

Reading #10 – From Augustine to Benedict

Augustine – The Confessions

BOOK SEVEN

The conversion to Neoplatonism. Augustine traces his growing disenchantment with the Manichean conceptions of God and evil and the dawning understanding of God's incorruptibility. But his thought is still bound by his materialistic notions of reality. He rejects astrology and turns to the study of Neoplatonism. There follows an analysis of the differences between Platonism and Christianity and a remarkable account of his appropriation of Plotinian wisdom and his experience of a Plotinian ecstasy. From this, he comes finally to the diligent study of the Bible, especially the writings of the apostle Paul. His pilgrimage is drawing toward its goal, as he begins to know Jesus Christ and to be drawn to him in hesitant faith.

CHAPTER I

1. Dead now was that evil and shameful youth of mine, and I was passing into full manhood. As I increased in years, the worse was my vanity. For I could not conceive of any substance but the sort I could see with my own eyes. I no longer thought of thee, O God, by the analogy of a human body. Ever since I inclined my ear to philosophy I had avoided this error--and the truth on this point I rejoiced to find in the faith of our spiritual mother, thy Catholic Church. Yet I could not see how else to conceive thee. And I, a man--and such a man!--sought to conceive thee, the sovereign and only true God. In my inmost heart, I believed that thou art incorruptible and inviolable and unchangeable, because--though I knew not how or why--I could still see plainly and without doubt that the corruptible is inferior to the incorruptible, the inviolable obviously superior to its opposite, and the unchangeable better than the changeable.

CHAPTER IX

13. And first of all, willing to show me how thou dost "resist the proud, but give grace to the humble," and how mercifully thou hast made known to men the way of humility in that thy Word "was made flesh and dwelt among men," thou didst procure for me, through one inflated with the most monstrous pride, certain books of the Platonists, translated from Greek into Latin. And therein I found, not indeed in the same words, but to the selfsame effect, enforced by many and various reasons that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." That

which was made by him is "life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shined in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Furthermore, I read that the soul of man, though it "bears witness to the light," yet itself "is not the light; but the Word of God, being God, is that true light that lights every man who comes into the world." And further, that "he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." But that "he came unto his own, and his own received him not. And as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name" -- this I did not find there.

14. Similarly, I read there that God the Word was born "not of flesh nor of blood, nor of the will of man, nor the will of the flesh, but of God." But, that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" -- I found this nowhere there. And I discovered in those books, expressed in many and various ways, that "the Son was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal in God," for he was naturally of the same substance. But, that "he emptied himself and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him" from the dead, "and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" -- this those books have not. I read further in them that before all times and beyond all times, thy only Son remaineth unchangeably coeternal with thee, and that of his fullness all souls receive that they may be blessed, and that by participation in that wisdom which abides in them, they are renewed that they may be wise. But, that "in due time, Christ died for the ungodly" and that thou "sparedst not thy only Son, but deliveredst him up for us all" -- this is not there. "For thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes"; that they "that labor and are heavy laden" might "come unto him and he might refresh them" because he is "meek and lowly in heart." "The meek will he guide in judgment; and the meek will he teach his way; beholding our lowliness and our trouble and forgiving all our sins." But those who strut in the high boots of what they deem to be superior knowledge will not hear Him who says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls." Thus, though they know God, yet they do not glorify him as God, nor are they thankful. Therefore, they "become vain in their imaginations; their foolish heart is darkened, and professing themselves to be wise they become fools."

15. And, moreover, I also read there how "they changed the glory of thy incorruptible nature into idols and various images--into an image made like corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things": namely, into that Egyptian food for which

Esau lost his birthright; so that thy first-born people worshiped the head of a four-footed beast instead of thee, turning back in their hearts toward Egypt and prostrating thy image (their own soul) before the image of an ox that eats grass. These things I found there, but I fed not on them. For it pleased thee, O Lord, to take away the reproach of his minority from Jacob, that the elder should serve the younger and thou mightest call the Gentiles, and I had sought strenuously after that gold which thou didst allow thy people to take from Egypt, since wherever it was it was thine. And thou saidst unto the Athenians by the mouth of thy apostle that in thee "we live and move and have our being," as one of their own poets had said. And truly these books came from there. But I did not set my mind on the idols of Egypt which they fashioned of gold, "changing the truth of God into a lie and worshiping and serving the creature more than the Creator."

CHAPTER X

16. And being admonished by these books to return into myself, I entered into my inward soul, guided by thee. This I could do because thou wast my helper. And I entered, and with the eye of my soul--such as it was--saw above the same eye of my soul and above my mind the Immutable Light. It was not the common light, which all flesh can see; nor was it simply a greater one of the same sort, as if the light of day were to grow brighter and brighter, and flood all space. It was not like that light, but different, yea, very different from all earthly light whatever. Nor was it above my mind in the same way as oil is above water, or heaven above earth, but it was higher, because it made me, and I was below it, because I was made by it. He who knows the Truth knows that Light, and he who knows it knows eternity. Love knows it, O Eternal Truth and True Love and Beloved Eternity! Thou art my God, to whom I sigh both night and day. When I first knew thee, thou didst lift me up, that I might see that there was something to be seen, though I was not yet fit to see it. And thou didst beat back the weakness of my sight, shining forth upon me thy dazzling beams of light, and I trembled with love and fear. I realized that I was far away from thee in the land of unlikeness, as if I heard thy voice from on high: "I am the food of strong men; grow and you shall feed on me; nor shall you change me, like the food of your flesh into yourself, but you shall be changed into my likeness." And I understood that thou chastenest man for his iniquity, and makest my soul to be eaten away as though by a spider. And I said, "Is Truth, therefore, nothing, because it is not diffused through space--neither finite nor infinite?" And thou didst cry to me from afar, "I am that I am." And I heard this, as things are heard in the heart, and there was no room for doubt. I should have more readily doubted that I am alive than that the Truth exists--the Truth which is "clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."

CHAPTER XVII

23. And I marveled that I now loved thee, and no fantasm in thy stead, and yet I was not stable enough to enjoy my God steadily. Instead I was transported to thee by thy beauty, and then presently torn away from thee by my own weight, sinking with grief into these lower things. This weight was carnal habit. But thy memory dwelt with me, and I never doubted in the least that there was One for me to cleave to; but I was not yet ready to cleave to thee firmly. For the body which is corrupted presses down the soul, and the earthly dwelling weighs down the mind, which muses upon many things. My greatest certainty was that "the invisible things of thine from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even thy eternal power and Godhead." For when I inquired how it was that I could appreciate the beauty of bodies, both celestial and terrestrial; and what it was that supported me in making correct judgments about things mutable; and when I concluded, "This ought to be thus; this ought not"--*then* when I inquired how it was that I could make such judgments (since I did, in fact, make them), I realized that I had found the unchangeable and true eternity of truth above my changeable mind.

And thus by degrees I was led upward from bodies to the soul which perceives them by means of the bodily senses, and from there on to the soul's inward faculty, to which the bodily senses report outward things--and this belongs even to the capacities of the beasts--and thence on up to the reasoning power, to whose judgment is referred the experience received from the bodily sense. And when this power of reason within me also found that it was changeable, it raised itself up to its own intellectual principle, and withdrew its thoughts from experience, abstracting itself from the contradictory throng of fantasms in order to seek for that light in which it was bathed. Then, without any doubting, it cried out that the unchangeable was better than the changeable. From this it follows that the mind somehow knew the unchangeable, for, unless it had known it in some fashion, it could have had no sure ground for preferring it to the changeable. And thus with the flash of a trembling glance, it arrived at *that which is*. And I saw thy invisibility [*invisibilia tua*] understood by means of the things that are made. But I was not able to sustain my gaze. My weakness was dashed back, and I lapsed again into my accustomed ways, carrying along with me nothing but a loving memory of my vision, and an appetite for what I had, as it were, smelled the odor of, but was not yet able to eat.

CHAPTER XVIII

24. I sought, therefore, some way to acquire the strength sufficient to enjoy thee; but I did not find it until I embraced that "Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus,"

"who is over all, God blessed forever," who came calling and saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and mingling with our fleshly humanity the heavenly food I was unable to receive. For "the Word was made flesh" in order that thy wisdom, by which thou didst create all things, might become milk for our infancy. And, as yet, I was not humble enough to hold the humble Jesus; nor did I understand what lesson his weakness was meant to teach us. For thy Word, the eternal Truth, far exalted above even the higher parts of thy creation, lifts his subjects up toward himself. But in this lower world, he built for himself a humble habitation of our own clay, so that he might pull down from themselves and win over to himself those whom he is to bring subject to him; lowering their pride and heightening their love, to the end that they might go on no farther in self-confidence--but rather should become weak, seeing at their feet the Deity made weak by sharing our coats of skin--so that they might cast themselves, exhausted, upon him and be uplifted by his rising.

CHAPTER XIX

25. Alypius, on the other hand, supposed the Catholics to believe that God was so clothed with flesh that besides God and the flesh there was no soul in Christ, and he did not think that a human mind was ascribed to him. And because he was fully persuaded that the actions recorded of him could not have been performed except by a living rational creature, he moved the more slowly toward Christian faith. But when he later learned that this was the error of the Apollinarian heretics, he rejoiced in the Catholic faith and accepted it. For myself, I must confess that it was even later that I learned how in the sentence, "The Word was made flesh," the Catholic truth can be distinguished from the falsehood of Photinus. For the refutation of heretics makes the tenets of thy Church and sound doctrine to stand out boldly. "For there must also be heresies [factions] that those who are approved may be made manifest among the weak."

CHAPTER XX

26. By having thus read the books of the Platonists, and having been taught by them to search for the incorporeal Truth, I saw how thy invisible things are understood through the things that are made. And, even when I was thrown back, I still sensed what it was that the dullness of my soul would not allow me to contemplate. I was assured that thou wast, and wast infinite, though not diffused in finite space or infinity; that thou truly art, who art ever the same, varying neither in part nor motion; and that all things are from thee, as is proved by this sure cause alone: that they exist.

Of all this I was convinced, yet I was too weak to enjoy thee. I chattered away as if I were an expert; but if I had not sought thy Way in Christ our Saviour, my knowledge would have turned out to be not instruction but destruction. For now full of what was in fact my punishment, I had begun to desire to seem wise. I did not mourn my ignorance, but rather was puffed up with knowledge. For where was that love which builds upon the foundation of humility, which is Jesus Christ? Or, when would these books teach me this? I now believe that it was thy pleasure that I should fall upon these books before I studied thy Scriptures, that it might be impressed on my memory how I was affected by them; and then afterward, when I was subdued by thy Scriptures and when my wounds were touched by thy healing fingers, I might discern and distinguish what a difference there is between presumption and confession--between those who saw where they were to go even if they did not see the way, and the Way which leads, not only to the observing, but also the inhabiting of the blessed country. For had I first been molded in thy Holy Scriptures, and if thou hadst grown sweet to me through my familiar use of them, and if then I had afterward fallen on those volumes, they might have pushed me off the solid ground of godliness--or if I had stood firm in that wholesome disposition which I had thereacquired, I might have thought that wisdom could be attained by the study of those [Platonist] books alone.

CHAPTER XXI

27. With great eagerness, then, I fastened upon the venerable writings of thy Spirit and principally upon the apostle Paul. I had thought that he sometimes contradicted himself and that the text of his teaching did not agree with the testimonies of the Law and the Prophets; but now all these doubts vanished away. And I saw that those pure words had but one face, and I learned to rejoice with trembling. So I began, and I found that whatever truth I had read [in the Platonists] was here combined with the exaltation of thy grace. Thus, he who sees must not glory as if he had not received, not only the things that he sees, but the very power of sight--for what does he have that he has not received as a gift? By this he is not only exhorted to see, but also to be cleansed, that he may grasp thee, who art ever the same; and thus he who cannot see thee afar off may yet enter upon the road that leads to reaching, seeing, and possessing thee. For although a man may "delight in the law of God after the inward man," what shall he do with that other "law in his members which wars against the law of his mind, and brings him into captivity under the law of sin, which is in his members"? Thou art righteous, O Lord; but we have sinned and committed iniquities, and have done wickedly. Thy hand has grown heavy upon us, and we are justly delivered over to that ancient sinner, the lord of death. For he persuaded our wills to become like his will, by which he remained not in thy truth. What shall "wretched man" do? "Who shall deliver him from the body of this death," except thy grace through Jesus Christ our Lord;

whom thou hast begotten, coeternal with thyself, and didst create in the beginning of thy ways -- in whom the prince of this world found nothing worthy of death, yet he killed him-- and so the handwriting which was all against us was blotted out?

The books of the Platonists tell nothing of this. Their pages do not contain the expression of this kind of godliness--the tears of confession, thy sacrifice, a troubled spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, the salvation of thy people, the espoused City, the earnest of the Holy Spirit, the cup of our redemption. In them, no man sings: "Shall not my soul be subject unto God, for from him comes my salvation? He is my God and my salvation, my defender; I shall no more be moved." In them, no one hears him calling, "Come unto me all you who labor." They scorn to learn of him because he is "meek and lowly of heart"; for "thou hast hidden those things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." For it is one thing to see the land of peace from a wooded mountaintop: and fail to find the way thither--to attempt impassable ways in vain, opposed and waylaid by fugitives and deserters under their captain, the "lion" and "dragon"; but it is quite another thing to keep to the highway that leads thither, guarded by the hosts of the heavenly Emperor, on which there are no deserters from the heavenly army to rob the passers-by, for they shun it as a torment. These thoughts sank wondrously into my heart, when I read that "least of thy apostles" and when I had considered all thy works and trembled.

BOOK EIGHT

Conversion to Christ. Augustine is deeply impressed by Simplicianus' story of the conversion to Christ of the famous orator and philosopher, Marius Victorinus. He is stirred to emulate him, but finds himself still enchained by his incontinence and preoccupation with worldly affairs. He is then visited by a court official, Ponticianus, who tells him and Alypius the stories of the conversion of Anthony and also of two imperial "secret service agents." These stories throw him into a violent turmoil, in which his divided will struggles against himself. He almost succeeds in making the decision for continence, but is still held back. Finally, a child's song, overheard by chance, sends him to the Bible; a text from Paul resolves the crisis; the conversion is a fact. Alypius also makes his decision, and the two inform the rejoicing Monica.

CHAPTER I

1. And thou didst put it into my mind, and it seemed good in my own sight, to go to Simplicianus, who appeared to me a faithful servant of thine, and thy grace shone forth in him. I had also been told that from his youth up he had lived in entire devotion to thee.

He was already an old man, and because of his great age, which he had passed in such a zealous discipleship in thy way, he appeared to me likely to have gained much wisdom--and, indeed, he had. From all his experience, I desired him to tell me--setting before him all my agitations--which would be the most fitting way for one who felt as I did to walk in thy way.

CHAPTER II

3. I went, therefore, to Simplicianus, the spiritual father of Ambrose (then a bishop), whom Ambrose truly loved as a father. I recounted to him all the mazes of my wanderings, but when I mentioned to him that I had read certain books of the Platonists which Victorinus--formerly professor of rhetoric at Rome, who died a Christian, as I had been told--had translated into Latin, Simplicianus congratulated me that I had not fallen upon the writings of other philosophers, which were full of fallacies and deceit,

CHAPTER V

10. Now when this man of thine, Simplicianus, told me the story of Victorinus, I was eager to imitate him. Indeed, this was Simplicianus' purpose in telling it to me. But when he went on to tell how, in the reign of the Emperor Julian, there was a law passed by which Christians were forbidden to teach literature and rhetoric; and how Victorinus, in ready obedience to the law, chose to abandon his "school of words" rather than thy Word, by which thou makest eloquent the tongues of the dumb--he appeared to me not so much brave as happy, because he had found a reason for giving his time wholly to thee.

CHAPTER VI

13. I attended thy church as frequently as my business, under the burden of which I groaned, left me free to do so. Alypius was with me, disengaged at last from his legal post, after a third term as assessor, and now waiting for private clients to whom he might sell his legal advice as I sold the power of speaking (as if it could be supplied by teaching). But Nebridius had consented, for the sake of our friendship, to teach under Verecundus--a citizen of Milan and professor of grammar, and a very intimate friend of us all--who ardently desired, and by right of friendship demanded from us, the faithful aid he greatly needed. Nebridius was not drawn to this by any desire of gain--for he could have made much more out of his learning had he been so inclined--but as he was a most sweet and kindly friend, he was unwilling, out of respect for the duties of friendship, to slight our request. But in this he acted very discreetly, taking care not to become known to those persons who had great reputations in the world. Thus he avoided all distractions of mind,

and reserved as many hours as possible to pursue or read or listen to discussions about wisdom.

14. On a certain day, then, when Nebridius was away--for some reason I cannot remember--there came to visit Alypius and me at our house one Ponticianus, a fellow countryman of ours from Africa, who held high office in the emperor's court. What he wanted with us I do not know; but we sat down to talk together, and it chanced that he noticed a book on a game table before us. He took it up, opened it, and, contrary to his expectation, found it to be the apostle Paul, for he imagined that it was one of my wearisome rhetoric textbooks. At this, he looked up at me with a smile and expressed his delight and wonder that he had so unexpectedly found this book and only this one, lying before my eyes; for he was indeed a Christian and a faithful one at that, and often he prostrated himself before thee, our God, in the church in constant daily prayer. When I had told him that I had given much attention to these writings, a conversation followed in which he spoke of Anthony, the Egyptian monk, whose name was in high repute among thy servants, although up to that time not familiar to me. When he learned this, he lingered on the topic, giving us an account of this eminent man, and marveling at our ignorance. We in turn were amazed to hear of thy wonderful works so fully manifested in recent times--almost in our own--occurring in the true faith and the Catholic Church. We all wondered--we, that these things were so great, and he, that we had never heard of them.

15. From this, his conversation turned to the multitudes in the monasteries and their manners so fragrant to thee, and to the teeming solitudes of the wilderness, of which we knew nothing at all. There was even a monastery at Milan, outside the city's walls, full of good brothers under the fostering care of Ambrose--and we were ignorant of it. He went on with his story, and we listened intently and in silence. He then told us how, on a certain afternoon, at Trier, when the emperor was occupied watching the gladiatorial games, he and three comrades went out for a walk in the gardens close to the city walls. There, as they chanced to walk two by two, one strolled away with him, while the other two went on by themselves. As they rambled, these first two came upon a certain cottage where lived some of thy servants, some of the "poor in spirit" ("of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"), where they found the book in which was written the life of Anthony! One of them began to read it, to marvel and to be inflamed by it. While reading, he meditated on embracing just such a life, giving up his worldly employment to seek thee alone. These two belonged to the group of officials called "secret service agents." Then, suddenly being overwhelmed with a holy love and a sober shame and as if in anger with himself, he fixed his eyes on his friend, exclaiming: "Tell me, I beg you, what goal are we seeking in all these toils of ours? What is it that we desire? What is our motive in public service? Can our hopes in the court rise higher than to be 'friends of the emperor'? But how frail, how beset with peril, is that pride!

Through what dangers must we climb to a greater danger? And when shall we succeed? But if I chose to become a friend of God, see, I can become one now." Thus he spoke, and in the pangs of the travail of the new life he turned his eyes again onto the page and continued reading; he was inwardly changed, as thou didst see, and the world dropped away from his mind, as soon became plain to others. For as he read with a heart like a stormy sea, more than once he groaned. Finally he saw the better course, and resolved on it. Then, having become thy servant, he said to his friend: "Now I have broken loose from those hopes we had, and I am determined to serve God; and I enter into that service from this hour in this place. If you are reluctant to imitate me, do not oppose me." The other replied that he would continue bound in his friendship, to share in so great a service for so great a prize. So both became thine, and began to "build a tower", counting the cost--namely, of forsaking all that they had and following thee. Shortly after, Ponticianus and his companion, who had walked with him in the other part of the garden, came in search of them to the same place, and having found them reminded them to return, as the day was declining. But the first two, making known to Ponticianus their resolution and purpose, and how a resolve had sprung up and become confirmed in them, entreated them not to take it ill if they refused to join themselves with them. But Ponticianus and his friend, although not changed from their former course, did nevertheless (as he told us) bewail themselves and congratulated their friends on their godliness, recommending themselves to their prayers. And with hearts inclining again toward earthly things, they returned to the palace. But the other two, setting their affections on heavenly things, remained in the cottage. Both of them had affianced brides who, when they heard of this, likewise dedicated their virginity to thee.

CHAPTER VII

17. But now, the more ardently I loved those whose wholesome affections I heard reported--that they had given themselves up wholly to thee to be cured--the more did I abhor myself when compared with them. For many of my years--perhaps twelve--had passed away since my nineteenth, when, upon the reading of Cicero's Hortensius, I was roused to a desire for wisdom. And here I was, still postponing the abandonment of this world's happiness to devote myself to the search.

CHAPTER VIII

19. Then, as this vehement quarrel, which I waged with my soul in the chamber of my heart, was raging inside my inner dwelling, agitated both in mind and countenance, I seized upon Alypius and exclaimed: "What is the matter with us? What is this? What did you hear? The uninstructed start up and take heaven, and we--with all our learning but so little heart--see where we wallow in flesh and blood! Because others have gone before us,

are we ashamed to follow, and not rather ashamed at our not following?" I scarcely knew what I said, and in my excitement I flung away from him, while he gazed at me in silent astonishment. For I did not sound like myself: my face, eyes, color, tone expressed my meaning more clearly than my words.

There was a little garden belonging to our lodging, of which we had the use--as of the whole house--for the master, our landlord, did not live there. The tempest in my breast hurried me out into this garden, where no one might interrupt the fiery struggle in which I was engaged with myself, until it came to the outcome that thou knewest though I did not. But I was mad for health, and dying for life; knowing what evil thing I was, but not knowing what good thing I was so shortly to become.

I fled into the garden, with Alypius following step by step; for I had no secret in which he did not share, and how could he leave me in such distress? We sat down, as far from the house as possible. I was greatly disturbed in spirit, angry at myself with a turbulent indignation because I had not entered thy will and covenant, O my God, while all my bones cried out to me to enter, extolling it to the skies. The way therein is not by ships or chariots or feet--indeed it was not as far as I had come from the house to the place where we were seated. For to go along that road and indeed to reach the goal is nothing else but the will to go. But it must be a strong and single will, not staggering and swaying about this way and that--a changeable, twisting, fluctuating will, wrestling with itself while one part falls as another rises.

CHAPTER XII

29. I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when suddenly I heard the voice of a boy or a girl I know not which--coming from the neighboring house, chanting over and over again, "Pick it up, read it; pick it up, read it." Immediately I ceased weeping and began most earnestly to think whether it was usual for children in some kind of game to sing such a song, but I could not remember ever having heard the like. So, damming the torrent of my tears, I got to my feet, for I could not but think that this was a divine command to open the Bible and read the first passage I should light upon. For I had heard how Anthony, accidentally coming into church while the gospel was being read, received the admonition as if what was read had been addressed to him: "Go and sell what you have and give it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." By such an oracle he was forthwith converted to thee.

So I quickly returned to the bench where Alypius was sitting, for there I had put down the apostle's book when I had left there. I snatched it up, opened it, and in silence read the paragraph on which my eyes first fell: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering

and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." I wanted to read no further, nor did I need to. For instantly, as the sentence ended, there was infused in my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away.

30. Closing the book, then, and putting my finger or something else for a mark I began--now with a tranquil countenance--to tell it all to Alypius. And he in turn disclosed to me what had been going on in himself, of which I knew nothing. He asked to see what I had read. I showed him, and he looked on even further than I had read. I had not known what followed. But indeed it was this, "Him that is weak in the faith, receive." This he applied to himself, and told me so. By these words of warning he was strengthened, and by exercising his good resolution and purpose--all very much in keeping with his character, in which, in these respects, he was always far different from and better than I--he joined me in full commitment without any restless hesitation.

Then we went in to my mother, and told her what happened, to her great joy. We explained to her how it had occurred--and she leaped for joy triumphant; and she blessed thee, who art "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think." For she saw that thou hadst granted her far more than she had ever asked for in all her pitiful and doleful lamentations. For thou didst so convert me to thee that I sought neither a wife nor any other of this world's hopes, but set my feet on that rule of faith which so many years before thou hadst showed her in her dream about me. And so thou didst turn her grief into gladness more plentiful than she had ventured to desire, and dearer and purer than the desire she used to cherish of having grandchildren of my flesh.

BOOK NINE

The end of the autobiography. Augustine tells of his resigning from his professorship and of the days at Cassiciacum in preparation for baptism. He is baptized together with Adeodatus and Alypius. Shortly thereafter, they start back for Africa. Augustine recalls the ecstasy he and his mother shared in Ostia and then reports her death and burial and his grief. The book closes with a moving prayer for the souls of Monica, Patricius, and all his fellow citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.

CHAPTER III

5. Verecundus was severely disturbed by this new happiness of mine, since he was still firmly held by his bonds and saw that he would lose my companionship. For he was not yet a Christian, though his wife was; and, indeed, he was more firmly enchained by her than by anything else, and held back from that journey on which we had set out. Furthermore, he

declared he did not wish to be a Christian on any terms except those that were impossible. However, he invited us most courteously to make use of his country house so long as we would stay there. O Lord, thou wilt recompense him for this "in the resurrection of the just," seeing that thou hast already given him "the lot of the righteous." For while we were absent at Rome, he was overtaken with bodily sickness, and during it he was made a Christian and departed this life as one of the faithful. Thus thou hadst mercy on him, and not on him only, but on us as well; lest, remembering the exceeding kindness of our friend to us and not able to count him in thy flock, we should be tortured with intolerable grief. Thanks be unto thee, our God; we are thine. Thy exhortations, consolations, and faithful promises assure us that thou wilt repay Verecundus for that country house at Cassiciacum--where we found rest in thee from the fever of the world--with the perpetual freshness of thy paradise in which thou hast forgiven him his earthly sins, in that mountain flowing with milk, that fruitful mountain--thy own.

6. Thus Verecundus was full of grief; but Nebridius was joyous. For he was not yet a Christian, and had fallen into the pit of deadly error, believing that the flesh of thy Son, the Truth, was a phantom. Yet he had come up out of that pit and now held the same belief that we did. And though he was not as yet initiated in any of the sacraments of thy Church, he was a most earnest inquirer after truth. Not long after our conversion and regeneration by thy baptism, he also became a faithful member of the Catholic Church, serving thee in perfect chastity and continence among his own people in Africa, and bringing his whole household with him to Christianity. Then thou didst release him from the flesh, and now he lives in Abraham's bosom. Whatever is signified by that term "bosom," there lives my Nebridius, my sweet friend, thy son by adoption, O Lord, and not a freedman any longer. There he lives; for what other place could there be for such a soul? There he lives in that abode about which he used to ask me so many questions--poor ignorant one that I was. Now he does not put his ear up to my mouth, but his spiritual mouth to thy fountain, and drinks wisdom as he desires and as he is able--happy without end. But I do not believe that he is so inebriated by that draught as to forget me; since thou, O Lord, who art the draught, art mindful of us.

Thus, then, we were comforting the unhappy Verecundus--our friendship untouched--reconciling him to our conversion and exhorting him to a faith fit for his condition (that is, to his being married). We tarried for Nebridius to follow us, since he was so close, and this he was just about to do when at last the interim ended. The days had seemed long and many because of my eagerness for leisure and liberty in which I might sing to thee from my inmost part, "My heart has said to thee, I have sought thy face; thy face, O Lord, will I seek."

CHAPTER IV

7. Finally the day came on which I was actually to be relieved from the professorship of rhetoric, from which I had already been released in intention. And it was done. And thou didst deliver my tongue as thou hadst already delivered my heart; and I blessed thee for it with great joy, and retired with my friends to the villa. My books testify to what I got done there in writing, which was now hopefully devoted to thy service; though in this pause it was still as if I were panting from my exertions in the school of pride. These were the books in which I engaged in dialogue with my friends, and also those in soliloquy before thee alone. And there are my letters to Nebridius, who was still absent.

When would there be enough time to recount all thy great blessings which thou didst bestow on us in that time, especially as I am hastening on to still greater mercies? For my memory recalls them to me and it is pleasant to confess them to thee, O Lord: the inward goads by which thou didst subdue me and how thou broughtest me low, leveling the mountains and hills of my thoughts, straightening my crookedness, and smoothing my rough ways. And I remember by what means thou also didst subdue Alypius, my heart's brother, to the name of thy only Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ--which he at first refused to have inserted in our writings. For at first he preferred that they should smell of the cedars of the schools which the Lord hath now broken down, rather than of the wholesome herbs of the Church, hostile to serpents.

8. O my God, how did I cry to thee when I read the psalms of David, those hymns of faith, those paeans of devotion which leave no room for swelling pride! I was still a novice in thy true love, a catechumen keeping holiday at the villa, with Alypius, a catechumen like myself. My mother was also with us--in woman's garb, but with a man's faith, with the peacefulness of age and the fullness of motherly love and Christian piety. What cries I used to send up to thee in those songs, and how I was enkindled toward thee by them! I burned to sing them if possible, throughout the whole world, against the pride of the human race. And yet, indeed, they are sung throughout the whole world, and none can hide himself from thy heat. With what strong and bitter regret was I indignant at the Manicheans! Yet I also pitied them; for they were ignorant of those sacraments, those medicines -- and raved insanely against the cure that might have made them sane! I wished they could have been somewhere close by, and--without my knowledge--could have seen my face and heard my words when, in that time of leisure, I pored over the Fourth Psalm. And I wish they could have seen how that psalm affected me. "When I called upon thee, O God of my righteousness, thou didst hear me; thou didst enlarge me when I was in distress. Have mercy upon me and hear my prayer." I wish they might have heard what I said in comment on those words--without my knowing that they heard, lest they should think that I was speaking it just on their account. For, indeed, I should not have said quite the same things, nor quite in the same way, if I had known that I was heard and seen by them. And if I had

so spoken, they would not have meant the same things to them as they did to me when I spoke by and for myself before thee, out of the private affections of my soul.

9. By turns I trembled with fear and warmed with hope and rejoiced in thy mercy, O Father. And all these feelings showed forth in my eyes and voice when thy good Spirit turned to us and said, "O sons of men, how long will you be slow of heart, how long will you love vanity, and seek after falsehood?" For I had loved vanity and sought after falsehood. And thou, O Lord, had already magnified thy Holy One, raising him from the dead and setting him at thy right hand, that thence he should send forth from on high his promised "Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth." Already he had sent him, and I knew it not. He had sent him because he was now magnified, rising from the dead and ascending into heaven. For till then "the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." And the prophet cried out: "How long will you be slow of heart? How long will you love vanity, and seek after falsehood? Know this, that the Lord hath magnified his Holy One." He cries, "How long?" He cries, "Know this," and I--so long "loving vanity, and seeking after falsehood"--heard and trembled, because these words were spoken to such a one as I remembered that I myself had been. For in those phantoms which I once held for truth there was vanity and falsehood. And I spoke many things loudly and earnestly--in the contrition of my memory--which I wish they had heard, who still "love vanity and seek after falsehood." Perhaps they would have been troubled, and have vomited up their error, and thou wouldst have heard them when they cried to thee; for by a real death in the flesh He died for us who now maketh intercession for us with thee.

10. I read on further, "Be angry, and sin not." And how deeply was I touched, O my God; for I had now learned to be angry with myself for the things past, so that in the future I might not sin. Yes, to be angry with good cause, for it was not another nature out of the race of darkness that had sinned for me--as they affirm who are not angry with themselves, and who store up for themselves dire wrath against the day of wrath and the revelation of thy righteous judgment. Nor were the good things I saw now outside me, nor were they to be seen with the eyes of flesh in the light of the earthly sun. For they that have their joys from without sink easily into emptiness and are spilled out on those things that are visible and temporal, and in their starving thoughts they lick their very shadows. If only they would grow weary with their hunger and would say, "Who will show us any good?" And we would answer, and they would hear, "O Lord, the light of thy countenance shines bright upon us." For we are not that Light that enlightens every man, but we are enlightened by thee, so that we who were formerly in darkness may now be alight in thee. If only they could behold the inner Light Eternal which, now that I had tasted it, I gnashed my teeth because I could not show it to them unless they brought me their heart in their eyes--their roving eyes--and said, "Who will show us any good?" But even there, in the inner chamber

of my soul--where I was angry with myself; where I was inwardly pricked, where I had offered my sacrifice, slaying my old man, and hoping in thee with the new resolve of a new life with my trust laid in thee--even there thou hadst begun to grow sweet to me and to "put gladness in my heart." And thus as I read all this, I cried aloud and felt its inward meaning. Nor did I wish to be increased in worldly goods which are wasted by time, for now I possessed, in thy eternal simplicity, other corn and wine and oil.

11. And with a loud cry from my heart, I read the following verse: "Oh, in peace! Oh, in the Selfsame!" See how he says it: "I will lay me down and take my rest." For who shall withstand us when the truth of this saying that is written is made manifest: "Death is swallowed up in victory"? For surely thou, who dost not change, art the Selfsame, and in thee is rest and oblivion to all distress. There is none other beside thee, nor are we to toil for those many things which are not thee, for only thou, O Lord, makest me to dwell in hope."

These things I read and was enkindled--but still I could not discover what to do with those deaf and dead Manicheans to whom I myself had belonged; for I had been a bitter and blind reviler against these writings, honeyed with the honey of heaven and luminous with thy light. And I was sorely grieved at these enemies of this Scripture.

12. When shall I call to mind all that happened during those holidays? I have not forgotten them; nor will I be silent about the severity of thy scourge, and the amazing quickness of thy mercy. During that time thou didst torture me with a toothache; and when it had become so acute that I was not able to speak, it came into my heart to urge all my friends who were present to pray for me to thee, the God of all health. And I wrote it down on the tablet and gave it to them to read. Presently, as we bowed our knees in supplication, the pain was gone. But what pain? How did it go? I confess that I was terrified, O Lord my God, because from my earliest years I had never experienced such pain. And thy purposes were profoundly impressed upon me; and rejoicing in faith, I praised thy name. But that faith allowed me no rest in respect of my past sins, which were not yet forgiven me through thy baptism.

CHAPTER V

13. Now that the vintage vacation was ended, I gave notice to the citizens of Milan that they might provide their scholars with another word-merchant. I gave as my reasons my determination to serve thee and also my insufficiency for the task, because of the difficulty in breathing and the pain in my chest.

And by letters I notified thy bishop, the holy man Ambrose, of my former errors and my present resolution. And I asked his advice as to which of thy books it was best for me to

read so that I might be the more ready and fit for the reception of so great a grace. He recommended Isaiah the prophet; and I believe it was because Isaiah foreshows more clearly than others the gospel, and the calling of the Gentiles. But because I could not understand the first part and because I imagined the rest to be like it, I laid it aside with the intention of taking it up again later, when better practiced in our Lord's words.

CHAPTER VI

14. When the time arrived for me to give in my name, we left the country and returned to Milan. Alypius also resolved to be born again in thee at the same time. He was already clothed with the humility that befits thy sacraments, and was so brave a tamer of his body that he would walk the frozen Italian soil with his naked feet, which called for unusual fortitude. We took with us the boy Adeodatus, my son after the flesh, the offspring of my sin. Thou hadst made of him a noble lad. He was barely fifteen years old, but his intelligence excelled that of many grave and learned men. I confess to thee thy gifts, O Lord my God, creator of all, who hast power to reform our deformities--for there was nothing of me in that boy but the sin. For it was thou who didst inspire us to foster him in thy discipline, and none other--thy gifts I confess to thee. There is a book of mine, entitled *De Magistro*. It is a dialogue between Adeodatus and me, and thou knowest that all things there put into the mouth of my interlocutor are his, though he was then only in his sixteenth year. Many other gifts even more wonderful I found in him. His talent was a source of awe to me. And who but thou couldst be the worker of such marvels? And thou didst quickly remove his life from the earth, and even now I recall him to mind with a sense of security, because I fear nothing for his childhood or youth, nor for his whole career. We took him for our companion, as if he were the same age in grace with ourselves, to be trained with ourselves in thy discipline. And so we were baptized and the anxiety about our past life left us.

Nor did I ever have enough in those days of the wondrous sweetness of meditating on the depth of thy counsels concerning the salvation of the human race. How freely did I weep in thy hymns and canticles; how deeply was I moved by the voices of thy sweet-speaking Church! The voices flowed into my ears; and the truth was poured forth into my heart, where the tide of my devotion overflowed, and my tears ran down, and I was happy in all these things.

CHAPTER VII

15. The church of Milan had only recently begun to employ this mode of consolation and exaltation with all the brethren singing together with great earnestness of voice and heart.

For it was only about a year--not much more--since Justina, the mother of the boy-emperor Valentinian, had persecuted thy servant Ambrose on behalf of her heresy, in which she had been seduced by the Arians. The devoted people kept guard in the church, prepared to die with their bishop, thy servant. Among them my mother, thy handmaid, taking a leading part in those anxieties and vigils, lived there in prayer. And even though we were still not wholly melted by the heat of thy Spirit, we were nevertheless excited by the alarmed and disturbed city.

This was the time that the custom began, after the manner of the Eastern Church, that hymns and psalms should be sung, so that the people would not be worn out with the tedium of lamentation. This custom, retained from then till now, has been imitated by many, indeed, by almost all thy congregations throughout the rest of the world.

16. Then by a vision thou madest known to thy renowned bishop the spot where lay the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius, the martyrs, whom thou hadst preserved uncorrupted for so many years in thy secret storehouse, so that thou mightest produce them at a fit time to check a woman's fury--a woman indeed, but also a queen! When they were discovered and dug up and brought with due honor to the basilica of Ambrose, as they were borne along the road many who were troubled by unclean spirits--the devils confessing themselves--were healed. And there was also a certain man, a well-known citizen of the city, blind many years, who, when he had asked and learned the reason for the people's tumultuous joy, rushed out and begged his guide to lead him to the place. When he arrived there, he begged to be permitted to touch with his handkerchief the bier of thy saints, whose death is precious in thy sight. When he had done this, and put it to his eyes, they were immediately opened. The fame of all this spread abroad; from this thy glory shone more brightly. And also from this the mind of that angry woman, though not enlarged to the sanity of a full faith, was nevertheless restrained from the fury of persecution.

Thanks to thee, O my God. Whence and whither hast thou led my memory, that I should confess such things as these to thee--for great as they were, I had forgetfully passed them over? And yet at that time, when the sweet savor of thy ointment was so fragrant, I did not run after thee. Therefore, I wept more bitterly as I listened to thy hymns, having so long panted after thee. And now at length I could breathe as much as the space allows in this our straw house.

CHAPTER VIII

17. Thou, O Lord, who makest men of one mind to dwell in a single house, also broughtest Evodius to join our company. He was a young man of our city, who, while serving as a secret service agent, was converted to thee and baptized before us. He had

relinquished his secular service, and prepared himself forthine. We were together, and we were resolved to live together in our devout purpose.

We cast about for some place where we might be most useful in our service to thee, and had planned on going back together to Africa. And when we had got as far as Ostia on the Tiber, my mother died.

Ecumenical Council #4: Council of Chalcedon (451)

“The Definition of Faith of the Council of Chalcedon”

The holy, great, and ecumenical synod, assembled by the grace of God and the command of our most religious and Christian Emperors, Marcian and Valentinian, Augusti, at Chalcedon, the metropolis of the Bithynian Province, in the martyrdom of the holy and victorious martyr Euphemia, has decreed as follows:

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when strengthening the knowledge of the Faith in his disciples, to the end that no one might disagree with his neighbour concerning the doctrines of religion, and that the proclamation of the truth might be set forth equally to all men, said, My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. But, since the evil one does not desist from sowing tares among the seeds of godliness, but ever invents some new device against the truth; therefore the Lord, providing, as he ever does, for the human race, has raised up this pious, faithful, and zealous Sovereign, and has called together unto him from all parts the chief rulers of the priesthood; so that, the grace of Christ our common Lord inspiring us, we may cast off every plague of falsehood from the sheep of Christ, and feed them with the tender leaves of truth. And this have we done with one unanimous consent, driving away erroneous doctrines and renewing the unerring faith of the Fathers, publishing to all men the Creed of the Three Hundred and Eighteen, and to their number adding, as their peers, the Fathers who have received the same summary of religion. Such are the One Hundred and Fifty holy Fathers who afterwards assembled in the great Constantinople and ratified the same faith. Moreover, observing the order and every form relating to the faith, which was observed by the holy synod formerly held in Ephesus, of which Celestine of Rome and Cyril of Alexandria, of holy memory, were the leaders, we do declare that the exposition of the right and blameless faith made by the Three Hundred and Eighteen holy and blessed Fathers, assembled at Nice in the reign of Constantine of pious memory, shall be pre-eminent: and that those things shall be of force also, which were decreed by the One Hundred and Fifty holy Fathers at Constantinople, for the uprooting of the heresies which

had then sprung up, and for the confirmation of the same Catholic and Apostolic Faith of ours.

The Creed of the three hundred and eighteen Fathers at Nice.

We believe in one God, etc.

Item, the Creed of the one hundred and fifty holy Fathers who were assembled at Constantinople.

We believe in one God, etc.

This wise and salutary formula of divine grace sufficed for the perfect knowledge and confirmation of religion; for it teaches the perfect [doctrine] concerning Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and sets forth the Incarnation of the Lord to them that faithfully receive it. But, forasmuch as persons undertaking to make void the preaching of the truth have through their individual heresies given rise to empty babblings; some of them daring to corrupt the mystery of the Lord's incarnation for us and refusing [to use] the name Mother of God (Θεοτόκος) in reference to the Virgin, while others, bringing in a confusion and mixture, and idly conceiving that the nature of the flesh and of the Godhead is all one, maintaining that the divine Nature of the Only Begotten is, by mixture, capable of suffering; therefore this present holy, great, and ecumenical synod, desiring to exclude every device against the Truth, and teaching that which is unchanged from the beginning, has at the very outset decreed that the faith of the Three Hundred and Eighteen Fathers shall be preserved inviolate. And on account of them that contend against the Holy Ghost, it confirms the doctrine afterwards delivered concerning the substance of the Spirit by the One Hundred and Fifty holy Fathers who assembled in the imperial City; which doctrine they declared unto all men, not as though they were introducing anything that had been lacking in their predecessors, but in order to explain through written documents their faith concerning the Holy Ghost against those who were seeking to destroy his sovereignty. And, on account of those who have taken in hand to corrupt the mystery of the dispensation [i.e. the Incarnation] and who shamelessly pretend that he who was born of the holy Virgin Mary was a mere man, it receives the synodical letters of the Blessed Cyril, Pastor of the Church of Alexandria, addressed to Nestorius and the Easterns, judging them suitable, for the refutation of the frenzied folly of Nestorius, and for the instruction of those who long with holy ardour for a knowledge of the saving symbol. And, for the confirmation of the orthodox doctrines, it has rightly added to these the letter of the President of the great and

old Rome, the most blessed and holy Archbishop Leo, which was addressed to Archbishop Flavian of blessed memory, for the removal of the false doctrines of Eutyches, judging them to be agreeable to the confession of the great Peter, and as it were a common pillar against misbelievers. For it opposes those who would rend the mystery of the dispensation into a Duad of Sons; it repels from the sacred assembly those who dare to say that the Godhead of the Only Begotten is capable of suffering; it resists those who imagine a mixture or confusion of the two natures of Christ; it drives away those who fancy his form of a servant is of an heavenly or some substance other than that which was taken of us, and it anathematizes those who foolishly talk of two natures of our Lord before the union, conceiving that after the union there was only one.

Following the holy Fathers we teach with one voice that the Son [of God] and our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same [Person], that he is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, very God and very man, of a reasonable soul and [human] body consisting, consubstantial with the Father as touching his Godhead, and consubstantial with us as touching his manhood; made in all things like us, sin only excepted; begotten of his Father before the worlds according to his Godhead; but in these last days for us men and for our salvation born [into the world] of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God according to his manhood. This one and the same Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son [of God] must be confessed to be in two natures, unconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly, inseparably [united], and that without the distinction of natures being taken away by such union, but rather the peculiar property of each nature being preserved and being united in one Person and subsistence, not separated or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten, God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Prophets of old time have spoken concerning him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ has taught us, and as the Creed of the Fathers has delivered to us.

These things, therefore, having been expressed by us with the greatest accuracy and attention, the holy Ecumenical Synod defines that no one shall be suffered to bring forward a different faith (ἐτέραν πίστιν), nor to write, nor to put together, nor to excogitate, nor to teach it to others. But such as dare either to put together another faith, or to bring forward or to teach or to deliver a different Creed (ἕτερον σύμβολον) to as wish to be converted to the knowledge of the truth, from the Gentiles, or Jews or any heresy whatever, if they be Bishops or clerics let them be deposed, the Bishops from the Episcopate, and the clerics from the clergy; but if they be monks or laics: let them be anathematized.

After the reading of the definition, all the most religious Bishops cried out: This is the faith of the fathers: let the metropolitans forthwith subscribe it: let them forthwith, in the

presence of the judges, subscribe it: let that which has been well defined have no delay: this is the faith of the Apostles: by this we all stand: thus we all believe.

Benedict – Rule

PROLOGUE

Listen, O my son, to the precepts of thy master, and incline the ear of thy heart, and cheerfully receive and faithfully execute the admonitions of thy loving Father, that by the toil of obedience thou mayest return to Him from whom by the sloth of disobedience thou hast gone away.

To thee, therefore, my speech is now directed, who, giving up thine own will, takest up the strong and most excellent arms of obedience, to do battle for Christ the Lord, the true King.

In the first place, beg of Him by most earnest prayer, that He perfect whatever good thou dost begin, in order that He who hath been pleased to count us in the number of His children, need never be grieved at our evil deeds. For we ought at all times so to serve Him with the good things which He hath given us, that He may not, like an angry father, disinherit his children, nor, like a dread lord, enraged at our evil deeds, hand us over to everlasting punishment as most wicked servants, who would not follow Him to glory.

Let us then rise at length, since the Scripture arouseth us, saying: "It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep" (Rom 13:11); and having opened our eyes to the deifying light, let us hear with awestruck ears what the divine voice, crying out daily, doth admonish us, saying: "Today, if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Ps 94[95]:8). And again: "He that hath ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" (Rev 2:7). And what doth He say? -- "Come, children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (Ps 33[34]:12). "Run whilst you have the light of life, that the darkness of death overtake you not" (Jn 12:35).

And the Lord seeking His workman in the multitude of the people, to whom He proclaimeth these words, saith again: "Who is the man that desireth life and loveth to see good days" (Ps 33[34]:13)? If hearing this thou answerest, "I am he," God saith to thee: "If thou wilt have true and everlasting life, keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile; turn away from evil and do good; seek after peace and pursue it" (Ps 33[34]:14-15). And when you shall have done these things, my eyes shall be upon you, and

my ears unto your prayers. And before you shall call upon me I will say: "Behold, I am here" (Is 58:9).

What, dearest brethren, can be sweeter to us than this voice of the Lord inviting us? See, in His loving kindness, the Lord showeth us the way of life. Therefore, having our loins girt with faith and the performance of good works, let us walk His ways under the guidance of the Gospel, that we may be found worthy of seeing Him who hath called us to His kingdom (cf 1 Thes 2:12).

If we desire to dwell in the tabernacle of His kingdom, we cannot reach it in any way, unless we run thither by good works. But let us ask the Lord with the Prophet, saying to Him: "Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle, or who shall rest in Thy holy hill" (Ps 14[15]:1)?

After this question, brethren, let us listen to the Lord answering and showing us the way to this tabernacle, saying: "He that walketh without blemish and worketh justice; he that speaketh truth in his heart; who hath not used deceit in his tongue, nor hath done evil to his neighbor, nor hath taken up a reproach against his neighbor" (Ps 14[15]:2-3), who hath brought to naught the foul demon tempting him, casting him out of his heart with his temptation, and hath taken his evil thoughts whilst they were yet weak and hath dashed them against Christ (cf Ps 14[15]:4; Ps 136[137]:9); who fearing the Lord are not puffed up by their goodness of life, but holding that the actual good which is in them cannot be done by themselves, but by the Lord, they praise the Lord working in them (cf Ps 14[15]:4), saying with the Prophet: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us; by Thy name give glory" (Ps 113[115]:1:9). Thus also the Apostle Paul hath not taken to himself any credit for his preaching, saying: "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Cor 15:10). And again he saith: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (2 Cor 10:17).

Hence, the Lord also saith in the Gospel: "He that heareth these my words and doeth them, shall be likened to a wise man who built his house upon a rock; the floods came, the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock" (Mt 7:24-25). The Lord fulfilling these words waiteth for us from day to day, that we respond to His holy admonitions by our works. Therefore, our days are lengthened to a truce for the amendment of the misdeeds of our present life; as the Apostle saith: "Knowest thou not that the patience of God leadeth thee to penance" (Rom 2:4)? For the good Lord saith: "I will not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live" (Ezek 33:11).

Now, brethren, that we have asked the Lord who it is that shall dwell in His tabernacle, we have heard the conditions for dwelling there; and if we fulfil the duties of tenants, we shall be heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Our hearts and our bodies must, therefore, be ready to

do battle under the biddings of holy obedience; and let us ask the Lord that He supply by the help of His grace what is impossible to us by nature. And if, flying from the pains of hell, we desire to reach life everlasting, then, while there is yet time, and we are still in the flesh, and are able during the present life to fulfil all these things, we must make haste to do now what will profit us forever.

We are, therefore, about to found a school of the Lord's service, in which we hope to introduce nothing harsh or burdensome. But even if, to correct vices or to preserve charity, sound reason dictateth anything that turneth out somewhat stringent, do not at once fly in dismay from the way of salvation, the beginning of which cannot but be narrow. But as we advance in the religious life and faith, we shall run the way of God's commandments with expanded hearts and unspeakable sweetness of love; so that never departing from His guidance and persevering in the monastery in His doctrine till death, we may by patience share in the sufferings of Christ, and be found worthy to be coheirs with Him of His kingdom.

CHAPTER I

Of the Kinds or the Life of Monks

It is well known that there are four kinds of monks. The first kind is that of Cenobites, that is, the monastic, who live under a rule and an Abbot.

The second kind is that of Anchorites, or Hermits, that is, of those who, no longer in the first fervor of their conversion, but taught by long monastic practice and the help of many brethren, have already learned to fight against the devil; and going forth from the rank of their brethren well trained for single combat in the desert, they are able, with the help of God, to cope single-handed without the help of others, against the vices of the flesh and evil thoughts.

But a third and most vile class of monks is that of Sarabaites, who have been tried by no rule under the hand of a master, as gold is tried in the fire (cf Prov27:21); but, soft as lead, and still keeping faith with the world by their works, they are known to belie God by their tonsure. Living in two's and three's, or even singly, without a shepherd, enclosed, not in the Lord's sheepfold, but in their own, the gratification of their desires is law unto them; because what they choose to do they call holy, but what they dislike they hold to be unlawful.

But the fourth class of monks is that called Landlopers, who keep going their whole life long from one province to another, staying three or four days at a time in different cells as guests. Always roving and never settled, they indulge their passions and the cravings of

their appetite, and are in every way worse than the Sarabaites. It is better to pass all these over in silence than to speak of their most wretched life.

Therefore, passing these over, let us go on with the help of God to lay down a rule for that most valiant kind of monks, the Cenobites.

CHAPTER VIII

Of the Divine Office during the Night

Making due allowance for circumstances, the brethren will rise during the winter season, that is, from the calends of November till Easter, at the eighth hour of the night; so that, having rested till a little after midnight, they may rise refreshed. The time, however, which remains over after the night office (Matins) will be employed in study by those of the brethren who still have some parts of the psalms and the lessons to learn.

But from Easter to the aforesaid calends, let the hour for celebrating the night office (Matins) be so arranged, that after a very short interval, during which the brethren may go out for the necessities of nature, the morning office (Lauds), which is to be said at the break of day, may follow presently.

CHAPTER IX

How Many Psalms Are to Be Said at the Night Office

During the winter season, having in the first place said the verse: *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina*, there is next to be said three times, *Domine, labia mea aperies, et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam* (Ps 50[51]:17). To this the third psalm and the *Gloria* are to be added. After this the 94th psalm with its antiphon is to be said or chanted. Hereupon let a hymn follow, and after that six psalms with antiphons. When these and the verse have been said, let the Abbot give the blessing. All being seated on the benches, let three lessons be read alternately by the brethren from the book on the reading stand, between which let three responsories be said. Let two of the responsories be said without the *Gloria*, but after the third lesson, let him who is chanting say the *Gloria*. When the cantor beginneth to sing it, let all rise at once from their seats in honor and reverence of the Blessed Trinity.

Let the inspired books of both the Old and the New Testaments be read at the night offices, as also the expositions of them which have been made by the most eminent orthodox and Catholic Fathers.

After these three lessons with their responsories, let six other psalms follow, to be sung with *Alleluia*. After these let the lessons from the Apostle follow, to be said by heart, then the verse, the invocation of the litany, that is, *Kyrie eleison*. And thus let the night office come to an end.

CHAPTER X

How the Office Is to Be Said during the Summer Season

From Easter till the calends of November let the whole psalmody, as explained above, be said, except that on account of the shortness of the nights, no lessons are read from the book; but instead of these three lessons, let one from the Old Testament be said from memory. Let a short responsory follow this, and let all the rest be performed as was said; namely, that never fewer than twelve psalms be said at the night office, exclusive of the third and the 94th psalm.

CHAPTER XI

How the Night Office Is to Be Said on Sundays

For the night office on Sunday the monks should rise earlier. At this office let the following regulations be observed, namely: after six psalms and the verse have been sung, as we arranged above, and all have been properly seated on the benches in their order, let four lessons with their responsories be read from the book, as we said above. In the fourth responsory only, let the *Gloria* be said by the chanter, and as soon as he beginneth it let all presently rise with reverence.

After these lessons let six other psalms with antiphons and the verse follow in order as before. After these let there be said three canticles from the Prophets, selected by the Abbot, and chanted with *Alleluia*. When the verse also hath been said and the Abbot hath given the blessing, let four other lessons from the New Testament be read in the order above mentioned. But after the fourth responsory let the Abbot intone the hymn *Te Deum laudamus*. When this hath been said, let the Abbot read the lesson from the Gospel, all standing with reverence and awe. When the Gospel hath been read let all answer *Amen*, and immediately the Abbot will follow up with the hymn *Te decet laus*, and when he hath given the blessing Lauds will begin.

Let this order of the night office be observed on Sunday the same way in all seasons, in summer as well as in winter, unless perchance (which God forbid) the brethren should rise too late and part of the lessons or the responsories would have to be shortened. Let every precaution be taken that this does not occur. If it should happen, let him through whose neglect it came about make due satisfaction for it to God in the oratory.

CHAPTER XII

How Lauds Are to Be Said

At Lauds on Sunday, let the 66th psalm be said first simply, without an antiphon. After that let the 50th psalm be said with *Alleluia*; after this let the 117th and the 62d be said; then the blessing and the praises, one lesson from the Apocalypse, said by heart, a responsory, the Ambrosian hymn, the verse and the canticle from the Gospel, the litany, and it is finished.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Whether Monks Ought to Have Anything of Their Own

The vice of personal ownership must by all means be cut out in the monastery by the very root, so that no one may presume to give or receive anything without the command of the Abbot; nor to have anything whatever as his own, neither a book, nor a writing tablet, nor a pen, nor anything else whatsoever, since monks are allowed to have neither their bodies nor their wills in their own power. Everything that is necessary, however, they must look for from the Father of the monastery; and let it not be allowed for anyone to have anything which the Abbot did not give or permit him to have. Let all things be common to all, as it is written. And let no one call or take to himself anything as his own (cf Acts 4:32). But if anyone should be found to indulge this most baneful vice, and, having been admonished once and again, doth not amend, let him be subjected to punishment.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Whether All Should Receive in Equal Measure What Is Necessary

It is written, "Distribution was made to everyone according as he had need" (Acts 4:35). We do not say by this that respect should be had for persons (God forbid), but regard for infirmities. Let him who hath need of less thank God and not give way to sadness, but let him who hath need of more, humble himself for his infirmity, and not be elated for the indulgence shown him; and thus all the members will be at peace.

Above all, let not the evil of murmuring appear in the least word or sign for any reason whatever. If anyone be found guilty herein, let him be placed under very severe discipline.

CHAPTER XLII

That No One Speak after Compline

Monks should always be given to silence, especially, however, during the hours of the night. Therefore, on every day, whether of fast or of a mid-day meal, as soon as they have risen from their evening meal, let all sit together in one place, and let one read the Conferences or the Lives of the Fathers, or something else that will edify the hearers; not, however, the Heptateuch or the Books of the Kings, because it would not be wholesome for weak minds to hear this part of the Scripture at that hour; they should, however, be read at other times. But if it was a fast-day, then, when Vespers have been said, and after a short interval, let them next come together for the reading of the Conferences, as we have said; and when the four or five pages have been read, or as much as the hour will permit, and all have assembled in one place during the time of the reading, let him also come who was perchance engaged in work enjoined on him. All, therefore, having assembled in one place, let them say Complin, and after going out from Complin, let there be no more permission from that time on for anyone to say anything.

If, however, anyone is found to break this rule, let him undergo heavy punishment, unless the needs of guests should arise, or the Abbot should perhaps give a command to anyone. But let even this be done with the utmost gravity and moderation.

CHAPTER XLVIII

Of the Daily Work

Idleness is the enemy of the soul; and therefore the brethren ought to be employed in manual labor at certain times, at others, in devout reading. Hence, we believe that the time for each will be properly ordered by the following arrangement; namely, that from Easter till the calends of October, they go out in the morning from the first till about the fourth hour, to do the necessary work, but that from the fourth till about the sixth hour they devote to reading. After the sixth hour, however, when they have risen from table, let them rest in their beds in complete silence; or if, perhaps, anyone desireth to read for himself, let him so read that he doth not disturb others. Let None be said somewhat earlier, about the middle of the eighth hour; and then let them work again at what is necessary until Vespers.

If, however, the needs of the place, or poverty should require that they do the work of gathering the harvest themselves, let them not be downcast, for then are they monks in truth, if they live by the work of their hands, as did also our forefathers and the Apostles. However, on account of the faint-hearted let all things be done with moderation.

From the calends of October till the beginning of Lent, let them apply themselves to reading until the second hour complete. At the second hour let Tierce be said, and then let all be employed in the work which hath been assigned to them till the ninth hour. When,

however, the first signal for the hour of None hath been given, let each one leave off from work and be ready when the second signal shall strike. But after their repast let them devote themselves to reading or the psalms.

During the Lenten season let them be employed in reading from morning until the third hour, and till the tenth hour let them do the work which is imposed on them. During these days of Lent let all received books from the library, and let them read them through in order. These books are to be given out at the beginning of the Lenten season.

Above all, let one or two of the seniors be appointed to go about the monastery during the time that the brethren devote to reading and take notice, lest perhaps a slothful brother be found who giveth himself up to idleness or vain talk, and doth not attend to his reading, and is unprofitable, not only to himself, but disturbeth also others. If such a one be found (which God forbid), let him be punished once and again. If he doth not amend, let him come under the correction of the Rule in such a way that others may fear. And let not brother join brother at undue times.

On Sunday also let all devote themselves to reading, except those who are appointed to the various functions. But if anyone should be so careless and slothful that he will not or cannot meditate or read, let some work be given him to do, that he may not be idle.

Let such work or charge be given to the weak and the sickly brethren, that they are neither idle, nor so wearied with the strain of work that they are driven away. Their weakness must be taken into account by the Abbot.

CHAPTER LIV

Whether a Monk Should Receive Letters or Anything Else

Let it not be allowed at all for a monk to give or to receive letters, tokens, or gifts of any kind, either from parents or any other person, nor from each other, without the permission of the Abbot. But even if anything is sent him by his parents, let him not presume to accept it before it hath been made known to the Abbot. And if he order it to be accepted, let it be in the Abbot's power to give it to whom he pleaseth. And let not the brother to whom perchance it was sent, become sad, that "no chance be given to the devil" (Eph 4:27; 1 Tm 5:14). But whosoever shall presume to act otherwise, let him fall under the discipline of the Rule.

CHAPTER LV

Of the Clothing and the Footgear of the Brethren

Let clothing be given to the brethren according to the circumstances of the place and the nature of the climate in which they live, because in cold regions more is needed, while in warm regions less. This consideration, therefore, resteth with the Abbot. We believe, however, that for a temperate climate a cowl and a tunic for each monk are sufficient, -- a woolen cowl for winter and a thin or worn one for summer, and a scapular for work, and stockings and shoes as covering for the feet. Let the monks not worry about the color or the texture of all these things, but let them be such as can be bought more cheaply. Let the Abbot, however, look to the size, that these garments are not too small, but fitted for those who are to wear them.

Let those who receive new clothes always return the old ones, to be put away in the wardrobe for the poor. For it is sufficient for a monk to have two tunics and two cowls, for wearing at night and for washing. Hence, what is over and above is superfluous and must be taken away. So, too, let them return stockings and whatever is old, when they receive anything new. Let those who are sent out on a journey receive trousers from the wardrobe, which, on their return, they will replace there, washed. The cowls and the tunics should also be a little better than the ones they usually wear, which they received from the wardrobe when they set out on a journey, and give back when they return.

For their bedding, let a straw mattress, a blanket, a coverlet, and a pillow be sufficient. These beds must, however, be frequently examined by the Abbot, to prevent personal goods from being found. And if anything should be found with anyone that he did not receive from the Abbot, let him fall under the severest discipline. And that this vice of private ownership may be cut off by the root, let everything necessary be given by the Abbot; namely, cowl, tunic, stockings, shoes, girdle, knife, pen, needle, towel, writing tablet; that all pretence of want may be removed. In this connection, however, let the following sentence from the Acts of the Apostles always be kept in mind by the Abbot: "And distribution was made to every man according as he had need" (Acts 4:35). In this manner, therefore, let the Abbot also have regard for the infirmities of the needy, not for the bad will of the envious. Yet in all his decisions, let the Abbot think of God's retribution.

CHAPTER LVII

Of the Artists of the Monastery

If there be skilled workmen in the monastery, let them work at their art in all humility, if the Abbot giveth his permission. But if anyone of them should grow proud by reason of his art, in that he seemeth to confer a benefit on the monastery, let him be removed from that work and not return to it, unless after he hath humbled himself, the Abbot

again ordereth him to do so. But if any of the work of the artists is to be sold, let them, through whose hands the transaction must pass, see to it, that they do not presume to practice any fraud on the monastery. Let them always be mindful of Ananias and Saphira, lest, perhaps, the death which these suffered in the body (cf Acts 5:1-11), they and all who practice any fraud in things belonging to the monastery suffer in the soul. On the other hand, as regards the prices of these things, let not the vice of avarice creep in, but let it always be given a little cheaper than it can be given by seculars, That God May Be Glorified in All Things (1 Pt 4:11).

CHAPTER LVIII

Of the Manner of Admitting Brethren

Let easy admission not be given to one who newly cometh to change his life; but, as the Apostle saith, "Try the spirits, whether they be of God" (1 Jn 4:1). If, therefore, the newcomer keepeth on knocking, and after four or five days it is seen that he patiently beareth the harsh treatment offered him and the difficulty of admission, and that he persevereth in his request, let admission be granted him, and let him live for a few days in the apartment of the guests.

But afterward let him live in the apartment of novices, and there let him meditate, eat, and sleep. Let a senior also be appointed for him, who is qualified to win souls, who will observe him with great care and see whether he really seeketh God, whether he is eager for the Work of God, obedience and humiliations. Let him be shown all the hard and rugged things through which we pass on to God.

If he promiseth to remain steadfast, let this Rule be read to him in order after the lapse of two months, and let it be said to him: Behold the law under which thou desirest to combat. If thou canst keep it, enter; if, however, thou canst not, depart freely. If he still persevereth, then let him be taken back to the aforesaid apartment of the novices, and let him be tried again in all patience. And after the lapse of six months let the Rule be read over to him, that he may know for what purpose he entereth. And if he still remaineth firm, let the same Rule be read to him again after four months. And if, after having weighed the matter with himself he promiseth to keep everything, and to do everything that is commanded him, then let him be received into the community, knowing that he is now placed under the law of the Rule, and that from that day forward it is no longer permitted to him to wrest his neck from under the yoke of the Rule, which after so long a deliberation he was at liberty either to refuse or to accept.

Let him who is received promise in the oratory, in the presence of all, before God and His saints, stability, the conversion of morals, and obedience, in order that, if he should ever do

otherwise, he may know that he will be condemned by God "Whom he mocketh." Let him make a written statement of his promise in the name of the saints whose relics are there, and of the Abbot there present. Let him write this document with his own hand; or at least, if he doth not know how to write, let another write it at his request, and let the novice make his mark, and with his own hand place it on the altar. When he hath placed it there, let the novice next begin the verse: "Uphold me, O Lord, according to Thy word and I shall live; and let me not be confounded in my expectations" (Ps 118[119]:116). Then let all the brotherhood repeat this verse three times, adding the *Gloria Patri*.

Let that novice brother cast himself down at the feet of all, that they may pray for him; and from that day let him be counted in the brotherhood. If he hath any property, let him first either dispose of it to the poor or bestow it on the monastery by a formal donation, reserving nothing for himself as indeed he should know that from that day onward he will no longer have power even over his own body.

Let him, therefore, be divested at once in the oratory of the garments with which he is clothed, and be vested in the garb of the monastery. But let the clothes of which he was divested be laid by in the wardrobe to be preserved, that, if on the devil's suasion he should ever consent to leave the monastery (which God forbid) he be then stripped of his monastic habit and cast out. But let him not receive the document of his profession which the Abbot took from the altar, but let it be preserved in the monastery.

CHAPTER LIX

Of the Children of the Noble and of the Poor Who Are Offered

If it happen that a nobleman offereth his son to God in the monastery and the boy is of tender age, let his parents execute the written promise which we have mentioned above; and with the oblation let them wrap that document and the boy's hand in the altar cloth and thus offer him.

As to their property, let them bind themselves under oath in the same document that they will never give him anything themselves nor through any other person, nor in any way whatever, nor leave a chance for his owning anything; or else, if they refuse to do this and want to make an offering to the monastery as an alms for their own benefit, let them make a donation to the monastery of whatever goods they wish to give, reserving to themselves the income of it, if they so desire. And let everything be so barred that the boy remain in no uncertainty, which might deceive and ruin him (which God forbid) -- a pass we have learned by experience.

Let those who are poor act in like manner. But as to those who have nothing at all, let them simply make the declaration, and with the oblation offer their son in the presence of witnesses.

CHAPTER LXIV *Of the Election of the Abbot*

In the election of an Abbot let this always be observed as a rule, that he be placed in the position whom the whole community with one consent, in the fear of God, or even a small part, with sounder judgment, shall elect. But let him who is to be elected be chosen for the merit of his life and the wisdom of his doctrine, though he be the last in the community.

But even if the whole community should by mutual consent elect a man who agreeth to connive at their evil ways (which God forbid) and these irregularities in some come to the knowledge of the Bishop to whose diocese the place belongeth, or to neighboring Abbots, or Christian people, let them not permit the intrigue of the wicked to succeed, but let them appoint a worthy steward over the house of God, knowing that they shall receive a bountiful reward for this action, if they do it with a pure intention and godly zeal; whereas, on the other hand, they commit a sin if they neglect it.

But when the Abbot hath been elected let him bear in mind how great a burden he hath taken upon himself, and to whom he must give an account of his stewardship (cf Lk 16:2); and let him be convinced that it becometh him better to serve than to rule. He must, therefore, be versed in the divine law, that he may know whence "to bring forth new things and old" (Mt 13:52). Let him be chaste, sober, and merciful, and let him always exalt "mercy above judgment" (Jas 2:13), that he also may obtain mercy.

Let him hate vice, but love the brethren. And even in his corrections, let him act with prudence and not go to extremes, lest, while he aimeth to remove the rust too thoroughly, the vessel be broken. Let him always keep his own frailty in mind, and remember that "the bruised reed must not be broken" (Is 42:3). In this we are not saying that he should allow evils to take root, but that he cut them off with prudence and charity, as he shall see it is best for each one, as we have already said; and let him aim to be loved rather than feared.

Let him not be fussy or over-anxious, exacting, or headstrong; let him not be jealous or suspicious, because he will never have rest. In all his commands, whether they refer to things spiritual or temporal, let him be cautious and considerate. Let him be discerning and temperate in the tasks which he enjoineeth, recalling the discretion of holy Jacob who saith: "If I should cause my flocks to be overdriven, they would all die in one day" (Gen 33:13).

Keeping in view these and other dictates of discretion, the mother of virtues, let him so temper everything that the strong may still have something to desire and the weak may not draw back. Above all, let him take heed that he keep this Rule in all its detail; that when he hath served well he may hear from the Lord what the good servant heard who gave his fellow-servants bread in season: "Amen, I say to you," He saith, "he shall set him over all his goods" (Mt 24:47).

CHAPTER LXXIII

Of This, that Not the Whole Observance of Righteousness Is Laid Down in this Rule

Now, we have written this Rule that, observing it in monasteries, we may show that we have acquired at least some moral righteousness, or a beginning of the monastic life.

On the other hand, he that hasteneth on to the perfection of the religious life, hath at hand the teachings of the holy Fathers, the observance of which leadeth a man to the height of perfection. For what page or what utterance of the divinely inspired books of the Old and the New Testament is not a most exact rule of human life? Or, what book of the holy Catholic Fathers doth not loudly proclaim how we may go straight to our Creator? So, too, the collations of the Fathers, and their institutes and lives, and the rule of our holy Father, Basil -- what are they but the monuments of the virtues of exemplary and obedient monks? But for us slothful, disedifying, and negligent monks they are a source for shame and confusion.

Thou, therefore, who hastenest to the heavenly home, with the help of Christ fulfil this least rule written for a beginning; and then thou shalt with God's help attain at last to the greater heights of knowledge and virtue which we have mentioned above.

U. I. O. G. D.