

BISHOP OF AUGUSTINE

THE CITY OF GOD,
VOLUME II

Saint Augustine
The City of God, Volume II

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The City of God, Volume II:

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Aurelius Augustine

The City of God, Volume II

BOOK FOURTEENTH

ARGUMENT

AUGUSTINE AGAIN TREATS OF THE SIN OF THE FIRST MAN, AND TEACHES THAT IT IS THE CAUSE OF THE CARNAL LIFE AND VICIOUS AFFECTIONS OF MAN. ESPECIALLY HE PROVES THAT THE SHAME WHICH ACCOMPANIES LUST IS THE JUST PUNISHMENT OF THAT DISOBEDIENCE, AND INQUIRES HOW MAN, IF HE HAD NOT SINNED, WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE WITHOUT LUST TO PROPAGATE HIS KIND.

1. That the disobedience of the first man would have plunged all men into the endless misery of the second death, had not the grace of God rescued many.

We have already stated in the preceding books that God, desiring not only that the human race might be able by their similarity of nature to associate with one another, but also that they might be bound together in harmony and peace by the ties of relationship, was pleased to derive all men from one individual, and created man with such a nature that the members of the race

should not have died, had not the two first (of whom the one was created out of nothing, and the other out of him) merited this by their disobedience; for by them so great a sin was committed, that by it the human nature was altered for the worse, and was transmitted also to their posterity, liable to sin and subject to death. And the kingdom of death so reigned over men, that the deserved penalty of sin would have hurled all headlong even into the second death, of which there is no end, had not the undeserved grace of God saved some therefrom. And thus it has come to pass, that though there are very many and great nations all over the earth, whose rites and customs, speech, arms, and dress, are distinguished by marked differences, yet there are no more than two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities, according to the language of our Scriptures. The one consists of those who wish to live after the flesh, the other of those who wish to live after the spirit; and when they severally achieve what they wish, they live in peace, each after their kind.

2. Of carnal life, which is to be understood not only of living in bodily indulgence, but also of living in the vices of the inner man

First, we must see what it is to live after the flesh, and what to live after the spirit. For any one who either does not recollect, or does not sufficiently weigh, the language of sacred Scripture, may, on first hearing what we have said, suppose that

the Epicurean philosophers live after the flesh, because they place man's highest good in bodily pleasure; and that those others do so who have been of opinion that in some form or other bodily good is man's supreme good; and that the mass of men do so who, without dogmatizing or philosophizing on the subject, are so prone to lust that they cannot delight in any pleasure save such as they receive from bodily sensations: and he may suppose that the Stoics, who place the supreme good of men in the soul, live after the spirit; for what is man's soul, if not spirit? But in the sense of the divine Scripture both are proved to live after the flesh. For by flesh it means not only the body of a terrestrial and mortal animal, as when it says, "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, another of birds,"¹ but it uses this word in many other significations; and among these various usages, a frequent one is to use flesh for man himself, the nature of man taking the part for the whole, as in the words, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified;"² for what does he mean here by "no flesh" but "no man?" And this, indeed, he shortly after says more plainly: "No man shall be justified by the law;"³ and in the Epistle to the Galatians, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law." And so we understand the words, "And the

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 39.

² Rom. iii. 20.

³ Gal. iii. 11.

Word was made flesh,"⁴— that is, man, which some not accepting in its right sense, have supposed that Christ had not a human soul.⁵ For as the whole is used for the part in the words of Mary Magdalene in the Gospel, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him,"⁶ by which she meant only the flesh of Christ, which she supposed had been taken from the tomb where it had been buried, so the part is used for the whole, flesh being named, while man is referred to, as in the quotations above cited.

Since, then, Scripture uses the word flesh in many ways, which there is not time to collect and investigate, if we are to ascertain what it is to live after the flesh (which is certainly evil, though the nature of flesh is not itself evil), we must carefully examine that passage of the epistle which the Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, in which he says, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."⁷ This whole passage of the apostolic epistle being considered, so

⁴ John. i. 14.

⁵ The Apollinarians.

⁶ John. xx. 13.

⁷ Gal. v. 19-21.

far as it bears on the matter in hand, will be sufficient to answer the question, what it is to live after the flesh. For among the works of the flesh which he said were manifest, and which he cited for condemnation, we find not only those which concern the pleasure of the flesh, as fornications, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness, revellings, but also those which, though they be remote from fleshly pleasure, reveal the vices of the soul. For who does not see that idolatries, witchcrafts, hatreds, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, heresies, envyings, are vices rather of the soul than of the flesh? For it is quite possible for a man to abstain from fleshly pleasures for the sake of idolatry or some heretical error; and yet, even when he does so, he is proved by this apostolic authority to be living after the flesh; and in abstaining from fleshly pleasure, he is proved to be practising damnable works of the flesh. Who that has enmity has it not in his soul? or who would say to his enemy, or to the man he thinks his enemy, You have a bad flesh towards me, and not rather, You have a bad spirit towards me? In fine, if any one heard of what I may call "carnalities," he would not fail to attribute them to the carnal part of man; so no one doubts that "animosities" belong to the soul of man. Why then does the doctor of the Gentiles in faith and verity call all these and similar things works of the flesh, unless because, by that mode of speech whereby the part is used for the whole, he means us to understand by the word flesh the man himself?

3. That sin is caused not by the flesh, but by the soul, and that the corruption contracted from sin is not sin, but sin's punishment

But if any one says that the flesh is the cause of all vices and ill conduct, inasmuch as the soul lives wickedly only because it is moved by the flesh, it is certain he has not carefully considered the whole nature of man. For "the corruptible body, indeed, weigheth down the soul."⁸ Whence, too, the apostle, speaking of this corruptible body, of which he had shortly before said, "though our outward man perish,"⁹ says, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in life."¹⁰ We are then burdened with this corruptible body; but knowing that the cause of this burdensomeness is not the nature and substance of the body, but its corruption, we do not

⁸ Wisd. ix. 15.

⁹ 2 Cor. iv. 16.

¹⁰ 2 Cor. v. 1-4.

desire to be deprived of the body, but to be clothed with its immortality. For then, also, there will be a body, but it shall no longer be a burden, being no longer corruptible. At present, then, "the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things," nevertheless they are in error who suppose that all the evils of the soul proceed from the body.

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Virgil, indeed, seems to express the sentiments of Plato in the beautiful lines, where he says, —

"A fiery strength inspires their lives,
An essence that from heaven derives,
Though clogged in part by limbs of clay,
And the dull 'vesture of decay;"¹¹

but though he goes on to mention the four most common mental emotions, — desire, fear, joy, sorrow, — with the intention of showing that the body is the origin of all sins and vices, saying,

—

"Hence wild desires and grovelling fears,
And human laughter, human tears,
Immured in dungeon-seeming night,
They look abroad, yet see no light,"¹²

yet we believe quite otherwise. For the corruption of the body, which weighs down the soul, is not the cause but the punishment

¹¹ *Æneid*, vi. 730-32.

¹² *Ib.* 733, 734.

of the first sin; and it was not the corruptible flesh that made the soul sinful, but the sinful soul that made the flesh corruptible. And though from this corruption of the flesh there arise certain incitements to vice, and indeed vicious desires, yet we must not attribute to the flesh all the vices of a wicked life, in case we thereby clear the devil of all these, for he has no flesh. For though we cannot call the devil a fornicator or drunkard, or ascribe to him any sensual indulgence (though he is the secret instigator and prompter of those who sin in these ways), yet he is exceedingly proud and envious. And this viciousness has so possessed him, that on account of it he is reserved in chains of darkness to everlasting punishment.¹³ Now these vices, which have dominion over the devil, the apostle attributes to the flesh, which certainly the devil has not. For he says "hatred, variance, emulations, strife, envying" are the works of the flesh; and of all these evils pride is the origin and head, and it rules in the devil though he has no flesh. For who shows more hatred to the saints? who is more at variance with them? who more envious, bitter, and jealous? And since he exhibits all these works, though he has no flesh, how are they works of the flesh, unless because they are the works of man, who is, as I said, spoken of under the name of flesh? For it is not by having flesh, which the devil has not, but by living according to himself, – that is, according to man, – that man became like the devil. For the devil too, wished to live according

¹³ On the punishment of the devil, see the *De Agone Christi*, 3-5, and *De Nat. Boni*, 33.

to himself when he did not abide in the truth; so that when he lied, this was not of God, but of himself, who is not only a liar, but the father of lies, he being the first who lied, and the originator of lying as of sin.

4. What it is to live according to man, and what to live according to God

When, therefore, man lives according to man, not according to God, he is like the devil. Because not even an angel might live according to an angel, but only according to God, if he was to abide in the truth, and speak God's truth and not his own lie. And of man, too, the same apostle says in another place, "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie;"¹⁴ – "my lie," he said, and "God's truth." When, then, a man lives according to the truth, he lives not according to himself, but according to God; for He was God who said, "I am the truth."¹⁵ When, therefore, man lives according to himself, – that is, according to man, not according to God, – assuredly he lives according to a lie; not that man himself is a lie, for God is his author and creator, who is certainly not the author and creator of a lie, but because man was made upright, that he might not live according to himself, but according to Him that made him, – in other words, that he might

¹⁴ Rom. iii. 7.

¹⁵ John xiv. 6.

do His will and not his own; and not to live as he was made to live, that is a lie. For he certainly desires to be blessed even by not living so that he may be blessed. And what is a lie if this desire be not? Wherefore it is not without meaning said that all sin is a lie. For no sin is committed save by that desire or will by which we desire that it be well with us, and shrink from it being ill with us. That, therefore, is a lie which we do in order that it may be well with us, but which makes us more miserable than we were. And why is this, but because the source of man's happiness lies only in God, whom he abandons when he sins, and not in himself, by living according to whom he sins?

In enunciating this proposition of ours, then, that because some live according to the flesh and others according to the spirit there have arisen two diverse and conflicting cities, we might equally well have said, "because some live according to man, others according to God." For Paul says very plainly to the Corinthians, "For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man?"¹⁶ So that to walk according to man and to be carnal are the same; for by *flesh*, that is, by a part of man, man is meant. For before he said that those same persons were animal whom afterwards he calls carnal, saying, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God;

¹⁶ 1 Cor. iii. 3.

that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the animal man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him."¹⁷ It is to men of this kind, then, that is, to animal men, he shortly after says, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal."¹⁸ And this is to be interpreted by the same usage, a part being taken for the whole. For both the soul and the flesh, the component parts of man, can be used to signify the whole man; and so the animal man and the carnal man are not two different things, but one and the same thing, viz. man living according to man. In the same way it is nothing else than men that are meant either in the words, "By the deeds of the law there shall no *flesh* be justified;"¹⁹ or in the words, "Seventy-five *souls* went down into Egypt with Jacob."²⁰ In the one passage, "no flesh" signifies "no man;" and in the other, by "seventy-five souls" seventy-five men are meant. And the expression, "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth," might equally be "not in words which fleshly wisdom teacheth;" and the expression, "ye walk according to man," might be "according to the flesh." And this is still more apparent in the words which followed: "For while

¹⁷ 1 Cor. ii. 11-14.

¹⁸ 1 Cor. iii. 1.

¹⁹ Rom. iii. 20.

²⁰ Gen. xlv. 27.

one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not men?" The same thing which he had before expressed by "ye are animal," "ye are carnal," he now expresses by "ye are men;" that is, ye live according to man, not according to God, for if you lived according to Him, you should be gods.

5. That the opinion of the Platonists regarding the nature of body and soul is not so censurable as that of the Manichæans, but that even it is objectionable, because it ascribes the origin of vices to the nature of the flesh.

There is no need, therefore, that in our sins and vices we accuse the nature of the flesh to the injury of the Creator, for in its own kind and degree the flesh is good; but to desert the Creator good, and live according to the created good, is not good, whether a man choose to live according to the flesh, or according to the soul, or according to the whole human nature, which is composed of flesh and soul, and which is therefore spoken of either by the name flesh alone, or by the name soul alone. For he who extols the nature of the soul as the chief good, and condemns the nature of the flesh as if it were evil, assuredly is fleshly both in his love of the soul and hatred of the flesh; for these his feelings arise from human fancy, not from divine truth. The Platonists, indeed, are not so foolish as, with the Manichæans, to detest our present bodies as an evil nature;²¹ for they attribute all the elements of which this visible and tangible world is compacted, with all their qualities, to God their Creator. Nevertheless, from

²¹ See Augustine, *De Hæres.* 46.

the death-infected members and earthly construction of the body they believe the soul is so affected, that there are thus originated in it the diseases of desires, and fears, and joy, and sorrow, under which four perturbations, as Cicero²² calls them, or passions, as most prefer to name them with the Greeks, is included the whole viciousness of human life. But if this be so, how is it that Æneas in Virgil, when he had heard from his father in Hades that the souls should return to bodies, expresses surprise at this declaration, and exclaims:

"O father! and can thought conceive
That happy souls this realm would leave,
And seek the upper sky,
With sluggish clay to reunite?
This direful longing for the light,
Whence comes it, say, and why?"²³

This direful longing, then, does it still exist even in that boasted purity of the disembodied spirits, and does it still proceed from the death-infected members and earthly limbs? Does he not assert that, when they begin to long to return to the body, they have already been delivered from all these so-called pestilences of the body? From which we gather that, were this endlessly alternating purification and defilement of departing and returning souls as true as it is most certainly false, yet it could

²² *Tusc. Quæst.* iv. 6.

²³ *Æneid*, vi. 719-21.

not be averred that all culpable and vicious motions of the soul originate in the earthly body; for, on their own showing, "this direful longing," to use the words of their noble exponent, is so extraneous to the body, that it moves the soul that is purged of all bodily taint, and is existing apart from any body whatever, and moves it, moreover, to be embodied again. So that even they themselves acknowledge that the soul is not only moved to desire, fear, joy, sorrow, by the flesh, but that it can also be agitated with these emotions at its own instance.

6. Of the character of the human will which makes the affections of the soul right or wrong

But the character of the human will is of moment; because, if it is wrong, these motions of the soul will be wrong, but if it is right, they will be not merely blameless, but even praiseworthy. For the will is in them all; yea, none of them is anything else than will. For what are desire and joy but a volition of consent to the things we wish? And what are fear and sadness but a volition of aversion from the things which we do not wish? But when consent takes the form of seeking to possess the things we wish, this is called desire; and when consent takes the form of enjoying the things we wish, this is called joy. In like manner, when we turn with aversion from that which we do not wish to happen, this volition is termed fear; and when we turn away from that which has happened against our will, this act of will is called sorrow.

And generally in respect of all that we seek or shun, as a man's will is attracted or repelled, so it is changed and turned into these different affections. Wherefore the man who lives according to God, and not according to man, ought to be a lover of good, and therefore a hater of evil. And since no one is evil by nature, but whoever is evil is evil by vice, he who lives according to God ought to cherish towards evil men a perfect hatred, so that he shall neither hate the man because of his vice, nor love the vice because of the man, but hate the vice and love the man. For the vice being cursed, all that ought to be loved, and nothing that ought to be hated, will remain.

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different affections. Wherefore the man who lives according to God, and not according to man, ought to be a lover of good, and therefore a hater of evil. And since no one is evil by nature, but whoever is evil is evil by vice, he who lives according to God ought to cherish towards evil men a perfect hatred, so that he shall neither hate the man because of his vice, nor love the vice because of the man, but hate the vice and love the man. For the vice being cursed, all that ought to be loved, and nothing that ought to be hated, will remain.

7. That the words love and regard (amor and dilectio) are in Scripture used indifferently of good and evil affection

He who resolves to love God, and to love his neighbour as himself, not according to man but according to God, is on account of this love said to be of a good will; and this is in Scripture more commonly called charity, but it is also, even in the same books, called love. For the apostle says that the man to be elected as a ruler of the people must be a lover of good.²⁴ And when the Lord Himself had asked Peter, "Hast thou a regard for me (*diligis*) more than these?" Peter replied, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love (*amo*) Thee." And again a second time the Lord asked not whether Peter loved (*amaret*) Him, but whether

²⁴ Tit. i. 8, according to Greek and Vulgate.

he had a regard (*diligeret*) for Him, and he again answered, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love (*amo*) Thee." But on the third interrogation the Lord Himself no longer says, "Hast thou a regard (*diligis*) for me," but "Lovest thou (*amas*) me?" And then the evangelist adds, "Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou (*amas*) me?" though the Lord had not said three times but only once, "Lovest thou (*amas*) me?" and twice "*Diligis me?*" from which we gather that, even when the Lord said "*diligis*," He used an equivalent for "*amas*." Peter, too, throughout used one word for the one thing, and the third time also replied, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love (*amo*) Thee."²⁵

I have judged it right to mention this, because some are of opinion that charity or regard (*dilectio*) is one thing, love (*amor*) another. They say that *dilectio* is used of a good affection, *amor* of an evil love. But it is very certain that even secular literature knows no such distinction. However, it is for the philosophers to determine whether and how they differ, though their own writings sufficiently testify that they make great account of love (*amor*) placed on good objects, and even on God Himself. But we wished to show that the Scriptures of our religion, whose authority we prefer to all writings whatsoever, make no distinction between *amor*, *dilectio*, and *caritas*; and we have already shown that *amor* is used in a good connection. And if any one fancy that *amor* is no doubt used both of good and bad loves,

²⁵ John xxi. 15-17. On these synonyms see the commentaries *in loc*.

but that *dilectio* is reserved for the good only, let him remember what the psalm says, "He that loveth (*diligit*) iniquity hateth his own soul;"²⁶ and the words of the Apostle John, "If any man love (*diligere*) the world, the love (*dilectio*) of the Father is not in him."²⁷ Here you have in one passage *dilectio* used both in a good and a bad sense. And if any one demands an instance of *amor* being used in a bad sense (for we have already shown its use in a good sense), let him read the words, "For men shall be lovers (*amantes*) of their own selves, lovers (*amatores*) of money."²⁸

The right will is, therefore, well-directed love, and the wrong will is ill-directed love. Love, then, yearning to have what is loved, is desire; and having and enjoying it, is joy; fleeing what is opposed to it, it is fear; and feeling what is opposed to it, when it has befallen it, it is sadness. Now these motions are evil if the love is evil; good if the love is good. What we assert let us prove from Scripture. The apostle "desires to depart, and to be with Christ."²⁹ And, "My soul desired to long for Thy judgments;"³⁰ or if it is more appropriate to say, "My soul longed to desire Thy judgments." And, "The desire of wisdom bringeth to a kingdom."³¹ Yet there has always obtained the usage of

²⁶ Ps. xi. 5.

²⁷ 1 John ii. 15

²⁸ 2 Tim. iii. 2.

²⁹ Phil. i. 23.

³⁰ Ps. cxix. 20.

³¹ Wisd. vi. 20.

understanding desire and concupiscence in a bad sense if the object be not defined. But joy is used in a good sense: "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous."³² And, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart."³³ And, "Thou wilt fill me with joy with Thy countenance."³⁴ Fear is used in a good sense by the apostle when he says, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling."³⁵ And, "Be not high-minded, but fear."³⁶ And, "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."³⁷ But with respect to sadness, which Cicero prefers to call sickness (*ægritudo*), and Virgil pain (*dolor*) (as he says, "*Dolent gaudentque*"³⁸), but which I prefer to call sorrow, because sickness and pain are more commonly used to express bodily suffering, – with respect to this emotion, I say, the question whether it can be used in a good sense is more difficult.

8. Of the three perturbations, which the Stoics admitted in the soul of the wise man to the exclusion of grief or sadness, which the manly mind ought not to experience.

Those emotions which the Greeks call εὐπαθείαι, and which

³² Ps. xxxii. 11.

³³ Ps. iv. 7.

³⁴ Ps. xvi. 11.

³⁵ Phil. ii. 12.

³⁶ Rom. xi. 20.

³⁷ 2 Cor. xi. 3.

³⁸ *Æneid*, vi. 733.

Cicero calls *constantia*, the Stoics would restrict to three; and, instead of three "perturbations" in the soul of the wise man, they substituted severally, in place of desire, will; in place of joy, contentment; and for fear, caution; and as to sickness or pain, which we, to avoid ambiguity, preferred to call sorrow, they denied that it could exist in the mind of a wise man. Will, they say, seeks the good, for this the wise man does. Contentment has its object in good that is possessed, and this the wise man continually possesses. Caution avoids evil, and this the wise man ought to avoid. But sorrow arises from evil that has already happened; and as they suppose that no evil can happen to the wise man, there can be no representative of sorrow in his mind. According to them, therefore, none but the wise man wills, is contented, uses caution; and that the fool can do no more than desire, rejoice, fear, be sad. The former three affections Cicero calls *constantia*, the last four *perturbationes*. Many, however, call these last *passions*; and, as I have said, the Greeks call the former εὐπαθείαι, and the latter πάθη. And when I made a careful examination of Scripture to find whether this terminology was sanctioned by it, I came upon this saying of the prophet: "There is no contentment to the wicked, saith the Lord;"³⁹ as if the wicked might more properly rejoice than be contented regarding evils, for contentment is the property of the good and godly. I found also that verse in the Gospel: "Whatsoever ye would that men

³⁹ Isa. lvii. 21.

should do unto you, do ye even so unto them;"⁴⁰ which seems to imply that evil or shameful things may be the object of desire, but not of will. Indeed, some interpreters have added "good things" to make the expression more in conformity with customary usage, and have given this meaning, "Whatsoever good deeds that ye would that men should do unto you." For they thought that this would prevent any one from wishing other men to provide him with unseemly, not to say shameful, gratifications, – luxurious banquets, for example, – on the supposition that if he returned the like to them he would be fulfilling this precept. In the Greek Gospel, however, from which the Latin is translated, "good" does not occur, but only, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," and, as I believe, because "good" is already included in the word "would;" for He does not say "desire."

Yet though we may sometimes avail ourselves of these precise proprieties of language, we are not to be always bridled by them; and when we read those writers against whose authority it is unlawful to reclaim, we must accept the meanings above mentioned in passages where a right sense can be educed by no other interpretation, as in those instances we adduced partly from the prophet, partly from the Gospel. For who does not know that the wicked exult with joy? Yet "there is no *contentment* for the wicked, saith the Lord." And how so, unless because contentment, when the word is used in its proper and

⁴⁰ Matt. vii. 12.

distinctive significance, means something different from joy? In like manner, who would deny that it were wrong to enjoin upon men that whatever they desire others to do to them they should themselves do to others, lest they should mutually please one another by shameful and illicit pleasure? And yet the precept, "Whatsoever ye *would* that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them," is very wholesome and just. And how is this, unless because the will is in this place used strictly, and signifies that will which cannot have evil for its object? But ordinary phraseology would not have allowed the saying, "Be unwilling to make any manner of lie,"⁴¹ had there not been also an evil will, whose wickedness separates it from that which the angels celebrated, "Peace on earth, of good will to men."⁴² For "good" is superfluous if there is no other kind of will but good will. And why should the apostle have mentioned it among the praises of charity as a great thing, that "it rejoices not in iniquity," unless because wickedness does so rejoice? For even with secular writers these words are used indifferently. For Cicero, that most fertile of orators, says, "I desire, conscript fathers, to be merciful."⁴³ And who would be so pedantic as to say that he should have said "I will" rather than "I desire," because the word is used in a good connection? Again, in Terence, the profligate youth, burning with wild lust, says, "I will nothing else than

⁴¹ Ecclus. vii. 13.

⁴² Luke ii. 14.

⁴³ *Cat.* i. 2.

Philumena."⁴⁴ That this "will" was lust is sufficiently indicated by the answer of his old servant which is there introduced: "How much better were it to try and banish that love from your heart, than to speak so as uselessly to inflame your passion still more!" And that contentment was used by secular writers in a bad sense, that verse of Virgil testifies, in which he most succinctly comprehends these four perturbations, —

"Hence they fear and desire, grieve and are content."⁴⁵

The same author had also used the expression, "the evil contentments of the mind."⁴⁶ So that good and bad men alike will, are cautious, and contented; or, to say the same thing in other words, good and bad men alike desire, fear, rejoice, but the former in a good, the latter in a bad fashion, according as the will is right or wrong. Sorrow itself, too, which the Stoics would not allow to be represented in the mind of the wise man, is used in a good sense, and especially in our writings. For the apostle praises the Corinthians because they had a godly sorrow. But possibly some one may say that the apostle congratulated them because they were penitently sorry, and that such sorrow can exist only in those who have sinned. For these are his words: "For I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though

⁴⁴ Ter. *Andr.* ii. 1, 6.

⁴⁵ *Æneid*, vi. 733.

⁴⁶ *Æneid*, v. 278.

it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For, behold, this selfsame thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you!"⁴⁷ Consequently the Stoics may defend themselves by replying,⁴⁸ that sorrow is indeed useful for repentance of sin, but that this can have no place in the mind of the wise man, inasmuch as no sin attaches to him of which he could sorrowfully repent, nor any other evil the endurance or experience of which could make him sorrowful. For they say that Alcibiades (if my memory does not deceive me), who believed himself happy, shed tears when Socrates argued with him, and demonstrated that he was miserable because he was foolish. In his case, therefore, folly was the cause of this useful and desirable sorrow, wherewith a man mourns that he is what he ought not to be. But the Stoics maintain not that the fool, but that the wise man, cannot be sorrowful.

⁴⁷ 2 Cor. vii. 8-11.

⁴⁸ *Tusc. Disp.* iii. 32.

9. Of the perturbations of the soul which appear as right affections in the life of the righteous

But so far as regards this question of mental perturbations, we have answered these philosophers in the ninth book⁴⁹ of this work, showing that it is rather a verbal than a real dispute, and that they seek contention rather than truth. Among ourselves, according to the sacred Scriptures and sound doctrine, the citizens of the holy city of God, who live according to God in the pilgrimage of this life, both fear and desire, and grieve and rejoice. And because their love is rightly placed, all these affections of theirs are right. They fear eternal punishment, they desire eternal life; they grieve because they themselves groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of their body;⁵⁰ they rejoice in hope, because there "shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."⁵¹ In like manner they fear to sin, they desire to persevere; they grieve in sin, they rejoice in good works. They fear to sin, because they hear that "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."⁵² They desire to persevere, because they hear that it is written, "He that endureth to the

⁴⁹ C. 4, 5.

⁵⁰ Rom. viii. 23.

⁵¹ 1 Cor. xv. 54.

⁵² Matt. xxiv. 12.

end shall be saved."⁵³ They grieve for sin, hearing that "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."⁵⁴ They rejoice in good works, because they hear that "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver."⁵⁵ In like manner, according as they are strong or weak, they fear or desire to be tempted, grieve or rejoice in temptation. They fear to be tempted, because they hear the injunction, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."⁵⁶ They desire to be tempted, because they hear one of the heroes of the city of God saying, "Examine me, O Lord, and tempt me: try my reins and my heart."⁵⁷ They grieve in temptations, because they see Peter weeping;⁵⁸ they rejoice in temptations, because they hear James saying, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."⁵⁹

And not only on their own account do they experience these emotions, but also on account of those whose deliverance they desire and whose perdition they fear, and whose loss or salvation affects them with grief or with joy. For if we who have come into

⁵³ Matt. x. 22.

⁵⁴ 1 John i. 8.

⁵⁵ 2 Cor. ix. 7.

⁵⁶ Gal. vi. 1.

⁵⁷ Ps. xxvi. 2.

⁵⁸ Matt. xxvi. 75.

⁵⁹ Jas. i. 2.

the Church from among the Gentiles may suitably instance that noble and mighty hero who glories in his infirmities, the teacher (*doctor*) of the nations in faith and truth, who also laboured more than all his fellow-apostles, and instructed the tribes of God's people by his epistles, which edified not only those of his own time, but all those who were to be gathered in, – that hero, I say, and athlete of Christ, instructed by Him, anointed of His Spirit, crucified with Him, glorious in Him, lawfully maintaining a great conflict on the theatre of this world, and being made a spectacle to angels and men,⁶⁰ and pressing onwards for the prize of his high calling,⁶¹ – very joyfully do we with the eyes of faith behold him rejoicing with them that rejoice, and weeping with them that weep;⁶² though hampered by fightings without and fears within;⁶³ desiring to depart and to be with Christ;⁶⁴ longing to see the Romans, that he might have some fruit among them as among other Gentiles;⁶⁵ being jealous over the Corinthians, and fearing in that jealousy lest their minds should be corrupted from the chastity that is in Christ;⁶⁶ having great heaviness and

⁶⁰ 1 Cor. iv. 9.

⁶¹ Phil. iii. 14.

⁶² Rom. xii. 15.

⁶³ 2 Cor. vii. 5.

⁶⁴ Phil. i. 23.

⁶⁵ Rom. i. 11-13.

⁶⁶ 2 Cor. xi. 1-3.

continual sorrow of heart for the Israelites,⁶⁷ because they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God;⁶⁸ and expressing not only his sorrow, but bitter lamentation over some who had formally sinned and had not repented of their uncleanness and fornications.⁶⁹

If these emotions and affections, arising as they do from the love of what is good and from a holy charity, are to be called vices, then let us allow these emotions which are truly vices to pass under the name of virtues. But since these affections, when they are exercised in a becoming way, follow the guidance of right reason, who will dare to say that they are diseases or vicious passions? Wherefore even the Lord Himself, when He condescended to lead a human life in the form of a slave, had no sin whatever, and yet exercised these emotions where He judged they should be exercised. For as there was in Him a true human body and a true human soul, so was there also a true human emotion. When, therefore, we read in the Gospel that the hard-heartedness of the Jews moved Him to sorrowful indignation,⁷⁰ that He said, "I am glad for your sakes, to the intent ye may believe,"⁷¹ that when about to raise Lazarus He even shed tears,⁷²

⁶⁷ Rom. ix. 2.

⁶⁸ Rom. x. 3.

⁶⁹ 2 Cor. xii. 21.

⁷⁰ Mark iii. 5.

⁷¹ John xi. 15.

that He earnestly desired to eat the passover with His disciples,⁷³ that as His passion drew near His soul was sorrowful,⁷⁴ these emotions are certainly not falsely ascribed to Him. But as He became man when it pleased Him, so, in the grace of His definite purpose, when it pleased Him He experienced those emotions in His human soul.

But we must further make the admission, that even when these affections are well regulated, and according to God's will, they are peculiar to this life, not to that future life we look for, and that often we yield to them against our will. And thus sometimes we weep in spite of ourselves, being carried beyond ourselves, not indeed by culpable desire, but by praiseworthy charity. In us, therefore, these affections arise from human infirmity; but it was not so with the Lord Jesus, for even His infirmity was the consequence of His power. But so long as we wear the infirmity of this life, we are rather worse men than better if we have none of these emotions at all. For the apostle vituperated and abominated some who, as he said, were "without natural affection."⁷⁵ The sacred Psalmist also found fault with those of whom he said, "I looked for some to lament with me, and there was none."⁷⁶ For to be quite free from pain while we are in this

⁷² John xi. 35.

⁷³ Luke xxii. 15.

⁷⁴ Matt. xxvi. 38.

⁷⁵ Rom. i. 31.

⁷⁶ Ps. lxix. 20.

place of misery is only purchased, as one of this world's literati perceived and remarked,⁷⁷ at the price of blunted sensibilities both of mind and body. And therefore that which the Greeks call ἀπάθεια, and what the Latins would call, if their language would allow them, "impassibilitas," if it be taken to mean an impassibility of spirit and not of body, or, in other words, a freedom from those emotions which are contrary to reason and disturb the mind, then it is obviously a good and most desirable quality, but it is not one which is attainable in this life. For the words of the apostle are the confession, not of the common herd, but of the eminently pious, just, and holy men: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."⁷⁸ When there shall be no sin in a man, then there shall be this ἀπάθεια. At present it is enough if we live without crime; and he who thinks he lives without sin puts aside not sin, but pardon. And if that is to be called apathy, where the mind is the subject of no emotion, then who would not consider this insensibility to be worse than all vices? It may, indeed, reasonably be maintained that the perfect blessedness we hope for shall be free from all sting of fear or sadness; but who that is not quite lost to truth would say that neither love nor joy shall be experienced there? But if by apathy a condition be meant in which no fear terrifies nor any pain annoys, we must in this life renounce such a state if we would live according to God's will, but may hope to enjoy it

⁷⁷ Crantor, an Academic philosopher quoted by Cicero, *Tusc. Quest.* iii. 6.

⁷⁸ 1 John i. 8.

in that blessedness which is promised as our eternal condition.

For that fear of which the Apostle John says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love,"⁷⁹— that fear is not of the same kind as the Apostle Paul felt lest the Corinthians should be seduced by the subtlety of the serpent; for love is susceptible of this fear, yea, love alone is capable of it. But the fear which is not in love is of that kind of which Paul himself says, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear."⁸⁰ But as for that "clean fear which endureth for ever,"⁸¹ if it is to exist in the world to come (and how else can it be said to endure for ever?), it is not a fear deterring us from evil which may happen, but preserving us in the good which cannot be lost. For where the love of acquired good is unchangeable, there certainly the fear that avoids evil is, if I may say so, free from anxiety. For under the name of "clean fear" David signifies that will by which we shall necessarily shrink from sin, and guard against it, not with the anxiety of weakness, which fears that we may strongly sin, but with the tranquillity of perfect love. Or if no kind of fear at all shall exist in that most imperturbable security of perpetual and blissful delights, then the expression, "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever," must be taken in the same sense as

⁷⁹ 1 John iv. 18.

⁸⁰ Rom. viii. 15.

⁸¹ Ps. xix. 9.

that other, "The patience of the poor shall not perish for ever."⁸² For patience, which is necessary only where ills are to be borne, shall not be eternal, but that which patience leads us to will be eternal. So perhaps this "clean fear" is said to endure for ever, because that to which fear leads shall endure.

And since this is so, – since we must live a good life in order to attain to a blessed life, – a good life has all these affections right, a bad life has them wrong. But in the blessed life eternal there will be love and joy, not only right, but also assured; but fear and grief there will be none. Whence it already appears in some sort what manner of persons the citizens of the city of God must be in this their pilgrimage, who live after the spirit, not after the flesh, – that is to say, according to God, not according to man, – and what manner of persons they shall be also in that immortality whither they are journeying. And the city or society of the wicked, who live not according to God, but according to man, and who accept the doctrines of men or devils in the worship of a false and contempt of the true divinity, is shaken with those wicked emotions as by diseases and disturbances. And if there be some of its citizens who seem to restrain and, as it were, temper those passions, they are so elated with ungodly pride, that their disease is as much greater as their pain is less. And if some, with a vanity monstrous in proportion to its rarity, have become enamoured of themselves because they can be stimulated and excited by no emotion, moved or bent by no affection, such persons rather

⁸² Ps. ix. 18.

lose all humanity than obtain true tranquillity. For a thing is not necessarily right because it is inflexible, nor healthy because it is insensible.

10. Whether it is to be believed that our first parents in Paradise, before they sinned, were free from all perturbation

But it is a fair question, whether our first parent or first parents (for there was a marriage of two), before they sinned, experienced in their animal body such emotions as we shall not experience in the spiritual body when sin has been purged and finally abolished. For if they did, then how were they blessed in that boasted place of bliss, Paradise? For who that is affected by fear or grief can be called absolutely blessed? And what could those persons fear or suffer in such affluence of blessings, where neither death nor ill-health was feared, and where nothing was wanting which a good will could desire, and nothing present which could interrupt man's mental or bodily enjoyment? Their love to God was unclouded, and their mutual affection was that of faithful and sincere marriage; and from this love flowed a wonderful delight, because they always enjoyed what was loved. Their avoidance of sin was tranquil; and, so long as it was maintained, no other ill at all could invade them and bring sorrow. Or did they perhaps desire to touch and eat the forbidden fruit, yet feared to die; and thus both fear and desire already, even

in that blissful place, preyed upon those first of mankind? Away with the thought that such could be the case where there was no sin! And, indeed, this is already sin, to desire those things which the law of God forbids, and to abstain from them through fear of punishment, not through love of righteousness. Away, I say, with the thought, that before there was any sin, there should already have been committed regarding that fruit the very sin which our Lord warns us against regarding a woman: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."⁸³ As happy, then, as were these our first parents, who were agitated by no mental perturbations, and annoyed by no bodily discomforts, so happy should the whole human race have been, had they not introduced that evil which they have transmitted to their posterity, and had none of their descendants committed iniquity worthy of damnation; but this original blessedness continuing until, in virtue of that benediction which said, "Increase and multiply,"⁸⁴ the number of the predestined saints should have been completed, there would then have been bestowed that higher felicity which is enjoyed by the most blessed angels, – a blessedness in which there should have been a secure assurance that no one would sin, and no one die; and so should the saints have lived, after no taste of labour, pain, or death, as now they shall live in the resurrection, after they have endured all these things.

⁸³ Matt. v. 28.

⁸⁴ Gen. i. 28.

11. Of the fall of the first man, in whom nature was created good, and can be restored only by its Author

But because God foresaw all things, and was therefore not ignorant that man also would fall, we ought to consider this holy city in connection with what God foresaw and ordained, and not according to our own ideas, which do not embrace God's ordination. For man, by his sin, could not disturb the divine counsel, nor compel God to change what He had decreed; for God's foreknowledge had anticipated both, – that is to say, both how evil the man whom He had created good should become, and what good He Himself should even thus derive from him. For though God is said to change His determinations (so that in a tropical sense the Holy Scripture says even that God repented⁸⁵), this is said with reference to man's expectation, or the order of natural causes, and not with reference to that which the Almighty had foreknown that He would do. Accordingly God, as it is written, made man upright,⁸⁶ and consequently with a good will. For if he had not had a good will, he could not have been upright. The good will, then, is the work of God; for God created him with it. But the first evil will, which preceded all man's evil acts, was rather a kind of falling away from the work of God to its own

⁸⁵ Gen. vi. 6, and 1 Sam. xv. 11.

⁸⁶ Eccles. vii. 29.

works than any positive work. And therefore the acts resulting were evil, not having God, but the will itself for their end; so that the will or the man himself, so far as his will is bad, was as it were the evil tree bringing forth evil fruit. Moreover, the bad will, though it be not in harmony with, but opposed to nature, inasmuch as it is a vice or blemish, yet it is true of it as of all vice, that it cannot exist except in a nature, and only in a nature created out of nothing, and not in that which the Creator has begotten of Himself, as He begot the Word, by whom all things were made. For though God formed man of the dust of the earth, yet the earth itself, and every earthly material, is absolutely created out of nothing; and man's soul, too, God created out of nothing, and joined to the body, when He made man. But evils are so thoroughly overcome by good, that though they are permitted to exist, for the sake of demonstrating how the most righteous foresight of God can make a good use even of them, yet good can exist without evil, as in the true and supreme God Himself, and as in every invisible and visible celestial creature that exists above this murky atmosphere; but evil cannot exist without good, because the natures in which evil exists, in so far as they are natures, are good. And evil is removed, not by removing any nature, or part of a nature, which had been introduced by the evil, but by healing and correcting that which had been vitiated and depraved. The will, therefore, is then truly free, when it is not the slave of vices and sins. Such was it given us by God; and this being lost by its own fault, can only be restored by Him

who was able at first to give it. And therefore the truth says, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;"⁸⁷ which is equivalent to saying, If the Son shall save you, ye shall be saved indeed. For He is our Liberator, inasmuch as He is our Saviour.

Man then lived with God for his rule in a paradise at once physical and spiritual. For neither was it a paradise only physical for the advantage of the body, and not also spiritual for the advantage of the mind; nor was it only spiritual to afford enjoyment to man by his internal sensations, and not also physical to afford him enjoyment through his external senses. But obviously it was both for both ends. But after that proud and therefore envious angel (of whose fall I have said as much as I was able in the eleventh and twelfth books of this work, as well as that of his fellows, who, from being God's angels, became his angels), preferring to rule with a kind of pomp of empire rather than to be another's subject, fell from the spiritual Paradise, and essaying to insinuate his persuasive guile into the mind of man, whose unfallen condition provoked him to envy now that himself was fallen, he chose the serpent as his mouthpiece in that bodily Paradise in which it and all the other earthly animals were living with those two human beings, the man and his wife, subject to them, and harmless; and he chose the serpent because, being slippery, and moving in tortuous windings, it was suitable for his purpose. And this animal being subdued to his wicked ends by the presence and superior force of his angelic nature, he abused

⁸⁷ John viii. 36.

as his instrument, and first tried his deceit upon the woman, making his assault upon the weaker part of that human alliance, that he might gradually gain the whole, and not supposing that the man would readily give ear to him, or be deceived, but that he might yield to the error of the woman. For as Aaron was not induced to agree with the people when they blindly wished him to make an idol, and yet yielded to constraint; and as it is not credible that Solomon was so blind as to suppose that idols should be worshipped, but was drawn over to such sacrilege by the blandishments of women; so we cannot believe that Adam was deceived, and supposed the devil's word to be truth, and therefore transgressed God's law, but that he by the drawings of kindred yielded to the woman, the husband to the wife, the one human being to the only other human being. For not without significance did the apostle say, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression;"⁸⁸ but he speaks thus, because the woman accepted as true what the serpent told her, but the man could not bear to be severed from his only companion, even though this involved a partnership in sin. He was not on this account less culpable, but sinned with his eyes open. And so the apostle does not say, "He did not sin," but "He was not deceived." For he shows that he sinned when he says, "By one man sin entered into the world,"⁸⁹ and immediately after more distinctly, "In the likeness of Adam's transgression." But he

⁸⁸ 1 Tim. ii. 14.

⁸⁹ Rom. v. 12.

meant that those are deceived who do not judge that which they do to be sin; but he knew. Otherwise how were it true "Adam was not deceived?" But having as yet no experience of the divine severity, he was possibly deceived in so far as he thought his sin venial. And consequently he was not deceived as the woman was deceived, but he was deceived as to the judgment which would be passed on his apology: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me, and I did eat."⁹⁰ What need of saying more? Although they were not both deceived by credulity, yet both were entangled in the snares of the devil, and taken by sin.

12. Of the nature of man's first sin

If any one finds a difficulty in understanding why other sins do not alter human nature as it was altered by the transgression of those first human beings, so that on account of it this nature is subject to the great corruption we feel and see, and to death, and is distracted and tossed with so many furious and contending emotions, and is certainly far different from what it was before sin, even though it were then lodged in an animal body, – if, I say, any one is moved by this, he ought not to think that that sin was a small and light one because it was committed about food, and that not bad nor noxious, except because it was forbidden; for in that spot of singular felicity God could not have created and planted

⁹⁰ Gen. iii. 12.

any evil thing. But by the precept He gave, God commended obedience, which is, in a sort, the mother and guardian of all the virtues in the reasonable creature, which was so created that submission is advantageous to it, while the fulfilment of its own will in preference to the Creator's is destruction. And as this commandment enjoining abstinence from one kind of food in the midst of great abundance of other kinds was so easy to keep, – so light a burden to the memory, – and, above all, found no resistance to its observance in lust, which only afterwards sprung up as the penal consequence of sin, the iniquity of violating it was all the greater in proportion to the ease with which it might have been kept.

13. That in Adam's sin an evil will preceded the evil act

Our first parents fell into open disobedience because already they were secretly corrupted; for the evil act had never been done had not an evil will preceded it. And what is the origin of our evil will but pride? For "pride is the beginning of sin."⁹¹ And what is pride but the craving for undue exaltation? And this is undue exaltation, when the soul abandons Him to whom it ought to cleave as its end, and becomes a kind of end to itself. This happens when it becomes its own satisfaction. And it does so when it falls away from that unchangeable good

⁹¹ Eccclus. x. 13.

which ought to satisfy it more than itself. This falling away is spontaneous; for if the will had remained stedfast in the love of that higher and changeless good by which it was illumined to intelligence and kindled into love, it would not have turned away to find satisfaction in itself, and so become frigid and benighted; the woman would not have believed the serpent spoke the truth, nor would the man have preferred the request of his wife to the command of God, nor have supposed that it was a venial transgression to cleave to the partner of his life even in a partnership of sin. The wicked deed, then, – that is to say, the transgression of eating the forbidden fruit, – was committed by persons who were already wicked. That "evil fruit"⁹² could be brought forth only by "a corrupt tree." But that the tree was evil was not the result of nature; for certainly it could become so only by the vice of the will, and vice is contrary to nature. Now, nature could not have been depraved by vice had it not been made out of nothing. Consequently, that it is a nature, this is because it is made by God; but that it falls away from Him, this is because it is made out of nothing. But man did not so fall away⁹³ as to become absolutely nothing; but being turned towards himself, his being became more contracted than it was when he clave to Him who supremely is. Accordingly, to exist in himself, that is, to be his own satisfaction after abandoning God, is not quite to become a nonentity, but to approximate to that. And therefore the holy

⁹² Matt. vii. 18.

⁹³ *Defecit.*

Scriptures designate the proud by another name, "self-pleasers." For it is good to have the heart lifted up, yet not to one's self, for this is proud, but to the Lord, for this is obedient, and can be the act only of the humble. There is, therefore, something in humility which, strangely enough, exalts the heart, and something in pride which debases it. This seems, indeed, to be contradictory, that loftiness should debase and lowliness exalt. But pious humility enables us to submit to what is above us; and nothing is more exalted above us than God; and therefore humility, by making us subject to God, exalts us. But pride, being a defect of nature, by the very act of refusing subjection and revolting from Him who is supreme, falls to a low condition; and then comes to pass what is written: "Thou castedst them down when they lifted up themselves."⁹⁴ For he does not say, "when they had been lifted up," as if first they were exalted, and then afterwards cast down; but "when they lifted up themselves" even then they were cast down, – that is to say, the very lifting up was already a fall. And therefore it is that humility is specially recommended to the city of God as it sojourns in this world, and is specially exhibited in the city of God, and in the person of Christ its King; while the contrary vice of pride, according to the testimony of the sacred writings, specially rules his adversary the devil. And certainly this is the great difference which distinguishes the two cities of which we speak, the one being the society of the godly men, the other of the ungodly, each associated with the angels that adhere

⁹⁴ Ps. lxxiii. 18.

to their party, and the one guided and fashioned by love of self, the other by love of God.

The devil, then, would not have ensnared man in the open and manifest sin of doing what God had forbidden, had man not already begun to live for himself. It was this that made him listen with pleasure to the words, "Ye shall be as gods,"⁹⁵ which they would much more readily have accomplished by obediently adhering to their supreme and true end than by proudly living to themselves. For created gods are gods not by virtue of what is in themselves, but by a participation of the true God. By craving to be more, man becomes less; and by aspiring to be self-sufficing, he fell away from Him who truly suffices him. Accordingly, this wicked desire which prompts man to please himself as if he were himself light, and which thus turns him away from that light by which, had he followed it, he would himself have become light, – this wicked desire, I say, already secretly existed in him, and the open sin was but its consequence. For that is true which is written, "Pride goeth before destruction, and before honour is humility;"⁹⁶ that is to say, secret ruin precedes open ruin, while the former is not counted ruin. For who counts exaltation ruin, though no sooner is the Highest forsaken than a fall is begun? But who does not recognise it as ruin, when there occurs an evident and indubitable transgression of the commandment? And consequently, God's prohibition had reference to such an act as,

⁹⁵ Gen. iii. 5.

⁹⁶ Prov. xviii. 12.

when committed, could not be defended on any pretence of doing what was righteous.⁹⁷ And I make bold to say that it is useful for the proud to fall into an open and indisputable transgression, and so displease themselves, as already, by pleasing themselves, they had fallen. For Peter was in a healthier condition when he wept and was dissatisfied with himself, than when he boldly presumed and satisfied himself. And this is averred by the sacred Psalmist when he says, "Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Thy name, O Lord;"⁹⁸ that is, that they who have pleased themselves in seeking their own glory may be pleased and satisfied with Thee in seeking Thy glory.

14. Of the pride in the sin, which was worse than the sin itself

But it is a worse and more damnable pride which casts about for the shelter of an excuse even in manifest sins, as these our first parents did, of whom the woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat;" and the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."⁹⁹ Here there is no word of begging pardon, no word of entreaty for healing. For though they do not, like Cain, deny that they have perpetrated the deed, yet their pride seeks to refer its wickedness to another, –

⁹⁷ That is to say, it was an obvious and indisputable transgression.

⁹⁸ Ps. lxxxiii. 16.

⁹⁹ Gen. iii. 12, 13.

the woman's pride to the serpent, the man's to the woman. But where there is a plain transgression of a divine commandment, this is rather to accuse than to excuse oneself. For the fact that the woman sinned on the serpent's persuasion, and the man at the woman's offer, did not make the transgression less, as if there were any one whom we ought rather to believe or yield to than God.

15. Of the justice of the punishment with which our first parents were visited for their disobedience

Therefore, because the sin was a despising of the authority of God, – who had created man; who had made him in His own image; who had set him above the other animals; who had placed him in Paradise; who had enriched him with abundance of every kind and of safety; who had laid upon him neither many, nor great, nor difficult commandments, but, in order to make a wholesome obedience easy to him, had given him a single very brief and very light precept by which He reminded that creature whose service was to be free that He was Lord, – it was just that condemnation followed, and condemnation such that man, who by keeping the commandments should have been spiritual even in his flesh, became fleshly even in his spirit; and as in his pride he had sought to be his own satisfaction, God in His justice abandoned him to himself, not to live in the absolute independence he affected, but instead of the liberty he

desired, to live dissatisfied with himself in a hard and miserable bondage to him to whom by sinning he had yielded himself, doomed in spite of himself to die in body as he had willingly become dead in spirit, condemned even to eternal death (had not the grace of God delivered him) because he had forsaken eternal life. Whoever thinks such punishment either excessive or unjust shows his inability to measure the great iniquity of sinning where sin might so easily have been avoided. For as Abraham's obedience is with justice pronounced to be great, because the thing commanded, to kill his son, was very difficult, so in Paradise the disobedience was the greater, because the difficulty of that which was commanded was imperceptible. And as the obedience of the second Man was the more laudable because He became obedient even "unto death,"¹⁰⁰ so the disobedience of the first man was the more detestable because he became disobedient even unto death. For where the penalty annexed to disobedience is great, and the thing commanded by the Creator is easy, who can sufficiently estimate how great a wickedness it is, in a matter so easy, not to obey the authority of so great a power, even when that power deters with so terrible a penalty?

In short, to say all in a word, what but disobedience was the punishment of disobedience in that sin? For what else is man's misery but his own disobedience to himself, so that in consequence of his not being willing to do what he could do, he now wills to do what he cannot? For though he could not

¹⁰⁰ Phil. ii. 8.

do all things in Paradise before he sinned, yet he wished to do only what he could do, and therefore he could do all things he wished. But now, as we recognise in his offspring, and as divine Scripture testifies, "Man is like to vanity."¹⁰¹ For who can count how many things he wishes which he cannot do, so long as he is disobedient to himself, that is, so long as his mind and his flesh do not obey his will? For in spite of himself his mind is both frequently disturbed, and his flesh suffers, and grows old, and dies; and in spite of ourselves we suffer whatever else we suffer, and which we would not suffer if our nature absolutely and in all its parts obeyed our will. But is it not the infirmities of the flesh which hamper it in its service? Yet what does it matter *how* its service is hampered, so long as the fact remains, that by the just retribution of the sovereign God whom we refused to be subject to and serve, our flesh, which was subjected to us, now torments us by insubordination, although our disobedience brought trouble on ourselves, not upon God? For He is not in need of our service as we of our body's; and therefore what we did was no punishment to Him, but what we receive is so to us. And the pains which are called bodily are pains of the soul in and from the body. For what pain or desire can the flesh feel by itself and without the soul? But when the flesh is said to desire or to suffer, it is meant, as we have explained, that the man does so, or some part of the soul which is affected by the sensation of the flesh, whether a harsh sensation causing pain, or gentle, causing

¹⁰¹ Ps. cxliv. 4.

pleasure. But pain in the flesh is only a discomfort of the soul arising from the flesh, and a kind of shrinking from its suffering, as the pain of the soul which is called sadness is a shrinking from those things which have happened to us in spite of ourselves. But sadness is frequently preceded by fear, which is itself in the soul, not in the flesh; while bodily pain is not preceded by any kind of fear of the flesh, which can be felt in the flesh before the pain. But pleasure is preceded by a certain appetite which is felt in the flesh like a craving, as hunger and thirst and that generative appetite which is most commonly identified with the name "lust," though this is the generic word for all desires. For anger itself was defined by the ancients as nothing else than the lust of revenge;¹⁰² although sometimes a man is angry even at inanimate objects which cannot feel his vengeance, as when one breaks a pen, or crushes a quill that writes badly. Yet even this, though less reasonable, is in its way a lust of revenge, and is, so to speak, a mysterious kind of shadow of [the great law of] retribution, that they who do evil should suffer evil. There is therefore a lust for revenge, which is called anger; there is a lust of money, which goes by the name of avarice; there is a lust of conquering, no matter by what means, which is called opinionativeness; there is a lust of applause, which is named boasting. There are many and various lusts, of which some have names of their own, while others have not. For who could readily give a name to the lust of ruling, which yet has a powerful influence in the soul of tyrants,

¹⁰² Cicero, *Tusc. Quæst.* iii. 6 and iv. 9. So Aristotle.

as civil wars bear witness?

16. Of the evil of lust, – a word which, though applicable to many vices, is specially appropriated to sexual uncleanness

Although, therefore, lust may have many objects, yet when no object is specified, the word lust usually suggests to the mind the lustful excitement of the organs of generation. And this lust not only takes possession of the whole body and outward members, but also makes itself felt within, and moves the whole man with a passion in which mental emotion is mingled with bodily appetite, so that the pleasure which results is the greatest of all bodily pleasures. So possessing indeed is this pleasure, that at the moment of time in which it is consummated, all mental activity is suspended. What friend of wisdom and holy joys, who, being married, but knowing, as the apostle says, "how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the disease of desire, as the Gentiles who know not God,"¹⁰³ would not prefer, if this were possible, to beget children without this lust, so that in this function of begetting offspring the members created for this purpose should not be stimulated by the heat of lust, but should be actuated by his volition, in the same way as his other members serve him for their respective ends? But even those

¹⁰³ 1 Thess. iv. 4.

who delight in this pleasure are not moved to it at their own will, whether they confine themselves to lawful or transgress to unlawful pleasures; but sometimes this lust importunes them in spite of themselves, and sometimes fails them when they desire to feel it, so that though lust rages in the mind, it stirs not in the body. Thus, strangely enough, this emotion not only fails to obey the legitimate desire to beget offspring, but also refuses to serve lascivious lust; and though it often opposes its whole combined energy to the soul that resists it, sometimes also it is divided against itself, and while it moves the soul, leaves the body unmoved.

17. Of the nakedness of our first parents, which they saw after their base and shameful sin

Justly is shame very specially connected with this lust; justly, too, these members themselves, being moved and restrained not at our will, but by a certain independent autocracy, so to speak, are called "shameful." Their condition was different before sin. For as it is written, "They were naked and were not ashamed,"¹⁰⁴— not that their nakedness was unknown to them, but because nakedness was not yet shameful, because not yet did lust move those members without the will's consent; not yet did the flesh by its disobedience testify against the disobedience of

¹⁰⁴ Gen. ii. 25.

man. For they were not created blind, as the unenlightened vulgar fancy;¹⁰⁵ for Adam saw the animals to whom he gave names, and of Eve we read, "The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes."¹⁰⁶ Their eyes, therefore, were open, but were not open to this, that is to say, were not observant so as to recognise what was conferred upon them by the garment of grace, for they had no consciousness of their members warring against their will. But when they were stripped of this grace,¹⁰⁷ that their disobedience might be punished by fit retribution, there began in the movement of their bodily members a shameless novelty which made nakedness indecent: it at once made them observant and made them ashamed. And therefore, after they violated God's command by open transgression, it is written: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."¹⁰⁸ "The eyes of them both were opened," not to see, for already they saw, but to discern between the good they had lost and the evil into which they had fallen. And therefore also the tree itself which they were forbidden to

¹⁰⁵ An error which arose from the words, "The eyes of them both were opened," Gen. iii. 7. – See *De Genesi ad lit.* ii. 40.

¹⁰⁶ Gen. iii. 6.

¹⁰⁷ This doctrine and phraseology of Augustine being important in connection with his whole theory of the fall, we give some parallel passages to show that the words are not used at random: *De Genesi ad lit.* xi. 41; *De Corrept. et Gratia*, xi. 31; and especially *Cont. Julian.* iv. 82.

¹⁰⁸ Gen. iii. 7.

touch was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from this circumstance, that if they ate of it it would impart to them this knowledge. For the discomfort of sickness reveals the pleasure of health. "They knew," therefore, "that they were naked," – naked of that grace which prevented them from being ashamed of bodily nakedness while the law of sin offered no resistance to their mind. And thus they obtained a knowledge which they would have lived in blissful ignorance of, had they, in trustful obedience to God, declined to commit that offence which involved them in the experience of the hurtful effects of unfaithfulness and disobedience. And therefore, being ashamed of the disobedience of their own flesh, which witnessed to their disobedience while it punished it, "they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons," that is, cinctures for their privy parts; for some interpreters have rendered the word by *succinctoria*. *Campestris* is, indeed, a Latin word, but it is used of the drawers or aprons used for a similar purpose by the young men who stripped for exercise in the *campus*; hence those who were so girt were commonly called *campestrati*. Shame modestly covered that which lust disobediently moved in opposition to the will which was thus punished for its own disobedience. Consequently all nations, being propagated from that one stock, have so strong an instinct to cover the shameful parts, that some barbarians do not uncover them even in the bath, but wash with their drawers on. In the dark solitudes of India also, though some philosophers go naked, and are therefore called gymnosophists,

yet they make an exception in the case of these members, and cover them.

18. Of the shame which attends all sexual intercourse

Lust requires for its consummation darkness and secrecy; and this not only when unlawful intercourse is desired, but even such fornication as the earthly city has legalized. Where there is no fear of punishment, these permitted pleasures still shrink from the public eye. Even where provision is made for this lust, secrecy also is provided; and while lust found it easy to remove the prohibitions of law, shamelessness found it impossible to lay aside the veil of retirement. For even shameless men call this shameful; and though they love the pleasure, dare not display it. What! does not even conjugal intercourse, sanctioned as it is by law for the propagation of children, legitimate and honourable though it be, does it not seek retirement from every eye? Before the bridegroom fondles his bride, does he not exclude the attendants, and even the paranympths, and such friends as the closest ties have admitted to the bridal chamber? The greatest master of Roman eloquence says, that all right actions wish to be set in the light, *i. e.* desire to be known. This right action, however, has such a desire to be known, that yet it blushes to be seen. Who does not know what passes between husband and wife that children may be born? Is it not for this purpose that wives are married with such ceremony? And yet, when this well-

understood act is gone about for the procreation of children, not even the children themselves, who may already have been born to them, are suffered to be witnesses. This right action seeks the light, in so far as it seeks to be known, but yet dreads being seen. And why so, if not because that which is by nature fitting and decent is so done as to be accompanied with a shame-begetting penalty of sin?

19. That it is now necessary, as it was not before man sinned, to bridle anger and lust by the restraining influence of wisdom

Hence it is that even the philosophers who have approximated to the truth have avowed that anger and lust are vicious mental emotions, because, even when exercised towards objects which wisdom does not prohibit, they are moved in an ungoverned and inordinate manner, and consequently need the regulation of mind and reason. And they assert that this third part of the mind is posted as it were in a kind of citadel, to give rule to these other parts, so that, while it rules and they serve, man's righteousness is preserved without a breach.¹⁰⁹ These parts, then, which they acknowledge to be vicious even in a wise and temperate man, so that the mind, by its composing and restraining influence, must bridle and recall them from those objects towards which

¹⁰⁹ See Plato's *Republic*, book iv.

they are unlawfully moved, and give them access to those which the law of wisdom sanctions, – that anger, *e. g.*, may be allowed for the enforcement of a just authority, and lust for the duty of propagating offspring, – these parts, I say, were not vicious in Paradise before sin, for they were never moved in opposition to a holy will towards any object from which it was necessary that they should be withheld by the restraining bridle of reason. For though now they are moved in this way, and are regulated by a bridling and restraining power, which those who live temperately, justly, and godly exercise, sometimes with ease, and sometimes with greater difficulty, this is not the sound health of nature, but the weakness which results from sin. And how is it that shame does not hide the acts and words dictated by anger or other emotions, as it covers the motions of lust, unless because the members of the body which we employ for accomplishing them are moved, not by the emotions themselves, but by the authority of the consenting will? For he who in his anger rails at or even strikes some one, could not do so were not his tongue and hand moved by the authority of the will, as also they are moved when there is no anger. But the organs of generation are so subjected to the rule of lust, that they have no motion but what it communicates. It is this we are ashamed of; it is this which blushing hides from the eyes of onlookers. And rather will a man endure a crowd of witnesses when he is unjustly venting his anger on some one, than the eye of one man when he innocently copulates with his wife.

20. *Of the foolish beastliness of the Cynics*

It is this which those canine or cynic¹¹⁰ philosophers have overlooked, when they have, in violation of the modest instincts of men, boastfully proclaimed their unclean and shameless opinion, worthy indeed of dogs, viz., that as the matrimonial act is legitimate, no one should be ashamed to perform it openly, in the street or in any public place. Instinctive shame has overborne this wild fancy. For though it is related¹¹¹ that Diogenes once dared to put his opinion in practice, under the impression that his sect would be all the more famous if his egregious shamelessness were deeply graven in the memory of mankind, yet this example was not afterwards followed. Shame had more influence with them, to make them blush before men, than error to make them affect a resemblance to dogs. And possibly, even in the case of Diogenes, and those who did imitate him, there was but an appearance and pretence of copulation, and not the reality. Even at this day there are still Cynic philosophers to be seen; for these are Cynics who are not content with being clad in the *pallium*, but also carry a club; yet no one of them dares to do this that we speak of. If they did, they would be spat upon, not to say stoned, by the mob. Human nature, then, is without doubt ashamed of this lust; and justly so, for the insubordination of these members, and their

¹¹⁰ The one word being the Latin form, the other the Greek, of the same adjective.

¹¹¹ By Diogenes Laertius, vi. 69, and Cicero, *De Offic.* i. 41.

defiance of the will, are the clear testimony of the punishment of man's first sin. And it was fitting that this should appear specially in those parts by which is generated that nature which has been altered for the worse by that first and great sin, – that sin from whose evil connection no one can escape, unless God's grace expiate in him individually that which was perpetrated to the destruction of all in common, when all were in one man, and which was avenged by God's justice.

21. That man's transgression did not annul the blessing of fecundity pronounced upon man before he sinned, but infected it with the disease of lust

Far be it, then, from us to suppose that our first parents in Paradise felt that lust which caused them afterwards to blush and hide their nakedness, or that by its means they should have fulfilled the benediction of God, "Increase and multiply and replenish the earth;"¹¹² for it was after sin that lust began. It was after sin that our nature, having lost the power it had over the whole body, but not having lost all shame, perceived, noticed, blushed at, and covered it. But that blessing upon marriage, which encouraged them to increase and multiply and replenish the earth, though, it continued even after they had sinned, was yet given before they sinned, in order that the procreation of children

¹¹² Gen. i. 28.

might be recognised as part of the glory of marriage, and not of the punishment of sin. But now, men being ignorant of the blessedness of Paradise, suppose that children could not have been begotten there in any other way than they know them to be begotten now, *i. e.* by lust, at which even honourable marriage blushes; some not simply rejecting, but sceptically deriding the divine Scriptures, in which we read that our first parents, after they sinned, were ashamed of their nakedness, and covered it; while others, though they accept and honour Scripture, yet conceive that this expression, "Increase and multiply," refers not to carnal fecundity, because a similar expression is used of the soul in the words, "Thou wilt multiply me with strength in my soul;"¹¹³ and so, too, in the words which follow in Genesis, "And replenish the earth, and subdue it," they understand by the earth the body which the soul fills with its presence, and which it rules over when it is multiplied in strength. And they hold that children could no more then than now be begotten without lust, which, after sin, was kindled, observed, blushed for, and covered; and even that children would not have been born in Paradise, but only outside of it, as in fact it turned out. For it was after they were expelled from it that they came together to beget children, and begot them.

¹¹³ Ps. cxxxviii. 3.

22. Of the conjugal union as it was originally instituted and blessed by God

But we, for our part, have no manner of doubt that to increase and multiply and replenish the earth in virtue of the blessing of God, is a gift of marriage as God instituted it from the beginning before man sinned, when He created them male and female, – in other words, two sexes manifestly distinct. And it was this work of God on which His blessing was pronounced. For no sooner had Scripture said, "Male and female created He them,"¹¹⁴ than it immediately continues, "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Increase, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it," etc. And though all these things may not unsuitably be interpreted in a spiritual sense, yet "male and female" cannot be understood of two things in one man, as if there were in him one thing which rules, another which is ruled; but it is quite clear that they were created male and female, with bodies of different sexes, for the very purpose of begetting offspring, and so increasing, multiplying, and replenishing the earth; and it is great folly to oppose so plain a fact. It was not of the spirit which commands and the body which obeys, nor of the rational soul which rules and the irrational desire which is ruled, nor of the contemplative virtue which is supreme and the active which is

¹¹⁴ Gen. i. 27, 28.

subject, nor of the understanding of the mind and the sense of the body, but plainly of the matrimonial union by which the sexes are mutually bound together, that our Lord, when asked whether it were lawful for any cause to put away one's wife (for on account of the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites Moses permitted a bill of divorcement to be given), answered and said, "Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."¹¹⁵ It is certain, then, that from the first men were created, as we see and know them to be now, of two sexes, male and female, and that they are called one, either on account of the matrimonial union, or on account of the origin of the woman, who was created from the side of the man. And it is by this original example, which God Himself instituted, that the apostle admonishes all husbands to love their own wives in particular.¹¹⁶

23. Whether generation should have taken place even in Paradise had man not sinned, or whether there should have been any contention there between chastity and lust.

But he who says that there should have been neither copulation nor generation but for sin, virtually says that man's sin was necessary to complete the number of the saints. For if these two

¹¹⁵ Matt. xix. 4, 5.

¹¹⁶ Eph. v. 25.

by not sinning should have continued to live alone, because, as is supposed, they could not have begotten children had they not sinned, then certainly sin was necessary in order that there might be not only two but many righteous men. And if this cannot be maintained without absurdity, we must rather believe that the number of the saints fit to complete this most blessed city would have been as great though no one had sinned, as it is now that the grace of God gathers its citizens out of the multitude of sinners, so long as the children of this world generate and are generated.¹¹⁷

And therefore that marriage, worthy of the happiness of Paradise, should have had desirable fruit without the shame of lust, had there been no sin. But how that could be, there is now no example to teach us. Nevertheless, it ought not to seem incredible that one member might serve the will without lust then, since so many serve it now. Do we now move our feet and hands when we will to do the things we would by means of these members? do we meet with no resistance in them, but perceive that they are ready servants of the will, both in our own case and in that of others, and especially of artisans employed in mechanical operations, by which the weakness and clumsiness of nature become, through industrious exercise, wonderfully dexterous? and shall we not believe that, like as all those members obediently serve the will, so also should the members have discharged the function of generation, though lust,

¹¹⁷ Luke xx. 34.

the award of disobedience, had been awaiting? Did not Cicero, in discussing the difference of governments in his *De Republica*, adopt a simile from human nature, and say that we command our bodily members as children, they are so obedient; but that the vicious parts of the soul must be treated as slaves, and be coerced with a more stringent authority? And no doubt, in the order of nature, the soul is more excellent than the body; and yet the soul commands the body more easily than itself. Nevertheless this lust, of which we at present speak, is the more shameful on this account, because the soul is therein neither master of itself, so as not to lust at all, nor of the body, so as to keep the members under the control of the will; for if they were thus ruled, there should be no shame. But now the soul is ashamed that the body, which by nature is inferior and subject to it, should resist its authority. For in the resistance experienced by the soul in the other emotions there is less shame, because the resistance is from itself, and thus, when it is conquered by itself, itself is the conqueror, although the conquest is inordinate and vicious, because accomplished by those parts of the soul which ought to be subject to reason, yet, being accomplished by its own parts and energies, the conquest is, as I say, its own. For when the soul conquers itself to a due subordination, so that its unreasonable motions are controlled by reason, while it again is subject to God, this is a conquest virtuous and praiseworthy. Yet there is less shame when the soul is resisted by its own vicious parts than when its will and order are resisted by the body, which is distinct from and inferior to it,

and dependent on it for life itself.

But so long as the will retains under its authority the other members, without which the members excited by lust to resist the will cannot accomplish what they seek, chastity is preserved, and the delight of sin foregone. And certainly, had not culpable disobedience been visited with penal disobedience, the marriage of Paradise should have been ignorant of this struggle and rebellion, this quarrel between will and lust, that the will may be satisfied and lust restrained, but those members, like all the rest, should have obeyed the will. The field of generation¹¹⁸ should have been sown by the organ created for this purpose, as the earth is sown by the hand. And whereas now, as we essay to investigate this subject more exactly, modesty hinders us, and compels us to ask pardon of chaste ears, there would have been no cause to do so, but we could have discoursed freely, and without fear of seeming obscene, upon all those points which occur to one who meditates on the subject. There would not have been even words which could be called obscene, but all that might be said of these members would have been as pure as what is said of the other parts of the body. Whoever, then, comes to the perusal of these pages with unchaste mind, let him blame his disposition, not his nature; let him brand the actings of his own impurity, not the words which necessity forces us to use, and for which every pure and pious reader or hearer will very readily pardon me, while I expose the folly of that scepticism which argues solely on

¹¹⁸ See Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 136.

the ground of its own experience, and has no faith in anything beyond. He who is not scandalized at the apostle's censure of the horrible wickedness of the women who "changed the natural use into that which is against nature,"¹¹⁹ will read all this without being shocked, especially as we are not, like Paul, citing and censuring a damnable uncleanness, but are explaining, so far as we can, human generation, while with Paul we avoid all obscenity of language.

24. That if men had remained innocent and obedient in Paradise, the generative organs should have been in subjection to the will as the other members are.

The man, then, would have sown the seed, and the woman received it, as need required, the generative organs being moved by the will, not excited by lust. For we move at will not only those members which are furnished with joints of solid bone, as the hands, feet, and fingers, but we move also at will those which are composed of slack and soft nerves: we can put them in motion, or stretch them out, or bend and twist them, or contract and stiffen them, as we do with the muscles of the mouth and face. The lungs, which are the very tenderest of the viscera except the brain, and are therefore carefully sheltered in the cavity of the chest, yet for all purposes of inhaling and exhaling the breath, and of uttering and modulating the voice, are obedient to the will when we breathe, exhale, speak, shout, or sing, just as the

¹¹⁹ Rom. i. 26.

bellows obey the smith or the organist. I will not press the fact that some animals have a natural power to move a single spot of the skin with which their whole body is covered, if they have felt on it anything they wish to drive off, – a power so great, that by this shivering tremor of the skin they can not only shake off flies that have settled on them, but even spears that have fixed in their flesh. Man, it is true, has not this power; but is this any reason for supposing that God could not give it to such creatures as He wished to possess it? And therefore man himself also might very well have enjoyed absolute power over his members had he not forfeited it by his disobedience; for it was not difficult for God to form him so that what is now moved in his body only by lust should have been moved only at will.

We know, too, that some men are differently constituted from others, and have some rare and remarkable faculty of doing with their body what other men can by no effort do, and, indeed, scarcely believe when they hear of others doing. There are persons who can move their ears, either one at a time, or both together. There are some who, without moving the head, can bring the hair down upon the forehead, and move the whole scalp backwards and forwards at pleasure. Some, by lightly pressing their stomach, bring up an incredible quantity and variety of things they have swallowed, and produce whatever they please, quite whole, as if out of a bag. Some so accurately mimic the voices of birds and beasts and other men, that, unless they are seen, the difference cannot be told. Some have such command of

their bowels, that they can break wind continuously at pleasure, so as to produce the effect of singing. I myself have known a man who was accustomed to sweat whenever he wished. It is well known that some weep when they please, and shed a flood of tears. But far more incredible is that which some of our brethren saw quite recently. There was a presbyter called Restitutus, in the parish of the Calamensian¹²⁰ Church, who, as often as he pleased (and he was asked to do this by those who desired to witness so remarkable a phenomenon), on some one imitating the wailings of mourners, became so insensible, and lay in a state so like death, that not only had he no feeling when they pinched and pricked him, but even when fire was applied to him, and he was burned by it, he had no sense of pain except afterwards from the wound. And that his body remained motionless, not by reason of his self-command, but because he was insensible, was proved by the fact that he breathed no more than a dead man; and yet he said that, when any one spoke with more than ordinary distinctness, he heard the voice, but as if it were a long way off. Seeing, then, that even in this mortal and miserable life the body serves some men by many remarkable movements and moods beyond the ordinary course of nature, what reason is there for doubting that, before man was involved by his sin in this

¹²⁰ The position of Calama is described by Augustine as between Constantine and Hippo, but nearer Hippo. —*Contra Lit. Petil.* ii. 228. A full description of it is given in Poujoulat's *Histoire de S. Augustin*, i. 340, who says it was one of the most important towns of Numidia, eighteen leagues south of Hippo, and represented by the modern Ghelma. It is to its bishop, Possidius, we owe the contemporary *Life of Augustine*.

weak and corruptible condition, his members might have served his will for the propagation of offspring without lust? Man has been given over to himself because he abandoned God, while he sought to be self-satisfying; and disobeying God, he could not obey even himself. Hence it is that he is involved in the obvious misery of being unable to live as he wishes. For if he lived as he wished, he would think himself blessed; but he could not be so if he lived wickedly.

25. Of true blessedness, which this present life cannot enjoy

However, if we look at this a little more closely, we see that no one lives as he wishes but the blessed, and that no one is blessed but the righteous. But even the righteous himself does not live as he wishes, until he has arrived where he cannot die, be deceived, or injured, and until he is assured that this shall be his eternal condition. For this nature demands; and nature is not fully and perfectly blessed till it attains what it seeks. But what man is at present able to live as he wishes, when it is not in his power so much as to live? He wishes to live, he is compelled to die. How, then, does he live as he wishes who does not live as long as he wishes? or if he wishes to die, how can he live as he wishes, since he does not wish even to live? Or if he wishes to die, not because he dislikes life, but that after death he may live better, still he is not yet living as he wishes, but only has the

prospect of so living when, through death, he reaches that which he wishes. But admit that he lives as he wishes, because he has done violence to himself, and forced himself not to wish what he cannot obtain, and to wish only what he can (as Terence has it, "Since you cannot do what you will, will what you can"¹²¹), is he therefore blessed because he is patiently wretched? For a blessed life is possessed only by the man who loves it. If it is loved and possessed, it must necessarily be more ardently loved than all besides; for whatever else is loved must be loved for the sake of the blessed life. And if it is loved as it deserves to be, – and the man is not blessed who does not love the blessed life as it deserves, – then he who so loves it cannot but wish it to be eternal. Therefore it shall then only be blessed when it is eternal.

26. That we are to believe that in Paradise our first parents begat offspring without blushing

In Paradise, then, man lived as he desired so long as he desired what God had commanded. He lived in the enjoyment of God, and was good by God's goodness; he lived without any want, and had it in his power so to live eternally. He had food that he might not hunger, drink that he might not thirst, the tree of life that old age might not waste him. There was in his body no corruption, nor seed of corruption, which could produce in

¹²¹ *Andr.* ii. 1, 5.

him any unpleasant sensation. He feared no inward disease, no outward accident. Soundest health blessed his body, absolute tranquillity his soul. As in Paradise there was no excessive heat or cold, so its inhabitants were exempt from the vicissitudes of fear and desire. No sadness of any kind was there, nor any foolish joy, true gladness ceaselessly flowed from the presence of God, who was loved "out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned."¹²² The honest love of husband and wife made a sure harmony between them. Body and spirit worked harmoniously together, and the commandment was kept without labour. No languor made their leisure wearisome; no sleepiness interrupted their desire to labour.¹²³ In tanta facilitate rerum et felicitate hominum, absit ut suspicemur, non potuisse prolem seri sine libidinis morbo: sed eo voluntatis nutu moverentur illa membra quo cætera, et sine ardoris illecebroso stimulo cum tranquillitate animi et corporis nulla corruptione integritatis infunderetur gremio maritus uxoris. Neque enim quia experientia probari non potest, ideo credendum non est; quando illas corporis partes non ageret turbidus calor, sed spontanea potestas, sicut opus esset, adhiberet; ita tunc potuisse utero conjugis salva integritate feminei genitalis virile semen immitti, sicut nunc potest eadem integritate salva ex utero virginis fluxus menstrui cruoris emitti. Eadem quippe via posset illud injici, qua hoc potest ejici. Ut

¹²² 1 Tim. i. 5.

¹²³ Compare Basil's *Homily on Paradise*, and John Damascene, *De Fide Orthod.* ii.

enim ad pariendum non doloris gemitus, sed maturitatis impulsus feminea viscera relaxaret: sic ad foetandum et concipiendum non libidinis appetitus, sed voluntarius usus naturam utramque conjungeret. We speak of things which are now shameful, and although we try, as well as we are able, to conceive them as they were before they became shameful, yet necessity compels us rather to limit our discussion to the bounds set by modesty than to extend it as our moderate faculty of discourse might suggest. For since that which I have been speaking of was not experienced even by those who might have experienced it, – I mean our first parents (for sin and its merited banishment from Paradise anticipated this passionless generation on their part), – when sexual intercourse is spoken of now, it suggests to men's thoughts not such a placid obedience to the will as is conceivable in our first parents, but such violent acting of lust as they themselves have experienced. And therefore modesty shuts my mouth, although my mind conceives the matter clearly. But Almighty God, the supreme and supremely good Creator of all natures, who aids and rewards good wills, while He abandons and condemns the bad, and rules both, was not destitute of a plan by which He might people His city with the fixed number of citizens which His wisdom had foreordained even out of the condemned human race, discriminating them not now by merits, since the whole mass was condemned as if in a vitiated root, but by grace, and showing, not only in the case of the redeemed, but also in those who were not delivered, how much grace He has bestowed

upon them. For every one acknowledges that he has been rescued from evil, not by deserved, but by gratuitous goodness, when he is singled out from the company of those with whom he might justly have borne a common punishment, and is allowed to go scathless. Why, then, should God not have created those whom He foresaw would sin, since He was able to show in and by them both what their guilt merited, and what His grace bestowed, and since, under His creating and disposing hand, even the perverse disorder of the wicked could not pervert the right order of things?

***27. Of the angels and men who sinned,
and that their wickedness did not
disturb the order of God's providence***

The sins of men and angels do nothing to impede the "great works of the Lord which accomplish His will."¹²⁴ For He who by His providence and omnipotence distributes to every one his own portion, is able to make good use not only of the good, but also of the wicked. And thus making a good use of the wicked angel, who, in punishment of his first wicked volition, was doomed to an obduracy that prevents him now from willing any good, why should not God have permitted him to tempt the first man, who had been created upright, that is to say, with a good will? For he had been so constituted, that if he

¹²⁴ Ps. cxi. 2.

looked to God for help, man's goodness should defeat the angel's wickedness; but if by proud self-pleasing he abandoned God, his Creator and Sustainer, he should be conquered. If his will remained upright, through leaning on God's help, he should be rewarded; if it became wicked, by forsaking God, he should be punished. But even this trusting in God's help could not itself be accomplished without God's help, although man had it in his own power to relinquish the benefits of divine grace by pleasing himself. For as it is not in our power to live in this world without sustaining ourselves by food, while it is in our power to refuse this nourishment and cease to live, as those do who kill themselves, so it was not in man's power, even in Paradise, to live as he ought without God's help; but it was in his power to live wickedly, though thus he should cut short his happiness, and incur very just punishment. Since, then, God was not ignorant that man would fall, why should He not have suffered him to be tempted by an angel who hated and envied him? It was not, indeed, that He was unaware that he should be conquered, but because He foresaw that by the man's seed, aided by divine grace, this same devil himself should be conquered, to the greater glory of the saints. All was brought about in such a manner, that neither did any future event escape God's foreknowledge, nor did His foreknowledge compel any one to sin, and so as to demonstrate in the experience of the intelligent creation, human and angelic, how great a difference there is between the private presumption of the creature and the Creator's protection. For who will dare

to believe or say that it was not in God's power to prevent both angels and men from sinning? But God preferred to leave this in their power, and thus to show both what evil could be wrought by their pride, and what good by His grace.

***28. Of the nature of the two cities,
the earthly and the heavenly***

Accordingly, two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories in itself, the latter in the Lord. For the one seeks glory from men; but the greatest glory of the other is God, the witness of conscience. The one lifts up its head in its own glory; the other says to its God, "Thou art my glory, and the lifter up of mine head."¹²⁵ In the one, the princes and the nations it subdues are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other, the princes and the subjects serve one another in love, the latter obeying, while the former take thought for all. The one delights in its own strength, represented in the persons of its rulers; the other says to its God, "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength."¹²⁶ And therefore the wise men of the one city, living according to man, have sought for profit to their own bodies or souls, or both, and

¹²⁵ Ps. iii. 3.

¹²⁶ Ps. xviii. 1.

those who have known God "glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise," – that is, glorying in their own wisdom, and being possessed by pride, – "they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." For they were either leaders or followers of the people in adoring images, "and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever."¹²⁷ But in the other city there is no human wisdom, but only godliness, which offers due worship to the true God, and looks for its reward in the society of the saints, of holy angels as well as holy men, "that God may be all in all."¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Rom. i. 21-25.

¹²⁸ 1 Cor. xv. 28.

BOOK FIFTEENTH

ARGUMENT

HAVING TREATED IN THE FOUR PRECEDING BOOKS OF THE ORIGIN OF THE TWO CITIES, THE EARTHLY AND THE HEAVENLY, AUGUSTINE EXPLAINS THEIR GROWTH AND PROGRESS IN THE FOUR BOOKS WHICH FOLLOW; AND, IN ORDER TO DO SO, HE EXPLAINS THE CHIEF PASSAGES OF THE SACRED HISTORY WHICH BEAR UPON THIS SUBJECT. IN THIS FIFTEENTH BOOK HE OPENS THIS PART OF HIS WORK BY EXPLAINING THE EVENTS RECORDED IN GENESIS FROM THE TIME OF CAIN AND ABEL TO THE DELUGE.

1. Of the two lines of the human race which from first to last divide it

OF the bliss of Paradise, of Paradise itself, and of the life of our first parents there, and of their sin and punishment, many have thought much, spoken much, written much. We ourselves, too, have spoken of these things in the foregoing books, and have written either what we read in the Holy Scriptures, or what

we could reasonably deduce from them. And were we to enter into a more detailed investigation of these matters, an endless number of endless questions would arise, which would involve us in a larger work than the present occasion admits. We cannot be expected to find room for replying to every question that may be started by unoccupied and captious men, who are ever more ready to ask questions than capable of understanding the answer. Yet I trust we have already done justice to these great and difficult questions regarding the beginning of the world, or of the soul, or of the human race itself. This race we have distributed into two parts, the one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God. And these we also mystically call the two cities, or the two communities of men, of which the one is predestined to reign eternally with God, and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil. This, however, is their end, and of it we are to speak afterwards. At present, as we have said enough about their origin, whether among the angels, whose numbers we know not, or in the two first human beings, it seems suitable to attempt an account of their career, from the time when our two first parents began to propagate the race until all human generation shall cease. For this whole time or world-age, in which the dying give place and those who are born succeed, is the career of these two cities concerning which we treat.

Of these two first parents of the human race, then, Cain was the first-born, and he belonged to the city of men; after him

was born Abel, who belonged to the city of God. For as in the individual the truth of the apostle's statement is discerned, "that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual,"¹²⁹ whence it comes to pass that each man, being derived from a condemned stock, is first of all born of Adam evil and carnal, and becomes good and spiritual only afterwards, when he is grafted into Christ by regeneration: so was it in the human race as a whole. When these two cities began to run their course by a series of deaths and births, the citizen of this world was the first-born, and after him the stranger in this world, the citizen of the city of God, predestinated by grace, elected by grace, by grace a stranger below, and by grace a citizen above. By grace, – for so far as regards himself he is sprung from the same mass, all of which is condemned in its origin; but God, like a potter (for this comparison is introduced by the apostle judiciously, and not without thought), of the same lump made one vessel to honour, another to dishonour.¹³⁰ But first the vessel to dishonour was made, and after it another to honour. For in each individual, as I have already said, there is first of all that which is reprobate, that from which we must begin, but in which we need not necessarily remain; afterwards is that which is well-approved, to which we may by advancing attain, and in which, when we have reached it, we may abide. Not, indeed, that every wicked man shall be good, but that no one will be good

¹²⁹ 1 Cor. xv. 46.

¹³⁰ Rom. ix. 21.

who was not first of all wicked; but the sooner any one becomes a good man, the more speedily does he receive this title, and abolish the old name in the new. Accordingly, it is recorded of Cain that he built a city,¹³¹ but Abel, being a sojourner, built none. For the city of the saints is above, although here below it begets citizens, in whom it sojourns till the time of its reign arrives, when it shall gather together all in the day of the resurrection; and then shall the promised kingdom be given to them, in which they shall reign with their Prince, the King of the ages, time without end.

2. Of the children of the flesh and the children of the promise

There was indeed on earth, so long as it was needed, a symbol and foreshadowing image of this city, which served the purpose of reminding men that such a city was to be, rather than of making it present; and this image was itself called the holy city, as a symbol of the future city, though not itself the reality. Of this city which served as an image, and of that free city it typified, Paul writes to the Galatians in these terms: "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond maid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bond woman was born after the flesh, but he of the free woman was

¹³¹ Gen. iv. 17.

by promise. Which things are an allegory:¹³² for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond woman and her son: for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. And we, brethren, are not children of the bond woman, but of the free, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."¹³³ This interpretation of the passage, handed down to us with apostolic authority, shows how we ought to understand the Scriptures of the two covenants – the old and the new. One portion of the earthly city became an image of the heavenly city, not having a significance of its own, but signifying another city, and therefore serving, or "being in bondage." For it was founded not for its own sake, but to prefigure another city; and this shadow of a city was also itself foreshadowed by another preceding figure. For Sarah's handmaid Agar, and her son, were

¹³² Comp. *De Trin.* xv. c. 15.

¹³³ Gal. iv. 21-31.

an image of this image. And as the shadows were to pass away when the full light came, Sarah, the free woman, who prefigured the free city (which again was also prefigured in another way by that shadow of a city Jerusalem), therefore said, "Cast out the bond woman and her son; for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac," or, as the apostle says, "with the son of the free woman." In the earthly city, then, we find two things – its own obvious presence, and its symbolic presentation of the heavenly city. Now citizens are begotten to the earthly city by nature vitiated by sin, but to the heavenly city by grace freeing nature from sin; whence the former are called "vessels of wrath," the latter "vessels of mercy."¹³⁴ And this was typified in the two sons of Abraham, – Ishmael, the son of Agar the handmaid, being born according to the flesh, while Isaac was born of the free woman Sarah, according to the promise. Both, indeed, were of Abraham's seed; but the one was begotten by natural law, the other was given by gracious promise. In the one birth, human action is revealed; in the other, a divine kindness comes to light.

3. That Sarah's barrenness was made productive by God's grace

Sarah, in fact, was barren; and, despairing of offspring, and being resolved that she would have at least through her handmaid

¹³⁴ Rom. ix. 22, 23.

that blessing she saw she could not in her own person procure, she gave her handmaid to her husband, to whom she herself had been unable to bear children. From him she required this conjugal duty, exercising her own right in another's womb. And thus Ishmael was born according to the common law of human generation, by sexual intercourse. Therefore it is said that he was born "according to the flesh," – not because such births are not the gifts of God, nor His handiwork, whose creative wisdom "reaches," as it is written, "from one end to another mightily, and sweetly doth she order all things,"¹³⁵ but because, in a case in which the gift of God, which was not due to men and was the gratuitous largess of grace, was to be conspicuous, it was requisite that a son be given in a way which no effort of nature could compass. Nature denies children to persons of the age which Abraham and Sarah had now reached; besides that, in Sarah's case, she was barren even in her prime. This nature, so constituted that offspring could not be looked for, symbolized the nature of the human race vitiated by sin and by just consequence condemned, which deserves no future felicity. Fitly, therefore, does Isaac, the child of promise, typify the children of grace, the citizens of the free city, who dwell together in everlasting peace, in which self-love and self-will have no place, but a ministering love that rejoices in the common joy of all, of many hearts makes one, that is to say, secures a perfect concord.

¹³⁵ Wisdom viii. 1.

4. Of the conflict and peace of the earthly city

But the earthly city, which shall not be everlasting (for it will no longer be a city when it has been committed to the extreme penalty), has its good in this world, and rejoices in it with such joy as such things can afford. But as this is not a good which can discharge its devotees of all distresses, this city is often divided against itself by litigations, wars, quarrels, and such victories as are either life-destroying or short-lived. For each part of it that arms against another part of it seeks to triumph over the nations through itself in bondage to vice. If, when it has conquered, it is inflated with pride, its victory is life-destroying; but if it turns its thoughts upon the common casualties of our mortal condition, and is rather anxious concerning the disasters that may befall it than elated with the successes already achieved, this victory, though of a higher kind, is still only short-lived; for it cannot abidingly rule over those whom it has victoriously subjugated. But the things which this city desires cannot justly be said to be evil, for it is itself, in its own kind, better than all other human good. For it desires earthly peace for the sake of enjoying earthly goods, and it makes war in order to attain to this peace; since, if it has conquered, and there remains no one to resist it, it enjoys a peace which it had not while there were opposing parties who contested for the enjoyment of those things which were too small to satisfy both. This peace is purchased by toilsome wars; it is

obtained by what they style a glorious victory. Now, when victory remains with the party which had the juster cause, who hesitates to congratulate the victor, and style it a desirable peace? These things, then, are good things, and without doubt the gifts of God. But if they neglect the better things of the heavenly city, which are secured by eternal victory and peace never-ending, and so inordinately covet these present good things that they believe them to be the only desirable things, or love them better than those things which are believed to be better, – if this be so, then it is necessary that misery follow and ever increase.

***5. Of the fratricidal act of the founder
of the earthly city, and the corresponding
crime of the founder of Rome***

Thus the founder of the earthly city was a fratricide. Overcome with envy, he slew his own brother, a citizen of the eternal city, and a sojourner on earth. So that we cannot be surprised that this first specimen, or, as the Greeks say, archetype of crime, should, long afterwards, find a corresponding crime at the foundation of that city which was destined to reign over so many nations, and be the head of this earthly city of which we speak. For of that city also, as one of their poets has mentioned, "the first walls were stained with a brother's blood,"¹³⁶ or, as

¹³⁶ Lucan, *Phar.* i. 95.

Roman history records, Remus was slain by his brother Romulus. And thus there is no difference between the foundation of this city and of the earthly city, unless it be that Romulus and Remus were both citizens of the earthly city. Both desired to have the glory of founding the Roman republic, but both could not have as much glory as if one only claimed it; for he who wished to have the glory of ruling would certainly rule less if his power were shared by a living consort. In order, therefore, that the whole glory might be enjoyed by one, his consort was removed; and by this crime the empire was made larger indeed, but inferior, while otherwise it would have been less, but better. Now these brothers, Cain and Abel, were not both animated by the same earthly desires, nor did the murderer envy the other because he feared that, by both ruling, his own dominion would be curtailed, – for Abel was not solicitous to rule in that city which his brother built, – he was moved by that diabolical, envious hatred with which the evil regard the good, for no other reason than because they are good while themselves are evil. For the possession of goodness is by no means diminished by being shared with a partner either permanent or temporarily assumed; on the contrary, the possession of goodness is increased in proportion to the concord and charity of each of those who share it. In short, he who is unwilling to share this possession cannot have it; and he who is most willing to admit others to a share of it will have the greatest abundance to himself. The quarrel, then, between Romulus and Remus shows how the earthly city is

divided against itself; that which fell out between Cain and Abel illustrated the hatred that subsists between the two cities, that of God and that of men. The wicked war with the wicked; the good also war with the wicked. But with the good, good men, or at least perfectly good men, cannot war; though, while only going on towards perfection, they war to this extent, that every good man resists others in those points in which he resists himself. And in each individual "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh."¹³⁷ This spiritual lusting, therefore, can be at war with the carnal lust of another man; or carnal lust may be at war with the spiritual desires of another, in some such way as good and wicked men are at war; or, still more certainly, the carnal lusts of two men, good but not yet perfect, contend together, just as the wicked contend with the wicked, until the health of those who are under the treatment of grace attains final victory.

6. Of the weaknesses which even the citizens of the city of God suffer during this earthly pilgrimage in punishment of sin, and of which they are healed by God's care.

This sickness – that is to say, that disobedience of which we spoke in the fourteenth book – is the punishment of the first disobedience. It is therefore not nature, but vice; and therefore it is said to the good who are growing in grace, and living in this pilgrimage by faith, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil

¹³⁷ Gal. v. 17.

the law of Christ."¹³⁸ In like manner it is said elsewhere, "Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man."¹³⁹ And in another place, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."¹⁴⁰ And elsewhere, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."¹⁴¹ And in the Gospel, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone."¹⁴² So too of sins which may create scandal the apostle says, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."¹⁴³ For this purpose, and that we may keep that peace without which no man can see the Lord,¹⁴⁴ many precepts are given which carefully inculcate mutual forgiveness; among which we may number that terrible word in which the servant is ordered to pay his formerly remitted debt of ten thousand talents, because he did not remit to his fellow-servant his debt of two hundred pence. To which parable the Lord Jesus added the words, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every

¹³⁸ Gal. vi. 2.

¹³⁹ 1 Thess. v. 14, 15.

¹⁴⁰ Gal. vi. 1.

¹⁴¹ Eph. iv. 26.

¹⁴² Matt. xviii. 15.

¹⁴³ 1 Tim. v. 20.

¹⁴⁴ Heb. xii. 14.

one his brother."¹⁴⁵ It is thus the citizens of the city of God are healed while still they sojourn in this earth and sigh for the peace of their heavenly country. The Holy Spirit, too, works within, that the medicine externally applied may have some good result. Otherwise, even though God Himself make use of the creatures that are subject to Him, and in some human form address our human senses, whether we receive those impressions in sleep or in some external appearance, still, if He does not by His own inward grace sway and act upon the mind, no preaching of the truth is of any avail. But this God does, distinguishing between the vessels of wrath and the vessels of mercy, by His own very secret but very just providence. When He Himself aids the soul in His own hidden and wonderful ways, and the sin which dwells in our members, and is, as the apostle teaches, rather the punishment of sin, does not reign in our mortal body to obey the lusts of it, and when we no longer yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness,¹⁴⁶ then the soul is converted from its own evil and selfish desires, and, God possessing it, it possesses itself in peace even in this life, and afterwards, with perfected health and endowed with immortality, will reign without sin in peace everlasting.

¹⁴⁵ Matt. xviii. 35.

¹⁴⁶ Rom. vi. 12, 13.

7. Of the cause of Cain's crime and his obstinacy, which not even the word of God could subdue

But though God made use of this very mode of address which we have been endeavouring to explain, and spoke to Cain in that form by which He was wont to accommodate Himself to our first parents and converse with them as a companion, what good influence had it on Cain? Did he not fulfil his wicked intention of killing his brother even after he was warned by God's voice? For when God had made a distinction between their sacrifices, neglecting Cain's, regarding Abel's, which was doubtless intimated by some visible sign to that effect; and when God had done so because the works of the one were evil but those of his brother good, Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. For thus it is written: "And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou offerest rightly, but dost not rightly distinguish, hast thou not sinned? Fret not thyself, for unto thee shall be his turning, and thou shalt rule over him."¹⁴⁷ In this admonition administered by God to Cain, that clause indeed, "If thou offerest rightly, but dost not rightly distinguish, hast thou not sinned?" is obscure, inasmuch as it is not apparent for what reason or purpose it was spoken, and many meanings have been put upon it, as each one who discusses it

¹⁴⁷ Gen. iv. 6, 7.

attempts to interpret it according to the rule of faith. The truth is, that a sacrifice is "rightly offered" when it is offered to the true God, to whom alone we must sacrifice. And it is "not rightly distinguished" when we do not rightly distinguish the places or seasons or materials of the offering, or the person offering, or the person to whom it is presented, or those to whom it is distributed for food after the oblation. Distinguishing¹⁴⁸ is here used for discriminating, – whether when an offering is made in a place where it ought not or of a material which ought to be offered not there but elsewhere; or when an offering is made at a wrong time, or of a material suitable not then but at some other time; or when that is offered which in no place nor any time ought to be offered; or when a man keeps to himself choicer specimens of the same kind than he offers to God; or when he or any other who may not lawfully partake profanely eats of the oblation. In which of these particulars Cain displeased God, it is difficult to determine. But the Apostle John, speaking of these brothers, says, "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."¹⁴⁹ He thus gives us to understand that God did not respect his offering because it was not rightly "distinguished" in this, that he gave to God something of his own but kept himself to himself. For this all do who follow not God's will but their own, who live not with an upright but a crooked heart, and yet offer

¹⁴⁸ Literally, "division."

¹⁴⁹ 1 John iii. 12.

to God such gifts as they suppose will procure from Him that He aid them not by healing but by gratifying their evil passions. And this is the characteristic of the earthly city, that it worships God or gods who may aid it in reigning victoriously and peacefully on earth not through love of doing good, but through lust of rule. The good use the world that they may enjoy God: the wicked, on the contrary, that they may enjoy the world would fain use God, – those of them, at least, who have attained to the belief that He is and takes an interest in human affairs. For they who have not yet attained even to this belief are still at a much lower level. Cain, then, when he saw that God had respect to his brother's sacrifice, but not to his own, should have humbly chosen his good brother as his example, and not proudly counted him his rival. But he was wroth, and his countenance fell. This angry regret for another person's goodness, even his brother's, was charged upon him by God as a great sin. And He accused him of it in the interrogation, "Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen?" For God saw that he envied his brother, and of this He accused him. For to men, from whom the heart of their fellow is hid, it might be doubtful and quite uncertain whether that sadness bewailed his own wickedness by which, as he had learned, he had displeased God, or his brother's goodness, which had pleased God, and won His favourable regard to his sacrifice. But God, in giving the reason why He refused to accept Cain's offering and why Cain should rather have been displeased at himself than at his brother, shows him that though he was unjust in "not rightly

distinguishing," that is, not rightly living and being unworthy to have his offering received, he was more unjust by far in hating his just brother without a cause.

Yet He does not dismiss him without counsel, holy, just, and good. "Fret not thyself," He says, "for unto thee shall be his turning, and thou shalt rule over him." Over his brother, does He mean? Most certainly not. Over what, then, but sin? For He had said, "Thou hast sinned," and then He added, "Fret not thyself, for to thee shall be its turning, and thou shalt rule over it."¹⁵⁰ And the "turning" of sin to the man can be understood of his conviction that the guilt of sin can be laid at no other man's door but his own. For this is the health-giving medicine of penitence, and the fit plea for pardon; so that, when it is said, "To thee its turning," we must not supply "shall be," but we must read, "To thee let its turning be," understanding it as a command, not as a prediction. For then shall a man rule over his sin when he does not prefer it to himself and defend it, but subjects it by repentance; otherwise he that becomes protector of it shall surely become its prisoner. But if we understand this sin to be that carnal concupiscence of which the apostle says, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit,"¹⁵¹ among the fruits of which lust he names envy, by which assuredly Cain was stung and excited to destroy his brother, then we may properly supply the words "shall be," and read, "To thee shall be its turning,

¹⁵⁰ We alter the pronoun to suit Augustine's interpretation.

¹⁵¹ Gal. v. 17.

and thou shalt rule over it." For when the carnal part which the apostle calls sin, in that place where he says, "It is not I who do it, but sin that dwelleth in me,"¹⁵² that part which the philosophers also call vicious, and which ought not to lead the mind, but which the mind ought to rule and restrain by reason from illicit motions, – when, then, this part has been moved to perpetrate any wickedness, if it be curbed and if it obey the word of the apostle, "Yield not your members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin,"¹⁵³ it is turned towards the mind and subdued and conquered by it, so that reason rules over it as a subject. It was this which God enjoined on him who was kindled with the fire of envy against his brother, so that he sought to put out of the way him whom he should have set as an example. "Fret not thyself," or compose thyself, He says: withhold thy hand from crime; let not sin reign in your mortal body to fulfil it in the lusts thereof, nor yield your members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. "For to thee shall be its turning," so long as you do not encourage it by giving it the rein, but bridle it by quenching its fire. "And thou shalt rule over it;" for when it is not allowed any external actings, it yields itself to the rule of the governing mind and righteous will, and ceases from even internal motions. There is something similar said in the same divine book of the woman, when God questioned and judged them after their sin, and pronounced sentence on them all, – the

¹⁵² Rom. vii. 17.

¹⁵³ Rom. vi. 13.

devil in the form of the serpent, the woman and her husband in their own persons. For when He had said to her, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children," then He added, "and thy turning shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."¹⁵⁴ What is said to Cain about his sin, or about the vicious concupiscence of his flesh, is here said of the woman who had sinned; and we are to understand that the husband is to rule his wife as the soul rules the flesh. And therefore, says the apostle, "He that loveth his wife, loveth himself; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh."¹⁵⁵ This flesh, then, is to be healed, because it belongs to ourselves: is not to be abandoned to destruction as if it were alien to our nature. But Cain received that counsel of God in the spirit of one who did not wish to amend. In fact, the vice of envy grew stronger in him; and, having entrapped his brother, he slew him. Such was the founder of the earthly city. He was also a figure of the Jews who slew Christ the Shepherd of the flock of men, prefigured by Abel the shepherd of sheep: but as this is an allegorical and prophetic matter, I forbear to explain it now; besides, I remember that I have made some remarks upon it in writing against Faustus the Manichæan.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Gen. iii. 16.

¹⁵⁵ Eph. v. 28, 29.

¹⁵⁶ *C. Faustum. Man.* xii. c. 9.

8. What Cain's reason was for building a city so early in the history of the human race

At present it is the history which I aim at defending, that Scripture may not be reckoned incredible when it relates that one man built a city at a time in which there seem to have been but four men upon earth, or rather indeed but three, after one brother slew the other, – to wit, the first man the father of all, and Cain himself, and his son Enoch, by whose name the city was itself called. But they who are moved by this consideration forget to take into account that the writer of the sacred history does not necessarily mention all the men who might be alive at that time, but those only whom the scope of his work required him to name. The design of that writer (who in this matter was the instrument of the Holy Ghost) was to descend to Abraham through the successions of ascertained generations propagated from one man, and then to pass from Abraham's seed to the people of God, in whom, separated as they were from other nations, was prefigured and predicted all that relates to the city whose reign is eternal, and to its king and founder Christ, which things were foreseen in the Spirit as destined to come; yet neither is this object so effected as that nothing is said of the other society of men which we call the earthly city, but mention is made of it so far as seemed needful to enhance the glory of the heavenly city by contrast to its opposite. Accordingly, when the divine

Scripture, in mentioning the number of years which those men lived, concludes its account of each man of whom it speaks, with the words, "And he begat sons and daughters, and all his days were so and so, and he died," are we to understand that, because it does not name those sons and daughters, therefore, during that long term of years over which one lifetime extended in those early days, there might not have been born very many men, by whose united numbers not one but several cities might have been built? But it suited the purpose of God, by whose inspiration these histories were composed, to arrange and distinguish from the first these two societies in their several generations, – that on the one side the generations of men, that is to say, of those who live according to man, and on the other side the generations of the sons of God, that is to say, of men living according to God, might be traced down together and yet apart from one another as far as the deluge, at which point their dissociation and association are exhibited: their dissociation, inasmuch as the generations of both lines are recorded in separate tables, the one line descending from the fratricide Cain, the other from Seth, who had been born to Adam instead of him whom his brother slew; their association, inasmuch as the good so deteriorated that the whole race became of such a character that it was swept away by the deluge, with the exception of one just man, whose name was Noah, and his wife and three sons and three daughters-in-law, which eight persons were alone deemed worthy to escape from that desolating visitation which destroyed all men.

Therefore, although it is written, "And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bare Enoch, and he builded a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch,"¹⁵⁷ it does not follow that we are to believe this to have been his first-born; for we cannot suppose that this is proved by the expression "he knew his wife," as if then for the first time he had had intercourse with her. For in the case of Adam, the father of all, this expression is used not only when Cain, who seems to have been his first-born, was conceived, but also afterwards the same Scripture says, "Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare a son, and called his name Seth."¹⁵⁸ Whence it is obvious that Scripture employs this expression neither always when a birth is recorded nor then only when the birth of a first-born is mentioned. Neither is it necessary to suppose that Enoch was Cain's first-born because he named his city after him. For it is quite possible that though he had other sons, yet for some reason the father loved him more than the rest. Judah was not the first-born, though he gives his name to Judæa and the Jews. But even though Enoch was the first-born of the city's founder, that is no reason for supposing that the father named the city after him as soon as he was born; for at that time he, being but a solitary man, could not have founded a civic community, which is nothing else than a multitude of men bound together by some associating tie. But when his family increased to such numbers that he had

¹⁵⁷ Gen. iv. 17.

¹⁵⁸ Gen. iv. 25.

quite a population, then it became possible to him both to build a city, and give it, when founded, the name of his son. For so long was the life of those antediluvians, that he who lived the shortest time of those whose years are mentioned in Scripture attained to the age of 753 years.¹⁵⁹ And though no one attained the age of a thousand years, several exceeded the age of nine hundred. Who then can doubt that during the lifetime of one man the human race might be so multiplied that there would be a population to build and occupy not one but several cities? And this might very readily be conjectured from the fact that from one man, Abraham, in not much more than four hundred years, the numbers of the Hebrew race so increased, that in the exodus of that people from Egypt there are recorded to have been six hundred thousand men capable of bearing arms,¹⁶⁰ and this over and above the Idumæans, who, though not numbered with Israel's descendants, were yet sprung from his brother, also a grandson of Abraham; and over and above the other nations which were of the same stock of Abraham, though not through Sarah, – that is, his descendants by Hagar and Keturah, the Ishmaelites, Midianites, etc.

¹⁵⁹ Lamech, according to the LXX.

¹⁶⁰ Ex. xii. 37.

9. *Of the long life and greater stature of the antediluvians*

Wherefore no one who considerably weighs facts will doubt that Cain might have built a city, and that a large one, when it is observed how prolonged were the lives of men, unless perhaps some sceptic take exception to this very length of years which our authors ascribe to the antediluvians and deny that this is credible. And so, too, they do not believe that the size of men's bodies was larger then than now, though the most esteemed of their own poets, Virgil, asserts the same, when he speaks of that huge stone which had been fixed as a landmark, and which a strong man of those ancient times snatched up as he fought, and ran, and hurled, and cast it, —

"Scarce twelve strong men of later mould
That weight could on their necks uphold;"¹⁶¹

thus declaring his opinion that the earth then produced mightier men. And if in the more recent times, how much more in the ages before the world-renowned deluge? But the large size of the primitive human body is often proved to the incredulous by the exposure of sepulchres, either through the wear of time

¹⁶¹ Virgil, *Aeneid*, xii. 899, 900. Compare the *Iliad*, v. 302, and Juvenal, xv. 65 et seqq. "Terra malos homines nunc educat atque pusillos."

or the violence of torrents or some accident, and in which bones of incredible size have been found or have rolled out. I myself, along with some others, saw on the shore at Utica a man's molar tooth of such a size, that if it were cut down into teeth such as we have, a hundred, I fancy, could have been made out of it. But that, I believe, belonged to some giant. For though the bodies of ordinary men were then larger than ours, the giants surpassed all in stature. And neither in our own age nor any other have there been altogether wanting instances of gigantic stature, though they may be few. The younger Pliny, a most learned man, maintains that the older the world becomes, the smaller will be the bodies of men.¹⁶² And he mentions that Homer in his poems often lamented the same decline; and this he does not laugh at as a poetical figment, but in his character of a recorder of natural wonders accepts it as historically true. But, as I said, the bones which are from time to time discovered prove the size of the bodies of the ancients,¹⁶³ and will do so to future ages, for they are slow to decay. But the length of an antediluvian's life cannot now be proved by any such monumental evidence. But we are not on this account to withhold our faith from the sacred history, whose statements of past fact we are the more inexcusable in discrediting, as we see the accuracy of its prediction of what was

¹⁶² Plin. *Hist. Nat.* vii. 16.

¹⁶³ See the account given by Herodotus (i. 67) of the discovery of the bones of Orestes, which, as the story goes, gave a stature of seven cubits.

future. And even that same Pliny¹⁶⁴ tells us that there is still a nation in which men live 200 years. If, then, in places unknown to us, men are believed to have a length of days which is quite beyond our own experience, why should we not believe the same of times distant from our own? Or are we to believe that in other places there is what is not here, while we do not believe that in other times there has been anything but what is now?

10. Of the different computation of the ages of the antediluvians, given by the Hebrew manuscripts and by our own.¹⁶⁵

Wherefore, although there is a discrepancy for which I cannot account between our manuscripts and the Hebrew, in the very number of years assigned to the antediluvians, yet the discrepancy is not so great that they do not agree about their longevity. For the very first man, Adam, before he begot his son Seth, is in our manuscripts found to have lived 230 years, but in the Hebrew mss. 130. But after he begot Seth, our copies read that he lived 700 years, while the Hebrew give 800. And thus, when the two periods are taken together, the sum agrees. And

¹⁶⁴ Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* vii. 49, merely reports what he had read in Hellanicus about the Epirotes of Etolia.

¹⁶⁵ "Our own mss.," of which Augustine here speaks, were the Latin versions of the Septuagint used by the Church before Jerome's was received; the "Hebrew mss." were the versions made from the Hebrew text. Compare *De Doct. Christ.* ii. 15 et seqq.

so throughout the succeeding generations, the period before the father begets a son is always made shorter by 100 years in the Hebrew, but the period after his son is begotten is longer by 100 years in the Hebrew than in our copies. And thus, taking the two periods together, the result is the same in both. And in the sixth generation there is no discrepancy at all. In the seventh, however, of which Enoch is the representative, who is recorded to have been translated without death because he pleased God, there is the same discrepancy as in the first five generations, 100 years more being ascribed to him by our mss. before he begat a son. But still the result agrees; for according to both documents he lived before he was translated 365 years. In the eighth generation the discrepancy is less than in the others, and of a different kind. For Methuselah, whom Enoch begat, lived, before he begat his successor, not 100 years less, but 100 years more, according to the Hebrew reading; and in our mss. again these years are added to the period after he begat his son; so that in this case also the sum-total is the same. And it is only in the ninth generation, that is, in the age of Lamech, Methuselah's son and Noah's father, that there is a discrepancy in the sum-total; and even in this case it is slight. For the Hebrew mss. represent him as living twenty-four years more than ours assign to him. For before he begat his son, who was called Noah, six years fewer are given to him by the Hebrew mss. than by ours; but after he begat this son, they give him thirty years more than ours; so that, deducting the former six, there remains, as we said, a surplus of twenty-four.

11. *Of Methuselah's age, which seems to extend fourteen years beyond the deluge*

From this discrepancy between the Hebrew books and our own arises the well-known question as to the age of Methuselah;¹⁶⁶ for it is computed that he lived for fourteen years after the deluge, though Scripture relates that of all who were then upon the earth only the eight souls in the ark escaped destruction by the flood, and of these Methuselah was not one. For, according to our books, Methuselah, before he begat the son whom he called Lamech, lived 167 years; then Lamech himself, before his son Noah was born, lived 188 years, which together make 355 years. Add to these the age of Noah at the date of the deluge, 600 years, and this gives a total of 955 from the birth of Methuselah to the year of the flood. Now all the years of the life of Methuselah are computed to be 969; for when he had lived 167 years, and had begotten his son Lamech, he then lived after this 802 years, which makes a total, as we said, of 969 years. From this, if we deduct 955 years from the birth of Methuselah to the flood, there remain fourteen years, which he is supposed to have lived after the flood. And therefore some suppose that, though he was not on earth (in which it is agreed that every living thing which could not naturally live in water perished), he was

¹⁶⁶ Jerome (*De Quæst. Heb. in Gen.*) says it was a question famous in all the churches. – Vives.

for a time with his father, who had been translated, and that he lived there till the flood had passed away. This hypothesis they adopt, that they may not cast a slight on the trustworthiness of versions which the Church has received into a position of high authority,¹⁶⁷ and because they believe that the Jewish mss. rather than our own are in error. For they do not admit that this is a mistake of the translators, but maintain that there is a falsified statement in the original, from which, through the Greek, the Scripture has been translated into our own tongue. They say that it is not credible that the seventy translators, who simultaneously and unanimously produced one rendering, could have erred, or, in a case in which no interest of theirs was involved, could have falsified their translation; but that the Jews, envying us our translation of their Law and Prophets, have made alterations in their texts so as to undermine the authority of ours. This opinion or suspicion let each man adopt according to his own judgment. Certain it is that Methuselah did not survive the flood, but died in the very year it occurred, if the numbers given in the Hebrew mss. are true. My own opinion regarding the seventy translators I will, with God's help, state more carefully in its own place, when I have come down (following the order which this work requires) to that period in which their translation was executed.¹⁶⁸ For the present question, it is enough that, according to our versions, the men of that age had lives so long as to make it quite possible

¹⁶⁷ "Quos in auctoritatem celebriorum Ecclesia suscepit."

¹⁶⁸ See below, book xviii. c. [42](#)-44.

that, during the lifetime of the first-born of the two sole parents then on earth, the human race multiplied sufficiently to form a community.

12. Of the opinion of those who do not believe that in these primitive times men lived so long as is stated

For they are by no means to be listened to who suppose that in those times years were differently reckoned, and were so short that one of our years may be supposed to be equal to ten of theirs. So that they say, when we read or hear that some man lived 900 years, we should understand ninety, – ten of those years making but one of ours, and ten of ours equalling 100 of theirs. Consequently, as they suppose, Adam was twenty-three years of age when he begat Seth, and Seth himself was twenty years and six months old when his son Enos was born, though the Scripture calls these months 205 years. For, on the hypothesis of those whose opinion we are explaining, it was customary to divide one such year as we have into ten parts, and to call each part a year. And each of these parts was composed of six days squared; because God finished His works in six days, that He might rest the seventh. Of this I disputed according to my ability in the eleventh book.¹⁶⁹ Now six squared, or six times six, gives thirty-six days; and this multiplied by ten amounts to 360 days,

¹⁶⁹ C. 8.

or twelve lunar months. As for the five remaining days which are needed to complete the solar year, and for the fourth part of a day, which requires that into every fourth or leap-year a day be added, the ancients added such days as the Romans used to call "intercalary," in order to complete the number of the years. So that Enos, Seth's son, was nineteen years old when his son Cainan was born, though Scripture calls these years 190. And so through all the generations in which the ages of the antediluvians are given, we find in our versions that almost no one begat a son at the age of 100 or under, or even at the age of 120 or thereabouts; but the youngest fathers are recorded to have been 160 years old and upwards. And the reason of this, they say, is that no one can beget children when he is ten years old, the age spoken of by those men as 100, but that sixteen is the age of puberty, and competent now to propagate offspring; and this is the age called by them 160. And that it may not be thought incredible that in these days the year was differently computed from our own, they adduce what is recorded by several writers of history, that the Egyptians had a year of four months, the Acarnanians of six, and the Lavinians of thirteen months.¹⁷⁰ The younger Pliny, after mentioning that some writers reported that one man had lived 152 years, another ten more, others 200, others 300, that some had even reached 500 and 600, and a few 800 years of age, gave it as his opinion that all this must be ascribed to mistaken computation. For some,

¹⁷⁰ On this subject see Wilkinson's note to the second book (appendix) of Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, where all available references are given.

he says, make summer and winter each a year; others make each season a year, like the Arcadians, whose years, he says, were of three months. He added, too, that the Egyptians, of whose little years of four months we have spoken already, sometimes terminated their year at the wane of each moon; so that with them there are produced lifetimes of 1000 years.

By these plausible arguments certain persons, with no desire to weaken the credit of this sacred history, but rather to facilitate belief in it by removing the difficulty of such incredible longevity, have been themselves persuaded, and think they act wisely in persuading others, that in these days the year was so brief that ten of their years equal but one of ours, while ten of ours equal 100 of theirs. But there is the plainest evidence to show that this is quite false. Before producing this evidence, however, it seems right to mention a conjecture which is yet more plausible. From the Hebrew manuscripts we could at once refute this confident statement; for in them Adam is found to have lived not 230 but 130 years before he begat his third son. If, then, this mean thirteen years by our ordinary computation, then he must have begotten his first son when he was only twelve or thereabouts. Who can at this age beget children according to the ordinary and familiar course of nature? But not to mention him, since it is possible he may have been able to beget his like as soon as he was created, – for it is not credible that he was created so little as our infants are, – not to mention him, his son was not 205 years old when he begat Enos, as our versions have it,

but 105, and consequently, according to this idea, was not eleven years old. But what shall I say of his son Cainan, who, though by our version 170 years old, was by the Hebrew text seventy when he beget Mahalaleel? If seventy years in those times meant only seven of our years, what man of seven years old begets children?

13. Whether, in computing years, we ought to follow the Hebrew or the Septuagint

But if I say this, I shall presently be answered, It is one of the Jews' lies. This, however, we have disposed of above, showing that it cannot be that men of so just a reputation as the seventy translators should have falsified their version. However, if I ask them which of the two is more credible, that the Jewish nation, scattered far and wide, could have unanimously conspired to forge this lie, and so, through envying others the authority of their Scriptures, have deprived themselves of their verity; or that seventy men, who were also themselves Jews, shut up in one place (for Ptolemy king of Egypt had got them together for this work), should have envied foreign nations that same truth, and by common consent inserted these errors: who does not see which can be more naturally and readily believed? But far be it from any prudent man to believe either that the Jews, however malicious and wrong-headed, could have tampered with so many and so widely-dispersed manuscripts; or that those renowned seventy individuals had any common purpose to grudge the truth

to the nations. One must therefore more plausibly maintain, that when first their labours began to be transcribed from the copy in Ptolemy's library, some such misstatement might find its way into the first copy made, and from it might be disseminated far and wide; and that this might arise from no fraud, but from a mere copyist's error. This is a sufficiently plausible account of the difficulty regarding Methuselah's life, and of that other case in which there is a difference in the total of twenty-four years. But in those cases in which there is a methodical resemblance in the falsification, so that uniformly the one version allots to the period before a son and successor is born 100 years more than the other, and to the period subsequent 100 years less, and *vice versâ*, so that the totals may agree, – and this holds true of the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and seventh generations, – in these cases error seems to have, if we may say so, a certain kind of constancy, and savours not of accident, but of design.

Accordingly, that diversity of numbers which distinguishes the Hebrew from the Greek and Latin copies of Scripture, and which consists of a uniform addition and deduction of 100 years in each lifetime for several consecutive generations, is to be attributed neither to the malice of the Jews nor to men so diligent and prudent as the seventy translators, but to the error of the copyist who was first allowed to transcribe the manuscript from the library of the above-mentioned king. For even now, in cases where numbers contribute nothing to the easier comprehension or more satisfactory knowledge of anything, they are both

carelessly transcribed, and still more carelessly emended. For who will trouble himself to learn how many thousand men the several tribes of Israel contained? He sees no resulting benefit of such knowledge. Or how many men are there who are aware of the vast advantage that lies hid in this knowledge? But in this case, in which during so many consecutive generations 100 years are added in one manuscript where they are not reckoned in the other, and then, after the birth of the son and successor, the years which were wanting are added, it is obvious that the copyist who contrived this arrangement designed to insinuate that the antediluvians lived an excessive number of years only because each year was excessively brief, and that he tried to draw the attention to this fact by his statement of their age of puberty at which they became able to beget children. For, lest the incredulous might stumble at the difficulty of so long a lifetime, he insinuated that 100 of their years equalled but ten of ours; and this insinuation he conveyed by adding 100 years whenever he found the age below 160 years or thereabouts, deducting these years again from the period after the son's birth, that the total might harmonize. By this means he intended to ascribe the generation of offspring to a fit age, without diminishing the total sum of years ascribed to the lifetime of the individuals. And the very fact that in the sixth generation he departed from this uniform practice, inclines us all the rather to believe that when the circumstance we have referred to required his alterations, he made them; seeing that when this circumstance did not exist,

he made no alteration. For in the same generation he found in the Hebrew MS. that Jared lived before he begat Enoch 162 years, which, according to the short year computation, is sixteen years and somewhat less than two months, an age capable of procreation; and therefore it was not necessary to add 100 short years, and so make the age twenty-six years of the usual length; and of course it was not necessary to deduct, after the son's birth, years which he had not added before it. And thus it comes to pass that in this instance there is no variation between the two manuscripts.

This is corroborated still further by the fact that in the eighth generation, while the Hebrew books assign 182¹⁷¹ years to Methuselah before Lamech's birth, ours assign to him twenty less, though usually 100 years are added to this period; then, after Lamech's birth, the twenty years are restored, so as to equalize the total in the two books. For if his design was that these 170 years be understood as seventeen, so as to suit the age of puberty, as there was no need for him adding anything, so there was none for his subtracting anything; for in this case he found an age fit for the generation of children, for the sake of which he was in the habit of adding those 100 years in cases where he did not find the age already sufficient. This difference of twenty years we might, indeed, have supposed had happened accidentally, had

¹⁷¹ One hundred and eighty-seven is the number given in the Hebrew, and one hundred and sixty-seven in the Septuagint; but notwithstanding the confusion, the argument of Augustine is easily followed.

he not taken care to restore them afterwards as he had deducted them from the period before, so that there might be no deficiency in the total. Or are we perhaps to suppose that there was the still more astute design of concealing the deliberate and uniform addition of 100 years to the first period and their deduction from the subsequent period, – did he design to conceal this by doing something similar, that is to say, adding and deducting, not indeed a century, but some years, even in a case in which there was no need for his doing so? But whatever may be thought of this, whether it be believed that he did so or not, whether, in fine, it be so or not, I would have no manner of doubt that when any diversity is found in the books, since both cannot be true to fact, we do well to believe in preference that language out of which the translation was made into another by translators. For there are three Greek mss., one Latin, and one Syriac, which agree with one another, and in all of these Methuselah is said to have died six years before the deluge.

14. That the years in those ancient times were of the same length as our own

Let us now see how it can be plainly made out that in the enormously protracted lives of those men the years were not so short that ten of their years were equal to only one of ours, but were of as great length as our own, which are measured by the course of the sun. It is proved by this, that Scripture states that

the flood occurred in the six hundredth year of Noah's life. But why in the same place is it also written, "The waters of the flood were upon the earth in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the twenty-seventh day of the month,"¹⁷² if that very brief year (of which it took ten to make one of ours) consisted of thirty-six days? For so scant a year, if the ancient usage dignified it with the name of year, either has not months, or its month must be three days, so that it may have twelve of them. How then was it here said, "In the six hundredth year, the second month, the twenty-seventh day of the month," unless the months then were of the same length as the months now? For how else could it be said that the flood began on the twenty-seventh day of the second month? Then afterwards, at the end of the flood, it is thus written: "And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the eleventh month: on the first day of the month were the tops of the mountains seen."¹⁷³ But if the months were such as we have, then so were the years. And certainly months of three days each could not have a twenty-seventh day. Or if every measure of time was diminished in proportion, and a thirtieth part of three days was then called a day, then that great deluge, which is recorded to have lasted forty days and forty nights, was really over in less than four of our days. Who can away with such foolishness and absurdity?

¹⁷² Gen. vii. 10, 11 (in our version the seventeenth day).

¹⁷³ Gen. viii. 4, 5.

Far be this error from us, – an error which seeks to build up our faith in the divine Scriptures on false conjecture, only to demolish our faith at another point. It is plain that the day then was what it now is, a space of four-and-twenty hours, determined by the lapse of day and night; the month then equal to the month now, which is defined by the rise and completion of one moon; the year then equal to the year now, which is completed by twelve lunar months, with the addition of five days and a-fourth to adjust it with the course of the sun. It was a year of this length which was reckoned the six hundredth of Noah's life; and in the second month, the twenty-seventh day of the month, the flood began, – a flood which, as is recorded, was caused by heavy rains continuing for forty days, which days had not only two hours and a little more, but four-and-twenty hours, completing a night and a day. And consequently those antediluvians lived more than 900 years, which were years as long as those which afterwards Abraham lived 175 of, and after him his son Isaac 180, and his son Jacob nearly 150, and some time after, Moses 120, and men now seventy or eighty, or not much longer, of which years it is said, "their strength is labour and sorrow."¹⁷⁴

But that discrepancy of numbers which is found to exist between our own and the Hebrew text does not touch the longevity of the ancients; and if there is any diversity so great that both versions cannot be true, we must take our ideas of the real facts from that text out of which our own version has

¹⁷⁴ Ps. xc. 10.

been translated. However, though any one who pleases has it in his power to correct this version, yet it is not unimportant to observe that no one has presumed to emend the Septuagint from the Hebrew text in the many places where they seem to disagree. For this difference has not been reckoned a falsification; and for my own part I am persuaded it ought not to be reckoned so. But where the difference is not a mere copyist's error, and where the sense is agreeable to truth and illustrative of truth, we must believe that the divine Spirit prompted them to give a varying version, not in their function of translators, but in the liberty of prophesying. And therefore we find that the apostles justly sanction the Septuagint, by quoting it as well as the Hebrew when they adduce proofs from the Scriptures. But as I have promised to treat this subject more carefully, if God help me, in a more fitting place, I will now go on with the matter in hand. For there can be no doubt that, the lives of men being so long, the first-born of the first man could have built a city, – a city, however, which was earthly, and not that which is called the city of God, to describe which we have taken in hand this great work.

15. Whether it is credible that the men of the primitive age abstained from sexual intercourse until that date at which it is recorded that they begat children.

Some one, then, will say, Is it to be believed that a man who intended to beget children, and had no intention of continence, abstained from sexual intercourse a hundred years and more, or even, according to the Hebrew version, only a little less, say

eighty, seventy, or sixty years; or, if he did not abstain, was unable to beget offspring? This question admits of two solutions. For either puberty was so much later as the whole life was longer, or, which seems to me more likely, it is not the first-born sons that are here mentioned, but those whose names were required to fill up the series until Noah was reached, from whom again we see that the succession is continued to Abraham, and after him down to that point of time until which it was needful to mark by pedigree the course of the most glorious city, which sojourns as a stranger in this world, and seeks the heavenly country. That which is undeniable is that Cain was the first who was born of man and woman. For had he not been the first who was added by birth to the two unborn persons, Adam could not have said what he is recorded to have said, "I have gotten a man by the Lord."¹⁷⁵ He was followed by Abel, whom the elder brother slew, and who was the first to show, by a kind of foreshadowing of the sojourning city of God, what iniquitous persecutions that city would suffer at the hands of wicked and, as it were, earth-born men, who love their earthly origin, and delight in the earthly happiness of the earthly city. But how old Adam was when he begat these sons does not appear. After this the generations diverge, the one branch deriving from Cain, the other from him whom Adam begot in the room of Abel slain by his brother, and whom he called Seth, saying, as it is written, "For God hath

¹⁷⁵ Gen. iv. 1.

raised me up another seed for Abel whom Cain slew."¹⁷⁶ These two series of generations accordingly, the one of Cain, the other of Seth, represent the two cities in their distinctive ranks, the one the heavenly city, which sojourns on earth, the other the earthly, which gapes after earthly joys, and grovels in them as if they were the only joys. But though eight generations, including Adam, are registered before the flood, no man of Cain's line has his age recorded at which the son who succeeded him was begotten. For the Spirit of God refused to mark the times before the flood in the generations of the earthly city, but preferred to do so in the heavenly line, as if it were more worthy of being remembered. Further, when Seth was born, the age of his father is mentioned; but already he had begotten other sons, and who will presume to say that Cain and Abel were the only ones previously begotten? For it does not follow that they alone had been begotten of Adam, because they alone were named in order to continue the series of generations which it was desirable to mention. For though the names of all the rest are buried in silence, yet it is said that Adam begot sons and daughters; and who that cares to be free from the charge of temerity will dare to say how many his offspring numbered? It was possible enough that Adam was divinely prompted to say, after Seth was born, "For God hath raised up to me another seed for Abel," because that son was to be capable of representing Abel's holiness, not because he was born first after him in point of time. Then because it is

¹⁷⁶ Gen. iv. 25.

written, "And Seth lived 205 years," or, according to the Hebrew reading, "105 years, and begat Enos,"¹⁷⁷ who but a rash man could affirm that this was his first-born? Will any man do so to excite our wonder, and cause us to inquire how for so many years he remained free from sexual intercourse, though without any purpose of continuing so, or how, if he did not abstain, he yet had no children? Will any man do so when it is written of him, "And he begat sons and daughters, and all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died?"¹⁷⁸ And similarly regarding those whose years are afterwards mentioned, it is not disguised that they begat sons and daughters.

Consequently it does not at all appear whether he who is named as the son was himself the first begotten. Nay, since it is incredible that those fathers were either so long in attaining puberty, or could not get wives, or could not impregnate them, it is also incredible that those sons were their first-born. But as the writer of the sacred history designed to descend by well-marked intervals through a series of generations to the birth and life of Noah, in whose time the flood occurred, he mentioned not those sons who were first begotten, but those by whom the succession was handed down.

Let me make this clearer by here inserting an example, in regard to which no one can have any doubt that what I am asserting is true. The evangelist Matthew, where he designs to

¹⁷⁷ Gen. v. 6.

¹⁷⁸ Gen. v. 8.

commit to our memories the generation of the Lord's flesh by a series of parents, beginning from Abraham and intending to reach David, says, "Abraham begat Isaac;"¹⁷⁹ why did he not say Ishmael, whom he first begat? Then "Isaac begat Jacob;" why did he not say Esau, who was the first-born? Simply because these sons would not have helped him to reach David. Then follows, "And Jacob begat Judah and his brethren: " was Judah the first begotten? "Judah," he says, "begat Pharez and Zara;" yet neither were these twins the first-born of Judah, but before them he had begotten three other sons. And so in the order of the generations he retained those by whom he might reach David, so as to proceed onwards to the end he had in view. And from this we may understand that the antediluvians who are mentioned were not the first-born, but those through whom the order of the succeeding generations might be carried on to the patriarch Noah. We need not, therefore, weary ourselves with discussing the needless and obscure question as to their lateness of reaching puberty.

***16. Of marriage between blood-relations,
in regard to which the present law could
not bind the men of the earliest ages***

As, therefore, the human race, subsequently to the first

¹⁷⁹ Matt. i.

marriage of the man who was made of dust, and his wife who was made out of his side, required the union of males and females in order that it might multiply, and as there were no human beings except those who had been born of these two, men took their sisters for wives, – an act which was as certainly dictated by necessity in these ancient days as afterwards it was condemned by the prohibitions of religion. For it is very reasonable and just that men, among whom concord is honourable and useful, should be bound together by various relationships; and that one man should not himself sustain many relationships, but that the various relationships should be distributed among several, and should thus serve to bind together the greatest number in the same social interests. "Father" and "father-in-law" are the names of two relationships. When, therefore, a man has one person for his father, another for his father-in-law, friendship extends itself to a larger number. But Adam in his single person was obliged to hold both relations to his sons and daughters, for brothers and sisters were united in marriage. So too Eve his wife was both mother and mother-in-law to her children of both sexes; while, had there been two women, one the mother, the other the mother-in-law, the family affection would have had a wider field. Then the sister herself by becoming a wife sustained in her single person two relationships, which, had they been distributed among individuals, one being sister, and another being wife, the family tie would have embraced a greater number of persons. But there was then no material for effecting this, since there

were no human beings but the brothers and sisters born of those two first parents. Therefore, when an abundant population made it possible, men ought to choose for wives women who were not already their sisters; for not only would there then be no necessity for marrying sisters, but, were it done, it would be most abominable. For if the grandchildren of the first pair, being now able to choose their cousins for wives, married their sisters, then it would no longer be only two but three relationships that were held by one man, while each of these relationships ought to have been held by a separate individual, so as to bind together by family affection a larger number. For one man would in that case be both father, and father-in-law, and uncle¹⁸⁰ to his own children (brother and sister now man and wife); and his wife would be mother, aunt, and mother-in-law to them; and they themselves would be not only brother and sister, and man and wife, but cousins also, being the children of brother and sister. Now, all these relationships, which combined three men into one, would have embraced nine persons had each relationship been held by one individual, so that a man had one person for his sister, another his wife, another his cousin, another his father, another his uncle, another his father-in-law, another his mother, another his aunt, another his mother-in-law; and thus the social bond would not have been tightened to bind a few, but loosened to embrace a larger number of relations.

And we see that, since the human race has increased and

¹⁸⁰ His own children being the children of his sister, and therefore his nephews.

multiplied, this is so strictly observed even among the profane worshippers of many and false gods, that though their laws perversely allow a brother to marry his sister,¹⁸¹ yet custom, with a finer morality, prefers to forego this licence; and though it was quite allowable in the earliest ages of the human race to marry one's sister, it is now abhorred as a thing which no circumstances could justify. For custom has very great power either to attract or to shock human feeling. And in this matter, while it restrains concupiscence within due bounds, the man who neglects and disobeys it is justly branded as abominable. For if it is iniquitous to plough beyond our own boundaries through the greed of gain, is it not much more iniquitous to transgress the recognised boundaries of morals through sexual lust? And with regard to marriage in the next degree of consanguinity, marriage between cousins, we have observed that in our own time the customary morality has prevented this from being frequent, though the law allows it. It was not prohibited by divine law, nor as yet had human law prohibited it; nevertheless, though legitimate, people shrank from it, because it lay so close to what was illegitimate, and in marrying a cousin seemed almost to marry a sister, – for cousins are so closely related that they are called brothers and sisters,¹⁸² and are almost really so. But the ancient fathers, fearing that near relationship might gradually in the course of generations diverge, and become distant relationship, or cease to

¹⁸¹ This was allowed by the Egyptians and Athenians, never by the Romans.

¹⁸² Both in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, though not uniformly, nor in Latin commonly.

be relationship at all, religiously endeavoured to limit it by the bond of marriage before it became distant, and thus, as it were, to call it back when it was escaping them. And on this account, even when the world was full of people, though they did not choose wives from among their sisters or half-sisters, yet they preferred them to be of the same stock as themselves. But who doubts that the modern prohibition of the marriage even of cousins is the more seemly regulation, – not merely on account of the reason we have been urging, the multiplying of relationships, so that one person might not absorb two, which might be distributed to two persons, and so increase the number of people bound together as a family, but also because there is in human nature I know not what natural and praiseworthy shamefacedness which restrains us from desiring that connection which, though for propagation, is yet lustful, and which even conjugal modesty blushes over, with any one to whom consanguinity bids us render respect?

The sexual intercourse of man and woman, then, is in the case of mortals a kind of seed-bed of the city; but while the earthly city needs for its population only generation, the heavenly needs also regeneration to rid it of the taint of generation. Whether before the deluge there was any bodily or visible sign of regeneration, such as was afterwards enjoined upon Abraham when he was circumcised, or what kind of sign it was, the sacred history does not inform us. But it does inform us that even these earliest of mankind sacrificed to God, as appeared also in the case of the two first brothers; Noah, too, is said to have offered

sacrifices to God when he had come forth from the ark after the deluge. And concerning this subject we have already said in the foregoing books that the devils arrogate to themselves divinity, and require sacrifice that they may be esteemed gods, and delight in these honours on no other account than this, because they know that true sacrifice is due to the true God.

17. Of the two fathers and leaders who sprang from one progenitor

Since, then, Adam was the father of both lines, – the father, that is to say, both of the line which belonged to the earthly, and of that which belonged to the heavenly city, – when Abel was slain, and by his death exhibited a marvellous mystery, there were henceforth two lines proceeding from two fathers, Cain and Seth, and in those sons of theirs, whom it behoved to register, the tokens of these two cities began to appear more distinctly. For Cain begat Enoch, in whose name he built a city, an earthly one, which was not from home in this world, but rested satisfied with its temporal peace and happiness. Cain, too, means "possession;" wherefore at his birth either his father or mother said, "I have gotten a man through God." Then Enoch means "dedication;" for the earthly city is dedicated in this world in which it is built, for in this world it finds the end towards which it aims and aspires. Further, Seth signifies "resurrection," and Enos his son signifies "man," not as Adam, which also signifies man but

is used in Hebrew indifferently for man and woman, as it is written, "Male and female created He them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam,"¹⁸³ leaving no room to doubt that though the woman was distinctively called Eve, yet the name Adam, meaning man, was common to both. But Enos means man in so restricted a sense, that Hebrew linguists tell us it cannot be applied to woman: it is the equivalent of the "child of the resurrection," when they neither marry nor are given in marriage.¹⁸⁴ For there shall be no generation in that place to which regeneration shall have brought us. Wherefore I think it not immaterial to observe that in those generations which are propagated from him who is called Seth, although daughters as well as sons are said to have been begotten, no woman is expressly registered by name; but in those which sprang from Cain at the very termination to which the line runs, the last person named as begotten is a woman. For we read, "Methusael begat Lamech. And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of the shepherds that dwell in tents. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah."¹⁸⁵ Here terminate all the generations

¹⁸³ Gen. v. 2.

¹⁸⁴ Luke xx. 35, 36.

¹⁸⁵ Gen. iv. 18-22.

of Cain, being eight in number, including Adam, – to wit, seven from Adam to Lamech, who married two wives, and whose children, among whom a woman also is named, form the eighth generation. Whereby it is elegantly signified that the earthly city shall to its termination have carnal generations proceeding from the intercourse of males and females. And therefore the wives themselves of the man who is the last named father of Cain's line are registered in their own names, – a practice nowhere followed before the deluge save in Eve's case. Now as Cain, signifying possession, the founder of the earthly city, and his son Enoch, meaning dedication, in whose name it was founded, indicate that this city is earthly both in its beginning and in its end, – a city in which nothing more is hoped for than can be seen in this world, – so Seth, meaning resurrection, and being the father of generations registered apart from the others, we must consider what this sacred history says of his son.

18. The significance of Abel, Seth, and Enos to Christ and His body the Church

"And to Seth," it is said, "there was born a son, and he called his name Enos: he hoped to call on the name of the Lord God."¹⁸⁶ Here we have a loud testimony to the truth. Man, then, the son of the resurrection, lives in hope: he lives in hope as long as the city

¹⁸⁶ Gen. iv. 26.

of God, which is begotten by faith in the resurrection, sojourns in this world. For in these two men, Abel, signifying "grief," and his brother Seth, signifying "resurrection," the death of Christ and His life from the dead are prefigured. And by faith in these is begotten in this world the city of God, that is to say, the man who has hoped to call on the name of the Lord. "For by hope," says the apostle, "we are saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."¹⁸⁷ Who can avoid referring this to a profound mystery? For did not Abel hope to call upon the name of the Lord God when his sacrifice is mentioned in Scripture as having been accepted by God? Did not Seth himself hope to call on the name of the Lord God, of whom it was said, "For God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel?" Why then is this which is found to be common to all the godly specially attributed to Enos, unless because it was fit that in him, who is mentioned as the first-born of the father of those generations which were separated to the better part of the heavenly city, there should be a type of the man, or society of men, who live not according to man in contentment with earthly felicity, but according to God in hope of everlasting felicity? And it was not said, "He hoped in the Lord God," nor "He called on the name of the Lord God," but "He hoped to call on the name of the Lord God." And what does this "hoped to call" mean, unless it is a prophecy that a people should arise who, according to the

¹⁸⁷ Rom. viii. 24, 25.

election of grace, would call on the name of the Lord God? It is this which has been said by another prophet, and which the apostle interprets of the people who belong to the grace of God: "And it shall be that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."¹⁸⁸ For these two expressions, "And he called his name Enos, which means man," and "He hoped to call on the name of the Lord God," are sufficient proof that man ought not to rest his hopes in himself; as it is elsewhere written, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man."¹⁸⁹ Consequently no one ought to trust in himself that he shall become a citizen of that other city which is not dedicated in the name of Cain's son in this present time, that is to say, in the fleeting course of this mortal world, but in the immortality of perpetual blessedness.

19. The significance of Enoch's translation

For that line also of which Seth is the father has the name "Dedication" in the seventh generation from Adam, counting Adam. For the seventh from him is Enoch, that is, Dedication. But this is that man who was translated because he pleased God, and who held in the order of the generations a remarkable place, being the seventh from Adam, a number signalized by the consecration of the Sabbath. But, counting from the diverging point of the two lines, or from Seth, he was the sixth. Now it was

¹⁸⁸ Rom. x. 13.

¹⁸⁹ Jer. xvii. 5.

on the sixth day God made man, and consummated His works. But the translation of Enoch prefigured our deferred dedication; for though it is indeed already accomplished in Christ our Head, who so rose again that He shall die no more, and who was Himself also translated, yet there remains another dedication of the whole house, of which Christ Himself is the foundation, and this dedication is deferred till the end, when all shall rise again to die no more. And whether it is the house of God, or the temple of God, or the city of God, that is said to be dedicated, it is all the same, and equally in accordance with the usage of the Latin language. For Virgil himself calls the city of widest empire "the house of Assaracus,"¹⁹⁰ meaning the Romans, who were descended through the Trojans from Assaracus. He also calls them the house of Æneas, because Rome was built by those Trojans who had come to Italy under Æneas.¹⁹¹ For that poet imitated the sacred writings, in which the Hebrew nation, though so numerous, is called the house of Jacob.

20. How it is that Cain's line terminates in the eighth generation, while Noah, though descended from the same father, Adam, is found to be the tenth from him.

Some one will say, If the writer of this history intended, in enumerating the generations from Adam through his son Seth, to descend through them to Noah, in whose time the deluge occurred, and from him again to trace the connected generations

¹⁹⁰ *Æneid*, i. 288.

¹⁹¹ *Æneid*, iii. 97.

down to Abraham, with whom Matthew begins the pedigree of Christ the eternal King of the city of God, what did he intend by enumerating the generations from Cain, and to what terminus did he mean to trace them? We reply, To the deluge, by which the whole stock of the earthly city was destroyed, but repaired by the sons of Noah. For the earthly city and community of men who live after the flesh will never fail until the end of this world, of which our Lord says, "The children of this world generate, and are generated."¹⁹² But the city of God, which sojourns in this world, is conducted by regeneration to the world to come, of which the children neither generate nor are generated. In this world generation is common to both cities; though even now the city of God has many thousand citizens who abstain from the act of generation; yet the other city also has some citizens who imitate these, though erroneously. For to that city belong also those who have erred from the faith, and introduced divers heresies; for they live according to man, not according to God. And the Indian gymnosophists, who are said to philosophize in the solitudes of India in a state of nudity, are its citizens; and they abstain from marriage. For continence is not a good thing, except when it is practised in the faith of the highest good, that is, God. Yet no one is found to have practised it before the deluge; for indeed even Enoch himself, the seventh from Adam, who is said to have been translated without dying, begat sons and daughters before he was translated, and among these was Methuselah, by

¹⁹² Luke xx. 34.

whom the succession of the recorded generations is maintained.

Why, then, is so small a number of Cain's generations registered, if it was proper to trace them to the deluge, and if there was no such delay of the date of puberty as to preclude the hope of offspring for a hundred or more years? For if the author of this book had not in view some one to whom he might rigidly trace the series of generations, as he designed in those which sprang from Seth's seed to descend to Noah, and thence to start again by a rigid order, what need was there of omitting the first-born sons for the sake of descending to Lamech, in whose sons that line terminates, – that is to say, in the eighth generation from Adam, or the seventh from Cain, – as if from this point he had wished to pass on to another series, by which he might reach either the Israelitish people, among whom the earthly Jerusalem presented a prophetic figure of the heavenly city, or to Jesus Christ, "according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever,"¹⁹³ the Maker and Ruler of the heavenly city? What, I say, was the need of this, seeing that the whole of Cain's posterity were destroyed in the deluge? From this it is manifest that they are the first-born sons who are registered in this genealogy. Why, then, are there so few of them? Their numbers in the period before the deluge must have been greater, if the date of puberty bore no proportion to their longevity, and they had children before they were a hundred years old. For supposing they were on an average thirty years old when they

¹⁹³ Rom. ix. 5.

began to beget children, then, as there are eight generations, including Adam and Lamech's children, 8 times 30 gives 240 years; did they then produce no more children in all the rest of the time before the deluge? With what intention, then, did he who wrote this record make no mention of subsequent generations? For from Adam to the deluge there are reckoned, according to our copies of Scripture, 2262 years,¹⁹⁴ and according to the Hebrew text, 1656 years. Supposing, then, the smaller number to be the true one, and subtracting from 1656 years 240, is it credible that during the remaining 1400 and odd years until the deluge the posterity of Cain begat no children?

But let any one who is moved by this call to mind that when I discussed the question, how it is credible that those primitive men could abstain for so many years from begetting children, two modes of solution were found, – either a puberty late in proportion to their longevity, or that the sons registered in the genealogies were not the first-born, but those through whom the author of the book intended to reach the point aimed at, as he intended to reach Noah by the generations of Seth. So that, if in the generations of Cain there occurs no one whom the writer could make it his object to reach by omitting the first-borns and inserting those who would serve such a purpose, then we must have recourse to the supposition of late puberty, and say that only at some age beyond a hundred years they became

¹⁹⁴ Eusebius, Jerome, Bede, and others, who follow the Septuagint, reckon only 2242 years, which Vives explains by supposing Augustine to have made a copyist's error.

capable of begetting children, so that the order of the generations ran through the first-borns, and filled up even the whole period before the deluge, long though it was. It is, however, possible that, for some more secret reason which escapes me, this city, which we say is earthly, is exhibited in all its generations down to Lamech and his sons, and that then the writer withholds from recording the rest which may have existed before the deluge. And without supposing so late a puberty in these men, there might be another reason for tracing the generations by sons who were not first-borns, viz. that the same city which Cain built, and named after his son Enoch, may have had a widely extended dominion and many kings, not reigning simultaneously, but successively, the reigning king begetting always his successor. Cain himself would be the first of these kings; his son Enoch, in whose name the city in which he reigned was built, would be the second; the third Irad, whom Enoch begat; the fourth Mehujael, whom Irad begat; the fifth Methusael, whom Mehujael begat; the sixth Lamech, whom Methusael begat, and who is the seventh from Adam through Cain. But it was not necessary that the first-born should succeed their fathers in the kingdom, but those would succeed who were recommended by the possession of some virtue useful to the earthly city, or who were chosen by lot, or the son who was best liked by his father would succeed by a kind of hereditary right to the throne. And the deluge may have happened during the lifetime and reign of Lamech, and may have destroyed him along with all other men, save those who were in the ark. For

we cannot be surprised that, during so long a period from Adam to the deluge, and with the ages of individuals varying as they did, there should not be an equal number of generations in both lines, but seven in Cain's, and ten in Seth's; for as I have already said, Lamech is the seventh from Adam, Noah the tenth; and in Lamech's case not one son only is registered, as in the former instances, but more, because it was uncertain which of them would have succeeded when he died, if there had intervened any time to reign between his death and the deluge.

But in whatever manner the generations of Cain's line are traced downwards, whether it be by first-born sons or by the heirs to the throne, it seems to me that I must by no means omit to notice that, when Lamech had been set down as the seventh from Adam, there were named, in addition, as many of his children as made up this number to eleven, which is the number signifying sin; for three sons and one daughter are added. The wives of Lamech have another signification, different from that which I am now pressing. For at present I am speaking of the children, and not of those by whom the children were begotten. Since, then, the law is symbolized by the number ten, – whence that memorable Decalogue, – there is no doubt that the number eleven, which goes beyond¹⁹⁵ ten, symbolizes the transgression of the law, and consequently sin. For this reason, eleven veils of goat's skin were ordered to be hung in the tabernacle of the testimony, which served in the wanderings of God's people as an

¹⁹⁵ *Transgreditur.*

ambulatory temple. And in that haircloth there was a reminder of sins, because the goats were to be set on the left hand of the Judge; and therefore, when we confess our sins, we prostrate ourselves in haircloth, as if we were saying what is written in the psalm, "My sin is ever before me."¹⁹⁶ The progeny of Adam, then, by Cain the murderer, is completed in the number eleven, which symbolizes sin; and this number itself is made up by a woman, as it was by the same sex that beginning was made of sin by which we all die. And it was committed that the pleasure of the flesh, which resists the spirit, might follow; and so Naamah, the daughter of Lamech, means "pleasure." But from Adam to Noah, in the line of Seth, there are ten generations. And to Noah three sons are added, of whom, while one fell into sin, two were blessed by their father; so that, if you deduct the reprobate and add the gracious sons to the number, you get twelve, – a number signalized in the case of the patriarchs and of the apostles, and made up of the parts of the number seven multiplied into one another, – for three times four, or four times three, give twelve. These things being so, I see that I must consider and mention how these two lines, which by their separate genealogies depict the two cities, one of earth-born, the other of regenerated persons, became afterwards so mixed and confused, that the whole human race, with the exception of eight persons, deserved to perish in the deluge.

21. *Why it is that, as soon as Cain's son Enoch has*

¹⁹⁶ Ps. li. 3.

been named, the genealogy is forthwith continued as far as the deluge, while after the mention of Enos, Seth's son, the narrative returns again to the creation of man.

We must first see why, in the enumeration of Cain's posterity, after Enoch, in whose name the city was built, has been first of all mentioned, the rest are at once enumerated down to that terminus of which I have spoken, and at which that race and the whole line was destroyed in the deluge; while, after Enos the son of Seth has been mentioned, the rest are not at once named down to the deluge, but a clause is inserted to the following effect: "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created."¹⁹⁷ This seems to me to be inserted for this purpose, that here again the reckoning of the times may start from Adam himself, – a purpose which the writer had not in view in speaking of the earthly city, as if God mentioned it, but did not take account of its duration. But why does he return to this recapitulation after mentioning the son of Seth, the man who hoped to call on the name of the Lord God, unless because it was fit thus to present these two cities, the one beginning with a murderer and ending in a murderer (for Lamech, too, acknowledges to his two wives that he had committed murder), the other built up by him who hoped to call upon the name of the Lord God?

¹⁹⁷ Gen. v. 1.

For the highest and complete terrestrial duty of the city of God, which is a stranger in this world, is that which was exemplified in the individual who was begotten by him who typified the resurrection of the murdered Abel. That one man is the unity of the whole heavenly city, not yet indeed complete, but to be completed, as this prophetic figure foreshows. The son of Cain, therefore, that is, the son of possession (and of what but an earthly possession?), may have a name in the earthly city which was built in his name. It is of such the Psalmist says, "They call their lands after their own names."¹⁹⁸ Wherefore they incur what is written in another psalm: "Thou, O Lord, in Thy city wilt despise their image."¹⁹⁹ But as for the son of Seth, the son of the resurrection, let him hope to call on the name of the Lord God. For he prefigures that society of men which says, "But I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God: I have trusted in the mercy of God."²⁰⁰ But let him not seek the empty honours of a famous name upon earth, for "Blessed is the man that maketh the name of the Lord his trust, and respecteth not vanities nor lying follies."²⁰¹ After having presented the two cities, the one founded in the material good of this world, the other in hope in God, but both starting from a common gate opened in Adam into this mortal state, and both running on and running out to

¹⁹⁸ Ps. xlix. 11.

¹⁹⁹ Ps. lxxiii. 20.

²⁰⁰ Ps. lii. 8.

²⁰¹ Ps. xl. 4.

their proper and merited ends, Scripture begins to reckon the times, and in this reckoning includes other generations, making a recapitulation from Adam, out of whose condemned seed, as out of one mass handed over to merited damnation, God made some vessels of wrath to dishonour and others vessels of mercy to honour; in punishment rendering to the former what is due, in grace giving to the latter what is not due: in order that by the very comparison of itself with the vessels of wrath, the heavenly city, which sojourns on earth, may learn not to put confidence in the liberty of its own will, but may hope to call on the name of the Lord God. For will, being a nature which was made good by the good God, but mutable by the immutable, because it was made out of nothing, can both decline from good to do evil, which takes place when it freely chooses, and can also escape the evil and do good, which takes place only by divine assistance.

22. Of the fall of the sons of God who were captivated by the daughters of men, whereby all, with the exception of eight persons, deservedly perished in the deluge.

When the human race, in the exercise of this freedom of will, increased and advanced, there arose a mixture and confusion of the two cities by their participation in a common iniquity. And this calamity, as well as the first, was occasioned by woman, though not in the same way; for these women were not themselves betrayed, neither did they persuade the men to sin, but having belonged to the earthly city and society of the earthly, they had been of corrupt manners from the first, and were loved for their

bodily beauty by the sons of God, or the citizens of the other city which sojourns in this world. Beauty is indeed a good gift of God; but that the good may not think it a great good, God dispenses it even to the wicked. And thus, when the good that is great and proper to the good was abandoned by the sons of God, they fell to a paltry good which is not peculiar to the good, but common to the good and the evil; and when they were captivated by the daughters of men, they adopted the manners of the earthly to win them as their brides, and forsook the godly ways they had followed in their own holy society. And thus beauty, which is indeed God's handiwork, but only a temporal, carnal, and lower kind of good, is not fitly loved in preference to God, the eternal, spiritual, and unchangeable good. When the miser prefers his gold to justice, it is through no fault of the gold, but of the man; and so with every created thing. For though it be good, it may be loved with an evil as well as with a good love: it is loved rightly when it is loved ordinally; evilly, when inordinately. It is this which some one has briefly said in these verses in praise of the Creator:²⁰² "These are Thine, they are good, because Thou art good who didst create them. There is in them nothing of ours, unless the sin we commit when we forget the order of things, and instead of Thee love that which Thou hast made."

But if the Creator is truly loved, that is, if He Himself is loved and not another thing in His stead, He cannot be evilly loved; for

²⁰² Or, according to another reading, "Which I briefly said in these verses in praise of a taper."

love itself is to be ordinally loved, because we do well to love that which, when we love it, makes us live well and virtuously. So that it seems to me that it is a brief but true definition of virtue to say, it is the order of love; and on this account, in the Canticles, the bride of Christ, the city of God, sings, "Order love within me."²⁰³ It was the order of this love, then, this charity or attachment, which the sons of God disturbed when they forsook God, and were enamoured of the daughters of men.²⁰⁴ And by these two names (sons of God and daughters of men) the two cities are sufficiently distinguished. For though the former were by nature children of men, they had come into possession of another name by grace. For in the same Scripture in which the sons of God are said to have loved the daughters of men, they are also called angels of God; whence many suppose that they were not men but angels.

23. Whether we are to believe that angels, who are of a spiritual substance, fell in love with the beauty of women, and sought them in marriage, and that from this connection giants were born.

In the third book of this work (c. 5) we made a passing reference to this question, but did not decide whether angels, inasmuch as they are spirits, could have bodily intercourse with women. For it is written, "Who maketh His angels spirits,"²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Cant. ii. 4.

²⁰⁴ See *De Doct. Christ.* i. 28.

²⁰⁵ Ps. civ. 4.

that is, He makes those who are by nature spirits His angels by appointing them to the duty of bearing His messages. For the Greek word ἄγγελος, which in Latin appears as "angelus," means a messenger. But whether the Psalmist speaks of their bodies when he adds, "and His ministers a flaming fire," or means that God's ministers ought to blaze with love as with a spiritual fire, is doubtful. However, the same trustworthy Scripture testifies that angels have appeared to men in such bodies as could not only be seen, but also touched. There is, too, a very general rumour, which many have verified by their own experience, or which trustworthy persons who have heard the experience of others corroborate, that sylfens and fauns, who are commonly called "incubi," had often made wicked assaults upon women, and satisfied their lust upon them; and that certain devils, called Duses by the Gauls, are constantly attempting and effecting this impurity is so generally affirmed, that it were impudent to deny it.²⁰⁶ From these assertions, indeed, I dare not determine whether there be some spirits embodied in an aerial substance (for this element, even when agitated by a fan, is sensibly felt by the body), and who are capable of lust and of mingling sensibly with women; but certainly I could by no means believe that God's holy angels could at that time have so fallen, nor can I think that it is of them the Apostle Peter said,

²⁰⁶ On these kinds of devils, see the note of Vives *in loc.*, or Lecky's *Hist. of Rationalism*, i. 26, who quotes from Maury's *Histoire de la Magie*, that the Dusii were Celtic spirits, and are the origin of our "Deuce."

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."²⁰⁷ I think he rather speaks of those who first apostatized from God, along with their chief the devil, who enviously deceived the first man under the form of a serpent. But the same holy Scripture affords the most ample testimony that even godly men have been called angels; for of John it is written: "Behold, I send my messenger (angel) before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way."²⁰⁸ And the prophet Malachi, by a peculiar grace specially communicated to him, was called an angel.²⁰⁹

But some are moved by the fact that we have read that the fruit of the connection between those who are called angels of God and the women they loved were not men like our own breed, but giants; just as if there were not born even in our own time (as I have mentioned above) men of much greater size than the ordinary stature. Was there not at Rome a few years ago, when the destruction of the city now accomplished by the Goths was drawing near, a woman, with her father and mother, who by her gigantic size overtopped all others? Surprising crowds from all quarters came to see her, and that which struck them most was the circumstance that neither of her parents were quite up to the tallest ordinary stature. Giants therefore might well be born, even before the sons of God, who are also called angels

²⁰⁷ 2 Pet. ii. 4.

²⁰⁸ Mark i. 2.

²⁰⁹ Mal. ii. 7.

of God, formed a connection with the daughters of men, or of those living according to men, that is to say, before the sons of Seth formed a connection with the daughters of Cain. For thus speaks even the canonical Scripture itself in the book in which we read of this; its words are: "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair [good]; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord God said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became the giants, men of renown."²¹⁰ These words of the divine book sufficiently indicate that already there were giants in the earth in those days, in which the sons of God took wives of the children of men, when they loved them because they were good, that is, fair. For it is the custom of this Scripture to call those who are beautiful in appearance "good." But after this connection had been formed, then too were giants born. For the words are: "There were giants in the earth in those days, *and also after that*, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men." Therefore there were giants both before, "in those days," and

²¹⁰ Gen. vi. 1-4. Lactantius (*Inst.* ii. 15), Sulpicius Severus (*Hist.* i. 2), and others suppose from this passage that angels had commerce with the daughters of men. See further references in the Commentary of Pererius *in loc.*

"also after that." And the words, "they bare children to them," show plainly enough that before the sons of God fell in this fashion they begat children to God, not to themselves, – that is to say, not moved by the lust of sexual intercourse, but discharging the duty of propagation, intending to produce not a family to gratify their own pride, but citizens to people the city of God; and to these they as God's angels would bear the message, that they should place their hope in God, like him who was born of Seth the son of resurrection, and who hoped to call on the name of the Lord God, in which hope they and their offspring would be co-heirs of eternal blessings, and brethren in the family of which God is the Father.

But that those angels were not angels in the sense of not being men, as some suppose, Scripture itself decides, which unambiguously declares that they were men. For when it had first been stated that "the angels of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose," it was immediately added, "And the Lord God said, My Spirit shall not always strive with these men, for that they also are flesh." For by the Spirit of God they had been made angels of God, and sons of God; but declining towards lower things, they are called men, a name of nature, not of grace; and they are called flesh, as deserters of the Spirit, and by their desertion deserted [by Him]. The Septuagint indeed calls them both angels of God and sons of God, though all the copies do not show this, some having only the name "sons of God." And Aquila, whom the Jews

prefer to the other interpreters,²¹¹ has translated neither angels of God nor sons of God, but sons of gods. But both are correct. For they were both sons of God, and thus brothers of their own fathers, who were children of the same God; and they were sons of gods, because begotten by gods, together with whom they themselves also were gods, according to that expression of the psalm: "I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High."²¹² For the Septuagint translators are justly believed to have received the Spirit of prophecy; so that, if they made any alterations under His authority, and did not adhere to a strict translation, we could not doubt that this was divinely dictated. However, the Hebrew word may be said to be ambiguous, and to be susceptible of either translation, "sons of God," or "sons of gods."

Let us omit, then, the fables of those scriptures which are called apocryphal, because their obscure origin was unknown to the fathers from whom the authority of the true Scriptures has been transmitted to us by a most certain and well-ascertained succession. For though there is some truth in these apocryphal writings, yet they contain so many false statements, that they have no canonical authority. We cannot deny that Enoch, the seventh

²¹¹ Aquila lived in the time of Hadrian, to whom he is said to have been related. He was excommunicated from the Church for the practice of astrology; and is best known by his translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, which he executed with great care and accuracy, though he has been charged with falsifying passages to support the Jews in their opposition to Christianity.

²¹² Ps. lxxxii. 6.

from Adam, left some divine writings, for this is asserted by the Apostle Jude in his canonical epistle. But it is not without reason that these writings have no place in that canon of Scripture which was preserved in the temple of the Hebrew people by the diligence of successive priests; for their antiquity brought them under suspicion, and it was impossible to ascertain whether these were his genuine writings, and they were not brought forward as genuine by the persons who were found to have carefully preserved the canonical books by a successive transmission. So that the writings which are produced under his name, and which contain these fables about the giants, saying that their fathers were not men, are properly judged by prudent men to be not genuine; just as many writings are produced by heretics under the names both of other prophets, and, more recently, under the names of the apostles, all of which, after careful examination, have been set apart from canonical authority under the title of Apocrypha. There is therefore no doubt that, according to the Hebrew and Christian canonical Scriptures, there were many giants before the deluge, and that these were citizens of the earthly society of men, and that the sons of God, who were according to the flesh the sons of Seth, sunk into this community when they forsook righteousness. Nor need we wonder that giants should be born even from these. For all of their children were not giants; but there were more then than in the remaining periods since the deluge. And it pleased the Creator to produce them, that it might thus be demonstrated that neither beauty, nor yet

size and strength, are of much moment to the wise man, whose blessedness lies in spiritual and immortal blessings, in far better and more enduring gifts, in the good things that are the peculiar property of the good, and are not shared by good and bad alike. It is this which another prophet confirms when he says, "These were the giants, famous from the beginning, that were of so great stature, and so expert in war. Those did not the Lord choose, neither gave He the way of knowledge unto them; but they were destroyed because they had no wisdom, and perished through their own foolishness."²¹³

24. How we are to understand this which the Lord said to those who were to perish in the flood: "Their days shall be 120 years."

But that which God said, "Their days shall be an hundred and twenty years," is not to be understood as a prediction that henceforth men should not live longer than 120 years, – for even after the deluge we find that they lived more than 500 years, – but we are to understand that God said this when Noah had nearly completed his fifth century, that is, had lived 480 years, which Scripture, as it frequently uses the name of the whole for the largest part, calls 500 years. Now the deluge came in the 600th year of Noah's life, the second month; and thus

²¹³ Baruch iii. 26-28.

120 years were predicted as being the remaining span of those who were doomed, which years being spent, they should be destroyed by the deluge. And it is not unreasonably believed that the deluge came as it did, because already there were not found upon earth any who were not worthy of sharing a death so manifestly judicial, – not that a good man, who must die some time, would be a jot the worse of such a death after it was past. Nevertheless there died in the deluge none of those mentioned in the sacred Scripture as descended from Seth. But here is the divine account of the cause of the deluge: "The Lord God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented²¹⁴ the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air: for I am angry that I have made them."²¹⁵

25. Of the anger of God, which does not inflame His mind, nor disturb His unchangeable tranquillity

The anger of God is not a disturbing emotion of His mind, but a judgment by which punishment is inflicted upon sin. His

²¹⁴ Lit.: "The Lord thought and reconsidered."

²¹⁵ Gen. vi. 5-7.

thought and reconsideration also are the unchangeable reason which changes things; for He does not, like man, repent of anything He has done, because in all matters His decision is as inflexible as His prescience is certain. But if Scripture were not to use such expressions as the above, it would not familiarly insinuate itself into the minds of all classes of men, whom it seeks access to for their good, that it may alarm the proud, arouse the careless, exercise the inquisitive, and satisfy the intelligent; and this it could not do, did it not first stoop, and in a manner descend, to them where they lie. But its denouncing death on all the animals of earth and air is a declaration of the vastness of the disaster that was approaching: not that it threatens destruction to the irrational animals as if they too had incurred it by sin.

26. That the ark which Noah was ordered to make figures in every respect Christ and the church

Moreover, inasmuch as God commanded Noah, a just man, and, as the truthful Scripture says, a man perfect in his generation, – not indeed with the perfection of the citizens of the city of God in that immortal condition in which they equal the angels, but in so far as they can be perfect in their sojourn in this world, – inasmuch as God commanded him, I say, to make an ark, in which he might be rescued from the destruction of the flood, along with his family, *i. e.* his wife, sons, and daughters-in-law, and along with the animals who, in obedience

to God's command, came to him into the ark: is certainly a figure of the city of God sojourning in this world; that is to say, of the church, which is rescued by the wood on which hung the Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus.²¹⁶ For even its very dimensions, in length, breadth, and height, represent the human body in which He came, as it had been foretold. For the length of the human body, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, is six times its breadth from side to side, and ten times its depth or thickness, measuring from back to front: that is to say, if you measure a man as he lies on his back or on his face, he is six times as long from head to foot as he is broad from side to side, and ten times as long as he is high from the ground. And therefore the ark was made 300 cubits in length, 50 in breadth, and 30 in height. And its having a door made in the side of it certainly signified the wound which was made when the side of the Crucified was pierced with the spear: for by this those who come to Him enter; for thence flowed the sacraments by which those who believe are initiated. And the fact that it was ordered to be made of squared timbers, signifies the immoveable steadiness of the life of the saints; for however you turn a cube, it still stands. And the other peculiarities of the ark's construction are signs of features of the church.

But we have not now time to pursue this subject; and, indeed, we have already dwelt upon it in the work we wrote against Faustus the Manichean, who denies that there is anything

²¹⁶ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

prophesied of Christ in the Hebrew books. It may be that one man's exposition excels another's, and that ours is not the best; but all that is said must be referred to this city of God we speak of, which sojourns in this wicked world as in a deluge, at least if the expositor would not widely miss the meaning of the author. For example, the interpretation I have given in the work against Faustus, of the words, "with lower, second, and third storeys shalt thou make it," is, that because the church is gathered out of all nations, it is said to have two storeys, to represent the two kinds of men, – the circumcision, to wit, and the uncircumcision, or, as the apostle otherwise calls them, Jews and Gentiles; and to have three storeys, because all the nations were replenished from the three sons of Noah. Now any one may object to this interpretation, and may give another which harmonizes with the rule of faith. For as the ark was to have rooms not only on the lower, but also on the upper storeys, which were called "third storeys," that there might be a habitable space on the third floor from the basement, some one may interpret these to mean the three graces commended by the apostle, – faith, hope, and charity. Or even more suitably they may be supposed to represent those three harvests in the gospel, thirty-fold, sixtyfold, an hundredfold, – chaste marriage dwelling in the ground floor, chaste widowhood in the upper, and chaste virginity in the top storey. Or any better interpretation may be given, so long as the reference to this city is maintained. And the same statement I would make of all the remaining particulars in this passage which

require exposition, viz. that although different explanations are given, yet they must all agree with the one harmonious catholic faith.

27. Of the ark and the deluge, and that we cannot agree with those who receive the bare history, but reject the allegorical interpretation, nor with those who maintain the figurative and not the historical meaning.

Yet no one ought to suppose either that these things were written for no purpose, or that we should study only the historical truth, apart from any allegorical meanings; or, on the contrary, that they are only allegories, and that there were no such facts at all, or that, whether it be so or no, there is here no prophecy of the church. For what right-minded man will contend that books so religiously preserved during thousands of years, and transmitted by so orderly a succession, were written without an object, or that only the bare historical facts are to be considered when we read them? For, not to mention other instances, if the number of the animals entailed the construction of an ark of great size, where was the necessity of sending into it two unclean and seven clean animals of each species, when both could have been preserved in equal numbers? Or could not God, who ordered them to be preserved in order to replenish the race, restore them in the same way He had created them?

But they who contend that these things never happened, but are only figures setting forth other things, in the first place suppose that there could not be a flood so great that the water

should rise fifteen cubits above the highest mountains, because it is said that clouds cannot rise above the top of Mount Olympus, because it reaches the sky where there is none of that thicker atmosphere in which winds, clouds, and rains have their origin. They do not reflect that the densest element of all, earth, can exist there; or perhaps they deny that the top of the mountain is earth. Why, then, do these measurers and weighers of the elements contend that earth can be raised to those aerial altitudes, and that water cannot, while they admit that water is lighter, and liker to ascend than earth? What reason do they adduce why earth, the heavier and lower element, has for so many ages scaled to the tranquil æther, while water, the lighter, and more likely to ascend, is not suffered to do the same even for a brief space of time?

They say, too, that the area of that ark could not contain so many kinds of animals of both sexes, two of the unclean and seven of the clean. But they seem to me to reckon only one area of 300 cubits long and 50 broad, and not to remember that there was another similar in the storey above, and yet another as large in the storey above that again; and that there was consequently an area of 900 cubits by 150. And if we accept what Origen²¹⁷ has with some appropriateness suggested, that Moses the man of God, being, as it is written, "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,"²¹⁸ who delighted in geometry, may have meant geometrical cubits, of which they say that one is equal to six

²¹⁷ In his second homily on Genesis.

²¹⁸ Acts vii. 22.

of our cubits, then who does not see what a capacity these dimensions give to the ark? For as to their objection that an ark of such size could not be built, it is a very silly calumny; for they are aware that huge cities have been built, and they should remember that the ark was an hundred years in building. Or, perhaps, though stone can adhere to stone when cemented with nothing but lime, so that a wall of several miles may be constructed, yet plank cannot be riveted to plank by mortices, bolts, nails, and pitch-glue, so as to construct an ark which was not made with curved ribs but straight timbers, which was not to be launched by its builders but to be lifted by the natural pressure of the water when it reached it, and which was to be preserved from shipwreck as it floated about rather by divine oversight than by human skill.

As to another customary inquiry of the scrupulous about the very minute creatures, not only such as mice and lizards, but also locusts, beetles, flies, fleas, and so forth, whether there were not in the ark a larger number of them than was determined by God in His command, those persons who are moved by this difficulty are to be reminded that the words "every creeping thing of the earth" only indicate that it was not needful to preserve in the ark the animals that can live in the water, whether the fishes that live submerged in it, or the sea-birds that swim on its surface. Then, when it is said "male and female," no doubt reference is made to the repairing of the races, and consequently there was no need for those creatures being in the ark which are born without the union

of the sexes from inanimate things, or from their corruption; or if they were in the ark, they might be there as they commonly are in houses, not in any determinate numbers; or if it was necessary that there should be a definite number of all those animals that cannot naturally live in the water, that so the most sacred mystery which was being enacted might be bodied forth and perfectly figured in actual realities, still this was not the care of Noah or his sons, but of God. For Noah did not catch the animals and put them into the ark, but gave them entrance as they came seeking it. For this is the force of the words, "They shall come unto thee,"²¹⁹— not, that is to say, by man's effort, but by God's will. But certainly we are not required to believe that those which have no sex also came; for it is expressly and definitely said, "They shall be male and female."²²⁰ For there are some animals which are born out of corruption, but yet afterwards they themselves copulate and produce offspring, as flies; but others, which have no sex, like bees. Then, as to those animals which have sex, but without ability to propagate their kind, like mules and she-mules, it is probable that they were not in the ark, but that it was counted sufficient to preserve their parents, to wit, the horse and the ass; and this applies to all hybrids. Yet, if it was necessary for the completeness of the mystery, they were there; for even this species has "male and female."

²¹⁹ This book is referred to in another work of Augustine's (*contra Advers. Legis et Prophet.* i. 18), which was written about the year 420.

²²⁰ Gen. vi. 19, 20.

Another question is commonly raised regarding the food of the carnivorous animals, – whether, without transgressing the command which fixed the number to be preserved, there were necessarily others included in the ark for their sustenance; or, as is more probable, there might be some food which was not flesh, and which yet suited all. For we know how many animals whose food is flesh eat also vegetable products and fruits, especially figs and chestnuts. What wonder is it, therefore, if that wise and just man was instructed by God what would suit each, so that without flesh he prepared and stored provision fit for every species? And what is there which hunger would not make animals eat? Or what could not be made sweet and wholesome by God, who, with a divine facility, might have enabled them to do without food at all, had it not been requisite to the completeness of so great a mystery that they should be fed? But none but a contentious man can suppose that there was no prefiguring of the church in so manifold and circumstantial a detail. For the nations have already so filled the church, and are comprehended in the framework of its unity, the clean and unclean together, until the appointed end, that this one very manifest fulfilment leaves no doubt how we should interpret even those others which are somewhat more obscure, and which cannot so readily be discerned. And since this is so, if not even the most audacious will presume to assert that these things were written without a purpose, or that though the events really happened they mean nothing, or that they did not really happen, but are only allegory,

or that at all events they are far from having any figurative reference to the church; if it has been made out that, on the other hand, we must rather believe that there was a wise purpose in their being committed to memory and to writing, and that they did happen, and have a significance, and that this significance has a prophetic reference to the church, then this book, having served this purpose, may now be closed, that we may go on to trace in the history subsequent to the deluge the courses of the two cities, – the earthly, that lives according to men, and the heavenly, that lives according to God.

BOOK SIXTEENTH

ARGUMENT

IN THE FORMER PART OF THIS BOOK, FROM THE FIRST TO THE TWELFTH CHAPTER, THE PROGRESS OF THE TWO CITIES, THE EARTHLY AND THE HEAVENLY, FROM NOAH TO ABRAHAM, IS EXHIBITED FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE: IN THE LATTER PART, THE PROGRESS OF THE HEAVENLY ALONE, FROM ABRAHAM TO THE KINGS OF ISRAEL, IS THE SUBJECT.

1. Whether, after the deluge, from Noah to Abraham, any families can be found who lived according to God

It is difficult to discover from Scripture, whether, after the deluge, traces of the holy city are continuous, or are so interrupted by intervening seasons of godlessness, that not a single worshipper of the one true God was found among men; because from Noah, who, with his wife, three sons, and as many daughters-in-law, achieved deliverance in the ark from the destruction of the deluge, down to Abraham, we do not find in the canonical books that the piety of any one is celebrated by express divine testimony, unless it be in the case of Noah, who

commends with a prophetic benediction his two sons Shem and Japheth, while he beheld and foresaw what was long afterwards to happen. It was also by this prophetic spirit that, when his middle son – that is, the son who was younger than the first and older than the last born – had sinned against him, he cursed him not in his own person, but in his son's (his own grandson's), in the words, "Cursed be the lad Canaan; a servant shall he be unto his brethren."²²¹ Now Canaan was born of Ham, who, so far from covering his sleeping father's nakedness, had divulged it. For the same reason also he subjoins the blessing on his two other sons, the oldest and youngest, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall gladden Japheth, and he shall dwell in the houses of Shem."²²² And so, too, the planting of the vine by Noah, and his intoxication by its fruit, and his nakedness while he slept, and the other things done at that time, and recorded, are all of them pregnant with prophetic meanings, and veiled in mysteries.²²³

2. What was prophetically prefigured in the sons of Noah

The things which then were hidden are now sufficiently revealed by the actual events which have followed. For who

²²¹ Gen. ix. 25.

²²² Gen. ix. 26, 27.

²²³ See *Contra Faust.* xii. c. 22 sqq.

can carefully and intelligently consider these things without recognising them accomplished in Christ? Shem, of whom Christ was born in the flesh, means "named." And what is of greater name than Christ, the fragrance of whose name is now everywhere perceived, so that even prophecy sings of it beforehand, comparing it in the Song of Songs²²⁴ to ointment poured forth? Is it not also in the houses of Christ, that is, in the churches, that the "enlargement" of the nations dwells? For Japheth means "enlargement." And Ham (*i. e.* hot), who was the middle son of Noah, and, as it were, separated himself from both, and remained between them, neither belonging to the first-fruits of Israel nor to the fulness of the Gentiles, what does he signify but the tribe of heretics, hot with the spirit, not of patience, but of impatience, with which the breasts of heretics are wont to blaze, and with which they disturb the peace of the saints? But even the heretics yield an advantage to those that make proficiency, according to the apostle's saying, "There must also be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."²²⁵ Whence, too, it is elsewhere said, "The son that receives instruction will be wise, and he uses the foolish as his servant."²²⁶ For while the hot restlessness of heretics stirs questions about many articles of the catholic faith, the necessity of defending them forces us both to investigate

²²⁴ Song of Solomon i. 3.

²²⁵ 1 Cor. xi. 19.

²²⁶ Prov. x. 5 (LXX.).

them more accurately, to understand them more clearly, and to proclaim them more earnestly; and the question mooted by an adversary becomes the occasion of instruction. However, not only those who are openly separated from the church, but also all who glory in the Christian name, and at the same time lead abandoned lives, may without absurdity seem to be figured by Noah's middle son: for the passion of Christ, which was signified by that man's nakedness, is at once proclaimed by their profession, and dishonoured by their wicked conduct. Of such, therefore, it has been said, "By their fruits ye shall know them."²²⁷ And therefore was Ham cursed in his son, he being, as it were, his fruit. So, too, this son of his, Canaan, is fitly interpreted "their movement," which is nothing else than their work. But Shem and Japheth, that is to say, the circumcision and uncircumcision, or, as the apostle otherwise calls them, the Jews and Greeks, but called and justified, having somehow discovered the nakedness of their father (which signifies the Saviour's passion), took a garment and laid it upon their backs, and entered backwards and covered their father's nakedness, without their seeing what their reverence hid. For we both honour the passion of Christ as accomplished for us, and we hate the crime of the Jews who crucified Him. The garment signifies the sacrament, their backs the memory of things past: for the church celebrates the passion of Christ as already accomplished, and no longer to be looked forward to, now that Japheth already dwells in the habitations of

²²⁷ Matt. vii. 20.

Shem, and their wicked brother between them.

But the wicked brother is, in the person of his son (*i. e.* his work), the boy, or slave, of his good brothers, when good men make a skilful use of bad men, either for the exercise of their patience or for their advancement in wisdom. For the apostle testifies that there are some who preach Christ from no pure motives; "but," says he, "whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."²²⁸ For it is Christ Himself who planted the vine of which the prophet says, "The vine of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel;"²²⁹ and He drinks of its wine, whether we thus understand that cup of which He says, "Can ye drink of the cup that I shall drink of?"²³⁰ and, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,"²³¹ by which He obviously means His passion. Or, as wine is the fruit of the vine, we may prefer to understand that from this vine, that is to say, from the race of Israel, He has assumed flesh and blood that He might suffer; "and he was drunken," that is, He suffered; "and was naked," that is, His weakness appeared in His suffering, as the apostle says, "though He was crucified through weakness."²³² Wherefore the same apostle says, "The weakness of God is stronger than men; and the foolishness of

²²⁸ Phil. i. 18.

²²⁹ Isa. v. 7.

²³⁰ Matt. xx. 22.

²³¹ Matt. xxvi. 39.

²³² 2 Cor. xiii. 4.

God is wiser than men."²³³ And when to the expression "he was naked" Scripture adds "in his house," it elegantly intimates that Jesus was to suffer the cross and death at the hands of His own household, His own kith and kin, the Jews. This passion of Christ is only externally and verbally professed by the reprobate, for what they profess they do not understand. But the elect hold in the inner man this so great mystery, and honour inwardly in the heart this weakness and foolishness of God. And of this there is a figure in Ham going out to proclaim his father's nakedness; while Shem and Japheth, to cover or honour it, went in, that is to say, did it inwardly.

These secrets of divine Scripture we investigate as well as we can. All will not accept our interpretation with equal confidence, but all hold it certain that these things were neither done nor recorded without some foreshadowing of future events, and that they are to be referred only to Christ and His church, which is the city of God, proclaimed from the very beginning of human history by figures which we now see everywhere accomplished. From the blessing of the two sons of Noah, and the cursing of the middle son, down to Abraham, or for more than a thousand years, there is, as I have said, no mention of any righteous persons who worshipped God. I do not therefore conclude that there were none; but it had been tedious to mention every one, and would have displayed historical accuracy rather than prophetic foresight. The object of the writer of these sacred books, or

²³³ 1 Cor. i. 25.

rather of the Spirit of God in him, is not only to record the past, but to depict the future, so far as it regards the city of God; for whatever is said of those who are not its citizens, is given either for her instruction, or as a foil to enhance her glory. Yet we are not to suppose that all that is recorded has some signification, but those things which have no signification of their own are interwoven for the sake of the things which are significant. It is only the ploughshare that cleaves the soil; but to effect this, other parts of the plough are requisite. It is only the strings in harps and other musical instruments which produce melodious sounds; but that they may do so, there are other parts of the instrument which are not indeed struck by those who sing, but are connected with the strings which are struck, and produce musical notes. So in this prophetic history some things are narrated which have no significance, but are, as it were, the framework to which the significant things are attached.

3. Of the generations of the three sons of Noah

We must therefore introduce into this work an explanation of the generations of the three sons of Noah, in so far as that may illustrate the progress in time of the two cities. Scripture first mentions that of the youngest son, who is called Japheth: he had eight sons,²³⁴ and by two of these sons seven grandchildren,

²³⁴ Augustine here follows the Greek version, which introduces the name Elisa among the sons of Japheth, though not found in the Hebrew. It is not found in the

three by one son, four by the other; in all, fifteen descendants. Ham, Noah's middle son, had four sons, and by one of them five grandsons, and by one of these two great-grandsons; in all, eleven. After enumerating these, Scripture returns to the first of the sons, and says, "Cush begat Nimrod; he began to be a giant on the earth. He was a giant hunter against the Lord God: wherefore they say, As Nimrod the giant hunter against the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Assur, and built Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah: this was a great city." Now this Cush, father of the giant Nimrod, is the first-named among the sons of Ham, to whom five sons and two grandsons are ascribed. But he either begat this giant after his grandsons were born, or, which is more credible, Scripture speaks of him separately on account of his eminence; for mention is also made of his kingdom, which began with that magnificent city Babylon, and the other places, whether cities or districts, mentioned along with it. But what is recorded of the land of Shinar which belonged to Nimrod's kingdom, to wit, that Assur went forth from it and built Nineveh and the other cities mentioned with it, happened long after; but he takes occasion to speak of it here on account of the grandeur of the Assyrian kingdom, which was wonderfully extended by Ninus son of Belus, and founder of the great city Nineveh, which was named after him, Nineveh, from Ninus.

But Assur, father of the Assyrian, was not one of the sons of Ham, Noah's middle son, but is found among the sons of Shem, his eldest son. Whence it appears that among Shem's offspring there arose men who afterwards took possession of that giant's kingdom, and advancing from it, founded other cities, the first of which was called Nineveh, from Ninus. From him Scripture returns to Ham's other son, Mizraim; and his sons are enumerated, not as seven individuals, but as seven nations. And from the sixth, as if from the sixth son, the race called the Philistines are said to have sprung; so that there are in all eight. Then it returns again to Canaan, in whose person Ham was cursed; and his eleven sons are named. Then the territories they occupied, and some of the cities, are named. And thus, if we count sons and grandsons, there are thirty-one of Ham's descendants registered.

It remains to mention the sons of Shem, Noah's eldest son; for to him this genealogical narrative gradually ascends from the youngest. But in the commencement of the record of Shem's sons there is an obscurity which calls for explanation, since it is closely connected with the object of our investigation. For we read, "Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Heber, the brother of Japheth the elder, were children born."²³⁵ This is the order of the words: And to Shem was born Heber, even to himself, that is, to Shem himself was born Heber, and Shem is the father of all his children. We are intended to

²³⁵ Gen. x. 21.

understand that Shem is the patriarch of all his posterity who were to be mentioned, whether sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, or descendants at any remove. For Shem did not beget Heber, who was indeed in the fifth generation from him. For Shem begat, among other sons, Arphaxad; Arphaxad begat Cainan, Cainan begat Salah, Salah begat Heber. And it was with good reason that he was named first among Shem's offspring, taking precedence even of his sons, though only a grandchild of the fifth generation; for from him, as tradition says, the Hebrews derived their name, though the other etymology which derives the name from Abraham (as if *Abrahews*) may possibly be correct. But there can be little doubt that the former is the right etymology, and that they were called after Heber, *Heberews*, and then, dropping a letter, Hebrews; and so was their language called Hebrew, which was spoken by none but the people of Israel among whom was the city of God, mysteriously prefigured in all the people, and truly present in the saints. Six of Shem's sons then are first named, then four grandsons born to one of these sons; then it mentions another son of Shem, who begat a grandson; and his son, again, or Shem's great-grandson, was Heber. And Heber begat two sons, and called the one Peleg, which means "dividing;" and Scripture subjoins the reason of this name, saying, "for in his days was the earth divided." What this means will afterwards appear. Heber's other son begat twelve sons; consequently all Shem's descendants are twenty-seven. The total number of the progeny of the three sons of Noah is seventy-

three, fifteen by Japheth, thirty-one by Ham, twenty-seven by Shem. Then Scripture adds, "These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations." And so of the whole number: "These are the families of the sons of Noah after their generations, in their nations, and by these were the isles of the nations dispersed through the earth after the flood." From which we gather that the seventy-three (or rather, as I shall presently show, seventy-two) were not individuals, but nations. For in a former passage, when the sons of Japheth were enumerated, it is said in conclusion, "By these were the isles of the nations divided in their lands, every one after his language, in their tribes, and in their nations."

But nations are expressly mentioned among the sons of Ham, as I showed above. "Mizraim begat those who are called Ludim;" and so also of the other seven nations. And after enumerating all of them, it concludes, "These are the sons of Ham, in their families, according to their languages, in their territories, and in their nations." The reason, then, why the children of several of them are not mentioned, is that they belonged by birth to other nations, and did not themselves become nations. Why else is it, that though eight sons are reckoned to Japheth, the sons of only two of these are mentioned; and though four are reckoned to Ham, only three are spoken of as having sons; and though six are reckoned to Shem, the descendants of only two of these are traced? Did the rest remain childless? We cannot suppose so; but they did not produce nations so great as to warrant their

being mentioned, but were absorbed in the nations to which they belonged by birth.

4. Of the diversity of languages, and of the founding of Babylon

But though these nations are said to have been dispersed according to their languages, yet the narrator recurs to that time when all had but one language, and explains how it came to pass that a diversity of languages was introduced. "The whole earth," he says, "was of one lip, and all had one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and dwelt there. And they said one to another, Come, and let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly. And they had bricks for stone, and slime for mortar. And they said, Come, and let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top shall reach the sky; and let us make us a name, before we be scattered abroad on the face of all the earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children, of men builded. And the Lord God said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Come, and let us go down, and confound there their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. And God scattered them thence on the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city and the

tower. Therefore the name of it is called Confusion; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and the Lord God scattered them thence on the face of all the earth."²³⁶ This city, which was called Confusion, is the same as Babylon, whose wonderful construction Gentile history also notices. For Babylon means Confusion. Whence we conclude that the giant Nimrod was its founder, as had been hinted a little before, where Scripture, in speaking of him, says that the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, that is, Babylon had a supremacy over the other cities as the metropolis and royal residence; although it did not rise to the grand dimensions designed by its proud and impious founder. The plan was to make it so high that it should reach the sky, whether this was meant of one tower which they intended to build higher than the others, or of all the towers, which might be signified by the singular number, as we speak of "the soldier," meaning the army, and of the frog or the locust, when we refer to the whole multitude of frogs and locusts in the plagues with which Moses smote the Egyptians.²³⁷ But what did these vain and presumptuous men intend? How did they expect to raise this lofty mass against God, when they had built it above all the mountains and the clouds of the earth's atmosphere? What injury could any spiritual or material elevation do to God? The safe and true way to heaven is made by humility, which lifts up the heart to the Lord, not against

²³⁶ Gen. xi. 1-9.

²³⁷ Ex. x.

Him; as this giant is said to have been a "hunter *against* the Lord." This has been misunderstood by some through the ambiguity of the Greek word, and they have translated it, not "against the Lord," but "before the Lord;" for ἐναντίον means both "before" and "against." In the Psalm this word is rendered, "Let us weep *before* the Lord our Maker."²³⁸ The same word occurs in the book of Job, where it is written, "Thou hast broken into fury *against* the Lord."²³⁹ And so this giant is to be recognised as a "hunter *against* the Lord." And what is meant by the term "hunter" but deceiver, oppressor, and destroyer of the animals of the earth? He and his people, therefore, erected this tower against the Lord, and so gave expression to their impious pride; and justly was their wicked intention punished by God, even though it was unsuccessful. But what was the nature of the punishment? As the tongue is the instrument of domination, in it pride was punished; so that man, who would not understand God when He issued His commands, should be misunderstood when he himself gave orders. Thus was that conspiracy disbanded, for each man retired from those he could not understand, and associated with those whose speech was intelligible; and the nations were divided according to their languages, and scattered over the earth as seemed good to God, who accomplished this in ways hidden from and incomprehensible to us.

²³⁸ Ps. xcv. 6.

²³⁹ Job xv. 13.

5. Of God's coming down to confound the languages of the builders of the city

We read, "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men built: " it was not the sons of God, but that society which lived in a merely human way, and which we call the earthly city. God, who is always wholly everywhere, does not move locally; but He is said to descend when He does anything in the earth out of the usual course, which, as it were, makes His presence felt. And in the same way, He does not by "seeing" learn some new thing, for He cannot ever be ignorant of anything; but He is said to see and recognise, in time, that which He causes others to see and recognise. And therefore that city was not previously being seen as God made it be seen when He showed how offensive it was to Him. We might, indeed, interpret God's descending to the city of the descent of His angels in whom He dwells; so that the following words, "And the Lord God said, Behold, they are all one race and of one language," and also what follows, "Come, and let us go down and confound their speech," are a recapitulation, explaining how the previously intimated "descent of the Lord" was accomplished. For if He had already gone down, why does He say, "Come, and let us go down and confound?" – words which seem to be addressed to the angels, and to intimate that He who was in the angels descended in their descent. And the words most appropriately

are, not, "Go ye down and confound," but, "Let us confound their speech;" showing that He so works by His servants, that they are themselves also fellow-labourers with God, as the apostle says, "For we are fellow-labourers with God."²⁴⁰

6. What we are to understand by God's speaking to the angels

We might have supposed that the words uttered at the creation of man, "Let us," and not Let me, "make man," were addressed to the angels, had He not added "in our image;" but as we cannot believe that man was made in the image of angels, or that the image of God is the same as that of angels, it is proper to refer this expression to the plurality of the Trinity. And yet this Trinity, being one God, even after saying "Let *us* make," goes on to say, "And God made man in His image,"²⁴¹ and not "Gods made," or "in their image." And were there any difficulty in applying to the angels the words, "Come, and let us go down and confound their speech," we might refer the plural to the Trinity, as if the Father were addressing the Son and the Holy Spirit; but it rather belongs to the angels to approach God by holy movements, that is, by pious thoughts, and thereby to avail themselves of the unchangeable truth which rules in the court of heaven as their

²⁴⁰ 1 Cor. iii. 9.

²⁴¹ Gen. i. 26.

eternal law. For they are not themselves the truth; but partaking in the creative truth, they are moved towards it as the fountain of life, that what they have not in themselves they may obtain in it. And this movement of theirs is steady, for they never go back from what they have reached. And to these angels God does not speak, as we speak to one another, or to God, or to angels, or as the angels speak to us, or as God speaks to us through them: He speaks to them in an ineffable manner of His own, and that which He says is conveyed to us in a manner suited to our capacity. For the speaking of God antecedent and superior to all His works, is the immutable reason of His work: it has no noisy and passing sound, but an energy eternally abiding and producing results in time. Thus He speaks to the holy angels; but to us, who are far off, He speaks otherwise. When, however, we hear with the inner ear some part of the speech of God, we approximate to the angels. But in this work I need not labour to give an account of the ways in which God speaks. For either the unchangeable Truth speaks directly to the mind of the rational creature in some indescribable way, or speaks through the changeable creature, either presenting spiritual images to our spirit, or bodily voices to our bodily sense.

The words, "Nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do,"²⁴² are assuredly not meant as an affirmation, but as an interrogation, such as is used by persons threatening, as, *e. g.*, when Dido exclaims,

²⁴² Gen. xi. 6.

"They will not take arms and pursue?"²⁴³

We are to understand the words as if it had been said, Shall nothing be restrained from them which they have imagined to do?²⁴⁴ From these three men, therefore, the three sons of Noah we mean, 73, or rather, as the catalogue will show, 72 nations and as many languages were dispersed over the earth, and as they increased filled even the islands. But the nations multiplied much more than the languages. For even in Africa we know several barbarous nations which have but one language; and who can doubt that, as the human race increased, men contrived to pass to the islands in ships?

***7. Whether even the remotest islands received
their fauna from the animals which were
preserved, through the deluge, in the ark***

There is a question raised about all those kinds of beasts which are not domesticated, nor are produced like frogs from the earth, but are propagated by male and female parents, such as wolves and animals of that kind; and it is asked how they could be found in the islands after the deluge, in which all the animals not in the ark perished, unless the breed was restored from those which

²⁴³ Virgil, *Aeneid*, iv. 592.

²⁴⁴ Here Augustine remarks on the addition of the particle *ne* to the word *non*, which he has made to bring out the sense.

were preserved in pairs in the ark. It might, indeed, be said that they crossed to the islands by swimming, but this could only be true of those very near the mainland; whereas there are some so distant, that we fancy no animal could swim to them. But if men caught them and took them across with themselves, and thus propagated these breeds in their new abodes, this would not imply an incredible fondness for the chase. At the same time, it cannot be denied that by the intervention of angels they might be transferred by God's order or permission. If, however, they were produced out of the earth as at their first creation, when God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature,"²⁴⁵ this makes it more evident that all kinds of animals were preserved in the ark, not so much for the sake of renewing the stock, as of prefiguring the various nations which were to be saved in the church; this, I say, is more evident, if the earth brought forth many animals in islands to which they could not cross over.

8. Whether certain monstrous races of men are derived from the stock of Adam or Noah's sons

It is also asked whether we are to believe that certain monstrous races of men, spoken of in secular history,²⁴⁶ have sprung from Noah's sons, or rather, I should say, from that

²⁴⁵ Gen. i. 24.

²⁴⁶ Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* vii. 2; Aulus Gellius, *Noct. Att.* ix. 4.

one man from whom they themselves were descended. For it is reported that some have one eye in the middle of the forehead; some, feet turned backwards from the heel; some, a double sex, the right breast like a man, the left like a woman, and that they alternately beget and bring forth: others are said to have no mouth, and to breathe only through the nostrils; others are but a cubit high, and are therefore called by the Greeks "Pigmies:"²⁴⁷ they say that in some places the women conceive in their fifth year, and do not live beyond their eighth. So, too, they tell of a race who have two feet but only one leg, and are of marvellous swiftness, though they do not bend the knee: they are called Skiopodes, because in the hot weather they lie down on their backs and shade themselves with their feet. Others are said to have no head, and their eyes in their shoulders; and other human or quasi-human races are depicted in mosaic in the harbour esplanade of Carthage, on the faith of histories of rarities. What shall I say of the Cynocephali, whose dog-like head and barking proclaim them beasts rather than men? But we are not bound to believe all we hear of these monstrosities. But whoever is anywhere born a man, that is, a rational mortal animal, no matter what unusual appearance he presents in colour, movement, sound, nor how peculiar he is in some power, part, or quality of his nature, no Christian can doubt that he springs from that one protoplast. We can distinguish the common human nature from that which is peculiar, and therefore wonderful.

²⁴⁷ From πυγμή, a cubit.

The same account which is given of monstrous births in individual cases can be given of monstrous races. For God, the Creator of all, knows where and when each thing ought to be, or to have been created, because He sees the similarities and diversities which can contribute to the beauty of the whole. But he who cannot see the whole is offended by the deformity of the part, because he is blind to that which balances it, and to which it belongs. We know that men are born with more than four fingers on their hands or toes on their feet: this is a smaller matter; but far from us be the folly of supposing that the Creator mistook the number of a man's fingers, though we cannot account for the difference. And so in cases where the divergence from the rule is greater. He whose works no man justly finds fault with, knows what He has done. At Hippo-Diarrhytus there is a man whose hands are crescent-shaped, and have only two fingers each, and his feet similarly formed. If there were a race like him, it would be added to the history of the curious and wonderful. Shall we therefore deny that this man is descended from that one man who was first created? As for the Androgyni, or Hermaphrodites, as they are called, though they are rare, yet from time to time there appear persons of sex so doubtful, that it remains uncertain from which sex they take their name; though it is customary to give them a masculine name, as the more worthy. For no one ever called them Hermaphroditesses. Some years ago, quite within my own memory, a man was born in the East, double in his upper, but single in his lower half – having two heads, two chests,

four hands, but one body and two feet like an ordinary man; and he lived so long that many had an opportunity of seeing him. But who could enumerate all the human births that have differed widely from their ascertained parents? As, therefore, no one will deny that these are all descended from that one man, so all the races which are reported to have diverged in bodily appearance from the usual course which nature generally or almost universally preserves, if they are embraced in that definition of man as rational and mortal animals, unquestionably trace their pedigree to that one first father of all. We are supposing these stories about various races who differ from one another and from us to be true; but possibly they are not: for if we were not aware that apes, and monkeys, and sphinxes are not men, but beasts, those historians would possibly describe them as races of men, and flaunt with impunity their false and vainglorious discoveries. But supposing they are men of whom these marvels are recorded, what if God has seen fit to create some races in this way, that we might not suppose that the monstrous births which appear among ourselves are the failures of that wisdom whereby He fashions the human nature, as we speak of the failure of a less perfect workman? Accordingly, it ought not to seem absurd to us, that as in individual races there are monstrous births, so in the whole race there are monstrous races. Wherefore, to conclude this question cautiously and guardedly, either these things which have been told of some races have no existence at all; or if they do exist, they are not

human races; or if they are human, they are descended from Adam.

9. Whether we are to believe in the Antipodes

But as to the fable that there are Antipodes, that is to say, men on the opposite side of the earth, where the sun rises when it sets to us, men who walk with their feet opposite ours, that is on no ground credible. And, indeed, it is not affirmed that this has been learned by historical knowledge, but by scientific conjecture, on the ground that the earth is suspended within the concavity of the sky, and that it has as much room on the one side of it as on the other: hence they say that the part which is beneath must also be inhabited. But they do not remark that, although it be supposed or scientifically demonstrated that the world is of a round and spherical form, yet it does not follow that the other side of the earth is bare of water; nor even, though it be bare, does it immediately follow that it is peopled. For Scripture, which proves the truth of its historical statements by the accomplishment of its prophecies, gives no false information; and it is too absurd to say, that some men might have taken ship and traversed the whole wide ocean, and crossed from this side of the world to the other, and that thus even the inhabitants of that distant region are descended from that one first man. Wherefore let us seek if we can find the city of God that sojourns on earth among those human races who are catalogued as having been

divided into seventy-two nations and as many languages. For it continued down to the deluge and the ark, and is proved to have existed still among the sons of Noah by their blessings, and chiefly in the eldest son Shem; for Japheth received this blessing, that he should dwell in the tents of Shem.

10. Of the genealogy of Shem, in whose line the city of God is preserved till the time of Abraham

It is necessary, therefore, to preserve the series of generations descending from Shem, for the sake of exhibiting the city of God after the flood; as before the flood it was exhibited in the series of generations descending from Seth. And therefore does divine Scripture, after exhibiting the earthly city as Babylon or "Confusion," revert to the patriarch Shem, and recapitulate the generations from him to Abraham, specifying besides, the year in which each father begat the son that belonged to this line, and how long he lived. And unquestionably it is this which fulfils the promise I made, that it should appear why it is said of the sons of Heber, "The name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided."²⁴⁸ For what can we understand by the division of the earth, if not the diversity of languages? And, therefore, omitting the other sons of Shem, who are not concerned in this matter, Scripture gives the genealogy of those by whom the line

²⁴⁸ Gen. x. 25.

runs on to Abraham, as before the flood those are given who carried on the line to Noah from Seth. Accordingly this series of generations begins thus: "These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood. And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters." In like manner it registers the rest, naming the year of his life in which each begat the son who belonged to that line which extends to Abraham. It specifies, too, how many years he lived thereafter, begetting sons and daughters, that we may not childishly suppose that the men named were the only men, but may understand how the population increased, and how regions and kingdoms so vast could be populated by the descendants of Shem; especially the kingdom of Assyria, from which Ninus subdued the surrounding nations, reigning with brilliant prosperity, and bequeathing to his descendants a vast but thoroughly consolidated empire, which held together for many centuries.

But to avoid needless prolixity, we shall mention not the number of years each member of this series lived, but only the year of his life in which he begat his heir, that we may thus reckon the number of years from the flood to Abraham, and may at the same time leave room to touch briefly and cursorily upon some other matters necessary to our argument. In the second year, then, after the flood, Shem when he was a hundred years old begat Arphaxad; Arphaxad when he was 135 years old begat Cainan; Cainan when he was 130 years begat Salah. Salah

himself, too, was the same age when he begat Eber. Eber lived 134 years, and begat Peleg, in whose days the earth was divided. Peleg himself lived 130 years, and begat Reu; and Reu lived 132 years, and begat Serug; Serug 130, and begat Nahor; and Nahor 79, and begat Terah; and Terah 70, and begat Abram, whose name God afterwards changed into *Abraham*. There are thus from the flood to Abraham 1072 years, according to the Vulgate or Septuagint versions. In the Hebrew copies far fewer years are given; and for this either no reason or a not very credible one is given.

When, therefore, we look for the city of God in these seventy-two nations, we cannot affirm that while they had but one lip, that is, one language, the human race had departed from the worship of the true God, and that genuine godliness had survived only in those generations which descend from Shem through Arphaxad and reach to Abraham; but from the time when they proudly built a tower to heaven, a symbol of godless exaltation, the city or society of the wicked becomes apparent. Whether it was only disguised before, or non-existent; whether both cities remained after the flood, – the godly in the two sons of Noah who were blessed, and in their posterity, and the ungodly in the cursed son and his descendants, from whom sprang that mighty hunter against the Lord, – is not easily determined. For possibly – and certainly this is more credible – there were despisers of God among the descendants of the two sons, even before Babylon was founded, and worshippers of God among the descendants of

Ham. Certainly neither race was ever obliterated from earth. For in both the Psalms in which it is said, "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one," we read further, "Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord."²⁴⁹ There was then a people of God even at that time. And therefore the words, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one," were said of the sons of men, not of the sons of God. For it had been previously said, "God looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if any understood and sought after God;" and then follow the words which demonstrate that all the sons of men, that is, all who belong to the city which lives according to man, not according to God, are reprobate.

11. That the original language in use among men was that which was afterwards called Hebrew, from Heber, in whose family it was preserved when the confusion of tongues occurred.

Wherefore, as the fact of all using one language did not secure the absence of sin-infected men from the race, – for even before the deluge there was one language, and yet all but the single family of just Noah were found worthy of destruction by the flood, – so when the nations, by a prouder godlessness, earned the punishment of the dispersion and the confusion of tongues, and the city of the godless was called Confusion or Babylon, there was still the house of Heber in which the primitive

²⁴⁹ Ps. xiv. 3, 4, liii. 3, 4.

language of the race survived. And therefore, as I have already mentioned, when an enumeration is made of the sons of Shem, who each founded a nation, Heber is first mentioned, although he was of the fifth generation from Shem. And because, when the other races were divided by their own peculiar languages, his family preserved that language which is not unreasonably believed to have been the common language of the race, it was on this account thenceforth named Hebrew. For it then became necessary to distinguish this language from the rest by a proper name; though, while there was only one, it had no other name than the language of man, or human speech, it alone being spoken by the whole human race. Some one will say: If the earth was divided by languages in the days of Peleg, Heber's son, that language, which was formerly common to all, should rather have been called after Peleg. But we are to understand that Heber himself gave to his son this name Peleg, which means Division; because he was born when the earth was divided, that is, at the very time of the division, and that this is the meaning of the words, "In his days the earth was divided."²⁵⁰ For unless Heber had been still alive when the languages were multiplied, the language which was preserved in his house would not have been called after him. We are induced to believe that this was the primitive and common language, because the multiplication and change of languages was introduced as a punishment, and it is fit to ascribe to the people of God an

²⁵⁰ Gen. x. 25.

immunity from this punishment. Nor is it without significance that this is the language which Abraham retained, and that he could not transmit it to all his descendants, but only to those of Jacob's line, who distinctively and eminently constituted God's people, and received His covenants, and were Christ's progenitors according to the flesh. In the same way, Heber himself did not transmit that language to all his posterity, but only to the line from which Abraham sprang. And thus, although it is not expressly stated, that when the wicked were building Babylon there was a godly seed remaining, this indistinctness is intended to stimulate research rather than to elude it. For when we see that originally there was one common language, and that Heber is mentioned before all Shem's sons, though he belonged to the fifth generation from him, and that the language which the patriarchs and prophets used, not only in their conversation, but in the authoritative language of Scripture, is called Hebrew, when we are asked where that primitive and common language was preserved after the confusion of tongues, certainly, as there can be no doubt that those among whom it was preserved were exempt from the punishment it embodied, what other suggestion can we make, than that it survived in the family of him whose name it took, and that this is no small proof of the righteousness of this family, that the punishment with which the other families were visited did not fall upon it?

But yet another question is mooted: How did Heber and his son Peleg each found a nation, if they had but one language?

For no doubt the Hebrew nation propagated from Heber through Abraham, and becoming through him a great people, is one nation. How, then, are all the sons of the three branches of Noah's family enumerated as founding a nation each, if Heber and Peleg did not so? It is very probable that the giant Nimrod founded also his nation, and that Scripture has named him separately on account of the extraordinary dimensions of his empire and of his body, so that the number of seventy-two nations remains. But Peleg was mentioned, not because he founded a nation (for his race and language are Hebrew), but on account of the critical time at which he was born, all the earth being then divided. Nor ought we to be surprised that the giant Nimrod lived to the time in which Babylon was founded and the confusion of tongues occurred, and the consequent division of the earth. For though Heber was in the sixth generation from Noah, and Nimrod in the fourth, it does not follow that they could not be alive at the same time. For when the generations are few, they live longer and are born later; but when they are many, they live a shorter time, and come into the world earlier. We are to understand that, when the earth was divided, the descendants of Noah who are registered as founders of nations were not only already born, but were of an age to have immense families, worthy to be called tribes or nations. And therefore we must by no means suppose that they were born in the order in which they were set down; otherwise, how could the twelve sons of Joktan, another son of Heber's, and brother of Peleg, have already founded nations,

if Joktan was born, as he is registered, after his brother Peleg, since the earth was divided at Peleg's birth? We are therefore to understand that, though Peleg is named first, he was born long after Joktan, whose twelve sons had already families so large as to admit of their being divided by different languages. There is nothing extraordinary in the last born being first named: of the sons of Noah, the descendants of Japheth are first named; then the sons of Ham, who was the second son; and last the sons of Shem, who was the first and oldest. Of these nations the names have partly survived, so that at this day we can see from whom they have sprung, as the Assyrians from Assur, the Hebrews from Heber, but partly have been altered in the lapse of time, so that the most learned men, by profound research in ancient records, have scarcely been able to discover the origin, I do not say of all, but of some of these nations. There is, for example, nothing in the name Egyptians to show that they are descended from Misraim, Ham's son, nor in the name Ethiopians to show a connection with Cush, though such is said to be the origin of these nations. And if we take a general survey of the names, we shall find that more have been changed than have remained the same.

12. Of the era in Abraham's life from which a new period in the holy succession begins

Let us now survey the progress of the city of God from the era of the patriarch Abraham, from whose time it begins to

be more conspicuous, and the divine promises which are now fulfilled in Christ are more fully revealed. We learn, then, from the intimations of holy Scripture, that Abraham was born in the country of the Chaldeans, a land belonging to the Assyrian empire. Now, even at that time impious superstitions were rife with the Chaldeans, as with other nations. The family of Terah, to which Abraham belonged, was the only one in which the worship of the true God survived, and the only one, we may suppose, in which the Hebrew language was preserved; although Joshua the son of Nun tells us that even this family served other gods in Mesopotamia.²⁵¹ The other descendants of Heber gradually became absorbed in other races and other languages. And thus, as the single family of Noah was preserved through the deluge of water to renew the human race, so, in the deluge of superstition that flooded the whole world, there remained but the one family of Terah in which the seed of God's city was preserved. And as, when Scripture has enumerated the generations prior to Noah, with their ages, and explained the cause of the flood before God began to speak to Noah about the building of the ark, it is said, "These are the generations of Noah;" so also now, after enumerating the generations from Shem, Noah's son, down to Abraham, it then signalizes an era by saying, "These are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Abram and

²⁵¹ Josh. xxiv. 2.

Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah."²⁵² This Iscah is supposed to be the same as Sarah, Abraham's wife.

13. Why, in the account of Terah's emigration, on his forsaking the Chaldeans and passing over into Mesopotamia, no mention is made of his son Nahor.

Next it is related how Terah with his family left the region of the Chaldeans and came into Mesopotamia, and dwelt in Haran. But nothing is said about one of his sons called Nahor, as if he had not taken him along with him. For the narrative runs thus: "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarah his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and led them forth out of the region of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; and he came into Haran, and dwelt there."²⁵³ Nahor and Milcah his wife are nowhere named here. But afterwards, when Abraham sent his servant to take a wife for his son Isaac, we find it thus written: "And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his lord, and of all the goods of his lord, with him; and arose, and went into Mesopotamia, into the city of Nahor."²⁵⁴ This and other testimonies of this sacred history show that Nahor, Abraham's brother, had also left the region of the Chaldeans, and fixed his abode in Mesopotamia, where

²⁵² Gen. xi. 27-29.

²⁵³ Gen. xi. 31.

²⁵⁴ Gen. xxiv. 10.

Abraham dwelt with his father. Why, then, did the Scripture not mention him, when Terah with his family went forth out of the Chaldean nation and dwelt in Haran, since it mentions that he took with him not only Abraham his son, but also Sarah his daughter-in-law, and Lot his grandson? The only reason we can think of is, that perhaps he had lapsed from the piety of his father and brother, and adhered to the superstition of the Chaldeans, and had afterwards emigrated thence, either through penitence, or because he was persecuted as a suspected person. For in the book called Judith, when Holofernes, the enemy of the Israelites, inquired what kind of nation that might be, and whether war should be made against them, Achior, the leader of the Ammonites, answered him thus: "Let our lord now hear a word from the mouth of thy servant, and I will declare unto thee the truth concerning the people which dwelleth near thee in this hill country, and there shall no lie come out of the mouth of thy servant. For this people is descended from the Chaldeans, and they dwelt heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers, which were glorious in the land of the Chaldeans, but went out of the way of their ancestors, and adored the God of heaven, whom they knew; and they cast them out from the face of their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and dwelt there many days. And their God said to them, that they should depart from their habitation, and go into the land of Canaan; and they dwelt,"²⁵⁵ etc., as Achior the Ammonite

²⁵⁵ Judith v. 5-9.

narrates. Whence it is manifest that the house of Terah had suffered persecution from the Chaldeans for the true piety with which they worshipped the one and true God.

14. Of the years of Terah, who completed his lifetime in Haran

On Terah's death in Mesopotamia, where he is said to have lived 205 years, the promises of God made to Abraham now begin to be pointed out; for thus it is written: "And the days of Terah in Haran were two hundred and five years, and he died in Haran."²⁵⁶ This is not to be taken as if he had spent all his days there, but that he there completed the days of his life, which were two hundred and five years: otherwise it would not be known how many years Terah lived, since it is not said in what year of his life he came into Haran; and it is absurd to suppose that, in this series of generations, where it is carefully recorded how many years each one lived, his age was the only one not put on record. For although some whom the same Scripture mentions have not their age recorded, they are not in this series, in which the reckoning of time is continuously indicated by the death of the parents and the succession of the children. For this series, which is given in order from Adam to Noah, and from him down to Abraham, contains no one without the number of the years

²⁵⁶ Gen. xi. 32.

of his life.

***15. Of the time of the migration of Abraham,
when, according to the commandment
of God, he went out from Haran***

When, after the record of the death of Terah, the father of Abraham, we next read, "And the Lord said to Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house,"²⁵⁷ etc., it is not to be supposed, because this follows in the order of the narrative, that it also followed in the chronological order of events. For if it were so, there would be an insoluble difficulty. For after these words of God which were spoken to Abraham, the Scripture says: "And Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him. Now Abraham was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran."²⁵⁸ How can this be true if he departed from Haran after his father's death? For when Terah was seventy years old, as is intimated above, he begat Abraham; and if to this number we add the seventy-five years which Abraham reckoned when he went out of Haran, we get 145 years. Therefore that was the number of the years of Terah, when Abraham departed out of that city of Mesopotamia; for he had reached the seventy-fifth year of his

²⁵⁷ Gen. xii. 1.

²⁵⁸ Gen. xii. 4.

life, and thus his father, who begat him in the seventieth year of his life, had reached, as was said, his 145th. Therefore he did not depart thence after his father's death, that is, after the 205 years his father lived; but the year of his departure from that place, seeing it was his seventy-fifth, is inferred beyond a doubt to have been the 145th of his father, who begat him in his seventieth year. And thus it is to be understood that the Scripture, according to its custom, has gone back to the time which had already been passed by the narrative; just as above, when it had mentioned the grandsons of Noah, it said that they were in their nations and tongues; and yet afterwards, as if this also had followed in order of time, it says, "And the whole earth was of one lip, and one speech for all."²⁵⁹ How, then, could they be said to be in their own nations and according to their own tongues, if there was one for all; except because the narrative goes back to gather up what it had passed over? Here, too, in the same way, after saying, "And the days of Terah in Haran were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran," the Scripture, going back to what had been passed over in order to complete what had been begun about Terah, says, "And the Lord said to Abram, Get thee out of thy country,"²⁶⁰ etc. After which words of God it is added, "And Abram departed, as the Lord spake unto him; and Lot went with him. But Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran." Therefore it was done when his father was in the 145th

²⁵⁹ Gen. xi. 1.

²⁶⁰ Gen. xii. 1.

year of his age; for it was then the seventy-fifth of his own. But this question is also solved in another way, that the seventy-five years of Abraham when he departed out of Haran are reckoned from the year in which he was delivered from the fire of the Chaldeans, not from that of his birth, as if he was rather to be held as having been born then.

Now the blessed Stephen, in narrating these things in the Acts of the Apostles, says: "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, and come into the land which I will show thee."²⁶¹ According to these words of Stephen, God spoke to Abraham, not after the death of his father, who certainly died in Haran, where his son also dwelt with him, but before he dwelt in that city, although he was already in Mesopotamia. Therefore he had already departed from the Chaldeans. So that when Stephen adds, "Then Abraham went out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran,"²⁶² this does not point out what took place after God spoke to him (for it was not after these words of God that he went out of the land of the Chaldeans, since he says that God spoke to him in Mesopotamia), but the word "*then*" which he uses refers to that whole period from his going out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelling in Haran. Likewise in what follows, "And thenceforth, when his

²⁶¹ Acts vii. 2, 3.

²⁶² Acts vii. 4.

father was dead, he settled him in this land, wherein ye now dwell, and your fathers," he does not say, after his father was dead he went out from Haran; but thenceforth he settled him here, after his father was dead. It is to be understood, therefore, that God had spoken to Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran; but that he came to Haran with his father, keeping in mind the precept of God, and that he went out thence in his own seventy-fifth year, which was his father's 145th. But he says that his settlement in the land of Canaan, not his going forth from Haran, took place after his father's death; because his father was already dead when he purchased the land, and personally entered on possession of it. But when, on his having already settled in Mesopotamia, that is, already gone out of the land of the Chaldeans, God says, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house,"²⁶³ this means, not that he should cast out his body from thence, for he had already done that, but that he should tear away his soul. For he had not gone out from thence in mind, if he was held by the hope and desire of returning, – a hope and desire which was to be cut off by God's command and help, and by his own obedience. It would indeed be no incredible supposition that afterwards, when Nahor followed his father, Abraham then fulfilled the precept of the Lord, that he should depart out of Haran with Sarah his wife and Lot his brother's son.

²⁶³ Gen. xii. 1.

16. Of the order and nature of the promises of God which were made to Abraham

God's promises made to Abraham are now to be considered; for in these the oracles of our God,²⁶⁴ that is, of the true God, began to appear more openly concerning the godly people, whom prophetic authority foretold. The first of these reads thus: "And the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, and go into a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and magnify thy name; and thou shalt be blessed: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all tribes of the earth be blessed."²⁶⁵ Now it is to be observed that two things are promised to Abraham, the one, that his seed should possess the land of Canaan, which is intimated when it is said, "Go into a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation;" but the other far more excellent, not about the carnal but the spiritual seed, through which he is the father, not of the one Israelite nation, but of all nations who follow the footprints of his faith, which was first promised in these words, "And in thee shall all tribes of the earth be blessed." Eusebius thought

²⁶⁴ Various reading, "of our Lord Jesus Christ."

²⁶⁵ Gen. xii. 1-3.

this promise was made in Abraham's seventy-fifth year, as if soon after it was made Abraham had departed out of Haran; because the Scripture cannot be contradicted, in which we read, "Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran." But if this promise was made in that year, then of course Abraham was staying in Haran with his father; for he could not depart thence unless he had first dwelt there. Does this, then, contradict what Stephen says, "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran?"²⁶⁶ But it is to be understood that the whole took place in the same year, – both the promise of God before Abraham dwelt in Haran, and his dwelling in Haran, and his departure thence, – not only because Eusebius in the *Chronicles* reckons from the year of this promise, and shows that after 430 years the exodus from Egypt took place, when the law was given, but because the Apostle Paul also mentions it.

17. Of the three most famous kingdoms of the nations, of which one, that is, the Assyrian, was already very eminent when Abraham was born.

During the same period there were three famous kingdoms of the nations, in which the city of the earth-born, that is, the society of men living according to man under the domination of the fallen angels, chiefly flourished, namely, the three kingdoms of Sicyon, Egypt, and Assyria. Of these, Assyria was much the

²⁶⁶ Acts vii. 2.

most powerful and sublime; for that king Ninus, son of Belus, had subdued the people of all Asia except India. By Asia I now mean not that part which is one province of this greater Asia, but what is called Universal Asia, which some set down as the half, but most as the third part of the whole world, – the three being Asia, Europe, and Africa, thereby making an unequal division. For the part called Asia stretches from the south through the east even to the north; Europe from the north even to the west; and Africa from the west even to the south. Thus we see that two, Europe and Africa, contain one half of the world, and Asia alone the other half. And these two parts are made by the circumstance, that there enters between them from the ocean all the Mediterranean water, which makes this great sea of ours. So that, if you divide the world into two parts, the east and the west, Asia will be in the one, and Europe and Africa in the other. So that of the three kingdoms then famous, one, namely Sicyon, was not under the Assyrians, because it was in Europe; but as for Egypt, how could it fail to be subject to the empire which ruled all Asia with the single exception of India? In Assyria, therefore, the dominion of the impious city had the pre-eminence. Its head was Babylon, – an earth-born city, most fitly named, for it means confusion. There Ninus reigned after the death of his father Belus, who first had reigned there sixty-five years. His son Ninus, who, on his father's death, succeeded to the kingdom, reigned fifty-two years, and had been king forty-three years when Abraham was born, which was about the 1200th year

before Rome was founded, as it were another Babylon in the west.

18. Of the repeated address of God to Abraham, in which He promised the land of Canaan to him and to his seed

Abraham, then, having departed out of Haran in the seventy-fifth year of his own age, and in the hundred and forty-fifth of his father's, went with Lot, his brother's son, and Sarah his wife, into the land of Canaan, and came even to Sichem, where again he received the divine oracle, of which it is thus written: "And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said unto him, Unto thy seed will I give this land."²⁶⁷ Nothing is promised here about that seed in which he is made the father of all nations, but only about that by which he is the father of the one Israelite nation; for by this seed that land was possessed.

19. Of the divine preservation of Sarah's chastity in Egypt, when Abraham had called her not his wife but his sister

Having built an altar there, and called upon God, Abraham proceeded thence and dwelt in the desert, and was compelled by

²⁶⁷ Gen. xii. 7.

pressure of famine to go on into Egypt. There he called his wife his sister, and told no lie. For she was this also, because she was near of blood; just as Lot, on account of the same nearness, being his brother's son, is called his brother. Now he did not deny that she was his wife, but held his peace about it, committing to God the defence of his wife's chastity, and providing as a man against human wiles; because if he had not provided against the danger as much as he could, he would have been tempting God rather than trusting in Him. We have said enough about this matter against the calumnies of Faustus the Manichæan. At last what Abraham had expected the Lord to do took place. For Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who had taken her to him as his wife, restored her to her husband on being severely plagued. And far be it from us to believe that she was defiled by lying with another; because it is much more credible that, by these great afflictions, Pharaoh was not permitted to do this.

***20. Of the parting of Lot and Abraham,
which they agreed to without breach of charity***

On Abraham's return out of Egypt to the place he had left, Lot, his brother's son, departed from him into the land of Sodom, without breach of charity. For they had grown rich, and began to have many herdmen of cattle, and when these strove together, they avoided in this way the pugnacious discord of their families. Indeed, as human affairs go, this cause might even have given rise

to some strife between themselves. Consequently these are the words of Abraham to Lot, when taking precaution against this evil, "Let there be no strife between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Behold, is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself from me: if thou wilt go to the left hand, I will go to the right; or if thou wilt go to the right hand, I will go to the left."²⁶⁸ From this, perhaps, has arisen a pacific custom among men, that when there is any partition of earthly things, the greater should make the division, the less the choice.

***21. Of the third promise of God, by
which He assured the land of Canaan
to Abraham and his seed in perpetuity***

Now, when Abraham and Lot had separated, and dwelt apart, owing to the necessity of supporting their families, and not to vile discord, and Abraham was in the land of Canaan, but Lot in Sodom, the Lord said to Abraham in a third oracle, "Lift up thine eyes, and look from the place where thou now art, to the north, and to Africa, and to the east, and to the sea; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: if any one can number the dust of the earth, thy seed shall also be numbered.

²⁶⁸ Gen. xiii. 8, 9.

Arise, and walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give it."²⁶⁹ It does not clearly appear whether in this promise that also is contained by which he is made the father of all nations. For the clause, "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth," may seem to refer to this, being spoken by that figure the Greeks call hyperbole, which indeed is figurative, not literal. But no person of understanding can doubt in what manner the Scripture uses this and other figures. For that figure (that is, way of speaking) is used when what is said is far larger than what is meant by it; for who does not see how incomparably larger the number of the dust must be than that of all men can be from Adam himself down to the end of the world? How much greater, then, must it be than the seed of Abraham, – not only that pertaining to the nation of Israel, but also that which is and shall be according to the imitation of faith in all nations of the whole wide world! For that seed is indeed very small in comparison with the multitude of the wicked, although even those few of themselves make an innumerable multitude, which by a hyperbole is compared to the dust of the earth. Truly that multitude which was promised to Abraham is not innumerable to God, although to man; but to God not even the dust of the earth is so. Further, the promise here made may be understood not only of the nation of Israel, but of the whole seed of Abraham, which may be fitly compared to the dust for

²⁶⁹ Gen. xiii. 14-17.

multitude, because regarding it also there is the promise²⁷⁰ of many children, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. But we have therefore said that this does not clearly appear, because the multitude even of that one nation, which was born according to the flesh of Abraham through his grandson Jacob, has increased so much as to fill almost all parts of the world. Consequently, even it might by hyperbole be compared to the dust for multitude, because even it alone is innumerable by man. Certainly no one questions that only that land is meant which is called Canaan. But that saying, "To thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever," may move some, if by "for ever" they understand "to eternity." But if in this passage they take "for ever" thus, as we firmly hold it means, that the beginning of the world to come is to be ordered from the end of the present, there is still no difficulty, because, although the Israelites are expelled from Jerusalem, they still remain in other cities in the land of Canaan, and shall remain even to the end; and when that whole land is inhabited by Christians, they also are the very seed of Abraham.

22. Of Abraham's overcoming the enemies of Sodom, when he delivered Lot from captivity and was blessed by Melchizedek the priest

Having received this oracle of promise, Abraham migrated,

²⁷⁰ Various reading, "the express promise."

and remained in another place of the same land, that is, beside the oak of Mamre, which was Hebron. Then on the invasion of Sodom, when five kings carried on war against four, and Lot was taken captive with the conquered Sodomites, Abraham delivered him from the enemy, leading with him to battle three hundred and eighteen of his home-born servants, and won the victory for the kings of Sodom, but would take nothing of the spoils when offered by the king for whom he had won them. He was then openly blessed by Melchizedek, who was priest of God Most High, about whom many and great things are written in the epistle which is inscribed to the Hebrews, which most say is by the Apostle Paul, though some deny this. For then first appeared the sacrifice which is now offered to God by Christians in the whole wide world, and that is fulfilled which long after the event was said by the prophet to Christ, who was yet to come in the flesh, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek,"²⁷¹— that is to say, not after the order of Aaron, for that order was to be taken away when the things shone forth which were intimated beforehand by these shadows.

23. Of the word of the Lord to Abraham, by which it was promised to him that his posterity should be multiplied according to the multitude of the stars; on believing which he was declared justified while yet in uncircumcision.

The word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision also. For when God promised him protection and exceeding great reward,

²⁷¹ Ps. cx. 4.

he, being solicitous about posterity, said that a certain Eliezer of Damascus, born in his house, would be his heir. Immediately he was promised an heir, not that house-born servant, but one who was to come forth of Abraham himself; and again a seed innumerable, not as the dust of the earth, but as the stars of heaven, – which rather seems to me a promise of a posterity exalted in celestial felicity. For, so far as multitude is concerned, what are the stars of heaven to the dust of the earth, unless one should say the comparison is like inasmuch as the stars also cannot be numbered? For it is not to be believed that all of them can be seen. For the more keenly one observes them, the more does he see. So that it is to be supposed some remain concealed from the keenest observers, to say nothing of those stars which are said to rise and set in another part of the world most remote from us. Finally, the authority of this book condemns those like Aratus or Eudoxus, or any others who boast that they have found out and written down the complete number of the stars. Here, indeed, is set down that sentence which the apostle quotes in order to commend the grace of God, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness;"²⁷²

²⁷² Rom. iv. 3; Gen. xv. 6.

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