A Treatise on the Anger of God

Lactantius (c. AD 250–325)

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Chapter I.-Of Divine and Human Wisdom.

I Have often observed, Donatus, that many persons hold this opinion, which some philosophers also have maintained, that God is not subject to anger; since the divine nature is either altogether beneficent, and that it is inconsistent with His surpassing and excellent power to do injury to any one; or, at any rate, He takes no notice of us at all, so that no advantage comes to us from His goodness, and no evil from His ill-will. But the error of these men, because it is very great, and tends to overthrow the condition of human life, must be refuted by us, lest you yourself also should be deceived, being incited by the authority of men who deem themselves wise. Nor, however, are we so arrogant as to boast that the truth is comprehended by our intellect; but we follow the teaching of God, who alone is able to know and to reveal secret things. But the philosophers, being destitute of this teaching, have imagined that the nature of things can be ascertained by conjecture. But this is impossible; because the mind of man, enclosed in the dark abode of the body, is far removed from the perception of truth: and in this the divine nature differs from the human, that ignorance is the property of the human, knowledge of the divine nature. On which account we have need of some light to dispel the darkness by which the reflection of man is overspread, since, while we live in mortal flesh, we are unable to divine by our senses.

But the light of the human mind is God, and he who has known and admitted Him into his breast will acknowledge the mystery of the truth with an enlightened heart; but when God and heavenly instruction are removed, all things are full of errors. And Socrates, though he was the most learned of all the philosophers, yet, that he might prove the ignorance of the others, who thought that they possessed something, rightly said that he knew nothing, except one thing-that he knew nothing. For he understood that that learning had nothing certain, nothing true in itself; nor, as some imagine, did he pretend to learning that he might refute others, but he saw the truth in some measure. And he testified even on his trial (as is related by Plato) that there was no human wisdom. He so despised, derided, and cast aside the learning in which the philosophers then boasted, that he professed that very thing as the greatest learning, that he had learnt that he knew nothing. If, therefore, there is no human wisdom, as Socrates taught, as Plato handed down, it is evident that the knowledge of the truth is divine, and belongs to no other than to God. Therefore God must

be known, in whom alone is the truth. He is the Parent of the world, and the Framer of all things; who is not seen with the eyes, and is scarcely distinguished by the mind;

whose religion is accustomed to be attacked in many ways by those who have neither been able to attain true wisdom, nor to comprehend the system of the great and heavenly secret.

Chapter II.-Of the Truth and Its Steps, and of God.

For since there are many steps by which the ascent is made to the abode of truth, it is not easy for any one to reach the summit. For when the eyes are darkened by the brightness of the truth, they who are unable to maintain a firm step fall back to the level ground. Now the first step is to understand false religions, and to throw aside the impious worship of gods which are made by the hand of man. But the second step is to perceive with the mind that there is but one Supreme God, whose power and providence made the world from the beginning, and afterwards continues to govern it. The third step is to know His Servant and Messenger, whom He sent as His ambassador to the earth, by whose teaching being freed from the error in which we were held entangled, and formed to the worship of the true God, we might learn righteousness. From all of these steps, as I have said, there is a rapid and easy gliding to a downfall, unless the feet are firmly planted with unshaken stedfastness.

We see those shaken off from the first step, who, though they understand things which are false, do not, however, discover that which is true; and though they despised earthly and frail images, do not betake themselves to the worship of God, of whom they are ignorant. But viewing with admiration the elements of the universe, they worship the heaven, the earth, the sea, the sun, the moon, and the other heavenly bodies. But we have already reproved their ignorance in the second book of the Divine Institutes. But we say that those fall from the second step, who, though they understand that there is but one Supreme God, nevertheless, ensnared by the philosophers, and captivated by false arguments, entertain opinions concerning that excellent majesty far removed from the truth; who either deny that God has any figure, or think that He is moved by no affection, because every affection is a sign of weakness, which has no existence in God. But they are precipitated from the third step, who, though they know the Ambassador of God, who is also the Builder of the divine and immortal temple, either do not receive Him, or receive Him otherwise than faith demands; whom we have partly refuted in the fourth book of the above-named work. And we will hereafter refute more carefully, when we shall begin to reply to all the sects, which, while they dispute, have destroyed the truth.

But now we will argue against those who, falling from the second step, entertain wrong sentiments respecting the Supreme God. For some say that He neither does a kindness to any one, nor becomes angry, but in security and quietness enjoys the advantages of His own immortality. Others, indeed, take away anger, but leave to God kindness; for they think that a nature excelling in the greatest virtue, while it ought not to be malevolent, ought also to be benevolent. Thus all the philosophers are agreed on the subject of anger, but are at variance respecting kindness. But, that my speech may descend in order to the proposed subject, a division of this kind must be made and followed by me, since anger and kindness are different, and opposed to one another. Either anger must be attributed to God, and kindness taken from Him; or both alike must be taken from Him; or anger must be taken away, and kindness attributed to Him; or neither must be taken away. The nature of the case admits of nothing else besides these; so that the truth, which is sought for, must necessarily be found in some one of these. Let us consider them separately, that reason and arrangement may conduct us to the hiding-place of truth.

Chapter III.-Of the Good and Evil Things in Human Affairs, and of Their Author.

First, no one ever said this respecting God, that He is only subject to anger, and is not influenced by kindness. For it is unsuitable to God, that He should be endowed with a power of this kind, by which He may injure and do harm, but be unable to profit and to do good. What means, therefore, what hope of safety, is proposed to men, if God is the author of evils only? For if this is so, that venerable majesty will now be drawn out, not to the power of the judge, to whom it is permitted to preserve and set at liberty, but to the office of the torturer and executioner. But whereas we see that there are not only evils in human affairs, but also goods, it is plain that if God is the author of evils, there must be another who does things contrary to God, and gives to us good things. If there is such a one, by what name must he be called? Why is he who injures us more known to us than He who benefits us? But if this can be nothing besides God, it is absurd and vain to suppose that the divine power, than which nothing is greater or better, is able to injure, but unable to benefit; and accordingly no one has ever existed who ventured to assert this, because it is neither reasonable nor in any way credible. And because this is agreed upon, let us pass on and seek after the truth elsewhere.

Chapter IV.-Of God and His Affections, and the Censure of Epicurus.

That which follows is concerning the school of Epicurus; that as there is no anger in God, so indeed there is no kindness. For when Epicurus thought that it was inconsistent with God to injure and to inflict harm, which for the most part arises from the affection of anger, he took away from Him beneficence also, since he saw that it followed that if God has anger, He must also have kindness. Therefore, lest he should concede to Him a vice, he deprived Him also of virtue. From this, he says, He is happy and uncorrupted, because He cares about nothing, and neither takes trouble Himself nor occasions it to another. Therefore He is not God, if He is neither moved, which is peculiar to a living being, nor does anything impossible for man, which is peculiar to God, if He has no will at all, no action, in short, no administration, which is worthy of God. And what greater, what more worthy administration can be attributed to God, than the government of the world, and especially of the human race, to which all earthly things are subject?

What happiness, then, can there be in God, if He is always inactive, being at rest and unmoveable? if He is deaf to those who pray to Him, and blind to His worshippers? What is so worthy of God, and so befitting to Him, as providence? But if He cares for nothing, and foresees nothing, He has lost all His divinity. What else does he say, who takes from God all power and all substance, except that there is no God at all? In short, Marcus Tullius relates that it was said by Posidonius, that Epicurus understood that there were no gods, but that he said those things which he spoke respecting the gods for the sake of driving away odium; and so that he leaves the gods in words, but takes them away in reality, since he gives them no motion, no office. But if this is so, what can be more deceitful than him? And this ought to be foreign to the character of a wise and weighty man. But if he understood one thing and spoke another, what else is he to be called than a deceiver, double-tongued, wicked, and moreover foolish? But Epicurus was not so crafty as to say those things with the desire of deceiving, when he consigned these things also by his writings to everlasting remem-

brance; but he erred through ignorance of the truth. For, being led from the beginning by the probability of a single opinion, he necessarily fell into those things which followed.

For the first opinion was, that anger was not consistent with the character of God. And when this appeared to him to be true and unassailable, he was unable to refuse the consequences; because one affection being removed, necessity itself compelled him to remove from God the other affections also. Thus, he who is not subject to anger is plainly uninfluenced by kindness, which is the opposite feeling to anger. Now, if there is neither anger nor kindness in Him, it is manifest that there is neither fear, nor joy, nor grief, nor pity. For all the affections have one system, one motion, which cannot he the case with God. But if there is no affection in God, because whatever is subject to affections is weak, it follows that there is in Him neither the care of anything, nor providence.

The disputation of the wise man extends thus far: he was silent as to the other things which follow; namely, that because there is in Him neither care nor providence, therefore there is no reflection nor any perception in Him, by which it is effected that He has no existence at all. Thus, when he had gradually descended, he remained on the last step, because he now saw the precipice. But what does it avail to have remained silent, and concealed the danger? Necessity compelled him even against his will to fall. For he said that which he did not mean, because he so arranged his argument that he necessarily came to that point which he wished to avoid. You see, therefore, to what point he comes, when anger is removed and taken away from God. In short, either no one believes that, or a very few, and they the guilty and the wicked, who hope for impunity for their sins. But if this also is found to be false, that there is neither anger nor kindness in God, let us come to that which is put in the third place.

Chapter V.-The Opinion of the Stoics Concerning God; Of His Anger and Kindness.

The Stoics and some others are supposed to have entertained much better sentiments respecting the divine nature, who say that there is kindness in God, but not anger. A very pleasing and popular speech, that God is not subject to such littleness of mind as to imagine that He is injured by any one, since it is impossible for Him to be injured; so that that serene and holy majesty is excited, disturbed, and maddened, which is the part of human frailty. For they say that anger is a commotion and perturbation of the mind, which is inconsistent with God. Since, when it fails upon the mind of any one, as a violent tempest it excites such waves that it changes the condition of the mind, the eyes gleam, the countenance trembles, the tongue stammers, the teeth chatter, the countenance is alternately stained now with redness spread over it, now with white paleness. But if anger is unbecoming to a man, provided he be of wisdom and authority, how much more is so foul a change unbecoming to God! And if man, when he has authority and power, inflicts widespread injury through anger, sheds blood, overthrows cities, destroys communities, reduces provinces to desolation, bow much more is it to be believed that God, since He has power over the whole human race, and over the universe itself, would have been about to destroy all things if He were angry.

Therefore they think that so great and so pernicious an evil ought to be absent from Him. And if anger and excitement are absent from Him, because it is disfiguring and injurious, and He inflicts injury on no one, they think that nothing else remains, except that He is mild calm, propitious, beneficent, the preserver. For thus at length He may be called the common Father of all, and the best and greatest, which His divine and heavenly nature demands. For if among men it appears praiseworthy to do good rather than to injure, to restore to life rather than to kill, to save rather than to destroy, and innocence is not undeservedly numbered among the virtues,-and he who does these things is loved, esteemed, honoured, and celebrated with all blessings and vows,-in short, on account of his deserts and benefits is judged to be most like to God; how much more right is it that God Himself,

who excels in divine and perfect virtues, and who is removed from all earthly taint, should conciliate the whole race of man by divine and heavenly benefits! Those things are spoken speciously and in a popular manner, and they allure many to believe them but they who entertain these sentiments approach nearer indeed to the truth, but they partly fail, not sufficiently considering the nature of the case. For if God is not angry with the impious and the unrighteous, it is clear that He does not love the pious and the righteous.

Therefore the error of those is more consistent who take away at once both anger and kindness. For in opposite matters it is necessary to be moved to both sides or to neither. Thus, he who loves the good also hates the wicked, and he who does not hate the wicked does not love the good; because the loving of the good arises from the hatred of the wicked, and the hating of the wicked has its rise from the love of the good. There is no one who loves life without a hatred of death, nor who is desirous of light, but he who avoids darkness. These things are so connected by nature, that the one cannot exist without the other.

If any master has in his household a good and a bad servant, it is evident that he does not hate them both, or confer upon both benefits and honours; for if he does this, he is both unjust and foolish. But he addresses the one who is good with friendly words, and honours him and sets him over his house and household, and all his affairs; but punishes the bad one with reproaches, with stripes, with nakedness, with hunger, with thirst, with fetters: so that the latter may be an example to others to keep them from sinning, and the former to conciliate them; so that fear may restrain some, and honour may excite others. He, therefore, who loves also hates, and he who hates also loves; for there are those who ought to be loved, and there are those who ought to be hated. And as he who loves confers good things on those whom he loves, so he who hates inflicts evils upon those whom he hates; which argument, because it is true, can in no way be refuted. Therefore the opinion of those is vain and false, who, when they attribute the one to God, take away the other, not less than the opinion of those who take away both. But the latter, as we have shown, in part do not err, but retain that which is the better of the two;

whereas the former, led on by the accurate method of their reasoning, fall into the greatest error, because they have assumed premises which are altogether false. For they ought not to have reasoned thus: Because God is not liable to anger, therefore He is not moved by kindness; but in this manner: Because God is moved by kindness, therefore He is also liable to anger. For if it had been certain and undoubted that God is not liable to anger, then the other point would necessarily be arrived at. But since the question as to whether God is angry is more open to doubt, while it is almost perfectly plain that He is kind, it is absurd to wish to subvert that which is certain by means of an uncertainty, since it is easier to confirm uncertain things by means of those which are certain.

Chapter VI.-That God is Angry.

These are the opinions entertained by the philosophers respecting God. But if we have discovered that these things which have been spoken are false, there remains that one last resource, in which alone the truth can be found, which has never been embraced by philosophers, nor at any time defended: that it follows that God is angry, since He is moved by kindness. This opinion is to be maintained and asserted by us; for this is the sum and turning-point on which the whole of piety and religion depend: and no honour can be due to God, if He affords nothing to His worshippers; and no fear, if He is not angry with him who does not worship Him.

Chapter VII.-Of Man, and the Brute Animals, and Religion.

Though philosophers have often turned aside from reason through their ignorance of the truth, and have fallen into inextricable errors (for that is wont to happen to these which happens to a traveller ignorant of the way, and not confessing that he is ignorant,-namely, that he wanders about, while he is ashamed to inquire from those whom he meets), no philosopher, however, has ever made the assertion that there is no difference between man and the brutes. Nor has any one at all, provided that he wished to appear wise, reduced a rational animal to the level of the mute and irrational; which some ignorant persons do, resembling the brutes themselves, who, wishing to give themselves up to the indulgence of their appetite and pleasure, say that they are born on the same principle as all living animals, which it is impious for man to say. For who is so unlearned as not to know, who is so void of understanding as not to perceive, that there is something divine in man? I do not as yet come to the excellences of the soul and of the intellect, by which there is a manifest affinity between man and God. Does not the position of the body itself, and the fashion of the countenance, declare that we are not on a level with the dumb creation? Their nature is prostrated to the ground and to their pasture, and has nothing in common with the heaven, which they do not look upon. But man, with his erect position, with his elevated countenance raised to the contemplation of the universe, compares his features with God, and reason recognises reason.

And on this account there is no animal, as Cicero says, except man, which has any knowledge of God. For he alone is furnished with wisdom, so that he alone understands religion; and this is the chief or only difference between man and the dumb animals. For the other things which appear to be peculiar to man, even if there are not such in the dumb animals, nevertheless may appear to be similar. Speech is peculiar to man; yet even in these there is a certain resemblance to speech. For they both distinguish one another by their voices; and when they are angry, they send forth a sound resembling altercation; and when they see one another after an interval of time, they show the office of congratulation by their voice. To us, indeed, their voices appear uncouth, as ours perhaps do to them; but to themselves, who understand one another, they are words. In short, in every affection they utter distinct expressions of voice by which they may show their state of mind. Laughter also is peculiar

to man; and yet we see certain indications of joy in other animals, when they use passionate gestures with a view to sports, hang down their ears, contract their mouth, smooth their forehead, relax their eyes to sportiveness. What is so peculiar to man as reason and the foreseeing of the future? But there are animals which open several outlets in different directions from their lairs, that if any danger comes upon them, an escape may be open for them shut in; but they would not do this unless they possessed intelligence and reflection. Others are provident for the future, as

"Ants, when they plunder a great heap of corn, mindful of the winter, and lay it up in their dwelling; " again,- "As bees, which alone know a country and fixed abodes; and mindful of the winter which is to come, they practise labour in the summer, and lay up their gains as a common stock." It would be a long task if I should wish to trace out the things most resembling the skill of man, which are accustomed to be done by the separate tribes of animals. But if, in the case of all these things which are wont to be ascribed to man, there is found to be some resemblance even in the dumb animals, it is evident that religion is the only thing of which no trace can be found in the dumb animals, nor any indication. For justice is peculiar to religion, and to this no other animal attains. For man alone bears rule; the other animals are subjected to him. But the worship of God is ascribed to justice; and he who does not embrace this, being far removed from the nature of man, will live the life of the brutes under the form of man. But since we differ from the other animals almost in this respect alone, that we alone of all perceive the divine might and power, while in the others there is no understanding of God, it is surely impossible that in this respect either the dumb animals should have more wisdom, or human nature should be unwise, since all living creatures, and the whole system of nature, are subject to man on account of his wisdom. Wherefore if reason, if the force of man in this respect, excels and surpasses the rest of living creatures, inasmuch as he alone is capable of the knowledge of God, it is evident that religion can in no way be overthrown.

Chapter VIII.-Of Religion.

But religion is overthrown if we believe Epicurus speaking thus:- ”For the nature of gods must ever in itself of necessity enjoy immortality together with supreme repose, far removed and withdrawn from our concerns; since, exempt from every pain, exempt from all dangers, strong in its own resources, not wanting aught of us, it is neither gained by favours nor moved by anger.”

Now, when he says these things, does he think that any worship is to be paid to God, or does he entirely overthrow religion? For if God confers nothing good on any one, if He repays the obedience of His worshipper with no favour, what is so senseless, what so foolish, as to build temples, to offer sacrifices, to present gifts, to diminish our property, that we may obtain nothing? But (it will be said) it is right that an excellent nature should be honoured. What honour can be due to a being who pays no regard to us, and is ungrateful? Can we be bound in any manner to him who has nothing in common with us? ”Farewell to God,” says Cicero, ”if He is such as to be influenced by no favour, and by no affection of men. For why should I say ’may He be propitious? ’ for He can be propitious to no one.” What can be spoken more contemptible with respect to God? Farewell to Him, he says, that is, let Him depart and retire, since He is able to profit no one. But if God takes no trouble, nor occasions trouble to another, why then should we not commit crimes as often as it shall be in our power to escape the notice of men and to cheat the public laws? Wherever we shall obtain a favourable opportunity of escaping notice, let us take advantage of the occasion: let us take away the property of others, either without bloodshed or even with blood, if there is nothing else besides the laws to be reverenced.

While Epicurus entertains these sentiments, he altogether destroys religion; and when this is taken away, confusion and perturbation of life will follow. But if religion cannot be taken away without destroying our hold of wisdom, by which we are separated from the brutes, and of justice, by which the public life may be more secure, how can religion itself be maintained or guarded without fear? For that which is not feared is despised, and that which is despised is plainly not reverenced. Thus it comes to pass that religion, and majesty, and honour exist together with fear; but there is no fear where no one is angry. Whether, therefore, you take away from God kindness, or anger, or both, religion must be taken away, without which the life of men is full of folly, of wickedness, and enormity. For conscience greatly curbs men,

if we believe that we are living in the sight of God; if we imagine not only that the actions which we perform are seen from above, but also that our thoughts and our words are heard by God. But it is profitable to believe this, as some imagine, not for the sake of the truth, but of utility, since laws cannot punish conscience unless some terror from above hangs over to restrain offences. Therefore religion is altogether false, and there is no divinity; but all things are made up by skilful men, in order that they may live more uprightly and innocently. This is a great question, and foreign to the subject which we have proposed; but because it necessarily occurs, it ought to be handled, however briefly.

Chapter IX.-Of the Providence of God, and of Opinions Opposed to It.

When the philosophers of former times had agreed in their opinions respecting providence, and there was no doubt but that the world was set in order by God and reason, and was governed by reason, Protagoras, in the times of Socrates, was the first of all who said that it was not clear to him whether there was any divinity or not. And this disputation of his was judged so impious, and so contrary to the truth and to religion, that the Athenians both banished him from their territories, and burnt in a public assembly those books of his in which these statements were contained. But there is no need to speak respecting his opinions, because he pronounced nothing certain. After these things Socrates and his disciple Plato, and those who flowed forth from the school of Plato like rivulets into different directions, namely, the Stoics and Peripatetics, were of the same opinion as those who went before them.

Afterwards Epicurus said that there was indeed a God, because it was necessary that there should be in the world some being of surpassing excellence, distinction, and blessedness; yet that there was no providence, and thus that the world itself was ordered by no plan, nor art, nor workmanship, but that the universe was made up of certain minute and indivisible seeds. But I do not see what can be said more repugnant to the truth. For if there is a God, as God He is manifestly provident; nor can divinity be attributed to Him in any other way than if He retains the past, and knows the present, and foresees the future. Therefore, in taking away providence, he also denied the existence of God.But when he openly acknowledged the existence of God, at the same time he also admitted His providence for the one cannot exist at all, orbe understood, without the other. But in those later times in which philosophy had now lost its vigour, there lived a certain Diagoras of Melos, who altogether denied the existence of God, and on account of this sentiment was called atheist; also Theodorus of Cyrene: both of whom, because they were unable to discover anything new, all things having already been said and found out, preferred even, in opposition to the truth, to deny that in which all preceding philosophers had agreed without any ambiguity. These are they who

attacked providence, which had been asserted and defended through so many ages by so many intellects. What then? Shall we refute those trifling and inactive philosophers by reason, or by the authority of distinguished men, or rather by both? But we must hasten onwards, lest our speech should wander too far from our subject.

Chapter X.-Of the Origin of the World, and the Nature of Affairs, and the Providence of God.

They who do not admit that the world was made by divine providence, either say that it is composed of first principles coming together at random, or that it suddenly came into existence by nature, but hold, as Straton does, that nature has in itself the power of production and of diminution, but that it has neither sensibility nor figure, so that we may understand that all things were produced spontaneously, without any artificer or author. Each opinion is vain and impossible. But this happens to those who are ignorant of the truth, that they devise anything, rather than perceive that which the nature of the subject requires. First of all, with respect to those minute seeds, by the meeting together of which they say that the whole world came into existence, I ask where or whence they are. Who has seen them at any time? Who has perceived them? Who has heard them? Had none but Leucippus eyes? Had he alone a mind, who assuredly alone of all men was blind and senseless, since he spoke those things which no sick man could have uttered in his ravings, or one asleep in his dreams?

The ancient philosophers argued that all things were made up of four elements. He would not admit this, lest he should appear to tread in the footsteps of others; but he held that there were other first principles of the elements themselves, which can neither be seen, nor touched, nor be perceived by any part of the body. They are so minute, he says, that there is no edge of a sword so flue that they can be cut and divided by it. From which circumstance he gave them the name of atoms. But it occurred to him, that if they all had one and the same nature, they could not make up different objects of so great a variety as we see to be present in the world. He said, therefore, that there were smooth and rough ones, and round, and angular, and hooked. How much better had it been to be silent, than to have a tongue for such miserable and empty uses! And, indeed, I fear lest he who thinks these things worthy of refutation, should appear no less to rave. Let us, however, reply as to one who says something. If they are soft and round, it is plain that they cannot lay hold of one another, so as to make some body; as, though any one should wish to bind together

millet into one combination, the very softness of the grains would not permit them to come together into a mass. If they are rough, and angular, and hooked, so that they may be able to cohere, then they are divisible, and capable of being cut; for hooks and angles must project, so that they may possibly be cut off.

Therefore that which is able to be cut off and torn away, will be able both to be seen and held. "These," he says, "flutter about with restless motions through empty space, and are carried hither and thither, just as we see little particles of dust in the sun when it has introduced its rays and light through a window. From these there arise trees and herbs, and all fruits of the earth; from these, animals, and water, and fire, and all things are produced, and are again resolved into the same elements." This can be borne as long as the inquiry is respecting small matters. Even the world itself was made up of these. He has reached to the full extent of perfect madness: it seems impossible that anything further should be said, and yet he found something to add. "Since everything," he says, "is infinite, and nothing can be empty, it follows of necessity that there are innumerable worlds." What force of atoms had been so great, that masses so incalculable should be collected from such minute elements? And first of all I ask, What is the nature or origin of those seeds? For if all things are from them, whence shall we say that they themselves are? What nature supplied such an abundance of matter for the making of innumerable worlds? But let us grant that he raved with impunity concerning worlds; let us speak respecting this in which we are, and which we see. He says that all things are made from minute bodies which are incapable of division.

If this were so, no object would ever need the seed of its own kind. Birds would be born without eggs, or eggs without bringing forth; likewise the rest of the living creatures without coition: trees and the productions of the earth would not have their own seeds, which we daily handle and sow. Why does a corn-field arise from grain, and again grain from a corn-field? In short, if the meeting together and collecting of atoms would effect all things, all things would grow together in the air, since atoms flutter about through empty space. Why cannot the herb, why cannot the tree or grain, arise or be increased without earth, without roots, without moisture, without seed? From which it is evident that nothing is made up from atoms, since everything has its own peculiar and fixed nature, its own seed, its own law given from the beginning. Finally, Lucretius, as though forgetful of atoms, which he was maintaining, in order that he might refute those who say that all things are produced from nothing, employed these arguments, which might have weighed against himself. For he thus spoke:-

"If things came from nothing, any kind might be born of anything; nothing would require seed." Likewise afterwards:- "We must admit, therefore, that nothing can come from nothing, since things require seed before they can severally be born, and be brought out into the buxom fields of air." Who would imagine that he had brain when he said these things, and did not see that they were contrary to one another? For that nothing is made by means of atoms, is apparent from this, that everything has a definite seed, unless by chance we shall

believe that the nature both of fire and water is derived from atoms. Why should I say, that if materials of the greatest hardness are struck together with a violent blow, fire is struck out? Are atoms concealed in the steel, or in the flint? Who shut them in? Or why do they not leap forth spontaneously? Or how could the seeds of fire remain in a material of the greatest coldness?

I leave the subject of the flint and steel. If you hold in the sun an orb of crystal filled with water, fire is kindled from the light which is reflected from the water, even in the most severe cold. Must we then believe that fire is contained in the water? And yet fire cannot be kindled from the sun even in summer. If you shall breathe upon wax, or if a light vapour shall touch anything-either the hard surface of marble or a plate of metal-water is gradually condensed by means of the most minute drops. Also from the exhalation of the earth or sea mist is formed, which either, being dispersed, moistens whatever it has covered, or being collected, is carried aloft by the wind to high mountains, and compressed into cloud, and sends down great rains. Where, then, do we say that fluids are produced? Is it in the vapour? Or in the exhalation? Or in the wind? But nothing can be formed in that which is neither touched nor seen. Why should I speak of animals, in whose bodies we see nothing formed without plan, without arrangement, without utility, without beauty, so that the most skilful and careful marking out of all the parts and members repels the idea of accident and chance? But let us suppose it possible that the limbs, and bones, and nerves, and blood should be made up of atoms. What of the senses, the reflection, the memory, the mind, the natural capacity: from what seeds can they be compacted? He says, From the most minute. There are therefore others of greater size. How, then, are they indivisible?

In the next place, if the things which are not seen are formed from invisible seeds, it follows that those which are seen are from visible seeds. Why, then, does no one see them? But whether any one regards the invisible parts which are in man, or the parts which can be touched, and which are visible, who does not see that both parts exist in accordance with design? How, then, can bodies which meet together without design effect anything reasonable? For we see that there is nothing in the whole world which has not in itself very great and wonderful design. And since this is above the sense and capacity of man, to what can it be more rightly attributed than to the divine providence? If a statue, the resemblance of man, is made by the exercise of design and art, shall we suppose that man himself is made up of fragments which come together at random? And what resemblance to the truth is there in the thing produced, when the greatest and most surpassing skill can imitate nothing more than the mere outline and extreme lineaments of the body? Was the skill of man able to give to his production any motion or sensibility? I say nothing of the exercise of the sight, of hearing, and of smelling, and the wonderful uses of the other members, either those which are in sight or those which are hidden from view. What artificer could have fabricated either the heart of man, or the voice, or his very wisdom? Does any man of sound mind, therefore, think that that which man cannot do by reason and judgement, may be accomplished by a meeting together of atoms everywhere adhering to each other? You see

into what foolish ravings they have fallen, while they are unwilling to assign to God the making and the care of all things

Let us, however, concede to them that the things which are earthly are made from atoms: are the things also which are heavenly? They say that the gods are without contamination, eternal, and blessed; and they grant to them alone an exemption, so that they do not appear to be made up of a meeting together of atoms. For if the gods also had been made up of these, they would be liable to be dispersed, the seeds at length being resolved, and returning to their own nature. Therefore, if there is something which the atoms could not produce, why may we not judge in the same way of the others? But I ask why the gods did not build for themselves a dwelling-place before those first elements produced the world? It is manifest that, unless the atoms had come together and made the heaven, the gods would still be suspended through the midst of empty space. By what counsel, then, by what plan, did the atoms from a confused mass collect themselves, so that from some the earth below was formed into a globe, and the heaven stretched out above, adorned with so great a variety of constellations that nothing can be conceived more embellished? Can he, therefore, who sees such and so great objects, imagine that they were made without any design, without any providence, without any divine intelligence, but that such great and wonderful things arose out of fine and minute atoms?

Does it not resemble a prodigy, that there should be any human being who might say these things, or that there should be those who might believe them-as Democritus, who was his hearer, or Epicurus, to whom all folly flowed forth from the fountain of Leucippus? But, as others say, the world was made by Nature, which is without perception and figure. But this is much more absurd. If Nature made the world, it must have made it by judgment and intelligence; for it is lie that makes something who has either the inclination to make it, or knowledge. If nature is without perception and figure, how can that be made by it which has both perception and figure, unless by chance any one thinks that the fabric of animals, which is so delicate, could have been formed and animated by that which is without perception, or that that figure of heaven, which is prepared with such foresight for the uses of living beings, suddenly came into existence by some accident or other, without a builder, without an artificer?

"If there is anything," says Chrysippus, "which effects those things which man, though he is endowed with reason, cannot do, that assuredly is greater, and stronger, and wiser than man." But man cannot make heavenly things; therefore that which shall produce or has produced these things surpasses man in art, in design, in skill, and in power. Who, therefore, can it be but God? But Nature, which they suppose to be, as it were, the mother of all things, if it has not a mind, will effect nothing, will contrive nothing; for where there is no reflection there is neither motion nor efficacy. But if it uses counsel for the commencement of anything, reason for its arrangement, art for its accomplishment, energy for its consummation, and power to govern and control, why should it be called Nature rather than God? Or if a concourse of atoms, or Nature without mind, made those things which we see, I ask

why it was able to make the heaven, but unable to make a city or a house? Why it made mountains of marble, but did not make columns and statues? But ought not atoms to have come together to effect these things, since they leave no position untried? For concerning Nature, which has no mind, it is no wonder that it forgot to do these things. What, then, is the case? It is plain that God, when He commenced this work of the world,-than which nothing can be better arranged with respect to order, nor more befitting as to utility, nor more adorned as to beauty, nor greater as to bulk,-Himself made the things which could not be made by man; and among these also man himself, to whom He gave a portion of His own wisdom, and furnished him with reason, as much as earthly frailty was capable of receiving, that he might make for himself the things which were necessary for his own uses.

But if in the commonwealth of this world, so to speak, there is no providence which rules, no God who administers, no sense at all prevails in this nature of things. From what source therefore will it be believed that the human mind, with its skill and its intelligence, had its origin? For if the body of man was made from the ground, from which circumstance man received his name; it follows that the soul, which has intelligence, and is the ruler of the body, which the limbs obey as a king and commander, which can neither be looked upon nor comprehended, could not have come to man except from a wise nature. But as mind and soul govern everybody, so also does God govern the world. For it is not probable that lesser and humble things bear rule, but that greater and highest things do not bear rule. In short, Marcus Cicero, in his Tusculan Disputations, and in his Consolation, says: "No origin of souls can be found on earth. For there is nothing, he says, mixed and compound in souls, or which may appear to be produced and made up from the earth; nothing moist or airy, or of the nature of fire. For in these natures there is nothing which has the force of memory, of mind and reflection, which both retains the past and foresees the future, and is able to comprise the present; which things alone are divine.

For no source will ever be found from which they are able to come to man, unless it be from God. Since, therefore, with the exception of two or three vain calumniators, it is agreed upon that the world is governed by providence, as also it was made, and there is no one who ventures to prefer the opinion of Diagoras and Theodorus, or the empty fiction of Leucippus, or the levity of Democritus and Epicurus, either to the authority of those seven ancient men who were called wise, or to that of Pythagoras or of Socrates or Plato, and the other philosophers who judged that there is a providence; therefore that opinion also is false, by which they think that religion was instituted by wise men for the sake of terror and fear, in order that ignorant men might abstain from sins.

But if this is true, it follows that we are derided by the wise men of old. But if they invented religion for the sake of deceiving us, and moreover of deceiving the whole human race, therefore they were not wise, because falsehood is not consistent with the character of the wise man. But grant that they were wise; what great success in falsehood was it, that they were able to deceive not only the unlearned, but Plato also, and Socrates, and so easily to delude Pythagoras, Zeno, and Aristotle, the chiefs of the greatest sects? There is

therefore a divine providence, as those men whom I have named perceived, by the energy and power of which all things which we see were both made and are governed. For so vast a system of things such arrangement and such regularity in preserving the settled orders and times, could neither at first have arisen without a provident artificer, or have existed so many ages without a powerful inhabitant, or have been perpetually governed without a skilful and intelligent ruler; and reason itself declares this. For whatever exists which has reason, must have arisen from reason. Now reason is the part of an intelligent and wise nature; but a wise and intelligent nature can be nothing else than God. Now the world, since it has reason, by which it is both governed and kept together, was therefore made by God. But if God is the maker and ruler of the world, then religion is rightly and truly established; for honour and worship are due to the author and common parent of all things.

Chapter XI.-Of God, and that the One God, and by Whose Providence the World is Governed and Exists.

Since it is agreed upon concerning providence, it follows that we show whether it is to be believed that it belongs to many, or rather to one only. We have sufficiently taught, as I think, in our Institutions, that there cannot be many gods; because, if the divine energy and power be distributed among several, it must necessarily be diminished. But that which is lessened is plainly mortal; but if He is not mortal, He can neither be lessened nor divided. Therefore there is but one God, in whom complete energy and power can neither be lessened nor increased. But if there are many, while they separately have something of power and authority, the sum itself decreases; nor will they separately be able to have the whole, which they have in corn-moN with others: so much will be wanting to each as the others shall possess. There cannot therefore be many rulers in this world, nor many masters in one house, nor many pilots in one ship, nor many leaders in one herd or flock, nor many queens in one swarm. But there could not have been many suns in heaven, as there are not several souls in one body; so entirely does the whole of nature agree in unity.But if the world

”Is nourished by a soul, A spirit whose celestial flame Glows in each member of the frame, And stirs the mighty whole,”

it is evident from the testimony of the poet, that there is one God who inhabits the world, since the whole body cannot be inhabited and governed except by one mind. Therefore all divine power must be in one person, by whose will and command all things are ruled; and therefore He is so great, that He cannot be described in words by man, or estimated by the senses. From what source, therefore, did the opinion or persuasion respecting many gods come to men? Without doubt, all those who are worshipped as gods were men, and were also the earliest and greatest kings; but who is ignorant that they were invested with divine honours after death, either on account of the virtue by which they had profited the race of men, or that they obtained immortal memory on account of the benefits and inventions by which they had adorned human life? And not only men, but women also. And this, both the most ancient writers of Greece, whom they call theologi, and also Roman writers following

and imitating the Greeks, teach; of whom especially Euhemerus and our Ennius, whopoint out the birthdays, marriages, offspring, governments, exploits, deaths, and tombs of all of them. And Tullius, following them, in his third book, On the Nature of the Gods, destroyed the public religions; but neither he himself nor any other person was able to introduce the true one, of which he was ignorant. And thus he himself testified that that which was false was evident; that the truth, however, lay concealed.

"Would to heaven," he says, "that I could as easily discover true things as refute those that are false! And this he proclaimed not with dissimulation as an Academic, but truly and in accordance with the feeling of his mind, because the truth cannot be uprooted from human perceptions: that which the foresight of man was able to attain to, he attained to, that he might expose false things. For whatever is fictitious and false, because it is supported by no reason, is easily destroyed. There is therefore one God, the source and origin of all things, as Plato both felt and taught in the Timoeus, whose majesty he declares to be so great, that it can neither be comprehended by the mind nor be expressed by the tongue.

Hermes bears the same testimony, whom Cicero asserts to be reckoned by the Egyptians among the number of the gods. I speak of him who, on account of his excellence and knowledge of many arts, was called Trismegistus; and he was far more ancient not only than Plato, but than Pythagoras, and those seven wise men. In Xenophon, Socrates, as he discourses, says that "the form of God ought not to be inquired about: "and Plato, in his Book of Laws, says: "What God is, ought not to be the subject of inquiry, because it can neither be found out nor related." Pythagoras also admits that there is but one God, saying that there is an incorporeal mind, which, being diffused and stretched through all nature, gives vital perception to all living creatures; but Antisthenes, in his Physics, said that there was but one natural God, although the nations and cities have gods of their own people. Aristotle, with his followers the Peripatetics, and Zeno with his followers the Stoics, say nearly the same things. Truly it would be a long task to follow up the opinions of all separately, who, although they used different names, nevertheless agreed in one power which governed the world. But, however, though philosophers and poets, and those, in short, who worship the gods, often acknowledge the Supreme God, yet no one ever inquired into, no one discussed, the subject of His worship and honours; with that persuasion, in truth, with which, always believing Him to be bounteous and incorruptible, they think that He is neither angry with any one, nor stands in need of any worship. Thus there can be no religion where there is no fear.

Chapter XII.-Of Religion and the Fear of God.

Now, since we have replied to the impious and detestable wisdom, or rather senselessness of some, let us return to our proposed subject. We have said that, if religion is taken away, neither wisdom nor justice can be retained: wisdom, because the understanding of the divine nature, in which we differ from the brutes, is found in man alone; justice, because unless God, who cannot be deceived, shall restrain our desires, we shall live wickedly and impiously. Therefore, that our actions should be viewed by God, pertains not only to the usefulness of common life, but even to the truth; because, if religion and justice are taken away, having lost our reason, we either descend to the senselessness of the herds; or to the savageness of the beasts, yea, even more so, since the beasts spare animals of their own kind. What will be more savage, what more unmerciful, than man, if, the fear of a superior being taken away, he shall be able either to escape the notice of or to despise the might of the laws? It is therefore the fear of God alone which guards the mutual society of men, by which life itself is sustained, protected, and governed. But that fear is taken away if man is persuaded that God is without anger; for that He is moved and indignant when unjust actions are done, not only the common advantage, but even reason itself, and truth, persuade us. We must again return to the former subjects, that, as we have taught that the world was made by God, we may teach why it was made.

Chapter XIII.-Of the Advantage and Use of the World and of the Seasons.

If any one considers the whole government of the world, he will certainly understand how true is the opinion of the Stoics, who say that the world was made on our account. For all the things of which the world is composed, and which it produces from itself, are adapted to the use of man. Man, accordingly, uses fire for the purpose of warmth and light, and of softening his food, and for the working of iron; he uses springs for drinking, and for baths; he uses rivers for irrigating the fields, and assigning boundaries to countries; he uses the earth for receiving a variety of fruits, the hills for planting vineyards, the mountains for the use of trees and firewood, the plains for crops of grain; he uses the sea not only for commerce, and for receiving supplies from distant countries, but also for abundance of every kind of fish. But if he makes use of these elements to which he is nearest, there is no doubt that he uses the hear-en also, since the offices even of heavenly things are regulated for the fertility of the earth from which we live. The sun, with its ceaseless courses and unequal intervals, completes its annual circles, and either at his rising draws forth the day for labour, or at his setting brings on the night for repose;

and at one time by his departure farther towards the south, at another time by his approach nearer towards the north, he causes the vicissitudes of winter and summer, so that both by the moistures and frosts of winter the earth becomes enriched for fruitfulness, and by the heats of summer either the produce of grass is hardened by maturity, or that which is in moist places, being seethed and heated, becomes ripened. The moon also, which governs the time of night, regulates her monthly courses by the alternate loss and recovery of light, and by the brightness of her shining illumines the nights obscure with gloomy darkness, so that journeys in the summer heat, and expeditions, and works, may be performed without labour and inconvenience; since

”By night the light stubble, by night The dry meadows are better mown.”

The other heavenly bodies also, either at their rising or setting, supply favourable times by their fixed positions. Moreover, they also afford guidance to ships, that they may not wander through the boundless deep with uncertain course, since the pilot duly observing them arrives at the harbour of the shore at which he aims. Clouds are attracted by the breath of the winds, that the fields of sown grain may be watered with showers, that the vines may abound with produce, and the trees with fruits. And these things are exhibited by a succession of changes throughout the year, that nothing may at any time be wanting by which the life of men is sustained. But (it is said) the same earth nourishes the other living creatures, and by the produce of the same even the dumb animals are fed. Has not God laboured also for the sake of the dumb animals? By no means; because they are void of reason. On the contrary, we understand that even these themselves in the same manner were made by God for the use of man, partly for food, partly for clothing, partly to assist him in his work; so that it is manifest that the divine providence wished to furnish and adorn the life of men with an abundance of objects and resources, and on this account He both filled the air with birds, and the sea with fishes, and the earth with quadrupeds.

But the Academics, arguing against the Stoics, are accustomed to ask why, if God made all things for the sake of men, many things are found even opposed, and hostile, and injurious to us, as well in the sea as on the land. And the Stoics, without any regard to the truth, most foolishly repelled this. For they say that there are many things among natural productions, and reckoned among animals, the utility of which hitherto escapes notice, but that this is discovered in process of the times, as necessity and use have already discovered many things which were unknown in former ages. What utility, then, can be discovered in mice, in beetles, in serpents, which are troublesome and pernicious to man? Is it that some medicine lies concealed in them? If there is any, it will at some time be found out, namely, as a remedy against evils, whereas they complain that it is altogether evil. They say that the viper, when burnt and reduced to ashes, is a remedy for the bite of the same beast. How much better had it been that it should not exist at all, than that a remedy should be required against it drawn from itself?

They might then have answered with more conciseness and truth after this manner. When God had formed man as it were His own image, that which was the completion of His workmanship, He breathed wisdom into him alone, so that he might bring all things into subjection to his own authority and government, and make use of all the advantages of the world. And yet He set before him both good and evil things, inasmuch as He gave to him wisdom, the whole nature of which is employed in discerning things evil and good: for no one can choose better things, and know what is good, unless he at the same time knows to reject and avoid the things which are evil. They are both mutually connected with each other, so that, the one being taken away, the other must also be taken away. Therefore, good and evil things being set before it, then at length wisdom discharges its office, and desires the good for usefulness, but rejects the evil for safety. Therefore, as innumerable good things have been given which it might enjoy, so also have evils, against which it might guard. For if there is no evil, no danger-nothing, in short, which can injure man-all the material of

wisdom is taken away, and will be unnecessary for man. For if only good things are placed in sight, what need is there of reflection, of understanding, of knowledge, of reason? since, wherever he shall extend his hand, that is befitting and adapted to nature;

so that if any one should wish to place a most exquisite dinner before infants, who as yet have no taste, it is plain that each will desire that to which either impulse, or hunger, or even accident, shall attract them; and whatever they shall take, it will be useful and salutary to them. What injury will it therefore be for them always to remain as they are, and always to be infants and unacquainted with affairs? But if you add a mixture either of bitter things, or things useless, or even poisonous, they are plainly deceived through their ignorance of good and evil, unless wisdom is added to them, by which they may have the rejection of evil things and the choice of good things. You see, therefore, that we have greater need of wisdom on account of evils; and unless these things had been proposed to us, we should not be a rational animal. But if this account is true, which the Stoics were in no manner able to see, that argument also of Epicurus is done away. God, he says, either wishes to take away evils, and is unable; or He is able, and is unwilling; or He is neither willing nor able, or He is both willing and able. If He is willing and is unable, He is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God; if He is able and unwilling, He is envious, which is equally at variance with God;

if He is neither willing nor able, He is both envious and feeble, and therefore not God; if He is both willing and able, which alone is suitable to God, from what source then are evils? or why does He not remove them? I know that many of the philosophers, who defend providence, are accustomed to be disturbed by this argument, and are almost driven against their will to admit that God takes no interest in anything, which Epicurus especially aims at; but having examined the matter, we easily do away with this formidable argument. For God is able to do whatever He wishes, and there is no weakness or envy in God. He is able, therefore, to take away evils; but He does not wish to do so, and yet He is not on that account envious. For on this account He does not take them away, because He at the same time gives wisdom, as I have shown; and there is more of goodness and pleasure in wisdom than of annoyance in evils. For wisdom causes us even to know God, and by that knowledge to attain to immortality, which is the chief good. Therefore, unless we first know evil, we shall be unable to know good. But Epicurus did not see this, nor did any other, that if evils are taken away, wisdom is in like manner taken away; and that no traces of virtue remain in man, the nature of which consists in enduring and overcoming the bitterness of evils.

And thus, for the sake of a slight gain in the taking away of evils, we should be deprived of a good, which is very great, and true, and peculiar to us. It is plain, therefore, that all things are proposed for the sake of man, as well evils as also goods.

Chapter XIV.-Why God Made Man.

It follows that I show for what purpose God made man himself. As He contrived the world for the sake of man, so He formed man himself t on His own account, as it were a priest of a divine temple, a spectator of His works and of heavenly objects. For he is the only being who, since he is intelligent and capable of reason, is able to understand God, to admire His works, and perceive His energy and power; for on this account he is furnished with judgment, intelligence, and prudence. On this account he alone, beyond the other living creatures, has been made with an upright body and attitude, so that he seems to have been raised up for the contemplation of his Parent. On this account he alone has received language, and a tongue the interpreter of his thought, that he may be able to declare the majesty of his Lord. Lastly, for this cause all things were placed under his control, that he himself might be under the control of God, their Maker and Creator. If God, therefore, designed man to be a worship per of Himself, and on this account gave him so much honour, that he might rule over all things; it is plainly most just that he should worship Him who bestowed upon him such great gifts, and love man, who is united with us in the participation of the divine justice. For it is not right that a worshipper of God should he injured by a worshipper of God.

From which it is understood that man was made for the sake of religion and justice. And of this matter Marcus Tullius is a witness in his books respecting the Laws, since he thus speaks: ”But of all things concerning which learned men dispute, nothing is of greater consequence than that it should be altogether understood that we are born to justice. And if this is most true, it follows that God will have all men to be just, that is, to have God and man as objects of their affection; to honour God in truth as a Father, and to love man as a brother: for in these two things the whole of justice is comprised. But he who either fails to acknowledge God or acts injuriously to man, lives unjustly and contrary to his nature, and in this manner disturbs the divine institution and law.

Chapter XV.-Whence Sins Extended to Man.

Here perhaps some one may ask, Whence sins extended to man, or what perversion distorted the rule of the divine institution to worse things, so that, though he was born to justice, he nevertheless performs unjust works. I have already in a former place explained, that God at the same time set before him good and evil, and that He loves the good, and hates the evil which is contrary to this; but that He permitted the evil on this account, that the good also might shine forth, since, as I have often taught, we understand that the one cannot exist without the other; in short, that the world itself is made up of two elements opposing and connected with one another, of fire and moisture, and that light could not have been made unless there has also been darkness, since there cannot be a higher place without a lower, nor a rising without a setting, nor warmth without cold, nor softness without hardness. Thus also we are composed of two substances equally opposed to one another-soul and body: the one of which is assigned to the heaven, because it is slight and not to be handled; the other to the earth, because it is capable of being laid hold of: the one is firm and eternal, the other frail and mortal. Therefore good clings to the one, and evil to the other: light, life, and justice to the one; darkness, death, and injustice to the other.

Hence there arose among men the corruption of their nature, so that it was necessary that a law should be established, by which vices might be prohibited, and the duties of virtue be en-joined. Since, therefore, there are good and evil things in the affairs of men, the nature of which I have set forth, it must be that God is moved to both sides, both to favour when He sees that just things are done, and to anger when He perceives unjust things.

But Epicurus opposes us, and says: "If there is in God the affection of joy leading Him to favour, and of hatred influencing Him to anger, He must of necessity have both fear, and inclination, and desire, and the other affections which belong to human weakness. It does not follow that he who is angry must fear, or that he who feels joy must grieve; in short, they who are liable to anger are less timid, and they who are of a joyful temperament are less affected with grief. What need is there to speak of the affections of humanity, to which our nature yields? Let us weigh the divine necessity; for I am unwilling to speak of nature, since it is believed that our God was never born. The affection of fear has a subject-matter in man,

but it has none in God. Man, inasmuch as he is liable to many accidents and dangers, fears lest any greater violence should arise which may strike, despoil, lacerate, dash down, and destroy him. But God, who is liable neither to want, nor injury, nor pain, nor death, can by no means fear, because there is nothing which can offer violence to Him. Also the reason and cause of desire is manifest in man. For, inasmuch as he was made frail and mortal, it was necessary that another and different sex should be made, by union with which offspring might be produced to continue the perpetuity of his race.

But this desire has no place in God, because frailty and death are far removed from Him; nor is there with Him any female in whose union He is able to rejoice; nor does He stand in need of succession, since He will live for ever. The same things may be said respecting envy and passion, to which, from sure and manifest causes, man is liable, but to which God is by no means liable. But, in truth, favour and anger and pity have their substance in God, and that greatest and matchless power employs them for the preservation of the world.

Chapter XVI.-Of God, and His Anger and Affections.

Some one will ask what this substance is. First of all, when evils befall them, men in their dejected state for the most part have recourse to God: they appease and entreat Him, believing that He is able to repel injuries from them. He has therefore an occasion of exercising pity; for He is not so unmerciful and a despiser of men as to refuse aid to those who are in distress. Very many, also, who are persuaded that justice is pleasing to God, both worship Him who is Lord and Parent of all, and with continual prayers and repeated vows offer gifts and sacrifices, follow up His name with praises, striving to gain His favour by just and good works. There is therefore a reason, on account of which God may and ought to favour them. For if there is nothing so befitting God as beneficence, and nothing so unsuited to His character as to be ungrateful, it is necessary that He should make some return for the services of those who are excellent, and who lead a holy life, that He may not be liable to the charge of ingratitude which is worthy of blame even in the case of a man. But, on the contrary, others are daring and wicked, who pollute all things with their lusts, harass with slaughters, practise fraud, plunder, commit perjury, neither spare relatives nor parents, neglect the laws, and even God Himself. Anger, therefore, has a befitting occasion in God.

For it is not right that, when He sees such things, He should not be moved, and arise to take vengeance upon the wicked, and destroy the pestilent and guilty, so as to promote the interests of all good men. Thus even in anger itself there is also contained a showing of kindness. Therefore the arguments are found to be empty and false, either of those who, when they will not admit that God is angry, will have it that He shows kindness, because this, indeed, cannot take place without anger; or of those who think that there is no emotion of the mind in God. And because there are some affections to which God is not liable, as desire, fear, avarice, grief, and envy, they have said that He is entirely free from all affection. For He is not liable to these, because they are vicious affections; but as to those which belong to virtue,-that is, anger towards the wicked, regard towards the good, pity towards the afflicted,-inasmuch as they are worthy of the divine power, He has affections of His own, both just and true. And if He is not possessed of them, the life of man will be thrown into confusion, and the condition of things will come to such disturbance that the laws will be despised and overpowered, and audacity alone reign, so that no one can at length be in

safety unless he who excels in strength. Thus all the earth will be laid waste, as it were, by a common robbery.

But now, since the wicked expect punishment, and the good hope for favour, and the afflicted look for aid, there is place for virtues, and crimes are more rare. But it is said, ofttimes the wicked are more prosperous, and the good more wretched, and the just are harassed with impunity by the unjust. We will hereafter consider why these things happen. In the meantime let us explain respecting anger, whether there be any in God; whether He takes no notice at all, and is unmoved at those things which are done with impiety.

Chapter XVII.-Of God, His Care and Anger.

God, says Epicurus, regards nothing; therefore He has no power. For he who has power must of necessity regard affairs. For if He has power, and does not use it, what so great cause is there that, I will not say our race, but even the universe itself, should be contemptible in His sight? On this account he says He is pure and happy, because He is always at rest. To whom, then, has the administration of so great affairs been entrusted, if these things which we see to be governed by the highest judgment are neglected by God? or how can he who lives and perceives be at rest? For rest belongs either to sleep or to death. But sleep has not rest. For when we are asleep, the body indeed is at rest, but the soul is restless and agitated: it forms for itself images which it may behold, so that it exercises its natural power of motion by a variety of visions, and calls itself away from false things, until the limbs are satiated, and receive vigour from rest. Therefore eternal rest belongs to death alone. Now if death does not affect God, it follows that God is never at rest. But in what can the action of God consist, but in the administration of the world? But if God carries on the care of the world, it follows that He cares for the life of men, and takes notice of the acts of individuals, and He earnestly desires that they should be wise and good.

This is the will of God, this the divine law; and he who follows and observes this is beloved by God. It is necessary that He should be moved with anger against the man who has broken or despised this eternal and divine law. If, he says, God does harm to any one, therefore He is not good. They are deceived by no slight error who defame all censure, whether human or divine, with the name of bitterness and malice, thinking that He ought to be called injurious who visits the injurious with punishment. But if this is so, it follows that we have injurious laws, which enact punishment for offenders, and injurious judges who inflict capital punishments on those convicted of crime. But if the law is just which awards to the transgressor his due, and if the judge is called upright and good when he punishes crimes,-for he guards the safety of good men who punishes the evil,-it follows that God, when He opposes the evil, is not injurious; but he himself is injurious who either injures an innocent man, or spares an injurious person that he may injure many.

I would gladly ask from those who represent God as immoveable, if any one had property, a house, a household of slaves, and his slaves, despising the forbearance of their master, should attack all things, and themselves take the enjoyment of his goods, if his household should honour them, while the master was despised by all, insulted, and deserted: could he be a wise man who should not avenge the insults, but permit those over whom he had power to have the enjoyment of his property? Can such forbearance be found in any one? If, indeed, it is to be called forbearance, and not rather a kind of insensible stupor. But it is easy to endure contempt. What if those things were done which are spoken of by Cicero? "For I ask, if any head of a family, when his children had been put to death by a slave, his wife slain and his house set on fire, should not exact most severe punishment from that slave, whether he would appear to be kind and merciful, or inhuman and most cruel? "But if to pardon deeds of this kind is the part of cruelty rather than of kindness, it is not therefore the part of goodness in God not to be moved at those things which are done unjustly. For the world is, as it were, the house of God, and men, as it were, His slaves; and if His name is a mockery to them, what kind or amount of forbearance is it to give up His own honours, to see wicked and unjust things done, and not to be indignant, which is peculiar and natural to Him who is displeased with sins! To be angry, therefore, is the part of reason: for thus faults are removed, and licentiousness is curbed; and this is plainly in accordance with justice and wisdom.

But the Stoics did not see that there is a distinction between right and wrong, that there is a just and also an unjust anger; and because they did not find a remedy for the matter, they wished altogether to remove it. But the Peripatetics said that it was not to be cut out, but moderated; to whom we have made a sufficient reply in the sixth book of the Institutions. Now, that the philosophers were ignorant of the nature of anger, is plain from their definitions, which Seneca enumerated in the books which he composed on the subject of anger. "Anger is," he says, "the desire of avenging an injury. Others, as Posidonius says, describe it as the desire of punishing him by whom you think that you have been unfairly injured. Some have thus defined it: "Anger is an incitement of the mind to injure him who either has committed an injury, or who has wished to do so. The definition of Aristotle does not differ greatly from ours; for he says that "anger is the desire of requiting pain. This is the unjust anger, con-coming which we spoke before, which is contained even in the dumb animals; but it is to be restrained in man, lest he should rush to some very great evil through rage. This cannot exist in God, because He cannot be injured; but it is found in man, inasmuch as he is frail. For the inflicting of injury inflames anguish, and anguish produces a desire of revenge.

Where, then, is that just anger against offenders? For this is evidently not the desire of revenge, inasmuch as no injury precedes. I do not speak of those who sin against the laws; for although a judge may be angry with these without incurring blame, let us, however, suppose that he ought to be of a sedate mind when he sentences the guilty to punishment, because he is the executor of the laws, not of his own spirit or power; for so they wish it who endeavour to extirpate anger. But I speak of those in particular who are in our own

power, as slaves, children, wives, and pupils; for when we see these offend, we are incited to restrain them.

For it cannot fail to be, that he who is just and good is displeased with things which are bad, and that he who is displeased with evil is moved when he sees it practised. Therefore we arise to take vengeance, not because we have been injured, but that discipline may be preserved, morals may be corrected, and licentiousness be suppressed. This is just anger; and as it is necessary in man for the correction of wickedness, so manifestly is it necessary in God, from whom an example comes to man. For as we ought to restrain those who are subject to our power, so also ought God to restrain the of-fences of all. And in order that He may do this, He must be angry; because it is natural for one who is good to be moved and incited at the fault of another. Therefore they ought to have given this definition: Anger is an emotion of the mind arousing itself for the restraining of faults. For the definition given by Cicero, "Anger is the desire of taking vengeance," does not differ much from those already mentioned. But that anger which we may call either fury or rage ought not to exist even in man, because it is altogether vicious; but the anger which relates to the correction of vices ought not to be taken away from man; nor can it be taken away from God, because it is both serviceable for the affairs of men, and necessary.

Chapter XVIII.-Of the Punishment of Faults, that It Cannot Take Place Without Anger.

What need is there, they say, of anger, since faults can be corrected without this affection? But there is no one who can calmly see any one committing an offence. This may perhaps be possible in him who presides over the laws, because the deed is not committed before his eyes, but it is brought before him as a doubtful matter from another quarter. Nor can any wickedness be so manifest, that there is no place for a de-fence; and therefore it is possible that a judge may not be moved against him who may possibly be found to be innocent; and when the detected crime shall have come to light, he now no longer uses his own opinion, but that of the laws. It may be granted that he does that which he does without anger; for he has that which he may follow. We, undoubtedly, when an offence is committed by our household at home, whether we see or perceive it, must be indignant; for the very sight of a sin is unbecoming. For he who is altogether unmoved either approves of faults, which is more disgraceful and unjust, or avoids the trouble of reproving them, which a tranquil spirit and a quiet mind despises and refuses, unless anger shall have aroused and incited it. But when any one is moved, and yet through unseasonable leniency grants pardon more frequently than is necessary, or at all times, he evidently both destroys the life of those whose audacity he is fostering for greater crimes, and furnishes himself with a perpetual source of annoyances. Therefore the restraining of one's anger in the case of sins is faulty.

Archytas of Tarentum is praised, who, when he had found everything ruined on his estate, rebuking the fault of his bailiff, said, "Wretch, I would have beaten you to death if I had not been angry. They consider this to be a singular example of forbearance; but influenced by authority, they do not see how foolishly he spoke and acted. For if (as Plato says) no prudent man punishes because there is an offence, but to prevent the occurrence of an offence, it is evident how evil an example this wise man put forth. For if slaves shall perceive that their master uses violence when he is not angry, and abstains from violence when he is angry, it is evident that they will not commit slight offences, lest they should be beaten; but will commit the greatest offences, that they may arouse the anger of the perverse man, and

escape with impunity. But I should praise him if, when he was enraged, he had given space to his anger, that the excitement of his mind might calm down through the interval of time, and his chastisement might be confined within moderate limits. Therefore, on account of the magnitude of the anger, punishment ought not to have been inflicted, but to have been delayed, lest it should inflict upon the offender pain greater than is just, or occasion an outburst of fury in the punisher.

But now, how is it equitable or wise, that any one should be punished on account of a slight offence, and should be unpunished on account of a very great one? But if he had learned the nature and causes of things, he never would have professed so unsuitable a forbearance, that a wicked slave should rejoice that his master has been angry with him. For as God has furnished the human body with many and various senses which are necessary for the use of life, so also He has assigned to the soul various affections by which the course of life might be regulated; and as He has given desire for the sake of producing offspring, so has He given anger for the sake of restraining faults.

But they who are ignorant of the ends of good and evil things, as they employ sensual desire for the purposes of corruption and pleasure, in the same manner make use of anger and passion for the inflicting of injury, while they are angry with those whom they regard with hatred. Therefore they are angry even with those who commit no offence, even with their equals, or even with their superiors. Hence they daily rush to monstrous deeds; hence tragedies often arise. Therefore Archytas would be deserving of praise, if, when he had been enraged against any citizen or equal who injured him, he had curbed himself, and by forbearance mitigated the impetuosity of his fury. This self-restraint is glorious, by which any great evil which impends is restrained; but it is a fault not to check the faults of slaves and children; for through their escaping without punishment they will proceed to greater evil. In this case anger is not to be restrained; but even if it is in a state of inactivity, it must be aroused. But that which we say respecting man, we also say respecting God, who made man like to Himself. I omit making mention of the figure of God, because the Stoics say that God has no form, and another great subject will arise if we should wish to refute them. I only speak respecting the soul. If it belongs to God to reflect, to be wise, to understand, to foresee. to excel, and of all animals man alone has these qualities, it follows that he was made after the likeness of God; but on this account he goes on to vice, because, being mingled with frailty derived from earth, he is unable to preserve pure and uncontaminated that which he has received from God, unless he is imbued with the precepts of justice by the same God.

Chapter XIX.-Of the Soul and Body, and of Providence.

But since he is made up, as we have said, of two parts, soul and body, the virtues are contained in the one, and vices in the other, and they mutually oppose each other. For the good properties of the soul, which consist in restraining lusts, are contrary to the body; and the good properties of the body, which consist in every kind of pleasure, are hostile to the soul. But if the virtue of the soul shall have resisted the desires, and suppressed them, he will be truly like to God. From which it is evident that the soul of man, which is capable of divine virtue, is not mortal. But there is this distinction, that since virtue is attended with bitterness, and the attraction of pleasure is sweet, great numbers are overcome and are drawn aside to the pleasantness; but they who have given themselves up to the body and earthly things are pressed to the earth, and are unable to attain to the favour of the divine bounty, because they have polluted themselves with the defilements of vices. But they who, following God, and in obedience to Him, have despised the desires of the body, and, preferring virtue to pleasures, have preserved innocence and righteousness, these God recognises as like to Himself.

Since, therefore, He has laid down a most holy law, and wishes all men to be innocent and beneficent, is it possible that He should not be angry when He sees that His law is despised, that virtue is rejected, and pleasure made the object of pursuit? But if He is the governor of the world, as He might to be, He surely does not despise that which is even of the greatest importance in the whole world. If He has fore-sight, as it is befitting that God should have, it is plain that He consults the interests of the human race, in order that our life may be more abundantly supplied, and better, and safer. If He is the Father and God of all, He is undoubtedly delighted with the virtues of men, and provoked by their vices. Therefore He loves the just, and hates the wicked. There is no need (one says) of hatred; for He once for all has fixed a reward for the good, and punishment for the wicked. But if any one lives justly and innocently, and at the same time neither worships God nor has any regard for Him, as Aristides, and Timon, and others of the philosophers, will he escape with impunity, because, though he has obeyed the law of God, he has nevertheless despised God Himself? There is therefore something on account of which God may be angry with one rebelling against Him, as it were, in reliance upon His integrity.

If He can be angry with this man on account of his pride, why not more so with the sinner, who has despised the law together with the Lawgiver? The judge cannot pardon offences, because he is subject to the will of another. But God can pardon, because He is Himself the arbitrator and judge of His own law; and when He laid down this, He did not surely deprive Himself of all power, but He has the liberty of bestowing pardon.

Chapter XX.-Of Offences, and the Mercy of God.

If He is able to pardon, He is therefore able also to be angry. Why, then, some one will say, does it often occur, that they who sin are prosperous, and they who live piously are wretched? Because fugitives and disinherited persons live without restraint, and they who are under the discipline of a father or master live in a more strict and frugal manner. For virtue is proved and fixed by means of ills; vices by means of pleasure. Nor, however, ought he who sins to hope for lasting impunity, because there is no lasting happiness. "But, in truth, the last day is always to be looked for by man and no one ought to be called happy before his death and last funeral rites,"

as the not inelegant poet says. It is the end which proves happiness, and no one is able to escape the judgment of God, either when alive or after death. For He has the power both to cast down the living from on high, and to punish the dead with eternal torments. Nay, he says, if God is angry, He ought to have inflicted vengeance at once, and to have punished every one according to his desert. But (it is replied) if He had done this, no one would survive. For there is no one who offends in no respect, and there are many things which excite to the commission of sin-age, intemperance, want, opportunity, reward. To such an extent is the frailty of the flesh with which we are clothed liable to sin, that unless God were indulgent to this necessity, perhaps too few would live. On this account He is most patient, and restrains His anger. For because there is in Him perfect virtue, it follows of necessity that His patience also is perfect, which is itself also a virtue. How many men, from having been sinners, have afterwards become righteous; from being injurious, have become good; from being wicked, have become temperate! How many who were in early life base, and condemned by the judgment of all, afterwards have turned out praiseworthy? But it is plain that this could not happen if punishment followed every offence.

The public laws condemn those who are manifestly guilty; but there are great numbers whose offences are concealed, great numbers who restrain the accuser either by entreaties or by reward, great numbers who elude justice by favour or influence. But if the divine censure should condemn all those who escape the punishment of men, there would be few or even no men on the earth. In short, even that one reason for destroying the human race might have

been a just one, that men, despising the living God, pay divine honour to earthly and frail images, as though they were of heaven, adoring works made by human hands. And though God their Creator made them of elevated countenance and upright figure, and raised them to the contemplation of the heaven and the knowledge of God, they have preferred, like cattle, to bend themselves to the earth. For he is low, and curved, and bent downward, who, turning away from the sight of heaven and God his Father, worships things of the earth, which he ought to have trodden upon, that is, things made and fashioned from earth. Therefore, amidst such great impiety and such great sins of men, the forbearance of God attains this object, that men, condemning the errors of their past life, correct themselves. In short, there are many who are just and good; and these, having laid aside the worship of earthly things, acknowledge the majesty of the one and only God. But though the forbearance of God is very great and most useful; yet, although late, He punishes the guilty, and does not suffer them to proceed further, when He sees that they are incorrigible.

Chapter XXI.-Of the Anger of God and Man.

There remains one question, and that the last. For some one will perhaps say, that God is so far from being angry, that in His precepts He even forbids man to be angry. I might say that the anger of man ought to be curbed, because he is often angry unjustly; and he has immediate emotion, because he is only for a time. Therefore, lest those things should be done which the low, and those of moderate station, and great kings do in their anger, his rage ought to have been moderated and suppressed, lest, being out of his mind, he should commit some inexpiable crime. But God is not angry for a short time, because He is eternal and of perfect virtue, and He is never angry unless deservedly. But, however, the matter is not so; for if He should altogether prohibit anger, He Himself would have been in some measure the censurer of His own workmanship, since He from the beginning had inserted anger in the liver of man, since it is believed that the cause of this emotion is contained in the moisture of the gall. Therefore He does not altogether prohibit anger, because that affection is necessarily given, but He forbids us to persevere in anger. For the anger of mortals ought to be mortal; for if it is lasting, enmity is strengthened to lasting destruction. Then, again, when He enjoined us to be angry, and yet not to sin, it is plain that He did not tear up anger by the roots, but restrained it, that in every correction we might preserve moderation and justice. Therefore He who commands us to be angry is manifestly Himself angry; He who enjoins us to be quickly appeased is manifestly Himself easy to be appeased: for He has enjoined those things which are just and useful for the interests of society.

But because I had said that the anger of God is not for a time only, as is the case with man, who becomes inflamed with an immediate excitement, and on account of his frailty is unable easily to govern himself, we ought to understand that because God is eternal, His anger also remains to eternity; but, on the other hand, that because He is endued with the greatest excellence, He controls His anger, and is not ruled by it, but that He regulates it according to His will. And it is plain that this is not opposed to that which has just been said. For if His anger had been altogether immortal, there would be no place after a fault for satisfaction or kind feeling, though He Himself commands men to be reconciled before the setting of the sun. But the divine anger remains for ever against those who ever sin. Therefore God is appeased not by incense or a victim, not by costly offerings, which things

are all corruptible, but by a reformation of the morals: and he who ceases to sin renders the anger of God mortal. For this reason He does not immediately punish every one who is guilty, that man may have the opportunity of coming to a right mind, and correcting himself.

Chapter XXII.-Of Sins, and the Verses of the Sibyls Respecting Them Recited.

This is what I had to say, most beloved Donatus, respecting the anger of God, that you might know how to refute those who represent God as being without emotions. It only remains that, after the practice of Cicero, I should use an epilogue by way of peroration. As he did in the Tusculan Disputations, when discoursing on the subject of death, so we in this work ought to bring forward divine testimonies, which may be believed, to refute the persuasion of those who, believing that God is without anger, destroy all religion, without which, as we have shown, we are either equal to the brutes in savageness, or to the cattle in foolishness; for it is in religion only-that is, in the knowledge of the Supreme God-that wisdom consists. All the prophets, being filled with the Divine Spirit, speak nothing else than of the favour of God towards the righteous, and His anger against the ungodly. And their testimony is indeed sufficient for us; but because it is not believed by those who make a display of wisdom by their hair and dress, it was necessary to refute them by reason and arguments. For they act so preposterously, that human things give authority to divine things, whereas divine things ought rather to give authority to human. But let us now leave these things, lest we should produce no effect upon them, and the subject should be indefinitely drawn out. Let us therefore seek those testimonies which they can either believe, or at any rate not oppose.

Authors of great number and weight have made mention of the Sibyls; of the Greeks, Aristo the Chian, and Apollodorus the Erythraean; of our writers, Varro and Fenestella.All these relate that the Erythraean Sibyl was distinguished and noble beyond the rest. Apollodorus, indeed, boasts of her as his own citizen and countrywoman. But Fenestella also relates that ambassadors were sent by the senate to Erythrae, that the verses of this Sibyl might be conveyed to Rome, and that the consuls Curio and Octavius might take care that they should be placed in the Capitol, which had then been restored under the care of Quintus Catulus. In her writings, verses of this kind are found respecting the Supreme God and Maker of the world:- ”The incorruptible and eternal Maker who dwells in the heaven, holding forth

good to the good, a much greater reward, but stirring up anger and rage against the evil and unjust."

Again, in another place, enumerating the deeds by which God is especially moved to anger, she introduced these things:- "Avoid unlawful services, and serve the living God. Abstain from adultery and impurity; bring up a pure generation of children; do not kill: for the Immortal will be angry with every one who may sin." Therefore He is angry with sinners.

Chapter XXIII.-Of the Anger of God and the Punishment of Sins, and a Recital of the Verses of the Sibyls Respecting It; And, Moreover, a Reproof and Exhortation.

But because it is related by most learned men that there have been many Sibyls, the testimony of one may not be sufficient to confirm the truth, as we purpose to do. The volumes, indeed, of the Cumaean Sibyl, in which are written the fates of the Romans are kept secret; but the writings of all the others are, for the most part, not prohibited from being in common use. And of these another, denouncing the anger of God against all nations on account of the impiety of men, thus began:- "Since great anger is coming upon a disobedient world, I disclose the commands of God to the last age, prophesying to all men from city to city." Another Sibyl also said, that the deluge was caused by the indignation of God against the unrighteous in a former age, that the wickedness of the human race might be extinguished:- "From the time when, the God of heaven being enraged against the cities themselves and all men, a deluge having burst forth, the sea covered the earth."

In like manner she foretold a conflagration about to take place hereafter, in which the impiety of men should again be destroyed:- " And at some time, God no longer soothing His anger, but increasing it, and destroying the race of men, and laying waste the whole of it by fire." From which mention is thus made concerning Jupiter by Ovid: - "He remembers also that it is fated that the time shall come in which the sea, the earth, and the palace of heaven, being caught by fire, shall be burnt, and the curiously wrought framework of the world be in danger." And this must come to pass at the time when the honour and worship of the Supreme shall have perished among men. The same Sibyl, however, testifying that He was appeased by reformation of conduct and self-improvement, added these things :- "But, ye mortals, in pity turn yourselves now, and do not lead the great God to every kind of auger."

And also a little later:- "He will not destroy, but will again restrain His anger, if you all practise valuable piety in your minds." Then another Sibyl declares that the Father of heavenly and earthly things ought to be loved, lest His indignation should arise, to the destruction of men:- "Lest by chance the immortal God should be angry, and destroy the whole race of men, their life and shameless race, it is befitting that we love the wise, ever-living God the Father." From these things it is evident that the arguments of the philosophers are vain, who imagine that God is without anger, and among His other praises reckon that which is most useless, detracting from Him that which is most salutary for human affairs, by which majesty itself exists. For this earthly, kingdom and government, unless guarded by fear, is broken down. Take away anger from a king, and he will not only cease to be obeyed, but he will even be cast down headlong from his height. Yea, rather take away this affection from any person of low degree, and who will not plunder him? Who will not deride him? Who will not treat him with injury? Thus he will be able to have neither clothing, nor an abode, nor food, since others will deprive him of whatever he has; much less can we suppose that the majesty of the heavenly government can exist without anger and fear. The Milesian Apollo being consulted concerning the religion of the Jews, inserted these things in his answer:-

"God, the King and Father of all, before whom the earth trembles, and the heaven and sea, and whom the recesses of Tartarus and the demons dread."

If He is so mild, as the philosophers will have it, how is it that not only the demons and ministers of such great power, but even the heaven and earth, and the whole system of the universe, tremble at His presence? For if no one submits to the service of another except by compulsion, it follows that all government exists by fear, and fear by anger. For if any one is not aroused against one who is unwilling to obey, it will not be possible for him to be compelled to obedience. Let any one consult his own feelings; he will at once understand that no one can be subdued to the command of another without anger and chastisement. Therefore, where there shall be no anger, there will be no authority. But God has authority; therefore also He must have anger, in which authority consists. Therefore let no one, induced by the empty prating of the philosophers, train himself to the contempt of God, which is the greatest impiety. We all are bound both to love Him, because He is our Father; and to reverence Him, because He is our Lord: both to pay Him honour, because He is bounteous; and to fear Him, because He is severe: each character in Him is worthy of reverence. Who can preserve his piety, and yet fail to love the parent of his life? or who can with impunity despise Him who, as ruler of all things, has true and everlasting power over all?

If you consider Him in the character of Father, He supplies to us our entrance to the light which we enjoy: through Him we live, through Him we have entered into the abode of this world. If you contemplate Him as God, it is. He who nourishes us with innumerable re sources: it is He who sustains us, we dwell in His house, we are His household; and if we are less obedient than was befitting, and less attentive to our duty than the endless merits of our Master and Parent demanded: nevertheless it is of great avail to our obtaining pardon,

if we retain the worship and knowledge of Him; if, laying aside low and earthly affairs and goods, we meditate upon heavenly and divine things which are everlasting. And that we may be able to do this, God must be followed by us, God must be adored and loved; since there is in Him the substance of things, the principle of the virtues, and the source of all that is good.For what is greater in power than God, or more perfect in reason, or brighter in clearness? And since He begat us to wisdom, and produced us to righteousness, it is not allowable for man to forsake God, who is the giver of intelligence and life and to serve earthly and frail things, or, intent upon seeking temporal goods, to turn aside from innocence and piety. Vicious and deadly pleasures do not render a man happy; nor does opulence, which is the inciter of lusts; nor empty ambition;

nor frail honours, by which the human soul, being ensnared and enslaved to the body, is condemned to eternal death: but innocence and righteousness alone, the lawful and due reward of which is immortality, which God from the beginning appointed for holy and uncorrupted minds, which keep themselves pure and uncontaminated from vices, and from every earthly impurity. Of this heavenly and eternal reward they cannot be partakers, who have polluted their conscience by deeds ofviolence, frauds, rapine, and deceits; and who, by injuries inflicted upon men, by impious actions, have branded themselves with indelible stains. Accordingly it is befitting that all who wish deservedly to be called wise, who wish to be called men, should despise frail things, should trample upon earthly things, and should look down upon base things, that they may be able to be united in a most blissful relationship with God.

Let impiety and discords be removed; let turbulent and deadly dissensions be allayed, by which human societies and the divine union of the public league are broken in upon, divided, and dispersed; as far as we can, let "us aim at being good and bounteous: if we have a supply of wealth and resources, let it not be devoted to the pleasure of a single person, but bestowed on the welfare of many. For pleasure is as short lived as the body to which it does service. But justice and kindness are as immortal as the mind and soul, which by good works attain to the likeness of God. Let God be consecrated by us, not in temples, but in our heart. All things which are made by the hand are destructible. Let us cleanse this temple, which is defiled not by smoke or dust, but by evil thoughts which is lighted not by blazing tapers but by the brightness and light of wisdom. And if we believe that God is always present in this temple, to whose divinity the secrets of the heart are open, we shall so live as always to have Him propitious, and never to fear His anger.

Note by the American Editor

It is worth while to direct attention to (book vi. cap. 2) what our author has said of "true worship," just now, when the most violent and persistent efforts are made to sensualize Christian worship, and to explain away the testimony of the Ante-Nicene Fathers on this important subject. The argument of our author, in its entire drift, is as applicable to our own times as to his; and, deeply as I value beauty in the public worship of God, I cannot, as

a Nicene Catholic, do less than adopt the universal sentiment of the early Fathers as to the limits of decoration.

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