

now, and that thing anon; but (as I said) know all at once, without any succession of times;—and because of the earth invisible and without form, without any succession of times, which succession presents “this thing now, that thing anon”; because where is no form, there is no distinction of things:—it is, then, on account of these two, a primitive formed, and a primitive formless; the one, heaven but the Heaven of heaven, the other earth but the earth invisible and without form; because of these two do I conceive, did Thy Scripture say without mention of days, In the Beginning God created Heaven and Earth. For forthwith it subjoined what earth it spake of; and also, in that the Firmament is recorded to be created the second day, and called Heaven, it conveys to us of which Heaven He before spake, without mention of days.

Chapter XIV

Wondrous depth of Thy words! whose surface, behold! is before us, inviting to little ones; yet are they a wondrous depth. O my God, a wondrous depth! It is awful to look therein; an awfulness of honour, and a trembling of love. The enemies thereof I hate vehemently; oh that Thou wouldest slay them with Thy two-edged sword, that they might no longer be enemies unto it: for so do I love to have them slain unto themselves, that they may live unto Thee. But behold others not faultfinders, but extollers of the book of Genesis; “The Spirit of God,” say they, “Who by His servant Moses wrote these things, would not have those words thus understood; He would not have it understood, as thou sayest, but otherwise, as we say.” Unto Whom Thyself, O Thou God all, being judge, do I thus answer.

Chapter XV

“Will you affirm that to be false, which with a strong voice Truth tells me in my inner ear, concerning the Eternity of the Creator, that His substance is no ways changed by time, nor His will separate from His substance? Wherefore He willeth not one thing now, another anon, but once, and at once, and always, He willeth all things that He willeth; not again and again, nor now this, now that; nor willeth afterwards, what before He willed not, nor willeth not, what before He willed; because such a will is and no mutable thing is eternal: but our God is eternal. Again, what He tells me in my inner ear, the expectation of things to come becomes sight, when they are come, and this same sight becomes memory, when they be past. Now all thought which thus varies is mutable; and is eternal: but our God is eternal.” These things I infer, and put together, and find that my God, the eternal God, hath not upon any new will made any creature, nor doth His knowledge admit of any thing transitory. “What will ye say then, O ye gainsayers? Are these things false?” “No,” they say; “What then? Is it false, that every nature already formed, or matter capable of form, is not, but

from Him Who is supremely good, because He is supremely?" "Neither do we deny this," say they. "What then? do you deny this, that there is a certain sublime creature, with so chaste a love cleaving unto the true and truly eternal God, that although not coeternal with Him, yet is it not detached from Him, nor dissolved into the variety and vicissitude of times, but reposeth in the most true contemplation of Him only?" Because Thou, O God, unto him that loveth Thee so much as Thou commandest, dost show Thyself, and sufficest him; and therefore doth he not decline from Thee, nor toward himself. This is the house of God, not of earthly mould, nor of celestial bulk corporeal but spiritual, and partaker of Thy eternity, because without defection for ever. For Thou hast made it fast for ever and ever, Thou hast given it a law which it shall not pass. Nor yet is it coeternal with Thee, O God, because not without beginning; for it was made.

For although we find no time before it, for wisdom was created before all things; not that Wisdom which is altogether equal and coeternal unto Thee, our God, His Father, and by Whom all things were created, and in Whom, as the Beginning, Thou createdst heaven and earth; but that wisdom which is created, that is, the intellectual nature, which by contemplating the light, is light. For this, though created, is also called wisdom. But what difference there is betwixt the Light which enlighteneth, and which is enlightened, so much is there betwixt the Wisdom that createth, and that created; as betwixt the Righteousness which justifieth, and the righteousness which is made by justification. For we also are called Thy righteousness; for so saith a certain servant of Thine, That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Therefore since a certain created wisdom was created before all things, the rational and intellectual mind of that chaste city of Thine, our mother which is above, and is free and eternal in the heavens (in what heavens, if not in those that praise Thee, the Heaven of heavens? Because this is also the Heaven of heavens for the Lord);—though we find no time before it (because that which hath been created before all things, precedeth also the creature of time), yet is the Eternity of the Creator Himself before it, from Whom, being created, it took the beginning, not indeed of time (for time itself was not yet), but of its creation.

Hence it is so of Thee, our God, as to be altogether other than Thou, and not the Self-same: because though we find time neither before it, nor even in it (it being meet ever to behold Thy face, nor is ever drawn away from it, wherefore it is not varied by any change), yet is there in it a liability to change, whence it would wax dark, and chill, but that by a strong affection cleaving unto Thee, like perpetual noon, it shineth and gloweth from Thee. O house most lightsome and delightsome! I have loved thy beauty, and the place of the habitation of the glory of my Lord, thy builder and possessor. Let my wayfaring sigh after thee, and I say to Him that made thee, let Him take possession of me also in thee, seeing He hath made me likewise. I have gone astray like a lost sheep: yet upon the shoulders of my Shepherd, thy builder, hope I to be brought back to thee.

"What say ye to me, O ye gainsayers that I was speaking unto, who yet believe Moses to have been the holy servant of God, and his books the oracles of the Holy Ghost? Is not this house of God, not coeternal indeed with God, yet after its measure, eternal in the heavens, when you seek for changes of times in vain, because you will not find them? For that, to which it is ever good to cleave fast to God, surpasses all extension, and all revolving periods of time." "It is," say they.

“What then of all that which my heart loudly uttered unto my God, when inwardly it heard the voice of His praise, what part thereof do you affirm to be false? Is it that the matter was without form, in which because there was no form, there was no order? But where no order was, there could be no vicissitude of times: and yet this almost nothing,’ inasmuch as it was not altogether nothing, was from Him certainly, from Whom is whatsoever is, in what degree soever it is.” “This also,” say they, “do we not deny.”

Chapter XVI

With these I now parley a little in Thy presence, O my God, who grant all these things to be true, which Thy Truth whispers unto my soul. For those who deny these things, let them bark and deafen themselves as much as they please; I will essay to persuade them to quiet, and to open in them a way for Thy word. But if they refuse, and repel me; I beseech, O my God, be not Thou silent to me. Speak Thou truly in my heart; for only Thou so speakest: and I will let them alone blowing upon the dust without, and raising it up into their own eyes: and myself will enter my chamber, and sing there a song of loves unto Thee; groaning with groanings unutterable, in my wayfaring, and remembering Jerusalem, with heart lifted up towards it, Jerusalem my country, Jerusalem my mother, and Thyself that rulest over it, the Enlightener, Father, Guardian, Husband, the pure and strong delight, and solid joy, and all good things unspeakable, yea all at once, because the One Sovereign and true Good. Nor will I be turned away, until Thou gather all that I am, from this dispersed and disordered estate, into the peace of that our most dear mother, where the first-fruits of my spirit be already (whence I am ascertained of these things), and Thou conform and confirm it for ever, O my God, my Mercy. But those who do not affirm all these truths to be false, who honour Thy holy Scripture, set forth by holy Moses, placing it, as we, on the summit of authority to be followed, and do yet contradict me in some thing, I answer thus; By Thyself judge, O our God, between my Confessions and these men's contradictions.

Chapter XVII

For they say, “Though these things be true, yet did not Moses intend those two, when, by revelation of the Spirit, he said, In the beginning God created heaven and earth. He did not under the name of heaven, signify that spiritual or intellectual creature which always beholds the face of God; nor under the name of earth, that formless matter.” “What then?” “That man of God,” say they, “meant as we say, this declared he by those words.” “What?” “By the name of heaven and earth would he first signify,” say they, “universally and compendiously, all this visible world; so as afterwards by the enumeration of the several days, to arrange in detail, and, as it were, piece by

piece, all those things, which it pleased the Holy Ghost thus to enounce. For such were that rude and carnal people to which he spake, that he thought them fit to be entrusted with the knowledge of such works of God only as were visible.” They agree, however, that under the words earth invisible and without form, and that darksome deep (out of which it is subsequently shown, that all these visible things which we all know, were made and arranged during those “days”) may, not incongruously, be understood of this formless first matter.

What now if another should say that “this same formlessness and confusedness of matter, was for this reason first conveyed under the name of heaven and earth, because out of it was this visible world with all those natures which most manifestly appear in it, which is oftentimes called by the name of heaven and earth, created and perfected?” What again if another say that “invisible and visible nature is not indeed inappropriately called heaven and earth; and so, that the universal creation, which God made in His Wisdom, that is, in the Beginning, was comprehended under those two words? Notwithstanding, since all things be made not of the substance of God, but out of nothing (because they are not the same that God is, and there is a mutable nature in them all, whether they abide, as doth the eternal house of God, or be changed, as the soul and body of man are): therefore the common matter of all things visible and invisible (as yet unformed though capable of form), out of which was to be created both heaven and earth (i. the invisible and visible creature when formed), was entitled by the same names given to the earth invisible and without form and the darkness upon the deep, but with this distinction, that by the earth invisible and without form is understood corporeal matter, antecedent to its being qualified by any form; and by the darkness upon the deep, spiritual matter, before it underwent any restraint of its unlimited fluidness, or received any light from Wisdom?”

It yet remains for a man to say, if he will, that “the already perfected and formed natures, visible and invisible, are not signified under the name of heaven and earth, when we read, In the beginning God made heaven and earth, but that the yet unformed commencement of things, the stuff apt to receive form and making, was called by these names, because therein were confusedly contained, not as yet distinguished by their qualities and forms, all those things which being now digested into order, are called Heaven and Earth, the one being the spiritual, the other the corporeal, creation.”

Chapter XVIII

All which things being heard and well considered, I will not strive about words: for that is profitable to nothing, but the subversion of the hearers. But the law is good to edify, if a man use it lawfully: for that the end of it is charity, out of a pure heart and good conscience, and faith unfeigned. And well did our Master know, upon which two commandments He hung all the Law and the Prophets. And what doth it prejudice me, O my God, Thou light of my eyes in secret, zealously confessing these things, since divers things may be understood under these words which

yet are all true,—what, I say, doth it prejudice me, if I think otherwise than another thinketh the writer thought? All we readers verily strive to trace out and to understand his meaning whom we read; and seeing we believe him to speak truly, we dare not imagine him to have said any thing, which ourselves either know or think to be false. While every man endeavours then to understand in the Holy Scriptures, the same as the writer understood, what hurt is it, if a man understand what Thou, the light of all true-speaking minds, dost show him to be true, although he whom he reads, understood not this, seeing he also understood a Truth, though not this truth?

Chapter XIX

For true it is, O Lord, that Thou madest heaven and earth; and it is true too, that the Beginning is Thy Wisdom, in Which Thou createst all: and true again, that this visible world hath for its greater part the heaven and the earth, which briefly comprise all made and created natures. And true too, that whatsoever is mutable, gives us to understand a certain want of form, whereby it receiveth a form, or is changed, or turned. It is true, that that is subject to no times, which so cleaveth to the unchangeable Form, as though subject to change, never to be changed. It is true, that that formlessness which is almost nothing, cannot be subject to the alteration of times. It is true, that that whereof a thing is made, may by a certain mode of speech, be called by the name of the thing made of it; whence that formlessness, whereof heaven and earth were made, might be called heaven and earth. It is true, that of things having form, there is not any nearer to having no form, than the earth and the deep. It is true, that not only every created and formed thing, but whatsoever is capable of being created and formed, Thou madest, of Whom are all things. It is true, that whatsoever is formed out of that which had no form, was unformed before it was formed.

Chapter XX

Out of these truths, of which they doubt not whose inward eye Thou hast enabled to see such things, and who unshakenly believe Thy servant Moses to have spoken in the Spirit of truth;—of all these then, he taketh one, who saith, In the Beginning God made the heaven and the earth; that is, “in His Word coeternal with Himself, God made the intelligible and the sensible, or the spiritual and the corporeal creature.” He another, that saith, In the Beginning God made heaven and earth; that is, “in His Word coeternal with Himself, did God make the universal bulk of this corporeal world, together with all those apparent and known creatures, which it containeth.” He another, that saith, In the Beginning God made heaven and earth; that is, “in His Word coeternal with Himself, did God make the formless matter of creatures spiritual and corporeal.” He another, that saith, In the Beginning God created heaven and earth; that is, “in His Word coeternal with Himself, did God

create the formless matter of the creature corporeal, wherein heaven and earth lay as yet confused, which, being now distinguished and formed, we at this day see in the bulk of this world.” He another, who saith, In the Beginning God made heaven and earth; that is, “in the very beginning of creating and working, did God make that formless matter, confusedly containing in itself both heaven and earth; out of which, being formed, do they now stand out, and are apparent, with all that is in them.”

Chapter XXI

And with regard to the understanding of the words following, out of all those truths, he chooses one to himself, who saith, But the earth was invisible, and without form, and darkness was upon the deep; that is, “that corporeal thing that God made, was as yet a formless matter of corporeal things, without order, without light. “ Another he who says, The earth was invisible and without form, and darkness was upon the deep; that is, “this all, which is called heaven and earth, was still a formless and darksome matter, of which the corporeal heaven and the corporeal earth were to be made, with all things in them, which are known to our corporeal senses.” Another he who says, The earth was invisible and without form, and darkness was upon the deep; that is, “this all, which is called heaven and earth, was still a formless and a darksome matter; out of which was to be made, both that intelligible heaven, elsewhere called the Heaven of heavens, and the earth, that is, the whole corporeal nature, under which name is comprised this corporeal heaven also; in a word, out of which every visible and invisible creature was to be created.” Another he who says, The earth was invisible and without form, and darkness was upon the deep, “the Scripture did not call that formlessness by the name of heaven and earth; but that formlessness, saith he, already was, which he called the earth invisible without form, and darkness upon the deep; of which he had before said, that God had made heaven and earth, namely, the spiritual and corporeal creature.” Another he who says, The earth was invisible and without form, and darkness was upon the deep; that is, “there already was a certain formless matter, of which the Scripture said before, that God made heaven and earth; namely, the whole corporeal bulk of the world, divided into two great parts, upper and lower, with all the common and known creatures in them.”

Chapter XXII

For should any attempt to dispute against these two last opinions, thus, “If you will not allow, that this formlessness of matter seems to be called by the name of heaven and earth; Ergo, there was something which God had not made, out of which to make heaven and earth; for neither hath Scripture told us, that God made this matter, unless we understand it to be signified by the name of heaven and earth, or of earth alone, when it is said, In the Beginning God made the heaven and

earth; that so in what follows, and the earth was invisible and without form (although it pleased Him so to call the formless matter), we are to understand no other matter, but that which God made, whereof is written above, God made heaven and earth.” The maintainers of either of those two latter opinions will, upon hearing this, return for answer, “we do not deny this formless matter to be indeed created by God, that God of Whom are all things, very good; for as we affirm that to be a greater good, which is created and formed, so we confess that to be a lesser good which is made capable of creation and form, yet still good. We say however that Scripture hath not set down, that God made this formlessness, as also it hath not many others; as the Cherubim, and Seraphim, and those which the Apostle distinctly speaks of, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Powers. All which that God made, is most apparent. Or if in that which is said, He made heaven and earth, all things be comprehended, what shall we say of the waters, upon which the Spirit of God moved? For if they be comprised in this word earth; how then can formless matter be meant in that name of earth, when we see the waters so beautiful? Or if it be so taken; why then is it written, that out of the same formlessness, the firmament was made, and called heaven; and that the waters were made, is not written? For the waters remain not formless and invisible, seeing we behold them flowing in so comely a manner. But if they then received that beauty, when God said, Let the waters under the firmament be gathered together, that so the gathering together be itself the forming of them; what will be said as to those waters above the firmament? Seeing neither if formless would they have been worthy of so honourable a seat, nor is it written, by what word they were formed. If then Genesis is silent as to God's making of any thing, which yet that God did make neither sound faith nor well-grounded understanding doubteth, nor again will any sober teaching dare to affirm these waters to be coeternal with God, on the ground that we find them to be mentioned in the hook of Genesis, but when they were created, we do not find; why (seeing truth teaches us) should we not understand that formless matter (which this Scripture calls the earth invisible and without form, and darksome deep) to have been created of God out of nothing, and therefore not to be coeternal to Him; notwithstanding this history hath omitted to show when it was created?”

Chapter XXIII

These things then being heard and perceived, according to the weakness of my capacity (which I confess unto Thee, O Lord, that knowest it), two sorts of disagreements I see may arise, when a thing is in words related by true reporters; one, concerning the truth of the things, the other, concerning the meaning of the relater. For we enquire one way about the making of the creature, what is true; another way, what Moses, that excellent minister of Thy Faith, would have his reader and hearer understand by those words. For the first sort, away with all those who imagine themselves to know as a truth, what is false; and for this other, away with all them too, which imagine Moses to have written things that be false. But let me be united in Thee, O Lord, with those and delight

myself in Thee, with them that feed on Thy truth, in the largeness of charity, and let us approach together unto the words of Thy book, and seek in them for Thy meaning, through the meaning of Thy servant, by whose pen Thou hast dispensed them.

Chapter XXIV

But which of us shall, among those so many truths, which occur to enquirers in those words, as they are differently understood, so discover that one meaning, as to affirm, “this Moses thought,” and “this would he have understood in that history”; with the same confidence as he would, “this is true,” whether Moses thought this or that? For behold, O my God, I Thy servant, who have in this book vowed a sacrifice of confession unto Thee, and pray, that by Thy mercy I may pay my vows unto Thee, can I, with the same confidence wherewith I affirm, that in Thy incommutable world Thou createdst all things visible and invisible, affirm also, that Moses meant no other than this, when he wrote, In the Beginning God made heaven and earth? No. Because I see not in his mind, that he thought of this when he wrote these things, as I do see it in Thy truth to be certain. For he might have his thoughts upon God's commencement of creating, when he said In the beginning; and by heaven and earth, in this place he might intend no formed and perfected nature whether spiritual or corporeal, but both of them inchoate and as yet formless. For I perceive, that whichsoever of the two had been said, it might have been truly said; but which of the two he thought of in these words, I do not so perceive. Although, whether it were either of these, or any sense beside (that I have not here mentioned), which this so great man saw in his mind, when he uttered these words, I doubt not but that he saw it truly, and expressed it aptly.

Chapter XXV

Let no man harass me then, by saying, Moses thought not as you say, but as I say: for if he should ask me, “How know you that Moses thought that which you infer out of his words?” I ought to take it in good part, and would answer perchance as I have above, or something more at large, if he were unyielding. But when he saith, “Moses meant not what you say, but what I say,” yet denieth not that what each of us say, may both be true, O my God, life of the poor, in Whose bosom is no contradiction, pour down a softening dew into my heart, that I may patiently bear with such as say this to me, not because they have a divine Spirit, and have seen in the heart of Thy servant what they speak, but because they be proud; not knowing Moses' opinion, but loving their own, not because it is truth, but because it is theirs. Otherwise they would equally love another true opinion, as I love what they say, when they say true: not because it is theirs, but because it is true; and on that very ground not theirs because it is true. But if they therefore love it, because it is true,

then is it both theirs, and mine; as being in common to all lovers of truth. But whereas they contend that Moses did not mean what I say, but what they say, this I like not, love not: for though it were so, yet that their rashness belongs not to knowledge, but to overboldness, and not insight but vanity was its parent. And therefore, O Lord, are Thy judgements terrible; seeing Thy truth is neither mine, nor his, nor another's; but belonging to us all, whom Thou callest publicly to partake of it, warning us terribly, not to account it private to ourselves, lest we be deprived of it. For whosoever challenges that as proper to himself, which Thou propoundest to all to enjoy, and would have that his own which belongs to all, is driven from what is in common to his own; that is, from truth, to a lie. For he that speaketh a lie, speaketh it of his own.

Hearken, O God, Thou best judge; Truth Itself, hearken to what I shall say to this gainsayer, hearken, for before Thee do I speak, and before my brethren, who employ Thy law lawfully, to the end of charity: hearken and behold, if it please Thee, what I shall say to him. For this brotherly and peaceful word do I return unto Him: "If we both see that to be true that Thou sayest, and both see that to be true that I say, where, I pray Thee, do we see it? Neither I in thee, nor thou in me; but both in the unchangeable Truth itself, which is above our souls." Seeing then we strive not about the very light of the Lord God, why strive we about the thoughts of our neighbour which we cannot so see, as the unchangeable Truth is seen: for that, if Moses himself had appeared to us and said, "This I meant"; neither so should we see it, but should believe it. Let us not then be puffed up for one against another, above that which is written: let us love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind: and our neighbour as ourself. With a view to which two precepts of charity, unless we believe that Moses meant, whatsoever in those books he did mean, we shall make God a liar, imagining otherwise of our fellow servant's mind, than he hath taught us. Behold now, how foolish it is, in such abundance of most true meanings, as may be extracted out of those words, rashly to affirm, which of them Moses principally meant; and with pernicious contentions to offend charity itself, for whose sake he spake every thing, whose words we go about to expound.

Chapter XXVI

And yet I, O my God, Thou lifter up of my humility, and rest of my labour, Who hearest my confessions, and forgivest my sins: seeing Thou commandest me to love my neighbour as myself, I cannot believe that Thou gavest a less gift unto Moses Thy faithful servant, than I would wish or desire Thee to have given me, had I been born in the time he was, and hadst Thou set me in that office, that by the service of my heart and tongue those books might be dispensed, which for so long after were to profit all nations, and through the whole world from such an eminence of authority, were to surmount all sayings of false and proud teachings. I should have desired verily, had I then been Moses (for we all come from the same lump, and what is man, saving that Thou art mindful

of him?), I would then, had I been then what he was, and been enjoined by Thee to write the book of Genesis, have desired such a power of expression and such a style to be given me, that neither they who cannot yet understand how God created, might reject the sayings, as beyond their capacity; and they who had attained thereto, might find what true opinion soever they had by thought arrived at, not passed over in those few words of that Thy servant: and should another man by the light of truth have discovered another, neither should that fail of being discoverable in those same words.

Chapter XXVII

For as a fountain within a narrow compass, is more plentiful, and supplies a tide for more streams over larger spaces, than any one of those streams, which, after a wide interval, is derived from the same fountain; so the relation of that dispenser of Thine, which was to benefit many who were to discourse thereon, does out of a narrow scantling of language, overflow into streams of clearest truth, whence every man may draw out for himself such truth as he can upon these subjects, one, one truth, another, another, by larger circumlocutions of discourse. For some, when they read, or hear these words, conceive that God like a man or some mass endued with unbounded power, by some new and sudden resolution, did, exterior to itself, as it were at a certain distance, create heaven and earth, two great bodies above and below, wherein all things were to be contained. And when they hear, God said, Let it be made, and it was made; they conceive of words begun and ended, sounding in time, and passing away; after whose departure, that came into being, which was commanded so to do; and whatever of the like sort, men's acquaintance with the material world would suggest. In whom, being yet little ones and carnal, while their weakness is by this humble kind of speech, carried on, as in a mother's bosom, their faith is wholesomely built up, whereby they hold assured, that God made all natures, which in admirable variety their eye beholdeth around. Which words, if any despising, as too simple, with a proud weakness, shall stretch himself beyond the guardian nest; he will, alas, fall miserably. Have pity, O Lord God, lest they who go by the way trample on the unfledged bird, and send Thine angel to replace it into the nest, that it may live, till it can fly.

Chapter XXVIII

But others, unto whom these words are no longer a nest, but deep shady fruit-bowers, see the fruits concealed therein, fly joyously around, and with cheerful notes seek out, and pluck them. For reading or hearing these words, they see that all times past and to come, are surpassed by Thy eternal and stable abiding; and yet that there is no creature formed in time, not of Thy making. Whose will, because it is the same that Thou art, Thou madest all things, not by any change of will,

nor by a will, which before was not, and that these things were not out of Thyself, in Thine own likeness, which is the form of all things; but out of nothing, a formless unlikeness, which should be formed by Thy likeness (recurring to Thy Unity, according to their appointed capacity, so far as is given to each thing in his kind), and might all be made very good; whether they abide around Thee, or being in gradation removed in time and place, made or undergo the beautiful variations of the Universe. These things they see, and rejoice, in the little degree they here may, in the light of Thy truth.

Another bends his mind on that which is said, In the Beginning God made heaven and earth; and beholdeth therein Wisdom, the Beginning because It also speaketh unto us. Another likewise bends his mind on the same words, and by Beginning understands the commencement of things created; In the beginning He made, as if it were said, He at first made. And among them that understand In the Beginning to mean, "In Thy Wisdom Thou createdst heaven and earth," one believes the matter out of which the heaven and earth were to be created, to be there called heaven and earth; another, natures already formed and distinguished; another, one formed nature, and that a spiritual, under the name Heaven, the other formless, a corporeal matter, under the name Earth. They again who by the names heaven and earth, understand matter as yet formless, out of which heaven and earth were to be formed, neither do they understand it in one way; but the one, that matter out of which both the intelligible and the sensible creature were to be perfected; another, that only, out of which this sensible corporeal mass was to be made, containing in its vast bosom these visible and ordinary natures. Neither do they, who believe the creatures already ordered and arranged, to be in this place called heaven and earth, understand the same; but the one, both the invisible and visible, the other, the visible only, in which we behold this lightsome heaven, and darksome earth, with the things in them contained.

Chapter XXIX

But he that no otherwise understands In the Beginning He made, than if it were said, At first He made, can only truly understand heaven and earth of the matter of heaven and earth, that is, of the universal intelligible and corporeal creation. For if he would understand thereby the universe, as already formed, it may be rightly demanded of him, "If God made this first, what made He afterwards?" and after the universe, he will find nothing; whereupon must he against his will hear another question; "How did God make this first, if nothing after?" But when he says, God made matter first formless, then formed, there is no absurdity, if he be but qualified to discern, what precedes by eternity, what by time, what by choice, and what in original. By eternity, as God is before all things; by time, as the flower before the fruit; by choice, as the fruit before the flower; by original, as the sound before the tune. Of these four, the first and last mentioned, are with extreme difficulty understood, the two middle, easily. For a rare and too lofty a vision is it, to behold Thy

Eternity, O Lord, unchangeably making things changeable; and thereby before them. And who, again, is of so sharpsighted understanding, as to be able without great pains to discern, how the sound is therefore before the tune; because a tune is a formed sound; and a thing not formed, may exist; whereas that which existeth not, cannot be formed. Thus is the matter before the thing made; not because it maketh it, seeing itself is rather made; nor is it before by interval of time; for we do not first in time utter formless sounds without singing, and subsequently adapt or fashion them into the form of a chant, as wood or silver, whereof a chest or vessel is fashioned. For such materials do by time also precede the forms of the things made of them, but in singing it is not so; for when it is sung, its sound is heard; for there is not first a formless sound, which is afterwards formed into a chant. For each sound, so soon as made, passeth away, nor canst thou find ought to recall and by art to compose. So then the chant is concentrated in its sound, which sound of his is his matter. And this indeed is formed, that it may be a tune; and therefore (as I said) the matter of the sound is before the form of the tune; not before, through any power it hath to make it a tune; for a sound is no way the workmaster of the tune; but is something corporeal, subjected to the soul which singeth, whereof to make a tune. Nor is it first in time; for it is given forth together with the tune; nor first in choice, for a sound is not better than a tune, a tune being not only a sound, but a beautiful sound. But it is first in original, because a tune receives not form to become a sound, but a sound receives a form to become a tune. By this example, let him that is able, understand how the matter of things was first made, and called heaven and earth, because heaven and earth were made out of it. Yet was it not made first in time; because the forms of things give rise to time; but that was without form, but now is, in time, an object of sense together with its form. And yet nothing can be related of that matter, but as though prior in time, whereas in value it is last (because things formed are superior to things without form) and is preceded by the Eternity of the Creator: that so there might be out of nothing, whereof somewhat might be created.

Chapter XXX

In this diversity of the true opinions, let Truth herself produce concord. And our God have mercy upon us, that we may use the law lawfully, the end of the commandment, pure charity. By this if man demands of me, “which of these was the meaning of Thy servant Moses”; this were not the language of my Confessions, should I not confess unto Thee, “I know not”; and yet I know that those senses are true, those carnal ones excepted, of which I have spoken what seemed necessary. And even those hopeful little ones who so think, have this benefit, that the words of Thy Book affright them not, delivering high things lowly, and with few words a copious meaning. And all we who, I confess, see and express the truth delivered in those words, let us love one another, and jointly love Thee our God, the fountain of truth, if we are athirst for it, and not for vanities; yea, let us so honour this Thy servant, the dispenser of this Scripture, full of Thy Spirit, as to believe

that, when by Thy revelation he wrote these things, he intended that, which among them chiefly excels both for light of truth, and fruitfulness of profit.

Chapter XXXI

So when one says, “Moses meant as I do”; and another, “Nay, but as I do,” I suppose that I speak more reverently, “Why not rather as both, if both be true?” And if there be a third, or a fourth, yea if any other seeth any other truth in those words, why may not he be believed to have seen all these, through whom the One God hath tempered the holy Scriptures to the senses of many, who should see therein things true but divers? For I certainly (and fearlessly I speak it from my heart), that were I to indite any thing to have supreme authority, I should prefer so to write, that whatever truth any could apprehend on those matters, might he conveyed in my words, rather than set down my own meaning so clearly as to exclude the rest, which not being false, could not offend me. I will not therefore, O my God, be so rash, as not to believe, that Thou vouchsafedst as much to that great man. He without doubt, when he wrote those words, perceived and thought on what truth soever we have been able to find, yea and whatsoever we have not been able, nor yet are, but which may be found in them.

Chapter XXXII

Lastly, O Lord, who art God and not flesh and blood, if man did see less, could any thing be concealed from Thy good Spirit (who shall lead me into the land of uprightness), which Thou Thyself by those words wert about to reveal to readers in times to come, though he through whom they were spoken, perhaps among many true meanings, thought on some one? which if so it be, let that which he thought on be of all the highest. But to us, O Lord, do Thou, either reveal that same, or any other true one which Thou pleasest; that so, whether Thou discoverest the same to us, as to that Thy servant, or some other by occasion of those words, yet Thou mayest feed us, not error deceive us. Behold, O Lord my God, how much we have written upon a few words, how much I beseech Thee! What strength of ours, yea what ages would suffice for all Thy books in this manner? Permit me then in these more briefly to confess unto Thee, and to choose some one true, certain, and good sense that Thou shalt inspire me, although many should occur, where many may occur; this being the law my confession, that if I should say that which Thy minister intended, that is right and best; for this should I endeavour, which if I should not attain, yet I should say that, which Thy Truth willed by his words to tell me, which revealed also unto him, what It willed.

Book XIII

Chapter I

I call upon Thee, O my God, my mercy, Who createdst me, and forgottest not me, forgetting Thee. I call Thee into my soul which, by the longing Thyself inspirest into her, Thou preparest for Thee. Forsake me not now calling upon Thee, whom Thou preventedst before I called, and urgedst me with much variety of repeated calls, that I would hear Thee from afar, and be converted, and call upon Thee, that calledst after me; for Thou, Lord, blottedst out all my evil deservings, so as not to repay into my hands, wherewith I fell from Thee; and Thou hast prevented all my well deservings, so as to repay the work of Thy hands wherewith Thou madest me; because before I was, Thou wert; nor was I any thing, to which Thou mightest grant to be; and yet behold, I am, out of Thy goodness, preventing all this which Thou hast made me, and whereof Thou hast made me. For neither hadst Thou need of me, nor am I any such good, as to be helpful unto Thee, my Lord and God; not in serving Thee, as though Thou wouldest tire in working; or lest Thy power might be less, if lacking my service: nor cultivating Thy service, as a land, that must remain uncultivated, unless I cultivated Thee: but serving and worshipping Thee, that I might receive a well-being from Thee, from whom it comes, that I have a being capable of well-being.

Chapter II

For of the fulness of Thy goodness, doth Thy creature subsist, that so a good, which could no ways profit Thee, nor was of Thee (lest so it should be equal to Thee), might yet be since it could be made of Thee. For what did heaven and earth, which Thou madest in the Beginning, deserve of Thee? Let those spiritual and corporeal natures which Thou madest in Thy Wisdom, say wherein they deserved of Thee, to depend thereon (even in that their several inchoate and formless state, whether spiritual or corporeal, ready to fall away into an immoderate liberty and far-distant unlikeliness unto Thee;—the spiritual, though without form, superior to the corporeal though formed, and the corporeal though without form, better than were it altogether nothing), and so to depend upon Thy Word, as formless, unless by the same Word they were brought back to Thy Unity, indued with form and from Thee the One Sovereign Good were made all very good. How did they deserve of Thee, to be even without form, since they had not been even this, but from Thee?

How did corporeal matter deserve of Thee, to be even invisible and without form? seeing it were not even this, but that Thou madest it, and therefore because it was not, could not deserve of Thee to be made. Or how could the inchoate spiritual creature deserve of Thee, even to ebb and

flow darksomenly like the deep,—unlike Thee, unless it had been by the same Word turned to that, by Whom it was created, and by Him so enlightened, become light; though not equally, yet conformably to that Form which is equal unto Thee? For as in a body, to be, is not one with being beautiful, else could it not be deformed; so likewise to a created spirit to live, is not one with living wisely; else should it be wise unchangeably. But good it is for it always to hold fast to Thee; lest what light it hath obtained by turning to Thee, it lose by turning from Thee, and relapse into life resembling the darksome deep. For we ourselves also, who as to the soul are a spiritual creature, turned away from Thee our light, were in that life sometimes darkness; and still labour amidst the relics of our darkness, until in Thy Only One we become Thy righteousness, like the mountains of God. For we have been Thy judgments, which are like the great deep.

Chapter III

That which Thou saidst in the beginning of the creation, Let there be light, and there was light; I do, not unsuitably, understand of the spiritual creature: because there was already a sort of life, which Thou mightest illuminate. But as it had no claim on Thee for a life, which could be enlightened, so neither now that it was, had it any, to be enlightened. For neither could its formless estate be pleasing unto Thee, unless it became light, and that not by existing simply, but by beholding the illuminating light, and cleaving to it; so that, that it lived, and lived happily, it owes to nothing but Thy grace, being turned by a better change unto That which cannot be changed into worse or better; which Thou alone art, because Thou alone simply art; unto Thee it being not one thing to live, another to live blessedly, seeing Thyself art Thine own Blessedness.

Chapter IV

What then could he wanting unto Thy good, which Thou Thyself art, although these things had either never been, or remained without form; which thou madest, not out of any want, but out of the fulness of Thy goodness, restraining them and converting them to form, not as though Thy joy were fulfilled by them? For to Thee being perfect, is their imperfection displeasing, and hence were they perfected by Thee, and please Thee; not as wert Thou imperfect, and by their perfecting wert also to be perfected. For Thy good Spirit indeed was borne over the waters, not borne up by them, as if He rested upon them. For those, on whom Thy good Spirit is said to rest, He causes to rest in Himself. But Thy incorruptible and unchangeable will, in itself all-sufficient for itself, was borne upon that life which Thou hadst created; to which, living is not one with happy living, seeing it liveth also, ebbing and flowing in its own darkness: for which it remaineth to be converted unto

Him, by Whom it was made, and to live more and more by the fountain of life, and in His light to see light, and to be perfected, and enlightened, and beautified.

Chapter V

Lo, now the Trinity appears unto me in a glass darkly, which is Thou my God, because Thou, O Father, in Him Who is the Beginning of our wisdom, Which is Thy Wisdom, born of Thyself, equal unto Thee and coeternal, that is, in Thy Son, createdst heaven and earth. Much now have we said of the Heaven of heavens, and of the earth invisible and without form, and of the darksome deep, in reference to the wandering instability of its spiritual deformity, unless it had been converted unto Him, from Whom it had its then degree of life, and by His enlightening became a beauteous life, and the heaven of that heaven, which was afterwards set between water and water. And under the name of God, I now held the Father, who made these things, and under the name of Beginning, the Son, in whom He made these things; and believing, as I did, my God as the Trinity, I searched further in His holy words, and to, Thy Spirit moved upon the waters. Behold the Trinity, my God, Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, Creator of all creation.

Chapter VI

But what was the cause, O true-speaking Light?—unto Thee lift I up my heart, let it not teach me vanities, dispel its darkness; and tell me, I beseech Thee, by our mother charity, tell me the reason, I beseech Thee, why after the mention of heaven, and of the earth invisible and without form, and darkness upon the deep, Thy Scripture should then at length mention Thy Spirit? Was it because it was meet that the knowledge of Him should be conveyed, as being “borne above”; and this could not be said, unless that were first mentioned, over which Thy Spirit may be understood to have been borne. For neither was He borne above the Father, nor the Son, nor could He rightly be said to be borne above, if He were borne over nothing. First then was that to be spoken of, over which He might be borne; and then He, whom it was meet not otherwise to be spoken of than as being borne. But wherefore was it not meet that the knowledge of Him should be conveyed otherwise, than as being borne above?

Chapter VII

Hence let him that is able, follow with his understanding Thy Apostle, where he thus speaks, Because Thy love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us: and where concerning spiritual gifts, he teacheth and showeth unto us a more excellent way of charity; and where he bows his knee unto Thee for us, that we may know the supereminent knowledge of the love of Christ. And therefore from the beginning, was He borne supereminent above the waters. To whom shall I speak this? how speak of the weight of evil desires, downwards to the steep abyss; and how charity raises up again by Thy Spirit which was borne above the waters? to whom shall I speak it? how speak it? For it is not in space that we are merged and emerge. What can be more, and yet what less like? They be affections, they be loves; the uncleanness of our spirit flowing away downwards with the love of cares, and the holiness of Thine raising us upward by love of unanxious repose; that we may lift our hearts unto Thee, where Thy Spirit is borne above the waters; and come to that supereminent repose, when our soul shall have passed through the waters which yield no support.

Chapter VIII

Angels fell away, man's soul fell away, and thereby pointed the abyss in that dark depth, ready for the whole spiritual creation, hadst not Thou said from the beginning, Let there be light, and there had been light, and every obedient intelligence of Thy heavenly City had cleaved to Thee, and rested in Thy Spirit, Which is borne unchangeably over every thing changeable. Otherwise, had even the heaven of heavens been in itself a darksome deep; but now it is light in the Lord. For even in that miserable restlessness of the spirits, who fell away and discovered their own darkness, when bared of the clothing of Thy light, dost Thou sufficiently reveal how noble Thou madest the reasonable creature; to which nothing will suffice to yield a happy rest, less than Thee; and so not even herself. For Thou, O our God, shalt lighten our darkness: from Thee riseth our garment of light; and then shall our darkness be as the noon day. Give Thyself unto me, O my God, restore Thyself unto me: behold I love, and if it be too little, I would love more strongly. I cannot measure so as to know, how much love there yet lacketh to me, ere my life may run into Thy embracements, nor turn away, until it be hidden in the hidden place of Thy Presence. This only I know, that woe is me except in Thee: not only without but within myself also; and all abundance, which is not my God, is emptiness to me.

Chapter IX

But was not either the Father, or the Son, borne above the waters? if this means, in space, like a body, then neither was the Holy Spirit; but if the unchangeable supereminence of Divinity above

all things changeable, then were both Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost borne upon the waters. Why then is this said of Thy Spirit only, why is it said only of Him? As if He had been in place, Who is not in place, of Whom only it is written, that He is Thy gift? In Thy Gift we rest; there we enjoy Thee. Our rest is our place. Love lifts us up thither, and Thy good Spirit lifts up our lowliness from the gates of death. In Thy good pleasure is our peace. The body by its own weight strives towards its own place. Weight makes not downward only, but to his own place. Fire tends upward, a stone downward. They are urged by their own weight, they seek their own places. Oil poured below water, is raised above the water; water poured upon oil, sinks below the oil. They are urged by their own weights to seek their own places. When out of their order, they are restless; restored to order, they are at rest. My weight, is my love; thereby am I borne, whithersoever I am borne. We are inflamed, by Thy Gift we are kindled; and are carried upwards; we glow inwardly, and go forwards. We ascend Thy ways that be in our heart, and sing a song of degrees; we glow inwardly with Thy fire, with Thy good fire, and we go; because we go upwards to the peace of Jerusalem: for gladdened was I in those who said unto me, We will go up to the house of the Lord. There hath Thy good pleasure placed us, that we may desire nothing else, but to abide there for ever.

Chapter X

Blessed creature, which being itself other than Thou, has known no other condition, than that, so soon as it was made, it was, without any interval, by Thy Gift, Which is borne above every thing changeable, borne aloft by that calling whereby Thou saidst, Let there be light, and there was light. Whereas in us this took place at different times, in that we were darkness, and are made light: but of that is only said, what it would have been, had it not been enlightened. And, this is so spoken, as if it had been unsettled and darksome before; that so the cause whereby it was made otherwise, might appear, namely, that being turned to the Light unfailing it became light. Whoso can, let him understand this; let him ask of Thee. Why should he trouble me, as if I could enlighten any man that cometh into this world?

Chapter XI

Which of us comprehendeth the Almighty Trinity? and yet which speaks not of It, if indeed it be It? Rare is the soul, which while it speaks of It, knows what it speaks of. And they contend and strive, yet, without peace, no man sees that vision. I would that men would consider these three, that are in themselves. These three be indeed far other than the Trinity: I do but tell, where they may practise themselves, and there prove and feel how far they be. Now the three I spake of are, To Be, to Know, and to Will. For I Am, and Know, and Will: I Am Knowing and Willing: and I

Know myself to Be, and to Will: and I Will to Be, and to Know. In these three then, let him discern that can, how inseparable a life there is, yea one life, mind, and one essence, yea lastly how inseparable a distinction there is, and yet a distinction. Surely a man hath it before him; let him look into himself, and see, and tell me. But when he discovers and can say any thing of these, let him not therefore think that he has found that which is above these Unchangeable, which Is unchangeably, and Knows unchangeably, and Wills unchangeably; and whether because of these three, there is in God also a Trinity, or whether all three be in Each, so that the three belong to Each; or whether both ways at once, wondrously, simply and yet manifoldly, Itself a bound unto Itself within Itself, yet unbounded; whereby It is, and is Known unto Itself and sufficeth to itself, unchangeably the Self-same, by the abundant greatness of its Unity,—who can readily conceive this? who could any ways express it? who would, any way, pronounce thereon rashly?

Chapter XII

Proceed in thy confession, say to the Lord thy God, O my faith, Holy, Holy, Holy, O Lord my God, in Thy Name have we been baptised, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; in Thy Name do we baptise, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, because among us also, in His Christ did God make heaven and earth, namely, the spiritual and carnal people of His Church. Yea and our earth, before it received the form of doctrine, was invisible and without form; and we were covered with the darkness of ignorance. For Thou chastenedst man for iniquity, and Thy judgments were like the great deep unto him. But because Thy Spirit was borne above the waters, Thy mercy forsook not our misery, and Thou saidst, Let there be light, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent ye, let there be light. And because our soul was troubled within us, we remembered Thee, O Lord, from the land of Jordan, and that mountain equal unto Thyself, but little for our sakes: and our darkness displeased us, we turned unto Thee and there was light. And, behold, we were sometimes darkness, but now light in the Lord.

Chapter XIII

But as yet by faith and not by sight, for by hope we are saved; but hope that is seen, is not hope. As yet doth deep call unto deep, but now in the voice of Thy water-spouts. As yet doth he that saith, I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even he as yet, doth not think himself to have apprehended, and forgetteth those things which are behind, and reacheth forth to those which are before, and groaneth being burthened, and his soul thirsteth after the Living God, as the hart after the water-brooks, and saith, When shall I come? desiring to be clothed upon with his house which is from heaven, and calleth upon this lower deep, saying, Be not conformed to this

world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. And, be not children in understanding, but in malice, be ye children, that in understanding ye may be perfect; and O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you? But now no longer in his own voice; but in Thine who sentest Thy Spirit from above; through Him who ascended up on high, and set open the flood-gates of His gifts, that the force of His streams might make glad the city of God. Him doth this friend of the Bridegroom sigh after, having now the first-fruits of the Spirit laid up with Him, yet still groaning within himself, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of his body; to Him he sighs, a member of the Bride; for Him he is jealous, as being a friend of the Bridegroom; for Him he is jealous, not for himself; because in the voice of Thy water-spouts, not in his own voice, doth he call to that other depth, over whom being jealous he feareth, lest as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so their minds should be corrupted from the purity that is in our Bridegroom Thy only Son. O what a light of beauty will that be, when we shall see Him as He is, and those tears be passed away, which have been my meat day and night, whilst they daily say unto me, Where is now Thy God?

Chapter XIV

Behold, I too say, O my God, Where art Thou? see, where Thou art! in Thee I breathe a little, when I pour out my soul by myself in the voice of joy and praise, the sound of him that keeps holy-day. And yet again it is sad, because it relapseth, and becomes a deep, or rather perceives itself still to be a deep. Unto it speaks my faith which Thou hast kindled to enlighten my feet in the night, Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me? Hope in the Lord; His word is a lanthorn unto thy feet: hope and endure, until the night, the mother of the wicked, until the wrath of the Lord, be overpast, whereof we also were once children, who were sometimes darkness, relics whereof we bear about us in our body, dead because of sin; until the day break, and the shadows fly away. Hope thou in the Lord; in the morning I shall stand in Thy presence, and contemplate Thee: I shall for ever confess unto Thee. In the morning I shall stand in Thy presence, and shall see the health of my countenance, my God, who also shall quicken our mortal bodies, by the Spirit that dwelleth in us, because He hath in mercy been borne over our inner darksome and floating deep: from Whom we have in this pilgrimage received an earnest, that we should now be light: whilst we are saved by hope, and are the children of light, and the children of the day, not the children of the night, nor of the darkness, which yet sometimes we were. Betwixt whom and us, in this uncertainty of human knowledge, Thou only dividest; Thou, who provest our hearts, and callest the light, day, and the darkness, night. For who discerneth us, but Thou? And what have we, that we have not received of Thee? out of the same lump vessels are made unto honour, whereof others also are made unto dishonour.

Chapter XV

Or who, except Thou, our God, made for us that firmament of authority over us in Thy Divine Scripture? as it is said, For heaven shall be folded up like a scroll; and now is it stretched over us like a skin. For Thy Divine Scripture is of more eminent authority, since those mortals by whom Thou dispensest it unto us, underwent mortality. And Thou knowest, Lord, Thou knowest, how Thou with skins didst clothe men, when they by sin became mortal. Whence Thou hast like a skin stretched out the firmament of Thy book, that is, Thy harmonizing words, which by the ministry of mortal men Thou spreadest over us. For by their very death was that solid firmament of authority, in Thy discourses set forth by them, more eminently extended over all that be under it; which whilst they lived here, was not so eminently extended. Thou hadst not as yet spread abroad the heaven like a skin; Thou hadst not as yet enlarged in all directions the glory of their deaths.

Let us look, O Lord, upon the heavens, the work of Thy fingers; clear from our eyes that cloud, which Thou hast spread under them. There is Thy testimony, which giveth wisdom unto the little ones: perfect, O my God, Thy praise out of the mouth of babes and sucklings. For we know no other books, which so destroy pride, which so destroy the enemy and the defender, who resisteth Thy reconciliation by defending his own sins. I know not, Lord, I know not any other such pure words, which so persuade me to confess, and make my neck pliant to Thy yoke, and invite me to serve Thee for nought. Let me understand them, good Father: grant this to me, who am placed under them: because for those placed under them, hast Thou established them.

Other waters there be above this firmament, I believe immortal, and separated from earthly corruption. Let them praise Thy Name, let them praise Thee, the supercelestial people, Thine angels, who have no need to gaze up at this firmament, or by reading to know of Thy Word. For they always behold Thy face, and there read without any syllables in time, what willeth Thy eternal will; they read, they choose, they love. They are ever reading; and that never passes away which they read; for by choosing, and by loving, they read the very unchangeableness of Thy counsel. Their book is never closed, nor their scroll folded up; seeing Thou Thyself art this to them, and art eternally; because Thou hast ordained them above this firmament, which Thou hast firmly settled over the infirmity of the lower people, where they might gaze up and learn Thy mercy, announcing in time Thee Who madest times. For Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and Thy truth reacheth unto the clouds. The clouds pass away, but the heaven abideth. The preachers of Thy word pass out of this life into another; but Thy Scripture is spread abroad over the people, even unto the end of the world. Yet heaven and earth also shall pass away, but Thy words shall not pass away. Because the scroll shall be rolled together: and the grass over which it was spread, shall with the goodliness of it pass away; but Thy Word remaineth for ever, which now appeareth unto us under the dark image of the clouds, and through the glass of the heavens, not as it is: because we also, though the well-beloved of Thy Son, yet it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. He looketh through the lattice of our flesh, and He spake us tenderly, and kindled us, and we ran after His odours. But

when He shall appear, then shall we be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. As He is, Lord, will our sight be.

Chapter XVI

For altogether, as Thou art, Thou only knowest; Who art unchangeably, and knowest unchangeably, and willest unchangeably. And Thy Essence Knoweth, and Willeth unchangeably; and Thy Knowledge Is, and Willeth unchangeably; and Thy Will Is, and Knoweth unchangeably. Nor seemeth it right in Thine eyes, that as the Unchangeable Light knoweth Itself, so should it be known by the thing enlightened, and changeable. Therefore is my soul like a land where no water is, because as it cannot of itself enlighten itself, so can it not of itself satisfy itself. For so is the fountain of life with Thee, like as in Thy light we shall see light.

Chapter XVII

Who gathered the embittered together into one society? For they have all one end, a temporal and earthly felicity, for attaining whereof they do all things, though they waver up and down with an innumerable variety of cares. Who, Lord, but Thou, saidst, Let the waters be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear, which thirsteth after Thee? For the sea also is Thine, and Thou hast made it, and Thy hands prepared the dry land. Nor is the bitterness of men's wills, but the gathering together of the waters, called sea; for Thou restrainest the wicked desires of men's souls, and settest them their bounds, how far they may be allowed to pass, that their waves may break one against another: and thus makest Thou it a sea, by the order of Thy dominion over all things.

But the souls that thirst after Thee, and that appear before Thee (being by other bounds divided from the society of the sea), Thou waterest by a sweet spring, that the earth may bring forth her fruit, and Thou, Lord God, so commanding, our soul may bud forth works of mercy according to their kind, loving our neighbour in the relief of his bodily necessities, having seed in itself according to its likeness, when from feeling of our infirmity, we compassionate so as to relieve the needy; helping them, as we would be helped; if we were in like need; not only in things easy, as in herb yielding seed, but also in the protection of our assistance, with our best strength, like the tree yielding fruit: that is, well-doing in rescuing him that suffers wrong, from the hand of the powerful, and giving him the shelter of protection, by the mighty strength of just judgment.

Chapter XVIII

So, Lord, so, I beseech Thee, let there spring up, as Thou doest, as Thou givest cheerfulness and ability, let truth spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven, and let there be lights in the firmament. Let us break our bread to the hungry, and bring the houseless poor to our house. Let us clothe the naked, and despise not those of our own flesh. Which fruits having sprung out of the earth, see it is good: and let our temporary light break forth; and ourselves, from this lower fruitfulness of action, arriving at the delightfulness of contemplation, obtaining the Word of Life above, appear like lights in the world, cleaving to the firmament of Thy Scripture. For there Thou instructest us, to divide between the things intellectual, and things of sense, as betwixt the day and the night; or between souls, given either to things intellectual, or things of sense, so that now not Thou only in the secret of Thy judgment, as before the firmament was made, dividest between the light and the darkness, but Thy spiritual children also set and ranked in the same firmament (now that Thy grace is laid open throughout the world), may give light upon the earth, and divide betwixt the day and the night, and be for signs of times, that old things are passed away, and, behold, all things are become new; and that our salvation is nearer than when we believed: and that the night is far spent, and the day is at hand: and that Thou wilt crown Thy year with blessing, sending the labourers of Thy goodness into Thy harvest, in sowing whereof, others have laboured, sending also into another field, whose harvest shall be in the end. Thus grantest Thou the prayers of him that asketh, and blessest the years of the just; but Thou art the same, and in Thy years which fail not, Thou preparest a garner for our passing years. For Thou by an eternal counsel dost in their proper seasons bestow heavenly blessings upon the earth. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, as it were the lesser light: to another faith; to another the gift with the light of perspicuous truth, as it were for the rule of the day. To another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, as it were the lesser light: to another faith; to another the gift of healing; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues. And all these as it were stars. For all these worketh the one and self-same spirit, dividing to every man his own as He will; and causing stars to appear manifestly, to profit withal. But the word of knowledge, wherein are contained all Sacraments, which are varied in their seasons as it were the moon, and those other notices of gifts, which are reckoned up in order, as it were stars, inasmuch as they come short of that brightness of wisdom, which gladdens the forementioned day, are only for the rule of the night. For they are necessary to such, as that Thy most prudent servant could not speak unto as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal; even he, who speaketh wisdom among those that are perfect. But the natural man, as it were a babe in Christ and fed on milk, until he be strengthened for solid meat and his eye be enabled to behold the Sun, let him not dwell in a night forsaken of all light, but be content with the light of the moon and the stars. So dost Thou speak to us, our All-wise God, in Thy Book, Thy firmament; that we may discern all things, in an admirable contemplation; though as yet in signs and in times, and in days, and in years.

Chapter XIX

But first, wash you, be clean; put away evil from your souls, and from before mine eyes, that the dry land may appear. Learn to do good, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow, that the earth may bring forth the green herb for meat, and the tree bearing fruit; and come, let us reason together, saith the Lord, that there may be lights in the firmament of the heaven, and they may shine upon the earth. That rich man asked of the good Master, what he should do to attain eternal life. Let the good Master tell him (whom he thought no more than man; but He is good because He is God), let Him tell him, if he would enter into life, he must keep the commandments: let him put away from him the bitterness of malice and wickedness; not kill, not commit adultery, not steal, not bear false witness; that the dry land may appear, and bring forth the honouring of father and mother, and the love of our neighbour. All these (saith he) have I kept. Whence then so many thorns, if the earth be fruitful? Go, root up the spreading thickets of covetousness; sell that thou hast, and be filled with fruit, by giving to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and follow the Lord if thou wilt be perfect, associated with them, among whom He speaketh wisdom, Who knoweth what to distribute to the day, and to the night, that thou also mayest know it, and for thee there may be lights in the firmament of heaven; which will not be, unless thy heart be there: nor will that either be, unless there thy treasure be; as thou hast heard of the good Master. But that barren earth was grieved; and the thorns choked the word.

But you, chosen generation, you weak things of the world, who have forsaken all, that ye may follow the Lord; go after Him, and confound the mighty; go after Him, ye beautiful feet, and shine ye in the firmament, that the heavens may declare His glory, dividing between the light of the perfect, though not as the angels, and the darkness of the little ones, though not despised. Shine over the earth; and let the day, lightened by the sun, utter unto day, speech of wisdom; and night, shining with the moon, show unto night, the word of knowledge. The moon and stars shine for the night; yet doth not the night obscure them, seeing they give it light in its degree. For behold God saying, as it were, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven; there came suddenly a sound from heaven, as it had been the rushing of a mighty wind, and there appeared cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And there were made lights in the firmament of heaven, having the word of life. Run ye to and fro every where, ye holy fires, ye beauteous fires; for ye are the light of the world, nor are ye put under a bushel; He whom you cleave unto, is exalted, and hath exalted you. Run ye to and fro, and be known unto all nations.

Chapter XX

Let the sea also conceive and bring forth your works; and let the waters bring forth the moving creature that hath life. For ye, separating the precious from the vile, are made the mouth of God,

by whom He saith, Let the waters bring forth, not the living creature which the earth brings forth, but the moving creature having life, and the fowls that fly above the earth. For Thy Sacraments, O God, by the ministry of Thy holy ones, have moved amid the waves of temptations of the world, to hallow the Gentiles in Thy Name, in Thy Baptism. And amid these things, many great wonders were wrought, as it were great whales: and the voices of Thy messengers flying above the earth, in the open firmament of Thy Book; that being set over them, as their authority under which they were to fly, whithersoever they went. For there is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard: seeing their sound is gone through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world, because Thou, Lord, multipliedst them by blessing.

Speak I untruly, or do I mingle and confound, and not distinguish between the lucid knowledge of these things in the firmament of heaven, and the material works in the wavy sea, and under the firmament of heaven? For of those things whereof the knowledge is substantial and defined, without any increase by generation, as it were lights of wisdom and knowledge, yet even of them, the material operations are many and divers; and one thing growing out of another, they are multiplied by Thy blessing, O God, who hast refreshed the fastidiousness of mortal senses; that so one thing in the understanding of our mind, may, by the motions of the body, be many ways set out, and expressed. These Sacraments have the waters brought forth; but in Thy word. The necessities of the people estranged from the eternity of Thy truth, have brought them forth, but in Thy Gospel; because the waters themselves cast them forth, the diseased bitterness whereof was the cause, why they were sent forth in Thy Word.

Now are all things fair that Thou hast made; but behold, Thyself art unutterably fairer, that madest all; from whom had not Adam fallen, the brackishness of the sea had never flowed out of him, that is, the human race so profoundly curious, and tempestuously swelling, and restlessly tumbling up and down; and then had there been no need of Thy dispensers to work in many waters, after a corporeal and sensible manner, mysterious doings and sayings. For such those moving and flying creatures now seem to me to mean, whereby people being initiated and consecrated by corporeal Sacraments, should not further profit, unless their soul had a spiritual life, and unless after the word of admission, it looked forwards to perfection.

Chapter XXI

And hereby, in Thy Word, not the deepness of the sea, but the earth separated from the bitterness of the waters, brings forth, not the moving creature that hath life, but the living soul. For now hath it no more need of baptism, as the heathen have, and as itself had, when it was covered with the waters; (for no other entrance is there into the kingdom of heaven, since Thou hast appointed that this should be the entrance:) nor does it seek after wonderfulness of miracles to work belief; for it is not such, that unless it sees signs and wonders, it will not believe, now that the faithful earth is

separated from the waters that were bitter with infidelity; and tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not. Neither then does that earth which Thou hast founded upon the waters, need that flying kind, which at Thy word the waters brought forth. Send Thou Thy word into it by Thy messengers: for we speak of their working, yet it is Thou that workest in them that they may work out a living soul in it. The earth brings it forth, because the earth is the cause that they work this in the soul; as the sea was the cause that they wrought upon the moving creatures that have life, and the fowls that fly under the firmament of heaven, of whom the earth hath no need; although it feeds upon that fish which was taken out of the deep, upon that table which Thou hast prepared in the presence of them that believe. For therefore was He taken out of the deep, that He might feed the dry land; and the fowl, though bred in the sea, is yet multiplied upon the earth. For of the first preachings of the Evangelists, man's infidelity was the cause; yet are the faithful also exhorted and blessed by them manifoldly, from day to day. But the living soul takes his beginning from the earth: for it profits only those already among the Faithful, to contain themselves from the love of this world, that so their soul may live unto Thee, which was dead while it lived in pleasures; in death-bringing pleasures, Lord, for Thou, Lord, art the life-giving delight of the pure heart.

Now then let Thy ministers work upon the earth,—not as upon the waters of infidelity, by preaching and speaking by miracles, and Sacraments, and mystic words; wherein ignorance, the mother of admiration, might be intent upon them, out of a reverence towards those secret signs. For such is the entrance unto the Faith for the sons of Adam forgetful of Thee, while they hide themselves from Thy face, and become a darksome deep. But—let Thy ministers work now as on the dry land, separated from the whirlpools of the great deep: and let them be a pattern unto the Faithful, by living before them, and stirring them up to imitation. For thus do men hear, so as not to hear only, but to do also. Seek the Lord, and your soul shall live, that the earth may bring forth the living soul. Be not conformed to the world. Contain yourselves from it: the soul lives by avoiding what it dies by affecting. Contain yourselves from the ungoverned wildness of pride, the sluggish voluptuousness of luxury, and the false name of knowledge: that so the wild beasts may be tamed, the cattle broken to the yoke, the serpents, harmless. For these be the motions of our mind under an allegory; that is to say, the haughtiness of pride, the delight of lust, and the poison of curiosity, are the motions of a dead soul; for the soul dies not so as to lose all motion; because it dies by forsaking the fountain of life, and so is taken up by this transitory world, and is conformed unto it.

But Thy word, O God, is the fountain of life eternal; and passeth not away: wherefore this departure of the soul is restrained by Thy word, when it is said unto us, Be not conformed unto this world; that so the earth may in the fountain of life bring forth a living soul; that is, a soul made continent in Thy Word, by Thy Evangelists, by following the followers of Thy Christ. For this is after his kind; because a man is wont to imitate his friend. Be ye (saith he) as I am, for I also am as you are. Thus in this living soul shall there be good beasts, in meekness of action (for Thou hast commanded, Go on with thy business in meekness, so shalt thou be beloved by all men); and good cattle, which neither if they eat, shall they over-abound, nor, if they eat not, have any lack; and

good serpents, not dangerous, to do hurt, but wise to take heed; and only making so much search into this temporal nature, as may suffice that eternity be clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. For these creatures are obedient unto reason, when being restrained from deadly prevailing upon us, they live, and are good.

Chapter XXII

For behold, O Lord, our God, our Creator, when our affections have been restrained from the love of the world, by which we died through evil-living; and begun to be a living soul, through good living; and Thy word which Thou spokest by Thy apostle, is made good in us, Be not conformed to this world: there follows that also, which Thou presently subjoinedst, saying, But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind; not now after your kind, as though following your neighbour who went before you, nor as living after the example of some better man (for Thou saidst not, “Let man be made after his kind,” but, Let us make man after our own image and similitude), that we might prove what Thy will is. For to this purpose said that dispenser of Thine (who begat children by the Gospel), that he might not for ever have them babes, whom he must be fain to feed with milk, and cherish as a nurse; be ye transformed (saith he) by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Wherefore Thou sayest not, “Let man be made,” but Let us make man. Nor saidst Thou, “according to his kind”; but, after our image and likeness. For man being renewed in his mind, and beholding and understanding Thy truth, needs not man as his director, so as to follow after his kind; but by Thy direction proveth what is that good, that acceptable, and perfect will of Thine: yea, Thou teachest him, now made capable, to discern the Trinity of the Unity, and the Unity of the Trinity. Wherefore to that said in the plural. Let us make man, is yet subjoined in the singular, And God made man: and to that said in the plural. After our likeness, is subjoined in the singular, After the image of God. Thus is man renewed in the knowledge of God, after the image of Him that created him: and being made spiritual, he judgeth all things (all things which are to be judged), yet himself is judged of no man.

Chapter XXIII

But that he judgeth all things, this answers to his having dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over all cattle and wild beasts, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For this he doth by the understanding of his mind, whereby he perceiveth the things of the Spirit of God; whereas otherwise, man being placed in honour, had no understanding, and is compared unto the brute beasts, and is become like unto them. In Thy Church therefore, O our God, according to Thy grace which Thou hast bestowed upon it

(for we are Thy workmanship created unto good works), not those only who are spiritually set over, but they also who spiritually are subject to those that are set over them,—for in this way didst Thou make man male and female, in Thy grace spiritual, where, according to the sex of body, there is neither male nor female, because neither Jew nor Grecian, neither bond nor free.—Spiritual persons (whether such as are set over, or such as obey); do judge spiritually; not of that spiritual knowledge which shines in the firmament (for they ought not to judge as to so supreme authority), nor may they judge of Thy Book itself, even though something there shineth not clearly; for we submit our understanding unto it, and hold for certain, that even what is closed to our sight, is yet rightly and truly spoken. For so man, though now spiritual and renewed in the knowledge of God after His image that created him, ought to be a doer of the law, not a judge. Neither doth he judge of that distinction of spiritual and carnal men, who are known unto Thine eyes, O our God, and have not as yet discovered themselves unto us by works, that by their fruits we might know them: but Thou, Lord, dost even now know them, and hast divided and called them in secret, or ever the firmament was made. Nor doth he, though spiritual, judge the unquiet people of this world; for what hath he to do, to judge them that are without, knowing not which of them shall hereafter come into the sweetness of Thy grace; and which continue in the perpetual bitterness of ungodliness?

Man therefore, whom Thou hast made after Thine own image, received not dominion over the lights of heaven, nor over that hidden heaven itself, nor over the day and the night, which Thou calledst before the foundation of the heaven, nor over the gathering together of the waters, which is the sea; but He received dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and over all cattle, and over all the earth, and over all creeping things which creep upon the earth. For He judgeth and approveth what He findeth right, and He disalloweth what He findeth amiss, whether in the celebration of those Sacraments by which such are initiated, as Thy mercy searches out in many waters: or in that, in which that Fish is set forth, which, taken out of the deep, the devout earth feedeth upon: or in the expressions and signs of words, subject to the authority of Thy Book,—such signs, as proceed out of the mouth, and sound forth, flying as it were under the firmament, by interpreting, expounding, discoursing disputing, consecrating, or praying unto Thee, so that the people may answer, Amen. The vocal pronouncing of all which words, is occasioned by the deep of this world, and the blindness of the flesh, which cannot see thoughts; So that there is need to speak aloud into the ears; so that, although flying fowls be multiplied upon the earth, yet they derive their beginning from the waters. The spiritual man judgeth also by allowing of what is right, and disallowing what he finds amiss, in the works and lives of the faithful; their alms, as it were the earth bringing forth fruit, and of the living soul, living by the taming of the affections, in chastity, in fasting, in holy meditations; and of those things, which are perceived by the senses of the body. Upon all these is he now said to judge, wherein he hath also power of correction.

Chapter XXIV

But what is this, and what kind of mystery? Behold, Thou blessest mankind, O Lord, that they may increase and multiply, and replenish the earth; dost Thou not thereby give us a hint to understand something? why didst Thou not as well bless the light, which Thou calledst day; nor the firmament of heaven, nor the lights, nor the stars, nor the earth, nor the sea? I might say that Thou, O God, who created created us after Thine Image, I might say, that it had been Thy good pleasure to bestow this blessing peculiarly upon man; hadst Thou not in like manner blessed the fishes and the whales, that they should increase and multiply, and replenish the waters of the sea, and that the fowls should be multiplied upon the earth. I might say likewise, that this blessing pertained properly unto such creatures, as are bred of their own kind, had I found it given to the fruit-trees, and plants, and beasts of the earth. But now neither unto the herbs, nor the trees, nor the beasts, nor serpents is it said, Increase and multiply; notwithstanding all these as well as the fishes, fowls, or men, do by generation increase and continue their kind.

What then shall I say, O Truth my Light? “that it was idly said, and without meaning?” Not so, O Father of piety, far be it from a minister of Thy word to say so. And if I understand not what Thou meanest by that phrase, let my betters, that is, those of more understanding than myself, make better use of it, according as Thou, my God, hast given to each man to understand. But let my confession also be pleasing in Thine eyes, wherein I confess unto Thee, that I believe, O Lord, that Thou spakest not so in vain; nor will I suppress, what this lesson suggests to me. For it is true, nor do I see what should hinder me from thus understanding the figurative sayings of Thy Bible. For I know a thing to be manifoldly signified by corporeal expressions, which is understood one way by the mind; and that understood many ways in the mind, which is signified one way by corporeal expression. Behold, the single love of God and our neighbour, by what manifold sacraments, and innumerable languages, and in each several language, in how innumerable modes of speaking, it is corporeally expressed. Thus do the offspring of the waters increase and multiply. Observe again, whosoever redest this; behold, what Scripture delivers, and the voice pronounces one only way, In the Beginning God created heaven and earth; is it not understood manifoldly, not through any deceit of error, but by various kinds of true senses? Thus do man's offspring increase and multiply.

If therefore we conceive of the natures of the things themselves, not allegorically, but properly, then does the phrase increase and multiply, agree unto all things, that come of seed. But if we treat of the words as figuratively spoken (which I rather suppose to be the purpose of the Scripture, which doth not, surely, superfluously ascribe this benediction to the offspring of aquatic animals and man only); then do we find “multitude” to belong to creatures spiritual as well as corporeal, as in heaven and earth, and to righteous and unrighteous, as in light and darkness; and to holy authors who have been the ministers of the Law unto us, as in the firmament which is settled betwixt the waters and the waters; and to the society of people yet in the bitterness of infidelity, as in the sea; and to the zeal of holy souls, as in the dry land; and to works of mercy belonging to this present life, as in the herbs bearing seed, and in trees bearing fruit; and to spiritual gifts set forth for

edification, as in the lights of heaven; and to affections formed unto temperance, as in the living soul. In all these instances we meet with multitudes, abundance, and increase; but what shall in such wise increase and multiply that one thing may be expressed many ways, and one expression understood many ways; we find not, except in signs corporeally expressed, and in things mentally conceived. By signs corporeally pronounced we understand the generations of the waters, necessarily occasioned by the depth of the flesh; by things mentally conceived, human generations, on account of the fruitfulness of reason. And for this end do we believe Thee, Lord, to have said to these kinds, Increase and multiply. For in this blessing, I conceive Thee to have granted us a power and a faculty, both to express several ways what we understand but one; and to understand several ways, what we read to be obscurely delivered but in one. Thus are the waters of the sea replenished, which are not moved but by several significations: thus with human increase is the earth also replenished, whose dryness appeareth in its longing, and reason ruleth over it.

Chapter XXV

I would also say, O Lord my God, what the following Scripture minds me of; yea, I will say, and not fear. For I will say the truth, Thyself inspiring me with what Thou willedst me to deliver out of those words. But by no other inspiration than Thine, do I believe myself to speak truth, seeing Thou art the Truth, and every man a liar. He therefore that speaketh a lie, speaketh of his own; that therefore I may speak truth, I will speak of Thine. Behold, Thou hast given unto us for food every herb bearing seed which is upon all the earth; and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed. And not to us alone, but also to all the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the earth, and to all creeping things; but unto the fishes and to the great whales, hast Thou not given them. Now we said that by these fruits of the earth were signified, and figured in an allegory, the works of mercy which are provided for the necessities of this life out of the fruitful earth. Such an earth was the devout Onesiphorus, unto whose house Thou gavest mercy, because he often refreshed Thy Paul, and was not ashamed of his chain. Thus did also the brethren, and such fruit did they bear, who out of Macedonia supplied what was lacking to him. But how grieved he for some trees, which did not afford him the fruit due unto him, where he saith, At my first answer no man stood by me, but all men forsook me. I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. For these fruits are due to such as minister the spiritual doctrine unto us out of their understanding of the divine mysteries; and they are due to them, as men; yea and due to them also, as the living soul, which giveth itself as an example, in all continency; and due unto them also, as flying creatures, for their blessings which are multiplied upon the earth, because their sound went out into all lands.

Chapter XXVI

But they are fed by these fruits, that are delighted with them; nor are they delighted with them, whose God is their belly. For neither in them that yield them, are the things yielded the fruit, but with what mind they yield them. He therefore that served God, and not his own belly, I plainly see why he rejoiced; I see it, and I rejoice with him. For he had received from the Philippians, what they had sent by Epaphroditus unto him: and yet I perceive why he rejoiced. For whereat he rejoiced upon that he fed; for, speaking in truth, I rejoiced (saith he) greatly in the Lord, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again, wherein ye were also careful, but it had become wearisome unto you. These Philippians then had now dried up, with a long weariness, and withered as it were as to bearing this fruit of a good work; and he rejoiceth for them, that they flourished again, not for himself, that they supplied his wants. Therefore subjoins he, not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need. I can do all things through Him which strengtheneth me.

Whereat then rejoicest thou, O great Paul? whereat rejoicest thou? whereon feedest thou, O man, renewed in the knowledge of God, after the image of Him that created thee, thou living soul, of so much continency, thou tongue like flying fowls, speaking mysteries? (for to such creatures, is this food due;) what is it that feeds thee? joy. Hear we what follows: notwithstanding, ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Hereat he rejoiceth, hereon feedeth; because they had well done, not because his strait was eased, who saith unto Thee, Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; for that he knew to abound, and to suffer want, in Thee Who strengthenest him. For ye Philippians also know (saith he), that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Unto these good works, he now rejoiceth that they are returned; and is gladdened that they flourished again, as when a fruitful field resumes its green.

Was it for his own necessities, because he said, Ye sent unto my necessity? Rejoiceth he for that? Verily not for that. But how know we this? Because himself says immediately, not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit. I have learned of Thee, my God, to distinguish betwixt a gift, and fruit. A gift, is the thing itself which he gives, that imparts these necessities unto us; as money, meat, drink, clothing, shelter, help: but the fruit, is the good and right will of the giver. For the Good Master said not only, He that receiveth a prophet, but added, in the name of a prophet: nor did He only say, He that receiveth a righteous man, but added, in the name of a righteous man. So verily shall the one receive the reward of a prophet, the other, the reward of a righteous man: nor saith He only, He that shall give to drink a cup of cold water to one of my little ones; but added, in the name of a disciple: and so concludeth, Verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. The gift is, to receive a prophet, to receive a righteous man, to give a cup of cold water to a disciple:

but the fruit, to do this in the name of a prophet, in the name of a righteous man, in the name of a disciple. With fruit was Elijah fed by the widow that knew she fed a man of God, and therefore fed him: but by the raven was he fed with a gift. Nor was the inner man of Elijah so fed, but the outer only; which might also for want of that food have perished.

Chapter XXVII

I will then speak what is true in Thy sight, O Lord, that when carnal men and infidels (for the gaining and initiating whom, the initiatory Sacraments and the mighty workings of miracles are necessary, which we suppose to be signified by the name of fishes and whales) undertake the bodily refreshment, or otherwise succour Thy servant with something useful for this present life; whereas they be ignorant, why this is to be done, and to what end; neither do they feed these, nor are these fed by them; because neither do the one do it out of an holy and right intent; nor do the other rejoice at their gifts, whose fruit they as yet behold not. For upon that is the mind fed, of which it is glad. And therefore do not the fishes and whales feed upon such meats, as the earth brings not forth until after it was separated and divided from the bitterness of the waves of the sea.

Chapter XXVIII

And Thou, O God, sawest every thing that Thou hadst made, and, behold, it was very good. Yea we also see the same, and behold, all things are very good. Of the several kinds of Thy works, when Thou hadst said “let them be,” and they were, Thou sawest each that it was good. Seven times have I counted it to be written, that Thou sawest that that which Thou madest was good: and this is the eighth, that Thou sawest every thing that Thou hadst made, and, behold, it was not only good, but also very good, as being now altogether. For severally, they were only good; but altogether, both good, and very good. All beautiful bodies express the same; by reason that a body consisting of members all beautiful, is far more beautiful than the same members by themselves are, by whose well-ordered blending the whole is perfected; notwithstanding that the members severally be also beautiful.

Chapter XXIX

And I looked narrowly to find, whether seven, or eight times Thou sawest that Thy works were good, when they pleased Thee; but in Thy seeing I found no times, whereby I might understand

that Thou sawest so often, what Thou madest. And I said, “Lord, is not this Thy Scripture true, since Thou art true, and being Truth, hast set it forth? why then dost Thou say unto me, ‘that in Thy seeing there be no times’; whereas this Thy Scripture tells me, that what Thou madest each day, Thou sawest that it was good: and when I counted them, I found how often.” Unto this Thou answerest me, for Thou art my God, and with a strong voice tellest Thy servant in his inner ear, breaking through my deafness and crying, “O man, that which My Scripture saith, I say: and yet doth that speak in time; but time has no relation to My Word; because My Word exists in equal eternity with Myself. So the things which ye see through My Spirit, I see; like as what ye speak by My Spirit, I speak. And so when ye see those things in time, I see them not in time; as when ye speak in time, I speak them not in time.”

Chapter XXX

And I heard, O Lord my God, and drank up a drop of sweetness out of Thy truth, and understood, that certain men there be who mislike Thy works; and say, that many of them Thou madest, compelled by necessity; such as the fabric of the heavens, and harmony of the stars; and that Thou madest them not of what was Thine, but that they were elsewhere and from other sources created, for Thee to bring together and compact and combine, when out of Thy conquered enemies Thou raisedst up the walls of the universe; that they, bound down by the structure, might not again be able to rebel against Thee. For other things, they say Thou neither madest them, nor even compactedst them, such as all flesh and all very minute creatures, and whatsoever hath its root in the earth; but that a mind at enmity with Thee, and another nature not created by Thee, and contrary unto Thee, did, in these lower stages of the world, beget and frame these things. Frenzied are they who say thus, because they see not Thy works by Thy Spirit, nor recognise Thee in them.

Chapter XXXI

But they who by Thy Spirit see these things, Thou seest in them. Therefore when they see that these things are good, Thou seest that they are good; and whatsoever things for Thy sake please, Thou pleasest in them, and what through Thy Spirit please us, they please Thee in us. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man, which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God. Now we (saith he) have received, not the spirit of this world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. And I am admonished, “Truly the things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God: how then do we also know, what things are given us of God?” Answer is made me; “because the things which we know by His Spirit, even these no one knoweth, but the Spirit of God. For as it is rightly

said unto those that were to speak by the Spirit of God, it is not ye that speak: so is it rightly said to them that know through the Spirit of God, 'It is not ye that know.' And no less then is it rightly said to those that see through the Spirit of God, 'It is not ye that see'; so whatsoever through the Spirit of God they see to be good, it is not they, but God that sees that it is good." It is one thing then for a man to think that to be ill which is good, as the forenamed do; another, that that which is good, a man should see that it is good (as Thy creatures be pleasing unto many, because they be good, whom yet Thou pleasest not in them, when they prefer to enjoy them, to Thee); and another, that when a man sees a thing that it is good, God should in him see that it is good, so, namely, that He should be loved in that which He made, Who cannot be loved, but by the Holy Ghost which He hath given. Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Which is given unto us: by Whom we see that whatsoever in any degree is, is good. For from Him it is, who Himself Is not in degree, but what He Is, Is.

Chapter XXXII

Thanks to Thee, O Lord. We behold the heaven and earth, whether the corporeal part, superior and inferior, or the spiritual and corporeal creature; and in the adorning of these parts, whereof the universal pile of the world, or rather the universal creation, doth consist, we see light made, and divided from the darkness. We see the firmament of heaven, whether that primary body of the world, between the spiritual upper waters and the inferior corporeal waters, or (since this also is called heaven) this space of air through which wander the fowls of heaven, betwixt those waters which are in vapours borne above them, and in clear nights distill down in dew; and those heavier waters which flow along the earth. We behold a face of waters gathered together in the fields of the sea; and the dry land both void, and formed so as to be visible and harmonized, yea and the matter of herbs and trees. We behold the lights shining from above, the sun to suffice for the day, the moon and the stars to cheer the night; and that by all these, times should be marked and signified. We behold on all sides a moist element, replenished with fishes, beasts, and birds; because the grossness of the air, which bears up the flights of birds, thickeneth itself by the exhalation of the waters. We behold the face of the earth decked out with earthly creatures, and man, created after Thy image and likeness, even through that Thy very image and likeness (that is the power of reason and understanding), set over all irrational creatures. And as in his soul there is one power which has dominion by directing, another made subject, that it might obey; so was there for the man, corporeally also, made a woman, who in the mind of her reasonable understanding should have a parity of nature, but in the sex of her body, should be in like manner subject to the sex of her husband, as the appetite of doing is fain to conceive the skill of right-doing from the reason of the mind. These things we behold, and they are severally good, and altogether very good.

Chapter XXXIII

Let Thy works praise Thee, that we may love Thee; and let us love Thee, that Thy works may praise Thee, which from time have beginning and ending, rising and setting, growth and decay, form and privation. They have then their succession of morning and evening, part secretly, part apparently; for they were made of nothing, by Thee, not of Thee; not of any matter not Thine, or that was before, but of matter concreated (that is, at the same time created by Thee), because to its state without form, Thou without any interval of time didst give form. For seeing the matter of heaven and earth is one thing, and the form another, Thou madest the matter of merely nothing, but the form of the world out of the matter without form: yet both together, so that the form should follow the matter, without any interval of delay.

Chapter XXXIV

We have also examined what Thou willedst to be shadowed forth, whether by the creation, or the relation of things in such an order. And we have seen, that things singly are good, and together very good, in Thy Word, in Thy Only-Begotten, both heaven and earth, the Head and the body of the Church, in Thy predestination before all times, without morning and evening. But when Thou begankest to execute in time the things predestinated, to the end Thou mightest reveal hidden things, and rectify our disorders; for our sins hung over us, and we had sunk into the dark deep; and Thy good Spirit was borne over us, to help us in due season; and Thou didst justify the ungodly, and dividest them from the wicked; and Thou madest the firmament of authority of Thy Book between those placed above, who were to be docile unto Thee, and those under, who were to be subject to them: and Thou gatheredst together the society of unbelievers into one conspiracy, that the zeal of the faithful might appear, and they might bring forth works of mercy, even distributing to the poor their earthly riches, to obtain heavenly. And after this didst Thou kindle certain lights in the firmament, Thy Holy ones, having the word of life; and shining with an eminent authority set on high through spiritual gifts; after that again, for the initiation of the unbelieving Gentiles, didst Thou out of corporeal matter produce the Sacraments, and visible miracles, and forms of words according to the firmament of Thy Book, by which the faithful should be blessed and multiplied. Next didst Thou form the living soul of the faithful, through affections well ordered by the vigour of continency: and after that, the mind subjected to Thee alone and needing to imitate no human authority, hast Thou renewed after Thy image and likeness; and didst subject its rational actions to the excellency of the understanding, as the woman to the man; and to all Offices of Thy Ministry, necessary for the perfecting of the faithful in this life, Thou willedst, that for their temporal uses, good things, fruitful to themselves in time to come, be given by the same faithful. All these we see,

and they are very good, because Thou seest them in us, Who hast given unto us Thy Spirit, by which we might see them, and in them love Thee.

Chapter XXXV

O Lord God, give peace unto us: (for Thou hast given us all things;) the peace of rest, the peace of the Sabbath, which hath no evening. For all this most goodly array of things very good, having finished their courses, is to pass away, for in them there was morning and evening.

Chapter XXXVI

But the seventh day hath no evening, nor hath it setting; because Thou hast sanctified it to an everlasting continuance; that that which Thou didst after Thy works which were very good, resting the seventh day, although Thou madest them in unbroken rest, that may the voice of Thy Book announce beforehand unto us, that we also after our works (therefore very good, because Thou hast given them us), shall rest in Thee also in the Sabbath of eternal life.

Chapter XXXVII

For then shalt Thou rest in us, as now Thou workest in us; and so shall that be Thy rest through us, as these are Thy works through us. But Thou, Lord, ever workest, and art ever at rest. Nor dost Thou see in time, nor art moved in time, nor retest in a time; and yet Thou makest things seen in time, yea the times themselves, and the rest which results from time.

Chapter XXXVIII

We therefore see these things which Thou madest, because they are: but they are, because Thou seest them. And we see without, that they are, and within, that they are good, but Thou sawest them there, when made, where Thou sawest them, yet to be made. And we were at a later time moved to do well, after our hearts had conceived of Thy Spirit; but in the former time we were moved to do evil, forsaking Thee; but Thou, the One, the Good God, didst never cease doing good. And we also have some good works, of Thy gift, but not eternal; after them we trust to rest in Thy great

hallowing. But Thou, being the Good which needeth no good, art ever at rest, because Thy rest is Thou Thyself. And what man can teach man to understand this? or what Angel, an Angel? or what Angel, a man? Let it be asked of Thee, sought in Thee, knocked for at Thee; so, so shall it be received, so shall it be found, so shall it be opened. Amen.

Gratias Tibi Domine