? For the Word is not mere speech, nor that breath mere breathing. Would not the Deity be brought down to the level of the likeness of our human nature, were it held as a doctrine that the Maker of the universe used such word and such breath as this? What power arising from speech or breathing could there be of such a kind as would suffice for the establishment of the heavens and the powers that are therein? For if the Word of God is like our speech, and His Breath is like our breath, then from these like things there must certainly come a likeness of power; and the Word of God has just so much force as our word, and no more.

But the words that come from us and the breath that accompanies their utterance are ineffective and unsubstantial. Thus, they who would bring down the Deity to a similarity with the word as with us render also the Divine word and spirit altogether ineffective and unsubstantial. But if, as David says, ”By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and their powers had their framing by His breath,” then has the mystery of the truth been confirmed, which instructs us to speak of a word as in essential being, and a breath as in personality.

Chapter V.

That there is, then, a Word of God, and a Breath of God, the Greek, with his ”innate ideas” , and the Jew, with his Scriptures, will perhaps not deny. But the dispensation as regards the Word of God, whereby He became man, both parties would perhaps equally reject, as being incredible and unfitting to be told of God. By starting, therefore, from another point we will bring these gainsayers to a belief in this fact. They believe that all things came into being by thought and skill on the part of Him Who framed the system of the universe; or else they hold views that do not conform to this opinion. But should they not grant that reason and wisdom guided the framing of the world, they will install unreason and unskilfulness on the throne of the universe. But if this is an absurdity and impiety, it is abundantly plain that they must allow that thought and skill rule the world. Now in what has been previously said, the Word of God has been shown not to be this actual utterance of speech, or the possession of some science or art, but to be a power essentially and substantially existing, willing all good, and being possessed of strength to execute all its will; and, of a world that is good, this power appetitive and creative of good is the cause.

If, then, the subsistence of the whole world has been made to depend on the power of the Word, as the train of the argument has shown, an absolute necessity prevents us entertaining the thought of there being any other cause of the organization of the several parts of the world than the Word Himself, through whom all things in it passed into being. If any one wants to call Him Word, or Skill, or Power, or God, or anything else that is high and prized, we will not quarrel with him. For whatever word or name be invented as descriptive of the subject, one thing is intended by the expressions, namely the eternal power of God which is creative of things that are, the discoverer of things that are not, the sustaining cause of things that are brought into being, the foreseeing cause of things yet to be. This, then, whether it be God, or Word, or Skill, or Power, has been shown by inference to be the Maker of the nature of man, not urged to framing him by any necessity, but in the superabundance of love operating the production of such a creature. For needful it was that neither His light should be unseen, nor His glory without witness, nor His goodness unenjoyed, nor that any other quality observed in the Divine nature should in any case lie idle, with none to share it or enjoy it.

If, therefore, man comes to his birth upon these conditions, namely to be a partaker of the good things in God, necessarily he is framed of such a kind as to be adapted to the participation of such good. For as the eye, by virtue of the bright ray which is by nature wrapped up in it, is in fellowship with the light, and by its innate capacity draws to itself that which is akin to it, so was it needful that a certain affinity with the Divine should be mingled with the nature of man, in order that by means of this correspondence it might aim at that which was native to it. It is thus even with the nature of the unreasoning creatures, whose lot is cast in water or in air; each of them has an organization adapted to its kind of life, so that by a peculiar formation of the body, to the one of them the air, to the other the water, is its proper and congenial element. Thus, then, it was needful for man, born for the enjoyment of Divine good, to have something in his nature akin to that in which he is to participate. For this end he has been furnished with life, with thought, with skill, and with all the excellences that we attribute to God, in order that by each of them he might have his desire set upon that which is not strange to him.

Since, then, one of the excellences connected with the Divine nature is also eternal existence, it was altogether needful that the equipment of our nature should not be without the further gift of this attribute, but should have in itself the immortal, that by its inherent faculty it might both recognize what is above it, and be possessed with a desire for the divine and eternal life . In truth this has been shown in the comprehensive utterance of one expression, in the description of the cosmogony, where it is said that man was made "in the image of God" . For in this likeness, implied in the word image, there is a summary of all things that characterize Deity; and whatever else Moses relates, in a style more in the way of history, of these matters, placing doctrines before us in the form of a story, is connected with the same instruction. For that Paradise of his, with its peculiar fruits, the eating of which did not afford to them who tasted thereof satisfaction of the appetite, but knowledge and eternity of life, is in entire agreement with what has been previously considered with regard to man, in the view that our nature at its beginnings was good, and in the midst of good. But, perhaps, what has been said will be contradicted by one who looks only to the present condition of things, and thinks to convict our statement of untruthfulness, inasmuch as man is seen no longer under those primeval circumstances, but under almost entirely opposite ones.

"Where is the divine resemblance in the soul? Where the body's freedom from suffering? Where the eternity of life? Man is of brief existence, subject to passions, liable to decay, and ready both in body and mind for every form of suffering. By these and the like assertions, and by directing the attack against human nature, the opponent will think that he upsets the account that has been offered respecting man. But to secure that our argument may not have to be diverted from its course at any future stage, we will briefly discuss these points. That the life of man is at present subject to abnormal conditions is no proof that man was not created in the midst of good. For since man is the work of God, Who through His goodness brought this creature into being, no one could reasonably suspect that he, of whose constitution goodness is the cause, was created by his Maker in the midst of evil. But there is another reason for our present circumstances being what they are, and for our being

destitute of the primitive surroundings: and yet again the starting-point of our answer to this argument against us is not beyond and outside the assent of our opponents.

For He who made man for the participation of His own peculiar good, and incorporated in him the instincts for all that was excellent, in order that his desire might be carried forward by a corresponding movement in each case to its like, would never have deprived him of that most excellent and precious of all goods; I mean the gift implied in being his own master, and having a free will. For if necessity in any way was the master of the life of man, the "image" would have been falsified in that particular part, by being estranged owing to this unlikeness to its archetype. How can that nature which is under a yoke and bondage to any kind of necessity be called an image of a Master Being? Was it not, then, most right that that which is in every detail made like the Divine should possess in its nature a self-ruling and independent principle, such as to enable the participation of good to be the reward of its virtue? Whence, then, comes it, you will ask, that he who had been distinguished throughout with most excellent endowments exchanged these good things for the worse? The reason of this also is plain. No growth of evil had its beginning in the Divine will. Vice would have been blameless were it inscribed with the name of God as its maker and father.

But the evil is, in some way or other, engendered from within, springing up in the will at that moment when there is a retrocession of the soul from the beautiful , For as sight is an activity of nature, and blindness a deprivation of that natural operation, such is the kind of opposition between virtue and vice. It is, in fact, not possible to form any other notion of the origin of vice than as the absence of virtue. For as when the light has been removed the darkness supervenes, but as long as it is present there is no darkness, so, as long as the good is present in the nature, vice is a thing that has no inherent existence; while the departure of the better state becomes the origin of its opposite. Since then, this is the peculiarity of the possession of a free will, that it chooses as it likes the thing that pleases it, you will find that it is not God Who is the author of the present evils, seeing that He has ordered your nature so as to be its own master and free; but rather the recklessness that makes choice of the worse in preference to the better.

Chapter VI.

But you will perhaps seek to know the cause of this error of judgment; for it is to this point that the train of our discussion tends. Again, then, we shall be justified in expecting to find some starting-point which will throw light on this inquiry also. An argument such as the following we have received by tradition from the Fathers; and this argument is no mere mythical narrative, but one that naturally invites our credence. Of all existing things there is a twofold manner of apprehension, the consideration of them being divided between what appertains to intellect and what appertains to the senses; and besides these there is nothing to be detected in the nature of existing things, as extending beyond this division. Now these two worlds have been separated from each other by a wide interval, so that the sensible is not included in those qualities which mark the intellectual, nor this last in those qualities which distinguish the sensible, but each receives its formal character from qualities opposite to those of the other. The world of thought is bodiless, impalpable, and figureless; but the sensible is, by its very name, bounded by those perceptions which come through the organs of sense.

But as in the sensible world itself, though there is a considerable mutual opposition of its various elements, yet a certain harmony maintained in those opposites has been devised by the wisdom that rules the Universe, and thus there is produced a concord of the whole creation with itself, and the natural contrariety does not break the chain of agreement;in like manner, owing to the Divine wisdom,there is an admixture and interpenetration ofthe sensible with the intellectual department, in order that all things may equally have a share in the beautiful, and no single one of existing things be without its share in that superior world.For this reason the corresponding locality of the intellectual world is a subtitle and mobile essence, which, in accordance with its supramundane habitation, has in its peculiar nature large affinity with the intellectual part. Now, by a provision of the supreme Mind there is an intermixture of the intellectual with the sensible world, in order that nothing in creation may be thrown aside as worthless, as says the Apostle, or be left without its portion of the Divine fellowship. On this account it is that the com mixture of the intellectual and sensible in man is effected by the Divine Being, as the description of the cosmogony instructs us.

It tells us that God, taking dust of the ground, formed the man, and by an inspiration from Himself He planted life in the work of His hand, that thus the earthy might be raised up to the Divine, and so one certain grace of equal value might pervade the whole creation, the lower nature being mingled with the supramundane. Since, then, the intellectual nature had a previous existence, and to each of the angelic powers a certain operation was assigned, for the organization of the whole, by the authority that presides over all things, there was a certain power ordained to hold together and sway the earthly region , constituted for this purpose by the power that administers the Universe. Upon that there was fashioned that thing moulded of earth, an ”image” copied from the superior Power. Now this living being was man. In him, by an ineffable influence, the godlike beauty of the intellectual nature was mingled. He to whom the administration of the earth has been consigned takes it ill and thinks it not to be borne, if, of that nature which has been subjected to him, any being shall be exhibited bearing likeness to his transcendent dignity. But the question, how one who had been created for no evil purpose by Him who framed the system of the Universe in goodness fell away, nevertheless, into this passion of envy, it is not a part of my present business minutely to discuss;

though it would not be difficult, and it would not take long, to offer an account to those who are amenable to persuasion. For the distinctive difference between virtue and vice is not to be contemplated as that between two actually subsisting phenomena; but as there is a logical opposition between that which is and that which is not, and it is not possible to say that, as regards subsistency, that which is not is distinguished from that which is, but we say that nonentity is only logically opposed to entity, in the same way also the word vice is opposed to the word virtue, not as being any existence in itself, but only as becoming thinkable by the absence of the better. As we say that blindness is logically opposed to sight, not that blindness has of itself a natural existence, being only a deprivation of a preceding faculty, so also we say that vice is to be regarded as the deprivation of goodness, just as a shadow which supervenes at the passage of the solar ray. Since, then, the uncreated nature is incapable of admitting of such movement as is implied in turning or change or alteration, while everything that subsists through creation has connection with change, inasmuch as the subsistence itself of the creation had its rise in change, that which was not passing by the Divine power into that which is;

and since the above-mentioned power was created too, and could choose by a spontaneous movement whatever he liked, when he had closed his eyes to the good and the ungrudging like one who in the sunshine lets his eyelids down upon his eyes and sees only darkness, in this way that being also, by his very unwillingness to perceive the good, became cognisant of the contrary to goodness. Now this is Envy. Well, it is undeniable that the beginning of any matter is the cause of everything else that by consequence follows upon it, as, for instance, upon health there follows a good habit of body, activity, and a pleasurable life, but upon sickness, weakness, want of energy, and life passed in distaste of everything; and so, in all other instances, things follow by consequence their proper beginnings. As, then, freedom from the agitation of the passions is the beginning and groundwork of a life in accordance

with virtue, so the bias to vice generated by that Envy is the constituted road to all these evils which have been since displayed.

For when once he, who by his apostacy from goodness had begotten in himself this Envy, had received this bias to evil , like a rock, torn asunder from a mountain ridge, which is driven down headlong by its own weight, in like manner he, dragged away from his original natural propension to goodness and gravitating with all his weight in the direction of vice, was deliberately forced and borne away as by a kind of gravitation to the utmost limit of iniquity; and as for that intellectual power which he had received from his Creator to co-operate with the better endowments, this he made his assisting instrument in the discovery of contrivances for the purposes of vice, while by his crafty skill he deceives and circumvents man, persuading him to become his own murderer with his own hands. For seeing that man by the commission of the Divine blessing had been elevated to a lofty pre-eminence (for he was appointed king over the earth and all things on it; he was beautiful in his form, being created an image of the archetypal beauty; he was without passion in his nature, for he was an imitation of the unimpassioned; he was full of frankness, delighting in a face-to-face manifestation of the personal Deity),-all this was to the adversary the fuel to his passion of envy. Yet could he not by any exercise of strength or dint of force accomplish his purpose, for the strength of God's blessing over-mastered his own force.

His plan, therefore, is to withdraw man from this enabling strength, that thus he may be easily captured by him and open to his treachery. As in a lamp when the flame has caught the wick and a person is unable to blow it out, he mixes water with the oil and by this devices will dull the flame, in the same way the enemy, by craftily mixing up badness in man's will, has produced a kind of extinguishment and dulness in the blessing, on the failure of which that which is opposed necessarily enters. For to life is opposed death, to strength weakness, to blessing curse, to frankness shame, and to all that is good whatever can be conceived as opposite. Thus it is that humanity is in its present evil condition, since that beginning introduced the occasions for such an ending.

Chapter VII.

Yet let no one ask, "How was it that, if God foresaw the misfortune that would happen to man from want of thought, He came to create him, since it was, perhaps, more to his advantage not to have been born than to be in the midst of such evils? This is what they who have been carried away by the false teaching of the Manichees put forward for the establishment of their error, as thus able to show that the Creator of human nature is evil. For if God is not ignorant of anything that is, and yet man is in the midst of evil, the argument for the goodness of God could not be upheld; that is, if He brought forth into life the man who was to be in this evil. For if the operating force which is in accordance with the good is entirely that of a nature which is good, then this painful and perishing life, they say, can never be referred to the workmanship of the good, but it is necessary to suppose for such a life as this another author, from whom our nature derives its tendency to misery. Now all these and the like assertions seem to those who are thoroughly imbued with the heretical fraud, as with some deeply ingrained stain, to have a certain force from their superficial plausibility. But they who have a more thorough insight into the truth clearly perceive that what they say is unsound, and admits of speedy demonstration of its fallacy.

In my opinion, too, it is well to put forward the Apostle as pleading with us on these points for their condemnation. In his address to the Corinthians he makes a distinction between the carnal and spiritual dispositions of souls; showing, I think, by what he says that it is wrong to judge of what is morally excellent, or, on the other hand, of what is evil, by the standard of the senses; but that, by withdrawing the mind from bodily phenomena, we must decide by itself and from itself the true nature of moral excellence and of its opposite. "The spiritual man," he says, "judgeth all things . This, I think, must have been the reason of the invention of these deceptive doctrines on the part of those who propound them, viz. that when they define the good they have an eye only to the sweetness of the body's enjoyment, and so, because from its composite nature and constant tendency to dissolution that body is unavoidably subject to suffering and sicknesses, and because upon such conditions of suffering there follows a sort of sense of pain, they decree that the formation of man is the work of an evil deity. Since, if their thoughts had taken a loftier view, and, withdrawing their minds from this disposition to regard the gratifications of the senses, they had looked at the nature of existing things dispassionately, they would have understood that there is no evil

other than wickedness. Now all wickedness has its form and character in the deprivation of the good;

it exists not by itself, and cannot be contemplated as a subsistence. For no evil of any kind lies outside and independent of the will; but it is the non-existence of the good that is so denominated. Now that which is not has no substantial existence, and the Maker of that which has no substantial existence is not the Maker of things that have substantial existence. Therefore the God of things that are is external to the causation of things that are evil, since He is not the Maker of things that are non-existent. He Who formed the sight did not make blindness. He Who manifested virtue manifested not the deprivation thereof. He Who has proposed as the prize in the contest of a free will the guerdon of all good to those who are living virtuously, never, to please Himself, subjected mankind to the yoke of a strong compulsion, as if he would drag it unwilling, as it were his lifeless tool, towards the right. But if, when the light shines very brightly in a clear sky, a man of his own accord shuts his eyelids to shade his sight, the sun is clear of blame on the part of him who sees not.

Chapter VIII.

Nevertheless one who regards only the dissolution of the body is greatly disturbed, and makes it a hardship that this life of ours should be dissolved by death; it is, he says, the extremity of evil that our being should be quenched by this condition of mortality. Let him, then, observe through this gloomy prospect the excess of the Divine benevolence. He may by this, perhaps, be the more induced to admire the graciousness of God's care for the affairs of man. To live is desirable to those who partake of life, on account of the enjoyment of things to their mind; since, if any one lives in bodily pain, not to be is deemed by such an one much more desirable than to exist in pain. Let us inquire, then, whether He Who gives us our outfit for living has any other object in view than how we may pass our life under the fairest circumstances. Now since by a motion of our self-will we contracted a fellowship with evil, and, owing to some sensual gratification, mixed up this evil with our nature like some deleterious ingredient spoiling the taste of honey, and so, falling away from that blessedness which is involved in the thought of passionlessness, we have been viciously transformed-for this reason, Man, like some earthen potsherd, is resolved again into the dust of the ground, in order to secure that he may part with the soil which he has now contracted, and that he may, through the resurrection, be reformed anew after the original pattern;

at least if in this life that now is he has preserved what belongs to that image. A doctrine such as this is set before us by Moses under the disguise of an historical manner . And yet this disguise of history contains a teaching which is most plain. For after, as he tells us, the earliest of mankind were brought into contact with what was forbidden, and thereby were stripped naked of that primal blessed condition, the Lord clothed these, His first-formed creatures, with coats of skins. In my opinion we are not bound to take these skins in their literal meaning. For to what sort of slain and flayed animals did this clothing devised for these humanities belong? But since all skin, after it is separated from the animal, is dead, I am certainly of opinion that He Who is the healer of our sinfulness, of His foresight invested man subsequently with that capacity of dying which had been the special attribute of the brute creation. Not that it was to last for ever; for a coat is something external put on us, lending itself to the body for a time, but not indigenous to its nature. This liability to death, then, taken from the brute creation, was, provisionally, made to envelope the nature created for immortality. It enwrapped it externally, but not internally. It grasped the sentient part

of man; but laid no hold upon the Divine image. This sentient part, however, does not disappear, but is dissolved.

Disappearance is the passing away into non-existence, but dissolution is the dispersion again into those constituent elements of the world of which it was composed. But that which is contained in them perishes not, though it escapes the cognisance of our senses.

Now the cause of this dissolution is evident from the illustration we have given of it. For since the senses have a close connection with what is gross and earthy, while the intellect is in its nature of a nobler and more exalted character than the movements involved in sensation, it follows that as, through the estimate which is made by the senses, there is an erroneous judgment as to what is morally good, and this error has wrought the effect of substantiating a contrary condition, that part of us which has thus been made useless is dissolved by its reception of this contrary. Now the bearing of our illustration is as follows. We supposed that some vessel has been composed of clay, and then, for some mischief or other, filled with melted lead, which lead hardens and remains in a non-liquid state; then that the owner of the vessel recovers it, and, as he possesses the potter's art, pounds to bits the ware which held the lead, and then remoulds the vessel after its former pattern for his own special use, emptied now of the material which had been mixed with it: by a like process the maker of our vessel, now that wickedness has intermingled with our sentient part, I mean that connected with the body, will dissolve the material which has received the evil, and, re-moulding it again by the Resurrection without any admixture of the contrary matter, will recombine the elements into the vessel in its original beauty.

Now since both soul and body have a common bond of fellowship in their participation of the sinful affections, there is also an analogy between the soul's and body's death. For as in regard to the flesh we pronounce the separation of the sentient life to be death, so in respect of the soul we call the departure of the real life death. While, then, as we have said before, the participation in evil observable both in soul and body is of one and the same character, for it is through both that the evil principle advances into actual working, the death of dissolution which came from that clothing of dead skins does not affect the soul. For how can that which is uncompounded be subject to dissolution? But since there is a necessity that the defilements which sin has engendered in the soul as well should be removed thence by some remedial process, the medicine which virtue supplies has, in the life that now is, been applied to the healing of such mutilations as these. If, however, the soul remains unhealed , the remedy is dispensed in the life that follows this. Now in the ailments of the body there are sundry differences, some admitting of an easier, others requiring a more difficult treatment. In these last the use of the knife, or cauteries, or draughts of bitter medicines are adopted to remove the disease that has attacked the body.

For the healing of the soul's sicknesses the future judgment announces something of the same kind, and this to the thoughtless sort is held out as the threat of a terrible correction , in order that through fear of this painful retribution they may gain the wisdom of fleeing from wickedness: while by those of more intelligence it is believed to be a remedial process

ordered by God to bring back man, His peculiar creature, to the grace of his primal condition. They who use the knife or cautery to remove certain unnatural excrescences in the body, such as wens or warts, do not bring to the person they are serving a method of healing that is painless, though certainly they apply the knife without any intention of injuring the patient. In like manner whatever material excrescences are hardening on our souls, that have been sensualized by fellowship with the body's affections, are, in the day of the judgment , as it were cut and scraped away by the ineffable wisdom and power of Him Who, as the Gospel says, "healeth those that are sick . For, as He says again, "they that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick . Since, then, there has been inbred in the soul a strong natural tendency to evil, it must suffer, just as the excision of a wart gives a sharp pain to the skin of the body;

for whatever contrary to the nature has been inbred in the nature attaches itself to the subject in a certain union of feeling, and hence there is produced an abnormal intermixture of our own with an alien quality, so that the feelings, when the separation from this abnormal growth comes, are hurt and lacerated. Thus when the soul pines and melts away under the correction of its sins, as prophecy somewhere tells us , there necessarily follow, from its deep and intimate connection with evil, certain unspeakable and inexpressible pangs, the description of which is as difficult to render as is that of the nature of those good things which are the subjects of our hope. For neither the one nor the other is capable of being expressed in words, or brought within reach of the understanding. If, then, any one looks to the ultimate aim of the Wisdom of Him Who directs the economy of the universe, he would be very unreasonable and narrow-minded to call the Maker of man the Author of evil; or to say that He is ignorant of the future, or that, if He knows it and has made him, He is not uninfluenced by the impulse to what is bad. He knew what was going to be, yet did not prevent the tendency towards that which actually happened. That humanity, indeed, would be diverted from the good, could not be unknown to Him Who grasps all things by His power of foresight, and Whose eyes behold the coming equally with the past events.

As, then, He had in sight the perversion, so He devised man's recall to good. Accordingly, which was the better way?-never to have brought our nature into existence at all, since He foresaw that the being about to be created would fall away from that which is morally beautiful; or to bring him back by repentance, and restore his diseased nature to its original beauty? But, because of the pains and sufferings of the body which are the necessary accidents of its unstable nature, to call God on that account the Maker of evil, or to think that He is not the Creator of man at all, in hopes thereby to prevent the supposition of His being the Author of what gives us pain,-all this is an instance of that extreme narrow-mindedness which is the mark of those who judge of moral good and moral evil by mere sensation. Such persons do not understand that that only is intrinsically good which sensation does not reach, and that the only evil is estrangement from the good. But to make pains and pleasures the criterion of what is morally good and the contrary, is a characteristic of the unreasoning nature of creatures in whom, from their want of mind and understanding, the apprehension of real goodness has no place. That man is the work of God, created

morally noble and for the noblest destiny, is evident not only from what has been said, but from a vast number of other proofs; which, because they are so many, we shall here omit.

But when we call God the Maker of man we do not forget how carefully at the outset we defined our position against the Greeks. It was there shown that the Word of God is a substantial and personified being, Himself both God and the Word; Who has embraced in Himself all creative power, or rather Who is very power with an impulse to all good; Who works out effectually whatever He wills by having a power concurrent with His will; Whose will and work is the life of all things that exist; by Whom, too, man was brought into being and adorned with the highest excellences after the fashion of Deity. But since that alone is unchangeable in its nature which does not derive its origin through creation, while whatever by the uncreated being is brought into existence out of what was nonexistent, from the very first moment that it begins to be, is ever passing through change, and if it acts according to its nature the change is ever to the better, but if it be diverted from the straight path, then a movement to the contrary succeeds,-since, I say, man was thus conditioned, and in him the changeable element in his nature had slipped aside to the exact contrary, so that this departure from the good introduced in its train every form of evil to match the good (as, for instance, on the defection of life there was brought in the antagonism of death; on the deprivation of light darkness supervened;

in the absence of virtue vice arose in its place, and against every form of good might be reckoned a like number of opposite evils), by whom, I ask, was man, fallen by his recklessness into this and the like evil state (for it was not possible for him to retain even his prudence when he had estranged himself from prudence, or to take any wise counsel when he had severed himself from wisdom),-by whom was man to be recalled to the grace of his original state? To whom belonged the restoration of the fallen one, the recovery of the lost, the leading back the wanderer by the hand? To whom else than entirely to Him Who is the the Lord of his nature? For Him only Who at the first had given the life was it possible, or fitting, to recover it when lost. This is what we are taught and learn from the Revelation of the truth, that God in the beginning made man and saved him when he had fallen.

Chapter IX.

Up to this point, perhaps, one who has followed the course of our argument will agree with it, inasmuch as it does not seem to him that anything has been said which is foreign to the proper conception of the Deity. But towards what follows and constitutes the strongest part of this Revelation of the truth, he will not be similarly disposed; the human birth, I mean, the growth of infancy to maturity, the eating and drinking, the fatigue and sleep, the sorrow and tears, the false accusation and judgment hall, the cross of death and consignment to the tomb. All these things, included as they are in this revelation, to a certain extent blunt the faith of the more narrow-minded, and so they reject the sequel itself in consequence of these antecedents. They will not allow that in the Resurrection from the dead there is anything consistent with the Deity, because of the unseemly circumstances of the Death. Well, I deem it necessary first of all to remove our thoughts for a moment from the grossness of the carnal element, and to fix them on what is morally beautiful in itself, and on what is not, and on the distinguishing marks by which each of them is to be apprehended. No one, I think, who has reflected will challenge the assertion that, in the whole nature of things, one thing only is disgraceful, and that is vicious weakness; while whatever has no connection with vice is a stranger to all disgrace;

and whatever has no mixture in it of disgrace is certainly to be found on the side of the beautiful; and what is really beautiful has in it no mixture of its opposite. Now whatever is to be regarded as coming within the sphere of the beautiful becomes the character of God. Either, then, let them show that there was viciousness in His birth, His bringing up, His growth, His progress to the perfection of His nature, His experience of death and return from death; or, if they allow that the aforesaid circumstances of His life remain outside the sphere of viciousness, they will perforce admit that there is nothing of disgrace in this that is foreign to viciousness. Since, then, what is thus removed from every disgraceful and vicious quality is abundantly shown to be morally beautiful, how can one fail to pity the folly of men who give it as their opinion that what is morally beautiful is not becoming in the case of God?

Chapter X.

”But the nature of man,” it is said, ”is narrow and circumscribed, whereas the Deity is infinite. How could the infinite be included in the atom ? But who is it that says the infinitude of the Deity is comprehended in the envelopment of the flesh as if it were in a vessel? Not even in the case of our own life is the intellectual nature shut up within the boundary of the flesh. On the contrary, while the body’s bulk is limited to the proportions peculiar to it, the soul by the movements of its thinking faculty can coincide at will with the whole of creation. It ascends to the heavens, and sets foot within the deep. It traverses the breadth of the world, and in the restlessness of its curiosity makes its way into the regions that are beneath the earth; and often it is occupied in the scrutiny of the wonders of heaven, and feels no weight from the appendage of the body. If, then, the soul of man, although by the necessity of its nature it is transfused through the body, yet presents itself everywhere at will, what necessity is there for saying that the Deity is hampered by an environment of fleshly nature, and why may we not, by examples which we are capable of understanding, gain some reasonable idea of God’s plan of salvation? There is an analogy, for instance, in the flame of a lamp, which is seen to embrace the material with which it is supplied .

Reason makes a distinction between the flame upon the material, and the material that kindles the flame, though in fact it is not possible to cut off the one from the other so as to exhibit the flame separate from the material, but they both united form one single thing. But let no one, I beg, associate also with this illustration the idea of the perishableness of the flame; let him accept only what is apposite in the image; what is irrelevant and incongruous let him reject. What is there, then, to prevent our thinking (just as we see flame fastening on the material , and yet not inclosed in it) of a kind of union or approximation of the Divine nature with humanity, and yet in this very approximation guarding the proper notion of Deity, believing as we do that, though the Godhead be in man, it is beyond all circumscription?

Chapter XI.

Should you, however, ask in what way Deity is mingled with humanity, you will have occasion for a preliminary inquiry as to what the coalescence is of soul with flesh. But supposing you are ignorant of the way in which the soul is in union with the body, do not suppose that that other question is bound to come within your comprehension; rather, as in this case of the union of soul and body, while we have reason to believe that the soul is something other than the body, because the flesh when isolated from the soul becomes dead and inactive, we have yet no exact knowledge of the method of the union, so in that other inquiry of the union of Deity with manhood, while we are quite aware that there is a distinction as regards degree of majesty between the Divine and the mortal perishable nature, we are not capable of detecting how the Divine and the human elements are mixed up together. The miracles recorded permit us not to entertain a doubt that God was born in the nature of man. But how-this, as being a subject unapproachable by the processes of reasoning, we decline to investigate. For though we believe, as we do, that all the corporeal and intellectual creation derives its subsistence from the incorporeal and uncreated Being, yet the whence or the how, these we do not make a matter for examination along with our faith in the thing itself. While we accept the fact, we pass by the manner of the putting together of the Universe, as a subject which must not be curiously handled, but one altogether ineffable and inexplicable.

Chapter XII.

If a person requires proofs of God's having been manifested to us in the flesh, let him look at the Divine activities. For of the existence of the Deity at all one can discover no other demonstration than that which the testimony of those activities supplies. When, that is, we take a wide survey of the universe, and consider the dispensations throughout the world, and the Divine benevolences that operate in our life, we grasp the conception of a power overlying all, that is creative of all things that come into being, and is conservative of them as they exist. On the same principle, as regards the manifestation of God in the flesh, we have established a satisfactory proof of that apparition of Deity, in those wonders of His operations; for in all his work as actually recorded we recognize the characteristics of the Divine nature. It belongs to God to give life to men, to uphold by His providence all things that exist. It belongs to God to bestow meat and drink on those who in the flesh have received from Him the boon of life, to benefit the needy, to bring back to itself, by means of renewed health, the nature that has been perverted by sickness. It belongs to God to rule with equal sway the whole of creation; earth, sea, air, and the realms above the air. It is His to have a power that is sufficient for all things, and above all to be stronger than death and corruption. Now if in any one of these or the like particulars the record of Him had been wanting, they who are external to the faith had reasonably taken exception to the gospel revelation. But if every notion that is conceivable of God is to be traced in what is recorded of Him, what is there to hinder our faith?

Chapter XIII.

But, it is said, to be born and to die are conditions peculiar to the fleshly nature. I admit it. But what went before that Birth and what came after that Death escapes the mark of our common humanity. If we look to either term of our human life, we understand both from what we take our beginning, and in what we end. Man commenced his existence in a weakness and in a weakness completes it. But in the instance of the Incarnation neither did the birth begin with a weakness, nor in a weakness did the death terminate; for neither did sensual pleasure go before the birth, nor did corruption follow upon the death. Do you disbelieve this marvel? I quite welcome your incredulity. You thus entirely admit that those marvellous facts are supernatural, in the very way that you think that what is related is above belief. Let this very fact, then, that the proclamation of the mystery did not proceed in terms that are natural, be a proof to you of the manifestation of the Deity. For if what is related of Christ were within the bounds of nature, where were the Godhead? But if the account surpasses nature, then the very facts which you disbelieve are a demonstration that He who was thus proclaimed was God. A man is begotten by the conjunction of two persons, and after death is left in corruption.

Had the Gospel comprised no more than this, you certainly would not have deemed him to be God, the testimony to whom was conveyed in terms peculiar only to our nature. But when you are told that He was born, and yet transcended our common humanity both in the manner of His birth, and by His incapacity of a change to corruption, it would be well if, in consequence of this, you would direct your incredulity upon the other point, so as to refuse to suppose Him to be one of those who have manifestly existed as mere men; for it follows of necessity that a person who does not believe that such and such a being is mere man, must be led on to the belief that He is God. Well, he who has recorded that He was born has related also that He was born of a Virgin. If, therefore, on the evidence stated, the fact of His being born is established as a matter of faith, it is altogether incredible, on the same evidence, that He was not born in the manner stated. For the author who mentions His birth adds also, that it was of a Virgin; and in recording His death bears further testimony to His resurrection from the dead. If, therefore, from what you are told, you grant that He both was born and died, on the same grounds you must admit that both His birth and death were independent of the conditions of human weakness,-in fact, were above nature.

The conclusion, therefore, is that He Who has thus been shown to have been born under supernatural circumstances was certainly Himself not limited by nature.

Chapter XIV.

”Then why,” it is asked, ”did the Deity descend to such humiliation? Our faith is staggered to think that God, that incomprehensible, inconceivable, and ineffable reality, transcending all glory of greatness, wraps Himself up in the base covering of humanity, so that His sublime operations as well are debased by this admixture with the grovelling earth.”

Chapter XV.

Even to this objection we are not at a loss for an answer consistent with our idea of God. You ask the reason why God was born among men. If you take away from life the benefits that come to us from God, you would not be able to tell me what means you have of arriving at any knowledge of Deity. In the kindly treatment of us we recognize the benefactor; that is, from observation of that which happens to us, we conjecture the disposition of the person who operates it. If, then, love of man be a special characteristic of the Divine nature, here is the reason for which you are in search, here is the cause of the presence of God among men. Our diseased nature needed a healer. Man in his fall needed one to set him upright. He who had lost the gift of life stood in need of a life-giver, and he who had dropped away from his fellowship with good wanted one who would lead him back to good. He who was shut up in darkness longed for the presence of the light. The captive sought for a ransomer, the fettered prisoner for some one to take his part, and for a deliverer he who was held in the bondage of slavery. Were these, then, trifling or unworthy wants to importune the Deity to come down and take a survey of the nature of man, when mankind was so miserably and pitiably conditioned?

”But,” it is replied, ”man might have been benefited, and yet God might have continued in a passionless state. Was it not possible for Him Who in His wisdom framed the universe, and by the simple impulse of His will brought into subsistence that which was not, had it so pleased Him, by means of some direct Divine command to withdraw man from the reach of the opposing power, and bring him back to his primal state? Whereas He waits for long periods of time to come round, He submits Himself to the condition of a human body, He enters upon the stage of life by being born, and after passing through each age of life in succession, and then tasting death, at last, only by the rising again of His own body, accomplishes His object,-as if it was not optional to Him to fulfil His purpose without leaving the height of His Divine glory, and to save man by a single command , letting those long periods of time alone. Needful, therefore, is it that in answer to objections such as these we should draw out the counter-statement of the truth, in order that no obstacle may be offered to the faith of those persons who will minutely examine the reasonableness of the gospel revelation. In the first place, then, as has been partially discussed before , let us consider what is that which, by the rule of contraries, is opposed to virtue.

As darkness is the opposite of light, and death of life, so vice, and nothing else besides, is plainly the opposite of virtue. For as in the many objects in creation there is nothing which is distinguished by its opposition to light or life, but only the peculiar ideas which are their exact opposites, as darkness and death-not stone, or wood, or water, or man, or anything else in the world,-so, in the instance of virtue, it cannot be said that any created thing can be conceived of as contrary to it, but only the idea of vice. If, then, our Faith preached that the Deity had been begotten under vicious circumstances, an opportunity would have been afforded the objector of running down our belief, as that of persons who propounded incongruous and absurd opinions with regard to the Divine nature. For, indeed, it were blasphemous to assert that the Deity, Which is very wisdom, goodness, incorruptibility, and every other exalted thing in thought or word, had undergone change to the contrary. If, then, God is real and essential virtue, and no mere existence of any kind is logically opposed to virtue, but only vice is so; and if the Divine birth was not into vice, but into human existence;

and if only vicious weakness is unseemly and shameful-and with such weakness neither was God born, nor had it in His nature to be born,-why are they scandalized at the confession that God came into touch with human nature, when in relation to virtue no contrariety whatever is observable in the organization of man? For neither Reason, nor Understanding , nor Receptivity for science, nor any other like quality proper to the essence of man, is opposed to the principle of virtue.

Chapter XVI.

”But,” it is said, ”this change in our body by birth is a weakness, and one born under such condition is born in weakness. Now the Deity is free from weakness. It is, therefore, a strange idea in connection with God,” they say, ”when people declare that one who is essentially free from weakness thus comes into fellowship with weakness. Now in reply to this let us adopt the same argument as before, namely that the word ”weakness” is used partly in a proper, partly in an adapted sense. Whatever, that is, affects the will and perverts it from virtue to vice is really and truly a weakness; but whatever in nature is to be seen proceeding by a chain peculiar to itself of successive stages would be more fitly called a work than a weakness. As, for instance, birth, growth, the continuance of the underlying substance through the influx and efflux of the aliments, the meeting together of the component elements of the body, and, on the other hand, the dissolution of its component parts and their passing back into the kindred elements. Which ”weakness,” then, does our Mystery assert that the Deity came in contact with? That which is properly called weakness, which is vice, or that which is the result of natural movements? Well, if our Faith affirmed that the Deity was born under forbidden circumstances, then it would be our duty to shun a statement which gave this profane and unsound description of the Divine Being.

But if it asserts that God laid hold on this nature of ours, the production of which in the first instance and the subsistence afterwards had its origin in Him, in what way does this our preaching fail in the reverence that befits Him? Amongst our notions of God no disposition tending to weakness goes along with our belief in Him. We do not say that a physician is in weakness when he is employed in healing one who is so . For though he touches the infirmity he is himself unaffected by it. If birth is not regarded in itself as a weakness, no one can call life such. But the feeling of sensual pleasure does go before the human birth, and as to the impulse to vice in all living men, this is a disease of our nature. But then the Gospel mystery asserts that. He Who took our nature was pure from both these feelings. If, then, His birth had no connection with sensual pleasure, and His life none with vice, what ”weakness” is there left which the mystery of our religion asserts that God participated in? But should any one call the separation of body and soul a weakness , far more justly might he term the meeting together of these two elements such. For if the severance of things that have been connected is a weakness, then is the union of things that are asunder a weakness also.

For there is a feeling of movement in the uniting of things sundered as well as in the separation of what has been welded into one. The same term, then, by which the final movement is called, it is proper to apply to the one that initiated it. If the first movement, which we call birth, is not a weakness, it follows that neither the second, which we call death, and by which the severance of the union of the soul and body is effected, is a weakness. Our position is, that God was born subject to both movements of our nature; first, that by which the soul hastens to join the body, and then again that by which the body is separated from the soul; and that when the concrete humanity was formed by the mixture of these two, I mean the sentient and the intelligent element, through that ineffable and inexpressible conjunction, this result in the Incarnation followed, that after the soul and body had been once united the union continued for ever. For when our nature, following its own proper course, had even in Him been advanced to the separation of soul and body, He knitted together again the disunited elements, cementing them, as it were, together with the cement of His Divine power, and recombining what has been severed in a union never to be broken. And this is the Resurrection, namely the return, after they have been dissolved, of those elements that had been before linked together, into an indissoluble union through a mutual incorporation;

in order that thus the primal grace which invested humanity might be recalled, and we restored to the everlasting life, when the vice that has been mixed up with our kind has evaporated through our dissolution, as happens to any liquid when the vessel that contained it is broken, and it is spilt and disappears, there being nothing to contain it. For as the principle of death took its rise in one person and passed on in succession through the whole of human kind, in like manner the principle of the Resurrection-life extends from one person to the whole of humanity. For He Who reunited to His own proper body the soul that had been assumed by Himself, by virtue of that power which had mingled with both of these component elements at their first framing, then, upon a more general scale as it were , conjoined the intellectual to the sentient nature, the new principle freely progressing to the extremities by natural consequence. For when, in that concrete humanity which He had taken to Himself, the soul after the dissolution returned to the body, then this uniting of the several portions passes, as by a new principle, in equal force upon the whole human race. This, then, is the mystery of God's plan with regard to His death and His resurrection from the dead; namely, instead of preventing the dissolution of His body by death and the necessary results of nature, to bring both back to each other in the resurrection;

so that He might become in Himself the meeting-ground both of life and death, having re-established in Himself that nature which death had divided, and being Himself the originating principle of the uniting those separated portions.

Chapter XVII.

But it will be said that the objection which has been brought against us has not yet been solved, and that what unbelievers have urged has been rather strengthened by all we have said. For if, as our argument has shown, there is such power in Him that both the destruction of death and the introduction of life resides in Him, why does He not effect His purpose by the mere exercise of His will, instead of working out our salvation in such a roundabout way, by being born and nurtured as a man, and even, while he was saving man, tasting death; when it was possible for Him to have saved man without subjecting Himself to such conditions? Now to this, with all candid persons, it were sufficient to reply, that the sick do not dictate to their physicians the measures for their recovery, nor cavil with those who do them good as to the method of their healing; why, for instance, the medical man felt the diseased part and devised this or that particular remedy for the removal of the complaint, when they expected another; but the patient looks to the end and aim of the good work, and receives the benefit with gratitude. Seeing, however, as says the Prophet , that God's abounding goodness keeps its utility concealed, and is not seen in complete clearness in this present life-otherwise, if the eyes could behold all that is hoped for, every objection of unbelievers would be removed,-but, as it is, abides the ages that are coming, when what is at present seen only by the eye of faith must be revealed, it is needful accordingly that, as far as we may, we should by the aid of arguments, the best within our reach, attempt to discover for these difficulties also a solution in harmony with what has gone before.

Chapter XVIII.

And yet it is perhaps straining too far for those who do believe that God sojourned here in life to object to the manner of His appearance , as wanting wisdom or conspicuous reasonableness. For to those who are not vehemently antagonistic to the truth there exists no slight proof of the Deity having sojourned here; I mean that which is exhibited now in this present life before the life to come begins, the testimony which is borne by actual facts. For who is there that does not know that every part of the world was overspread with demoniacal delusion which mastered the life of man through the madness of idolatry; how this was the customary rule among all nations, to worship demons under the form of idols, with the sacrifice of living animals and the polluted offerings on their altars? But from the time when, as says the Apostle, ”the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men appeared ,” and dwelt among us in His human nature, all these things passed away like smoke into nothingness, the madness of their oracles and prophesyings ceased, the annual pomps and pollutions of their bloody hecatombs came to an end, while among most nations altars entirely disappeared, together with porches, precincts, and shrines, and all the ritual besides which was followed out by the attendant priest of those demons, to the deception both of themselves and of all who came in their way. So that in many of these places no memorial exists of these things having ever been.

But, instead, throughout the whole world there have arisen in the name of Jesus temples and altars and a holy and unbloody Priesthood , and a sublime philosophy, which teaches, by deed and example more than by word, a disregard of this bodily life and a contempt of death, a contempt which they whom tyrants have tried to force to apostatize from the faith have manifestly displayed, making no account of the cruelties done to their bodies or of their doom of death: and yet, plainly, it was not likely that they would have submitted to such treatment unless they had had a clear and indisputable proof of that Divine Sojourn among men. And the following fact is, further, a sufficient mark, as against the Jews, of the presence among them of Him in Whom they disbelieve; up to the time of the manifestation of Christ the royal palaces in Jerusalem were in all their splendour: there was their far-famed Temple; there was the customary round of their sacrifices throughout the year: all the things, which had been expressed by the Law in symbols to those who knew how to read its secrets, were up to that point of time unbroken in their observance, in accordance with that form of worship which had been established from the beginning.

But when at length they saw Him Whom they were looking for, and of Whom by their Prophets and the Law they had before been told, and when they held in more estimation than faith in Him Who had so manifested Himself that which for the future became but a degraded superstition, because they took it in a wrong sense , and clung to the mere phrases of the Law in obedience to the dictates of custom rather than of intelligence, and when they had thus refused the grace which had appeared,-then even those holy monuments of their religion were left standing, as they do, in history alone; for no traces even of their Temple can be recognized, and their splendid city has been left in ruins, so that there remains to the Jews nothing of the ancient institutions; while by the command of those who rule over them the very ground of Jerusalem which they so venerated is forbidden to them.

Chapter XIX.

Nevertheless, since neither those who take the Greek view, nor yet the leaders of Jewish opinions, are willing to make such things the proofs of that Divine manifestation, it may be as well, as regards these demurrers to our statement, to treat more particularly the reason by virtue of which the Divine nature is combined with ours, saving, as it does, humanity by means of itself, and not working out its proposed design by means of a mere command. With what, then, must we begin, so as to conduct our thinking by a logical sequence to the proposed conclusion? What but this, viz. with a succinct detail of the notions that can religiously be entertained of God ?

Chapter XX.

It is, then, universally acknowledged that we must believe the Deity to be not only almighty, but just, and good, and wise, and everything else that suggests excellence. It follows, therefore, in the present dispensation of things, that it is not the case that some particular one of these Divine attributes freely displays itself in creation, while there is another that is not present there; for, speaking once for all, no one of those exalted terms, when disjoined from the rest, is by itself alone a virtue, nor is the good really good unless allied with what is just, and wise, and mighty (for what is unjust, or unwise, or powerless, is not good, neither is power, when disjoined from the principle of justice and of wisdom, to be considered in the light of virtue; such species of power is brutal and tyrannous; and so, as to the rest, if what is wise be carried beyond the limits of what is just, or if what is just be not contemplated along with might and goodness, cases of that sort one would more properly call vice; for how can what comes short of perfection be reckoned among things that are good?). If, then, it is fitting that all excellences should be combined in the views we have of God, let us see whether this Dispensation as regards man fails in any of those conceptions which we should entertain of Him. The object of our inquiry in the case of God is before all things the indications of His goodness.

And what testimony to His goodness could there be more palpable than this, viz. His regaining to Himself the allegiance of one who had revolted to the opposite side, instead of allowing the fixed goodness of His nature to be affected by the variableness of the human will? For, as David says, He had not come to save us had not ”goodness” created in Him such a purpose ; and yet His goodness had not advanced His purpose had not wisdom given efficacy to His love for man. For, as in the case of persons who are in a sickly condition, there are probably many who wish that a man were not in such evil plight, but it is only they in whom there is some technical ability operating in behalf of the sick, who bring their good-will on their behalf to a practical issue, so it is absolutely needful that wisdom should be conjoined with goodness. In what way, then, is wisdom contemplated in combination with goodness; in the actual events, that is, which have taken place? because one cannot observe a good purpose in the abstract; a purpose cannot possibly be revealed unless it has the light of some events upon it. Well, the things accomplished, progressing as they did in orderly series and sequence, reveal the wisdom and the skill of the Divine economy.

And since, as has been before remarked, wisdom, when combined with justice, then absolutely becomes a virtue, but, if it be disjoined from it, cannot in itself alone be good, it were well moreover in this discussion of the Dispensation in regard to man, to consider attentively in the light of each other these two qualities; I mean, its wisdom and its justice.

Chapter XXI.

What, then, is justice? We distinctly remember what in the course of our argument we said in the commencement of this treatise; namely, that man was fashioned in imitation of the Divine nature, preserving his resemblance to the Deity as well in other excellences as in possession of freedom of the will, yet being of necessity of a nature subject to change. For it was not possible that a being who derived his origin from an alteration should be altogether free from this liability. For the passing from a state of non-existence into that of existence is a kind of alteration; when being, that is, by the exercise of Divine power takes the place of nonentity. In the following special respect, too, alteration is necessarily observable in man, namely, because man was an imitation of the Divine nature, and unless some distinctive difference had been occasioned, the imitating subject would be entirely the same as that which it resembles; but in this instance, it is to be observed, there is a difference between that which "was made in the image" and its pattern; namely this, that the one is not subject to change, while the other is (for, as has been described, it has come into existence through an alteration), and being thus subject to alteration does not always continue in its existing state. For alteration is a kind of movement ever advancing from the present state to another; and there are two forms of this movement;

the one being ever towards what is good, and in this the advance has no check, because no goal of the course to be traversed can be reached, while the other is in the direction of the contrary, and of it this is the essence, that it has no subsistence; for, as has been before stated, the contrary state to goodness conveys some such notion of opposition, as when we say, for instance, that that which is is logically opposed to that which is not, and that existence is so opposed to non-existence. Since, then, by reason of this impulse and movement of changeful alteration it is not possible that the nature of the subject of this change should remain self-centred and unmoved, but there is always something towards which the will is tending, the appetency for moral beauty naturally drawing it on to movement, this beauty is in one instance really such in its nature, in another it is not so, only blossoming with an illusive appearance of beauty; and the criterion of these two kinds is the mind that dwells within us. Under these circumstances it is a matter of risk whether we happen to choose the real beauty, or whetherwe are diverted from its choice by some deception arising from appearance, and thus drift away to the opposite;

as happened, we are told in the heathen fable, to the dog which looked askance at the reflection in the water of what it carried in its mouth, but let go the real food, and, opening its mouth wide to swallow the image of it, still hungered. Since, then, the mind has been disappointed in its craving for the real good, and diverted to that which is not such, being persuaded, through the deception of the great advocate and inventor of vice, that that was beauty which was just the opposite (for this deception would never have succeeded, had not the glamour of beauty been spread over the hook of vice like a bait),-the man, I say, on the one hand, who had enslaved himself by indulgence to the enemy of his life, being of his own accord in this unfortunate condition,-I ask you to investigate, on the other hand, those qualities which suit and go along with our conception of the Deity, such as goodness, wisdom, power, immortality, and all else that has the stamp of superiority. As good, then, the Deity entertains pity for fallen man; as wise He is not ignorant of the means for his recovery; while a just decision must also form part of that wisdom; for no one would ascribe that genuine justice to the absence of wisdom.

Chapter XXII.

What, then, under these circumstances is justice? It is the not exercising any arbitrary sway over him who has us in his power , nor, by tearing us away by a violent exercise of force from his hold, thus leaving some colour for a just complaint to him who enslaved man through sensual pleasure. For as they who have bartered away their freedom for money are the slaves of those who have purchased them (for they have constituted themselves their own sellers, and it is not allowable either for themselves or any one else in their behalf to call freedom to their aid, not even though those who have thus reduced themselves to this sad state are of noble birth; and, if any one out of regard for the person who has so sold himself should use violence against him who has bought him, he will clearly be acting unjustly in thus arbitrarily rescuing one who has been legally purchased as a slave, whereas, if he wishes to pay a price to get such a one away, there is no law to prevent that), on the same principle, now that we had voluntarily bartered away our freedom, it was requisite that no arbitrary method of recovery, but the one consonant with justice should be devised by Him Who in His goodness had undertaken our rescue. Now this method is in a measure this; to make over to the master of the slave whatever ransom he may agree to accept for the person in his possession.

Chapter XXIII.

What, then, was it likely that the master of the slave would choose to receive in his stead? It is possible in the way of inference to make a guess as to his wishes in the matter, if, that is, the manifest indications of what we are seeking for should come into our hands. He then, who, as we before stated in the beginning of this treatise, shut his eyes to the good in his envy of man in his happy condition, he who generated in himself the murky cloud of wickedness, he who suffered from the disease of the love of rule, that primary and fundamental cause of propension to the bad and the mother, so to speak, of all the wickedness that follows,-what would he accept in exchange for the thing which he held, but something, to be sure, higher and better, in the way of ransom, that thus, by receiving a gain in the exchange, he might foster the more his own special passion of pride? Now unquestionably in not one of those who had lived in history from the beginning of the world had he been conscious of any such circumstance as he observed to surround Him Who then manifested Himself, i. e.

conception without carnal connection, birth without impurity, motherhood with virginity, voices of the unseen testifying from above to a transcendent worth, the healing of natural disease, without the use of means and of an extraordinary character, proceeding from Him by the mere utterance of a word and exercise of His will, the restoration of the dead to life, the absolution of the damned , the fear with which He inspired devils, His power over tempests, His walking through the sea, not by the waters separating on either side, and, as in the case of Moses' miraculous power, making bare its depths for those who passed through, but by the surface of the water presenting solid ground for His feet, and by a firm and hard resistance supporting His steps; then, His disregard for food as long as it pleased Him to abstain, His abundant banquets in the wilderness wherewith many thousands were fully fed (though neither did the heavens pour down manna on them, nor was their need supplied by the earth producing corn for them in its natural way, but that instance of munificence came out of the ineffable store-houses of His Divine power), the bread ready in the hands of those who distributed it, as if they were actually reaping it, and becoming more, the more the eaters were filled; and then, the banquet on the fish; not that the sea supplied their need, but He Who had stocked the sea with its fish.

But how is it possible to narrate in succession each one of the Gospel miracles? The Enemy, therefore, beholding in Him such power, saw also in Him an opportunity for an advance, in

the exchange, upon the value of what he held. For this reason he chooses Him as a ransom for those who were shut up in the prison of death. But it was out of his power to look on the unclouded aspect of God; he must see in Him some portion of that fleshly nature which through sin he had so long held in bondage. Therefore it was that the Deity was invested with the flesh, in order, that is, to secure that he, by looking upon something congenial and kindred to himself, might have no fears in approaching that supereminent power; and might yet by perceiving that power, showing as it did, yet only gradually, more and more splendour in the miracles, deem what was seen an object of desire rather than of fear. Thus, you see how goodness was conjoined with justice, and how wisdom was not divorced from them. For to have devised that the Divine power should have been containable in the envelopment of a body, to the end that the Dispensation in our behalf might not be thwarted through any fear inspired by the Deity actually appearing, affords a demonstration of all these qualities at once-goodness, wisdom, justice. His choosing to save man is a testimony of his goodness;

His making the redemption of the captive a matter of exchange exhibits His justice, while the invention whereby He enabled the Enemy to apprehend that of which he was before incapable, is a manifestation of supreme wisdom.

Chapter XXIV.

But possibly one who has given his attention to the course of the preceding remarks may inquire: ”wherein is the power of the Deity, wherein is the imperishableness of that Divine power, to be traced in the processes you have described? In order, therefore, to make this also clear, let us take a survey of the sequel of the Gospel mystery, where that Power conjoined with Love is more especially exhibited. In the first place, then, that the omnipotence of the Divine nature should have had strength to descend to the humiliation of humanity, furnishes a clearer proof of that omnipotence than even the greatness and supernatural character of the miracles. For that something pre-eminently great should be wrought out by Divine power is, in a manner, in accordance with, and consequent upon the Divine nature; nor is it startling to hear it said that the whole of the created world, and all that is understood to be beyond the range of visible things, subsists by the power of God, His will giving it existence according to His good pleasure. But this His descent to the humility of man is a kind of superabundant exercise of power, which thus finds no check even in directions which contravene nature. It is the peculiar property of the essence of fire to tend upwards; no one therefore, deems it wonderful in the case of flame to see that natural operation. But should the flame be seen to stream downwards, like heavy bodies, such a fact would be regarded as a miracle;

namely, how fire still remains fire, and yet, by this change of direction in its motion, passes out of its nature by being borne downward. In like manner, it is not the vastness of the heavens, and the bright shining of its constellations, and the order of the universe and the unbroken administration over all existence that so manifestly displays the transcendent power of the Deity, as this condescension to the weakness of our nature; the way, in fact, in which sublimity, existing in lowliness, is actually seen in lowliness, and yet descends not from its height, and in which Deity, entwined as it is with the nature of man, becomes this, and yet still is that. For since, as has been said before, it was not in the nature of the opposing power to come in contact with the undiluted presence of God, and to undergo His unclouded manifestation, therefore, in order to secure that the ransom in our behalf might be easily accepted by him who required it, the Deity was hidden under the veil of our nature, that so, as with ravenous fish , the hook of the Deity might be gulped down along with the bait of flesh, and thus, life being introduced into the house of death, and light shining in darkness, that which is diametrically opposed to light and life might vanish; for it is not

in the nature of darkness to remain when light is present, or of death to exist when life is active.

Let us, then, by way of summary take up the train of the arguments for the Gospel mystery, and thus complete our answer to those who question this Dispensation of God, and show them on what ground it is that the Deity by a personal intervention works out the salvation of man. It is certainly most necessary that in every point the conceptions we entertain of the Deity should be such as befit the subject, and not that, while one idea worthy of His sublimity should be retained, another equally belonging to that estimate of Deity should be dismissed from it; on the contrary, every exalted notion, every devout thought, must most surely enter into our belief in God, and each must be made dependent on each in a necessary sequence. Well, then; it has been pointed out that His goodness, wisdom, justice, power, incapability of decay, are all of them in evidence in the doctrine of the Dispensation in which we are. His goodness is caught sight of in His election to save lost man; His wisdom and justice have been displayed in the method of our salvation; His power, in that, though born in the likeness and fashion of a man, on the lowly level of our nature, and in accordance with that likeness raising the expectation that he could be overmastered by death, he, after such a birth, nevertheless produced the effects peculiar and natural to Him. Now it is the peculiar effect of light to make darkness vanish, and of life to destroy death.

Since, then, we have been led astray from the right path, and diverted from that life which was ours at the beginning, and brought under the sway of death, what is there improbable in the lesson we are taught by the Gospel mystery, if it be this; that cleansing reaches those who are befouled with sin, and life the dead, and guidance the wanderers, in order that defilement may be cleansed, error corrected, and what was dead restored to life?

Chapter XXV.

That Deity should be born in our nature, ought not reasonably to present any strangeness to the minds of those who do not take too narrow a view of things. For who, when he takes a survey of the universe, is so simple as not to believe that there is Deity in everything, penetrating it, embracing it, and seated in it? For all things depend on Him Who is , nor can there be anything which has not its being in Him Who is. If, therefore, all things are in Him, and He in all things, why are they scandalized at the plan of Revelation when it teaches that God was born among men, that same God Whom we are convinced is even now not outside mankind? For although this last form of God's presence amongst us is not the same as that former presence, still His existence amongst us equally both then and now is evidenced; only now He Who holds together Nature in existence is transfused in us; while at that other time He was transfused throughout our nature, in order that our nature might by this transfusion of the Divine become itself divine, rescued as it was from death, and put beyond the reach of the caprice of the antagonist. For His return from death becomes to our mortal race the commencement of our return to the immortal life.

Chapter XXVI.

Still, in his examination of the amount of justice and wisdom discoverable in this Dispensation a person is, perhaps, induced to entertain the thought that it was by means of a certain amount of deceit that God carried out this scheme on our behalf. For that not by pure Deity alone, but by Deity veiled in human nature, God, without the knowledge of His enemy, got within the lines of him who had man in his power, is in some measure a fraud and a surprise; seeing that it is the peculiar way with those who want to deceive to divert in another direction the expectations of their intended victims, and then to effect something quite different from what these latter expected. But he who has regard for truth will agree that the essential qualities of justice and wisdom are before all things these; viz. of justice, to give to every one according to his due; of wisdom, not to pervert justice, and yet at the same time not to dissociate the benevolent aim of the love of mankind from the verdict of justice, but skilfully to combine both these requisites together, in regard to justice returning the due recompense, in regard to kindness not swerving from the aim of that love of man. Let us see, then, whether these two qualities are not to be observed in that which took place.

That repayment, adequate to the debt, by which the deceiver was in his turn deceived, exhibits the justice of the dealing, while the object aimed at is a testimony to the goodness of Him who effected it. It is, indeed, the property of justice to assign to every one those particular results of which he has sunk already the foundations and the causes, just as the earth returns its harvests according to the kinds of seeds thrown into it; while it is the property of wisdom, in its very manner of giving equivalent returns, not to depart from the kinder course. Two persons may both mix poison with food, one with the design of taking life, the other with the design of saving that life; the one using it as a poison, the other only as an antidote to poison; and in no way does the manner of the cure adopted spoil the aim and purpose of the benefit intended; for although a mixture of poison with the food may be effected by both of these persons alike, yet looking at their intention we are indignant with the one and approve the other; so in this instance, by the reasonable rule of justice, he who practised deception receives in return that very treatment, the seeds of which he had himself sown of his own free will. He who first deceived man by the bait of sensual pleasure is himself deceived by the presentment of the human form.

But as regards the aim and purpose of what took place, a change in the direction of the nobler is involved; for whereas he, the enemy, effected his deception for the ruin of our nature, He Who is at once the just, and good, and wise one, used His device, in which there was deception, for the salvation of him who had perished, and thus not only conferred benefit on the lost one, but on him, too, who had wrought our ruin. For from this approximation of death to life, of darkness to light, of corruption to incorruption, there is effected an obliteration of what is worse, and a passing away of it into nothing, while benefit is conferred on him who is freed from those evils. For it is as when some worthless material has been mixed with gold, and the gold-refiners burn up the foreign and refuse part in the consuming fire, and so restore the more precious substance to its natural lustre: (not that the separation is effected without difficulty, for it takes time for the fire by its melting force to cause the baser matter to disappear; but for all that, this melting away of the actual thing that was embedded in it to the injury of its beauty is a kind of healing of the gold.

In the same way when death, and corruption, and darkness, and every other offshoot of evil had grown into the nature of the author of evil, the approach of the Divine power, acting like fire , and making that unnatural accretion to disappear, thus by purgation of the evil becomes a blessing to that nature, though the separation is agonizing. Therefore even the adversary himself will not be likely to dispute that what took place was both just and salutary, that is, if he shall have attained to a perception of the boon. For it is now as with those who for their cure are subjected to the knife and the cautery; they are angry with the doctors, and wince with the pain of the incision; but if recovery of health be the result of this treatment, and the pain of the cautery passes away, they will feel grateful to those who have wrought this cure upon them. In like manner, when, after long periods of time, the evil of our nature, which now is mixed up with it and has grown with its growth, has been expelled, and when there has been a restoration of those who are now lying in Sin to their primal state, a harmony of thanksgiving will arise from all creation , as well from those who in the process of the purgation have suffered chastisement, as from those who needed not any purgation at all. These and the like benefits the great mystery of the Divine incarnation bestows.

For in those points in which He was mingled with humanity, passing as He did through all the accidents proper to human nature, such as birth, rearing, growing up, and advancing even to the taste of death, He accomplished all the results before mentioned, freeing both man from evil, and healing even the introducer of evil himself. For the chastisement, however painful, of moral disease is a healing of its weakness.

Chapter XXVII

It is, then, completely in keeping with this, that He Who was thus pouring Himself into our nature should accept this commixture in all its accidents. For as they who wash clothes do not pass over some of the dirt and cleanse the rest, but clear the whole cloth from all its stains, from one end to the other, that the cloak by being uniformly brightened from washing may be throughout equal to its own standard of cleanness, in like manner, since the life of man was defiled by sin, in its beginning, end, and all its intermediate states, there needed an abstergent force to penetrate the whole, and not to mend some one part by cleansing, while it left another unattended to. For this reason it is that, seeing that our life has been included between boundaries on either side, one, I mean, at its beginning, and the other at its ending, at each boundary the force that is capable of correcting our nature is to be found, attaching itself to the beginning, and extending to the end, and touching all between those two points . Since, then, there is for all men only one way of entrance into this life of ours, from whence was He Who was making His entrance amongst us to transport Himself into our life? From heaven, perhaps some one will say, who rejects with contempt, as base and degraded, this species of birth, i. e. the human. But there was no humanity in heaven:

and in that supramundane existence no disease of evil had been naturalized; but He Who poured Himself into man adopted this commixture with a view to the benefit of it. Where, then, evil was not and the human life was not lived, how is it that any one seeks there the scene of this wrapping up of God in man, or, rather, not man, but some phantom resemblance of man? In what could the recovery of our nature have consisted if, while this earthly creature was diseased and needed this recovery, something else, amongst the heavenly beings, had experienced the Divine sojourning? It is impossible for the sick man to be healed, unless his suffering member receives the healing. If, therefore, while this sick part was on earth, omnipotence had touched it not, but had regarded only its own dignity, this its pre-occupation with matters with which we had nothing in common would have been of no benefit to man. And with regard to the undignified in the case of Deity we can make no distinction; that is, if it is allowable to conceive at all of anything beneath the dignity of Deity beside evil. On the contrary, for one who forms such a narrow-minded view of the greatness of the Deity as to make it consist in inability to admit of fellowship with the peculiarities of our nature, the degradation is in no point lessened by the Deity being conformed to the fashion of a heavenly rather than of an earthly body.

For every created being is distant, by an equal degree of inferiority, from that which is the Highest, Who is unapproachable by reason of the sublimity of His Being: the whole universe is in value the same distance beneath Him. For that which is absolutely inaccessible does not allow access to some one thing while it is unapproachable by another, but it transcends all existences by an equal sublimity. Neither, therefore, is the earth further removed from this dignity, nor the heavens closer to it, nor do the things which have their existence within each of these elemental worlds differ at all from each other in this respect, that some are allowed to be in contact with the inaccessible Being, while others are forbidden the approach. Otherwise we must suppose that the power which governs the Universe does not equally pervade the whole, but in some parts is in excess, in others is deficient. Consequently, by this difference of less or more in quantity or quality, the Deity will appear in the light of something composite and out of agreement with itself; if, that is, we could suppose it, as viewed in its essence, to be far away from us, whilst it is a close neighbour to some other creature, and from that proximity easily apprehended. But on this subject of that exalted dignity true reason looks neither downward nor upward in the way of comparison; for all things sink to a level beneath the power which presides over the Universe:

so that if it shall be thought by them that any earthly nature is unworthy of this intimate connection with the Deity, neither can any other be found which has such worthiness. But if all things equally fall short of this dignity, one thing there is that is not beneath the dignity of God, and that is, to do good to him that needed it. If we confess, then, that where the disease was, there the healing power attended, what is there in this belief which is foreign to the proper conception of the Deity?

Chapter XXVIII.

But they deride our state of nature, and din into our ears the manner of our being born, supposing in this way to make the mystery ridiculous, as if it were unbecoming in God by such an entrance into the world as this to connect Himself with the fellowship of the human life. But we touched upon this point before, when we said that the only thing which is essentially degraded is moral evil or whatever has an affinity with such evil; whereas the orderly process of Nature, arranged as it has been by the Divine will and law, is beyond the reach of any misrepresentation on the score of wickedness: otherwise this accusation would reach up to the Author of Nature, if anything connected with Nature were to be found fault with as degraded and unseemly. If, then, the Deity is separate only from evil, and if there is no nature in evil, and if the mystery declares that God was born in man but not in evil; and if, for man, there is but one way of entrance upon life, namely that by which the embryo passes on to the stage of life, what other mode of entrance upon life would they prescribe for God?

these people, I mean, who, while they judge it right and proper that the nature which evil had weakened should be visited by the Divine power, yet take offence at this special method of the visitation, not remembering that the whole organization of the body is of equal value throughout, and that nothing in it, of all the elements that contribute to the continuance of the animal life, is liable to the charge of being worthless or wicked. For the whole arrangement of the bodily organs and limbs has been constructed with one end in view, and that is, the continuance in life of humanity; and while the other organs of the body conserve the present actual vitality of men, each being apportioned to a different operation, and by their means the faculties of sense and action are exercised, the generative organs on the contrary involve a forecast of the future, introducing as they do, by themselves, their counteracting transmission for our race. Looking, therefore, to their utility, to which of those parts which are deemed more honourable are these inferior ? Nay, than which must they not in all reason be deemed more worthy of honour? For not by the eye, or ear, or tongue, or any other sense, is the continuation of our race carried on. These, as has been remarked, pertain to the enjoyment of the present.

But by those other organs the immortality of humanity is secured, so that death, though ever operating against us, thus in a certain measure becomes powerless and ineffectual,

since Nature, to baffle him, is ever as it were throwing herself into the breach through those who come successively into being. What unseemliness, then, is contained in our revelation of God mingled with the life of humanity through those very means by which Nature carries on the combat against death?

Chapter XXIX.

But they change their ground and endeavour to vilify our faith in another way. They ask, if what took place was not to the dishonour of God or unworthy of Him, why did He delay the benefit so long? Why, since evil was in the beginning, did He not cut off its further progress?- To this we have a concise answer; viz. that this delay in conferring the benefit was owing to wisdom and a provident regard for that which would be a gain for our nature. In diseases, for instance, of the body, when some corrupt humour spreads unseen beneath the pores, before all the unhealthy secretion has been detected on the skin, they who treat diseases by the rules of art do not use such medicines as would harden the flesh, but they wait till all that lurks within comes out upon the surface, and then, with the disease unmasked, apply their remedies. When once, then, the disease of evil had fixed itself in the nature of mankind, He, the universal Healer, waited for the time when no form of wickedness was left still hidden in that nature. For this reason it was that He did not produce his healing for man's disease immediately on Cain's hatred and murder of his brother;

for the wickedness of those who were destroyed in the days of Noah had not yet burst into a flame, nor had that terrible disease of Sodomite lawlessness been displayed, nor the Egyptians' war against God , nor the pride of Assyria, nor the Jews' bloody persecution of God's saints, nor Herod's cruel murder of the children, nor whatever else is recorded, or if unrecorded was done in the generations that followed, the root of evil budding forth in divers manners in the wilful purposes of man. When, then, wickedness had reached its utmost height, and there was no form of wickedness which men had not dared to do, to the end that the healing remedy might pervade the whole of the diseased system, He, accordingly, ministers to the disease; not at its beginning, but when it had been completely developed.

Chapter XXX.

If, however, any one thinks to refute our argument on this ground, that even after the application of the remedial process the life of man is still in discord through its errors, let us lead him to the truth by an example taken from familiar things. Take, for instance, the case of a serpent; if it receives a deadly blow on the head, the hinder part of the coil is not at once deadened along with it; but, while the head is dead, the tail part is still animated with its own particular spirit, and is not deprived of its vital motion: in like manner we may see Sin struck its deadly blow and yet in its remainders still vexing the life of man. But then they give up finding fault with the account of Revelation on these points, and make another charge against it; viz. that the Faith does not reach all mankind. "But why is it," they ask, "that all men do not obtain the grace, but that, while some adhere to the Word, the portion who remain unbelieving is no small one; either because God was unwilling to bestow his benefit ungrudgingly upon all, or because He was altogether unable to do so? Now neither of these alternatives can defy criticism. For it is unworthy of God, either that He should not will what is good, or that He should be unable to do it. "If, therefore, the Faith is a good thing, why," they ask, "does not its grace come upon all men?

Now , if in our representation of the Gospel mystery we had so stated the matter as that it was the Divine will that the Faith should be so granted away amongst mankind that some men should be called, while the rest had no share in the calling, occasion would be given for bringing such a charge against this Revelation. But if the call came with equal meaning to all and makes no distinction as to worth, age, or different national characteristics (for it was for this reason that at the very first beginning of the proclamation of the Gospel they who ministered the Word were, by Divine inspiration, all at once enabled to speak in the language of any nation, viz. in order that no one might be destitute of a share in the blessings of evangelical instruction), with what reasonableness can they still charge it upon God that the Word has not influenced all mankind? For He Who holds the sovereignty of the universe, out of the excess of this regard for man, permitted something to be under our own control, of which each of us alone is master. Now this is the will, a thing that cannot be enslaved, and of self-determining power, since it is seated in the liberty of thought and mind. Therefore such a charge might more justly be transferred to those who have not attached themselves to the Faith, instead of resting on Him Who has called them to believe.

For even when Peter at the beginning preached the Gospel in a crowded assembly of the Jews, and three thousand at once received the Faith, though those who disbelieved were more in number than the believers, they did not attach blame to the Apostle on the ground of their disbelief. It was, indeed, not in reason, when the grace of the Gospel had been publicly set forth, for one who had absented himself from it of his own accord to lay the blame of his exclusion on another rather than himself.

Chapter XXXI.

Yet, even in their reply to this, or the like, they are not at a loss for a contentious rejoinder. For they assert that God, if He had been so pleased, might have forcibly drawn those, who were not inclined to yield, to accept the Gospel message. But where then would have been their free will? Where their virtuous merit? Where their meed of praise from their moral directors? It belongs only to inanimate or irrational creatures to be brought round by the will of another to his purpose; whereas the reasoning and intelligent nature, if it lays aside its freedom of action, loses at the same time the gracious gift of intellect. For upon what is he to employ any faculty of thought, if his power of choosing anything according to his inclination lies in the will of another? But then, if the will remains without the capacity of action, virtue necessarily disappears, since it is shackled by the enforced quiescence of the will. Then, if virtue does not exist, life loses its value, reason moves in accordance with fatalism, the praise of moral guardians is gone, sin may be indulged in without risk, and the difference between the courses of life is obliterated. For who, henceforth, could with any reason condemn profligacy, or praise sobriety? Since every one would have this ready answer, that nothing of all the things we are inclined to is in our own power, but that by some superior and ruling influence the wills of men are brought round to the purpose of one who has the mastery over them. The conclusion, then is that it is not the goodness of God that is chargeable with the fact that the Faith is not engendered in all men, but rather the disposition of those by whom the preaching of the Word is received.

Chapter XXXII.

What other objection is alleged by our adversaries? This; that (to take the preferable view) it was altogether needless that that transcendent Being should submit to the experience of death, but He might independently of this, through the superabundance of His power, have wrought with ease His purpose; still, if for some ineffable reason or other it was absolutely necessary that so it should be, at least He ought not to have been subjected to the contumely of such an ignominious kind of death. What death, they ask, could be more ignominious than that by crucifixion? What answer can we make to this? Why, that the death is rendered necessary by the birth, and that He Who had determined once for all to share the nature of man must pass through all the peculiar conditions of that nature. Seeing, then, that the life of man is determined between two boundaries, had He, after having passed the one, not touched the other that follows, His proposed design would have remained only half fulfilled, from His not having touched that second condition of our nature. Perhaps, however, one who exactly understands the mystery would be justified rather in saying that, instead of the death occurring in consequence of the birth, the birth on the contrary was accepted by Him for the sake of the death; for He Who lives for ever did not sink down into the conditions of a bodily birth from any need to live, but to call us back from death to life.

Since, then, there was needed a lifting up from death for the whole of our nature, He stretches forth a hand as it were to prostrate man, and stooping down to our dead corpse He came so far within the grasp of death as to touch a state of deadness, and then in His own body to bestow on our nature the principle of the resurrection, raising as He did by His power along with Himself the whole man. For since from no other source than from the concrete lump of our nature had come that flesh, which was the receptacle of the Godhead and in the resurrection was raised up together with that Godhead, therefore just in the same way as, in the instance of this body of ours, the operation of one of the organs of sense is felt at once by the whole system, as one with that member, so also the resurrection principle of this Member, as though the whole of mankind was a single living being, passes through the entire race, being imparted from the Member to the whole by virtue of the continuity and oneness of the nature. What, then, is there beyond the bounds of probability in what this Revelation teaches us; viz. that He Who stands upright stoops to one who has fallen, in order to lift him up from his prostrate condition? And as to the Cross, whether it possesses some other and deeper meaning, those who are skilled in mysticism may explain;

but, however that may be, the traditional teaching which has reached us is as follows. Since all things in the Gospel, both deeds and words, have a sublime and heavenly meaning, and there is nothing in it which is not such, that is, which does not exhibit a complete mingling of the human with the Divine, where the utterance exerted and the deeds enacted are human but the secret sense represents the Divine, it would follow that in this particular as well as in the rest we must not regard only the one element and overlook the other; but in the fact of this death we must contemplate the human feature, while in the manner of it we must be anxious to find the Divine . For since it is the property of the Godhead to pervade all things, and to extend itself through the length and breadth of the substance of existence in every part-for nothing would continue to be if it remained not within the existent; and that which is this existent properly and primarily is the Divine Being, Whose existence in the world the continuance of all things that are forces us to believe in,-this is the very thing we learn from the figure of the Cross; it is divided into four parts, so that there are the projections, four in number, from the central point where the whole converges upon itself;

because He Who at the hour of His pre-arranged death was stretched upon it is He Who binds together all things into Himself, and by Himself brings to one harmonious agreement the diverse natures of actual existences. For in these existences there is the idea either of something above, or of something below, or else the thought passes to the confines sideways. If, therefore, you take into your consideration the system of things above the heavens or of things below the earth, or of things at the boundaries of the universe on either side, everywhere the presence of Deity anticipates your thought as the sole observable power that in every part of existing things holds in a state of being all those things. Now whether we ought to call this Existence Deity, or Mind, or Power, or Wisdom, or any other lofty term which might be better able to express Him Who is above all, our argument has no quarrel with the appellation or name or form of phrase used. Since, then, all creation looks to Him, and is about and around Him, and through Him is coherent with itself, things above being through Him conjoined to things below and things lateral to themselves, it was right that not by hearing only we should be conducted to the full understanding of the Deity, but that sight also should be our teacher in these sublime subjects for thought;

and it is from sight that the mighty Paul starts when he initiates the people of Ephesus in the mysteries, and imbues them through his instructions with the power of knowing what is that ”depth and height and breadth and length. In fact he designates each projection of the Cross by its proper appellation. The upper part he calls height, the lower depth, and the side extensions breadth and length; and in another passage he makes his thought still clearer to the Philippians, to whom be says, ”that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. In that passage he includes in one appellation the centre and projecting arms , calling ”things in earth” all that is in the middle between things in heaven and things under the earth. Such is the lesson we learn in regard to the mystery of the Cross. And the subsequent events which the narrative contains follow so appropriately that, as even unbelievers must admit, there is nothing in them adverse to the proper conceptions of the Deity.

That He did not abide in death, that the wounds which His body had received from the iron of the nails and spear offered no impediment to His rising again, that after His resurrection He showed Himself as He pleased to His disciples, that when He wished to be present with them He was in their midst without being seen, as needing no entrance through open doors, and that He strengthened the disciples by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and that He promised to be amongst them, and that no partition wall should intervene between them and Him, and that to the sight He ascended to Heaven while to the mind He was everywhere; all these, and whatever like facts the history of Him comprises, need no assistance from arguments to show that they are signs of deity and of a sublime and supereminent power. With regard to them therefore I do not deem it necessary to go into any detail, inasmuch as their description of itself shows the supernatural character. But since the dispensation of the washing (whether we choose to call it baptism, or illumination, or regeneration; for we make the name no subject of controversy) is a part of our revealed doctrines, it may be as well to enter on a short discussion of this as well.

Chapter XXXIII.

For when they have heard from us something to this effect-that when the mortal passes into life it follows necessarily that, as that first birth leads only to the existence of mortality, another birth should be discovered, a birth which neither begins nor ends with corruption, but one which conducts the person begotten to an immortal existence, in order that, as what is begotten of a mortal birth has necessarily a mortal subsistence, so from a birth which admits not corruption that which is born may be superior to the corruption of death; when, I say, they have heard this and the like from us, and are besides instructed as to the process,-namely that it is prayer and the invocation of heavenly grace, and water, and faith, by which the mystery of regeneration is accomplished,-they still remain incredulous and have an eye only for the outward and visible, as if that which is operated corporeally concurred not with the fulfilment of God's promise. How, they ask, can prayer and the invocation of Divine power over the water be the foundation of life in those who have been thus initiated? In reply to them, unless they be of a very obstinate disposition, one single consideration suffices to bring them to an acquiescence in our doctrine. For let us in our turn ask them about that process of the carnal generation which every one can notice. How does that something which is cast for the beginnings of the formation of a living being become a Man?

In that case, most certainly, there is no method whatever that can discover for us, by any possible reasoning, even the probable truth. For what correlation is there between the definition of man and the quality observable in that something? Man, when once he is put together, is a reasoning and intellectual being, capable of thought and knowledge; but that something is to be observed only in its quality of humidity, and the mind grasps nothing in it beyond that which is seen by the sense of sight. The reply, therefore, which we might expect to receive from those whom we questioned as to how it is credible that a man is compounded from that humid element, is the very reply which we make when questioned about the regeneration that takes place through the water. Now in that other case any one so questioned has this reply ready at hand, that that element becomes a man by a Divine power, wanting which, the element is motionless and inoperative. If, therefore, in that instance the subordinate matter does not make the man, but the Divine power changes that visible thing into a man's nature, it would be utterly unfair for them, when in the one case they testify to such power in God, in this other department to suppose that the Deity is

too weak to accomplish His will. What is there common, they ask, between water and life? What is there common, we ask them in return, between humidity and God's image?

In that case there is no paradox if, God so willing, what is humid changes into the most rare creature . Equally, then, in this case we assert that there is nothing strange when the presence of a Divine influence transforms what is born with a corruptible nature into a state of incorruption.

Chapter XXXIV.

But they ask for proof of this presence of the Deity when invoked for the sanctification of the baptismal process . Let the person who requires this evidence recall to mind the result of our inquiries further back. The reasoning by which we established that the power which was manifested to us through the flesh was really a Divine power, is the defence of that which we now say. For when it has been shown that He Who was manifested in the flesh, and then exhibited His nature by the miracles which He wrought, was God, it is also at the same time shown that He is present in that process, as often as He is invoked. For, as of everything that exists there is some peculiarity which indicates its nature, so truth is the distinctive peculiarity of the Divine nature. Well, then, He has promised that He will always be present with those that call upon Him, that He is in the midst of those that believe, that He remains among them collectively and has special intercourse with each one. We can no longer, then, need any other proof of the presence of the Deity in the things that are done in Baptism, believing as we do that He is God by reason of the miracles which He wrought, and knowing as we do that it is the peculiarity of the Godhead to be free from any touch of falsehood, and confidently holding as we do that the thing promised was involved in the truthfulness of its announcement.

The invocation by prayer, then, which precedes this Divine Dispensation constitutes an abundance of proof that what is effected is done by God. For if in the case of that other kind of man-formation the impulses of the parents, even though they do not invoke the Deity, yet by the power of God, as we have before said, mould the embryo, and if this power is withheld their eagerness is ineffectual and useless, how much more will the object be accomplished in that spiritual mode of generation, where both God has promised that He will be present in the process and, as we have believed, has put power from Himself into the work, and, besides, our own will is bent upon that object; supposing, that is, that the aid which comes through prayer has at the same time been duly called in? For as they who pray God that the sun may shine on them in no way blunt the promptitude of that which is actually going to take place, yet no one will say that the zeal of those who thus pray is useless on the ground that they pray God for what must happen, in the same way they who, resting on the truthfulness of His promise, are firmly persuaded that His grace is surely present in those who are regenerate in this mystical Dispensation, either themselves make an actual addition to that grace, or at all events do not cause the existing grace to miscarry.

For that the grace is there is a matter of faith, on account of Him Who has promised to give it being Divine; while the testimony as to His Divinity comes through the Miracles . Thus, then, that the Deity is present in all the baptismal process admits of no question.

Chapter XXXV

But the descent into the water, and the trine immersion of the person in it, involves another mystery. For since the method of our salvation was made effectual not so much by His precepts in the way of teaching as by the deeds of Him Who has realized an actual fellowship with man, and has effected life as a living fact, so that by means of the flesh which He has assumed, and at the same time deified , everything kindred and related may be saved along with it, it was necessary that some means should be devised by which there might be, in the baptismal process, a kind of affinity and likeness between him who follows and Him Who leads the way. Needful, therefore, is it to see what features are to be observed in the Author of our life, in order that the imitation on the part of those that follow may be regulated, as the Apostle says, after the pattern of the Captain of our salvation .

For, as it is they who are actually drilled into measured and orderly movements in arms by skilled drill-masters, who are advanced to dexterity in handling their weapons by what they see with their eyes, whereas he who does not practise what is shown him remains devoid of such dexterity, in the same way it is imperative on all those who have an equally earnest desire for the Good as He has, to be followers by the path of an exact imitation of Him Who leads the way to salvation, and to carry into action what He has shown them. It is, in fact, impossible for persons to reach the same goal unless they travel by the same ways. For as persons who are at a loss how to thread the turns of mazes, when they happen to fall in with some one who has experience of them, get to the end of those various misleading turnings in the chambers by following him behind, which they could not do, did they not follow him their leader step by step, so too, I pray you mark, the labyrinth of this our life cannot be threaded by the faculties of human nature unless a man pursues that same path as He did Who, though once in it, yet got beyond the difficulties which hemmed Him in. I apply this figure of a labyrinth to that prison of death, which is without an egress and environs the wretched race of mankind.

What, then, have we beheld in the case of the Captain of our salvation? A three days' state of death and then life again. Now some sort of resemblance in us to such things has to be planned. What, then, is the plan by which in us too a resemblance to that which took place in Him is completed? Everything that is affected by death has its proper and natural place, and that is the earth in which it is laid and hidden. Now earth and water have much mutual

affinity. Alone of the elements they have weight and gravitate downwards; they mutually abide in each other; they are mutually confined. Seeing, then, the death of the Author of our life subjected Him to burial in earth and was in accord with our common nature, the imitation which we enact of that death is expressed in the neighbouring element. And as He, that Man from above , having taken deadness on Himself, after His being deposited in the earth, returned back to life the third day, so every one who is knitted to Him by virtue of his bodily form, looking forward to the same successful issue, I mean this arriving at life by having, instead of earth, water poured on him , and so submitting to that element, has represented for him in the three movements the three-days-delayed grace of the resurrection.

Something like this has been said in what has gone before, namely, that by the Divine providence death has been introduced as a dispensation into the nature of man, so that, sin having flowed away at the dissolution of the union of soul and body, man, through the resurrection, might be refashioned, sound, passionless, stainless, and removed from any touch of evil. In the case however of the Author of our Salvation this dispensation of death reached its fulfilment, having entirely accomplished its special purpose. For in His death, not only were things that once were one put asunder, but also things that had been disunited were again brought together; so that in this dissolution of things that had naturally grown together, I mean, the soul and body, our nature might be purified, and this return to union of these severed elements might secure freedom from the contamination of any foreign admixture. But as regards those who follow this Leader, their nature does not admit of an exact and entire imitation, but it receives now as much as it is capable of receiving, while it reserves the remainder for the time that comes after. In what, then, does this imitation consist? It consists in the effecting the suppression of that admixture of sin, in the figure of mortification that is given by the water, not certainly a complete effacement, but a kind of break in the continuity of the evil, two things concurring to this removal of sin-the penitence of the transgressor and his imitation of the death.

By these two things the man is in a measure freed from his congenital tendency to evil; by his penitence he advances to a hatred of and averseness from sin, and by his death he works out the suppression of the evil. But had it been possible for him in his imitation to undergo a complete dying, the result would be not imitation but identity; and the evil of our nature would so entirely vanish that, as the Apostle says, ”he would die unto sin once for all . But since, as has been said, we only so far imitate the transcendent Power as the poverty of our nature is capable of, by having the water thrice poured on us and ascending again up from the water, we enact that saving burial and resurrection which took place on the third day, with this thought in our mind, that as we have power over the water both to be in it and arise out of it, so He too, Who has the universe at His sovereign disposal, immersed Himself in death, as we in the water, to return to His own blessedness. If, therefore, one looks to that which is in reason, and judges of the results according to the power inherent in either party, one will discover no disproportion in these results, each in proportion to the measure of his natural power working out the effects that are within his reach.

For, as it is in the power of man, if he is so disposed, to touch the water and yet be safe, with infinitely greater ease may death be handled by the Divine Power so as to be in it and yet not to be changed by it injuriously. Observe, then, that it is necessary for us to rehearse beforehand in the water the grace of the resurrection, to the intent that we may understand that, as far as facility goes, it is the same thing for us to be baptized with water and to rise again from death. But as in matters that concern our life here, there are some which take precedence of others, as being those without which the result could not be achieved, although if the beginning be compared with the end, the beginning so contrasted will seem of no account (for what equality, for instance, is there between the man and that which is laid as a foundation for the constitution of his animal being? And yet if that had never been, neither would this be which we see), in like manner that which happens in the great resurrection, essentially vaster though it be, has its beginnings and its causes here; it is not, in fact, possible that that should take place, unless this had gone before; I mean, that without the laver of regeneration it is impossible for the man to be in the resurrection; but in saying this I do not regard the mere remoulding and refashioning of our composite body;

for towards this it is absolutely necessary that human nature should advance, being constrained thereto by its own laws according to the dispensation of Him Who has so ordained, whether it have received the grace of the laver, or whether it remains without that initiation: but I am thinking of the restoration to a blessed and divine condition, separated from all shame and sorrow. For not everything that is granted in the resurrection a return to existence will return to the same kind of life. There is a wide interval between those who have been purified, and those who still need purification. For those in whose life-time here the purification by the laver has preceded, there is a restoration to a kindred state. Now, to the pure, freedom from passion is that kindred state, and that in this freedom from passion blessedness consists, admits of no dispute. But as for those whose weaknesses have become inveterate , and to whom no purgation of their defilement has been applied, no mystic water, no invocation of the Divine power, no amendment by repentance, it is absolutely necessary that they should come to be in something proper to their case,-just as the furnace is the proper thing for gold alloyed with dross,-in order that, the vice which has been mixed up in them being melted away after long succeeding ages, their nature may be restored pure again to God.

Since, then, there is a cleansing virtue in fire and water, they who by the mystic water have washed away the defilement of their sin have no further need of the other form of purification, while they who have not been admitted to that form of purgation must needs be purified by fire.

Chapter XXXVI.

For common sense as well as the teaching of Scripture shows that it is impossible for one who has not thoroughly cleansed himself from all the stains arising from evil to be admitted amongst the heavenly company. This is a thing which, though little in itself, is the beginning and foundation of great blessings. I call it little on account of the facility of the means of amendment. For what difficulty is there in this matter? viz. to believe that God is everywhere, and that being in all things He is also present with those who call upon Him for His life-supporting power, and that, thus present, He does that which properly belongs to Him to do. Now, the work properly belonging to the Divine energy is the salvation of those who need it; and this salvation proves effectual by means of the cleansing in the water; and he that has been so cleansed will participate in Purity; and true Purity is Deity. You see, then, how small a thing it is in its beginning, and how easily effected; I mean, faith and water; the first residing within the will, the latter being the nursery companion of the life of man. But as to the blessing which springs from these two things, oh! how great and how wonderful it is, that it should imply relationship with Deity itself!

Chapter XXXVII.

But since the human being is a twofold creature, compounded of soul and body, it is necessary that the saved should lay hold of the Author of the new life through both their component parts. Accordingly, the soul being fused into Him through faith derives from that the means and occasion of salvation; for the act of union with the life implies a fellowship with the life. But the body comes into fellowship and blending with the Author of our salvation in another way. For as they who owing to some act of treachery have taken poison, allay its deadly influence by means of some other drug (for it is necessary that the antidote should enter the human vitals in the same way as the deadly poison, in order to secure, through them, that the effect of the remedy may be distributed through the entire system), in like manner we, who have tasted the solvent of our nature , necessarily need something that may combine what has been so dissolved, so that such an antidote entering within us may, by its own counter-influence, undo the mischief introduced into the body by the poison. What, then, is this remedy to be? Nothing else than that very Body which has been shown to be superior to death, and has been the First-fruits of our life.

For, in the manner that, as the Apostle says , a little leaven assimilates to itself the whole lump, so in like manner that body to which immortality has been given it by God, when it is in ours, translates and transmutes the whole into itself. For as by the admixture of a poisonous liquid with a wholesome one the whole drought is deprived of its deadly effect, so too the immortal Body, by being within that which receives it, changes the whole to its own nature. Yet in no other way can anything enter within the body but by being transfused through the vitals by eating and drinking. It is, therefore, incumbent on the body to admit this life-producing power in the one way that its constitution makes possible. And since that Body only which was the receptacle of the Deity received this grace of immortality, and since it has been shown that in no other way was it possible for our body to become immortal, but by participating in incorruption through its fellowship with that immortal Body, it will be necessary to consider how it was possible that that one Body, being for ever portioned to so many myriads of the faithful throughout the whole world, enters through that portion, whole into each individual, and yet remains whole in itself.

In order, therefore, that our faith, with eyes fixed on logical probability, may harbour no doubt on the subject before us, it is fitting to make a slight digression in our argument, to

consider the physiology of the body. Who is there that does not know that our bodily frame, taken by itself, possesses no life in its own proper subsistence, but that it is by the influx of a force or power from without that it holds itself together and continues in existence, and by a ceaseless motion that it draws to itself what it wants, and repels what is superfluous? When a leathern bottle is full of some liquid, and then the contents leak out at the bottom, it would not retain the contour of its full bulk unless there entered? at the top something else to fill up the vacuum; and thus a person, seeing the circumference of this bottle swollen to its full size, would know that this circumference did not really belong to the object which he sees, but that what was being poured in, by being in it, gave shape and roundness to the bulk. In the same way the mere framework of our body possesses nothing belonging to itself that is cognizable by us, to hold it together, but remains in existence owing to a force that is introduced into it. Now this power or force both is, and is called, nourishment.

But it is not the same in all bodies that require aliment, but to each of them has been assigned a food adapted to its condition by Him who governs Nature. Some animals feed on roots which they dig up. Of others grass is the food, of others different kinds of flesh, but for man above all things bread; and, in order to continue and preserve the moisture of his body, drink, not simply water, but water frequently sweetened with wine, to join forces with our internal heat. He, therefore, who thinks of these things, thinks by implication of the particular bulk of our body. For those things by being within me became my blood and flesh, the corresponding nutriment by its power of adaptation being changed into the form of my body. With these distinctions we must return to the consideration of the question before us. The question was, how can that one Body of Christ vivify the whole of mankind, all, that is, in whomsoever there is Faith, and yet, though divided amongst all, be itself not diminished? Perhaps, then, we are now not far from the probable explanation.

If the subsistence of every body depends on nourishment, and this is eating and drinking, and in the case of our eating there is bread and in the case of our drinking water sweetened with wine, and if, as was explained at the beginning, the Word of God, Who is both God and the Word, coalesced with man's nature, and when He came in a body such as ours did not innovate on man's physical constitution so as to make it other than it was, but secured continuance for His own body by the customary and proper means, and controlled its subsistence by meat and drink, the former of which was bread,-just, then, as in the case of ourselves, as has been repeatedly said already, if a person sees bread he also, in a kind of way, looks on a human body, for by the bread being within it the bread becomes it, so also, in that other case, the body into which God entered, by partaking of the nourishment of bread, was, in a certain measure, the same with it; that nourishment, as we have said, changing itself into the nature of the body. For that which is peculiar to all flesh is acknowledged also in the case of that flesh, namely, that that Body too was maintained by bread; which Body also by the indwelling of God the Word was transmuted to the dignity of Godhead.

Rightly, then, do we believe that now also the bread which is consecrated by the Word of God is changed into the Body of God the Word. For that Body was once, by implication,

bread, but has been consecrated by the inhabitation of the Word that tabernacled in the flesh. Therefore, from the same cause as that by which the bread that was transformed in that Body was changed to a Divine potency, a similar result takes place now. For as in that case, too, the grace of the Word used to make holy the Body, the substance of which came of the bread, and in a manner was itself bread, so also in this case the bread, as says the Apostle , "is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer"; not that it advances by the process of eating to the stage of passing into the body of the Word, but it is at once changed into the body by means of the Word, as the Word itself said, "This is My Body. Seeing, too, that all flesh is nourished by what is moist (for without this combination our earthly part would not continue to live), just as we support by food which is firm and solid the solid part of our body, in like manner we supplement the moist part from the kindred element; and this, when within us, by its faculty of being transmitted, is changed to blood, and especially if through the wine it receives the faculty of being transmuted into heat.

Since, then, that God-containing flesh partook for its substance and support of this particular nourishment also, and since the God who was manifested infused Himself into perishable humanity for this purpose, viz. that by this communion with Deity mankind might at the same time be deified, for this end it is that, by dispensation of His grace, He disseminates Himself in every believer through that flesh, whose substance comes from bread and wine, blending Himself with the bodies of believers, to secure that, by this union with the immortal, man, too, may be a sharer in incorruption. He gives these gifts by virtue of the benediction through which He transelements the natural quality of these visible things to that immortal thing.

Chapter XXXVIII.

There is now, I think, wanting in these remarks no answer to inquiries concerning the Gospel mystery, except that on Faith ; which we give briefly in the present treatise. For those who require a more elaborate account we have already published it in other works of ours, in which we have explained the subject with all the earnestness and accuracy in our power. In those treatises we have both fought controversially with our opponents, and also have taken private consultation with ourselves as to the questions which have been brought against us. But in the present discussion we have thought it as well only to say just so much on the subject of faith as is involved in the language of the Gospel, namely, that one who is begotten by the spiritual regeneration may know who it is that begets him, and what sort of creature he becomes. For it is only this form of generation which has in it the power to become what it chooses to be.

Chapter XXXIX.

For, while all things else that are born are subject to the impulse of those that beget them, the spiritual birth is dependent on the power of him who is being born. Seeing, then, that herelies the hazard, namely, that he should not miss what is for his advantage, when to every one a free choice is thus open, it were well, I think, for him who is moved towards the begetting of himself, to determine by previous reasoning what kind of father is for his advantage, and of what element it is better for him that his nature should consist. For, as we have said, it is in the power of such a child as this to choose its parents. Since, then, there is a twofold division of existences, into created and uncreated, and since the uncreated world possesses within itself immutability and immobility, while the created is liable to change and alteration, of which will he, who with calculation and deliberation is to choose what is for his benefit, prefer to be the offspring; of that which is always found in a state of change, or of that which possesses a nature that is changeless, steadfast, and ever consistent and unvarying in goodness?

Now there have been delivered to us in the Gospel three Persons and names through whom the generation or birth of believers takes place, and he who is begotten by this Trinity is equally begotten of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost-for thus does the Gospel speak of the Spirit, that ”that which is born of Spirit is spirit ,” and it is ”in Christ ” that Paul begets, and the Father is the ”Father of all; here, then, I beg, let the mind of the hearer be sober in its choice, lest it make itself the offspring of some inconstant nature, when it has it in its power to make the steadfast and unalterable nature the founder of its life. For according to the disposition of heart in one who comes to the Dispensation will that which is begotten in him exhibit its power; so that he who confesses that the Holy Trinity is uncreate enters on the steadfast unalterable life; while another, who through a mistaken conception sees only a created nature in the Trinity and then is baptized in that, has again been born into the shifting and alterable life. For that which is born is of necessity of one kindred with that which begets. Which, then, offers the greater advantage; to enter on the unchangeable life, or to be again tossed about by thewaves of this lifetime of uncertainty and change?

Well, since it is evident to any one of the least understanding that what is stable is far more valuable than what is unstable, what is perfect than what is deficient, what needs not than

what needs, and what has no further to advance, but ever abides in the perfection of all that is good, than what climbs by progressive toil, it is incumbent upon every one, at least upon every one who is possessed of sense, to make an absolute choice of one or other of these two conditions, either to believe that the Holy Trinity belongs to the uncreated world, and so through the spiritual birth to make It the foundation of his own life, or, if he thinks that the Son or the Holy Ghost is external to the being of the first, the true, the good, God, I mean, of the Father, not to include these Persons in the belief which he takes upon him at the moment of his new birth, lest he unconsciously make himself over to that imperfect nature which itself needs some one to make it good, and in a manner bring himself back again to something of the same nature as his own by thus removing his faith from that higher world. For whoever has bound himself to any created thing forgets that, as from the Deity, he has no longer hope of salvation. For all creation, owing to the whole equally proceeding from non-existence into being, has an intimate connection with itself;

and as in the bodily organization all the limbs have a natural and mutual coherence, though some have a downward, some an upward direction, so the world of created things is, viewed as the creation, in oneness with itself, and the differences in us, as regards abundance or deficiency, in no wise disjoint it from this natural coherence with itself. For in things which equally imply the idea of a previous non-existence, though there be a difference between them in other respects, as regards this point we discover no variation of nature. If, then, man, who is himself a created being, thinks that the Spirit and the Only-begotten God are likewise created, the hope which he entertains of a change to a better state will be a vain one; for he only returns to himself . What happens then is on a par with the surmises of Nicodemus; he, when instructed by our Lord as to the necessity of being born from above, because he could not yet comprehend the meaning of the mystery, had his thoughts drawn back to his mother's womb . So that if a man does not conduct himself towards the uncreated nature, but to that which is kindred to, and equally in bondage with, himself, he is of the birth which is from below, and not of that which is from above. But the Gospel tells us that the birth of the saved is from above.

Chapter XL.

But, as far as what has been already said, the instruction of this Catechism does not seem to me to be yet complete. For we ought, in my opinion, to take into consideration the sequel of this matter; which many of those who come to the grace of baptism overlook, being led astray, and self-deceived, and indeed only seemingly, and not really, regenerate. For that change in our life which takes place through regeneration will not be change, if we continue in the state in which we were. I do not see how it is possible to deem one who is still in the same condition, and in whom there has been no change in the distinguishing features of his nature, to be any other than he was, it being palpable to every one that it is for a renovation and change of our nature that the saving birth is received. And yet human nature does not of itself admit of any change in baptism; neither the reason, nor the understanding, nor the scientific faculty, nor any other peculiar characteristic of man is a subject for change. Indeed the change would be for the worse if any one of these properties of our nature were exchanged away for something else. If, then, the birth from above is a definite refashioning of the man, and yet these properties do not admit of change, it is a subject for inquiry what that is in him, by the changing of which the grace of regeneration is perfected.

It is evident that when those evil features which mark our nature have been obliterated a change to a better state takes place. If, then, by being ”washed,” as says the Prophet , in that mystic bath we become ”clean” in our wills and ”put away the evil” of our souls, we thus become better men, and are changed to a better state. But if, when the bath has been applied to the body, the soul has not cleansed itself from the stains of its passions and affections, but the life after initiation keeps on a level with the uninitiate life, then, though it may be a bold thing to say, yet I will say it and will not shrink; in these cases the water is but water, for the gift of the Holy Ghost in no ways appears in him who is thus baptismally born; whenever, that is, not only the deformity of anger , or the passion of greed, or the unbridled and unseemly thought, with pride, envy, and arrogance, disfigures the Divine image, but the gains, too, of injustice abide with him, and the woman he has procured by adultery still even after that ministers to his pleasures. If these and the like vices, after, as before, surround the life of the baptized, I cannot see in what respects he has been changed; for I observe him the same man as he was before.

The man whom he has unjustly treated, the man whom he has falsely accused, the man whom he has forcibly deprived of his property, these, as far as they are concerned, see no change in him though he has been washed in the laver of baptism. They do not hear the cry of Zacchaeus from him as well: "If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore fourfold . What they said of him before his baptism, the same they now more fully declare; they call him by the same names, a covetous person, one who is greedy of what belongs to others, one who lives in luxury at the cost of men's calamities. Let such an one, therefore, who remains in the same moral condition as before, and then babbles to himself of the beneficial change he has received from baptism, listen to what Paul says: "If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself . For what you have not become, that you are not. "As many as received Him," thus speaks the Gospel of those who have been born again, "to them gave He power to become the sons of God . Now the child born of any one is entirely of a kindred nature with his parent. If, then, you have received God, if you have become a child of God, make manifest in your disposition the God that is in you, manifest in yourself Him that begot you.

By the same marks whereby we recognize God, must this relationship to God of the son so born be exhibited. "He openeth His hand and filleth every living thing with His good pleasure. "He passeth over transgressions. "He repenteth Him of the evil. "The Lord is good to all, and bringeth not on us His anger every day. "God is a righteous Lord, and there isno injustice in Him ; and all other sayings of the like kind which are scattered for our instruction throughout the Scripture;-if you live amidst such things as these, you are a child of God indeed; but if you continue with the characteristic marks of vice in you, it is in vain that you babble to yourself of your birth from above. Prophecy will speak against you and say, "You are a 'son of man,' not a son of the Most High. You 'love vanity, and seek after leasing.' Know you not in what way man is 'made admirable '? In no other way than by becoming holy."

It will be necessary to add to what has been said this remaining statement also; viz. that those good things which are held out in the Gospels to those who have led a godly life, are not such as can be precisely described. For how is that possible with things which "eye hath not seen, neither ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man "? Indeed, the sinner's life of torment presents no equivalent to anything that pains the sense here. Even if some one of the punishments in that other world be named in terms that are well known here, the distinction is still not small. When you hear the word fire, you have been taught to think of a fire other than the fire we see, owing to something being added to that fire which in this there is not; for that fire is never quenched, whereas experience has discovered many ways of quenching this; and there is a great difference between a fire which can be extinguished, and one that does not admit of extinction. That fire, therefore, is something other than this. If, again, a person hears the word "worm," let not his thoughts, from the similarity of the term, be carried to the creature here that crawls upon the ground; for the addition that it "dieth not" suggests the thought of another reptile than that known here. Since, then, these things are set before us as to be expected in the life that follows this, being the natural

outgrowth according to the righteous judgment of God, in the life of each, of his particular disposition, it must be the part of the wise not to regard the present, but that which follows after, and to lay down the foundations for that unspeakable blessedness during this short and fleeting life, and by a good choice to wean themselves from allexperience of evil, now in their lifetime here, hereafter in their eternal recompense .

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.