

Reading #9 – From Constantine to Augustine

Athanasius – “Easter Letter of 367”

Of the particular books and their number, which are accepted by the Church. From the thirty-ninth Letter of Holy Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, on the Paschal festival; wherein he defines canonically what are the divine books which are accepted by the Church.

1. They have fabricated books which they call books of tables, in which they shew stars, to which they give the names of Saints. And therein of a truth they have inflicted on themselves a double reproach: those who have written such books, because they have perfected themselves in a lying and contemptible science; and as to the ignorant and simple, they have led them astray by evil thoughts concerning the right faith established in all truth and upright in the presence of God.

2. But since we have made mention of heretics as dead, but of ourselves as possessing the Divine Scriptures for salvation; and since I fear lest, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, some few of the simple should be beguiled from their simplicity and purity, by the subtilty of certain men, and should henceforth read other books — those called apocryphal — led astray by the similarity of their names with the true books; I beseech you to bear patiently, if I also write, by way of remembrance, of matters with which you are acquainted, influenced by the need and advantage of the Church.

3. In proceeding to make mention of these things, I shall adopt, to commend my undertaking, the pattern of Luke the Evangelist, saying on my own account: ‘Forasmuch as some have taken in hand,’ to reduce into order for themselves the books termed apocryphal, and to mix them up with the divinely inspired Scripture, concerning which we have been fully persuaded, as they who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, delivered to the fathers; it seemed good to me also, having been urged thereto by true brethren, and having learned from the beginning, to set before you the books included in the Canon, and handed down, and accredited as Divine; to the end that anyone who has fallen into error may condemn those who have led him astray; and that he who has continued stedfast in purity may again rejoice, having these things brought to his remembrance.

4. There are, then, of the Old Testament, twenty-two books in number; for, as I have heard, it is handed down that this is the number of the letters among the Hebrews; their respective order and names being as follows. The first is Genesis, then Exodus, next Leviticus, after that Numbers, and then Deuteronomy. Following these there is Joshua, the son of Nun, then Judges, then Ruth. And again, after these four books of Kings, the first and second being reckoned as one book, and so likewise the third and fourth as one book. And again, the first and second of the Chronicles are reckoned as one book. Again Ezra, the first and second are similarly one book. After these there is the book of Psalms, then the Proverbs, next Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. Job follows, then the Prophets, the twelve being reckoned as one book. Then Isaiah, one book, then Jeremiah with Baruch, Lamentations, and the epistle, one book; afterwards, Ezekiel and Daniel, each one book. Thus far constitutes the Old Testament.

5. Again it is not tedious to speak of the [books] of the New Testament. These are, the four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Afterwards, the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles (called Catholic), seven, viz. of James, one; of Peter, two; of John, three; after these, one of Jude. In addition, there are fourteen Epistles of Paul, written in this order. The first, to the Romans; then two to the Corinthians; after these, to the Galatians; next, to the Ephesians; then to the Philippians; then to the Colossians; after these, two to the Thessalonians, and that to the Hebrews; and again, two to Timothy; one to Titus; and lastly, that to Philemon. And besides, the Revelation of John.

6. These are fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these. For concerning these the Lord put to shame the Sadducees, and said, 'Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.' And He reproveth the Jews, saying, 'Search the Scriptures, for these are they that testify of Me.'

7. But for greater exactness I add this also, writing of necessity; that there are other books besides these not indeed included in the Canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us, and who wish for instruction in the word of godliness. The Wisdom of Solomon, and the Wisdom of Sirach, and Esther, and Judith, and Tobit, and that which is called the Teaching of the Apostles, and the Shepherd. But the former, my brethren, are included in the Canon, the latter being [merely] read; nor is there in any place a mention of apocryphal writings. But they are an invention of heretics, who write them when they choose, bestowing upon them their approbation, and assigning to them a date, that so, using them as ancient writings, they may find occasion to lead astray the simple.

Ecumenical Council #2: The First Council of Constantinople (381)

“Creed”

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the Right Hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead. Whose kingdom shall have no end. (I)

And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver-of-Life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And [we believe] in one, holy, (II) Catholic and Apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, [and] we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

“Letter of the Same Holy Synod to the Most Pious Emperor Theodosius the Great, to Which are Appended the Canons Enacted by Them”

To the most religious Emperor Theodosius, the Holy Synod of Bishops assembled in Constantinople out of different Provinces.

We begin our letter to your Piety with thanks to God, who has established the empire of your Piety for the common peace of the Churches and for the support of the true Faith. And, after rendering due thanks unto God, as in duty bound we lay before your Piety the things which have been done in the Holy Synod. When, then, we had assembled in Constantinople, according to the letter of your Piety, we first of all renewed our unity of heart each with the other, and then we pronounced some concise definitions, ratifying the Faith of the Nicene Fathers, and anathematizing the heresies which have sprung up, contrary thereto. Besides these things, we also framed certain Canons for the better ordering of the Churches, all which we have subjoined to this our letter. Wherefore we beseech your Piety that the decree of the Synod may be ratified, to the end that, as you

have honoured the Church by your letter of citation, so you should set your seal to the conclusion of what has been decreed. May the Lord establish your empire in peace and righteousness, and prolong it from generation to generation; and may he add unto your earthly power the fruition of the heavenly kingdom also. May God by the prayers (εὐχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων) of the Saints, show favour to the world, that you may be strong and eminent in all good things as an Emperor most truly pious and beloved of God.

“The Decree of Damasus” (Council of Rome – 382 A.D.)

It is likewise decreed: Now, indeed, we must treat of the divine Scriptures: what the universal Catholic Church accepts and what she must shun.

The list of the Old Testament begins: Genesis, one book; Exodus, one book; Leviticus, one book; Numbers, one book; Deuteronomy, one book; Jesus Nave, one book; of Judges, one book; Ruth, one book; of Kings, four books; Paralipomenon, two books; One Hundred and Fifty Psalms, one book; of Solomon, three books: Proverbs, one book; Ecclesiastes, one book; Canticle of Canticles, one book; likewise, Wisdom, one book; Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), one book; Likewise, the list of the Prophets: Isaiah, one book; Jeremias, one book; along with Cinoth, that is, his Lamentations; Ezechiel, one book; Daniel, one book; Osee, one book; Amos, one book; Micheas, one book; Joel, one book; Abdias, one book; Jonas, one book; Nahum, one book; Habacuc, one book; Sophonias, one book; Aggeus, one book; Zacharias, one book; Malachias, one book. Likewise, the list of histories: Job, one book; Tobias, one book; Esdras, two books; Esther, one book; Judith, one book; of Maccabees, two books. Likewise, the list of the Scriptures of the New and Eternal Testament, which the holy and Catholic Church receives: of the Gospels, one book according to Matthew, one book according to Mark, one book according to Luke, one book according to John. The Epistles of the Apostle Paul, fourteen in number: one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one to the Ephesians, two to the Thessalonians, one to the Galatians, one to the Philippians, one to the Colossians, two to Timothy, one to Titus one to Philemon, one to the Hebrews. Likewise, one book of the Apocalypse of John. And the Acts of the Apostles, one book. Likewise, the canonical Epistles, seven in number: of the Apostle Peter, two Epistles; of the Apostle James, one Epistle; of the Apostle John, one Epistle; of the other John, a Presbyter, two Epistles; of the Apostle Jude the Zealot, one Epistle. Thus concludes the canon of the New Testament.

Augustine – The Confessions (selections)

BOOK THREE

The story of his student days in Carthage, his discovery of Cicero's Hortensius, the enkindling of his philosophical interest, his infatuation with the Manichean heresy, and his mother's dream which foretold his eventual return to the true faith and to God.

CHAPTER II

2. Stage plays also captivated me, with their sights full of the images of my own miseries: fuel for my own fire. Now, why does a man like to be made sad by viewing doleful and tragic scenes, which he himself could not by any means endure? Yet, as a spectator, he wishes to experience from them a sense of grief, and in this very sense of grief his pleasure consists. What is this but wretched madness? For a man is more affected by these actions the more he is spuriously involved in these affections. Now, if he should suffer them in his own person, it is the custom to call this "misery." But when he suffers with another, then it is called "compassion." But what kind of compassion is it that arises from viewing fictitious and unreal sufferings? The spectator is not expected to aid the sufferer but merely to grieve for him. And the more he grieves the more he applauds the actor of these fictions. If the misfortunes of the characters--whether historical or entirely imaginary--are represented so as not to touch the feelings of the spectator, he goes away disgusted and complaining. But if his feelings are deeply touched, he sits it out attentively, and sheds tears of joy.

3. Tears and sorrow, then, are loved. Surely every man desires to be joyful. And, though no one is willingly miserable, one may, nevertheless, be pleased to be merciful so that we love their sorrows because without them we should have nothing to pity. This also springs from that same vein of friendship. But whither does it go? Whither does it flow? Why does it run into that torrent of pitch which seethes forth those huge tides of loathsome lusts in which it is changed and altered past recognition, being diverted and corrupted from its celestial purity by its own will? Shall, then, compassion be repudiated? By no means! Let us, however, love the sorrows of others. But let us beware of uncleanness, O my soul, under the protection of my God, the God of our fathers, who is to be praised and exalted--let us beware of uncleanness. I have not yet ceased to have compassion. But in those days in the theaters I sympathized with lovers when they sinfully enjoyed one another, although this was done fictitiously in the play. And when they lost one another, I grieved with them, as if pitying them, and yet had delight in both grief and pity. Nowadays I feel much more pity for one who delights in his wickedness than for one who counts himself unfortunate because he fails to obtain some harmful pleasure or suffers the loss of some miserable

felicity. This, surely, is the truer compassion, but the sorrow I feel in it has no delight for me. For although he that grieves with the unhappy should be commended for his work of love, yet he who has the power of real compassion would still prefer that there be nothing for him to grieve about. For if good will were to be ill will--which it cannot be--only then could he who is truly and sincerely compassionate wish that there were some unhappy people so that he might commiserate them. Some grief may then be justified, but none of it loved. Thus it is that thou dost act, O Lord God, for thou lovest souls far more purely than we do and art more incorruptibly compassionate, although thou art never wounded by any sorrow. Now "who is sufficient for these things?"

CHAPTER III

6. Those studies I was then pursuing, generally accounted as respectable, were aimed at distinction in the courts of law--to excel in which, the more crafty I was, the more I should be praised. Such is the blindness of men that they even glory in their blindness. And by this time I had become a master in the School of Rhetoric, and I rejoiced proudly in this honor and became inflated with arrogance. Still I was relatively sedate, O Lord, as thou knowest, and had no share in the wreckings of "The Wreckers" (for this stupid and diabolical name was regarded as the very badge of gallantry) among whom I lived with a sort of ashamed embarrassment that I was not even as they were. But I lived with them, and at times I was delighted with their friendship, even when I abhorred their acts (that is, their "wrecking") in which they insolently attacked the modesty of strangers, tormenting them by uncalled-for jeers, gratifying their mischievous mirth. Nothing could more nearly resemble the actions of devils than these fellows. By what name, therefore, could they be more aptly called than "wreckers"?--being themselves wrecked first, and altogether turned upside down. They were secretly mocked at and seduced by the deceiving spirits, in the very acts by which they amused themselves in jeering and horseplay at the expense of others.

CHAPTER IV

7. Among such as these, in that unstable period of my life, I studied the books of eloquence, for it was in eloquence that I was eager to be eminent, though from a reprehensible and vainglorious motive, and a delight in human vanity. In the ordinary course of study I came upon a certain book of Cicero's, whose language almost all admire, though not his heart. This particular book of his contains an exhortation to philosophy and was called *Hortensius*. Now it was this book which quite definitely changed my whole attitude and turned my prayers toward thee, O Lord, and gave me new hope and new desires. Suddenly every vain hope became worthless to me, and with an incredible warmth of heart I yearned for an immortality of wisdom and began now to arise that I might return to thee. It was not to

sharpen my tongue further that I made use of that book. I was now nineteen; my father had been dead two years, and my mother was providing the money for my study of rhetoric. What won me in it [i.e., the *Hortensius*] was not its style but its substance.

8. How ardent was I then, my God, how ardent to fly from earthly things to thee! Nor did I know how thou wast even then dealing with me. For with thee is wisdom. In Greek the love of wisdom is called "philosophy," and it was with this love that that book inflamed me. There are some who seduce through philosophy, under a great, alluring, and honorable name, using it to color and adorn their own errors. And almost all who did this, in Cicero's own time and earlier, are censored and pointed out in his book. In it there is also manifest that most salutary admonition of thy Spirit, spoken by thy good and pious servant: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily." Since at that time, as thou knowest, O Light of my heart, the words of the apostle were unknown to me, I was delighted with Cicero's exhortation, at least enough so that I was stimulated by it, and enkindled and inflamed to love, to seek, to obtain, to hold, and to embrace, not this or that sect, but wisdom itself, wherever it might be. Only this checked my ardor: that the name of Christ was not in it. For this name, by thy mercy, O Lord, this name of my Saviour thy Son, my tender heart had piously drunk in, deeply treasured even with my mother's milk. And whatsoever was lacking that name, no matter how erudite, polished, and truthful, did not quite take complete hold of me.

CHAPTER VII

12. For I was ignorant of that other reality, true Being. And so it was that I was subtly persuaded to agree with these foolish deceivers when they put their questions to me: "Whence comes evil?" and, "Is God limited by a bodily shape, and has he hairs and nails?" and, "Are those patriarchs to be esteemed righteous who had many wives at one time, and who killed men and who sacrificed living creatures?" In my ignorance I was much disturbed over these things and, though I was retreating from the truth, I appeared to myself to be going toward it, because I did not yet know that evil was nothing but a privation of good (that, indeed, it has no being); and how should I have seen this when the sight of my eyes went no farther than physical objects, and the sight of my mind reached no farther than to fantasms? And I did not know that God is a spirit who has no parts extended in length and breadth, whose being has no mass--for every mass is less in a part than in a whole--and if it be an infinite mass it must be less in such parts as are limited by a certain space than in its infinity. It cannot therefore be wholly everywhere as Spirit is, as

God is. And I was entirely ignorant as to what is that principle within us by which we are like God, and which is rightly said in Scripture to be made "after God's image."

CHAPTER XI

19. And now thou didst "stretch forth thy hand from above" and didst draw up my soul out of that profound darkness [of Manicheism] because my mother, thy faithful one, wept to thee on my behalf more than mothers are accustomed to weep for the bodily deaths of their children. For by the light of the faith and spirit which she received from thee, she saw that I was dead. And thou didst hear her, O Lord, thou didst hear her and despised not her tears when, pouring down, they watered the earth under her eyes in every place where she prayed. Thou didst truly hear her.

For what other source was there for that dream by which thou didst console her, so that she permitted me to live with her, to have my meals in the same house at the table which she had begun to avoid, even while she hated and detested the blasphemies of my error? In her dream she saw herself standing on a sort of wooden rule, and saw a bright youth approaching her, joyous and smiling at her, while she was grieving and bowed down with sorrow. But when he inquired of her the cause of her sorrow and daily weeping (not to learn from her, but to teach her, as is customary in visions), and when she answered that it was my soul's doom she was lamenting, he bade her rest content and told her to look and see that where she was there I was also. And when she looked she saw me standing near her on the same rule.

Whence came this vision unless it was that thy ears were inclined toward her heart? O thou Omnipotent Good, thou carest for every one of us as if thou didst care for him only, and so for all as if they were but one!

20. And what was the reason for this also, that, when she told me of this vision, and I tried to put this construction on it: "that she should not despair of being someday what I was," she replied immediately, without hesitation, "No; for it was not told me that 'where he is, there you shall be' but 'where you are, there he will be'?" I confess my remembrance of this to thee, O Lord, as far as I can recall it--and I have often mentioned it. Thy answer, given through my watchful mother, in the fact that she was not disturbed by the plausibility of my false interpretation but saw immediately what should have been seen--and which I certainly had not seen until she spoke--this answer moved me more deeply than the dream itself. Still, by that dream, the joy that was to come to that pious woman so long after was predicted long before, as a consolation for her present anguish.

Nearly nine years passed in which I wallowed in the mud of that deep pit and in the darkness of falsehood, striving often to rise, but being all the more heavily dashed down. But all that time this chaste, pious, and sober widow--such as thou dost love--was now more buoyed up with hope, though no less zealous in her weeping and mourning; and she did not cease to bewail my case before thee, in all the hours of her supplication. Her prayers entered thy presence, and yet thou didst allow me still to tumble and toss around in that darkness.

CHAPTER XII

21. Meanwhile, thou gavest her yet another answer, as I remember--for I pass over many things, hastening on to those things which more strongly impel me to confess to thee--and many things I have simply forgotten. But thou gavest her then another answer, by a priest of thine, a certain bishop reared in thy Church and well versed in thy books. When that woman had begged him to agree to have some discussion with me, to refute my errors, to help me to unlearn evil and to learn the good - - for it was his habit to do this when he found people ready to receive it--he refused, very prudently, as I afterward realized. For he answered that I was still unteachable, being inflated with the novelty of that heresy, and that I had already perplexed divers inexperienced persons with vexatious questions, as she herself had told him. "But let him alone for a time," he said, "only pray God for him. He will of his own accord, by reading, come to discover what an error it is and how great its impiety is." He went on to tell her at the same time how he himself, as a boy, had been given over to the Manicheans by his misguided mother and not only had read but had even copied out almost all their books. Yet he had come to see, without external argument or proof from anyone else, how much that sect was to be shunned--and had shunned it. When he had said this she was not satisfied, but repeated more earnestly her entreaties, and shed copious tears, still beseeching him to see and talk with me. Finally the bishop, a little vexed at her importunity, exclaimed, "Go your way; as you live, it cannot be that the son of these tears should perish." As she often told me afterward, she accepted this answer as though it were a voice from heaven.

BOOK FOUR

This is the story of his years among the Manicheans. It includes the account of his teaching at Tagaste, his taking a mistress, the attractions of astrology, the poignant loss of a friend which leads to a searching analysis of grief and transience. He reports on his first

book, De pulchro et apto, and his introduction to Aristotle's Categories and other books of philosophy and theology, which he mastered with great ease and little profit.

CHAPTER I

1. During this period of nine years, from my nineteenth year to my twenty-eighth, I went astray and led others astray. I was deceived and deceived others, in varied lustful projects--sometimes publicly, by the teaching of what men style "the liberal arts"; sometimes secretly, under the false guise of religion. In the one, I was proud of myself; in the other, superstitious; in all, vain! In my public life I was striving after the emptiness of popular fame, going so far as to seek theatrical applause, entering poetic contests, striving for the straw garlands and the vanity of theatricals and intemperate desires. In my private life I was seeking to be purged from these corruptions of ours by carrying food to those who were called "elect" and "holy," which, in the laboratory of their stomachs, they should make into angels and gods for us, and by them we might be set free. These projects I followed out and practiced with my friends, who were both deceived with me and by me. Let the proud laugh at me, and those who have not yet been savingly cast down and stricken by thee, O my God. Nevertheless, I would confess to thee my shame to thy glory. Bear with me, I beseech thee, and give me the grace to retrace in my present memory the devious ways of my past errors and thus be able to "offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving." For what am I to myself without thee but a guide to my own downfall? Or what am I, even at the best, but one suckled on thy milk and feeding on thee, O Food that never perishes? What indeed is any man, seeing that he is but a man? Therefore, let the strong and the mighty laugh at us, but let us who are "poor and needy" confess to thee.

CHAPTER II

2. During those years I taught the art of rhetoric. Conquered by the desire for gain, I offered for sale speaking skills with which to conquer others. And yet, O Lord, thou knowest that I really preferred to have honest scholars (or what were esteemed as such) and, without tricks of speech, I taught these scholars the tricks of speech--not to be used against the life of the innocent, but sometimes to save the life of a guilty man. And thou, O God, didst see me from afar, stumbling on that slippery path and sending out some flashes of fidelity amid much smoke--guiding those who loved vanity and sought after lying,[\[85\]](#) being myself their companion.

In those years I had a mistress, to whom I was not joined in lawful marriage. She was a woman I had discovered in my wayward passion, void as it was of understanding, yet she was the only one; and I remained faithful to her and with her I discovered, by my own experience, what a great difference there is between the restraint of the marriage bond

contracted with a view to having children and the compact of a lustful love, where children are born against the parents' will--although once they are born they compel our love.

3. I remember too that, when I decided to compete for a theatrical prize, some magician--I do not remember him now--asked me what I would give him to be certain to win. But I detested and abominated such filthy mysteries, and answered "that, even if the garland was of imperishable gold, I would still not permit a fly to be killed to win it for me." For he would have slain certain living creatures in his sacrifices, and by those honors would have invited the devils to help me. This evil thing I refused, but not out of a pure love of thee, O God of my heart, for I knew not how to love thee because I knew not how to conceive of anything beyond corporeal splendors. And does not a soul, sighing after such idle fictions, commit fornication against thee, trust in false things, and "feed on the winds"? But still I would not have sacrifices offered to devils on my behalf, though I was myself still offering them sacrifices of a sort by my own [Manichean] superstition. For what else is it "to feed on the winds" but to feed on the devils, that is, in our wanderings to become their sport and mockery?

CHAPTER III

4. And yet, without scruple, I consulted those other impostors, whom they call "astrologers" [*mathematicos*], because they used no sacrifices and invoked the aid of no spirit for their divinations. Still, true Christian piety must necessarily reject and condemn their art.

5. There was at that time a wise man, very skillful and quite famous in medicine. He was proconsul then, and with his own hand he placed on my distempered head the crown I had won in a rhetorical contest. He did not do this as a physician, however; and for this distemper "only thou canst heal whoresisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." But didst thou fail me in that old man, or forbear from healing my soul? Actually when I became better acquainted with him, I used to listen, rapt and eager, to his words; for, though he spoke in simple language, his conversation was replete with vivacity, life, and earnestness. He recognized from my own talk that I was given to books of the horoscope-casters, but he, in a kind and fatherly way, advised me to throw them away and not to spend idly on these vanities care and labor that might otherwise go into useful things. He said that he himself in his earlier years had studied the astrologers' art with a view to gaining his living by it as a profession. Since he had already understood Hippocrates, he was fully qualified to understand this too. Yet, he had given it up and followed medicine for the simple reason that he had discovered astrology to be utterly false and, as a man of honest character, he was unwilling to gain his living by beguiling people. "But you," he said, "have the profession of rhetoric to support yourself by, so that you are following this

delusion in free will and not necessity. All the more, therefore, you ought to believe me, since I worked at it to learn the art perfectly because I wished to gain my living by it." When I asked him to account for the fact that many true things are foretold by astrology, he answered me, reasonably enough, that the force of chance, diffused through the whole order of nature, brought these things about. For when a man, by accident, opens the leaves of some poet (who sang and intended something far different) a verse oftentimes turns out to be wondrously apposite to the reader's present business. "It is not to be wondered at," he continued, "if out of the human mind, by some higher instinct which does not know what goes on within itself, an answer should be arrived at, by chance and not art, which would fit both the business and the action of the inquirer."

6. And thus truly, either by him or through him, thou wast looking after me. And thou didst fix all this in my memory so that afterward I might search it out for myself.

But at that time, neither the proconsul nor my most dear Nebridius--a splendid youth and most circumspect, who scoffed at the whole business of divination--could persuade me to give it up, for the authority of the astrological authors influenced me more than they did. And, thus far, I had come upon no certain proof--such as I sought--by which it could be shown without doubt that what had been truly foretold by those consulted came from accident or chance, and not from the art of the stargazers.

CHAPTER IV

7. In those years, when I first began to teach rhetoric in my native town, I had gained a very dear friend, about my own age, who was associated with me in the same studies. Like myself, he was just rising up into the flower of youth. He had grown up with me from childhood and we had been both school fellows and playmates. But he was not then my friend, nor indeed ever became my friend, in the true sense of the term; for there is no true friendship save between those thou dost bind together and who cleave to thee by that love which is "shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who is given to us." Still, it was a sweet friendship, being ripened by the zeal of common studies. Moreover, I had turned him away from the true faith--which he had not soundly and thoroughly mastered as a youth--and turned him toward those superstitious and harmful fables which my mother mourned in me. With me this man went wandering off in error and my soul could not exist without him. But behold thou wast close behind thy fugitives--at once a God of vengeance and a Fountain of mercies, who dost turn us to thyself by ways that make us marvel. Thus, thou didst take that man out of this life when he had scarcely completed one whole year of friendship with me, sweeter to me than all the sweetness of my life thus far.

8. Who can show forth all thy praise for that which he has experienced in himself alone? What was it that thou didst do at that time, O my God; how unsearchable are the depths of thy judgments! For when, sore sick of a fever, he long lay unconscious in a death sweat and everyone despaired of his recovery, he was baptized without his knowledge. And I myself cared little, at the time, presuming that his soul would retain what it had taken from me rather than what was done to his unconscious body. It turned out, however, far differently, for he was revived and restored. Immediately, as soon as I could talk to him--and I did this as soon as he was able, for I never left him and we hung on each other overmuch--I tried to jest with him, supposing that he also would jest in return about that baptism which he had received when his mind and senses were inactive, but which he had since learned that he had received. But he recoiled from me, as if I were his enemy, and, with a remarkable and unexpected freedom, he admonished me that, if I desired to continue as his friend, I must cease to say such things. Confounded and confused, I concealed my feelings till he should get well and his health recover enough to allow me to deal with him as I wished. But he was snatched away from my madness, that with thee he might be preserved for my consolation. A few days after, during my absence, the fever returned and he died.

9. My heart was utterly darkened by this sorrow and everywhere I looked I saw death. My native place was a torture room to me and my father's house a strange unhappiness. And all the things I had done with him--now that he was gone--became a frightful torment. My eyes sought him everywhere, but they did not see him; and I hated all places because he was not in them, because they could not say to me, "Look, he is coming," as they did when he was alive and absent. I became a hard riddle to myself, and I asked my soul why she was so downcast and why this disquieted me so sorely. But she did not know how to answer me. And if I said, "Hope thou in God," she very properly disobeyed me, because that dearest friend she had lost was as an actual man, both truer and better than the imagined deity she was ordered to put her hope in. Nothing but tears were sweet to me and they took my friend's place in my heart's desire.

CHAPTER VI

11. But why do I speak of these things? Now is not the time to ask such questions, but rather to confess to thee. I was wretched; and every soul is wretched that is fettered in the friendship of mortal things--it is torn to pieces when it loses them, and then realizes the misery which it had even before it lost them. Thus it was at that time with me. I wept most bitterly, and found a rest in bitterness. I was wretched, and yet that wretched life I still held dearer than my friend. For though I would willingly have changed it, I was still more unwilling to lose it than to have lost him. Indeed, I doubt whether I was willing to lose it, even for him--as they tell (unless it be fiction) of the friendship of Orestes and Pylades; they

would have gladly died for one another, or both together, because not to love together was worse than death to them. But a strange kind of feeling had come over me, quite different from this, for now it was wearisome to live and a fearful thing to die. I suppose that the more I loved him the more I hated and feared, as the most cruel enemy, that death which had robbed me of him. I even imagined that it would suddenly annihilate all men, since it had had such a power over him. This is the way I remember it was with me.

Look into my heart, O God! Behold and look deep within me, for I remember it well, O my Hope who cleansest me from the uncleanness of such affections, directing my eyes toward thee and plucking my feet out of the snare. And I marveled that other mortals went on living since he whom I had loved as if he would never die was now dead. And I marveled all the more that I, who had been a second self to him, could go on living when he was dead. Someone spoke rightly of his friend as being "his soul's other half" -- for I felt that my soul and his soul were but one soul in two bodies. Consequently, my life was now a horror to me because I did not want to live as a half self. But it may have been that I was afraid to die, lest he should then die wholly whom I had so greatly loved.

CHAPTER VII

12. And yet I did flee from my native place so that my eyes would look for him less in a place where they were not accustomed to see him. Thus I left the town of Tagaste and returned to Carthage.

CHAPTER XIII

20. These things I did not understand at that time, and I loved those inferior beauties, and I was sinking down to the very depths. And I said to my friends: "Do we love anything but the beautiful? What then is the beautiful? And what is beauty? What is it that allures and unites us to the things we love; for unless there were a grace and beauty in them, they could not possibly attract us to them?" And I reflected on this and saw that in the objects themselves there is a kind of beauty which comes from their forming a whole and another kind of beauty that comes from mutual fitness--as the harmony of one part of the body with its whole, or a shoe with a foot, and so on. And this idea sprang up in my mind out of my inmost heart, and I wrote some books--two or three, I think--*On the Beautiful and the Fitting*. Thou knowest them, O Lord; they have escaped my memory. I no longer have them; somehow they have been mislaid.

CHAPTER XIV

21. What was it, O Lord my God, that prompted me to dedicate these books to Hierius, an orator of Rome, a man I did not know by sight but whom I loved for his reputation of learning, in which he was famous--and also for some words of his that I had heard which had pleased me? But he pleased me more because he pleased others, who gave him high praise and expressed amazement that a Syrian, who had first studied Greek eloquence, should thereafter become so wonderful a Latin orator and also so well versed in philosophy. Thus a man we have never seen is commended and loved. Does a love like this come into the heart of the hearer from the mouth of him who sings the other's praise? Not so. Instead, one catches the spark of love from one who loves. This is why we love one who is praised when the eulogist is believed to give his praise from an unfeigned heart; that is, when he who loves him praises him.

22. Thus it was that I loved men on the basis of other men's judgment, and not thine, O my God, in whom no man is deceived. But why is it that the feeling I had for such men was not like my feeling toward the renowned charioteer, or the great gladiatorial hunter, famed far and wide and popular with the mob? Actually, I admired the orator in a different and more serious fashion, as I would myself desire to be admired. For I did not want them to praise and love me as actors were praised and loved--although I myself praise and love them too. I would prefer being unknown than known in that way, or even being hated than loved that way.

23. But that orator whom I admired so much was the kind of man I wished myself to be. Thus I erred through a swelling pride and "was carried about with every wind," but through it all I was being piloted by thee, though most secretly. And how is it that I know--whence comes my confident confession to thee--that I loved him more because of the love of those who praised him than for the things they praised in him? Because if he had gone unpraised, and these same people had criticized him and had spoken the same things of him in a tone of scorn and disapproval, I should never have been kindled and provoked to love him. And yet his qualities would not have been different, nor would he have been different himself; only the appraisals of the spectators. See where the helpless soul lies prostrate that is not yet sustained by the stability of truth! Just as the breezes of speech blow from the breast of the opinionated, so also the soul is tossed this way and that, driven forward and backward, and the light is obscured to it and the truth not seen. And yet, there it is in front of us. And to me it was a great matter that both my literary work and my zest for learning should be known by that man. For if he approved them, I would be even more fond of him; but if he disapproved, this vain heart of mine, devoid of thy steadfastness, would have been offended. And so I meditated on the problem "of the beautiful and the fitting" and dedicated my essay on it to him. I regarded it admiringly, though no one else joined me in doing so.

CHAPTER XV

27. I was about twenty-six or twenty-seven when I wrote those books, analyzing and reflecting upon those sensory images which clamored in the ears of my heart. I was straining those ears to hear thy inward melody, O sweet Truth, pondering on "the beautiful and the fitting" and longing to stay and hear thee, and to rejoice greatly at "the Bridegroom's voice." Yet I could not, for by the clamor of my own errors I was hurried outside myself, and by the weight of my own pride I was sinking ever lower. You did not "make me to hear joy and gladness," nor did the bones rejoice which were not yet humbled.

28. And what did it profit me that, when I was scarcely twenty years old, a book of Aristotle's entitled *The Ten Categories* fell into my hands? On the very title of this I hung as on something great and divine, since my rhetoric master at Carthage and others who had reputations for learning were always referring to it with such swelling pride. I read it by myself and understood it. And what did it mean that when I discussed it with others they said that even with the assistance of tutors--who not only explained it orally, but drew many diagrams in the sand--they scarcely understood it and could tell me no more about it than I had acquired in the reading of it by myself alone? For the book appeared to me to speak plainly enough about substances, such as a man; and of their qualities, such as the shape of a man, his kind, his stature, how many feet high, and his family relationship, his status, when born, whether he is sitting or standing, is shod or armed, or is doing something or having something done to him--and all the innumerable things that are classified under these nine categories (of which I have given some examples) or under the chief category of substance.

30. And what did it profit me that I could read and understand for myself all the books I could get in the so-called "liberal arts," when I was actually a worthless slave of wicked lust? I took delight in them, not knowing the real source of what it was in them that was true and certain. For I had my back toward the light, and my face toward the things on which the light falls, so that my face, which looked toward the illuminated things, was not itself illuminated. Whatever was written in any of the fields of rhetoric or logic, geometry, music, or arithmetic, I could understand without any great difficulty and without the instruction of another man. All this thou knowest, O Lord my God, because both quickness in understanding and acuteness in insight are thy gifts. Yet for such gifts I made no thank offering to thee. Therefore, my abilities served not my profit but rather my loss, since I went about trying to bring so large a part of my substance into my own power. And I did not store up my strength for thee, but went away from thee into the far country to prostitute my gifts in disordered appetite. And what did these abilities profit me, if I did not put them to good use? I did not realize that those arts were understood with great difficulty, even by

the studious and the intelligent, until I tried to explain them to others and discovered that even the most proficient in them followed my explanations all too slowly.

31. And yet what did this profit me, since I still supposed that thou, O Lord God, the Truth, wert a bright and vast body and that I was a particle of that body? O perversity gone too far! But so it was with me. And I do not blush, O my God, to confess thy mercies to me in thy presence, or to call upon thee--any more than I did not blush when I openly avowed my blasphemies before men, and bayed, houndlike, against thee. What good was it for me that my nimble wit could run through those studies and disentangle all those knotty volumes, without help from a human teacher, since all the while I was erring so hatefully and with such sacrilege as far as the right substance of pious faith was concerned? And what kind of burden was it for thy little ones to have a far slower wit, since they did not use it to depart from thee, and since they remained in the nest of thy Church to become safely fledged and to nourish the wings of love by the food of a sound faith.

BOOK FIVE

A year of decision. Faustus comes to Carthage and Augustine is disenchanted in his hope for solid demonstration of the truth of Manichean doctrine. He decides to flee from his known troubles at Carthage to troubles yet unknown at Rome. His experiences at Rome prove disappointing and he applies for a teaching post at Milan. Here he meets Ambrose, who confronts him as an impressive witness for Catholic Christianity and opens out the possibilities of the allegorical interpretation of Scripture. Augustine decides to become a Christian catechumen.

CHAPTER III

3. Let me now lay bare in the sight of God the twenty-ninth year of my age. There had just come to Carthage a certain bishop of the Manicheans, Faustus by name, a great snare of the devil; and many were entangled by him through the charm of his eloquence. Now, even though I found this eloquence admirable, I was beginning to distinguish the charm of words from the truth of things, which I was eager to learn. Nor did I consider the dish as much as I did the kind of meat that their famous Faustus served up to me in it. His fame had run before him, as one very skilled in an honorable learning and pre-eminently skilled in the liberal arts.

And as I had already read and stored up in memory many of the injunctions of the philosophers, I began to compare some of their doctrines with the tedious fables of the Manicheans; and it struck me that the probability was on the side of the philosophers,

whose power reached far enough to enable them to form a fair judgment of the world, even though they had not discovered the sovereign Lord of it all. For thou art great, O Lord, and thou hast respect unto the lowly, but the proud thou knowest afar off. Thou drawest near to none but the contrite in heart, and canst not be found by the proud, even if in their inquisitive skill they may number the stars and the sands, and map out the constellations, and trace the courses of the planets.

4. For it is by the mind and the intelligence which thou gavest them that they investigate these things. They have discovered much; and have foretold, many years in advance, the day, the hour, and the extent of the eclipses of those luminaries, the sun and the moon. Their calculations did not fail, and it came to pass as they predicted. And they wrote down the rules they had discovered, so that to this day they may be read and from them may be calculated in what year and month and day and hour of the day, and at what quarter of its light, either the moon or the sun will be eclipsed, and it will come to pass just as predicted. And men who are ignorant in these matters marvel and are amazed; and those who understand them exult and are exalted. Both, by an impious pride, withdraw from thee and forsake thy light. They foretell an eclipse of the sun before it happens, but they do not see their own eclipse which is even now occurring. For they do not ask, as religious men should, what is the source of the intelligence by which they investigate these matters. Moreover, when they discover that thou didst make them, they do not give themselves up to thee that thou mightest preserve what thou hast made. Nor do they offer, as sacrifice to thee, what they have made of themselves. For they do not slaughter their own pride--as they do the sacrificial fowls--nor their own curiosities by which, like the fishes of the sea, they wander through the unknown paths of the deep. Nor do they curb their own extravagances as they do those of "the beasts of the field," so that thou, O Lord, "a consuming fire," mayest burn up their mortal cares and renew them unto immortality.

6. Yet I remembered many a true saying of the philosophers about the creation, and I saw the confirmation of their calculations in the orderly sequence of seasons and in the visible evidence of the stars. And I compared this with the doctrines of Mani, who in his voluminous folly wrote many books on these subjects. But I could not discover there any account, of either the solstices or the equinoxes, or the eclipses of the sun and moon, or anything of the sort that I had learned in the books of secular philosophy. But still I was ordered to believe, even where the ideas did not correspond with--even when they contradicted--the rational theories established by mathematics and my own eyes, but were very different.

CHAPTER VI

10. For almost the whole of the nine years that I listened with unsettled mind to the Manichean teaching I had been looking forward with unbounded eagerness to the arrival of this Faustus. For all the other members of the sect that I happened to meet, when they were unable to answer the questions I raised, always referred me to his coming. They promised that, in discussion with him, these and even greater difficulties, if I had them, would be quite easily and amply cleared away. When at last he did come, I found him to be a man of pleasant speech, who spoke of the very same things they themselves did, although more fluently and in a more agreeable style. But what profit was there to me in the elegance of my cupbearer, since he could not offer me the more precious draught for which I thirsted? My ears had already had their fill of such stuff, and now it did not seem any better because it was better expressed nor more true because it was dressed up in rhetoric; nor could I think the man's soul necessarily wise because his face was comely and his language eloquent. But they who extolled him to me were not competent judges. They thought him able and wise because his eloquence delighted them. At the same time I realized that there is another kind of man who is suspicious even of truth itself, if it is expressed in smooth and flowing language. But thou, O my God, hadst already taught me in wonderful and marvelous ways, and therefore I believed--because it is true--that thou didst teach me and that beside thee there is no other teacher of truth, wherever truth shines forth. Already I had learned from thee that because a thing is eloquently expressed it should not be taken to be as necessarily true; nor because it is uttered with stammering lips should it be supposed false. Nor, again, is it necessarily true because rudely uttered, nor untrue because the language is brilliant. Wisdom and folly both are like meats that are wholesome and unwholesome, and courtly or simple words are like town-made or rustic vessels--both kinds of food may be served in either kind of dish.

11. That eagerness, therefore, with which I had so long awaited this man, was in truth delighted with his action and feeling in a disputation, and with the fluent and apt words with which he clothed his ideas. I was delighted, therefore, and I joined with others--and even exceeded them--in exalting and praising him. Yet it was a source of annoyance to me that, in his lecture room, I was not allowed to introduce and raise any of those questions that troubled me, in a familiar exchange of discussion with him. As soon as I found an opportunity for this, and gained his ear at a time when it was not inconvenient for him to enter into a discussion with me and my friends, I laid before him some of my doubts. I discovered at once that he knew nothing of the liberal arts except grammar, and that only in an ordinary way. He had, however, read some of Tully's [i.e. Cicero's] orations, a very few books of Seneca, and some of the poets, and such few books of his own sect as were written in good Latin. With this meager learning and his daily practice in speaking, he had acquired a sort of eloquence which proved the more delightful and enticing because it was

under the direction of a ready wit and a sort of native grace. Was this not even as I now recall it, O Lord my God, Judge of my conscience? My heart and my memory are laid open before thee, who wast even then guiding me by the secret impulse of thy providence and wast setting my shameful errors before my face so that I might see and hate them.

CHAPTER VII

12. For as soon as it became plain to me that Faustus was ignorant in those arts in which I had believed him eminent, I began to despair of his being able to clarify and explain all these perplexities that troubled me--though I realized that such ignorance need not have affected the authenticity of his piety, if he had not been a Manichean. For their books are full of long fables about the sky and the stars, the sun and the moon; and I had ceased to believe him able to show me in any satisfactory fashion what I so ardently desired: whether the explanations contained in the Manichean books were better or at least as good as the mathematical explanations I had read elsewhere. But when I proposed that these subjects should be considered and discussed, he quite modestly did not dare to undertake the task, for he was aware that he had no knowledge of these things and was not ashamed to confess it. For he was not one of those talkative people--from whom I had endured so much--who undertook to teach me what I wanted to know, and then said nothing. Faustus had a heart which, if not right toward thee, was at least not altogether false toward himself; for he was not ignorant of his own ignorance, and he did not choose to be entangled in a controversy from which he could not draw back or retire gracefully. For this I liked him all the more. For the modesty of an ingenious mind is a finer thing than the acquisition of that knowledge I desired; and this I found to be his attitude toward all abstruse and difficult questions.

13. Thus the zeal with which I had plunged into the Manichean system was checked, and I despaired even more of their other teachers, because Faustus who was so famous among them had turned out so poorly in the various matters that puzzled me. And so I began to occupy myself with him in the study of his own favorite pursuit, that of literature, in which I was already teaching a class as a professor of rhetoric among the young Carthaginian students. With Faustus then I read whatever he himself wished to read, or what I judged suitable to his bent of mind. But all my endeavors to make further progress in Manicheism came completely to an end through my acquaintance with that man. I did not wholly separate myself from them, but as one who had not yet found anything better I decided to content myself, for the time being, with what I had stumbled upon one way or another, until by chance something more desirable should present itself. Thus that Faustus who had entrapped so many to their death--though neither willing nor witting it--now began to loosen the snare in which I had been caught. For thy hands, O my God, in the

hidden design of thy providence did not desert my soul; and out of the blood of my mother's heart, through the tears that she poured out by day and by night, there was a sacrifice offered to thee for me, and by marvelous ways thou didst deal with me. For it was thou, O my God, who didst it: for "the steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and he shall choose his way." How shall we attain salvation without thy hand remaking what it had already made?

CHAPTER VIII

14. Thou didst so deal with me, therefore, that I was persuaded to go to Rome and teach there what I had been teaching at Carthage. And how I was persuaded to do this I will not omit to confess to thee, for in this also the profoundest workings of thy wisdom and thy constant mercy toward us must be pondered and acknowledged. I did not wish to go to Rome because of the richer fees and the higher dignity which my friends promised me there--though these considerations did affect my decision. My principal and almost sole motive was that I had been informed that the students there studied more quietly and were better kept under the control of stern discipline, so that they did not capriciously and impudently rush into the classroom of a teacher not their own--indeed, they were not admitted at all without the permission of the teacher. At Carthage, on the contrary, there was a shameful and intemperate license among the students. They burst in rudely and, with furious gestures, would disrupt the discipline which the teacher had established for the good of his pupils. Many outrages they perpetrated with astounding effrontery, things that would be punishable by law if they were not sustained by custom.

CHAPTER X

19. But now, hopeless of gaining any profit from that false doctrine, I began to hold more loosely and negligently even to those points which I had decided to rest content with, if I could find nothing better. I was now half inclined to believe that those philosophers whom they call "The Academics" were wiser than the rest in holding that we ought to doubt everything, and in maintaining that man does not have the power of comprehending any certain truth, for, although I had not yet understood their meaning, I was fully persuaded that they thought just as they are commonly reputed to do. And I did not fail openly to dissuade my host from his confidence which I observed that he had in those fictions of which the works of Mani are full. For all this, I was still on terms of more intimate friendship with these people than with others who were not of their heresy. I did not indeed defend it with my former ardor; but my familiarity with that group--and there were many of them concealed in Rome at that time -- made me slower to seek any other way. This was particularly easy since I had no hope of finding in thy Church the truth from

which they had turned me aside, O Lord of heaven and earth, Creator of all things visible and invisible. And it still seemed to me most unseemly to believe that thou couldst have the form of human flesh and be bounded by the bodily shape of our limbs. And when I desired to meditate on my God, I did not know what to think of but a huge extended body--for what did not have bodily extension did not seem to me to exist--and this was the greatest and almost the sole cause of my unavoidable errors.

20. And thus I also believed that evil was a similar kind of substance, and that it had its own hideous and deformed extended body--either in a dense form which they called the earth or in a thin and subtle form as, for example, the substance of the air, which they imagined as some malignant spirit penetrating that earth. And because my piety--such as it was--still compelled me to believe that the good God never created any evil substance, I formed the idea of two masses, one opposed to the other, both infinite but with the evil more contracted and the good more expansive. And from this diseased beginning, the other sacrileges followed after.

CHAPTER XI

21. Furthermore, the things they censured in thy Scriptures I thought impossible to be defended. And yet, occasionally, I desired to confer on various matters with someone well learned in those books, to test what he thought of them. For already the words of one Elpidius, who spoke and disputed face to face against these same Manicheans, had begun to impress me, even when I was at Carthage; because he brought forth things out of the Scriptures that were not easily withstood, to which their answers appeared to me feeble. One of their answers they did not give forth publicly, but only to us in private--when they said that the writings of the New Testament had been tampered with by unknown persons who desired to ingraft the Jewish law into the Christian faith. But they themselves never brought forward any uncorrupted copies. Still thinking in corporeal categories and very much ensnared and to some extent stifled, I was borne down by those conceptions of bodily substance. I panted under this load for the air of thy truth, but I was not able to breathe it pure and undefiled.

CHAPTER XII

22. I set about diligently to practice what I came to Rome to do--the teaching of rhetoric. The first task was to bring together in my home a few people to whom and through whom I had begun to be known. And lo, I then began to learn that other offenses were committed in Rome which I had not had to bear in Africa. Just as I had been told, those riotous disruptions by young blackguards were not practiced here. Yet, now, my friends told me,

many of the Roman students--breakers of faith, who, for the love of money, set a small value on justice--would conspire together and suddenly transfer to another teacher, to evade paying their master's fees.

CHAPTER XIII

23. When, therefore, the officials of Milan sent to Rome, to the prefect of the city, to ask that he provide them with a teacher of rhetoric for their city and to send him at the public expense, I applied for the job through those same persons, drunk with the Manichean vanities, to be freed from whom I was going away--though neither they nor I were aware of it at the time. They recommended that Symmachus, who was then prefect, after he had proved me by audition, should appoint me.

And to Milan I came, to Ambrose the bishop, famed through the whole world as one of the best of men, thy devoted servant. His eloquent discourse in those times abundantly provided thy people with the flour of thy wheat, the gladness of thy oil, and the sober intoxication of thy wine. To him I was led by thee without my knowledge, that by him I might be led to thee in full knowledge. That man of God received me as a father would, and welcomed my coming as a good bishop should. And I began to love him, of course, not at the first as a teacher of the truth, for I had entirely despaired of finding that in thy Church--but as a friendly man. And I studiously listened to him--though not with the right motive--as he preached to the people. I was trying to discover whether his eloquence came up to his reputation, and whether it flowed fuller or thinner than others said it did. And thus I hung on his words intently, but, as to his subject matter, I was only a careless and contemptuous listener. I was delighted with the charm of his speech, which was more erudite, though less cheerful and soothing, than Faustus' style. As for subject matter, however, there could be no comparison, for the latter was wandering around in Manichean deceptions, while the former was teaching salvation most soundly. But "salvation is far from the wicked," such as I was then when I stood before him. Yet I was drawing nearer, gradually and unconsciously.

CHAPTER XIV

24. For, although I took no trouble to learn what he said, but only to hear how he said it--for this empty concern remained foremost with me as long as I despaired of finding a clear path from man to thee--yet, along with the eloquence I prized, there also came into my mind the ideas which I ignored; for I could not separate them. And, while I opened my heart to acknowledge how skillfully he spoke, there also came an awareness of how *truly* he spoke--but only gradually. First of all, his ideas had already begun to appear to me

defensible; and the Catholic faith, for which I supposed that nothing could be said against the onslaught of the Manicheans, I now realized could be maintained without presumption. This was especially clear after I had heard one or two parts of the Old Testament explained allegorically--whereas before this, when I had interpreted them literally, they had "killed" me spiritually. However, when many of these passages in those books were expounded to me thus, I came to blame my own despair for having believed that no reply could be given to those who hated and scoffed at the Law and the Prophets. Yet I did not see that this was reason enough to follow the Catholic way, just because it had learned advocates who could answer objections adequately and without absurdity. Nor could I see that what I had held to heretofore should now be condemned, because both sides were equally defensible. For that way did not appear to me yet vanquished; but neither did it seem yet victorious.

25. But now I earnestly bent my mind to require if there was possible any way to prove the Manicheans guilty of falsehood. If I could have conceived of a spiritual substance, all their strongholds would have collapsed and been cast out of my mind. But I could not. Still, concerning the body of this world, nature as a whole--now that I was able to consider and compare such things more and more--I now decided that the majority of the philosophers held the more probable views. So, in what I thought was the method of the Academics--doubting everything and fluctuating between all the options--I came to the conclusion that the Manicheans were to be abandoned. For I judged, even in that period of doubt, that I could not remain in a sect to which I preferred some of the philosophers. But I refused to commit the cure of my fainting soul to the philosophers, because they were without the saving name of Christ. I resolved, therefore, to become a catechumen in the Catholic Church--which my parents had so much urged upon me--until something certain shone forth by which I might guide my course.

BOOK SIX

Turmoil in the twenties. Monica follows Augustine to Milan and finds him a catechumen in the Catholic Church. Both admire Ambrose but Augustine gets no help from him on his personal problems. Ambition spurs and Alypius and Nebridius join him in a confused quest for the happy life. Augustine becomes engaged, dismisses his first mistress, takes another, and continues his fruitless search for truth.

CHAPTER III

3. Nor had I come yet to groan in my prayers that thou wouldst help me. My mind was wholly intent on knowledge and eager for disputation. Ambrose himself I esteemed a happy man, as the world counted happiness, because great personages held him in honor. Only his celibacy appeared to me a painful burden. But what hope he cherished, what struggles he had against the temptations that beset his high station, what solace in adversity, and what savory joys thy bread possessed for the hidden mouth of his heart when feeding on it, I could neither conjecture nor experience.

Nor did he know my own frustrations, nor the pit of my danger. For I could not request of him what I wanted as I wanted it, because I was debarred from hearing and speaking to him by crowds of busy people to whose infirmities he devoted himself. And when he was not engaged with them--which was never for long at a time--he was either refreshing his body with necessary food or his mind with reading.

Now, as he read, his eyes glanced over the pages and his heart searched out the sense, but his voice and tongue were silent. Often when we came to his room--for no one was forbidden to enter, nor was it his custom that the arrival of visitors should be announced to him--we would see him thus reading to himself. After we had sat for a long time in silence--for who would dare interrupt one so intent?--we would then depart, realizing that he was unwilling to be distracted in the little time he could gain for the recruiting of his mind, free from the clamor of other men's business. Perhaps he was fearful lest, if the author he was studying should express himself vaguely, some doubtful and attentive hearer would ask him to expound it or discuss some of the more abstruse questions, so that he could not get over as much material as he wished, if his time was occupied with others. And even a truer reason for his reading to himself might have been the care for preserving his voice, which was very easily weakened. Whatever his motive was in so doing, it was doubtless, in such a man, a good one.

4. But actually I could find no opportunity of putting the questions I desired to that holy oracle of thine in his heart, unless it was a matter which could be dealt with briefly. However, those surgings in me required that he should give me his full leisure so that I might pour them out to him; but I never found him so. I heard him, indeed, every Lord's Day, "rightly dividing the word of truth" among the people. And I became all the more convinced that all those knots of crafty calumnies which those deceivers of ours had knit together against the divine books could be unraveled.

CHAPTER IV

6. I was also glad that the old Scriptures of the Law and the Prophets were laid before me to be read, not now with an eye to what had seemed absurd in them when formerly I censured

thy holy ones for thinking thus, when they actually did not think in that way. And I listened with delight to Ambrose, in his sermons to the people, often recommending this text most diligently as a rule: "The letter kills, but the spirit gives life," while at the same time he drew aside the mystic veil and opened to view the spiritual meaning of what seemed to teach perverse doctrine if it were taken according to the letter. I found nothing in his teachings that offended me, though I could not yet know for certain whether what he taught was true. For all this time I restrained my heart from assenting to anything, fearing to fall headlong into error. Instead, by this hanging in suspense, I was being strangled. For my desire was to be as certain of invisible things as I was that seven and three are ten. I was not so deranged as to believe that *this* could not be comprehended, but my desire was to have other things as clear as this, whether they were physical objects, which were not present to my senses, or spiritual objects, which I did not know how to conceive of except in physical terms.

If I could have believed, I might have been cured, and, with the sight of my soul cleared up, it might in some way have been directed toward thy truth, which always abides and fails in nothing. But, just as it happens that a man who has tried a bad physician fears to trust himself with a good one, so it was with the health of my soul, which could not be healed except by believing. But lest it should believe falsehoods, it refused to be cured, resisting thy hand, who hast prepared for us the medicines of faith and applied them to the maladies of the whole world, and endowed them with such great efficacy.

CHAPTER V

7. Still, from this time forward, I began to prefer the Catholic doctrine. I felt that it was with moderation and honesty that it commanded things to be believed that were not demonstrated--whether they could be demonstrated, but not to everyone, or whether they could not be demonstrated at all. This was far better than the method of the Manicheans, in which our credulity was mocked by an audacious promise of knowledge and then many fabulous and absurd things were forced upon believers *because* they were incapable of demonstration. After that, O Lord, little by little, with a gentle and most merciful hand, drawing and calming my heart, thou didst persuade me that, if I took into account the multitude of things I had never seen, nor been present when they were enacted--such as many of the events of secular history; and the numerous reports of places and cities which I had not seen; or such as my relations with many friends, or physicians, or with these men and those--that unless we should believe, we should do nothing at all in this life. Finally, I was impressed with what an unalterable assurance I believed which two people were my parents, though this was impossible for me to know otherwise than by hearsay. By bringing all this into my consideration, thou didst persuade me that it was not the ones who believed

thy books--which with so great authority thou hast established among nearly all nations--but those who did not believe them who were to be blamed. Moreover, those men were not to be listened to who would say to me, "How do you know that those Scriptures were imparted to mankind by the Spirit of the one and most true God?" For this was the point that was most of all to be believed, since no wranglings of blasphemous questions such as I had read in the books of the self-contradicting philosophers could once snatch from me the belief that thou dost exist--although *what* thou art I did not know--and that to thee belongs the governance of human affairs.

8. This much I believed, some times more strongly than other times. But I always believed both that thou art and that thou hast a care for us, although I was ignorant both as to what should be thought about thy substance and as to which way led, or led back, to thee. Thus, since we are too weak by unaided reason to find out truth, and since, because of this, we need the authority of the Holy Writings, I had now begun to believe that thou wouldst not, under any circumstances, have given such eminent authority to those Scriptures throughout all lands if it had not been that through them thy will may be believed in and that thou mightest be sought. For, as to those passages in the Scripture which had heretofore appeared incongruous and offensive to me, now that I had heard several of them expounded reasonably, I could see that they were to be resolved by the mysteries of spiritual interpretation. The authority of Scripture seemed to me all the more revered and worthy of devout belief because, although it was visible for all to read, it reserved the full majesty of its secret wisdom within its spiritual profundity. While it stooped to all in the great plainness of its language and simplicity of style, it yet required the closest attention of the most serious-minded--so that it might receive all into its common bosom, and direct some few through its narrow passages toward thee, yet many more than would have been the case had there not been in it such a lofty authority, which nevertheless allured multitudes to its bosom by its holy humility. I continued to reflect upon these things, and thou wast with me. I sighed, and thou didst hear me. I vacillated, and thou guidedst me. I roamed the broad way of the world, and thou didst not desert me.

CHAPTER VI

9. I was still eagerly aspiring to honors, money, and matrimony; and thou didst mock me. In pursuit of these ambitions I endured the most bitter hardships, in which thou wast being the more gracious the less thou wouldst allow anything that was not thee to grow sweet to me. Look into my heart, O Lord, whose prompting it is that I should recall all this, and confess it to thee. Now let my soul cleave to thee, now that thou hast freed her from that fast-sticking glue of death.

How wretched she was! And thou didst irritate her sore wound so that she might forsake all else and turn to thee--who art above all and without whom all things would be nothing at all--so that she should be converted and healed. How wretched I was at that time, and how thou didst deal with me so as to make me aware of my wretchedness, I recall from the incident of the day on which I was preparing to recite a panegyric on the emperor. In it I was to deliver many a lie, and the lying was to be applauded by those who knew I was lying. My heart was agitated with this sense of guilt and it seethed with the fever of my uneasiness. For, while walking along one of the streets of Milan, I saw a poor beggar--with what I believe was a full belly--joking and hilarious. And I sighed and spoke to the friends around me of the many sorrows that flowed from our madness, because in spite of all our exertions--such as those I was then laboring in, dragging the burden of my unhappiness under the spur of ambition, and, by dragging it, increasing it at the same time--still and all we aimed only to attain that very happiness which this beggar had reached before us; and there was a grim chance that we should never attain it! For what he had obtained through a few coins, got by his begging, I was still scheming for by many a wretched and tortuous turning--namely, the joy of a passing felicity. He had not, indeed, gained true joy, but, at the same time, with all my ambitions, I was seeking one still more untrue. Anyhow, he was now joyous and I was anxious. He was free from care, and I was full of alarms. Now, if anyone should inquire of me whether I should prefer to be merry or anxious, I would reply, "Merry." Again, if I had been asked whether I should prefer to be as he was or as I myself then was, I would have chosen to be myself; though I was beset with cares and alarms. But would not this have been a false choice? Was the contrast valid? Actually, I ought not to prefer myself to him because I happened to be more learned than he was; for I got no great pleasure from my learning, but sought, rather, to please men by its exhibition--and this not to instruct, but only to please. Thus thou didst break my bones with the rod of thy correction.

CHAPTER VII

11. Those of us who were living like friends together used to bemoan our lot in our common talk; but I discussed it with Alypius and Nebridius more especially and in very familiar terms. Alypius had been born in the same town as I; his parents were of the highest rank there, but he was a bit younger than I. He had studied under me when I first taught in our town, and then afterward at Carthage. He esteemed me highly because I appeared to him good and learned, and I esteemed him for his inborn love of virtue, which was uncommonly marked in a man so young. But in the whirlpool of Carthaginian fashion--where frivolous spectacles are hotly followed--he had been inveigled into the madness of the gladiatorial games. While he was miserably tossed about in this fad, I was teaching

rhetoric there in a public school. At that time he was not attending my classes because of some ill feeling that had arisen between me and his father. I then came to discover how fatally he doted upon the circus, and I was deeply grieved, for he seemed likely to cast away his very great promise--if, indeed, he had not already done so. Yet I had no means of advising him, or any way of reclaiming him through restraint, either by the kindness of a friend or by the authority of a teacher. For I imagined that his feelings toward me were the same as his father's. But this turned out not to be the case. Indeed, disregarding his father's will in the matter, he began to be friendly and to visit my lecture room, to listen for a while and then depart.

12. But it slipped my memory to try to deal with his problem, to prevent him from ruining his excellent mind in his blind and headstrong passion for frivolous sport. But thou, O Lord, who holdest the helm of all that thou hast created, thou hadst not forgotten him who was one day to be numbered among thy sons, a chief minister of thy sacrament. And in order that his amendment might plainly be attributed to thee, thou broughtest it about through me while I knew nothing of it.

One day, when I was sitting in my accustomed place with my scholars before me, he came in, greeted me, sat himself down, and fixed his attention on the subject I was then discussing. It so happened that I had a passage in hand and, while I was interpreting it, a simile occurred to me, taken from the gladiatorial games. It struck me as relevant to make more pleasant and plain the point I wanted to convey by adding a biting gibe at those whom that madness had enthralled. Thou knowest, O our God, that I had no thought at that time of curing Alypius of that plague. But he took it to himself and thought that I would not have said it but for his sake. And what any other man would have taken as an occasion of offense against me, this worthy young man took as a reason for being offended at himself, and for loving me the more fervently. Thou hast said it long ago and written in thy Book, "Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you." Now I had not rebuked him; but thou who canst make use of everything, both witting and unwitting, and in the order which thou thyself knowest to be best--and that order is right--thou madest my heart and tongue into burning coals with which thou mightest cauterize and cure the hopeful mind thus languishing. Let him be silent in thy praise who does not meditate on thy mercy, which rises up in my inmost parts to confess to thee. For after that speech Alypius rushed up out of that deep pit into which he had willfully plunged and in which he had been blinded by its miserable pleasures. And he roused his mind with a resolve to moderation. When he had done this, all the filth of the gladiatorial pleasures dropped away from him, and he went to them no more. Then he also prevailed upon his reluctant father to let him be my pupil. And, at the son's urging, the father at last consented. Thus Alypius began again to hear my lectures and became involved with me in the same superstition, loving in the Manicheans

that outward display of ascetic discipline which he believed was true and unfeigned. It was, however, a senseless and seducing continence, which ensnared precious souls who were not able as yet to reach the height of true virtue, and who were easily beguiled with the veneer of what was only a shadowy and feigned virtue.

CHAPTER VIII

13. He had gone on to Rome before me to study law--which was the worldly way which his parents were forever urging him to pursue--and there he was carried away again with an incredible passion for the gladiatorial shows. For, although he had been utterly opposed to such spectacles and detested them, one day he met by chance a company of his acquaintances and fellow students returning from dinner; and, with a friendly violence, they drew him, resisting and objecting vehemently, into the amphitheater, on a day of those cruel and murderous shows. He protested to them: "Though you drag my body to that place and set me down there, you cannot force me to give my mind or lend my eyes to these shows. Thus I will be absent while present, and so overcome both you and them." When they heard this, they dragged him on in, probably interested to see whether he could do as he said. When they got to the arena, and had taken what seats they could get, the whole place became a tumult of inhuman frenzy. But Alypius kept his eyes closed and forbade his mind to roam abroad after such wickedness. Would that he had shut his ears also! For when one of the combatants fell in the fight, a mighty cry from the whole audience stirred him so strongly that, overcome by curiosity and still prepared (as he thought) to despise and rise superior to it no matter what it was, he opened his eyes and was struck with a deeper wound in his soul than the victim whom he desired to see had been in his body. Thus he fell more miserably than the one whose fall had raised that mighty clamor which had entered through his ears and unlocked his eyes to make way for the wounding and beating down of his soul, which was more audacious than truly valiant--also it was weaker because it presumed on its own strength when it ought to have depended on Thee. For, as soon as he saw the blood, he drank in with it a savage temper, and he did not turn away, but fixed his eyes on the bloody pastime, unwittingly drinking in the madness--delighted with the wicked contest and drunk with blood lust. He was now no longer the same man who came in, but was one of the mob he came into, a true companion of those who had brought him thither. Why need I say more? He looked, he shouted, he was excited, and he took away with him the madness that would stimulate him to come again: not only with those who first enticed him, but even without them; indeed, dragging in others besides. And yet from all this, with a most powerful and most merciful hand, thou didst pluck him and taught him not to rest his confidence in himself but in thee--but not till long after.

CHAPTER IX

14. But this was all being stored up in his memory as medicine for the future. So also was that other incident when he was still studying under me at Carthage and was meditating at noonday in the market place on what he had to recite--as scholars usually have to do for practice--and thou didst allow him to be arrested by the police officers in the market place as a thief. I believe, O my God, that thou didst allow this for no other reason than that this man who was in the future to prove so great should now begin to learn that, in making just decisions, a man should not readily be condemned by other men with reckless credulity.

For as he was walking up and down alone before the judgment seat with his tablets and pen, lo, a young man--another one of the scholars, who was the real thief--secretly brought a hatchet and, without Alypius seeing him, got in as far as the leaden bars which protected the silversmith shop and began to hack away at the lead gratings. But when the noise of the hatchet was heard the silversmiths below began to call to each other in whispers and sent men to arrest whomsoever they should find. The thief heard their voices and ran away, leaving his hatchet because he was afraid to be caught with it. Now Alypius, who had not seen him come in, got a glimpse of him as he went out and noticed that he went off in great haste. Being curious to know the reasons, he went up to the place, where he found the hatchet, and stood wondering and pondering when, behold, those that were sent caught him alone, holding the hatchet which had made the noise which had startled them and brought them there. They seized him and dragged him away, gathering the tenants of the market place about them and boasting that they had caught a notorious thief. Thereupon he was led away to appear before the judge.

15. But this is as far as his lesson was to go. For immediately, O Lord, thou didst come to the rescue of his innocence, of which thou wast the sole witness. As he was being led off to prison or punishment, they were met by the master builder who had charge of the public buildings. The captors were especially glad to meet him because he had more than once suspected them of stealing the goods that had been lost out of the market place. Now, at last, they thought they could convince him who it was that had committed the thefts. But the custodian had often met Alypius at the house of a certain senator, whose receptions he used to attend. He recognized him at once and, taking his hand, led him apart from the throng, inquired the cause of all the trouble, and learned what had occurred. He then commanded all the rabble still around--and very uproarious and full of threatenings they were--to come along with him, and they came to the house of the young man who had committed the deed. There, before the door, was a slave boy so young that he was not restrained from telling the whole story by fear of harming his master. And he had followed his master to the market place. Alypius recognized him, and whispered to the architect,

who showed the boy the hatchet and asked whose it was. "Ours," he answered directly. And, being further questioned, he disclosed the whole affair. Thus the guilt was shifted to that household and the rabble, who had begun to triumph over Alypius, were shamed. And so he went away home, this man who was to be the future steward of thy Word and judge of so many causes in thy Church--a wiser and more experienced man.

CHAPTER X

16. I found him at Rome, and he was bound to me with the strongest possible ties, and he went with me to Milan, in order that he might not be separated from me, and also that he might obtain some law practice, for which he had qualified with a view to pleasing his parents more than himself. He had already sat three times as assessor, showing an integrity that seemed strange to many others, though he thought them strange who could prefer gold to integrity. His character had also been tested, not only by the bait of covetousness, but by the spur of fear. At Rome he was assessor to the secretary of the Italian Treasury. There was at that time a very powerful senator to whose favors many were indebted, and of whom many stood in fear. In his usual highhanded way he demanded to have a favor granted him that was forbidden by the laws. This Alypius resisted. A bribe was promised, but he scorned it with all his heart. Threats were employed, but he trampled them underfoot--so that all men marveled at so rare a spirit, which neither coveted the friendship nor feared the enmity of a man at once so powerful and so widely known for his great resources of helping his friends and doing harm to his enemies. Even the official whose counselor Alypius was--although he was unwilling that the favor should be granted--would not openly refuse the request, but passed the responsibility on to Alypius, alleging that he would not permit him to give his assent. And the truth was that even if the judge had agreed, Alypius would have simply left the court.

There was one matter, however, which appealed to his love of learning, in which he was very nearly led astray. He found out that he might have books copied for himself at praetorian rates [i.e., at public expense]. But his sense of justice prevailed, and he changed his mind for the better, thinking that the rule that forbade him was still more profitable than the privilege that his office would have allowed him. These are little things, but "he that is faithful in a little matter is faithful also in a great one." Nor can that possibly be void which was uttered by the mouth of Thy truth: "If, therefore, you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" Such a man was Alypius, who clung to me at that time and who wavered in his purpose, just as I did, as to what course of life to follow.

17. Nebridius also had come to Milan for no other reason than that he might live with me in a most ardent search after truth and wisdom. He had left his native place near Carthage--and Carthage itself, where he usually lived--leaving behind his fine family estate, his house, and his mother, who would not follow him. Like me, he sighed; like me, he wavered; an ardent seeker after the true life and a most acute analyst of the most abstruse questions. So there were three begging mouths, sighing out their wants one to the other, and waiting upon thee, that thou mightest give them their meat in due season. And in all the vexations with which thy mercy followed our worldly pursuits, we sought for the reason why we suffered so--and all was darkness! We turned away groaning and exclaiming, "How long shall these things be?" And this we often asked, yet for all our asking we did not relinquish them; for as yet we had not discovered anything certain which, when we gave those others up, we might grasp in their stead.

CHAPTER XII

21. Actually, it was Alypius who prevented me from marrying, urging that if I did so it would not be possible for us to live together and to have as much undistracted leisure in the love of wisdom as we had long desired. For he himself was so chaste that it was wonderful, all the more because in his early youth he had entered upon the path of promiscuity, but had not continued in it. Instead, feeling sorrow and disgust at it, he had lived from that time down to the present most continently. I quoted against him the examples of men who had been married and still lovers of wisdom, who had pleased God and had been loyal and affectionate to their friends. I fell far short of them in greatness of soul, and, enthralled with the disease of my carnality and its deadly sweetness, I dragged my chain along, fearing to be loosed of it. Thus I rejected the words of him who counseled me wisely, as if the hand that would have loosed the chain only hurt my wound. Moreover, the serpent spoke to Alypius himself by me, weaving and lying in his path, by my tongue to catch him with pleasant snares in which his honorable and free feet might be entangled.

CHAPTER XIV

24. Many in my band of friends, consulting about and abhorring the turbulent vexations of human life, had often considered and were now almost determined to undertake a peaceful life, away from the turmoil of men. This we thought could be obtained by bringing together what we severally owned and thus making of it a common household, so that in the sincerity of our friendship nothing should belong more to one than to the other; but all were to have one purse and the whole was to belong to each and to all. We thought that this group might consist of ten persons, some of whom were very rich--especially Romanianus, my fellow townsman, an intimate friend from childhood days. He had been brought up to

the court on grave business matters and he was the most earnest of us all about the project and his voice was of great weight in commending it because his estate was far more ample than that of the others. We had resolved, also, that each year two of us should be managers and provide all that was needful, while the rest were left undisturbed. But when we began to reflect whether this would be permitted by our wives, which some of us had already and others hoped to have, the whole plan, so excellently framed, collapsed in our hands and was utterly wrecked and cast aside. From this we fell again into sighs and groans, and our steps followed the broad and beaten ways of the world; for many thoughts were in our hearts, but "Thy counsel standeth fast forever." In thy counsel thou didst mock ours, and didst prepare thy own plan, for it was thy purpose "to give us meat in due season, to open thy hand, and to fill our souls with blessing."