Confessions

Parallel Patristics Series

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Volume 1

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Confessions

Parallel Latin and English Edition



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Confessions: Parallel Latin and English Edition

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Series Preface

When it comes to accessing ancient writings in the current digitally dominant age the task can seem both simple and overwhelming. Simple, in the sense, that most everything is now readily available digitally through some searching. Overwhelming, in the sense, that a newcomer to this world may struggle with deciding how to begin. An additional issue is the fact that with the plethora of digital availability, there is minimal affordable access to physical copies, especially for those not connected to an academic library. The Parallel Patristics Series aims to provide an answer to these issues.

The first issue of simplicity is answered by providing both the original language of the text (Greek or Latin) in parallel (either on facing pages or side-by-side on a page) with an English translation. This will enable a reader who may not have an advanced familiarity with the language to be able to read and engage with the text on that deep level through easy reference to the original text. The second issue of overwhelm is answered through including a brief Introduction and "Suggested Reading" list for each text. The final issue of affordability is answered with maintaining low cost for these volumes so as to help students and others with less financial flexibility be able to acquire a physical copy of these texts for their enjoyment and study.

In this inaugural volume to the Parallel Patristics Series, readers can engage with Augustine's powerful reflections on his own life and creation through prayerful petition for understanding God's providence. This volume is unique in a couple points. One is that, in contrast to the two-volume edition in the Loeb Classical Library, this is a single-volume containing the whole of Augustine's Confessions in Latin-English parallel. The second unique element is the inclusion of macrons in the Latin text. These two factors provide both more affordable access and facilitates deeper engagement with Augustine's text.

Nathan Alexander Scott (Series Editor)

Introduction

By Timothy A. Lee

Saint Augustine and His Confessions

Augustine towers over all other theologians as the man who shaped the Western church more than anyone after the apostles. Both Roman Catholics and Protestants share exegetical and theological traditions steeped in this bishop's writings and interpretation of the Bible. Both sides of the Reformation claimed Augustine as their own. Whether it was Luther emphasising grace in Augustine, Calvin emphasising Augustine on predestination, or Roman Catholics emphasising Augustine on the church, they grounded their arguments in Augustine and his interpretation of the Bible.[1] The present Pope Leo XIV is an Augustinian, a member of the Order of Saint Augustine and frequently quotes Saint Augustine on grace.

Augustine's Confessions ranks among the most significant works of Western literature. Despite its great antiquity, Augustine's striking honesty and perceptive insights remain as fresh as ever. Reading Augustine, one realises that despite the advancing years human nature and its desires do not change. As Augustine looks back on his first thirty-four years of life, he openly shares his struggles with pride, lust, envy, dishonesty and all manner of sin. He wrestles with the veracity of Christianity against competing claims of other sects and leading philosophies.

The World of Augustine

To some extent Augustine was simply in the right place at the right time. He found himself writing ninety years after the conversion of Constantine and on the back of generations of Christian scholars who through the necessity of debates as well as deep study had established the boundaries for theological orthodoxy. However, unlike all but a

[1] Brown was the 'most persuasive apologist and the real shaper of the revolution', James J. O'Donnell, "Augustine" in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*. ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 8-25, 8.

handful of people, the influence of Augustine endures down to the present day.

The world of Augustine was that of Late Antiquity. That is the transitional period between the end of the Classical Antiquity and start of the Middle Ages. This period saw the fall of Rome, invasion of Barbarian kingdoms and dominance of Christianity. The period of Late Antiquity is a term that only recently entered scholarship in the 1960s largely through the work of Peter Brown who popularised the term.[2] It transpires that the invading Barbarian and existing Roman cultures were more alike than previously realised, which refutes Gibbon's idea of 'triumph of barbarianism and religion' (i.e. Christianity).[3]

Augustine grew up and spent most of his life in Roman North Africa. Born in Thagaste, he spent much of his early adulthood in Carthage (modern-day Tunis) and later returned from Rome and Mediolanum (modern-day Milan) to Hippo Regius where he was ordained and appointed bishop. North Africa was a grain producing region, known as the breadbasket of the Roman Empire. The last years of his life saw two major barbarian armies sack and conquer the Western Roman Empire and change the world he knew. He lived through the sacking of Rome by the Visigoths in 410, an event that occasioned his magnum opus, *De Civitate Dei* (the City of God). Whereas the Visigoths moved on to Gaul, it was the Vandals who came from there through Spain and into North Africa.[4] They surrounded Augustine in Hippo where he died under siege.

The Life of Augustine

Sources for Augustine largely come from Augustine's own writings, especially his semi-biographical Confessions. There is also an 'life of Saint Augustine' biography written by his former pupil Bishop Possidius of Calama (c. 432–7). Possidius documents Augustine's life as a priest and bishop; that is, material beginning where Confessions ends.

Augustine was born in 354 AD/CE Thagaste, North Africa (modern-day Souk Ahras, Algeria). The town was 200 miles from the sea and 2,000 ft (600 m) above sea level, so quite different to the Mediterranean city and capital of the region, Carthage.[5] He was probably of Berber origin because his mother's name is generally assumed to be a Berber

[2] O'Donnell, "Augustine", 8.

[3] The Vandals possibly originated in Scandinavia, but after a few centuries they migrated quickly through Germany and Gaul.

[4] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography. Forty-Fifth Anniversary Edition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 8.

[5] It is perhaps linked to the Numidian goddess Mon, Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 21.

name.[6] That the leading Christian theologian throughout history was an African refutes the idea Christianity is historically a white-European religion. Nonetheless, he was fully integrated with Roman culture, spoke Latin and spent his education, career, and ministry as a fully integrated Roman citizen.

In contrast to his father, he had a strong relationship with his mother and writes very fondly about her and her faith. He describes his mother, Monica, as a model Christian woman who prayed for the conversion of Augustine and his father while forgiving her husband Patricius (Patrick) for his numerous infidelities. The fact Patricius never beat his wife – unlike many husbands in his day – Augustine puts down to Monica's character.[7]

Augustine received a rigorous classical Latin education. This taught him to express himself clearly which became very useful in later life.[8] He did not enjoy and struggled reading Greek literature, much preferring the Latin classics. He was reading Virgil at grammar school (from twelve years of age) and later Cicero. He was deeply moved by the latter's work *Hortensius* which was about seeking and loving wisdom. Wisdom and its acquisition was a key theme throughout his life. It is referred to in the first line of Confessions and found throughout Confessions.

After school he became a tutor in rhetoric in Carthage. To his mother's horror, however, he rejected her orthodox Catholic Christianity in favour of Manichaeism and the secret wisdom it offered. For nine years he was a hearer in this sect which later spread as far as China and still existed into the thirteenth century.[9] It was a syncretic blend of Christianity with gnostic wisdom following the teaching of its third century founder Mani who claimed to be the Paraclete of John 14–16. It promoted a strong dualism common in Persian Zoroastrianism between good and evil, light and darkness. It believed evil originates from the Kingdom of Darkness opposed to God's pure Kingdom of Light. It rejected the God of the Old Testament as a malevolent demon finding him different to the God of the New Testament.[10] In his youth

[6] Confessions 9.9.19.

[7] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 25.

[8] 'Hearers' were the laity who support the 'Elect' religious elite within Manichaeism such as by providing meals. Hearers did not live under the strictest laws of the Elect that prohibited against the eating of meat, drinking of wine, and sexual activity.

[9] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 39.

[10] In Augustine's day, marriage was for people of equal status. This was not ideal for an aspiring professor with a lowly woman, Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 51.

Augustine was attracted to this sect since its teaching appeared to offer the best explanations to his questions.

During this time, he fell in love with a woman. She remains nameless, despite his great love for her. She was a woman of a lower social class so he could not easily marry her but took her as his concubine and she bore his son Adeodatus.[11] After 17 years together he begrudgingly left her when he rose in prominence and a suitable woman of high status was found for him.[12] However, impatient with the two-year wait between dismissing his concubine and marriage he took another woman.

Augustine's career took him to Rome and then Mediolanum (modern Milan) where he was appointed professor of rhetoric by Symmachus, Prefect of Milan.[13] In this time he encounters Neoplatonism, a third century AD/CE development of Platonism.[14] Especially significant for him were the writings of Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism.[15] Plotinus taught that there is a supreme, totally transcendent 'One', containing no division, multiplicity, nor distinction. These ideas were similar to the Logos Christology of John's gospel and were easily integrated into Christian thought.[16] Through this union Augustine later brings together the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob with the God of the Philosophers.[17]

Simplician was a leading figure in the Christian church of Milan and mentor to Bishop Ambrose.[18] He was instrumental in the conversion of Augustine. He was very glad Augustine had read Plotinus given the shared ideas with Christianity. Neoplatonism was very much in vogue in Christian circles in Milan, for its leading figure, Bishop Ambrose also borrowed a lot from Plotinus.[19].

By this time Augustine had rejected Manichaeism after being disappointed with its wisdom. In his youth Augustine was fascinated with astrology and horoscopes. Manichaeism offered an alternative

[11] Confessions 6.15.21.

[12] Symmachus was an increasingly rare pagan in high office and possibly cousin of Saint Ambrose, bishop of Milan.

[13] He read these Greek authors in Latin translation Confessions 7.9.13.

[14] Plotinus developed ideas from his teacher Ammonius Saccas. There was confusion regarding the belief of Ammonius, with Eusebius and Jerome saying that he was a Christian, but the pagan Porphyry stating Ammonius had been a convert from Christianity to paganism. Scholars now usually think there was confusion and two Ammonius' resided in Alexandria.

[15] The pagan philosophies were Christianised rather than paganising Christianity as later Anabaptists would claim.

[16] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 168.

[17] Succeeded Ambrose as bishop of Milan despite being slightly older.

[18] Confessions 8.2.3

[19] Confessions 5.5.6-7.

cosmology that presents celestial bodies in mythical terms. However, his faith faltered through reading astronomical books and scientific predictions of lunar eclipses. Faustus – the leading apologist of Manichaeism – could not satisfy his questions upon meeting in Carthage and he slowly left the sect after moving to Rome and then Milan.[20]

Having rejected Manichaeism, and other philosophies, his restless heart could still not be satisfied. He became a catechumen in the Catholic church; however, he was not ready for baptism for what it would entail. Famously crying out to God, 'give me chastity and continency, but not yet.'[21] Tired of teaching, he found himself in the garden of a house under a fig tree, probably symbolic of the tree in Eden. In this spot he converts to Christianity and the course of the rest of his life. As he writes in the opening words, his restless heart had finally found rest in God.[22]

Shortly after his conversion, through over work in his teaching, he burns out and spends a time of *otium* (leisure) contemplating philosophy and recuperating in Cassiciacum (modern Casciago), just south of Lake Como at the foot of the Alps. He and his son were subsequently baptised in Milan on Easter Eve 387, and set out to return to North Africa. During this time, Monica died at Ostia, and his son's death followed a couple of years later. He had returned to Thagaste for a quiet life of prayer, study, and writing. There he set out to study the scriptures, especially the apostle Paul who became incredibly influential in his thinking. Despite his plan, he was appointed priest and then bishop of Hippo, a small insignificant city on the coast of modern Algeria.

Throughout his bishopric he preached, studied, and debated various controversies. His writings about these topics left a lasting imprint on the Western world. In *On Christian Teaching* (*De Doctrina Christiana*) he develops principles for biblical interpretation or hermeneutics. In *On the Trinity* (*De Trinitate*) he develops the idea of double procession of the Holy Spirit, which led to the *filioque* clause being inserted into the Creed. In his anti-Pelagian writings he develops the doctrine of Original Sin and the necessity of divine grace as opposed to human free will. In *the City of God* (*De Civitate Dei*) he develops theology of the two cities, history as conflict, God's providence through history, and a refutation of paganism.

[20] 'dā mihi castitātem et continentiam, sed nōlī modo.' Confessions 8.7.17.
[21] fēcistī nōs ad tē et inquiētum est cor nostrum dōnec requiēscat in tē. 'You have formed us for yourself, our hearts are restless until they find rest in you.' Confessions 1.1.1.
[22] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 163.

A lot of Confessions refutes Manichaeism; however, Confessions does not address his debates with the Donatists, a powerful Christian group who claimed to be the pure church untinged by Catholic compromisers. The Donatists had split from the Catholic Church over the Diocletian persecution. Unlike the Catholic church, their clergy had not betrayed their scriptures to the persecutors and so claimed pure lineage. It is surprising that the Donatists are unmentioned in Confessions, perhaps due to their power and slight numerical majority in the North African church. Later in life Augustine agreed with the use of imperial power to suppress the Donatists. Despite Augustine writing favourably over the protection of the Jews, in the Middle Ages his support of imperial forces was used to justify the inquisition and persecution of heretics and Jews. A troublesome consequence, though it is unclear how much he is to blame for this.

Introduction to Augustine's Confessions

Augustine's Confessions is one of the most profound works in the history of Western literature and Christian theology. It blends together autobiography with philosophical inquiry and theological reflection. Written ten years after his conversion and the latest events described in the book it offers mature reflection on his early life and God's grace and providence at work. As Brown summarises, the Confessions are: "the story of Augustine's 'heart', or his 'feelings' – his *affectus*."[23] The lasting appeal of Confessions is due to Augustine opening up to the feelings of his youth, this emotional tone strikes the modern reader.[24]

The Confessions is structured as a prayer, an extended conversation with God. Augustine uses the word *confessio* in its two senses: a confession of sins, and a confession of praise.[25] Writing at the end of his life, Augustine writes in his Retractions how Confessions praises God through his evil and good deeds.[26] In religious philosophy and Neoplatonism prayer was a vehicle for speculative inquiry. However, Augustine goes much further so as to strike a lively conversation with

[23] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 163.
[24] Rowan Williams, *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 3.
[25] 'Confessionum mearum libri tredecim, et de malis et de bonis meis Deum laudant iustum et bonum, atque in eum excitant humanum intellectum et affectum. … In quarto libro, cum de amici morte animi mei miseriam confiterer. …' 'The thirteen books of my Confessions, both about my evils and my good deeds, praise God as just and good, and arouse human understanding and affection towards Him. … In the fourth book, when I confessed the misery of my soul about the death of a friend …'
[26] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 160.

God.[27] It is written like the psalmist addresses God. Indeed, it begins with a quotation from the Psalms and constantly quotes from the Psalms.[28]

Confessions is not strictly an autobiography; it is layered in spiritual meaning like Dante's Divine Comedy or Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.[29] However, the autobiographical tone sets it apart from other genres so not labelling autobiography is unhelpful.[30] Confessions contrasts with other ancient lives and biographies of Christian saints. For example, the third century bishop of Carthage Cyprian's biography skips his first forty years and focusses on his last four and martyrdom.[31] There had been some predecessors to Confessions in the form of pagan biographies, but none were as conversational with the deity as this.[32]

Divided into thirteen books, books 1–9 provide an account of Augustine's early life, his struggle with temptation, and his intellectual pursuits, culminating in his dramatic conversion to Christianity. Books 10–13 shift focus to profound meditations on time, memory, and the meaning of creation with reference to Genesis 1. However, such references to Genesis have been littered throughout to preceding books giving more unity than is first apparent.[33] Other themes tie to work together such as the appeal to seek and find (Matthew 7) found at the beginning of Book 1 and right at the end of Book 13.

Books 1–4

Books 1 to 4 of Confessions set the stage for Augustine's eventual conversion by exposing the restlessness of his soul without God. They recount his spiritual journey, detailing his childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. These books are pivotal in understanding Augustine's formative years and the challenges that shaped his eventual transformation. They provide a rich tapestry of personal anecdotes, philosophical musings, and theological insights, which together create a compelling narrative of human frailty and divine intervention. As the narrative of the pear tree shows, he found himself held captive to sin's desires. He begins his pursuit of knowledge through Manichaeism,

[27] Williams states, 'it would not be an exaggeration to say that the narrative autobiographical voice of the Confessions is systematically blended with the voice of the psalmist.' Williams, *On Augustine*, 25.
[28] Garry Wills, *Augustine's Confessions: A Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 17–25.
[29] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 163.
[30] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 152.
[31] Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 52.
[32] Wills, *Augustine's Confessions*, 13.
[33] Confessions 1.1.1

but reading Cicero's *Hortensius* was a turning point in his pursuit of wisdom.

Book 1: The Early Years

In Book 1, Augustine reflects on his infancy and early childhood, acknowledging his dependency on God even in his earliest moments. He describes the innate human tendency toward sin, evident even in the selfish cries of a baby. This book introduces Augustine's overarching theme of the restless human soul seeking rest in God. He opens with his famous declaration, 'You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You.'[34] This sets the tone for the entire work, emphasizing the centrality of God in the human quest for fulfilment.

The book also examines Augustine's education, which emphasized classical rhetoric and literature. He was taught the three R's, reading, writing, and arithmetic.[35] While he excelled academically, he laments the moral and spiritual emptiness of his studies, noting that they often glorified human pride and ambition. This tension between worldly success and spiritual longing becomes a recurring theme in the Confessions.

Book 2: Adolescence and Rebellion

In Book 2, Augustine provides a candid account of his teenage years, marked by lust, theft, and rebellion. He recounts at length an apparently minor incident of him stealing pears from a neighbour's tree not out of hunger but for the thrill.[36] This mirrors Adam's rebellion in eating the fruit of the tree in the garden of Eden.[37] As with Paul in Romans 7, he realises the tension between desire and will and that his desire got the better of his will.

Book 3: Intellectual Pursuits in Carthage

Book 3 recounts Augustine's arrival in Carthage and exposure to entertainment, philosophical inquiry, and moral corruption. It was during this time that he pursued the study of philosophy and rhetoric.

[34] Confessions 1.13.20
[35] Confessions 2.4.9.
[36] Genesis 3:6.
[37] Augustine read the Old Latin translation(s) of the Bible because Jerome's Vulgate had not been produced until later in his life. The Old Latin text was a very literal translation of the Greek Septuagint and New Testament. Therefore, his Bible read like a very wooden translation with many unusual phrases.

However, his search for wisdom led him to the seductive teachings of the Manichaeans and their answers to the problem of evil.

Augustine was disappointed when reading the Bible, finding its style contrasted badly with that of Cicero.[38] Augustine's encounter with the works of Cicero, particularly the *Hortensius*, marked a turning point in his philosophical journey. The text awakened in him a love for wisdom. Yet, he found himself torn between his pursuit of philosophical ideals and the carnal desires that enslaved him.

Book 4: Grief and the Illusion of Happiness

In Book 4, Augustine becomes a teacher of rhetoric and lives with a concubine in Carthage. A significant event in this book is the death of a close friend, which plunged Augustine into deep sorrow and despair. This experience forced him to confront the fleeting nature of earthly attachments and the ultimate insufficiency of created things to satisfy the human heart. Augustine begins to question astrology and the Manichaean philosophy.

Books 5–9

These books trace Augustine's transition from restless intellectual to convicted seeker, culminating in his conversion to Christianity.

Book 5: Move to Rome and Milan

In Book 5, Augustine's doubts about Manichaeanism persist when he meets the great Manichean philosopher Faustus who was passing through Carthage. His career takes him from Carthage to Rome and then Mediolanum (modern Milan) where is appointed professor of rhetoric by Symmachus, Prefect of Milan. In Milan he encounters Bishop Ambrose. Ambrose, an impressive orator, impresses Augustine not merely with his oratory, but with his allegorical interpretation of the Bible. This offers a more satisfying answer to Manichean objections to the Old Testament and begins to reshape Augustine's view of Scripture.

Book 6: Meets Ambrose

In Book 6, Augustine's inner conflict intensifies. He becomes intellectually convinced by Christianity but is not yet ready to accept it fully. His mother Monica joins him in Milan, continuing her

[38] This follows the suggestion in Fabio Ruggiero, "Spirabat Paululum iam. Una nuova congettura per un noto locus desperatus agostiniano", Augustinianum 57.1 2017, 257-262.

quiet spiritual influence. Most significantly, Augustine encounters Neoplatonism. Neoplatonism (or Platonism as he knew it), teaches – against Manichaeism dualism – that there is a single source (the Monad) at the top of all things.

Book 7: Exploring Neoplatonism

In Book 7, Augustine reads Plotinus and begins to grasp the idea of God as immaterial and eternal. He finally rejects Manichaean cosmology, but continues to struggle with the incarnation, how the divine could become flesh.

Book 8: His Conversion

In Book 8, Augustine is still held back by his carnal desires. In a garden in Milan he recalls his youthful plea, 'give me chastity and continency, but not yet' (Book 8 7.17). Then while sitting under a tree he hears a cry from nearby, *tolle lege* 'take and read'. Taking it as a divine cue, he picks up a book of Pauline epistles and opens to Romans 13:13–14. The passage speaks directly to his condition and puts an end to his objections. He is converted to Christianity.

Book 9: Baptism and the death of Monica

In Book 9, Augustine resigns his teaching post. He, his son Adeodatus, and his friend Alypius are baptised by Ambrose. Monica dies shortly after, and Augustine reflects on her life and their final conversations. The book ends with a tone of peace and gratitude, closing the narrative arc of his conversion.

Books 10–13

These books mark a major transition in Confessions. The content shifts from autobiography to biblical interpretation and theology; however, that is not to deny Books 1–9 were steeped in theological reflection. He moves from personal confession on sin, his life, and conversion to profound reflections on memory, time, creation, and Scripture, showing how both the human soul and the cosmos find their fulfilment in God's eternal presence.

Book 10: Memory and Self-Examination

In Book 10, Augustine shifts from recounting his past to examining his present inner life. He explores the vastness of memory, describing it as a storehouse of images, knowledge, and emotions, and even the memory

of forgetting itself. Augustine insists that confession is not only about past sins but also about acknowledging his ongoing dependence on God. Memory becomes the means by which the soul searches for God, and Augustine's reflections highlight both the depth of human interiority and the need for divine grace.

Book 11: Time and Eternity

In Book 11, Augustine turns to Genesis 1:1 and asks what it means for God to create 'in the beginning'. This leads to a meditation on the nature of time. He concludes that time exists only in the human soul: the past remembered, the present experienced, and the future anticipated. In contrast, God exists outside of time in an eternal present. Augustine's reflections here are among his most influential, showing the gulf between human temporality and divine eternity while emphasising God's timeless creative act.

Book 12: Creation and Interpretation

In Book 12, Augustine continues expounding Genesis 1, focusing on the meaning of 'heaven and earth' in the opening verse. He acknowledges that Scripture can be interpreted in multiple valid ways and stresses humility in approaching God's word. Rather than insisting on a single reading, he argues that diverse interpretations can still converge on the truth of God's creative power.

Book 13: The Order of Creation and Rest in God

In the final book Augustine meditates on the days of creation. He finds the Trinity in the first words and interprets the days symbolically as stages in the ordering of the soul and the life of the Church. Light, land, plants, animals, and humanity all become metaphors for spiritual realities. The Sabbath rest, with which creation concludes, symbolises eternal rest in God — the ultimate goal of human existence. Augustine closes by returning to the opening verse and rest one finds only in God.

Liber I

He wishes to praise God, having been stirred by Him.

1 **1** Magnus es, Domine, et laudābilis valdē.[1] Magna virtūs tua et sapientiae tuae nōn est numerus.[2] Et laudāre tē vult homō, aliqua portiō creātūrae tuae, et homō circumferēns mortālitātem suam, circumferēns testimōnium peccātī suī et testimōnium quia superbīs resistis;[3] et tamen laudāre tē vult homō, aliqua portiō creātūrae tuae. Tū excitās ut laudāre tē dēlectet, quia fēcistī nōs ad tē et inquiētum est cor nostrum dōnec requiēscat in tē. Dā mihi, Domine, scīre et intellegere utrum sit prius invocāre tē an laudāre tē, et scīre tē prius sit an invocāre tē. Sed quis tē invocat nesciēns tē? Aliud enim prō aliō potest invocāre nesciēns. An potius invocāris ut sciāris? Quōmodo autem invocābunt, in quem nōn crēdidērunt? Aut quōmodo crēdent sine praedicante?[4] Et laudābunt Dominum quī requīrunt eum:[5] quaerentēs enim inveniunt eum et invenientēs laudābunt eum. Quaeram tē, Domine, invocāns tē et invocem tē crēdēns in tē: praedicātus enim es nōbīs. Invocat tē, Domine, fidēs mea, quam dedistī mihi, quam īnspīrāstī mihi per hūmānitātem fīliī tuī, per ministerium praedicātōris tuī.

God whom he calls upon in His very being, and Himself in God.

2 **2** Et quōmodo invocābō deum meum, deum et Dominum meum, quoniam utique in mē ipsum eum vocābō, cum invocābō eum? Et quis locus est in mē quō veniat in mē deus meus, quō deus veniat in mē, deus quī fēcit caelum et terram? Itane, Domine deus meus? Est quicquam in mē quod capiat tē? An vērō caelum et terra, quae fēcistī et in quibus mē fēcistī, capiunt tē? An quia sine tē nōn esset quidquid est, fit ut quidquid est capiat tē? Quoniam itaque et ego sum, quid petō ut veniās in mē, quī nōn essem nisi essēs in mē? Nōn enim ego iam īnferī, et tamen etiam ibi es, nam etsī dēscenderō in īnfernum, ades.[6] Nōn ergō essem, deus meus, nōn omnīnō essem, nisi essēs in mē. An potius nōn essem nisi essem in tē, ex quō omnia, per quem omnia, in quō omnia?[7] Etiam sīc, Domine, etiam sīc. Quō tē invocō, cum in tē sim? Aut unde veniās in mē? Quō enim recēdam extrā caelum et terram, ut inde in mē veniat deus meus, quī dīxit, 'caelum et terram ego impleō'?[8]

God is so wholly everywhere that no single thing can fully contain Him.

3 **3** Capiunt ergōne tē caelum et terra, quoniam tū implēs ea? An implēs et restat, quoniam nōn tē capiunt? Et quō refundis quidquid implētō caelō et terrā restat ex tē? An nōn opus habēs ut quōquam contineāris, quī continēs omnia, quoniam quae

1 Ps. 144.3 2 Ps. 146.5 3 1 Pet. 5.5 4 Rom. 10.14 5 Ps. 21.27 6 Ps. 138.8 7 Rom. 11.36 8 Jer. 23.24

Book I.

He Proclaims the Greatness of God, Whom He Desires to Seek and Invoke, Being Awakened by Him.

1 [1] Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power, and of Thy wisdom there is no end. And man, being a part of Thy creation, desires to praise Thee, man, who bears about with him his mortality, the witness of his sin, even the witness that Thou "resistest the proud,"—yet man, this part of Thy creation, desires to praise Thee. Thou movest us to delight in praising Thee; for Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee. Lord, teach me to know and understand which of these should be first, to call on Thee, or to praise Thee; and likewise to know Thee, or to call upon Thee. But who is there that calls upon Thee without knowing Thee? For he that knows Thee not may call upon Thee as other than Thou art. Or perhaps we call on Thee that we may know Thee. "But how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? or how shall they believe without a preacher?" And those who seek the Lord shall praise Him. For those who seek shall find Him, and those who find Him shall praise Him. Let me seek Thee, Lord, in calling on Thee, and call on Thee in believing in Thee; for Thou hast been preached unto us. O Lord, my faith calls on Thee,—that faith which Thou hast imparted to me, which Thou hast breathed into me through the incarnation of Thy Son, through the ministry of Thy preacher.

That the God Whom We Invoke is in Us, and We in Him.

2 [2] And how shall I call upon my God—my God and my Lord? For when I call on Him I ask Him to come into me. And what place is there in me into which my God can come—into which God can come, even He who made heaven and earth? Is there anything in me, O Lord my God, that can contain Thee? Do indeed the very heaven and the earth, which Thou hast made, and in which Thou hast made me, contain Thee? Or, as nothing could exist without Thee, doth whatever exists contain Thee? Why, then, do I ask Thee to come into me, since I indeed exist, and could not exist if Thou wert not in me? Because I am not yet in hell, though Thou art even there; for "if I go down into hell Thou art there." I could not therefore exist, could not exist at all, O my God, unless Thou wert in me. Or should I not rather say, that I could not exist unless I were in Thee from whom are all things, by whom are all things, in whom are all things? Even so, Lord; even so. Where do I call Thee to, since Thou art in me, or whence canst Thou come into me? For where outside heaven and earth can I go that from thence my God may come into me who has said, I fill heaven and earth"?

Everywhere God Wholly Filleth All Things, But Neither Heaven Nor Earth Containeth Him.

3 [3] Since, then, Thou fillest heaven and earth, do they contain Thee? Or, as they contain Thee not, dost Thou fill them, and yet there remains something over? And where dost Thou pour forth that which remaineth of Thee when the heaven and earth are filled? Or, indeed, is there no need that Thou who containest all things shouldest be contained of any, since those things which Thou fillest Thou fillest by containing them? For the vessels which Thou fillest do not sustain Thee, since should they even be broken Thou wilt not be poured forth. And when Thou art poured forth on us, Thou

tuae, Domine, laudēs tuae per scrīptūrās tuās suspenderent palmitem cordis meī, et nōn raperētur per inānia nūgārum turpis praeda volātilibus. Nōn enim ūnō modō sacrificātur trānsgressōribus angelīs.

That men take care to observe the rules of grammarians but not the precepts of God.

18 **28** Quid autem mīrum, quod in vānitātēs ita ferēbar et ā tē, deus meus, ībam forās, quandō mihi imitandī prōpōnēbantur hominēs quī aliqua facta sua nōn mala, sī cum barbarismō aut soloecismō ēnūntiārent, reprehēnsī cōnfundēbantur, sī autem libīdinēs suās integrīs et rīte cōnsequentibus verbīs cōpiōsē ōrnātēque narrārent, laudātī glōriābantur? Vidēs haec, Domine, et tacēs, longanimis et multum misericors et vērāx. Numquid semper tacēbis? Et nunc ēruis dē hōc immānissimō profundō quaerentem tē animam et sitientem dēlectātiōnēs tuās, et cuius cor dīcit tibi, 'quaesīvī vultum tuum.' Vultum tuum, Domine, requīram:[1] nam longē ā vultū tuō in affectū tenebrōsō. Nōn enim pedibus aut ā spatiīs locōrum ītur abs tē aut redītur ad tē, aut vērō fīlius ille tuus minor equōs vel currūs vel nāvēs quaesīvit, aut āvolāvit pinnā vīsibilī, aut mōtō poplite iter ēgit, ut in longinquā regiōne vīvēns prōdigē dissipāret quod dederās proficīscentī, dulcis pater quia dederās, et egēnō redeuntī dulcior:[2] in affectū ergō libīdinōsō, id enim est tenebrōsō, atque id est longē ā vultū tuō.

29 Vidē, Domine deus, et patienter, ut vidēs, vidē quōmodo dīligenter observent fīliī hominum pacta litterārum et syllabārum accepta ā priōribus locūtōribus, et ā tē accepta aeterna pacta perpetuae salūtis neglegant, ut quī illa sonōrum vetera placita teneat aut doceat, sī contrā disciplīnam grammaticam sine adspīrātiōne prīmae syllabae hominem dīxerit, magis displiceat hominibus quam sī contrā tua praecepta hominem ōderit, cum sit homō. Quasi vērō quemlibet inimīcum hominem perniciōsius sentiat quam ipsum odium quō in eum inrītātur, aut vāstet quisquam persequendō alium gravius quam cor suum vāstat inimīcandō. Et certē nōn est interior litterārum scientia quam scrīpta cōnscientia, id sē alterī facere quod nōlit patī. Quam tū sēcrētus es, habitāns in excelsīs in silentiō, deus sōlus magnus, lēge īnfatīgābilī spargēns poenālēs caecitātēs suprā inlicitās cupiditātēs, cum homō ēloquentiae fāmam quaeritāns ante hominem iūdicem circumstante hominum multitūdine inimīcum suum odiō immānissimō īnsectāns vigilantissimē cavet, nē per linguae errōrem dīcat, 'inter hominibus', et nē per mentis furōrem hominem auferat ex hominibus, nōn cavet.

The vices of boyhood that carry over into later years.

19 **30** Hōrum ego puer mōrum in līmine iacēbam miser, et huius harēnae palaestra erat illa, ubi magis timēbam barbarismum facere quam cavēbam, sī facerem, nōn

1 Ps. 26.8 2 Luke 15.12, 32

too, on which I could exercise my wit and tongue? Thy praise, Lord, Thy praises might have supported the tendrils of my heart by Thy Scriptures; so had it not been dragged away by these empty trifles, a shameful prey of the fowls of the air. For there is more than one way in which men sacrifice to the fallen angels.

Men Desire to Observe the Rules of Learning, But Neglect the Eternal Rules of Everlasting Safety.

18 **28** But what matter of surprise is it that I was thus carried towards vanity, and went forth from Thee, O my God, when men were proposed to me to imitate, who, should they in relating any acts of theirs—not in themselves evil—be guilty of a barbarism or solecism, when censured for it became confounded; but when they made a full and ornate oration, in well-chosen words, concerning their own licentiousness, and were applauded for it, they boasted? Thou seest this, O Lord, and keepest silence, "long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth," as Thou art. Wilt Thou keep silence for ever? And even now Thou drawest out of this vast deep the soul that seeketh Thee and thirsteth after Thy delights, whose "heart said unto Thee," I have sought Thy face, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." For I was far from Thy face, through my darkened affections. For it is not by our feet, nor by change of place, that we either turn from Thee or return to Thee. Or, indeed, did that younger son look out for horses, or chariots, or ships, or fly away with visible wings, or journey by the motion of his limbs, that he might, in a far country, prodigally waste all that Thou gavest him when he set out? A kind Father when Thou gavest, and kinder still when he returned destitute! So, then, in wanton, that is to say, in darkened affections, lies distance from Thy face.

29 Behold, O Lord God, and behold patiently, as Thou art wont to do, how diligently the sons of men observe the conventional rules of letters and syllables, received from those who spoke prior to them, and yet neglect the eternal rules of everlasting salvation received from Thee, insomuch that he who practises or teaches the hereditary rules of pronunciation, if, contrary to grammatical usage, he should say, without aspirating the first letter, a uman being, will offend men more than if, in opposition to Thy commandments, he, a human being, were to hate a human being. As if, indeed, any man should feel that an enemy could be more destructive to him than that hatred with which he is excited against him, or that he could destroy more utterly him whom he persecutes than he destroys his own soul by his enmity. And of a truth, there is no science of letters more innate than the writing of conscience—that he is doing unto another what he himself would not suffer. How mysterious art Thou, who in silence "dwellest on high," Thou God, the only great, who by an unwearied law dealest out the punishment of blindness to illicit desires! When a man seeking for the reputation of eloquence stands before a human judge while a thronging multitude surrounds him, inveighs against his enemy with the most fierce hatred, he takes most vigilant heed that his tongue slips not into grammatical error, but takes no heed lest through the fury of his spirit he cut off a man from his fellow-men.

30 These were the customs in the midst of which I, unhappy boy, was cast, and on that arena it was that I was more fearful of perpetrating a barbarism than, having done so, of envying those who had not. These things I declare and confess unto Thee, my God, for which I was applauded by them whom I then thought it my whole duty to please, for I did not perceive the gulf of infamy wherein I was cast away from Thine eyes. For in Thine eyes what was more infamous than I was already, displeasing even those

Liber VII

He thinks of God as something corporeal diffused through infinite space.

1 [1] Iam mortua erat adulēscentia mea mala et nefanda, et ībam in iuventūtem, quantō aetāte maior, tantō vānitāte turpior, quī cōgitāre aliquid substantiae nisi tāle nōn poteram, quāle per hōs oculōs vidērī solet. Nōn tē cōgitābam, deus, in figūrā corporis hūmānī; ex quō audīre aliquid dē sapientiā coepī, semper hoc fūgī et gaudēbam mē hoc repperisse in fidē spīritālis mātris nostrae, catholicae tuae, sed quid tē aliud cōgitārem nōn occurrēbat. Et cōnābar cōgitāre tē, homō et tālis homō, summum et sōlum et vērum deum, et tē incorruptibilem et inviolābilem et incommūtābilem tōtīs medullīs crēdēbam, quia nesciēns unde et quōmodo, plānē tamen vidēbam et certus eram id quod corrumpī potest dēterius esse quam id quod nōn potest, et quod violārī nōn potest incūnctanter praepōnēbam violābilī, et quod nūllam patitur mūtātiōnem melius esse quam id quod mūtārī potest. Clāmābat violenter cor meum adversus omnia phantasmata mea, et hōc ūnō ictū cōnābar abigere circumvolantem turbam immunditiae ab aciē mentis meae, et vix dimōta in ictū oculī, ecce conglobāta rūrsus aderat et inruēbat in aspectum meum et obnūbilābat eum, ut quamvīs nōn fōrmā hūmānī corporis, corporeum tamen aliquid cōgitāre cōgerer per spatia locōrum, sīve īnfūsum mundō sīve etiam extrā mundum per īnfīnīta diffūsum, etiam ipsum incorruptibile et inviolābile et incommūtābile quod corruptibilī et violābilī et commūtābilī praepōnēbam, quoniam quidquid prīvābam spatiīs tālibus nihil mihi esse vidēbātur, sed prōrsus nihil, nē ināne quidem, tamquam sī corpus auferātur locō et maneat locus omnī corpore vacuātus et terrēnō et hūmidō et āeriō et caelestī, sed tamen sit locus inānis tamquam spatiōsum nihil.

[2] Ego itaque incrassātus corde nec mihimet ipsī vel ipse cōnspicuus, quidquid nōn per aliquanta spatia tenderētur vel diffunderētur vel conglobārētur vel tumēret vel tāle aliquid caperet aut capere posset, nihil prōrsus esse arbitrābar. Per quālēs enim fōrmās īre solent oculī meī, per tālēs imāginēs ībat cor meum, nec vidēbam hanc eandem intentiōnem quā illās ipsās imāginēs fōrmābam nōn esse tāle aliquid, quae tamen ipsās nōn fōrmāret nisi esset magnum aliquid. Ita etiam tē, vīta vītae meae, grandem per īnfīnīta spatia undique cōgitābam penetrāre tōtam mundī mōlem et extrā eam quāquāversum per immēnsa sine terminō, ut habēret tē terra, habēret caelum, habērent omnia et illa fīnīrentur in tē, tū autem nusquam. Sīcut autem lūcī sōlis nōn obsisteret āeris corpus, āeris huius quī suprā terram est, quōminus per eum trāicerētur penetrāns eum, nōn dirrumpendō aut concidendō sed implendō eum tōtum, sīc tibi putābam nōn sōlum caelī et āeris et maris sed etiam terrae corpus pervium et ex omnibus maximīs minimīsque partibus penetrābile ad capiendam praesentiam tuam, occultā

Book VII.

He Regarded Not God Indeed Under the Form of a Human Body, But as a Corporeal Substance Diffused Through Space.

1 [1] Dead now was that evil and abominable youth of mine, and I was passing into early manhood: as I increased in years, the fouler became I in vanity, who could not conceive of any substance but such as I saw with my own eyes. I thought not of Thee, O God, under the form of a human body. Since the time I began to hear something of wisdom, I always avoided this; and I rejoiced to have found the same in the faith of our spiritual mother, Thy Catholic Church. But what else to imagine Thee I knew not. And I, a man, and such a man, sought to conceive of Thee, the sovereign and only true God; and I did in my inmost heart believe that Thou wert incorruptible, and inviolable, and unchangeable; because, not knowing whence or how, yet most plainly did I see and feel sure that that which may be corrupted must be worse than that which cannot, and what cannot be violated did I without hesitation prefer before that which can, and deemed that which suffers no change to be better than that which is changeable. Violently did my heart cry out against all my phantasms, and with this one blow I endeavoured to beat away from the eye of my mind all that unclean crowd which fluttered around it. And lo, being scarce put off, they, in the twinkling of an eye, pressed in multitudes around me, dashed against my face, and beclouded it; so that, though I thought not of Thee under the form of a human body, yet was I constrained to image Thee to be something corporeal in space, either infused into the world, or infinitely diffused beyond it,—even that incorruptible, inviolable, and unchangeable, which I preferred to the corruptible, and violable, and changeable; since whatsoever I conceived, deprived of this space, appeared as nothing to me, yea, altogether nothing, not even a void, as if a body were removed from its place and the place should remain empty of any body at all, whether earthy, terrestrial, watery, aerial, or celestial, but should remain a void place—a spacious nothing, as it were.

[2] I therefore being thus gross-hearted, nor clear even to myself, whatsoever was not stretched over certain spaces, nor diffused, nor crowded together, nor swelled out, or which did not or could not receive some of these dimensions, I judged to be altogether nothing. For over such forms as my eyes are wont to range did my heart then range; nor did I see that this same observation, by which I formed those same images, was not of this kind, and yet it could not have formed them had not itself been something great. In like manner did I conceive of Thee, Life of my life, as vast through infinite spaces, on every side penetrating the whole mass of the world, and beyond it, all ways, through immeasurable and boundless spaces; so that the earth should have Thee, the heaven have Thee, all things have Thee, and they bounded in Thee, but Thou nowhere. For as the body of this air which is above the earth preventeth not the light of the sun from passing through it, penetrating it, not by bursting or by cutting, but by filling it entirely, so I imagined the body, not of heaven, air, and sea only, but of the earth also, to be pervious to Thee, and in all its greatest parts as well as smallest penetrable to receive Thy presence,

aspernātiōne, aliquandō cum dēsīderiō, prō eārum rērum dīversitāte dē quibus mē gāvīsum esse meminī. Nam et dē turpibus gaudiō quōdam perfūsus sum, quod nunc recordāns dētestor atque exsecror, aliquandō dē bonīs et honestīs, quod dēsīderāns recolō, tametsī forte nōn adsunt, et ideō trīstis gaudium prīstinum recolō.

31 Ubi ergō et quandō expertus sum vītam meam beātam, ut recorder eam et amem et dēsīderem? Nec ego tantum aut cum paucīs, sed beātī prōrsus omnēs esse volumus. Quod nisi certā nōtitiā nōssēmus, nōn tam certā voluntāte vellēmus. Sed quid est hoc? Quod sī quaerātur ā duōbus utrum mīlitāre velint, fierī possit ut alter eōrum velle sē, alter nōlle respondeat. Sī autem ab eīs quaerātur utrum esse beātī velint, uterque sē statim sine ūllā dubitātiōne dīcat optāre, nec ob aliud velit ille mīlitāre, nec ob aliud iste nōlit, nisi ut beātī sint. Num forte quoniam alius hinc, alius inde gaudet? Ita sē omnēs beātōs esse velle cōnsonant, quemadmodum cōnsonārent sī hoc interrogārentur, sē velle gaudēre, atque ipsum gaudium vītam beātam vocant. Quod etsī alius hinc, alius illinc adsequitur, ūnum est tamen quō pervenīre omnēs nītuntur, ut gaudeant. Quae quoniam rēs est quam sē expertum nōn esse nēmō potest dīcere, propterea reperta in memoriā recognōscitur quandō beātae vītae nōmen audītur.

What the blessed life is.

22 **32** Absit, Domine, absit ā corde servī tuī quī cōnfitētur tibi, absit ut, quōcumque gaudiō gaudeam, beātum mē putem. Est enim gaudium quod nōn datur impiīs,[1] sed eīs quī tē grātīs colunt, quōrum gaudium tū ipse es. Et ipsa est beāta vīta, gaudēre ad tē, dē tē, propter tē: ipsa est et nōn est altera. Quī autem aliam putant esse, aliud sectantur gaudium neque ipsum vērum. Ab aliquā tamen imāgine gaudiī voluntās eōrum nōn āvertitur.

More on the blessed life.

23 **33** Nōn ergō certum est quod omnēs esse beātī volunt, quoniam quī nōn dē tē gaudēre volunt, quae sōla vīta beāta est, nōn utique beātam vītam volunt. An omnēs hoc volunt, sed quoniam carō concupīscit adversus spīritum et spīritus adversus carnem, ut nōn faciant quod volunt,[2] cadunt in id quod valent eōque contentī sunt, quia illud quod nōn valent, nōn tantum volunt quantum sat est ut valeant? Nam quaerō ab omnibus utrum mālint dē vēritāte quam dē falsitāte gaudēre. Tam nōn dubitant dīcere dē vēritāte sē mālle, quam nōn dubitant dīcere beātōs esse sē velle. Beāta quippe vīta est gaudium dē vēritāte. Hoc est enim gaudium dē tē, quī vēritās es,[3] deus, inlūminātiō mea, salūs faciēī meae,[4] deus meus. Hanc vītam beātam omnēs volunt, hanc vītam, quae sōla beāta est, omnēs volunt, gaudium dē vēritāte omnēs volunt. Multōs expertus sum quī vellent fallere, quī autem fallī, nēminem. Ubi ergō nōvērunt hanc vītam beātam, nisi ubi nōvērunt etiam vēritātem? Amant enim et ipsam, quia fallī nōlunt, et cum amant beātam vītam, quod nōn est aliud quam dē vēritāte gaudium, utique amant etiam vēritātem, nec amārent nisi esset aliqua nōtitia eius in memoriā

1 Isa. 48.22 2 Gal. 5.17 3 John 14.6 4 Ps. 26.1

to the difference of the things wherein I now remember that I rejoiced. For even from unclean things have I been bathed with a certain joy, which now calling to mind, I detest and execrate; at other times, from good and honest things, which, with longing, I call to mind, though perchance they be not nigh at hand, and then with sadness do I call to mind a former joy.

31 Where and when, then, did I experience my happy life, that I should call it to mind, and love and long for it? Nor is it I alone or a few others who wish to be happy, but truly all; which, unless by certain knowledge we knew, we should not wish with so certain a will. But how is this, that if two men be asked whether they would wish to serve as soldiers one, it may be, would reply that he would, the other that he would not; but if they were asked whether they would wish to be happy, both of them would unhesitatingly say that they would; and this one would wish to serve, and the other not, from no other motive but to be happy? Is it, perchance, that as one joys in this, and another in that, so do all men agree in their wish for happiness, as they would agree, were they asked, in wishing to have joy,—and this joy they call a happy life? Although, then, one pursues joy in this way, and another in that, all have one goal, which they strive to attain, namely, to have joy. This life, being a thing which no one can say he has not experienced, it is on that account found in the memory, and recognised whenever the name of a happy life is heard.

A Happy Life is to Rejoice in God, and for God.

22 **32** Let it be far, O Lord,—let it be far from the heart of Thy servant who confesseth unto Thee; let it be far from me to think myself happy, be the joy what it may. For there is a joy which is not granted to the "wicked," but to those who worship Thee thankfully, whose joy Thou Thyself art. And the happy life is this,—to rejoice unto Thee, in Thee, and for Thee; this it is, and there is no other. But those who think there is another follow after another joy, and that not the true one. Their will, however, is not turned away from some shadow of joy.

All Wish to Rejoice in the Truth.

23 **33** It is not, then, certain that all men wish to be happy, since those who wish not to rejoice in Thee, which is the only happy life, do not verily desire the happy life. Or do all desire this, but because "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh," so that they "cannot do the things that they would," they fall upon that which they are able to do, and with that are content; because that which they are not able to do, they do not so will as to make them able? For I ask of every man, whether he would rather rejoice in truth or in falsehood. They will no more hesitate to say, "in truth," than to say, "that they wish to be happy." For a happy life is joy in the truth. For this is joy in Thee, who art "the truth," O God, "my light," "the health of my countenance, and my God." All wish for this happy life; this life do all wish for, which is the only happy one; joy in the truth do all wish for. I have had experience of many who wished to deceive, but not one who wished to be deceived. Where, then, did they know this happy life, save where they knew also the truth? For they love it, too, since they would not be deceived. And when they love a happy life, which is naught else but joy in the truth, assuredly they love also the truth; which yet they would not love were there not some knowledge of it in the memory. Wherefore, then, do they not rejoice in it? Why are they not happy? Because

dissimilitūdinem īnfōrmem, quae fōrmārētur per similitūdinem tuam recurrēns in tē ūnum prō captū ōrdinātō, quantum cuique rērum in suō genere datum est, et fierent omnia bona valdē, sīve maneant circā tē sīve gradātim remōtiōre distantiā per tempora et locōs pulchrās mūtātiōnēs faciant aut patiantur. Vident haec et gaudent in lūce vēritātis tuae, quantulum hic valent.

39 Et alius eōrum intendit in id quod dictum est, 'in prīncipiō fēcit deus,' et respicit sapientiam, prīncipium, quia et loquitur ipsa nōbīs. Alius itidem intendit in eadem verba et prīncipium intellegit exōrdium rērum conditārum et sīc accipit 'In prīncipiō fēcit' ac sī dīcerētur 'Prīmō fēcit'. Atque in eīs quī intellegunt 'In prīncipiō' quod in sapientiā fēcistī caelum et terram, alius eōrum ipsum caelum et terram, creābilem māteriam caelī et terrae, sīc esse crēdit cognōminātam, alius iam fōrmātās distīnctāsque nātūrās, alius ūnam fōrmātam eandemque spīritālem caelī nōmine, aliam īnfōrmem corporālis māteriae terrae nōmine. Quī autem intellegunt in nōminibus caelī et terrae adhūc īnfōrmem māteriam, dē quā fōrmārētur caelum et terra, nec ipsī ūnō modō id intellegunt, sed alius, unde cōnsummārētur intellegibilis sēnsibilisque creātūra, alius tantum, unde sēnsibilis mōlēs ista corporea sinū grandī continēns perspicuās prōmptāsque nātūrās. Nec illī ūnō modō, quī iam dispositās dīgestāsque creātūrās caelum et terram vocārī hōc locō crēdunt, sed alius invīsibilem atque vīsibilem, alius sōlam vīsibilem, in quā lūminōsum caelum suspicimus et terram cālīginōsam quaeque in eīs sunt.

In how many ways something can be prior.

29 **40** At ille quī nōn aliter accipit 'In prīncipiō fēcit' quam sī dīcerētur 'Prīmō fēcit' nōn habet quōmodo vērāciter intellegat caelum et terram, nisi māteriam caelī et terrae intellegat, vidēlicet ūniversae, id est intellegibilis corporālisque, creātūrae. Sī enim iam fōrmātam velit ūniversam, rēctē ab eō quaerī poterit, sī hoc prīmō fēcit deus, quid fēcerit deinceps, et post ūniversitātem nōn inveniet ac per hoc audiet invītus, 'quōmodo illud prīmō, sī posteā nihil?' Cum vērō dīcit prīmō īnfōrmem, deinde fōrmātam, nōn est absurdus, sī modo est idōneus discernere quid praecēdat aeternitāte, quid tempore, quid ēlēctiōne, quid orīgine: aeternitāte, sīcut deus omnia; tempore, sīcut flōs frūctum; ēlēctiōne, sīcut frūctus flōrem; orīgine, sīcut sonus cantum. In hīs quattuor prīmum et ultimum quae commemorāvī difficillimē intelleguntur, duo media facillimē. Namque rāra vīsiō est et nimis ardua cōnspicere, Domine, aeternitātem tuam incommūtābiliter mūtābilia facientem ac per hoc priōrem. Quis deinde sīc acūtum cernat animō, ut sine labōre magnō dīnōscere valeat quōmodo sit prior sonus quam cantus, ideō quia cantus est fōrmātus sonus et esse utique aliquid nōn fōrmātum potest, fōrmārī autem quod nōn est nōn potest? Sīc est prior māteriēs quam id quod ex eā fit, nōn ea prior quia ipsa efficit, cum potius fīat, nec prior intervāllō temporis. Neque enim priōre tempore sonōs ēdimus īnfōrmēs sine cantū et eōs posteriōre tempore in fōrmam canticī coaptāmus aut fingimus, sīcut ligna, quibus arca, vel argentum, quō vāsculum fabricātur. Tālēs quippe māteriae tempore etiam praecēdunt fōrmās rērum

and place, make or undergo beautiful variations. These things they see, and rejoice in the light of Thy truth, in the little degree they here may.

39 Again, another of these directs his attention to that which is said, "In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth," and beholdeth Wisdom,—the Beginning, because It also speaketh unto us. Another likewise directs his attention to the same words, and by "beginning" understands the commencement of things created; and receives it thus,—In the beginning He made, as if it were said, He at first made. And among those who understand "In the beginning" to mean, that "in Thy Wisdom Thou hast created heaven and earth," one believes the matter out of which the heaven and earth were to be created to be there called "heaven and earth;" another, that they are natures already formed and distinct; another, one formed nature, and that a spiritual, under the name of heaven, the other formless, of corporeal matter, under the name of earth. But they who under the name of "heaven and earth" understand matter as yet formless, out of which were to be formed heaven and earth, do not themselves understand it in one manner; but one, that matter out of which the intelligible and the sensible creature were to be completed; another, that only out of which this sensible corporeal mass was to come, holding in its vast bosom these visible and prepared natures. Nor are they who believe that the creatures already set in order and arranged are in this place called heaven and earth of one accord; but the one, both the invisible and visible; the other, the visible only, in which we admire the luminous heaven and darksome earth, and the things that are therein.

Concerning the Opinion of Those Who Explain It "At First He Made."

29 40 But he who does not otherwise understand, "In the beginning He made," than if it were said, "At first He made," can only truly understand heaven and earth of the matter of heaven and earth, namely, of the universal, that is, intelligible and corporeal creation. For if he would have it of the universe. as already formed, it might rightly be asked of him: "If at first God made this, what made He afterwards?" And after the universe he will find nothing; thereupon must he, though unwilling, hear, "How is this first, if there is nothing afterwards?" But when he says that God made matter first formless, then formed, he is not absurd if he be but able to discern what precedes by eternity, what by time, what by choice, what by origin. By eternity, as God is before all things; by time, as the flower is before the fruit; by choice, as the fruit is before the flower; by origin, as sound is before the tune. Of these four, the first and last which I have referred to are with much difficulty understood; the two middle very easily. For an uncommon and too lofty vision it is to behold, O Lord, Thy Eternity, immutably making things mutable, and thereby before them. Who is so acute of mind as to be able without great labour to discover how the sound is prior to the tune, because a tune is a formed sound; and a thing not formed may exist, but that which existeth not cannot be formed? So is the matter prior to that which is made from it; not prior because it maketh it, since itself is rather made, nor is it prior by an interval of time. For we do not as to time first utter formless sounds without singing, and then adapt or fashion them into the form of a song, just as wood or silver from which a chest or vessel is made. Because such materials do by time also precede the forms of the things which are made from them; but in singing this is not so. For when it is sung, its sound is heard at the same time; seeing there is not first a formless sound, which is afterwards formed into a song. For as soon as it shall have first sounded it

quae fīunt ex eīs, at in cantū nōn ita est. Cum enim cantātur, audītur sonus eius, nōn prius īnfōrmiter sonat et deinde fōrmātur in cantum. Quod enim prīmō utcumque sonuerit, praeterit, nec ex eō quicquam reperiēs quod resūmptum arte compōnās. Et ideō cantus in sonō suō vertitur, quī sonus eius māteriēs eius est. Īdem quippe fōrmātur, ut cantus sit. Et ideō, sīcut dīcēbam, prior māteriēs sonandī quam fōrma cantandī. Nōn per faciendī potentiam prior: neque enim sonus est cantandī artifex, sed cantantī animae subiacet ex corpore, dē quō cantum faciat; nec tempore prior: simul enim cum cantū ēditur; nec prior ēlēctiōne: nōn enim potior sonus quam cantus, quandōquidem cantus est nōn tantum sonus vērum etiam speciōsus sonus. Sed prior est orīgine, quia nōn cantus fōrmātur ut sonus sit, sed sonus fōrmātur ut cantus sit. Hōc exemplō quī potest intellegat māteriam rērum prīmō factam et appellātam caelum et terram, quia inde facta sunt caelum et terra, nec tempore prīmō factam, quia fōrmae rērum exserunt tempora, illa autem erat īnfōrmis iamque in temporibus simul animadvertitur, nec tamen dē illā narrārī aliquid potest, nisi velut tempore prior sit, cum pendātur extrēmior, quia profectō meliōra sunt fōrmāta quam īnfōrmia, et praecēdātur aeternitāte creātōris, ut esset dē nihilō, unde aliquid fieret.

When interpretations differ, grace and the pursuit of truth are most important.

30 **41** In hāc dīversitāte sententiārum vērārum concordiam pariat ipsa vēritās, et deus noster misereātur nostrī, ut lēgitimē lēge ūtāmur, praeceptī fīne, pūrā cāritāte. Ac per hoc, sī quis quaerit ex mē quid hōrum Moÿsēs, tuus ille famulus, sēnserit, nōn sunt hī sermōnēs cōnfessiōnum meārum sī tibi nōn cōnfiteor, 'nesciō.' Et sciō tamen illās vērās esse sententiās (exceptīs carnālibus, dē quibus quantum exīstimāvī locūtus sum – quōs tamen bonae speī parvulōs haec verba librī tuī nōn territant alta humiliter et pauca cōpiōsē), sed omnēs quōs in eīs verbīs vēra cernere ac dīcere fateor, dīligāmus nōs invicem pariterque dīligāmus tē, deum nostrum, fontem vēritātis, sī nōn vāna sed ipsam sitīmus, eundemque famulum tuum, scrīptūrae huius dispēnsātōrem, spīritū tuō plēnum, ita honōrēmus, ut hoc eum tē revēlante, cum haec scrīberet, attendisse crēdāmus quod in eīs maximē et lūce vēritātis et frūge ūtilitātis excellit.

We should consider Moses to have meant whatever truth can be found in his words.

31 **42** Ita cum alius dīxerit, 'hoc sēnsit quod ego,' et alius, 'immō illud quod ego,' religiōsius mē arbitror dīcere, 'cūr nōn utrumque potius, sī utrumque vērum est, et sī quid tertium et sī quid quārtum et sī quid omnīnō aliud vērum quispiam in hīs verbīs videt, cūr nōn illa omnia vīdisse crēdātur, per quem deus ūnus sacrās litterās vēra et dīversa vīsūrīs multōrum sēnsibus temperāvit?' Ego certē, quod intrepidus dē meō corde prōnūntiō, sī ad culmen auctōritātis aliquid scrīberem, sīc māllem scrībere ut quod vērī quisque dē hīs rēbus capere posset mea verba resonārent, quam ut ūnam vēram sententiam ad hoc apertius pōnerem, ut exclūderem cēterās quārum falsitās mē nōn posset offendere. Nōlō itaque, deus meus, tam praeceps esse ut hoc illum virum dē tē meruisse nōn crēdam. Sēnsit ille omnīnō in

et esset caelum caelī eius, quod inter aquam et aquam posteā factum est. Et tenēbam iam patrem in deī nōmine, quī fēcit haec, et fīlium in prīncipiī nōmine, in quō fēcit haec, et trīnitātem crēdēns deum meum, sīcut crēdēbam, quaerēbam in ēloquiīs sānctīs eius, et ecce spīritus tuus superferēbātur super aquās. Ecce trīnitās deus meus, pater et fīlius et spīritus sānctus, creātor ūniversae creātūrae.

Why it is said that the Spirit was borne over the waters.

6 **7** Sed quae causa fuerat – ō lūmen vēridicum, tibi admoveō cor meum, nē mē vāna doceat; discute tenebrās eius et dīc mihi, obsecrō tē per mātrem cāritātem, obsecrō tē, dīc mihi, quae causa fuerat, ut post nōminātum caelum et terram invīsibilem et incompositam et tenebrās super abyssum tum dēmum scrīptūra tua nōmināret spīritum tuum? An quia oportēbat sīc eum īnsinuārī, ut dīcerētur superferre? Nōn posset hoc dīcī nisi prius illud commemorārētur cui superferrī spīritus tuus posset intellegī. Nec patrī enim nec fīliō superferēbātur nec superferrī rēctē dīcerētur, sī nūllī reī superferrētur. Prius ergō dīcendum erat cui superferrētur, et deinde ille quem nōn oportēbat aliter commemorārī nisi ut superferrī dīcerētur. Cūr ergō aliter eum īnsinuārī nōn oportēbat, nisi ut superferrī dīcerētur?

The effects of the Holy Spirit.

7 **8** Iam hinc sequātur quī potest intellēctū apostolum tuum dīcentem quia cāritās tua diffūsa est in cordibus nostrīs per spīritum sānctum, quī datus est nōbīs,[1] et dē spīritālibus docentem et dēmōnstrantem superēminentem viam cāritātis et flectentem genua prō nōbīs ad tē, ut cognōscāmus superēminentem scientiam cāritātis Chrīstī.[2] Ideōque ab initiō superēminēns superferēbātur super aquās. Cui dīcam, quōmodo dīcam dē pondere cupiditātis in abruptam abyssum et dē sublevātiōne cāritātis per spīritum tuum, quī superferēbātur super aquās? Cui dīcam? Quōmodo dīcam? Neque enim loca sunt quibus mergimur et ēmergimus. Quid similius et quid dissimilius? Affectūs sunt, amōrēs sunt, immunditia spīritūs nostrī dēfluēns īnferius amōre cūrārum et sānctitās tuī attollēns nōs superius amōre sēcūritātis, ut sūrsum cor habeāmus ad tē, ubi spīritus tuus superfertur super aquās, et veniāmus ad superēminentem requiem, cum pertrānsierit anima nostra aquās quae sunt sine substantiā.[3]

Nothing less than God brings us blessed rest.

8 **9** Dēflūxit angelus, dēflūxit anima hominis et indicāvērunt abyssum ūniversae spīritālis creātūrae in profundō tenebrōsō, nisi dīxissēs ab initiō, 'fīat lūx,' et facta esset lūx, et inhaerēret tibi omnis oboediēns intellegentia caelestis cīvitātis tuae et requiēsceret in spīritū tuō, quī superfertur incommūtābiliter super omne mūtābile. Aliōquīn et ipsum caelum caelī tenebrōsa abyssus esset in sē; nunc autem lūx est in Dominō. Nam et in ipsā miserā inquiētūdine dēfluentium spīrituum et indicantium tenebrās suās nūdātās veste lūminis

1 Rom. 5.5 2 Eph. 3.14-19 3 Ps. 123.5

held the Father, who made these things; and under the name of the Beginning, the Son, in whom He made these things; and believing, as I did, that my God was the Trinity, I sought further in His holy words, and behold, Thy Spirit was borne over the waters. Behold the Trinity, O my God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—the Creator of all creation.

Why the Holy Ghost Should Have Been Mentioned After the Mention of Heaven and Earth.

6 [7] But what was the cause, O Thou true-speaking Light? Unto Thee do I lift up my heart, let it not teach me vain things; disperse its darkness, and tell me, I beseech Thee, by our mother charity, tell me, I beseech Thee, the reason why, after the mention of heaven, and of the earth invisible and formless, and darkness upon the deep, Thy Scripture should then at length mention Thy Spirit? Was it because it was meet that it should be spoken of Him that He was "borne over," and this could not be said, unless that were first mentioned "over" which Thy Spirit may be understood to have been "borne?" For neither was He "borne over" the Father, nor the Son, nor could it rightly be said that He was "borne over" if He were "borne over" nothing. That, therefore, was first to be spoken of "over" which He might be "borne;" and then He, whom it was not meet to mention otherwise than as having been "borne." Why, then, was it not meet that it should otherwise be mentioned of Him, than as having been "borne over?"

That the Holy Spirit Brings Us to God.

7 [8] Hence let him that is able now follow Thy apostle with his understanding where he thus speaks, because Thy love "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us;" and where, "concerning spiritual gifts," he teacheth and showeth unto us a more excellent way of charity; and where he bows his knees unto Thee for us, that we may know the super-eminent knowledge of the love of Christ. And, therefore, from the beginning was He super-eminently "borne above the waters." To whom shall I tell this? How speak of the weight of lustful desires, pressing downwards to the steep abyss? and how charity raises us up again, through Thy Spirit which was "borne over the waters?" To whom shall I tell it? How tell it? For neither are there places in which we are merged and emerge. What can be more like, and yet more unlike? They be affections, they be loves; the filthiness of our spirit flowing away downwards with the love of cares, and the sanctity of Thine raising us upwards by the love of freedom from care; that we may lift our hearts unto Thee where Thy Spirit is "borne over the waters;" and that we may come to that pre-eminent rest, when our soul shall have passed through the waters which have no substance.

That Nothing Whatever, Short of God, Can Yield to the Rational Creature a Happy Rest.

8 [9] The angels fell, the soul of man fell and they have thus indicated the abyss in that dark deep, ready for the whole spiritual creation, unless Thou hadst said from the beginning, "Let there be light," and there had been light, and every obedient intelligence of Thy celestial City had cleaved to Thee, and rested in Thy Spirit, which unchangeably is "borne over" everything changeable. Otherwise, even the heaven of heavens itself would have been a darksome deep, whereas now it is light in the Lord. For even in that wretched restlessness of the spirits who fell away, and, when unclothed of the garments of Thy light, discovered their own darkness, dost Thou sufficiently disclose how noble Thou hast made