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R. P. H. Green

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De Doctrina Christiana

Oxford Early Christian Texts

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Augustine

De Doctrina Christiana

Edited and Translated By
R.P. H. Green

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Foreword

My interest was first drawn to Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, at least twenty years ago, in two different contexts: one was the study of the relationships between Christianity and paganism at the time of Ausonius and Paulinus of Nola; the other was an interest in medieval education, rhetoric, and poetics, to which modern scholars have often highlighted the work's relevance. There are many more good reasons for studying it, not least the importance of Augustine's ideas in their own right and their contribution to the flow of his thinking on such central matters as the nature of Christian love, the function of signs, the evolution of Biblical hermeneutics, and the value of the classical heritage. Even to a relative outsider to Augustinian studies the need for a new translation was clear, but although I have frequently, and profitably, studied the book with students the attempt to provide one was delayed until recently by various other commitments, among them the study of a very different rhetor.

In the following pages the reader should not expect a detailed exploration of the work's significance in any of the perspectives just mentioned, but will find in the Select Bibliography a distillation from a mass of modern writing of what seems most valuable, and in the notes pointers to further study as well as brief comment or explanation. The Introduction is merely an introduction, and does not purport to be an extended essay in interpretation. Most of my attention has been given to scrutinizing the received text and creating a translation which is at once smooth and accurate. A word-for-word translation is seldom feasible, and even the sound principle of consistently using the same English word to translate a particular Latin one often proved impossible to observe; but I have aimed at least to retain the structure of Augustine's Latin, preferring, for example, to mirror his word-order when

deciding between two or more equally acceptable options. The hardest task was to find suitable English equivalents in such areas as *caro/carnalis* ('flesh': but 'fleshly' or 'carnal?'), *salus/salubris* (the noun means 'health' or 'salvation', but what about the adjective in modern idiom?), for important concepts like *consuetudo*, *utilitas*, and *pacta* (where I toyed with the excitingly sinister 'protocols' before opting for the more philosophical 'contracts'), and for certain essentially unproblematic words which happen not to coincide with an obviously acceptable English one (such as *inhaereo*, *narro*, *permaneo*). As for the realm of rhetorical style—where Augustine by and large follows his Ciceronian precepts of using the appropriate style to teach, delight, or move—it seemed right to try to stay with him in his flights into the grand style, in his extended analogies (but there are limits to the elasticity of a sentence beginning 'just as'), and even, perhaps rashly, in his word-play. Translations of the Bible are essentially my own, even where Augustine's text is close to the ones used by modern translators.

The numbering used in the text and translation, and in cross-references, is that devised by Bulhart for the CSEL edition prepared by W. M. Green, but as there the older numberings, commonly used in modern literature although obviously less convenient, will be found in the margin.

I would like to thank Henry Chadwick for his illuminating comments, Ian Kidd for his help with Augustine's section on logic, Rasmus Nøjgaard for his general interest and his assistance at a particularly busy moment, and three typists for their efforts not only to purge the text of hundreds of commas and other excrescences but also to resist the work of gremlins who, by refusing to format the italics in which scriptural and other quotations were presented, showed themselves clearly to be in league with the devil.

R. P. H. G.

St Andrews

September, 1994

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Introduction

Aims and Circumstances

The book's title is not the least of the translator's problems. While many scholars have followed a prudent course of citing it only in Latin, others have adopted the renderings 'doctrine' or 'culture'. But these are misleading in different ways: 'doctrine', because although the work frequently deals with doctrinal matters it is not a treatise principally concerned with doctrine (unlike the Miltonic work of the same name); and 'culture', because the work contains no clear allusion to such a concept, and a careful reading of the text does not warrant its importation.¹ There is no doubt that contemporary writers knew and used the classical concept of *doctrina* as 'culture' or 'learning', and Augustine certainly alludes to it elsewhere, but this sense of the word is in fact absent from *DDC*. When Augustine does use the word in the context of classical learning (in his survey and evaluation of the various components of the classical heritage, 2. 73ff.) he uses it in the plural, clearly referring to discrete branches of learning or culture. In other places the sense of *doctrina* must be 'teaching'. There are many allusions to the 'wholesome teaching', or, in earlier versions, 'sound doctrine' of the Pastoral Epistles, and the work's concluding sentence makes the equation of *doctrina Christiana* with *doctrina sana* quite explicit. The inspiration is not classical but biblical. Augustine is not, as suggested by the still influential work of Marrou,² constructing a self-conscious counterpart to the classical idea of *doctrina* as 'learning' or 'culture', but rather performing the apostolically sanctioned task of Christian

¹ L. M. J. Verheijen, 'Le *De Doctrina Christiana* de S. Augustin', *Augustiniana*, 24 (1974), 10–20; R. P. H. Green, 'Qué entendió San Agustín por doctrina cristiana?', *Augustinus*, 26 (1981), 49–57; G. A. Press, 'Doctrina in Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 17 (1984), 98–120.

² H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris, 1938).

instruction. It is of course possible to derive from *DDC* a blue-print for what we might call a Christian culture, but Augustine does not see his project in that light. The work is about teaching Christianity; hence 'Christian teaching', referring both to the process and the content of teaching. Since for all but a special few (1. 94) it is the scriptures that lead Christians to their goal, *DDC* is a guide to the discovery and communication of what is taught in the Bible. One scholar has maintained that *tractatio scripturarum* ('handling the scriptures') would have been an equally clear statement of its function;³ in formal terms this is true. Another has paraphrased the actual title as 'How to teach Christianity',⁴ but this ignores the considerable 'teach yourself' element of books 1–3.

DDC has often been considered a manual for preachers, and this is no doubt one of its main contributions to Western culture, but Augustine does not forget other kinds of communication, such as debates, books, and letters. He nowhere makes it unambiguously clear whether the work is directed solely to the clergy, and in particular bishops, who were involved in such tasks, though in 4. 8 he refers to 'those whom we desire to be educated for the good of the church', and in that book as a whole the needs of preachers are uppermost. At the beginning of *DDC*, however, he says that he is writing for 'those with the will and the wit to learn', which suggests that he did not intend to exclude any who could profit. He was certainly always sensitive to the needs of the laity, and ready to help them with the study of the Bible. There is no justification for the blithe confidence with which many modern writers have opted for one answer or the other;⁵ it seems wiser to accept both. Augustine's reason for writing the work should probably be sought not in some particular stimulus or impulse, but in his general awareness of a need for such instruction. When he undertook it, he was an experienced preacher and expositor, if not yet a bishop. He had become aware, as he says, that there were general principles which could helpfully be passed on to

³ G. A. Press, 'The Subject and Structure of Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*', *Augustinian Studies*, 11 (1980), 99–124.

⁴ E. Hill, 'De Doctrina Christiana : A Suggestion', *Texte und Untersuchungen*, 81 (Studia Patristica 6; 1962), 442–6.

⁵ For a selection of recent judgements see H. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* (Gothenburg, 1967), 2. 566.

the intelligent and well-motivated. Without denying the importance of commentaries, manuals, and models, he seeks to develop in such students the ability to arrive at their own interpretations, comparing his function to that of the primary teacher who enables pupils to read for themselves and not depend on a reader. It does not seem that the work was undertaken in a polemical spirit, or in response to particular adversaries. In the preface he indeed anticipates criticism of his programme, but it seems unlikely that he is reacting to a particular sect or group (see p. xiii/xiv). When he discusses the interpretation of the Old Testament in Book 3, he doubtless has in mind problems raised by the Manichees, but nowhere mentions them. In his presentation of the rules of Tyconius (3. 92ff.) his reservations are expressed with restraint and his attitude is clearly positive. He is certainly not attacking Tyconius, though it may well have been the appearance of the Donatist's work some years before that showed him the possibilities of a hermeneutical treatise and encouraged him to provide something better. It has been suggested, on the strength of a sentence in *Ep.* 41. 2,⁶ that Augustine wrote his book at the request of the bishop Aurelius, but the words 'I am not neglecting your behest' (or 'suggestion') seem a rather oblique way to refer to a major work in progress. His request for Aurelius' opinion on the rules of Tyconius—a request evidently repeated several times—certainly suggests that Aurelius was involved in some way with Augustine's project, or at least that Augustine wanted him to be, but does not establish him as the prime mover.

In *Retract.* 2. 30 Augustine says that he had found the work in an unfinished state (it went only as far as 3. 78), and had completed it. The reference in 4. 139 to his visit to Caesarea, 'eight or more' years before, enables us to date its completion to 426/7, but tracing the early progress of the work is rather more complicated. It may have been begun in 395, before he became bishop: there is a significant similarity in terminology between 1. 79 and a letter securely dated to this year, which is more likely to have echoed a distinctive idea of *DDC* than to

⁶ E. Hill, '*De Doctrina Christiana*'. The Latin reads: 'nam et ego quod iussisti non neglego et de Tyconii septem regulis vel clavibus, sicut saepe iam scripsi, cognoscere quid tibi videatur expecto.'

have anticipated it.⁷ Another indication has been found in 2. 146, where Augustine gives examples of Christian writers who have, as it were, loaded themselves with the treasures of Egypt. He mentions Lactantius, Victorinus, Optatus, and Hilary, but not, surprisingly, Ambrose; this must be because Augustine, as he tells us, is here passing over writers still alive. This passage therefore seems to have been written before April 397, the month of Ambrose's death, which was surely reported to Augustine very quickly. But a later date than this seems to be demanded by the three works mentioned in *Retractationes* immediately before *DDC*. Two of these cannot be dated independently, but when speaking about the first of them, *Ad Simplicianum Libri Duo* (2. 27), Augustine describes Simplicianus, who was the successor of Ambrose, as *antistes Mediolanensis*, and this indication of episcopal rank is supported by the language of the work itself and its dedicatory letter (*Ep.* 37). Augustine says in his preface to *Retractationes* that he will present the works in the order of composition, and so the order of the two works suggests that Simplicianus had become Bishop of Milan before work on *DDC* was halted, and that it was continued after April 397. If this is so—and the conclusion is not inescapable, for Augustine could be thinking not of the dates of completion but of the times when these books particularly occupied him—it would not be particularly surprising that the passage in 2. 146 was not revised to include Ambrose, since such a point could easily have escaped Augustine's notice. But he may have paid some attention to revision: Martin has suggested⁸ that Augustine's desire to have a copy of Ambrose's work *De Sacramentis sive de Philosophia* expressed in *Ep.* 31. 8 is evidence of an attempt to check his statement, which he later acknowledged as false, that Ambrose had made Plato and Jeremiah contemporaries.

If Augustine had not told us the exact place where he broke off, the join would probably have escaped detection. He had

⁷ Oliver O'Donovan, 'Usus and Fructus in Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 1', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 33 (1982), 395.

⁸ J. Martin, 'Abfassung, Veröffentlichung und Überlieferung von Augustins Schrift *De Doctrina Christiana*', *Traditio*, 18 (1962), 69–87, much clearer than the Latin preface to his edition, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini De Doctrina Christiana* (CCSL 32; Turnhout, 1962), pp. vii–xix. But since the recipient of *Ep.* 31 is Paulinus of Nola, not Paulinus of Milan, the date he suggests for it is invalid.

just begun to show how certain words may be used in more than one figurative sense, but the example of 'leaven' was evidently not joined by those of 'lion', 'serpent', or 'bread' for some thirty years. Whether he had left some kind of notes or not (it is surely probable), he found it easy to resume; he organized his material with a characteristic *partitio* ('there are two forms of this . . .'), pointed out that easy passages may be used to illuminate obscure ones, touched on the implications of the quest for authorial meaning, commented on the wealth of tropes in scripture, and then plunged into the rules of Tyconius. All these topics were presumably part of his original plan. Book 4 too seems to be part of the original conception; its programme is announced at the outset of the work, and its main thrust is to develop what is said in 2. 132. Because of the difference in subject-matter between Book 4 and the other books, it is difficult to point with any confidence to areas where his attitudes or opinions changed over these years. Perhaps the fourth book seems more dismissive about the value of a conventional education than the second, but when the evidence of *Confessiones*, closely contemporary with the earlier part of *DDC*, is considered, a change of opinion seems less likely. The discrepancy suggested by Jordan⁹ between Augustine's favourable attitude to rhetoric in the second book (2. 11–12) and his attitude to rhetoricians in the fourth is not at all compelling, especially as rhetoric is not even mentioned in the former passage.

It is not like Augustine to leave a work unfinished. Perhaps he was awaiting Aurelius' reply to his request for help with the rules of Tyconius, but it would surely have taken more than that to stop him. Whether the two-book version (see p. xxi/ii) was circulated at this time or not, it is unlikely that he forgot his work, or lost interest, or dropped it out of dissatisfaction. There may have been some greater priority—a book like *Confessiones* to write, or some pressing *ecclesiae cura*. We all know that even an important piece of work may be left unfinished for all manner of reasons, small in themselves perhaps but cumulatively as massive and obstructive as a mountain range.

There has been considerable discussion of the date of what

⁹ M. D. Jordan, 'Words and Word: Incarnation and Signification in Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*', *Augustinian Studies*, 11 (1980), 180.

editors call the prologue or preface. (In many manuscripts a separate preface is not recognized and it is presented as part of Book 1, but these paragraphs are certainly prefatory in nature and intention.) The matter could be settled by a more exact dating of the St Petersburg manuscript (see p. xxi), which includes it, but in the present state of knowledge it would be premature to make that the arbiter. Duchrow contended that Augustine is attacking the body of ‘charismatics’ referred to by Cassian in *De Institutione Coenobiorum* 5. 33, and argued that the preface was written with the later part;¹⁰ but the accomplishments of the Theodorus mentioned by Cassian do not match those of Augustine's opponents particularly closely, which one would expect if the claim had recently come to his attention. It is surely more likely that Augustine is attacking ideas that were fairly widespread, as Mayer has argued.¹¹ But Mayer's own attempt to show that various parts of the preface enshrine the doctrine of *res per signa* immanent in Books 1 and 2 is vulnerable to the objection that the connection is not explicitly made. They may be compatible with it, and may foreshadow it, but are not referred to directly. One may, however, agree with Mayer against Duchrow that the preface to *DDC* is not the kind of preface that is written last—it is not a summary but a clearing of the ground—and that Duchrow's deductions from similarities with other works of Augustine are not compelling. In sum, there is no good reason to reject Augustine's clear implication that he wrote the preface before developing his thoughts and committing them to paper.

Summary and Significance

In his preface Augustine anticipates three kinds of critic: those who cannot understand his advice, those who fail to apply it, and those who consider it unnecessary. He directs most of his attention to the third group, whom he refutes by appealing to their own experience of learning and the many occasions recorded in scripture when humans were taught through

¹⁰ U. Duchrow, ‘Zum Prolog von Augustins *De Doctrina Christiana*’, *Vigiliae Christianae*, 17 (1963), 165–72.

¹¹ C. Mayer, ‘*Res per signa* : Der Grundgedanke des Prologs in Augustins Schrift *De Doctrina Christiana* und das Problem seiner Datierung’, *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 20 (1974), 100–112.

human agency. Augustine then begins his task by dividing his subject into two parts: the discovery of what must be learnt from scripture, and the presentation of it. To understand the teaching of scripture we need a knowledge both of 'things' and of 'signs'. The subject of Book 1 will be things *qua* things (for things can be signs, and vice versa). Human beings, themselves a kind of thing, should 'enjoy' some things or cleave to them in love, and 'use' others, relating or subordinating them to the attainment of what they love. God, who is universally acknowledged in one way or another, is to be enjoyed; in order to enjoy him, to behold the light of the divine Trinity continually, the human eye must be purged, and we must travel to God along his chosen way, accepting his carefully designed means of healing and taking full advantage of the encouragement that He has provided, especially through the church. The greater part of the book is devoted to giving answers to various problems that arise from this understanding of love. Should humans use each other or enjoy each other? In what way should they love themselves? Which of the things to be used should be loved? Is it possible to hate oneself? Can all people be loved equally in practice? Does the commandment to love one's neighbour apply to the angels? Does God, in loving us, enjoy us or use us? The importance of these careful discussions is that the two commandments to love God and to love one's neighbour as oneself are 'the fulfilment and end of the law', and so our interpretations of scripture—which cannot lie, although we may be misled as we try to interpret it—should be ones which serve to build up this love. Its importance in the wider context of Augustine's general thinking on love is rather less; the distinctive analysis of love in terms of enjoyment and use was never repeated by Augustine, and in retrospect the book must be regarded as experimental and inconclusive.¹² None the less it remains a careful and sensitive discussion of various problems in this area of biblical ethics.

In Book 2 Augustine takes up the treatment of signs *qua* signs, and sketches a basic conceptual framework, one whose sources, validity, and contribution to the development of Augustine's thought have attracted great interest; the discussion of these

¹² Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-love in St. Augustine* (New Haven, Conn., 1980), 26.

matters, and especially of the sources of Augustine's sign theory, is by no means closed. Words are a particular kind of sign, which in scripture is made especially problematic both by the diversity of languages and by the divine provision of a level of difficulty appropriate to the needs of the human mind. Problems arise for the student of scripture either from unknown signs or from ambiguous ones. The serious student, equipped with Christian virtues as well as a wide knowledge of canonical scripture, must be prepared to learn the relevant languages or at least to consult experts, and to examine the original versions and the various available translations, among which the hyper-literal and stilted may have more to offer than those written in good Latin. A knowledge of various things referred to in scripture is also necessary, since it may, for example, take analogies from the natural world—how exactly do we set about being as wise as serpents?—or express its meaning in terms of number and music. The study of music for this purpose is quite proper; the pagan fancies associated with the Muses should not lead to a contempt of music itself. Augustine then tackles this problem on a general front, and makes a classification of the arts and sciences which is of major importance. The various arts and sciences are either human institutions or divine ones which humans have observed and developed. Of human institutions some are superstitious, like astrology, and their significance is due to pacts or contracts with demons; these must be strenuously avoided. Of those that are not superstitious, some are superfluous and self-indulgent, like the study of representational art, and therefore a dangerous waste of time for the Christian, but others are necessary to life, like a knowledge of weights and measures, the alphabet, or shorthand. The latter are not to be avoided, but used, with due care, as may be necessary. Divinely instituted disciplines include history (which narrates, or perhaps to Augustine is the past, which cannot be changed), various sciences such as medicine and astronomy (though the borderline with superstition is a difficult one), practical arts such as joinery and navigation, and various arts 'involving the mind', among which logic and rhetoric are preeminent. Philosophy is added, perhaps in recognition of Augustine's personal experience. All these must be used in moderation and with a humble acknowledgement that knowledge

puffs up but love builds up, and that the treasures of pagan books are tiny when compared with those of scripture.

This analysis, perhaps the most systematic appraisal from antiquity of its traditional curriculum, is an interesting mixture of the practical and the theoretical. On the one hand Augustine recommends the compilation, or wider distribution, of manuals on such things as Hebrew names or botanical terms found in the Bible, as if he is thinking of the needs of Christians already educated; on the other, he seems to be trying to work out *ab initio* what kinds of knowledge and expertise it might be useful for Christian children to acquire. Yet it is not exhaustive: it is notable that he omits all mention of *grammaticae*, which was studied in the school curriculum for several years before rhetoric and included not only systematic formal grammar but also careful study of the canonical Latin poets. It is clear, especially if *Confessiones* is taken into account, that Augustine had reservations both about grammar as conventionally taught and about classical poetry; but he would not have hesitated to place the discipline among those divinely instituted. Language, and so grammar, was part of the divine creation, and poetry is found in the Bible, as Augustine recognizes.

Having dealt with ‘unknown’ or unfamiliar signs in Book 2, Augustine turns to ‘ambiguous’ ones in Book 3. Literal words or expressions may cause difficulty if there are uncertainties of punctuation and pronunciation, so due attention must be given to these. Figurative expressions require even more; to take literally what has a spiritual significance is a mark of slavery, conspicuous in the Old Testament Jews, though less serious there than in pagan society with its much worse confusion of sign and thing. But there is an opposite danger, that of taking as figurative what should be taken literally; a danger aggravated by the tendency of people to judge past ages according to their own familiar standards and not by the ethical principles of the Bible, which are the nourishing of love and the overcoming of lust. To help in deciding whether an expression is literal or figurative Augustine presents various guidelines. Cruel words in the mouth of God or a saint will refer literally to the destruction of lust; wicked words or deeds issuing from one whose sanctity is commended will be figurative. Such a person should not be censured, especially by those who are ignorant of

the conditions prevailing in former times. An expression which forbids wickedness or enjoins kindness is not figurative; but one which apparently does enjoin wickedness (drinking a man's blood, for example) or forbid kindness will be. One must beware of taking as figurative certain commands (such as castrating oneself or giving a daughter in marriage) which scripture addresses exclusively to particular categories of people, or the non-condemnatory description of practices such as polygamy which though now unacceptable were not wrong in former days. It is a sign of depravity to censure such things, and even worse to imitate.

Augustine had carefully summed up and apparently completed this section to his satisfaction before he broke off, but there is much that is unclear. Are we dealing exclusively with moral precepts, and not with descriptive phrases such as 'the anger of God' and 'crucifying the flesh', which he once mentions in a very brief parenthesis? How do we distinguish between a moral absolute and a practice or precept justified by particular circumstances? How exactly may a passage be both literal and figurative, as he says that everything, or nearly everything, in the Old Testament is? How do we set about examining a passage from all angles in order to find the true meaning?

The rest of the book offers assistance in working out what a particular figurative expression means. A particular word will not always have the same figurative sense. Easy passages should be used to illustrate the obscure. If a meaning is reached which was not intended by the human author of scripture, it is not necessarily wrong. Scripture in fact—this is addressed to the *litterati*—contains innumerable tropes. At this point Augustine brings in the seven rules of Tyconius, the Donatist exegete, in which he clearly found much of value, though less than Tyconius had claimed for them. He rejects the third (*De promissis et lege*, in Tyconius' formulation), as being a doctrinal problem rather than a rule of interpretation, but summarizes the other six, using Tyconius' shorter examples to show how they should be applied. The fourth (*De specie et genere*) he seems to misunderstand when interpreting it of whole and part rather than type and antitype, and there is controversy about his understanding of the sixth (*De recapitulatione*), where Tyconius himself is puzzlingly brief. Augustine argues that these rules

are essentially figurative, because ‘they cause one thing to be understood through another’, but one might better describe them as revealing latent modes of transition from one topic to another: from the head to the body (as in the first, referring to Christ, and the seventh, referring to the devil), or from the bad to the good (as in the second, which Augustine would have rather called *De permixta ecclesia*).

In Book 4, after announcing the second part of his project, on presentation, and warning his readers not to expect a rhetorical treatise of the traditional kind, Augustine issues a rousing appeal to Christians not to shrink from using rhetoric in defence of the faith: this is neutral ground, which Christian speakers must occupy. They do not need a traditional education, with its surfeit of rules, but can acquire eloquence much more quickly by listening to eloquent Christians and imitating them; there is no lack of Christian speakers and writers who show the necessary combination of eloquence and wisdom. For the speaker who does not succeed in acquiring eloquence, close adherence to the words of scripture is an acceptable option. Augustine then raises the question whether the scriptures are eloquent as well as wise, and maintains that they do have their own special kind of eloquence, which he proceeds to exemplify by analysing (principally in terms of sentence structure) a passage from Paul and one from Amos. The Christian speaker is warned not to imitate scripture in those passages where it has been made deliberately obscure, because in addressing a popular audience the need for intelligibility is paramount. In the interests of his listeners a speaker may even need to choose colloquial usages that offend the ears of the educated. A discussion of the importance of holding an audience's attention leads Augustine to introduce and explain the Ciceronian doctrine of the orator's three aims—to teach, to delight, and to move—which he later rephrases as ‘to be listened to with understanding, with pleasure, and with obedience’. With due allowance for the danger of overdoing the entertainment, the Christian speaker should make these aims his own. They are then combined with another Ciceronian triad—the eloquent speaker will speak of small things in the restrained style, moderate things in the mixed style, and important things in the grand style—but this is found to be inappropriate in the ecclesiastical context,

where there are no matters of minor importance. Augustine then illustrates the three styles by means of excerpts from the writings of Paul, Cyprian, and Ambrose, and shows how they reflect different aims. But within an address the three styles may, indeed must, be combined, in whatever ways context or contrast may demand. For Augustine, unlike other orators, the aim of giving pleasure is the least important of the three, and he also stresses that while using any one style the speaker must be aware of all three aims. The book ends by emphasizing requirements of a specifically Christian nature: the integrity of the speaker's life, a concern with the truth rather than with wrangling, and, whether the speaker is about to deliver his own speech or one composed by someone else (as he may quite legitimately do), the need to pray for words that will communicate effectively.

Book 4, with its wealth of observation both general and particular, has probably been the most influential part of *DDC*. The Ciceronian framework is clear, and numerous details show how well Augustine knew the relevant writings. But a catalogue of his allusions would be a poor guide, for, as Testard has clearly shown,¹³ Augustine has important reservations about the value of Cicero's teaching. Indeed it might even be asked why he relies so much on Cicero in the first place. The answer is not that Augustine is eager to show his learning or the effectiveness with which he can demolish an authority—as may be the case in other works—but that Cicero was the embodiment, imperfect but by far the best available, of the divinely instituted truths of rhetoric. Some of what Cicero said is as immovable for Augustine as the truths of logic or mathematics; some is open to modification. Augustine is not toying with his classical predecessor or showing an exaggerated deference but carefully and seriously attempting to sift his advice—a good example of the careful examination of traditional disciplines recommended in Book 2. His discriminating blend of classical and Christian precept contains much that is valuable. To the ordinary preacher he has given reassurance of the eloquence of the Bible, the power of prayer, and the reasonableness of using borrowed material, as well as salutary instruction on the

¹³ M. Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron* (Paris, 1958), 189–92.

importance of keeping basic goals in view and appreciating the needs of an audience. To the educated Christian he has provided, on top of this, a delineation of what is permanently useful in the art of rhetoric, a strong legitimation for its use, and a clear demonstration of its presence both in the scriptures and in the Church Fathers. That Augustine should not only explicitly accept, but also warmly embrace, rhetoric in this way, is an important landmark in the history of Christianity; but given that Christians had not in fact been slow to do this,¹⁴ and could perhaps hardly have done otherwise, the book's most important long-term effect may have been not so much to convince Christians of the legitimacy of rhetoric as to reassure them of the acceptability of scripture in a world still dominated by the treasured remnants of its classical heritage.

Manuscripts and Text

Pride of place among the manuscripts is taken by the manuscript from St Petersburg (Q v. 1. 3), because of its very early date.¹⁵ It contains the first two books of *DDC* (including the preface), and also the works *De Diversis Quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* together with its dedicatory letter (*Ep.* 37), *Contra Epistolam Fundamenti*, and *De Agone Christiano*. One quaternion, covering 2. 29 to 2. 67, is now lost. According to E. A. Lowe as quoted by Green,¹⁶ it is certainly of the fifth century, if not older, and likely to have been written in Africa. Because of the form of the signature, and the frequency of errors, it is unlikely to be an autograph, but W. M. Green argued that it represented an early edition of the work, circulated long before *DDC* was complete and in fact within a few years of its inception. The hypothesis is an attractive one. There is a reference to 2. 144–5 in Augustine's *Contra Faustum* (22.91), generally dated between 397 and 400; although it is conceivable that Augustine alluded to a work not publicly available, such a

¹⁴ Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley, Calif., 1991).

¹⁵ A. Mutzenbecher, 'Codex Leningrad Q v. 1. 3 (Corbie): ein Beitrag zu seiner Beschreibung', *Sacris Erudiri*, 18 (1967–8), 406–50.

¹⁶ W. M. Green, 'A Fourth Century Manuscript of Saint Augustine?', *Revue Bénédictine*, 69(1959), 191–7. See also E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, xi (Oxford, 1966), 1613.

reference would have had far more point if the work was already in circulation. It is remarkable that the manuscript contains four works which come from the same short period of Augustine's life, in exactly the same order as they are given in *Retractationes* 2. 27–30; Green suggested that they were assembled from the library at Hippo in response to an enquiry for recent works. If such an edition was made, it would not be unreasonable to include only Books 1 and 2; in spite of the close connection between the second and third books, it might have been thought more satisfactory to do this than to end at 3. 78 or earlier in Book 3. It could be argued against this that the contents of the manuscript were in fact based on the evidence of *Retractationes*, and were written later, but there would be little point at that stage in producing such a thematically diverse collection, and one including only two books of *DDC*. That we have an isolated element of an otherwise unattested *opera omnia* of Augustine does not seem probable.

Many of this manuscript's errors have been corrected, in a hand adjudged almost equally old, but numerous trivial ones remain, and there are grounds for suspecting more serious error in one or two places. Other early sources, both fragmentary, are a manuscript copied in the late sixth century in Northern Italy and now in Milan, and a Geneva papyrus, part of the 'papyrus Augustine' written at Luxeuil *c.* 700. There is also the evidence of Eugippius, who quotes many long passages, but in using it more attention should be paid to the apparatus of Knoell's edition than to his unsatisfactory text.

These witnesses were all known to both Green and Martin, the most recent editors of the text,¹⁷ but otherwise they have only four manuscripts in common, and one of Green's two families was quite unknown to Martin. Since the early 1960s, when their editions appeared almost simultaneously, the picture, at least of the later manuscripts, has changed remarkably.¹⁸ Over

¹⁷ W. M. Green, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera* (CSEL 80; Vienna, 1963), and Martin, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini De Doctrina Christiana*.

¹⁸ See M. M. Gorman, 'The Diffusion of the Manuscripts of Saint Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* in the Early Middle Ages', *Revue Bénédictine*, 95 (1985), 11–24; M. Aviles, 'Manuscritos del *De Doctrina Christiana* existentes en Europa', *Augustinus*, 31 (1986), 379–90; and the ongoing work of the Kommission zur Herausgabe des Corpus der Lateinischen Kirchenväter published in *österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte*, 263, 267, 281, 276, 289, 292, 306, 350, 601.

one hundred are now known, and at least in the ninth century *DDC* appears to have been as popular as any work of Augustine but *De Civitate Dei*. The collation and classification of these manuscripts—which will be a long task even if the unimportant material that clogs Martin's apparatus and sometimes Green's is avoided—will doubtless shed light on the significance of the manuscript readings already recorded, dethroning some and reinstating others. They may help a future editor with various niggling questions about word-order and usage (did Augustine, for example, use *quid aliud* rather than *si quid aliud* for 'anything else'? In what circumstances did he prefer *sicuti* to *sicut*?) which it is difficult to answer with any confidence given the St Petersburg manuscript's unreliability on detail and the impossibility of making conclusive appeal to current editions of other works of Augustine or to works of reference based on them. Conjectural emendation offers a better chance of progress, and more important results. Schaüblin did well to declare, at the end of a valuable article,¹⁹ that it is wrong to think of patristic texts as essentially sound and not in need of the critic's attention, and his own examination of the received text for possible omissions, glosses, or other flaws which could betray scribal error has set a standard. Not all his emendations have been accepted here, but I have followed his example and made some of my own. Alterations to the received text, or suspicions that all is not well with it, are duly noted in the foot-notes.

¹⁹ C. Schaüblin, 'Zum Text von Augustins *De Doctrina Christiana*', *Wiener Studien*, NF, 8 (1974), 173–181.

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Abbreviations

<i>Adu. Haer.</i>	<i>Adversus Haereses</i>
<i>Aen.</i>	<i>Aeneid</i>
Ambr.	Ambrose
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
Cic.	Cicero
<i>Civ. Dei</i>	<i>De Civitate Dei</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>Confessiones</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
Cypr.	Cyprian
<i>DDC</i>	<i>De Doctrina Christiana</i>
<i>Demonstr.</i>	<i>Demonstratio</i>
<i>De Div. Quaest.</i>	<i>De Diversis Quaestionibus lxxxiii</i>
<i>De Inv.</i>	<i>De Inventione</i>
<i>De Orat.</i>	<i>De Oratore</i>
<i>De Trin.</i>	<i>De Trinitate</i>
<i>Enarr.</i>	<i>Enarrationes</i>
<i>Enn.</i>	<i>Enneads</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistula</i>
<i>In. Ps.</i>	<i>In Psalmos</i>
<i>Orat.</i>	<i>Orator</i>
Quint.	Quintilian (<i>Institutio Oratoria</i>)
REA	<i>Revue des Études Augustiniennes</i>
<i>Retract.</i>	<i>Retractationes</i>
<i>Rhet. Her.</i>	<i>Rhetorica ad Herennium</i>
<i>Serm.</i>	<i>Sermones</i>
Ter.	Terence
Tert.	Tertullian
<i>Tract. Iob.</i>	<i>Tractatus in Iohannem</i>
Verg.	Vergil

De Doctrina ChristianaOn Christian Teaching

Praefatio

Praefatio

1. Sunt praecepta quaedam tractandarum scripturarum quae studiosis earum video non incommode posse tradi, ut non solum legendo alios qui divinarum litterarum opera aperuerunt sed etiam ipsi aperiendo proficiant.²⁰ Haec tradere institui volentibus et valentibus discere, si dominus ac deus noster ea quae de hac re cogitanti solet suggerere etiam scribenti mihi non deneget. 2. Quod antequam exordiar videtur mihi respondendum esse his qui haec reprehensuri sunt, aut reprehensuri essent si eos non ante placemus. Quod si nonnulli etiam post ista reprehenderit, saltem alios non movebunt nec ab utili studio ad imperitiae pigritiam revocabunt, quos movere possent nisi praemunitos praeparatosque invenirent.

3. Quidam enim reprehensuri sunt hoc opus nostrum, cum ea quae praecepturi sumus non intellexerint. Quidam vero, cum intellectis uti voluerint conatque fuerint scripturas divinas secundum haec praecepta tractare neque valuerint aperire atque explicare quod cupiunt, inaniter me laborasse arbitrabuntur et quia ipsi non adiuvantur hoc opere nullum adiuvari posse censebunt. 4. Tertium genus est reprehensorum qui divinas scripturas vel re vera bene tractant vel bene tractare sibi videntur. Qui quoniam nullis huiusmodi observationibus lectis, quales nunc tradere institui, facultatem exponendorum sanctorum librorum se assecutos vel vident vel putant, nemini esse ista praecepta necessaria sed potius totum quod de illarum litterarum obscuritatibus laudabiliter aperitur divino munere fieri posse clamatibunt.²¹

5. Quibus omnibus breviter respondens, illis qui haec quae

²⁰ The words *et aliis* ('to others'), found in many editions but very few manuscripts in place of *etiam*, should not be read.

²¹ Whether Augustine here refers to a particular group is doubtful: see Introduction, p. xiv.

Preface

1. There are certain rules for interpreting the scriptures which, as I am well aware, can usefully be passed on to those with an appetite for such study to make it possible for them to progress not just by reading the work of others who have illuminated the obscurities of divine literature, but also by finding illumination for themselves.²² It is my intention to communicate these rules to those with the will and the wit to learn, if my Lord and God does not withhold from me, as I write, the thoughts which he regularly supplies as I reflect on these matters. 2. But before I begin it seems necessary for me to reply to those who are likely to criticize this undertaking, or who would be minded to do so if not placated in advance. If, even after this, there are criticisms from certain people, at least they will not succeed in misleading others or in diverting them from this valuable study into the idleness of ignorance, as they might have done had they not found them forearmed and forewarned.

3. Some people will criticize this work of mine because they have failed to understand the rules that I am about to give. Others, wishing to make use of what they have understood, will try to interpret the divine scriptures by means of these rules but will be unable to find illumination or to explain what they want to explain, and will therefore consider my efforts futile. Because they themselves get no help from this work, they will conclude that nobody can. 4. A third class of critic consists of those who either interpret the divine scriptures quite correctly or think they do. Because they see, or at least believe, that they have gained their ability to expound the holy books without recourse to any rules of the kind that I have now undertaken to give, they will protest that these rules are not needed by anybody, and that all worthwhile illumination of the difficulties of these texts can come by a special gift of God.²³

5. To all these critics I have a brief reply. I say to those who

²² The words *et aliis* ('to others'), found in many editions but very few manuscripts in place of *etiam*, should not be read.

²³ Whether Augustine here refers to a particular group is doubtful: see Introduction, p. xiv.

scribimus non intellegunt hoc dico: ita me non esse reprehendendum quia haec non intellegunt. Tamquam si lunam vel veterem vel novam sidusve aliquod minime clarum vellent videre, quod ego intento digito demonstrarem, illis autem nec ad ipsum digitum meum videndum sufficiens acies esset oculorum, num propterea mihi suscensere deberent? 6. Illi vero, qui etiam istis praeceptis cognitis atque perceptis ea quae in divinis scripturis obscura sunt intueri nequiverint, arbitrentur se digitum quidem meum videre posse, sidera vero quibus demonstrandis intenditur videre non posse. Et illi ergo et isti me reprehendere desinant et lumen oculorum divinitus sibi praeberi deprecentur. Non enim, si possum membrum meum ad aliquid demonstrandum movere, possum etiam oculos accendere quibus vel ipsa demonstratio mea vel etiam illud quod volo demonstrare cernatur.

7. Iam vero eorum qui divino munere exultant et sine talibus praeceptis, qualia nunc tradere institui, se sanctos libros intellegere atque tractare gloriantur et propterea me superflua voluisse scribere existimant, sic est lenienda commotio ut quamvis magno dei dono iure laetentur recordentur se tamen per homines didicisse vel litteras, 8. nec propterea sibi ab Antonio sancto et perfecto Aegypto monacho insultari debere,²⁴ qui sine ulla scientia litterarum scripturas divinas et memoriter audiendo tenuisse et prudenter cogitando intellexisse praedicatur, aut ab illo servo barbaro Christiano,²⁵ de quo a gravissimis fideique dignissimis viris nuper accepimus, qui litteras quoque ipsas nullo docente homine in plenam notitiam orando ut sibi revelarentur accepit, triduanis precibus impetrans ut etiam codicem oblatum, stupentibus qui aderant,

legendo percurreret. 9. Aut si haec quisque falsa esse arbitratur, non ago pugnaciter. Certe enim quoniam cum Christianis nobis res est qui se scripturas sanctas sine duce homine nosse gaudent et, si ita est, vero et non mediocri gaudent bono, concedant necesse est unum quemque nostrum et ab ineunte pueritia consuetudine audiendi linguam suam didicisse et aliam aliquam vel graecam vel hebraeam vel quamlibet ceterarum aut similiter audiendo aut per hominem praeceptorem

²⁴ *The Life of Anthony*, by Athanasius, emphasizes Anthony's lifelong lack of letters (1. 72–3), but has nothing to say about his learning of the scriptures.

²⁵ Nothing more is known of this man.

fail to understand what I write that it is not my fault that they do not understand. Suppose they wanted to see the new moon, or the old one, or a star that was very faint, and I pointed it out with my finger but their eyesight was too weak to see even my finger—surely it would be wrong for them to be annoyed with me for that reason? 6. As for those who manage to learn and assimilate these rules but are still unable to see into the obscure passages of the divine scriptures, they must consider themselves as capable of seeing my finger but not the stars to which it points. Both types of objector should stop blaming me and pray for insight to be given them by God. Although I can move a limb to point to something, I cannot improve their eyesight to make them see even my pointing finger, let alone what I want to point out.

7. Now for those who exult in their divine gift and boast that they understand and interpret the sacred books without rules of the kind that I now plan to give, and so consider superfluous what I have chosen to say. Their elation must be checked by the recollection that although they have a perfect right to rejoice in their great gift from God they nevertheless learned even the alphabet with human help. 8. Yet that would be no good reason for them to feel humiliated by the holy and perfect Egyptian monk Anthony,²⁶ who, though lacking any knowledge of the alphabet, is reported to have memorized the divine scriptures by listening to them being read, and to have understood them by thoughtful meditation; or indeed by the barbarian Christian slave,²⁷ who (as we have recently been told by serious and trustworthy people) achieved a complete knowledge of the alphabet itself, without any human instruction, by praying for it to be revealed, and who after three days' prayer managed to read through a book that was offered to him, to the utter amazement of those present. 9. If anyone thinks these reports untrue, I will not make an issue of it. My argument is with Christians who congratulate themselves on a knowledge of the holy scriptures gained without any human guidance and who—if their claim is valid—thus enjoy a real and substantial blessing. But they must admit that each one of us learnt our native language by habitually hearing it spoken from the very beginnings of childhood, and acquired others—Greek, Hebrew, or whatever—either by hearing them in the same way

²⁶ *The Life of Anthony*, by Athanasius, emphasizes Anthony's lifelong lack of letters (1. 72–3), but has nothing to say about his learning of the scriptures.

²⁷ Nothing more is known of this man.

accepisse. 10. Iam ergo si placet,²⁸ moneamus omnes fratres ne parvulos suos ista doceant, quia momento uno temporis adveniente spiritu sancto repleti apostoli omnium gentium linguis locuti sunt,²⁹ aut cui talia non provenerint, non se arbitretur esse Christianum aut spiritum sanctum accepisse se dubitet? 11. Immo vero et quod per hominem discendum est, sine superbia discat, et per quem docetur alius, sine superbia et sine invidia tradat quod accepit; neque temptemus eum cui credidimus, ne talibus inimici versutiis et perversitate decepti ad ipsum quoque audiendum evangelium atque discendum nolimus ire in ecclesias aut codicem legere aut legentem praedicantemque hominem audire et exspectemus rapi usque *in tertium caelum sive in corpore sive extra corpus*, sicut dicit apostolus,³⁰ et ibi audire *ineffabilia verba quae non licet homini loqui*, aut ibi videre dominum Iesum Christum et ab illo potius quam ab hominibus audire evangelium.

12. Caveamus tales temptationes superbissimas et periculosissimas magisque cogitemus et ipsum apostolum Paulum, licet divina et caelesti voce prostratum et instructum, ad hominem tamen missum esse ut sacramenta perciperet atque copularetur ecclesiae;³¹ et centurionem Cornelium, quamvis exauditas orationes eius elemosinasque respectas ei angelus nuntiaverit, Petro tamen traditum imbuendum, per quem non solum sacramenta perciperet sed etiam quid credendum quid sperandum quid diligendum esset audiret.³² 13. Et poterant utique omnia per angelum fieri, sed abiecta esset humana condicio si per homines hominibus deus verbum suum ministrare nolle videretur. Quomodo enim verum esset quod dictum est, *templum enim dei sanctum est, quod estis vos*,³³ si deus de humano templo responsa non redderet et totum quod discendum hominibus tradi vellet de caelo atque per angelos personaret? Deinde ipsa caritas, quae sibi homines invicem nodo unitatis astringit, non haberet aditum refundendorum et

²⁸ *Si placet* is a Christian adaptation of the phrase *si dis placet*, used to protest at something outrageous (Donatus on Ter. *Eunuchus* 919).

²⁹ Acts 2: 1–4.

³⁰ 2 Cor. 12: 2–4.

³¹ Acts 9: 3–8.

³² Acts 10. The words on faith, hope, and love are Augustine's addition.

³³ 1 Cor. 3: 17.

or by learning them from a human teacher. 10. So should we now (I ask you!)³⁴ warn all our brethren not to teach these things to their small children, on the grounds that the apostles spoke in the languages of all peoples after being inspired in a single moment by the coming of the Holy Spirit?³⁵ Or should we warn those to whom such things do not happen to stop thinking of themselves as Christians and start doubting that they have received the Holy Spirit? 11. No, they should learn, without any pride, what has to be learned from a human teacher; and those responsible for teaching others should pass on, without pride or jealousy, the knowledge they have received. Let us not tempt the one in whom we have placed our trust, or we may be deceived by the adversary's cunning and perversity and become unwilling even to go to church to hear and learn the gospel or to read the biblical text or listen to it being read and preached, preferring to wait until 'we are caught up into the third heaven, whether in the body or out of the body' (in the words of the apostle),³⁶ and there hear 'words that cannot be expressed, which a human being may not utter' or see the Lord Jesus Christ in person and hear the gospel from him rather than from men.

12. Let us beware of such arrogant and dangerous temptations, and rather reflect that the apostle Paul, no less, though prostrated and then enlightened by a divine voice from heaven, was sent to a human being to receive the sacrament of baptism and be joined to the church.³⁷ And Cornelius the centurion, although an angel announced to him that his prayers had been heard and his acts of charity remembered, was nevertheless put under the tuition of Peter not only to receive the sacrament but also to learn what should be the objects of his faith, hope, and love.³⁸ 13. All this could certainly have been done through an angel, but the human condition would be really forlorn if God appeared unwilling to minister his word to human beings through human agency. It has been said, 'For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are':³⁹ how could that be true if God did not make divine utterances from his human temple but broadcast direct from heaven or through angels the learning that he wished to be passed on to mankind? Moreover, there would be no way for love, which ties people together in the bonds of unity, to make souls overflow and as it were inter-mingle

³⁴ *Si placet* is a Christian adaptation of the phrase *si dis placet*, used to protest at something outrageous (Donatus on Ter. *Eunuchus* 919).

³⁵ Acts 2: 1–4.

³⁶ 2 Cor. 12: 2–4.

³⁷ Acts 9: 3–8.

³⁸ Acts 10. The words on faith, hope, and love are Augustine's addition.

³⁹ 1 Cor. 3: 17.

quasi miscendorum sibimet animorum, si homines per

homines nihil discerent. 14. Et certe illum spadonem, qui Esaiam prophetam legens non intellegebat,⁴⁰ neque ad apostolum angelus misit nec ei per angelum id quod non intellegebat expositum aut divinitus in mente sine hominis ministerio revelatum est, sed potius suggestionem divinam missus est ad eum seditque cum eo Philippus, qui noverat Esaiam prophetam, eique humanis verbis et lingua quod in scriptura illa tectum erat aperuit. 15. Nonne cum Moyse deus loquebatur et tamen consilium regendi atque administrandi tam magni populi a socero suo, alienigena scilicet homine, et maxime providus et minime superbus accepit?⁴¹ Noverat enim ille vir, ex quacumque anima verum consilium processisset, non ei sed illi qui est veritas incommutabili deo esse tribuendum.

16. Postremo quisquis se nullis praeceptis instructum divino munere quaecumque in scripturis obscura sunt intellegere gloriatur, bene quidem credit, et verum est, non esse illam facultatem quasi a se ipso existentem sed divinitus traditam; ita enim dei gloriam quaerit et non suam. Sed cum legit et nullo sibi hominum exponente intellegit, cur ipse aliis affectat exponere ac non potius eos remittit deo, ut ipsi quoque non per hominem sed illo intus docente intellegant? 17. Sed videlicet timet ne audiat a domino *serve nequam, dares pecuniam meam nummulariis*.⁴² Sicut ergo hi ea quae intellegunt produnt ceteris vel loquendo vel scribendo, ita ego quoque, si non solum ea quae intellego sed etiam in intellegendo ea quae observent prodidero, culpari ab eis profecto non debeo. Quamquam nemo debet aliquid sic habere quasi suum proprium, nisi forte mendacium.⁴³ Nam omne verum ab illo est qui ait, *ego sum veritas*.⁴⁴ Quid enim habemus quod non accepimus? Quod si accepimus, quid gloriamur quasi non acceperimus?⁴⁵

18. Qui legit audientibus litteras, utique quas agnoscit enuntiat; qui autem ipsas litteras tradit, hoc agit ut alii quoque

⁴⁰ Acts 8: 26–35.

⁴¹ Exod. 18.

⁴² Matt. 25: 26–7.

⁴³ Derived from John 8: 44, which in Augustine's text reads *qui loquitur mendacium, de suo loquitur* ('he who speaks a lie, speaks of his own').

⁴⁴ John 14: 6.

⁴⁵ 1 Cor. 4: 7.

with each other, if human beings learned nothing from other humans. 14. And, to be sure, the eunuch who was reading the prophet Isaiah⁴⁶ but could not understand him was not sent by an angel to the apostle; nor was the passage that he could not understand explained to him by an angel or divinely revealed within his mind without human assistance. In fact Philip, who knew the prophet Isaiah, was sent to him by divine prompting and sat with him, revealing in human words and human language the passage of scripture that had been meaningless to him. 15. Is it not true that God spoke with Moses, and yet Moses accepted advice about guiding and governing such a great people from his father-in-law, a man actually of another race, with an abundance of foresight and an absence of pride?⁴⁷ He was well aware that true counsel, from whatever mind it might come, should be ascribed not to man but to the unchangeable God who is the truth.

16. Finally, anyone who boasts that without having been taught any rules he can understand the difficult passages in the scriptures, by virtue of a divine gift, does well to believe—for it is quite true—that this ability does not somehow originate within the human mind but is given by God: in this way he seeks God's glory, not his own. But if he reads and understands without any human expositor, why does he then aspire to expound it to others and not simply refer them to God so that they too may understand it by God's inner teaching rather than through a human intermediary? 17. Because, of course, he is afraid of being told by his master, 'Wicked servant, you should have put my money on deposit.'⁴⁸ Just as these interpreters reveal to others, whether in speech or in writing, what they learn, so do I: and if I reveal not only what I understand but also the rules to be observed in the process of understanding it, I should surely not incur their criticism. Yet nobody should regard anything as his own, except perhaps a lie.⁴⁹ For all truth comes from the one who says, 'I am the truth.'⁵⁰ What do we possess that we have not received from another? And if we have received it from another, why give ourselves airs, as if we had not received it?⁵¹

18. The teacher who reads out a text to listening students simply articulates what he recognizes; but the teacher who teaches the actual alphabet has the intention of enabling others

⁴⁶ Cf. 1 Cor. 7: 31.

⁴⁷ Rom. 1: 20.

⁴⁸ Rom. 11: 36.

⁴⁹ Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 5. 3. 14.

⁵⁰ Latin *deus* has two syllables.

⁵¹ This category takes in the pre-Socratic philosophers, Plato, Aristotle, Stoics, and Epicureans, as well as popular belief.

legere noverint. Uterque tamen id insinuat quod accepit. Sic etiam qui ea quae in scripturis intellegit exponit audientibus, tamquam litteras quas agnoscit pronuntiat lectoris officio. Qui autem praecipit quomodo intellegendum sit, similis est tradenti litteras, hoc est praecipienti quo modo legendum sit, ut, quomodo ille qui legere novit alio lectore non indiget, cum codicem invenerit, a quo audiat quid ibi scriptum sit, sic iste qui praecepta quae conamur tradere acceperit, cum in libris aliquid obscuritatis invenerit, quasdam regulas velut litteras tenens intellectorem alium non requirat per quem sibi quod opertum est retegatur, sed quibusdam vestigiis indagatis ad occultum sensum sine ullo errore ipse perveniat aut certe in absurditatem pravae sententiae non incidat.

19. Quapropter, quamquam et in ipso opere satis apparere possit huic officioso labori nostro non recte aliquem contradicere, tamen, si huiusmodi prooemio quibuslibet obsistentibus convenienter videtur esse responsum, huius viae quam in hoc libro ingredi volumus, tale nobis occurrit exordium.

to read too. Both are instilling knowledge they have received. The teacher who expounds what he understands in the scriptures expounds it to his listeners, like the reader of a text articulating the letters which he recognizes; whereas the teacher who teaches how to understand scripture is like the teacher of the alphabet, one who teaches how to read. So the person who knows how to read, on finding a book, does not require another reader to explain what is written in it; and in the same way the person who has assimilated the rules that I am trying to teach, on finding a difficulty in the text, will not need another interpreter to reveal what is obscure, because he comprehends certain rules (the equivalent of letters in this analogy). And so by following up various clues he can unerringly arrive at the hidden meaning for himself or at least avoid falling into incongruous misconceptions.

19. So although it may be clear enough in the work itself that it would be wrong for anyone to speak out against this work of practical utility, I hope that these opening words will be seen to provide an adequate reply to any who object. Such is the introduction that suggested itself to me as I set out along the road that I want to follow in this work.

Liber Primus

Liber Primus

1. Duae sunt res quibus nititur omnis tractatio scripturarum, modus inveniendi quae intellegenda sunt et modus proferendi quae intellecta sunt. De inveniendo prius,⁵² de proferendo postea disseremus. Magnum onus et arduum,⁵³ et si ad sustinendum difficile, vereor ne ad suscipiendum temerarium; ita sane si de nobis ipsis praesumeremus. Nunc vero cum in illo sit spes peragendi huius operis a quo nobis in cogitatione multa de hac re iam tradita tenemus, non est metuendum ne dare desinat cetera, cum ea quae data sunt coeperimus impendere. 2. Omnis enim res quae dando non deficit, dum habetur et non datur, nondum habetur quomodo habenda est. Ille enim ait, *qui habet, dabitur ei*.⁵⁴ Dabit ergo habentibus, id est cum benignitate utentibus eo quod acceperunt adimplebit atque cumulabit quod dedit. Illi quinque et illi septem erant panes antequam inciperent dari esurientibus; quod ubi fieri coepit, cophinos et sportas satiatis hominum tot milibus impleverunt.⁵⁵ 3. Sicut ergo ille panis dum frangeretur accrevit, sic ea quae ad hoc opus aggrediendum iam dominus praebuit, cum disputari coeperint, eo ipso suggerente multiplicabuntur, ut in hoc nostro ministerio non solum nullam patiamur inopiam, sed de mirabili abundantia gaudeamus.

4. Omnis doctrina vel rerum est vel signorum, sed res per signa discuntur. Proprie autem nunc res appellavi, quae non ad significandum aliquid adhibentur, sicuti est lignum, lapis, pecus atque huiusmodi cetera; sed non illud lignum quod in aquas amaras Moysen misisse legimus,⁵⁶ ut amaritudine

⁵² 'Discovery' or *inventio* is a technical term of classical rhetoric, defined as 'the devising of true or plausible matter to make a case convincing' (*Rhet. Her.* 1. 2. 3). Augustine changes its sense significantly.

⁵³ *Magnum onus et arduum* : cf. Cic. *Orat.* 33 (but with *opus*), which is exactly quoted at the beginning of *Civ. Dei*.

⁵⁴ Matt. 13: 12.

⁵⁵ Matt. 14: 17–21; 15: 34–8.

⁵⁶ Exod. 15: 25.

Book One

There are two things on which all interpretation of scripture depends: the process of discovering what we need to learn, and the process of presenting what we have learnt. I shall discuss the process of discovery first,⁵⁷ and then that of presentation. This is a great and arduous task,⁵⁸ difficult to sustain and also, I fear, a rash one to undertake; or so it would be if I were trusting in my own resources. But since in fact my hope of completing the work is based on God, from whom I already have much relevant material through meditation, I have no need to worry that he will fail to supply the remainder when I begin to share what has been given to me. 2. For everything which does not give out when given away is not yet possessed in the way in which it should be possessed, while it is possessed and not given away. God says, 'the man who has will be given more'.⁵⁹ He will give to those who have: this means that for those who make generous use of what they have received he will supplement and increase what he has given. One person had five loaves, and another had seven before the loaves began to be distributed to the hungry, but once the distribution had begun, they managed to fill baskets and hampers even after satisfying so many thousands of people.⁶⁰ 3. So just like the bread, which increased as it was broken, the material which God has already supplied to me for starting this work will be multiplied, through his own provision, when discussion of it begins. So in this act of service I will not only experience no shortage of material, but rather enjoy an astonishing abundance of it.

4. All teaching is teaching of either things or signs, but things are learnt through signs. What I now call things in the strict sense are things such as logs, stones, sheep, and so on, which are not employed to signify something; but I do not include the log which we read that Moses threw into the bitter waters to make them lose their bitter taste,⁶¹ or the stone which

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⁶⁰ Matt. 14: 17–21; 15: 34–8.

⁶¹ Exod. 15: 25.

carerent, neque ille lapis quem Iacob sibi ad caput posuerat,⁶² neque illud pecus quod pro filio immolavit Abraham.⁶³ Hae namque ita res sunt, ut aliarum etiam signa sint rerum.

5. Sunt autem alia signa quorum omnis usus in significando est, sicuti sunt verba.⁶⁴ Nemo enim utitur verbis nisi aliquid significandi gratia. Ex quo intellegitur quid appellem signa: res eas videlicet quae ad significandum aliquid adhibentur. Quam ob rem omne signum etiam res aliqua est; quod enim nulla res est, omnino nihil est. Non autem omnis res etiam signum est.

6. Et ideo in hac divisione rerum atque signorum, cum de rebus loquemur, ita loquemur ut etiamsi earum aliquae adhiberi ad significandum possint, non impedian partitionem quaprius de rebus, postea de signis disseremus, memoriterque teneamus id nunc in rebus considerandum esse quod sunt, non quod aliud etiam praeter se ipsas significant.

7. Res ergo aliae sunt quibus fruendum est, aliae quibus utendum, aliae quae fruuntur et utuntur. Illae quibus fruendum est nos beatos faciunt; istis quibus utendum est tendentes ad beatitudinem adiuvamur et quasi adminiculamur, ut ad illas quae nos beatos faciunt pervenire atque his inhaerere possimus. Nos vero, qui fruimur et utimur inter utrasque constituti, si eis quibus utendum est frui voluerimus, impeditur cursus noster et aliquando etiam deflectitur, ut ab his rebus quibus fruendum est obtinendis vel retardemur vel etiam revocemur inferiorum amore praepediti.

8. Frui est enim amore inhaerere alicui rei propter se ipsam; uti autem, quod in usum venerit ad id quod amas obtinendum referre, si tamen amandum est. Nam usus illicitus abusus potius vel abusio nominanda est. Quomodo ergo, si essemus peregrini qui beate vivere nisi in patria non possemus, eaque peregrinatione utique miseri et miseriam finire cupientes in patriam redire vellemus, opus esset vel terrestribus vel marinis vehiculis quibus utendum esset ut ad patriam qua fruendum erat pervenire valeremus; quod si amoenitates itineris et ipsa gestatio vehiculorum nos delectaret, conversi ad fruendum his quibus uti debuimus nollemus cito viam finire et perversa

⁶² Gen. 28: 11.

⁶³ Gen. 22: 13

⁶⁴ See 2. 1–8.

Jacob placed under his head,⁶⁵ or the sheep which Abraham sacrificed in place of his son.⁶⁶ These are things, but they are at the same time signs of other things. 5. There are other signs whose whole function consists in signifying.⁶⁷ Words, for example: nobody uses words except in order to signify something. From this it may be understood what I mean by signs: those things which are employed to signify something. So every sign is also a thing, since what is not a thing does not exist. But it is not true that every thing is also a sign. 6. Therefore in my distinction of things and signs, when I speak of things, I shall speak of them in such a way that even if some of them can be employed to signify they do not impair the arrangement by which I will treat things first and signs later. And we must be careful to remember that what is under consideration at this stage is the fact that things exist, not that they signify something else besides themselves.

7. There are some things which are to be enjoyed, some which are to be used, and some whose function is both to enjoy and use. Those which are to be enjoyed make us happy; those which are to be used assist us and give us a boost, so to speak, as we press on towards our happiness, so that we may reach and hold fast to the things which make us happy. And we, placed as we are among things of both kinds, both enjoy and use them; but if we choose to enjoy things that are to be used, our advance is impeded and sometimes even diverted, and we are held back, or even put off, from attaining things which are to be enjoyed, because we are hamstrung by our love of lower things.

8. To enjoy something is to hold fast to it in love for its own sake. To use something is to apply whatever it may be to the purpose of obtaining what you love—if indeed it is something that ought to be loved. (The improper use of something should be termed abuse.) Suppose we were travellers who could live happily only in our homeland, and because our absence made us unhappy we wished to put an end to our misery and return to our homeland: we would need transport by land or sea which we could use to travel to our homeland, the object of our enjoyment. But if we were fascinated by the delights of the journey and the actual travelling, we would be perversely enjoying things that we should be using; and we would be reluctant to finish our journey quickly, being ensnared in the

⁶⁵ Gen. 28: 11.

⁶⁶ Gen. 22: 13

⁶⁷ See 2. 1–8.

suavitate implicati alienaremur⁶⁸ a patria, cuius suavitas faceret beatos, 9. sic in huius mortalitatis vita peregrinantes a domino,⁶⁹ si redire in patriam volumus ubi beati esse possimus, utendum est hoc mundo,⁷⁰ non fruendum, ut *invisibilia dei per ea quae facta sunt intellecta* conspiciantur,⁷¹ hoc est ut de corporalibus temporalibusque rebus aeterna et spiritalia capiamus.

10. Res igitur quibus fruendum est, pater et filius et spiritus sanctus, eademque trinitas, una quaedam summa res communisque omnibus fruentibus ea, si tamen res et non rerum omnium causa, si tamen et causa. Non enim facile nomen quod tantae excellentiae conveniat inveniri potest, nisi quod melius ita dicitur trinitas haec unus deus ex quo omnia, per quem omnia, in quo omnia.⁷² 11. Ita pater et filius et spiritus sanctus et singulus quisque horum deus, et simul omnes unus deus, et singulus quisque horum plena substantia, et simul omnes una substantia. Pater nec filius est nec spiritus sanctus, filius nec pater est nec spiritus sanctus, spiritus sanctus nec pater est nec filius, sed pater tantum pater et filius tantum filius et spiritus sanctus tantum spiritus sanctus. 12. Eadem tribus aeternitas, eadem incommutabilitas, eadem maiestas, eadem potestas. In patre unitas, in filio aequalitas, in spiritu sancto unitatis aequalitatisque concordia, et tria haec unum omnia propter patrem, aequalia omnia propter filium, conexa omnia propter spiritum sanctum.

13. Diximusne aliquid et sonuimus aliquid dignum deo? Immo vero nihil me aliud quam dicere voluisse sentio; si autem dixi, non hoc est quod dicere volui. Hoc unde scio, nisi quia deus ineffabilis est? Quod autem a me dictum est, si ineffabile esset, dictum non esset. Ac per hoc ne ineffabilis quidem dicendus est deus, quia et hoc cum dicitur, aliquid dicitur. Et fit nescio quae pugna verborum,⁷³ quoniam si illud est ineffabile quod dici non potest, non est ineffabile quod vel ineffabile dici potest. Quae pugna verborum silentio cavenda potius quam voce pacanda est. 14. Et tamen deus, cum de illo nihil digne

⁶⁸ On the history of the concept of *alienatio* and Augustine's use of the idea, see R. A. Markus in *Texte and Untersuchungen*, 94 (Studia Patristica 9, 1966), 431–50.

⁶⁹ 2 Cor. 5: 6.

⁷⁰ Cf. 1 Cor. 7: 31.

⁷¹ Rom. 1: 20.

⁷² Rom. 11: 36.

⁷³ Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 5. 3. 14.

wrong kind of pleasure and estranged⁷⁴ from the homeland whose pleasures could make us happy. 9. So in this mortal life we are like travellers away from our Lord:⁷⁵ if we wish to return to the homeland where we can be happy we must use this world,⁷⁶ not enjoy it, in order to discern ‘the invisible attributes of God, which are understood through what has been made’⁷⁷ or, in other words, to ascertain what is eternal and spiritual from corporeal and temporal things.

10. The things which are to be enjoyed, then, are the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the Trinity comprised by them, which is a kind of single, supreme thing, shared by all who enjoy it—if indeed it is a thing and not the cause of all things, and if indeed it is a cause. It is not easy to find a suitable name for such excellence, but perhaps the Trinity is better called the one God from whom, through whom, and in whom everything is.⁷⁸ 11. There is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit—each one of these is God, and all of them together are one God; each of these is a full substance and all together are one substance. The Father is neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit, the Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but the Father is purely the Father, the Son purely the Son, and the Holy Spirit purely the Holy Spirit. 12. These three have the same eternal nature, the same unchangeableness, the same majesty, the same power. In the Father there is unity, in the Son equality, and in the Holy Spirit a harmony of unity and equality. And the three are all one because of the Father, all equal because of the Son, and all in harmony because of the Holy Spirit.

13. Have I spoken something, have I uttered something, worthy of God? No, I feel that all I have done is to wish to speak; if I did say something, it is not what I wanted to say. How do I know this? Simply because God is unspeakable. But what I have spoken would not have been spoken if it were unspeakable. For this reason God should not even be called unspeakable, because even when this word is spoken, something is spoken. There is a kind of conflict between words here:⁷⁹ if what cannot be spoken is unspeakable, then it is not unspeakable, because it can actually be said to be unspeakable. It is better to evade this verbal conflict silently than to quell it disputatiously. 14. Yet although nothing can be spoken in a

⁷⁴ On the history of the concept of *alienatio* and Augustine's use of the idea, see R. A. Markus in *Texte and Untersuchungen*, 94 (Studia Patristica 9, 1966), 431–50.

⁷⁵ 2 Cor. 5: 6.

⁷⁶ Cf. 1 Cor. 7: 31.

⁷⁷ Rom. 1: 20.

⁷⁸ Rom. 11: 36.

⁷⁹ Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 5. 3. 14.

dici possit, admisit humanae vocis obsequium et verbis nostris in laude sua gaudere nos voluit. Nam inde est et quod dicitur deus. Non enim re vera in strepitu istarum duarum syllabarum ipse cognoscitur,⁸⁰ sed tamen omnes latinae linguae socios, cum aures eorum sonus iste tetigerit, movet ad cogitandam excellentissimam quandam immortalemque naturam.

15. Nam cum ille unus cogitatur deorum deus, ab his etiam qui alios et suspicantur et vocant et colunt deos, sive in caelo sive in terra, ita cogitatur ut aliquid quo nihil sit melius atque sublimius illa cogitatio conetur attingere. Sane quoniam diversis moventur bonis, partim eis quae ad corporis sensum, partim eis quae ad animi intellegentiam pertinent, illi qui dediti sunt corporis sensibus,⁸¹ aut ipsum caelum aut quod in caelo fulgentissimum vident aut ipsum mundum deum deorum esse arbitrantur; aut si extra mundum ire contendunt, aliquid lucidum imaginantur idque vel infinitum vel ea forma quae optima videtur inani suspicione constituunt, aut humani corporis figuram cogitant, si eam ceteris anteponunt.

16. Quod si unum deum deorum esse non putant et potius multos aut innumerabiles aequalis ordinis deos, etiam eos tamen, prout cuique aliquid corporis videtur excellere, ita figuratos animo tenent. Illi autem qui per intellegentiam pergunt videre quod deus est,⁸² omnibus eum naturis visibilibus et corporalibus, intellegibilibus vero et spiritalibus, omnibus mutabilibus praeferunt. Omnes tamen certatim pro excellentia dei dimicant, nec quisquam inveniri potest qui hoc deum credat esse quo est aliquid melius. Itaque omnes hoc deum esse consentiunt quod ceteris rebus omnibus anteponunt.

17. Et quoniam omnes qui de deo cogitant vivum aliquid cogitant, illi soli possunt non absurda et indigna existimare de deo qui vitam ipsam cogitant. Et quaecumque illis forma occurrerit corporis, eam vel⁸³ vivere vel non vivere statuunt et

⁸⁰ Latin *deus* has two syllables.

⁸¹ This category takes in the pre-Socratic philosophers, Plato, Aristotle, Stoics, and Epicureans, as well as popular belief.

⁸² Especially the neo-Platonists (cf. 2. 144), whose doctrines are prominent in the following paragraphs.

⁸³ The manuscript readings *vita* ('with life') and *vitam* seem otiose with *vivere*, and premature in view of the distinction made later in this paragraph. I suspect a misreading of *vel* ('either'), or a gloss.

way worthy of God, he has sanctioned the homage of the human voice, and chosen that we should derive pleasure from our words in praise of him. Hence the fact that he is called God: he himself is not truly known by the sound of these two syllables,⁸⁴ yet when the word strikes our ears it leads all users of the Latin language to think of a supremely excellent and immortal being.

15. Now although he alone is thought of as the god of gods, he is also thought of by those who imagine, invoke, and worship other gods, whether in heaven or on earth, in so far as their thinking strives to reach a being than which there is nothing better or more exalted. They are, to be sure, inspired by various ideas of excellence, of which some relate to the senses, and others to the intellect, and accordingly those who are devoted to the bodily senses⁸⁵ think that either the sky itself, or the brightest element that they see in the sky, or the world itself, is the god of gods. If they try to pass beyond the visible world, they envisage something bright, and in their futile imaginations represent it either as an infinite being or as one endowed with what they see as ultimate beauty; or else they think of the figure of a human body, if they value that above all else. 16. If they do not believe in a single god of gods, but rather in many gods, or gods without number, all of them having equal status, then for these too they form a mental picture which corresponds to their various ideas of bodily excellence. Those who strive to behold the nature of God through their intellect⁸⁶ place him above all visible and corporeal beings, indeed above all intelligible and spiritual beings, and above all beings that are subject to change. But they all vigorously contend for the excellence of God; it is impossible to find anyone who believes that God is a thing than which there exists something better. All, then, are agreed that what they value above all other things is God.

17. And since all who think of God think of something alive, the only thinkers whose conceptions of God are not absurd and unworthy can be those who think of life itself. Whatever corporeal form occurs to them, they establish that it either lives⁸⁷ or does not live; and they esteem what lives more highly than what does not. They understand that the living corporeal form,

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⁸⁵ This category takes in the pre-Socratic philosophers, Plato, Aristotle, Stoics, and Epicureans, as well as popular belief.

⁸⁶ Especially the neo-Platonists (cf. 2. 144), whose doctrines are prominent in the following paragraphs.

⁸⁷ The manuscript readings *vita* ('with life') and *vitam* seem otiose with *vivere*, and premature in view of the distinction made later in this paragraph. I suspect a misreading of *vel* ('either'), or a gloss.

viventem non viventi anteponunt, eamque ipsam viventem corporis formam, quantalibet luce praeferat, quantalibet magnitudine praemineat, quantalibet pulchritudine ornetur, aliud esse ipsam, aliud vitam qua vegetatur intellegunt, eamque illi moli quae ab illa vegetatur et animatur dignitate incomparabili praeferunt. 18. Deinde ipsam vitam pergunt inspicere, et si eam sine sensu vegetantem invenerint, qualis est arborum, praeponunt ei sentientem, qualis est pecorum, et huic rursus intellegentem, qualis est hominum. Quam cum adhuc mutabilem viderint, etiam huic aliquam incommutabilem coguntur praeponere, illam scilicet vitam quae non aliquando desipit aliquando sapit sed est potius ipsa sapientia.⁸⁸ 19. Sapiens enim mens, id est adepta sapientiam, antequam adipisceretur non erat sapiens; at vero ipsa sapientia nec fuit umquam insipiens nec esse umquam potest.⁸⁹ Quam si non viderent, nullo modo plena fiducia vitam incommutabiliter sapientem commutabili vitae anteponerent. Ipsam quippe regulam veritatis,⁹⁰ qua illam clamant esse meliorem, incommutabilem vident, nec uspiam nisi supra suam naturam

vident, quandoquidem se mutabiles vident. 20. Nemo est enim tam impudenter insulsus qui dicat, ‘unde scis incommutabiliter sapientem vitam mutabili esse praeferendam?’ Id ipsum enim quod interrogat, unde sciam, omnibus ad contemplandum communiter atque incommutabiliter praesto est. Et hoc qui non videt ita est quasi caecus in sole, cui nihil prodest ipsis locis oculorum eius tam clarae ac praesentis lucis fulgor infusus. 21. Qui autem videt et refugit, consuetudine umbrarum carnalium invalidam mentis aciem gerit. Pravorum igitur morum quasi contrariis flatibus ab ipsa patria reperiuntur homines, posteriora atque inferiora sectantes quam illud quod esse melius atque praestantius confitentur.

22. Quapropter, cum illa veritate perfruendum sit quae incommutabiliter vivit, et in ea trinitas deus, auctor et conditor universitatis, rebus quas condidit consulat, purgandus est animus,⁹¹ ut et perspicere illam lucem valeat et inhaerere perspectae. Quam purgationem quasi ambulationem quandam et

⁸⁸ Cf. *Conf.* 7. 17. 23 (Augustine's ‘ascent’).

⁸⁹ Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 5. 9. 2 (of Intellect).

⁹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.* 1. 3. 5 (καὶ ἀνὼν τοῦ ἀληθοῦς), equivalent in its context to the rules of logic.

⁹¹ Cf. *Ibid.* 3. 6. 5, 1. 6. 9.

however outstanding its light, however outstanding its size, however outstanding its beauty, consists of two separate things, namely itself and the life by which it is energized; and they raise that life above the mass which is energized and activated by it to a position of unrivalled status. 18. Then they proceed to examine that life, and if they find it has energy but not sense (as in the case of trees) they subordinate it to a sentient form of life (like that of livestock), and they subordinate that in turn to an intelligent form of life (like that of humans). Realizing the mutability of human life, they are obliged to subordinate that too to some unchangeable form of life, namely the life which is not intermittently wise but rather is wisdom itself.⁹² 19. A wise mind (in other words, one that has acquired wisdom) was not wise before it acquired wisdom; but wisdom itself was never unwise, and never can be.⁹³ If they did not see this, they could not, with such complete confidence, subordinate the changeable form of life to a form of life that was unchangeably wise. They certainly see that the actual standard of truth,⁹⁴ by which they maintain the superiority of that life, is not subject to change, and they can only see this as belonging to a realm above their own nature, since they see themselves to be subject to change. 20. Nobody is so brazenly stupid as to say, 'how do you know that the form of life that is unchangeably wise is to be ranked more highly than the changeable form?'. The answer to his question, about how I know, is publicly and unchangeably present for all to behold. Anyone who fails to see this is like a blind man in the sun, who cannot be helped by the brightness of such a clear and powerful light shining into his eyes. 21. But anyone who sees this yet runs away from it has a mind whose insight is weakened by his habit of living in the shadows cast by the flesh. Those, then, who follow what is secondary and inferior to whatever they admit to be superior and more outstanding are, as it were, blown away from their homeland by the adverse winds of their own perverted characters. 22. Since, therefore, we must enjoy to the full that truth which lives unchangeably, and since, within it, God the Trinity, the author and creator of everything, takes thought for the things that he has created, our minds must be purified⁹⁵ so that they are able to perceive that light and then hold fast to it.

⁹² Cf. *Conf.* 7. 17. 23 (Augustine's 'ascent').

⁹³ Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 5. 9. 2 (of Intellect).

⁹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.* 1. 3. 5 (καὶ ἀνῶν τοῦ ἀληθοῦς), equivalent in its context to the rules of logic.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.* 3. 6. 5, 1. 6. 9.

quasi navigationem ad patriam esse arbitremur.⁹⁶ Non enim ad eum qui ubique praesens est locis movemur, sed bono studio bonisque moribus. 23. Quod non possemus, nisi ipsa sapientia tantae etiam nostrae infirmitati congruere dignaretur et vivendi nobis praeberet exemplum, non aliter quam in homine, quoniam et nos homines sumus. Sed quia nos cum ad illam venimus sapienter facimus, ipsa cum ad nos venit ab hominibus superbis quasi stulte fecisse putata est. Et quoniam nos cum ad illam venimus convalescimus, ipsa cum ad nos venit quasi infirma existimata est. Sed *quod stultum est dei, sapientius est hominibus, et quod infirmum est dei, fortius est hominibus*.⁹⁷ Cum ergo ipsa sit patria, viam se quoque nobis

fecit ad patriam. 24. Et cum sano et puro interiori oculo ubique sit praesens, eorum qui oculum illum infirmum immundumque habent oculis etiam carneis apparere dignata est. *Quia enim in sapientia dei non poterat mundus per sapientiam cognoscere deum, placuit deo per stultitiam praedicationis salvos facere*

credentes.⁹⁸ 25. Non igitur per locorum spatia veniendo, sed in carne mortali mortalibus apparendo venisse ad nos dicitur. Illuc ergo venit ubi erat, quia *in hoc mundo erat et mundus per eam factus est*.⁹⁹ Sed quoniam cupiditate fruendi pro ipso creatore creatura homines configurati huic mundo¹⁰⁰ et mundi nomine congruentissime vocati non eam cognoverunt, propterea dixit evangelista, *et mundus eam non cognovit*.¹⁰¹ Itaque *in sapientia dei non poterat mundus per sapientiam cognoscere deum*.¹⁰² Cur ergo venit cum hic esset, nisi quia placuit deo per stultitiam praedicationis

salvos facere credentes? 26. Quomodo venit nisi quod *verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis*?¹⁰³ Sicuti cum loquimur, ut id quod animo gerimus in audientis animum per aures carneas illabatur, fit sonus verbum quod corde gestamus, et locutio vocatur, nec tamen in eundem sonum cogitatio nostra convertitur, sed apud se manens integra formam vocis qua se

⁹⁶ Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 1. 6. 8, a favourite passage of Augustine.

⁹⁷ 1 Cor. 1: 25.

⁹⁸ 1 Cor. 1: 21.

⁹⁹ Cf. John 1: 10.

¹⁰⁰ Rom. 12: 2.

¹⁰¹ John 1: 10.

¹⁰² 1 Cor. 1: 21.

¹⁰³ John 1: 14.

Let us consider this process of cleansing as a trek, or a voyage, to our homeland;¹⁰⁴ though progress towards the one who is ever present is not made through space, but through goodness of purpose and character. 23. This we would be unable to do, if wisdom itself had not deigned to adapt itself to our great weakness and offered us a pattern for living; and it has done so actually in human form because we too are human. But because we act wisely when we come to wisdom, wisdom has been thought by arrogant people to have somehow acted foolishly when it came to us; and because we recover strength when we come to wisdom, wisdom has been reckoned as being somehow weak when it came to us. But ‘the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men’.¹⁰⁵ So although it is actually our homeland, it has also made itself the road to our homeland. 24. And although wisdom is everywhere present to the inner eye that is healthy and pure, it deigned to appear even to the carnal eyes of those whose inner eye was weak and impure. For because ‘in the wisdom of God the world was incapable of recognizing God through its wisdom, it pleased God to save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching’.¹⁰⁶ 25. It is not, then, by coming in a spatial sense but by appearing to mortals in mortal flesh that wisdom is said to have come to us. So it came to where it already was, because ‘it was in this world and the world was made through it’.¹⁰⁷ But since human beings, assimilated as they were to this world¹⁰⁸ because of their desire to enjoy the created order instead of its actual creator—and so very aptly described by the word ‘world’—did not recognize it, the evangelist said, ‘and the world did not recognize it’.¹⁰⁹ So, ‘in the wisdom of God, the world was incapable of recognizing God through wisdom’.¹¹⁰ What then, since he was here already, was the reason for his coming, if not that it pleased God to save those who believed through the foolishness of preaching? 26. And what was the manner of his coming, if not this: ‘The word was made flesh and lived among us.’¹¹¹ When we speak, the word which we hold in our mind becomes a sound in order that what we have in our mind may pass through ears of flesh into the listener’s mind: this is called speech. Our thought, however, is not converted into the same sound, but remains intact in its own home, suffering no diminution from

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 1. 6. 8, a favourite passage of Augustine.

¹⁰⁵ 1 Cor. 1: 25.

¹⁰⁶ 1 Cor. 1: 21.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. John 1: 10.

¹⁰⁸ Rom. 12: 2.

¹⁰⁹ John 1: 10.

¹¹⁰ 1 Cor. 1: 21.

¹¹¹ John 1: 14.

insinuet auribus sine aliqua labe suae mutationis assumit,¹¹² ita verbum dei non commutatum caro tamen factum est ut habitaret in nobis.

27. Sicut autem curatio via est ad sanitatem, sic ista curatio peccatores sanandos reficiendosque suscepit. Et quemadmodum medici cum alligant vulnera non incomposite sed apte id faciunt, ut vinculi utilitatem quaedam pulchritudo etiam consequatur, sic medicina sapientiae per hominis susceptionem nostris est accommodata vulneribus, de quibusdam contrariis curans et de quibusdam similibus. 28. Sicut etiam ille qui medetur vulnere corporis adhibet quaedam contraria, sicut frigidum calido vel umido siccum vel quid aliud eiusmodi, adhibet etiam quaedam similia, sicut linteolum vel rotundo vulnere rotundum vel oblongum oblongo ligaturamque ipsam non eandem membris omnibus, sed similem similibus coaptat, sic sapientia dei hominem curans se ipsam exhibuit ad sanandum, ipsa medicus, ipsa medicina. Quia ergo per superbiam homo lapsus est, humilitatem adhibuit ad sanandum. Serpentis sapientia decepti sumus, dei stultitia liberamur. 29. Quemadmodum autem illa sapientia vocabatur, erat autem stultitia contemnentes deum, sic ista quae vocatur stultitia sapientia est vincentibus diabolum. Nos immortalitate male usi sumus ut moreremur, Christus mortalitate bene usus est ut viveremus. Corrupto animo feminae ingressus est morbus, integro corpore feminae processit salus. Ad eadem contraria pertinet quod etiam exemplo virtutum eius vitia nostra curantur. 30. Iam vero similia quasi ligamenta membris et vulneribus nostris adhibita illa sunt, quod per feminam deceptos per feminam natus, homo homines, mortalis mortales, morte mortuos liberavit. Multa quoque alia diligentius considerantibus, quos instituti operis peragendi necessitas non rapit, vel a contrariis vel a similibus medicinae christianae apparet instructio.

31. Iam vero credita domini a mortuis resurrectio et in caelum ascensio magna spe fulcit nostram fidem. Multum

¹¹² Cf. *Conf.* 7. 11. 17, of God, based on *Wisd.* 7: 27, and on the relation of words and the Word, *De Trin.* 15. 14. 23–16. 26.

its change¹¹³ as it takes on the form of a word in order to make its way into the ears. In the same way the word of God suffered no change although it became flesh in order to live in us.

27. The way to health is through medical care; God's care has taken it upon itself to heal and restore sinners by the same methods. When doctors bind wounds, they do this not just anyhow, but in an appropriate manner, so that the effectiveness of the ligature is matched by a kind of beauty; similarly the treatment given by wisdom was adapted to our wounds by its acceptance of human nature, healing sometimes by the principle of contrariety, sometimes by that of similarity. 28. A doctor treating a physical wound applies some medications that are contrary—a cold one to a hot wound, a dry one to a wet wound, and so on—and also some that are similar, such as a round bandage to a round wound and a rectangular bandage to a rectangular wound, and he does not apply the same ligature to all wounds, but matches like with like. So for the treatment of human beings God's wisdom—in itself both doctor and medicine—offered itself in a similar way. Because human beings fell through pride it used humility in healing them. We were deceived by the wisdom of the serpent; we are freed by the foolishness of God. 29. But just as that was called wisdom yet was foolishness to those who despise God, so this so-called foolishness is wisdom to those who overcome the devil. We made bad use of immortality, and so we died; Christ made good use of mortality, and so we live. The disease entered through a corrupted female mind; healing emerged from an intact female body. Also relevant to the principle of contrariety is the fact that our vices too are treated by the example of his virtues. 30. Examples of similarity in the kinds of bandages (as it were) applied to our limbs and wounds are these: it was one born of a woman that freed those deceived by a woman; it was a mortal man that freed mortals; and it was by death that he freed the dead. Careful consideration of many other such things—as may be done by those who are not hard pressed by the need to finish a book—reveals that the basic principle of Christian healing is one of contrariety and similarity.

31. Now the belief in the Lord's resurrection from the dead and his ascent into heaven reinforces our faith with a great hope. For it clearly testifies how willingly he laid down his life

¹¹³ Cf. *Conf.* 7. 11. 17, of God, based on *Wisd.* 7: 27, and on the relation of words and the Word, *De Trin.* 15. 14. 23–16. 26.

enim ostendit quam voluntarie pro nobis animam posuerit,¹¹⁴ qui eam sic habuit in potestatem resumere. Quanta ergo se fiducia spes credentium consolatur, considerans quantus quanta pro nondum credentibus passus sit! Cum vero iudex vivorum atque mortuorum exspectatur e caelo, magnum timorem incutit negligentibus, ut se ad diligentiam convertant, eumque magis bene agendo desiderent quam male agendo formident. 32. Quibus autem verbis dici aut qua cogitatione capi potest praemium quod ille in fine daturus est, quando ad consolationem huius itineris de spiritu suo tantum dedit, quo in adversis vitae huius fiduciam caritatemque tantam eius quem nondum videmus habeamus, et dona uni cuique propria ad instructionem ecclesiae suae,¹¹⁵ ut id quod ostendit esse faciendum non solum sine murmure sed etiam cum delectatione

faciamus! 33. Est enim ecclesia corpus eius, sicut apostolica doctrina commendat,¹¹⁶ quae coniunx etiam eius dicitur.¹¹⁷ Corpus ergo suum multis membris diversa officia¹¹⁸ gerentibus nodo unitatis et caritatis tamquam sanitatis astringit. Exercet autem hoc tempore et purgat medicinalibus quibusdam molestiis, ut erutam de hoc saeculo in aeternum sibi copulet coniugem *ecclesiam, non habentem maculam aut rugam aut aliquid eius modi*.¹¹⁹

34. Porro quoniam in via sumus nec via ista locorum est, sed affectuum, quam intercludebant quasi saepta quaedam spinosa praeteritorum malitia peccatorum, quid liberalius et misericordius facere potuit, qui se ipsum nobis qua rediremus substernere voluit, nisi ut omnia donaret peccata conversis et graviter fixa interdicta reditus nostri pro nobis crucifixus evelleret?

35. Has igitur claves dedit ecclesiae suae, ut quae solveret in terra soluta essent et in caelo, quae ligaret in terra ligata essent et in caelo,¹²⁰ scilicet ut quisquis in ecclesia eius dimitti sibi peccata non crederet, non ei dimitterentur, quis-quis autem crederet seque ab his correctus averteret, in eiusdem ecclesiae gremio constitutus eadem fide atque correctione

¹¹⁴ Cf. John 10: 18

¹¹⁵ 1 Cor. 12: 7.

¹¹⁶ Eph. 1: 23.

¹¹⁷ Eph. 5: 22.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Rom. 12: 4.

¹¹⁹ Eph. 5: 27.

¹²⁰ Matt. 16: 19.

for us,¹²¹ since he had it in his power to take it up again. What great confidence do believers have to buttress their hopes, when they consider the mighty things that such a mighty one suffered for those who did not yet believe! And as he is expected to come from heaven as judge of the living and the dead, he instils great fear into the uncommitted, so that they may develop a serious commitment and yearn for him in lives of goodness rather than fear him in lives of wickedness. 32. For what words can express, what thoughts conceive, the reward which he is going to give at the end, seeing that he has already given us, to support us on our journey, so much of his spirit, in order that in the troubles of this life we may have this enormous confidence and delight in one whom we do not yet behold, and seeing that he has also bestowed individual gifts for the consolidation of his church,¹²² in order that we may perform the tasks that he has indicated not only without murmuring but even with positive enjoyment? 33. The church is his body, as the teaching of the apostle shows;¹²³ it is also called his bride.¹²⁴ So he ties together his own body, with its many members who perform different tasks,¹²⁵ in a bond of unity and love like a healing bandage. And at the present time he trains it and purges it by means of various disagreeable medicines so that when it has been saved from the world he may take as his wife for eternity ‘the church, which has no spot or wrinkle or any such thing’.¹²⁶

34. Furthermore, given that we are on a road—a spiritual road, not a spatial one—and one blocked as it were by thorny hedgerows, flourishing through the evil influences of our earlier sins—could he who chose to lay himself down as the way by which we could return have done anything more generous and merciful than to forgive the converted all their sins and, by being crucified for us, pull out the firmly fixed barriers to our return? 35. He accordingly gave keys to his church so that whatever it loosed on earth should also be loosed in heaven, and whatever it bound on earth should also be bound in heaven.¹²⁷ So that if anyone does not believe that his sins are forgiven in God's church they are not forgiven, but if anyone does believe and reform, turning from them to the right way, he is healed, within the bosom of the same church, by the very act of believing and reform. A person who does not believe that his

¹²¹ Cf. John 10: 18

¹²² 1 Cor. 12: 7.

¹²³ Eph. 1: 23.

¹²⁴ Eph. 5: 22.

¹²⁵ Cf. Rom. 12: 4.

¹²⁶ Eph. 5: 27.

¹²⁷ Matt. 16: 19.

sanaretur. Quisquis enim non credit dimitti sibi posse peccata, fit deterior desperando, quasi nihil illi melius quam malum esse remaneat, ubi de fructu suae conversionis infidus est.

36. Iam vero sicut animi quaedam mors est vitae prioris morumque relictio, quae fit paenitendo, sic etiam corporis mors est animationis pristinae resolutio. Et quomodo animus post paenitentiam, qua priores mores perditos interemit, reformatur in melius, sic etiam corpus, post istam mortem quam vinculo peccati omnes debemus, credendum et sperandum est resurrectionis tempore in melius commutari, ut non caro et sanguis regnum caelorum possideat¹²⁸ (quod fieri non potest) sed corruptibile hoc induat incorruptionem et mortale hoc induat immortalitatem¹²⁹ nullamque faciens molestiam, quia nullam patietur indigentiam, a beata perfecta anima

cum summa quiete vegetetur. 37. Cuius autem animus non moritur huic saeculo neque incipit configurari veritati, in graviores mortem morte corporis trahitur neque ad commutationem caelestis habitudinis, sed ad luenda supplicia reviviscit.

38. Hoc itaque fides habet atque ita se rem habere credendum est neque animum neque corpus humanum omnimodum interitum pati, sed impios resurgere ad poenas inaestimabiles, pios autem ad vitam aeternam.

39. In his igitur omnibus rebus illae tantum sunt quibus fruendum est, quas aeternas atque incommutabiles commemoravimus; ceteris autem utendum est ut ad illarum perfructionem pervenire possimus. Nos itaque qui fruimur et utimur aliis rebus, res aliquae sumus. Magna enim quaedam res est homo, factus *ad imaginem et similitudinem dei*,¹³⁰ non in quantum mortali corpore includitur, sed in quantum bestias rationalis animae honore praecedit. 40. Itaque magna quaestio est, utrum frui se homines debeant an uti an utrumque.¹³¹ Praeceptum est enim nobis ut diligamus invicem,¹³² sed quaeritur utrum propter se homo ab homine diligendus sit an propter aliud. Si enim propter se, fruimur eo; si propter aliud, utimur eo. Videtur autem mihi propter aliud diligendus. Quod enim propter se diligendum est, in eo constituitur

¹²⁸ 1 Cor. 15: 50.

¹²⁹ 1 Cor. 15: 53.

¹³⁰ Gen. 1: 26–7.

¹³¹ For a careful study of this and other questions in what follows, see O. O'Donovan 'Usus and Fructio' in Augustine *De Doctrina Christiana* I, *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, 33 (1982), 361–97.

¹³² John 13: 34; 15: 12, 17.

sins can be forgiven is made worse by despair, feeling that nothing better awaits him than to be wicked, since he has no faith in the results of being converted.

36. Now just as the abandonment of one's earlier life and behavior, which comes by repentance, is a sort of death of the soul, so too the dissolution of one's former mode of existence is the death of the body. And just as the soul is reformed after repentance, by which the soul kills off its earlier evil character, so we must believe and hope that after this death, to which we are all liable by the bondage of sin, the body is changed to something better at the time of resurrection, with the result, not that flesh and blood take over the kingdom of heaven¹³³—this is impossible—but that this corruptible thing will put on incorruptibility and this mortal thing immortality,¹³⁴ and that without making any trouble (for it will experience no deprivation) it will be energized by the blessed and perfect soul in supreme tranquillity.

37. If a person's soul does not die to the present world and begin to be conformed to the truth, it is drawn by the death of the body into a worse death and reborn not to experience a new heavenly state but to suffer the retribution of punishment. 38. This is contained in our faith, and this, we must believe, is the real situation: neither the soul nor the human body suffers total destruction, but the wicked rise to unthinkable agony, the good to eternal life.

39. Among all these things, then, it is only the eternal and unchangeable things which I mentioned that are to be enjoyed; other things are to be used so that we may attain the full enjoyment of those things. We ourselves who enjoy and use other things are things. A human being is an important kind of thing, being made 'in the image and likeness of God'¹³⁵ not by virtue of having a mortal body but by virtue of having a rational soul and thus a higher status than animals. 40. It is therefore an important question, whether humans should enjoy one another or use one another, or both.¹³⁶ We have been commanded to love one another,¹³⁷ but the question is whether one person should be loved by another on his own account or for some other reason. If on his own account, we enjoy him; if for another reason, we use him. In my opinion, he should be loved for another reason. For if something is to be loved on its own

¹³³ 1 Cor. 15: 50.

¹³⁴ 1 Cor. 15: 53.

¹³⁵ Gen. 1: 26–7.

¹³⁶ For a careful study of this and other questions in what follows, see O. O'Donovan 'Usus and Fructio' in Augustine *De Doctrina Christiana* I, *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, 33 (1982), 361–97.

¹³⁷ John 13: 34; 15: 12, 17.

beata vita, cuius etiamsi nondum res, tamen spes eius nos hoc tempore consolatur. *Maledictus autem qui spem suam ponit in homine.*¹³⁸

41. Sed nec se ipso quisquam frui debet, si liquide advertas, quia nec se ipsum debet propter se ipsum diligere, sed propter illum quo fruendum est. Tunc est quippe optimus homo, cum tota vita sua pergit in incommutabilem vitam et toto affectu inhaeret illi. Si autem se propter se diligit, non se refert ad deum, sed ad se ipsum conversus non ad incommutabile aliquid convertitur. Et propterea iam cum defectu aliquo se fruitur, quia melior est cum totus haeret atque constringitur incommutabili bono quam cum inde vel ad se ipsum relaxatur. 42. Si ergo te ipsum non propter te debes diligere, sed propter illum ubi dilectionis tuae rectissimus finis est, non suscenseat alius homo, si etiam ipsum propter deum diligis. Haec enim regula dilectionis divinitus constituta est: *diliges*, inquit, *proximum tuum tamquam te ipsum*, deum vero *ex toto corde, ex tota anima, ex tota mente*,¹³⁹ ut omnes cogitationes tuas et omnem vitam et omnem intellectum in illum conferas a quo habes ea ipsa quae confers. 43. Cum autem ait ‘toto corde, tota anima, tota mente’, nullam vitae nostrae partem reliquit quae vacare debeat et quasi locum dare ut alia re velit frui, sed quidquid aliud diligendum venerit in animum illuc rapiatur quo totus dilectionis impetus currit. Quisquis ergo recte diligit proximum, hoc cum eo debet agere, ut etiam ipse toto corde, tota anima, tota mente diligat deum. Sic enim eum diligens tamquam se ipsum totam dilectionem sui et illius refert in illam dilectionem dei quae nullum a se rivulum duci extra patitur cuius derivatione minuat.

44. Non autem omnia quibus utendum est diligenda sunt, sed ea sola quae aut nobiscum societate quadam referuntur in deum, sicuti est homo vel angelus, aut ad nos relata beneficio dei per nos indigent, sicut est corpus. Nam utique martyres non dilexerunt scelus persequentium se, quo tamen usi sunt ad

¹³⁸ Jer. 17: 5.

¹³⁹ Matt. 22: 39, 37.

account, it is made to constitute the happy life, even if it is not as yet the reality but the hope of it which consoles us at this time. But 'cursed is he who puts his hope in a man'.¹⁴⁰

41. Neither should a person enjoy himself, if you think closely about this, because he should not love himself on his own account, but only on account of the one who is to be enjoyed. A person is at his best when in his whole life he strives towards the unchangeable form of life and holds fast to it wholeheartedly. But if he loves himself on his own account, he does not relate himself to God, but turns to himself and not to something unchangeable. And for this reason it is with a certain insufficiency that he enjoys himself, because when totally absorbed and controlled by the unchangeable good he is a better man than when his attention leaves it, even if it turns to himself. 42. So if you ought to love yourself not on your own account but on account of the one who is the most proper object of your love, another person should not be angry if you love him too on account of God. For the divinely established rule of love says 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself' but God 'with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind',¹⁴¹ so that you may devote all your thoughts and all your life and all your understanding to the one from whom you actually receive the things that you devote to him. 43. And when it says 'all your heart, all your soul, all your mind', it leaves no part of our life free from this obligation, no part free as it were to back out and enjoy some other thing; any other object of love that enters the mind should be swept towards the same goal as that to which the whole flood of our love is directed. So a person who loves his neighbour properly should, in concert with him, aim to love God with all his heart, all his soul, and all his mind. In this way, loving him as he would himself, he relates his love of himself and his neighbour entirely to the love of God, which allows not the slightest trickle to flow away from it and thereby diminish it.

44. It is not the case that all things which are to be used are to be loved; but only those which exist in some kind of association with us and are related to God, like a man or an angel, or which, being related to us, stand in need of the kindness of God as received through us, like the body. The martyrs, certainly, did not love the crime of those who persecuted them, but used

¹⁴⁰ Jer. 17: 5.

¹⁴¹ Matt. 22: 39, 37.

promerendum deum. 45. Cum ergo quattuor sint diligenda, unum quod supra nos est, alterum quod nos sumus, tertium quod iuxta nos est, quartum quod infra nos est, de secundo et quarto nulla praecepta danda erant. Quantumlibet enim homo excidat a veritate,¹⁴² remanet illi dilectio sui et dilectio corporis sui. Fugax enim animus ab incommutabili lumine omnium regnatore id agit ut ipse sibi regnet et corpori suo, et ideo non potest nisi et se et corpus suum diligere.

46. Magnum autem aliquid adeptum se putat, si etiam sociis, id est aliis hominibus, dominari potuerit. Inest enim vitioso animo id magis appetere et sibi tamquam debitum vindicare, quod uni proprie debetur deo. Talis autem sui dilectio melius odium vocatur. Iniquum est enim, quia vult sibi servire quod infra se est, cum ipse superiori servire nolit, rectissimeque dictum est, *qui autem diligit iniquitatem odit animam suam*.¹⁴³ Et ideo fit infirmus animus et de mortali corpore cruciatur. 47. Necesse est enim ut illud diligat et eius corruptione praegravetur. Immortalitas enim et incorruptio corporis de sanitate animi existit, sanitas autem animi est firmissime inhaerere potiori, hoc est incommutabili deo. Cum vero etiam eis qui sibi naturaliter pares sunt, hoc est hominibus, dominari affectat, intolerabilis omnino superbia est.

48. Nemo ergo se odit. Et hinc quidem nulla cum aliqua secta quaestio fuit. Sed neque corpus suum quisquam odit. Verum est enim quod ait apostolus: *nemo umquam carnem suam odio habuit*.¹⁴⁴ Et quod nonnulli dicunt malle se esse sine corpore, omnino falluntur. Non enim corpus suum, sed corruptiones eius et pondus oderunt. 49. Non itaque nullum corpus, sed incorruptum et celerrimum corpus volunt habere, sed putant nullum corpus esse si tale fuerit, quia tale aliquid esse animam putant. Quod autem continentia quadam et laboribus quasi persequi videntur corpora sua, qui hoc recte faciunt non id agunt ut non habeant corpus, sed ut habeant subiugatum et paratum ad opera necessaria. 50. Libidines enim male utentes corpore, id est consuetudines et inclinationes¹⁴⁵ animae ad fruendum inferioribus, per ipsius corporis

¹⁴² Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 18.

¹⁴³ Ps. 10: 6(11: 5).

¹⁴⁴ Eph. 5: 29.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. *Conf.* 7. 17. 23. The reading *inclinationis* of some manuscripts is surely not right, but could be a corruption of *inclinatio* ('more inclined'); this would recall *Conf.* 7. 17. 21. But the manuscript reading adopted here gives a better description of *libidines*.

it to win their way to God. 45. There are four things that are to be loved—one, that which is above us; two, that which we are; three, that which is close to us; four, that which is beneath us. No commandments needed to be given about the second and fourth of these. For however much a man may lapse from the truth,¹⁴⁶ he retains a love of himself and a love of his own body. The mind which shuns the unchangeable light which is sovereign over all aims to exercise sovereignty over itself and its body, and so cannot fail to love both itself and its body.

46. And it thinks it has achieved something great if it can also dominate its peers, by which I mean other men. For it is the instinct of a corrupt mind to covet and claim as its due what is really due to God alone. This kind of self-love is better called hatred. It is unjust because it wants what is beneath it to serve it while itself refusing to serve what is above it; and it has been very well said that ‘the person who loves injustice hates his own soul’.¹⁴⁷ For this reason such a mind becomes weak and is tormented because of its mortal body, 47. for it is inevitable that it should love the body and be weighed down by the body's corruption. A body's immortality and immunity from corruption derives from health of mind, and health of mind means resolutely holding fast to something better, namely the unchangeable God. But when it aspires to dominate those who are its natural peers, that is, its fellow-men, its arrogance is quite intolerable.

48. So nobody hates himself. On this point there has never been any dispute with any sect. But neither does anyone hate his own body. What the apostle said is true: ‘no-one ever felt hatred for his own body’.¹⁴⁸ Some say that they would prefer not to have a body at all, but they are mistaken. For what they hate is not their body, but its imperfections and its dead weight. 49. What they want is not to have no body at all, but to have one free from corruption and totally responsive; they think that if the body were such a thing it would not be a body, because they consider such a thing to be a soul. When they seem to persecute their own body by a kind of repression, and by hardships, their aim (if they are doing it rightly) is not to have no body at all but to have one that is subservient and ready for necessary tasks. 50. It is the lusts which misuse the body—in other words, the habits and inclinations of a soul¹⁴⁹ to enjoy what

¹⁴⁶ Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 18.

¹⁴⁷ Ps. 10: 6(11: 5).

¹⁴⁸ Eph. 5: 29.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. *Conf.* 7. 17. 23. The reading *inclinationis* of some manuscripts is surely not right, but could be a corruption of *inclinatiois* (‘more inclined’); this would recall *Conf.* 7. 17. 21. But the manuscript reading adopted here gives a better description of *libidines*.

laboriosam quandam militiam extinguere affectant. Nam non se interimunt et curam suae valetudinis gerunt.

51. Qui autem perverse id agunt, quasi naturaliter inimico suo corpori bellum ingerunt. In quo fallit eos quod legunt, *caro concupiscit adversus spiritum et spiritus adversus carnem; haec enim invicem adversantur.*¹⁵⁰ Dictum est enim hoc propter indomitam carnalem consuetudinem, adversus quam spiritus concupiscit, non ut interimat corpus, sed ut concupiscentia eius, id est consuetudine mala, edomita faciat spiritui subiugatum, quod naturalis ordo desiderat. 52. Quia enim hoc erit post resurrectionem, ut corpus omnimodo cum quiete summa spiritui subditum immortaliter vigeat, hoc etiam in hac vita meditandum est, ut consuetudo carnis mutetur in melius nec inordinatis motibus resistat spiritui. Quod donec fiat, caro concupiscit adversus spiritum et spiritus adversus carnem, non per odium resistente spiritu, sed per principatum, quia magis quod diligit vult subditum esse meliori, nec per odium resistente carne, sed per consuetudinis vinculum, quod a parentum etiam propagine inveteratum naturae lege inolevit. 53. Id ergo agit spiritus in domanda carne ut solvat malae consuetudinis quasi pacta perversa¹⁵¹ et fiat pax consuetudinis bonae. Tamen nec isti qui falsa opinione depravati corpora sua detestantur parati essent unum oculum vel sine sensu doloris amittere, etiamsi in altero tantus cernendi sensus remaneret quantus erat in duobus, nisi aliqua res quae praeponenda esset urgeret. Isto atque huiusmodi documentis satis ostenditur eis qui sine pertinacia verum requirunt quam certa sententia sit apostoli, ubi ait, *nemo enim umquam carnem suam odio habuit.*¹⁵² Addidit etiam, *sed nutrit et fovet eam, sicut et Christus ecclesiam.*

54. Modus ergo diligendi praeciendus est homini, id est quomodo se diligit ut prosit sibi—quin autem se diligit et prodesse sibi velit, dubitare dementis est—praeciendum etiam quomodo corpus suum diligit, ut ei ordinate prudenterque consulat. Nam quod diligit etiam corpus suum idque salvum habere atque integrum velit, aequè manifestum est.

¹⁵⁰ Gal. 5: 17.

¹⁵¹ A favourite notion, used in different ways in 2. 74–95 and *Conf.* 1. 18. 29.

¹⁵² Eph. 5: 29.

is inferior—that they are trying to eliminate by this strenuous drilling of the body itself. After all, they do not kill themselves, and have some concern for their health.

51. Those who have this misguided aim are waging war on their body as if it were a natural enemy. They are misled by their reading of the words ‘the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; for these are in conflict with each other’.¹⁵³ These words were spoken because of the ungovernable habits of the flesh, against which the spirit lusts not in order to destroy the body but to make it subservient to the spirit, as our nature demands, by taming its lusts, that is, its evil habits. 52. For since it will be the case after the resurrection that the body will live for ever in a state of utmost tranquillity and total subservience to the spirit, it should be our concern in this life that the tendency of the flesh is reformed and not allowed to resist the spirit with its unruly impulses. But until this happens, the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. The spirit fights back not out of hatred, but to establish its primacy, because it wants the body it loves to be subservient to something better; nor does the flesh fight back out of hatred, but because of the stranglehold of these habits which, after establishing themselves in the stock of our ancestors, have become naturally ingrained. 53. The spirit’s aim in subduing the flesh is to break the perverse contracts¹⁵⁴ (so to speak) of these evil habits and establish the peace brought by good habits. Even those who are corrupted by false ideas and hate their bodies would not be prepared to lose one eye, even painlessly, and even if the sight remaining in the other eye were as good as the sight that there had been in both, unless they were constrained by some greater necessity. This and other arguments make it clear enough to those who seek the truth without prejudice that the apostle’s judgement was sound when he said ‘no-one ever felt hatred for his own body’.¹⁵⁵ And he added, ‘but one feeds it and looks after it, as Christ did to the church’.

54. Human beings must also be told how to love, that is, how to love themselves so as to do themselves good. (It would be absurd to doubt that anyone wishes to love himself and do himself good.) They must also be told how to love their own bodies so as to look after them systematically and sensibly; for it is equally obvious that one loves one’s own body and wants it

¹⁵³ Gal. 5: 17.

¹⁵⁴ A favourite notion, used in different ways in 2. 74–95 and *Conf.* 1. 18. 29.

¹⁵⁵ Eph. 5: 29.

55. Aliquid itaque amplius diligere aliquis potest quam salutem atque integritatem corporis sui. Nam multi et dolores et amissiones nonnullorum membrorum voluntarias suscepisse inveniuntur, sed ut alia quae amplius diligebant consequerentur. Non ergo propterea quisquam dicendus est non diligere salutem atque incolumitatem corporis sui quia plus aliquid diligit. 56. Nam et avarus quamvis pecuniam diligit tamen emit sibi panem; quod cum facit dat pecuniam quam multum diligit et augere desiderat, sed quia pluris aestimat salutem corporis sui, quae illo pane fulcitur. Supervacaneum est diutius de re manifestissima disputare, quod tamen plerumque nos facere cogit error impiorum.

57. Ergo quoniam praecepto non opus est ut se quisque et corpus suum diligit, id est quoniam id quod sumus et id quod infra nos, ad nos tamen pertinet, inconcussa naturae lege diligimus, quae in bestias etiam promulgata est (nam et bestiae se atque corpora sua diligunt) restabat ut et de illo quod supra nos est et de illo quod iuxta nos est praecepta sumeremus. *Diliges*, inquit, *dominum deum tuum ex toto corde tuo et ex tota anima tua et ex tota mente tua, et diliges proximum tuum tamquam te ipsum. In his duobus praeceptis tota lex pendet et omnes prophetae.*¹⁵⁶ 58. Finis itaque praecepti est dilectio¹⁵⁷ et ea gemina, id est dei et proximi. Quod si te totum intellegas, id est animum et corpus, et proximum totum, id est animum et corpus eius—homo enim ex animo constat et corpore—nullum rerum diligendarum genus in his duobus praeceptis praetermissum est. Cum enim praecurrat dilectio dei eiusque dilectionis modus praescriptus appareat, ita ut cetera in illum confluant, de dilectione tua nihil dictum videtur. Sed cum dictum est, *diliges proximum tuum tamquam te ipsum*, simul et tui abs te dilectio non praetermissa est.

59. Ille autem iuste et sancte vivit qui rerum integer aestimator est. Ipse est autem qui ordinatam habet dilectionem,¹⁵⁸ ne aut diligit quod non est diligendum, aut non diligit quod

¹⁵⁶ Matt. 22: 37–40. W. M. Green (*REA* 8 (1962) 228–9) believed that here and in 1. 67 *omnes* ('all', qualifying 'prophets'), which is read by many manuscripts and present as an early correction in the St Petersburg manuscript, was added by Augustine himself, correcting the biblical version with which he was familiar. This seems unlikely, and is not supported by his other quotations of the verse, which do not include *omnes*.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. 1 Tim. 1: 5.

¹⁵⁸ On the notion of 'ordered' love see Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-love in St. Augustine*, (New Haven, Conn., 1980), 24–32.

to be healthy and sound. 55. Now it is possible to love something more than the health and soundness of one's own body. It is well known that many people have voluntarily undergone pain and the amputation of limbs in order to obtain other things which they valued more. But it should not be said that someone does not value his body's health and safety just because he values something else more highly. 56. A miser buys himself bread in spite of the fact that he loves money; in doing so he gives away the money which he loves so much and wants to have more of, but he does this because he puts a greater value on the health of his body, which needs the bread for its sustenance. It is pointless to discuss such an obvious point further—though the heresy of the wicked often leaves us with no choice.

57. There is, then, no need to be instructed to love oneself and one's body; we love what we are and what is inferior to us but belongs to us, according to an immovable unvarying natural law, one which was also made for animals, because even animals love themselves and their bodies. It therefore remains for us to receive instruction about what is above us and what is close to us. Scripture says, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind', and, 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend the entire law and the prophets.'¹⁵⁹ 58. The aim of the commandment is love,¹⁶⁰ a double love of God and of one's neighbour. But if you understand by this your whole person—mind and body—and your whole neighbour—that is, his mind and body, for a person consists of mind and body—no class of things to be loved is missing from these two commandments. Although love of God comes first and the manner of loving him is clearly laid down, in such a way that everything else flows into it, nothing seems to have been said about self-love. But when it is said 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself', your own self-love is not neglected.

59. The person who lives a just and holy life is one who is a sound judge of these things. He is also a person who has ordered his love,¹⁶¹ so that he does not love what it is wrong to love, or fail to love what should be loved, or love too much what should be loved less < or love too little what should be loved

¹⁵⁹ Matt. 22: 37–40. W. M. Green (*REA* 8 (1962) 228–9) believed that here and in 1. 67 *omnes* ('all', qualifying 'prophets'), which is read by many manuscripts and present as an early correction in the St Petersburg manuscript, was added by Augustine himself, correcting the biblical version with which he was familiar. This seems unlikely, and is not supported by his other quotations of the verse, which do not include *omnes*.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. 1 Tim. 1: 5.

¹⁶¹ On the notion of 'ordered' love see Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-love in St. Augustine*, (New Haven, Conn., 1980), 24–32.

diligendum est, aut amplius diligit quod minus diligendum est, <aut minus diligit quod amplius diligendum est>¹⁶² aut aequè diligit quod vel minus vel amplius diligendum est, aut minus vel amplius quod aequè diligendum est. Omnis peccator, in quantum peccator est, non est diligendus, et omnis homo, in quantum homo est, diligendus est propter deum, deus vero propter se ipsum. 60. Et si deus omni homine amplius diligendus est, amplius quisque deum debet diligere quam se ipsum. Item amplius alius homo diligendus est quam corpus nostrum, quia propter deum omnia ista diligenda sunt et potest nobiscum alius homo deo perfrui, quod non potest corpus quia corpus per animam vivit qua fruimur deo.

61. Omnes autem aequè diligendi sunt. Sed cum omnibus prodesse non possis, his potissimum consulendum est qui pro locorum et temporum vel quarumlibet rerum opportunitatibus constrictius tibi quasi quadam sorte iunguntur. 62. Sicut enim si tibi abundaret aliquid quod dari oporteret ei qui non haberet nec duobus dari potuisset, si tibi occurrerent duo, quorum neuter alium vel indigentia vel erga te aliqua necessitudine superaret, nihil iustius faceres quam ut sorte legeres cui dandum esset quod dari utrique non posset, sic in hominibus quibus omnibus consulere nequeas pro sorte habendum est, prout quisque temporaliter colligatius adhaerere potuerit.

63. Omnium autem qui nobiscum frui possunt deo, partim eos diligimus quos ipsi adiuvamus, partim eos a quibus adiuvamur, partim quorum et indigemus adiutorio et indigentiae subvenimus, partim quibus nec ipsi conferimus aliquid commodi nec ab eis ut nobis conferatur attendimus. Velle tamen debemus ut omnes nobiscum diligant deum, et totum quod eos vel adiuvamus vel adiuvamur ab eis ad unum illum finem referendum est. 64. Si enim in theatris nequitiae¹⁶³ qui aliquem diligit histrionem et tamquam magno vel etiam summo bono eius arte perfruitur, omnes diligit qui secum eum diligunt, non propter illos, sed propter eum quem pariter diligunt, et quanto est in eius amore ferventior, tanto agit quibus modis potest ut a pluribus diligatur et tanto pluribus

¹⁶² These words are not present in the manuscripts, but surely needed; the omission is more likely to be a scribe's fault than Augustine's.

¹⁶³ A common complaint: cf. 2. 71.

more> ,¹⁶⁴ or love two things equally if one of them should be loved either less or more than the other, or love things either more or less if they should be loved equally. Every sinner, *qua* sinner, should not be loved; every human being, *qua* human being, should be loved on God's account; and God should be loved for himself. 60. And if God is to be loved more than any human being, each person should love God more than he loves himself. Likewise, another human being should be loved more than our own bodies, because all these things are to be loved on account of God whereas another person can enjoy God together with us in a way in which the body cannot, since the body lives only through the soul, and it is the soul by which we enjoy God.

61. All people should be loved equally. But you cannot do good to all people equally, so you should take particular thought for those who by the chance of place or time or anything else are, as if by lot, in particularly close contact with you. 62. Suppose that you had plenty of something which had to be given to someone in need of it but could not be given to two people, and you met two people, neither of whom had a greater need or a closer relationship to you than the other: you could do nothing more just than to choose by lot the person to whom you should give what could not be given to both. Analogously, since you cannot take thought for all men, you must settle by lot in favour of the one who happens to be more closely associated with you in temporal matters.

63. Of all those who are capable of enjoying God together with us, we love some whom we are helping, and some who are helping us; some whose help we need and some whose needs we are meeting; some to whom we give no benefit and some by whom we do not expect any benefit to be given to us. But it should be our desire that they all love God together with us, and all the help that we give to or receive from them must be related to this one end. 64. In the theatre—that den of wickedness¹⁶⁵—someone who loves an actor and revels in his skill as if it were a great good, or even the supreme one, also loves all those who share his love, not on their account, but on account of the one they equally love. The more passionate he is in his love, the more he tries by whatever methods he can to make his hero loved by a greater number of people, and the

¹⁶⁴ These words are not present in the manuscripts, but surely needed; the omission is more likely to be a scribe's fault than Augustine's.

¹⁶⁵ A common complaint: cf. 2. 71.

eum cupit ostendere, et quem frigidiorē videt, excitat eum quantum potest laudibus illius; si autem contravenientem invenerit, odit in illo vehementer odium dilecti sui, et quibus modis valet instat ut auferat—quid nos in societate dilectionis dei agere convenit, quo perfrui beate vivere est, et a quo habent omnes qui eum diligunt et quod sunt et quod eum diligunt, de quo nihil metuimus ne cuiquam possit cognitus displicere, et qui se vult diligi, non ut sibi aliquid sed ut eis qui diligunt aeternum praemium conferatur, hoc est ipse quem diligunt? 65. Hinc efficitur ut inimicos etiam nostros diligimus. Non enim eos timemus, quia nobis quod diligimus auferre non possunt, sed miseramur potius, quia tanto magis nos oderunt quanto ab illo quem diligimus separati sunt. Ad quem si conversi fuerint, et illum tamquam beatificum bonum et nos tamquam socios tanti boni necesse est diligant.

66. Oritur autem hoc loco de angelis nonnulla quaestio. Illo enim fruētes etiam ipsi beati sunt, quo et nos frui desideramus; et quantum in hac vita fruimur vel *per speculum* vel *in aenigmate*,¹⁶⁶ tanto eam peregrinationem et tolerabilius sustinemus et ardentius finire cupimus. Sed utrum ad illa duo praecepta etiam dilectio pertineat angelorum, non irrationabiliter quaeri potest. 67. Nam quod nullum hominum exceperit qui praecepit ut proximum diligamus, et ipse in evangelio dominus ostendit et apostolus Paulus. Namque ille cui duo ipsa praecepta protulerat atque in eis pendere totam legem prophetasque omnes dixerat, cum interrogaret eum dicens,¹⁶⁷ *et quis est mihi proximus?*¹⁶⁸ hominem quendam proposuit descendentem ab Hierusalem ad Hiericho incidisse in latrones et ab eis graviter vulneratum saucium et semivivum esse derelictum. Cui proximum esse non docuit nisi qui erga illum recreandum atque curandum misericors exstitit, ita ut hoc qui interrogaverat interrogatus ipse fateretur. 68. Cui dominus ait, *vade et tu fac similiter*,¹⁶⁹ ut videlicet eum proximum esse intellegamus, cui vel exhibendum est officium misericordiae, si indiget, vel exhibendum esset, si indigeret. Ex quo iam est

¹⁶⁶ 1 Cor. 13: 12.

¹⁶⁷ Matt. 22: 37–40. See n. 53 above.

¹⁶⁸ Luke 10: 29.

¹⁶⁹ Luke 10: 37.

more he desires to point him out to a greater number of people. If he sees someone unenthusiastic he rouses him as much as he can with his praises. If he finds anyone antagonistic, he violently hates that person's hatred of his hero and goes all out to remove it by whatever methods he can. So what should we do in sharing the love of God, whose full enjoyment constitutes the happy life? It is God from whom all those who love him derive both their existence and their love; it is God who frees us from any fear that he can fail to satisfy anyone to whom he becomes known; it is God who wants himself to be loved, not in order to gain any reward for himself but to give to those who love him an eternal reward—namely himself, the object of their love. 65. Hence the fact that we also love our enemies. We do not fear them, for they cannot take away from us what we love, but we pity them, for they hate us all the more because they are separated from the one we love. If they turned to him, it is inevitable that they would love him as the goodness which is the source of all happiness and love us as joint participants in such goodness.

66. At this point there arise questions about the angels. They are happy because they enjoy the one whom we too desire to enjoy; and the more we enjoy him in this life, whether 'in a mirror' or 'obscurely',¹⁷⁰ the easier it is for us to endure our absence and the stronger our yearning to end it. But it may be asked, not unreasonably, whether love of the angels is also covered by these two commandments. 67. That the commandment to love our neighbour excludes no human being is made clear by our Lord himself in the gospel and by the apostle Paul. When our Lord was asked by the man to whom he had pronounced these same two commandments and said that the whole law and the prophets depended on them,¹⁷¹ 'And who is my neighbour?',¹⁷² he told the story of a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho who fell among thieves, was badly beaten up by them, and left injured and half-dead. He taught that the man's only neighbour was the man who showed kindness in reviving and healing him; and he put this in such a way that when questioned the questioner himself admitted it. 68. The Lord said to him, 'Go and do the same'¹⁷³ so it is clear that we should understand by our neighbour the person to whom an act of compassion is due if he needs it or would be due if he

¹⁷⁰ 1 Cor. 13: 12.

¹⁷¹ Matt. 22: 37–40. See n. 53 above.

¹⁷² Luke 10: 29.

¹⁷³ Luke 10: 37.

consequens ut etiam ille a quo nobis hoc vicissim exhibendum est proximus sit noster. Proximi enim nomen ad aliquid est, nec quisquam esse proximus nisi proximo potest. 69. Nullum autem exceptum esse cui misericordiae denegetur officium, quis non videat, quando usque ad inimicos etiam porrectum est, eodem domino dicente, *diligite inimicos vestros,*

*benefacite eis qui vos oderunt.*¹⁷⁴ 70. Ita quoque Paulus apostolus docet cum dicit, *nam non adulterabis, non homicidium facies, non furaberis, non concupisces, et si quod est aliud mandatum, in hoc sermone recapitulatur; diliges proximum tuum tamquam te ipsum. Dilectio proximi malum non operatur.*¹⁷⁵ Quisquis ergo arbitratur non de omni homine apostolum praecepisse cogitur fateri, quod absurdissimum et sceleratissimum est, visum fuisse apostolo non esse peccatum si quis aut non Christiani aut inimici adulterarit uxorem aut eum occiderit aut eius rem concupiverit. Quod si dementis est dicere, manifestum est omnem hominem proximum esse deputandum, quia erga neminem operandum est malum.

71. Iam vero si vel cui praebendum vel a quo nobis praebendum est officium misericordiae recte proximus dicitur, manifestum est hoc praecepto quo iubemur diligere proximum etiam sanctos angelos contineri, a quibus tanta nobis misericordiae impenduntur officia quanta multis divinarum scripturarum locis animadvertere facile est. Ex quo et ipse deus et dominus noster proximum se nostrum dici voluit. Nam et se ipsum significat dominus Iesus Christus opitulatum esse semivivo iacenti in via afflicto et relicto a latronibus. 72. Et propheta in oratione ait *sicut proximum, sicut fratrem nostrum, ita complacebam.*¹⁷⁶ Sed quoniam excellentior ac supra nostram naturam est divina substantia, praeceptum quo diligamus deum a proximi dilectione distinctum est. Ille enim nobis praebet misericordiam propter suam bonitatem, nos autem nobis invicem propter illius, id est ille nostri miseretur ut se perfruamur, nos vero invicem nostri miseremur ut illo perfruamur.

73. Quapropter adhuc ambiguum videtur esse, cum dicimus

¹⁷⁴ Matt. 5: 44.

¹⁷⁵ Rom. 13: 9–10.

¹⁷⁶ Ps. 34: 14 (35: 14).

needed it. It follows from this that a person from whom an act of compassion is due to us in our turn is also our neighbour. For the word 'neighbour' implies a relationship: one can only be a neighbour to a neighbour. 69. Who can fail to see that there is no exception to this, nobody to whom compassion is not due? The commandment extends even to our enemies; in the words of our Lord once again, 'Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.'¹⁷⁷ 70. This is also the teaching of the apostle Paul when he says, 'The commandments "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet", and any other commandment, are summed up in this text "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." The love of one's neighbour does no wrong.'¹⁷⁸ Anyone who thinks that the apostle was not here giving commandments that embraced all people is compelled to admit something totally absurd and totally wicked: that Paul thought it no sin to violate the wife of a non-Christian or an enemy, or to kill him, or covet his property. If this conclusion is absurd, it is clear that all people must be reckoned as neighbours, because evil must not be done to anyone.

71. So if the person to whom compassion must be shown and the person by whom it must be shown to us are rightly called neighbours, it is obvious that the commandment by which we are instructed to love our neighbour also embraces the holy angels, who perform so many acts of compassion on our behalf, as can easily be observed in many passages of the holy scriptures. It follows that even the Lord God himself wanted to be called our neighbour; for the Lord Jesus Christ made clear that it was he himself who assisted the man who lay half-dead on the road, beaten up and abandoned by the robbers. 72. And in a prayer the prophet says, 'I grieved for him as for a neighbour, or a brother.'¹⁷⁹ But because the divine substance is altogether transcendent and far above our own nature, the commandment to love God was kept distinct from the commandment to love our neighbour. God shows compassion to us because of his own kindness, and we in turn show it to one another because of his kindness: in other words, he pities us so that we may enjoy him, and we in our turn pity one another so that we may enjoy him.

73. There is still an element of uncertainty here. I am saying

¹⁷⁷ Matt. 5: 44.

¹⁷⁸ Rom. 13: 9–10.

¹⁷⁹ Ps. 34: 14 (35: 14).

ea re nos perfrui quam diligimus propter se ipsam, et ea re nobis fruendum esse tantum, qua efficimur beati, ceteris vero utendum. Diligit enim nos deus, et multum nobis dilectionem eius erga nos divina scriptura commendat.¹⁸⁰ Quomodo ergo diligit—ut nobis utatur an ut fruatur? 74. Sed si fruitur, eget bono nostro, quod nemo sanus dixerit. Omne enim nostrum bonum vel ipse vel ab ipso est. Cui autem obscurum vel dubium est, non egere lucem rerum harum nitore quas ipsa illustraverit? Dicit apertissime etiam propheta, *dixi domino, dominus meus es tu, quoniam bonorum meorum non eges*.¹⁸¹ Non ergo fruitur nobis, sed utitur. Nam si neque fruitur neque utitur, non invenio quemadmodum diligat.

75. Sed neque sic utitur ut nos; nam nos res quibus utimur ad id referimus, ut dei bonitate perfruamur, deus vero ad suam bonitatem usum nostrum refert. Quia enim bonus est, sumus; et in quantum sumus, boni sumus. Porro quia etiam iustus est, non impune mali sumus; et in quantum mali sumus, in tantum etiam minus sumus. Ille enim summe ac primitus est, qui omnino incommutabilis est et qui plenissime dicere potuit, *ego sum qui sum, et dices eis: qui est misit me ad vos*,¹⁸² ut cetera quae sunt et nisi ab illo esse non possint et in tantum bona sint, in quantum acceperunt ut sint. 76. Ille igitur usus qui dicitur dei quo nobis utitur, non ad eius sed ad nostram utilitatem refertur, ad eius autem tantummodo bonitatem. Cuius autem nos miseremur et cui consulimus, ad eius quidem utilitatem id facimus eamque intuemur, sed nescio quomodo etiam nostra fit consequens, cum eam misericordiam, quam impendimus egenti, sine mercede non relinquit deus. Haec autem merces summa est, ut ipso perfruamur et omnes qui eo fruimur nobis etiam invicem in ipso perfruamur.

77. Nam si in nobis id facimus, remanemus in via et spem beatitudinis nostrae in homine aut in angelo collocamus. Quod et homo superbus et angelus superbus arrogant sibi atque in se aliorum spem gaudent constitui; sanctus autem homo et sanctus angelus etiam fessos nos atque in se acquiescere et remanere cupientes reficiunt potius aut eo sumptu

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Rom. 5: 8.

¹⁸¹ Ps. 15: 2 (16: 2).

¹⁸² Exod. 3: 14.

that we enjoy a thing which we love for itself, and that we should enjoy only a thing by which we are made happy, but use everything else. God loves us (and the divine scripture often commends his love towards us),¹⁸³ but in what way does he love us—so as to use us or to enjoy us? 74. If he enjoys us, he stands in need of our goodness, which only a madman could assert; for all our goodness either comes from him or actually is him. Is it not quite clear and beyond all doubt that light does not stand in need of the brightness of the things which it illuminates? The prophet says very clearly, ‘I said to the Lord, “You are my Lord, since you do not stand in need of my goodness.”’¹⁸⁴ So God does not enjoy us, but uses us. (If he neither enjoys nor uses us, then I fail to see how he can love us at all.)

75. But he does not use us in the way that we use things; for we relate the things which we use to the aim of enjoying God's goodness, whereas God relates his use of us to his own goodness. We exist because he is good, and we are good to the extent that we exist. Moreover, because he is also just, we are not evil with impunity; if we are evil, to that extent we exist less. God exists in the supreme sense, and the original sense, of the word. He is altogether unchangeable, and it is he who could say with full authority ‘I am who I am’, and ‘You will say to them, “I have been sent by the one who is”’;¹⁸⁵ so it is true of other things which exist that they could not exist except by him, and that they are good to the extent that they have received their existence from him. 76. So the kind of use attributed to God, that by which he uses us, is related not to his own advantage, but solely to his goodness. If we pity someone or take thought for someone, we do so for that person's advantage, and we concentrate on that; but somehow there also results an advantage to us, since God does not let the compassion we show to the needy go unrewarded. This reward is the supreme reward—that we may thoroughly enjoy him and that all of us who enjoy him may enjoy one another in him.

77. For if we enjoy one another in ourselves, we remain on the road and put our hopes of happiness on a human being or an angel. This is something that arrogant people and arrogant angels pride themselves on; they rejoice when the hopes of others are placed on them. But a holy person or a holy angel restores us when we are weary and when we desire to rest in

¹⁸³ Cf. Rom. 5: 8.

¹⁸⁴ Ps. 15: 2 (16: 2).

¹⁸⁵ Exod. 3: 14.

quem propter nos, aut illo etiam quem propter se acceperunt, acceperunt tamen, atque ita refectos in illum ire compellunt, quo fruenter pariter beati sumus. 78. Nam et apostolus clamat, *numquid Paulus crucifixus est pro vobis? Aut in nomine Pauli baptizati estis?*¹⁸⁶ et, *neque qui plantat est aliquid neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat deus,*¹⁸⁷ et angelus hominem se adorantem monet ut illum potius adoret sub quo ei domino etiam ipse conservus est.¹⁸⁸

79. Cum autem homine in deo frueris, deo potius quam homine frueris. Illo enim frueris quo efficeris beatus, et ad eum te pervenisse laetaberis, in quo spem ponis ut venias. Inde ad Philemonem Paulus, *ita, frater,* inquit, *ego te fruar in domino.*¹⁸⁹ Quod si non addidisset *in domino* et *te fruar* tantum dixisset, in eo constitueret spem beatitudinis suae. Quamquam etiam vicinissime dicitur frui cum dilectione uti. 80. Cum enim adest quod diligitur, etiam delectationem secum necesse est gerat. Per quam si transieris eamque ad illud ubi permanendum est rettuleris, uteris ea et abusive, non proprie, diceris frui.¹⁹⁰ Si vero inhaeris atque permanseris, finem in ea ponens laetitiae tuae, tunc vere et proprie frui dicendus es. Quod non faciendum est nisi in illa trinitate, id est summo et incommutabili bono.

81. Vide quemadmodum, cum ipsa veritas et verbum per quod facta sunt omnia, caro factum esset ut habitaret in nobis,¹⁹¹ tamen ait apostolus, *et si noveramus Christum secundum carnem, sed iam non novimus.*¹⁹² Ille quippe qui non solum pervenientibus possessionem, sed etiam viam se voluit praebere venientibus ad principium viarum, voluit carnem assumere. Unde est etiam illud: *dominus creavit me in principio viarum suarum,*¹⁹³ ut inde inciperent qui vellent venire. 82. Apostolus igitur, quamvis adhuc ambularet in via et ad palmam supernae

¹⁸⁶ 1 Cor. 1: 13.

¹⁸⁷ 1 Cor. 3: 7.

¹⁸⁸ Rev. 19: 10; 22: 8–9.

¹⁸⁹ Philem. 20. For this way of describing love cf. 3. 37 and *Ep.* 26. 4.

¹⁹⁰ For the trope of *abusio* (catachresis), cf. 3. 89.

¹⁹¹ John 1: 3, 14.

¹⁹² 2 Cor. 5: 16.

¹⁹³ Prov. 8: 22.

them and stay with them, using either the resources which they have received for our sakes or those which they have received for their own sakes (but in either case they have certainly received them); and then they impel us, thus restored, to go to the one by the enjoyment of whom we likewise are made happy. 78. The apostle exclaims, 'Was it Paul that was crucified for you? Or were you baptized in Paul's name?'¹⁹⁴ and 'Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the increase.'¹⁹⁵ And the angel warned the man who was adoring him that he should adore God instead, the master under whom he was but the man's fellow servant.¹⁹⁶

79. When you enjoy a human being in God, you are enjoying God rather than that human being. For you enjoy the one by whom you are made happy, and you will one day rejoice that you have attained the one in whom you now set your hope of attaining him. So Paul says to Philemon: 'So, brother, I shall enjoy you in the Lord.'¹⁹⁷ If he had not added the words 'in the Lord', and just said, 'I shall enjoy you', he would have been setting his hopes of happiness on Philemon. Yet the idea of enjoying someone or something is very close to that of using someone or something together with love. 80. For when the object of love is present, it inevitably brings with it pleasure as well. If you go beyond this pleasure and relate it to your permanent goal, you are using it, and are said to enjoy it not in the literal sense but in a transferred sense.¹⁹⁸ But if you hold fast and go no further, making it the goal of your joy, then you should be described as enjoying it in the true and literal sense of the word. This is to be done only in the case of the Trinity, the supreme and unchangeable good.

81. Notice how, although the truth itself and the word by which all things were made became flesh so that it could live among us,¹⁹⁹ the apostle says, 'And if we knew Christ according to the flesh, we do not know him in the same way now.'²⁰⁰ In fact Christ, who chose to offer himself not only as a possession for those who come to their journey's end but also as a road for those who come to the beginning of the ways, chose to become flesh. Whence the saying, 'God created me at the beginning of his ways',²⁰¹ so that those who wanted to come could begin from there. 82. The apostle, then, although still walking on the road and following God as he called him to the prize of a higher

¹⁹⁴ 1 Cor. 1: 13.

¹⁹⁵ 1 Cor. 3: 7.

¹⁹⁶ Rev. 19: 10; 22: 8–9.

¹⁹⁷ Philem. 20. For this way of describing love cf. 3. 37 and *Ep.* 26. 4.

¹⁹⁸ For the trope of *abusio* (catachresis), cf. 3. 89.

¹⁹⁹ John 1: 3, 14.

²⁰⁰ 2 Cor. 5: 16.

²⁰¹ Prov. 8: 22.

vocationis sequeretur vocantem deum, tamen ea *quae retro sunt obliviscens et in ea quae ante sunt extentus*²⁰² iam principium viarum transierat, hoc est, eo non indigebat a quo tamen aggrediendum et exordiendum iter est omnibus qui ad veritatem pervenire et in vita aeterna permanere desiderant. Sic enim ait, *ego sum via et veritas et vita*,²⁰³ hoc est ‘per me venit, ad me pervenitur, in me permanetur’. 83. Cum enim ad ipsum pervenitur, etiam ad patrem pervenitur,²⁰⁴ quia per aequalem ille cui est aequalis agnoscitur, vinciente et tamquam agglutinante nos sancto spiritu, quo in summo atque incommutabili bono permanere possimus. Ex quo intellegitur quam nulla res in via tenere nos debeat, quando nec ipse dominus, in quantum via nostra esse dignatus est, tenere nos voluerit sed transire, ne rebus temporalibus, quamvis ab illo pro salute nostra susceptis et gestis, haereamus infirmiter sed per eas potius curramus alacriter, ut ad eum ipsum, qui nostram naturam e temporalibus liberavit et collocavit ad dexteram patris, provehi atque pervehi mereamur.

84. Omnium igitur quae dicta sunt ex quo de rebus tractamus haec summa est, ut intellegatur legis²⁰⁵ et omnium divinarum scripturarum plenitudo et finis esse dilectio rei qua fruendum est et rei quae nobiscum ea re frui potest, quia ut se quisque diligit praecepto non opus est. 85. Hoc ergo ut nossemus atque possemus facta est tota pro nostra salute per divinam providentiam dispensatio temporalis, qua debemus uti non quasi mansoria quadam dilectione et delectatione sed transitoria potius tamquam viae, tamquam vehiculorum vel aliorum quorumlibet instrumentorum, aut si quid congruentius dici potest, ut ea quibus ferimur propter illud ad quod ferimur diligamus.

86. Quisquis igitur scripturas divinas vel quamlibet earum partem intellexisse sibi videtur, ita ut eo intellectu non aedificet istam geminam caritatem dei et proximi, nondum intellexit. Quisquis vero talem inde sententiam duxerit, ut huic aedificandae caritati sit utilis, nec tamen hoc dixerit quod ille quem legit eo loco sensisse probabitur, non perniciose fallitur nec omnino mentitur. Inest quippe in mentiente voluntas falsa

²⁰² Phil. 3: 14, 13.

²⁰³ John 14: 6.

²⁰⁴ Cf. John 14: 6–11.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Rom. 13: 10 and 1 Tim. 1: 5.

calling, none the less ‘forgetting what was behind and straining forward to what lay ahead’²⁰⁶ had already passed beyond the beginning of the ways. In other words, he was not deprived of the one from whom the journey must actually be undertaken and begun by all who long to come to the truth and abide in eternal life. For Christ says, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’;²⁰⁷ that is, ‘you come by me, you come to me, you abide in me’. 83. For when you come to him, you come also to the Father,²⁰⁸ because God, to whom he is equal, is recognized through his equal, and the spirit binds us and as it were cements us together, so that we can abide in the supreme and unchangeable good. From this it is to be inferred that nothing must detain us on our way, since not even the Lord, at least in his graciously chosen role of being our way, wanted to detain us, but wanted us to pass on, not sticking feebly to temporal things, even though they were accepted and endured by him for our salvation, but rather hastening eagerly through them so that in our journey to the one who has freed our nature from temporal things and set it at the Father’s right hand we may achieve progress and success.

84. The chief purpose of all that we have been saying in our discussion of things is to make it understood that the fulfilment and end of the law²⁰⁹ and all the divine scriptures is to love the thing which must be enjoyed and the thing which together with us can enjoy that thing (since there is no need for a commandment to love oneself). 85. To enlighten us and enable us, the whole temporal dispensation was set up by divine providence for our salvation. We must make use of this, not with a permanent love and enjoyment of it, but with a transient love and enjoyment of our journey, or of our conveyances (so to speak) or any other expedients whatsoever (there may be a more appropriate word), so that we love the means of transport only because of our destination.

86. So anyone who thinks that he has understood the divine scriptures or any part of them, but cannot by his understanding build up this double love of God and neighbour, has not yet succeeded in understanding them. Anyone who derives from them an idea which is useful for supporting this love but fails to say what the writer demonstrably meant in the passage has not made a fatal error, and is certainly not a liar. In a liar there is a

²⁰⁶ Phil. 3: 14, 13.

²⁰⁷ John 14: 6.

²⁰⁸ Cf. John 14: 6–11.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Rom. 13: 10 and 1 Tim. 1: 5.

dicendi, et ideo multos invenimus qui mentiri velint, qui autem falli, neminem.²¹⁰ 87. Cum igitur hoc sciens homo faciat, illud nesciens patiat, satis apparet in una eademque re illum qui fallitur eo qui mentitur esse meliorem, quandoquidem pati melius est iniquitatem quam facere. Omnis autem qui mentitur inique facit, et si cuiquam videtur utile aliquando esse mendacium, potest videri utilem aliquando esse iniquitatem. Nemo enim mentiens in eo quod mentitur servat fidem. Nam hoc utique vult, ut cui mentitur fidem sibi habeat, quam tamen ei mentiando non servat. Omnis autem fidei violator iniquus est. Aut igitur iniquitas aliquando est utilis, quod fieri non

potest, aut mendacium semper inutile est. 88. Sed quisquis in scripturis aliud sentit quam ille qui scripsit, illis non mentientibus fallitur. Sed tamen, ut dicere coeperam, si ea sententia fallitur qua aedificet caritatem, quae finis praecepti est, ita fallitur ac si quisquam errore deserens viam eo tamen per agrum pergat quo etiam via illa perducit. Corrigendus est tamen, et quam sit utilius viam non deserere demonstrandum est, ne consuetudine deviandi etiam in transversum aut perversum ire cogatur.

89. Asserendo enim temere quod ille non sensit quem legit plerumque incurrit in alia quae illi sententiae contexere nequeat. Quae si vera et certa esse consentit, illud non possit verum esse quod senserat, fitque in eo nescio quo modo ut amando sententiam suam scripturae incipiat offensior esse quam sibi. Quod malum si serpere siverit, evertetur ex eo. *Per fidem enim ambulamus, non per speciem*,²¹¹ titubabit autem fides, si divinarum scripturarum vacillat auctoritas; porro fide titubante caritas etiam ipsa languescit. 90. Nam si a fide quisque ceciderit, a caritate etiam necesse est cadat. Non enim potest diligere quod esse non credit. Porro si et credit et diligit, bene agendo et praeceptis morum bonorum obtemperando efficit ut etiam speret se ad id quod diligit esse venturum. Itaque tria haec sunt quibus et scientia omnis et prophetia militat: fides,

spes, caritas.²¹² 91. Sed fidei succedet species quam videbimus, et spei succedet beatitudo ipsa ad quam perventuri sumus, caritas autem etiam istis decedentibus augebitur

²¹⁰ There is a fuller treatment of this and other questions about lying in Augustine's *De Mendaciis*.

²¹¹ 2 Cor. 5: 7

²¹² 1 Cor. 13: 13.

desire to say what is false, and that is why we find many who want to lie but nobody who wants to be misled.²¹³ 87. Since a person lies knowingly but is misled unknowingly, it is clear enough that in any given situation the person misled is better than the one who lies, since it is better to suffer injustice than to commit it. Everyone who lies commits injustice; so anyone who believes a lie is sometimes useful believes that injustice is sometimes useful. No-one who lies keeps faith while lying—he certainly desires that the person he lies to should put faith in him, but when lying he does not keep faith—and everyone who breaks faith is unjust. So either injustice is sometimes useful—which is impossible—or lying is always useless. 88. Anyone with an interpretation of the scriptures that differs from that of the writer is misled, but not because the scriptures are lying. If, as I began by saying, he is misled by an idea of the kind that builds up love, which is the end of the commandment, he is misled in the same way as a walker who leaves his path by mistake but reaches the destination to which the path leads by going through a field. But he must be put right and shown how it is more useful not to leave the path, in case the habit of deviating should force him to go astray or even adrift.

89. It often happens that by thoughtlessly asserting something that the author did not mean an interpreter runs up against other things which cannot be reconciled with that original idea. If he agrees that these things are true and certain, his original interpretation could not possibly be true, and by cherishing his own idea he comes in some strange way to be more displeased with scripture than with himself. If he encourages this evil to spread it will be his downfall. ‘For we walk by faith, not by sight’,²¹⁴ and faith will falter if the authority of holy scripture is shaken; and if faith falters, love itself decays. 90. For if someone lapses in his faith, he inevitably lapses in his love as well, since he cannot love what he does not believe to be true. If on the other hand he both believes and loves, then by good conduct and by following the rules of good behaviour he gives himself reason to hope that he will attain what he loves. So there are these three things which all knowledge and prophecy serve: faith, hope, and love.²¹⁵ 91. But faith will be replaced by the sight of visible reality, and hope by the real happiness which we shall attain, whereas love will actually increase when these

²¹³ There is a fuller treatment of this and other questions about lying in Augustine's *De Mendacia*.

²¹⁴ 2 Cor. 5: 7

²¹⁵ 1 Cor. 13: 13.

potius. Si enim credendo diligimus quod nondum videmus, quanto magis cum videre coeperimus? Et si sperando diligimus quo nondum pervenimus, quanto magis cum pervenerimus? 92. Inter temporalia quippe atque aeterna hoc interest, quod temporale aliquid plus diligitur antequam habeatur, vilescet autem cum advenerit; non enim satiat animam, cui vera est et certa sedes aeternitas. Aeternum autem ardentius diligitur adeptum quam desideratum; nulli enim desideranti conceditur plus de illo existimare quam se habet, ut ei vilescat cum minus invenerit, sed quantum quisque veniens existimare potuerit, plus perveniens inventurus est.

93. Homo itaque fide et spe et caritate subnixus eaque inconcusse retinens non indiget scripturis nisi ad alios instruendos. Itaque multi per haec tria etiam in solitudine sine codicibus vivunt. Unde in illis arbitror iam impletum esse quod dictum est: *sive prophetiae evacuabuntur sive linguae cessabunt sive scientia evacuabitur*.²¹⁶ 94. Quibus tamen quasi machinis tanta fidei et spei et caritatis in eis surrexit instructio, ut perfectum aliquid tenentes *ea quae sunt ex parte* non quaerant²¹⁷—perfectum sane, quantum in hac vita potest; nam in comparatione futurae vitae nullius iusti et sancti est vita ista perfecta. Ideo *manent*, inquit, *fides, spes, caritas, tria haec. Maior autem horum est caritas*,²¹⁸ quia et cum quisque ad aeterna pervenerit duobus istis decedentibus caritas auctor et certior permanebit.

95. Quapropter cum quisque cognoverit finem praecepti esse caritatem *de corde puro et conscientia bona et fide non ficta*,²¹⁹ omnem intellectum divinarum scripturarum ad ista tria relaturus, ad tractationem illorum librorum securus accedat. Cum enim diceret *caritas*, addidit *de corde puro*, ut nihil aliud quam id quod diligendum est diligatur. *Conscientiam* vero *bonam* subiunxit propter spem: ille enim se ad id quod credit et diligit perventurum esse desperat cui malae conscientiae scrupulus inest. Tertio *et fide*, inquit, *non ficta*. 96. si enim

²¹⁶ 1 Cor. 13: 8.

²¹⁷ 1 Cor. 13: 10.

²¹⁸ 1 Cor. 13: 13.

²¹⁹ 1 Tim. 1: 5.

things pass away. If, through faith, we love what we cannot yet see, how much greater will our love be when we have begun to see! And if, through hope, we love something that we have not yet attained, how much greater will our love be when we have attained it! 92. There is this important difference between temporal things and eternal things: something temporal is loved more before it is possessed, but will lose its appeal when attained, for it does not satisfy the soul, whose true and certain abode is eternity. The eternal, on the other hand, is loved more passionately when obtained than when desired. No-one who desires it is allowed to think more highly of it than is warranted (it would then disappoint when found to be less impressive); but however high one's expectations on the way one will find it even more impressive on arrival.

93. Therefore a person strengthened by faith, hope, and love, and who steadfastly holds on to them, has no need of the scriptures except to instruct others. That is why many people, relying on these three things, actually live in solitude without any texts of the scriptures. They are, I think, a fulfilment of the saying 'If there are prophecies, they will lose their meaning; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge that too will lose its meaning.'²²⁰ 94. By these devices (so to speak) such an edifice of faith, hope, and love has been built in them that they do not seek what is imperfect,²²¹ for they hold what is perfect—perfect, that is, as far as anything can be in this life; for in comparison with the life to come the life of no righteous or holy man in this world is perfect. This is why scripture says, 'there remain faith, hope, and love, these three; the greatest of these is love':²²² when one reaches eternity the other two will pass away and love will remain in an enhanced and a more certain form.

95. So when someone has learnt that the aim of the commandment is 'love from a pure heart, and good conscience and genuine faith',²²³ he will be ready to relate every interpretation of the holy scriptures to these three things and may approach the task of handling these books with confidence. For when the apostle said 'love' he added 'from a pure heart', so that nothing is loved except what should be loved. He added 'good' to 'conscience' because of hope; for a person with the incubus of a bad conscience despairs of reaching what he loves and believes. Thirdly, he said 'with genuine faith': 96. for if our faith is free

²²⁰ 1 Cor. 13: 8.

²²¹ 1 Cor. 13: 10.

²²² 1 Cor. 13: 13.

²²³ 1 Tim. 1: 5.

fides nostra mendacio caruerit, tunc et non diligimus quod non est diligendum et recte vivendo id speramus, ut nullo modo spes nostra fallatur.

Propterea de rebus continentibus fidem, quantum pro tempore satis esse arbitratus sum, dicere volui, quia in aliis voluminibus sive per alios sive per nos multa iam dicta sunt. Modus itaque sit iste libri huius. Cetera de signis, quantum dominus dederit, disseremus.

of untruthfulness then we do not love what should not be loved, whereas by living aright it is impossible for our hope to be in any way misguided.

I have chosen to speak of the things which are objects of our faith only to the extent that I considered necessary for the present context; much has already been said by me and by others in other works. This is the end of this book. The remainder of my discussion, in as much detail as the Lord allows, will be about signs.

Liber Secundus

Liber Secundus

1. Quoniam de rebus cum scriberem praemisi commonens ne quis in eis attenderet nisi quod sunt, non etiam si quid aliud praeter se significant,²²⁴ vicissim de signis disserens hoc dico, ne quis in eis attendat quod sunt, sed potius quod signa sunt, id est quod significant.²²⁵ Signum est enim res praeter speciem quam ingerit sensibus aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem venire; sicut vestigio viso transisse animal cuius vestigium est cogitamus et fumo viso ignem subesse cognoscimus, et voce animantis audita affectionem animi eius advertimus, et tuba sonante milites vel progredi se vel regredi, et si quid aliud pugna postulat, oportere noverunt.

2. Signorum igitur alia sunt naturalia, alia data. Naturalia sunt quae sine voluntate atque ullo appetitu significandi praeter se aliquid aliud ex se cognosci faciunt, sicuti est fumus significans ignem. Non enim volens significare id facit, sed rerum expertarum animadversione et notatione cognoscitur ignem subesse, etiam si fumus solus appareat. Sed et vestigium transeuntis animantis ad hoc genus pertinet, et vultus irati seu tristis affectionem animi significat, etiam nulla eius voluntate qui aut iratus aut tristis est, aut si quis alius motus animi vultu indice proditur, etiam nobis non id agentibus ut prodatur. Sed de hoc toto genere nunc disserere non est propositum. Quoniam tamen incidit in partitionem nostram, praeteriri omnino non potuit, atque id hactenus notatum esse suffecerit.

3. Data vero signa sunt quae sibi quaeque viventia invicem dant ad demonstrandos quantum possunt motus animi sui vel sensa aut intellecta quaelibet. Nec ulla causa est nobis

²²⁴ 1.4.

²²⁵ There are illuminating analyses of Augustine's theory of signs in R. A. Markus, 'St. Augustine on Signs', *Phronesis*, 2 (1957), 60–83, B. D. Jackson, 'The Theory of Signs in St Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 15 (1969) 9–49 and C. Kirwan, *Augustine* (London, 1989), 35–43.

Book Two

1. When I was writing about things I began with the warning that attention should be paid solely to the fact that they existed, and not to anything besides themselves that they might signify.²²⁶ Now that I am discussing signs, I must say, conversely, that attention should not be paid to the fact that they exist, but rather to the fact that they are signs, or, in other words, that they signify.²²⁷ For a sign is a thing which of itself makes some other thing come to mind, besides the impression that it presents to the senses. So when we see a footprint we think that the animal whose footprint it is has passed by; when we see smoke we realize that there is fire beneath it; when we hear the voice of an animate being we note its feeling; and when the trumpet sounds soldiers know they must advance or retreat or do whatever else the state of the battle demands.

2. Some signs are natural, others given. Natural signs are those which without a wish or any urge to signify cause something else besides themselves to be known from them, like smoke, which signifies fire. It does not signify fire because it wishes to do so; but because of our observation and attention to things that we have experienced it is realized that there is fire beneath it, even if nothing but smoke appears. The footprint of a passing animal also belongs to this category. The expression of an angry or depressed person signifies an emotional state even if there is no such wish on the part of the person who is angry or depressed, and likewise any other emotion is revealed by the evidence of the face even if we are not seeking to reveal it. It is not my intention to discuss this whole category now, but since it comes into my classification it could not be omitted altogether. So let the above remarks suffice.

3. Given signs are those which living things give to each other, in order to show, to the best of their ability, the emotions of their minds, or anything that they have felt or learnt. There is

²²⁶ 1.4.

²²⁷ There are illuminating analyses of Augustine's theory of signs in R. A. Markus, 'St. Augustine on Signs', *Phronesis*, 2 (1957), 60–83, B. D. Jackson, 'The Theory of Signs in St Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 15 (1969) 9–49 and C. Kirwan, *Augustine* (London, 1989), 35–43.

significandi, id est signi dandi, nisi ad depromendum et traiciendum in alterius animum id quod animo gerit qui signum dat. Horum igitur signorum genus, quantum ad homines attinet, considerare atque tractare statuimus, quia et signa divinitus data quae scripturis sanctis continentur per homines nobis indicata sunt qui ea conscripserunt. 4. Habent etiam bestiae quaedam inter se signa quibus produnt appetitum animi sui. Nam et gallus gallinaceus reperto cibo dat signum vocis gallinae ut accurrat, et columbus gemitu columbam vocat vel ab ea vicissim vocatur, et multa huiusmodi animadverti solent. Quae utrum, sicut vultus aut dolentis clamor, sine voluntate significandi sequantur motum animi an vere ad significandum dentur, alia quaestio est et ad rem quae agitur non pertinet. Quam partem ab hoc opere tamquam non necessariam removemus.

5. Signorum igitur, quibus inter se homines sua sensa communicant, quaedam pertinent ad oculorum sensum, pleraque ad aurium, paucissima ad ceteros sensus. Nam cum innuimus non damus signum nisi oculis eius quem volumus per hoc signum voluntatis nostrae participem facere. Et quidam motus manuum pleraque significant, et historiones omnium membrorum motibus dant signa quaedam scientibus et cum oculis eorum quasi fabulantur, et vexilla draconesque militares per oculos insinuant voluntatem ducum. Et sunt haec omnia quasi quaedam verba visibilia. 6. Ad aures autem quae pertinent, ut dixi, plura sunt, in verbis maxime. Nam et tuba et tibia et cithara dant plerumque non solum suavem sed etiam significantem sonum. Sed omnia verbis comparata paucissima sunt. Verba enim prorsus inter homines obtinuerunt principatum significandi quaecumque animo concipiuntur, si ea quisque prodere velit. 7. Nam et odore unguenti dominus, quo perfusi sunt pedes eius, signum aliquod dedit,²²⁸ et sacramento corporis et sanguinis sui per gustatum significavit quod voluit,²²⁹ et cum mulier tangendo fimbriam vestimenti eius salva facta est²³⁰ nonnihil significat. Sed innumerabilis multitudo signorum quibus suas cogitationes homines exserunt in verbis constituta

²²⁸ John 12: 3–7.

²²⁹ Matt. 26: 26–8; Mark 14: 22–4; Luke 22: 15–20.

²³⁰ Matt. 9: 20–2; Mark 5: 25–9; Luke 8: 43–4.

no reason for us to signify something (that is, to give a sign) except to express and transmit to another's mind what is in the mind of the person who gives the sign. It is this category of signs—to the extent that it applies to humans—that I have decided to examine and discuss, because even the divinely given signs contained in the holy scriptures have been communicated to us by the human beings who wrote them. 4. Some animals, too, have signs among themselves by which they show the desires of their minds: a cockerel on finding food gives a vocal sign to its hen to come quickly, and a dove calls to, or is called by, its mate by cooing. Many other such signs are observed regularly. Whether (as with a facial expression or a shout of pain) they accompany emotion without any desire to signify, or whether they are really given in order to signify something, is another question, and irrelevant to the matter in hand. I am excluding it from this work as not essential.

5. Some of the signs by which people communicate their feelings to one another concern the eyes; most of them concern the ears, and a very small number concern the other senses. When we nod, we give a sign just to the eyes of the person whom we want, by means of that sign, to make aware of our wishes. Certain movements of the hands signify a great deal. Actors, by the movement of all their limbs, give certain signs to the *cognoscenti* and, as it were, converse with the spectators' eyes; and it is through the eyes that flags and standards convey the wishes of military commanders. All these things are, to coin a phrase, visible words. 6. But most signs, as I said, and especially verbal ones, concern the ears. A trumpet, a flute, and a lyre generally produce not just a pleasant sound but one that is also significant. But these signs are very few compared with words. Words have gained an altogether dominant role among humans in signifying the ideas conceived by the mind that a person wants to reveal. 7. It is true that our Lord gave a sign through the smell of the ointment by which his feet were anointed,²³¹ and that in the sacrament of his body and blood he signified his wishes through the sense of taste,²³² and that the healing of the woman who touched the border of his garment²³³ has its significance. But an incalculable number of the signs by which people disclose their thoughts consist in words. I have

²³¹ John 12: 3–7.

²³² Matt. 26: 26–8; Mark 14: 22–4; Luke 22: 15–20.

²³³ Matt. 9: 20–2; Mark 5: 25–9; Luke 8: 43–4.

est. Nam illa signa omnia, quorum genera breviter attigi, potui verbis enuntiare, verba vero illis signis nullo modo possem.

8. Sed quia verberato aere statim transeunt nec diutius manent quam sonant, instituta sunt per litteras signa verborum. Ita voces oculis ostenduntur, non per se ipsas, sed per signa quaedam sua. Ista signa igitur non potuerunt communia esse omnibus gentibus, peccato quodam dissensionis humanae, cum ad se quisque principatum rapit. Cuius superbiae signum est erecta illa turris in caelum, ubi homines impii non solum

animos sed etiam voces dissonas habere meruerunt.²³⁴ 9. Ex quo factum est ut etiam scriptura divina, qua tantis morbis humanarum voluntatum subvenitur, ab una lingua profecta,²³⁵ qua opportune potuit per orbem terrarum disseminari, per varias interpretum linguas longe lateque diffusa innotesceret gentibus ad salutem. Quam legentes nihil aliud appetunt quam cogitationes voluntatemque illorum a quibus conscripta est invenire et per illas voluntatem dei, secundum quam tales homines locutos credimus.

10. Sed multis et multiplicibus obscuritatibus et ambiguitatibus decipiuntur qui temere legunt, aliud pro alio sentientes. Quibusdam autem locis quid vel falso suspicentur non inveniunt: ita obscure dicta quaedam densissimam caliginem obducunt. Quod totum provisum esse divinitus non dubito, ad edomandam labore superbiam et intellectum a fastidio renovandum, cui facile investigata plerumque vilescunt.²³⁶ 11. Quid enim est, quaeso, quod si quisquam dicat sanctos esse homines atque perfectos, quorum vita et moribus Christi ecclesia de quiblibet superstitionibus praecidit eos qui ad se veniunt et imitatione bonorum sibimet quodam modo incorporat, qui boni fideles et veri dei servi deponentes onera saeculi ad sanctum baptismi lavacrum venerunt atque inde ascendentes conceptione sancti spiritus fructum dant geminae caritatis, id est dei et proximi²³⁷—quid est ergo quod si haec quisquam dicat

²³⁴ Gen. 11: 1–9.

²³⁵ Hebrew for the Old Testament, Greek for the New.

²³⁶ Cf. 4. 27, *Ep.* 55. 11. 21, and *Ep.* 137. 18, and for Augustine's justifications of allegory, see J. Pépin, 'Saint Augustin et la fonction protreptique de l'allégorie', *Recherches Augustiniennes*, 1 (1958), 244–57.

²³⁷ S. of S. 4: 2. The same interpretation of the two lambs is found in *Ep.* 149. 1. 4 and *Serm.* 313B. 3.

been able to express in words all the various kinds of sign that I have briefly mentioned, but in no way could I have expressed all my words in terms of signs.

8. But spoken words cease to exist as soon as they come into contact with the air, and their existence is no more lasting than that of their sound; hence the invention, in the form of letters, of signs of words. In this way words are presented to the eyes, not in themselves, but by certain signs peculiar to them. These signs could not be shared by all nations, because of the sin of human disunity by which each one sought hegemony for itself. This pride is signified by the famous tower raised towards heaven at the time when wicked men justly received incompatible languages to match their incompatible minds.²³⁸ 9. Consequently even divine scripture, by which assistance is provided for the many serious disorders of the human will, after starting off in one language,²³⁹ in which it could have conveniently been spread throughout the world, was circulated far and wide in the various languages of translators and became known in this way to the Gentiles for their salvation. The aim of its readers is simply to find out the thoughts and wishes of those by whom it was written down and, through them, the will of God, which we believe these men followed as they spoke.

10. But casual readers are misled by problems and ambiguities of many kinds, mistaking one thing for another. In some passages they find no meaning at all that they can grasp at, even falsely, so thick is the fog created by some obscure phrases. I have no doubt that this is all divinely predetermined, so that pride may be subdued by hard work and intellects which tend to despise things that are easily discovered may be rescued from boredom and reinvigorated.²⁴⁰ 11. Why is it, I wonder, that if someone should say that there exist holy and perfect men by whose lives and conduct the church of Christ tears away those who come to it from their various superstitions, and by inspiring them to imitate their goodness somehow incorporates them into itself; and that there exist servants of the true God, good and faithful men who, putting aside the burdens of this life, have come to the holy font of baptism, arise from it born again with the Holy Spirit, and then produce the fruit of a double love, that is love of God and love of their neighbour²⁴¹—why is it that someone who says this gives less pleasure

²³⁸ Gen. 11: 1–9.

²³⁹ Hebrew for the Old Testament, Greek for the New.

²⁴⁰ Cf. 4. 27, *Ep.* 55. 11. 21, and *Ep.* 137. 18, and for Augustine's justifications of allegory, see J. Pépin, 'Saint Augustin et la fonction protreptique de l'allégorie', *Recherches Augustiniennes*, 1 (1958), 244–57.

²⁴¹ S. of S. 4: 2. The same interpretation of the two lambs is found in *Ep.* 149. 1. 4 and *Serm.* 313B. 3.

minus delectat audientem quam si ad eundem sensum locum illum exponat de Canticis Canticorum ubi dictum est ecclesiae, cum tamquam pulchra quaedam femina laudaretur: *Dentes tui sicut grex detonsarum ascendens de lavacro, quae omnes geminos creant, et sterilis non est in illis?* 12. Num aliud homo discit quam cum illud planissimis verbis sine similitudinis huius adminiculo audiret? Et tamen nescio quo modo suavius intueor sanctos, cum eos quasi dentes ecclesiae video praecidere ab erroribus homines atque in eius corpus emollita duritia quasi demorsos mansosque transferre. Oves etiam iucundissime agnosco detonsas, oneribus saecularibus tamquam velleribus positis, et ascendentes de lavacro, id est de baptismo, creare omnes geminos, duo praecepta dilectionis, et nullam esse ab

isto sancto fructu sterilem video. 13. Sed quare suavius videam quam si nulla de divinis libris talis similitudo promeretur, cum res eadem sit eademque cognitio, difficile est dicere et alia quaestio est. Nunc tamen nemo ambigit et per similitudines libentius quaeque cognosci et cum aliqua difficultate quaesita multo gratius inveniri. 14. Qui enim prorsus non inveniunt quod quaerunt, fame laborant; qui autem non quaerunt, quia in promptu habent, fastidio saepe marcescunt. In utroque autem languor cavendus est. 15. Magnifice igitur et salubriter spiritus sanctus ita scripturas sanctas modificavit, ut locis apertioribus fami occurreret, obscurioribus autem fastidia detergeret. Nihil enim fere de illis obscuritatibus eruitur quod non planissime dictum alibi reperitur.

16. Ante omnia igitur opus est dei timore converti ad cognoscendam eius voluntatem, quid nobis appetendum fugiendumque praecipiat.²⁴² Timor autem iste cogitationem de nostra mortalitate et de futura morte necesse est incutiat et quasi clavatis carnibus omnes superbiae motus ligno crucis affigat. 17. Deinde mitescere opus est pietate neque contradicere divinae scripturae sive intellectae, si aliqua vitia nostra percutit, sive non intellectae, quasi nos melius sapere meliusque praecipere possimus, sed cogitare potius et credere id esse melius et

²⁴² This description of the seven steps or stages to wisdom is closely based on the description of the gifts of the spirit found (in the reverse order) in Isa. 11: 2–3.

to an audience than by expounding in the same terms this passage from the Song of Songs, where the church is addressed and praised like a beautiful woman: ‘Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes ascending from the pool, all of which give birth to twins, and there is not a sterile animal among them’? 12. Surely one learns the same lesson as when one hears it in plain words without the support of the imagery? And yet somehow it gives me more pleasure to contemplate holy men, when I see them as the teeth of the church tearing men away from their errors and transferring them into its body, breaking down their rawness by biting and chewing. And it is with the greatest of pleasure that I visualize the shorn ewes, their worldly burdens set aside like fleeces, ascending from the pool (baptism) and all giving birth to twins (the two commandments of love), with none of them failing to produce this holy fruit. 13. Exactly why this picture gives me greater pleasure than if no such imagery were presented by the divine books, since the topic is the same, and the lesson the same, it is difficult to say; this, however, is another question entirely. But no-one disputes that it is much more pleasant to learn lessons presented through imagery, and much more rewarding to discover meanings that are won only with difficulty. 14. Those who fail to discover what they are looking for suffer from hunger, whereas those who do not look, because they have it in front of them, often die of boredom. In both situations the danger is lethargy. 15. It is a wonderful and beneficial thing that the Holy Spirit organized the holy scripture so as to satisfy hunger by means of its plainer passages and remove boredom by means of its obscurer ones. Virtually nothing is unearthed from these obscurities which cannot be found quite plainly expressed somewhere else.

16. It is therefore necessary above all else to be moved by the fear of God towards learning his will: what it is that he instructs us to seek or avoid.²⁴³ This fear will necessarily inspire reflection about our mortality and future death, and by nailing our flesh to the wood of the cross as it were crucify all our presumptuous impulses. 17. After that it is necessary, through holiness, to become docile, and not contradict holy scripture—whether we understand it (as when it hits at some of our vices) or fail to understand it (as when we feel that we could by ourselves gain better knowledge or give better instruction)—but rather

²⁴³ This description of the seven steps or stages to wisdom is closely based on the description of the gifts of the spirit found (in the reverse order) in Isa. 11: 2–3.

verius quod ibi scriptum est, etiam si lateat, quam id quod nos per nos ipsos sapere possumus.

18. Post istos duos gradus timoris atque pietatis ad tertium venit scientiae gradum, de quo nunc agere institui. Nam in eo se exercet omnis divinarum scripturarum studiosus, nihil in eis aliud inventurus quam diligendum esse deum propter deum et proximum propter deum, et illum quidem ex toto corde, ex tota anima, ex tota mente, proximum vero tamquam se ipsum,²⁴⁴ id est ut tota proximi sicut etiam nostri dilectio referatur in deum. 19. De quibus duobus praeceptis, cum de rebus ageremus, libro superiore tractavimus. Necesse est ergo, ut primo se quisque in scripturis inveniatur amore huius saeculi, hoc est temporalium rerum, implicatum, longe seiunctum esse a tanto amore dei et tanto amore proximi quantum scriptura ipsa praescribit. Tum vero ille timor quo cogitat de iudicio dei, et illa pietas qua non potest nisi credere et cedere auctoritati sanctorum librorum, cogit eum se ipsum lugere. 20. Nam ista scientia bonae spei hominem non se iactantem sed lamentantem facit; quo affectu impetrat sedulis precibus consolationem divini adiutorii, ne desperatione frangatur, et esse incipit in quarto gradu, hoc est fortitudinis, quo esuritur et sititur iustitia.²⁴⁵ Hoc enim affectu ab omni mortifera iucunditate rerum transeuntium sese extrahit et inde se avertens convertit ad dilectionem aeternorum, incommutabilem scilicet unitatem eandemque trinitatem.

21. Quam ubi aspexerit, quantum potest, in longinqua radiantem suique aspectus infirmitate sustinere se illam lucem non posse persenserit, in quinto gradu, hoc est in consilio misericordiae,²⁴⁶ purgat animam tumultuantem quodam modo atque obstrepentem sibi de appetitu inferiorum conceptis sordibus. Hic vero se in dilectione proximi naviter exercet in eaque perficitur. 22. Et spe iam plenus atque integer viribus, cum pervenerit usque ad inimici dilectionem, ascendet in sextum gradum, ubi iam ipsum oculum purgat quo videri deus

²⁴⁴ Matt. 22: 37–9.

²⁴⁵ Matt. 5: 6.

²⁴⁶ Latin versions of Isaiah give *consilium* ('resolve'), with no mention of compassion; hence Augustine's strained expression. On purification, see 1. 22 n.

ponder and believe that what is written there, even if obscure, is better and truer than any insights that we may gain by our own efforts.

18. After these two stages of fear and holiness comes the third stage, that of knowledge, with which I now propose to deal. This is the area in which every student of the divine scriptures exerts himself, and what he will find in them is quite simply that he must love God for himself, and his neighbour for God's sake, and that he must love God with his whole heart, his whole soul, and his whole mind, and his neighbour as himself²⁴⁷—in other words, that his love of his neighbour, like his own self-love, should be totally related to God. 19. (I have dealt with these two commandments in the previous book, in my discussion of things.) It is vital that the reader first learns from the scriptures that he is entangled in a love of this present age, of temporal things, that is, and is far from loving God and his neighbour to the extent that scripture prescribes. It is at this point that the fear which makes him ponder the judgement of God, and the holiness which makes it impossible for him not to admit and submit to the authority of the holy books, compel him to deplore his own condition. 20. For this knowledge makes a person with good reason to hope not boastful but remorseful; in this state he obtains by constant prayer the encouragement of divine assistance, so that he is not crushed by despair. And so he begins to be at the fourth stage—that of fortitude—which brings a hunger and thirst after righteousness.²⁴⁸ In this state he extricates himself from all the fatal charms of transient things; turning away from these, he turns to the love of eternal things, namely the unchangeable unity which is also the Trinity.

21. When he beholds this light (as far as he is able to), shining as it does even into remote places, and realizes that because of the weakness of his vision he cannot bear its brilliance, he is at the fifth stage—that is, in the resolve of compassion²⁴⁹—and purifies his mind, which is somehow turbulent and feuding with itself because of the impurities accumulated by its desire of what is inferior. Here he strenuously occupies himself with the love of his neighbour and becomes perfect in it. 22. Full of hope now, and at full strength, since he has come to love even his enemy, he rises to the sixth stage, in

²⁴⁷ Matt. 22: 37–9.

²⁴⁸ Matt. 5: 6.

²⁴⁹ Latin versions of Isaiah give *consilium* ('resolve'), with no mention of compassion; hence Augustine's strained expression. On purification, see 1. 22 n.

potest, quantum potest ab eis qui huic saeculo moriuntur quantum possunt. Nam in tantum vident in quantum moriuntur huic saeculo, in quantum autem hic vivunt, non vident. Et ideo quamvis iam certior et non solum tolerabilior sed etiam iucundior species lucis illius incipiat apparere, in aenigmate adhuc tamen et per speculum videri dicitur,²⁵⁰ quia magis per fidem quam per speciem ambulatur cum in hac vita peregrinamur,²⁵¹ quamvis conversationem habeamus in caelis.²⁵² 23. In hoc autem gradu ita purgat oculum cordis, ut veritati ne ipsum quidem praeferat aut conferat proximum; ergo nec se ipsum, quia nec illum quem diligit sicut se ipsum. Erit ergo iste sanctus tam simplici corde atque mundato, ut neque hominibus placendi studio detorqueatur a vero nec respectu devitandorum quorumlibet incommodorum suorum quae adversantur huic vitae. Talis filius ascendit ad sapientiam, quae ultima et septima est, qua pacatus tranquillisque perfruitur. *Initium enim sapientiae timor domini:*²⁵³ ab illo enim usque ad ipsam per hos gradus tenditur et venit.

24. Sed nos ad tertium illum gradum considerationem referamus, de quo disserere quod dominus suggesserit atque tractare instituimus. Erit igitur divinarum scripturarum soler-tissimus indagator qui primo totas legerit notasque habuerit, etsi nondum intellectu, iam tamen lectione, dumtaxat eas quae appellantur canonicae. Nam ceteras securius leget fide veritatis instructus, ne praeoccupent imbecillum animum et periculosas mendaciis atque phantasmatis eludentes praeiudicent aliquid contra sanam intellegentiam. In canonicis autem scripturis ecclesiarum catholicarum quam plurimum auctoritatem sequatur, inter quas sane illae sint quae apostolicas sedes habere et epistolas accipere meruerunt. 25. Tenebit igitur hunc modum in scripturis canonicis, ut eas quae ab omnibus accipiuntur ecclesiis catholicis praeponat eis quas quidam non accipiunt. In eis vero quae non accipiuntur ab omnibus, praeponat eas quas plures gravioresque accipiunt eis quas

²⁵⁰ 1 Cor. 13: 12.

²⁵¹ 2 Cor. 5: 6–7.

²⁵² Cf. Phil. 3: 20.

²⁵³ Ps. 110: 10 (111: 10).

which he now purifies the eye by which God may actually be seen—to the extent that he may be seen by those who, to the best of their ability, die to this world; for they see to the extent that they die to the world, and to the extent that they live in it they fail to see. The vision of that light, although it now begins to appear more steady and not only more tolerable but also more pleasant, is none the less said to be seen still obscurely and through a mirror;²⁵⁴ this is because we walk more by faith than by sight²⁵⁵ as we travel in this life, even though we are citizens of heaven.²⁵⁶ 23. At this stage he purifies the eye of his heart so that he does not give a higher priority than the truth, or indeed an equal one, even to his neighbour; nor does he give such precedence to himself, since he does not give it to the one whom he loves as himself. So this holy person will have a heart so single-minded and purified that he will not be deflected from the truth either by an eagerness to please men or by the thought of avoiding any of the troubles which beset him in this life. Such a son ascends to wisdom, which is the seventh and last stage, enjoyed by those who are calm and peaceful. ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom’:²⁵⁷ these are the stages by which we progress from the one to the other.

24. But let us take our thoughts back to the third stage. Here I propose to discuss and consider whatever ideas the Lord may provide. The most expert investigator of the divine scriptures will be the person who, firstly, has read them all and has a good knowledge—a reading knowledge, at least, if not yet a complete understanding—of those pronounced canonical. He will read the others more confidently when equipped with a belief in the truth; they will then be unable to take possession of his unprotected mind and prejudice him in any way against sound interpretations or delude him by their dangerous false-hoods and fantasies. In the matter of canonical scriptures he should follow the authority of as many catholic churches as possible, including of course those that were found worthy to have apostolic seats and receive apostolic letters. 25. He will apply this principle to the canonical scriptures: to prefer those accepted by all catholic churches to those which some do not accept. As for those not universally accepted, he should prefer those accepted by a majority of churches, and by the more authoritative ones, to those supported by fewer churches, or by

²⁵⁴ 1 Cor. 13: 12.

²⁵⁵ 2 Cor. 5: 6–7.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Phil. 3: 20.

²⁵⁷ Ps. 110: 10 (111: 10).

pauciores minorique auctoritatis ecclesiae tenent. Si autem alias invenerit a pluribus, alias a gravioribus haberi, quam-quam hoc invenire non possit, aequalis tamen auctoritatis eas habendas puto.

26. Totus autem canon scripturarum,²⁵⁸ in quo istam considerationem versandam dicimus, his libris continetur: quinque Moyseos, id est Genesi, Exodo, Levitico, Numeris, Deuteronomio, et uno libro Iesu Nave, uno Iudicum, uno libello qui appellatur Ruth, qui magis ad Regnorum principium videtur pertinere; deinde quattuor Regnorum et duobus Paralipomenon, non consequentibus sed quasi a latere adiunctis simulque pergentibus. 27. Haec est historia, quae sibimet adnexa tempora continet atque ordinem rerum. Sunt aliae tamquam ex diverso ordine, quae neque huic ordini neque inter se conectuntur, sicut est Iob et Tobias et Esther et Iudith et Machabaeorum libri duo et Esdrae duo,²⁵⁹ qui magis subsequi videntur ordinatam illam historiam usque ad Regnorum vel Paralipomenon terminatam. Deinde prophetae, in quibus David unus liber Psalmorum, et Salomonis tres, Proverbiorum, Cantici Canticorum et Ecclesiastes; nam illi duo libri, unus qui Sapientia et alius qui Ecclesiasticus inscribitur, de quadam similitudine Salomonis esse dicuntur; nam Iesus Sirach eos conscripsisse constantissime perhibetur.²⁶⁰ Qui tamen quoniam in auctoritatem recipi meruerunt inter propheticos numerandi sunt. 28. Reliqui sunt eorum libri qui proprie prophetae appellantur, duodecim prophetarum libri singuli, qui conexi sibimet, quoniam numquam seiuncti sunt, pro uno habentur; quorum prophetarum nomina sunt haec: Osee, Ioel, Amos, Abdias, Ionas, Micha, Naum, Abacuc, Sophonias, Aggeus, Zacharias, Malachi. Deinde quattuor prophetae sunt maiorum voluminum: Esaias, Hieremias, Daniel, Hiezechiel. 29. His quadraginta quattuor libris testamenti veteris terminatur auctoritas,²⁶¹ novi autem quattuor librorum evangelio (secundum Matthaeum, secundum Marcum, secundum

²⁵⁸ The details of this canon, and its relationship to other contemporary African versions, is discussed by A.-M. La Bonnardière, 'Le canon des divines écritures' in *Saint Augustin et la Bible*, iii (Bible de Tous les Temps; Paris, 1986), 287–301.

²⁵⁹ Ezra and Nehemiah.

²⁶⁰ Augustine withdraws this in *Retract.* 2. 30. 2, after he had realized that in all probability Jesus Sirach was not the author. See also La Bonnardière (ed.), *Saint Augustin et la Bible*, 294–8.

²⁶¹ Augustine comments in *Retract.* 2. 30. 3 that in using the expression 'Old Testament' here he had followed the usage of the church and not that of Paul.

churches of lesser authority. Should he find that some scriptures are accepted by the majority of churches, but others by the more authoritative ones (though in fact he could not possibly find this situation) I think that they should be considered to have equal authority.

26. The complete canon of scripture,²⁶² on which I say that our attention should be concentrated, includes the following books: the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), and the single books of Joshua son of Nave and of Judges, and the little book known as Ruth, which seems to relate more to the beginning of Kings, and then the four books of Kings and the two of Chronicles, which do not follow chronologically but proceed as it were side by side with Kings. 27. All this is historiography, which covers continuous periods and gives a chronological sequence of events. There are others, forming another sequence, not connected with either this class or each other, like Job, Tobias, Esther, Judith, and the two books of Maccabees and the two of Ezra,²⁶³ which rather seem to follow on from the chronologically ordered account which ends with Kings and Chronicles. Then come the prophets, including David's single book of Psalms, and three books of Solomon, namely Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes. The two books entitled Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus are also said to be by Solomon, on the strength of a general similarity; but there is a strong tradition that Jesus Sirach wrote them,²⁶⁴ and, in any case, because they have been found worthy of inclusion among authoritative texts, they should be numbered with the prophetic books. 28. There remain the books of the prophets properly so called, the individual books of the twelve prophets who because they are joined together and never separated are counted as one. Their names are these: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi. Then there are the four prophets in larger books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel. 29. These forty-four books form the authoritative Old Testament;²⁶⁵ the authoritative New Testament consists of the Gospel in four books (Matthew, Mark,

²⁶² The details of this canon, and its relationship to other contemporary African versions, is discussed by A.-M. La Bonnardière, 'Le canon des divines écritures' in *Saint Augustin et la Bible*, iii (Bible de Tous les Temps; Paris, 1986), 287–301.

²⁶³ Ezra and Nehemiah.

²⁶⁴ Augustine withdraws this in *Retract.* 2. 30. 2, after he had realized that in all probability Jesus Sirach was not the author. See also La Bonnardière (ed.), *Saint Augustin et la Bible*, 294–8.

²⁶⁵ Augustine comments in *Retract.* 2. 30. 3 that in using the expression 'Old Testament' here he had followed the usage of the church and not that of Paul.

Lucam, secundum Iohannem), quattuordecim epistolis apostoli Pauli (ad Romanos, ad Corinthios duabus, ad Galatas, ad Ephesios, ad Philippenses, ad Thessalonicenses duabus, ad Colossenses,²⁶⁶ ad Timotheum duabus, ad Titum, ad Philemonem, ad Hebraeos), Petri duabus, tribus Iohannis, una Iudae et una Iacobi, Actibus Apostolorum libro uno et Apocalypsi Iohannis libro uno.

30. In his omnibus libris timentes deum et pietate mansueti quaerunt voluntatem dei. Cuius operis et laboris prima observatio est, ut diximus, nosse istos libros, etsi nondum ad intellectum, legendo tamen vel mandare memoriae vel omnino incognitos non habere. Deinde illa quae in eis aperte posita sunt, vel praecepta vivendi vel regulae credendi, sollertius diligentiusque investiganda sunt. Quae tanto quisque plura invenit quanto est intellegentia capacior. 31. In his enim quae aperte in scripturis posita sunt, inveniuntur illa omnia quae continent fidem moresque vivendi, spem scilicet atque caritatem, de quibus libro superiore tractavimus.²⁶⁷ Tum vero facta quadam familiaritate cum ipsa lingua divinarum scripturarum, in ea quae obscura sunt aperienda et discutienda pergendum est, ut ad obscuriores locutiones illustrandas de manifestioribus sumantur exempla et quaedam certarum sententiarum testimonia dubitationem incertis auferant. In qua re memoria valet plurimum; quae si defuerit non potest his praeceptis dari.

32. Duabus autem causis non intelleguntur quae scripta sunt, si aut ignotis aut ambiguis signis obteguntur. Sunt autem signa vel propria vel translata. Propria dicuntur, cum his rebus significandis adhibentur propter quas sunt instituta, sicut dicimus bovem, cum intellegimus pecus quod omnes nobiscum latinae linguae homines hoc nomine vocant. 33. Translata sunt, cum et ipsae res quas propriis verbis significamus, ad aliquid aliud significandum usurpantur, sicut dicimus bovem et per has duas syllabas intellegimus pecus quod isto nomine appellari solet, sed rursus per illud pecus intellegimus evangelistam, quem significavit scriptura interpretante apostolo dicens, *bovem triturantem non infrenabis*.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ The placing of Colossians after Thessalonians was common in the Western Church.

²⁶⁷ See especially 1. 90–6.

²⁶⁸ 1 Cor. 9: 9, and 1 Tim. 5: 18, quoting Deut. 25: 4.

Luke, John), fourteen letters of the apostle Paul (Romans, Corinthians (two), Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Thessalonians (two), Colossians,²⁶⁹ Timothy (two), Titus, Philemon, Hebrews), two of Peter, three of John, one of Jude, and one of James; the single book of the Acts of the Apostles and the single book of the Revelation of John.

30. These are all the books in which those who fear God and are made docile by their holiness seek God's will. The first rule in this laborious task is, as I have said, to know these books; not necessarily to understand them but to read them so as to commit them to memory or at least make them not totally unfamiliar. Then the matters which are clearly stated in them, whether ethical precepts or articles of belief, should be examined carefully and intelligently. The greater a person's intellectual capacity, the more of these he finds. 31. In clearly expressed passages of scripture one can find all the things that concern faith and the moral life (namely hope and love, treated in my previous book).²⁷⁰ Then, after gaining a familiarity with the language of the divine scriptures, one should proceed to explore and analyse the obscure passages, by taking examples from the more obvious parts to illuminate obscure expressions and by using the evidence of indisputable passages to remove the uncertainty of ambiguous ones. Here memory is extremely valuable; and it cannot be supplied by these instructions if it is lacking.

32. There are two reasons why written texts fail to be understood: their meaning may be veiled either by unknown signs or by ambiguous signs. Signs are either literal or metaphorical. They are called literal when used to signify the things for which they were invented: so, for example, when we say *bovem*, meaning the animal which we and all speakers of Latin call by that name. 33. They are metaphorical when the actual things which we signify by the particular words are used to signify something else: when, for example, we say *bovem* and not only interpret these two syllables to mean the animal normally referred to by that name but also understand, by that animal, 'worker in the gospel', which is what scripture, as interpreted by the apostle Paul, means when it says, 'You shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain'.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ The placing of Colossians after Thessalonians was common in the Western Church.

²⁷⁰ See especially 1. 90–6.

²⁷¹ 1 Cor. 9: 9, and 1 Tim. 5: 18, quoting Deut. 25: 4.

34. Contra ignota signa propria magnum remedium est linguarum cognitio. Et latinae quidem linguae homines, quos nunc instruendos suscepimus, duabus aliis ad scripturarum divinarum cognitionem opus habent, hebraea scilicet et graeca, ut ad exemplaria praecedentia recurratur si quam dubitationem attulerit latinorum interpretum infinita varietas. Quamquam et hebraea verba non interpretata saepe inveniamus in libris, sicut *amen* et *alleluia* et *racha*²⁷² et *osanna*²⁷³ et si qua sunt alia. Quorum partim propter sanctiorem auctoritatem, quamvis interpretari potuissent, servata est antiquitas, sicut sunt *amen* et *alleluia*, partim vero in aliam linguam transferri non potuisse dicuntur, sicut alia duo quae posuimus.

35. Sunt enim quaedam verba certarum linguarum quae in usum alterius linguae per interpretationem transire non possint. Et hoc maxime interiectionibus accidit, quae verba motum animi significant potius quam sententiae conceptae ullam particulam. Nam et haec duo talia esse perhibentur; dicunt enim *racha* indignantis esse vocem, *osanna* laetantis.

36. Sed non propter haec pauca quae notare atque interrogare facillimum est, sed propter diversitates, ut dictum est, interpretum illarum linguarum est cognitio necessaria. Qui enim scripturas ex hebraea in graecam verterunt numerari possunt, latini autem interpretes nullo modo. Ut enim cuique primis fidei temporibus in manus venit codex graecus et aliquantum facultatis sibi utriusque linguae habere videbatur, ausus est interpretari.

37. Quae quidem res plus adiuvit intellegentiam quam impedivit, si modo legentes non sint neglegentes. Nam nonnullas obscuriores sententias plurium codicum saepe manifestavit inspectio, sicut illud Esaiae prophetae²⁷⁴

〈cum〉 unus interpret ait, *et domesticos seminis tui ne despexeris*, alius autem ait, *et carnem tuam ne despexeris*. Uterque sibimet invicem attestatus est. 38. Namque alter ex altero exponitur, quia et caro posset accipi proprie, ut corpus suum quisque ne despiceret se putaret admonitum, et domestici seminis translate Christiani possent intellegi, ex eodem verbi semine nobiscum spiritualiter nati. Nunc autem collato interpretum sensu probabilior occurrit sententia proprie de consanguineis non despiciendis

²⁷² Matt. 5: 22.

²⁷³ Matt. 21: 9, 15; Mark 11: 9–10; John 12: 13.

²⁷⁴ Isa. 58: 7. The first reading is that of the Septuagint, the second a more literal translation used in the Vulgate. In Augustine's text *cum* has been added with Schaüblin.

34. An important antidote to the ignorance of literal signs is the knowledge of languages. Users of the Latin language—and it is these that I have now undertaken to instruct—need two others, Hebrew and Greek, for an understanding of the divine scriptures, so that recourse may be had to the original versions if any uncertainty arises from the infinite variety of Latin translators. Though we often find Hebrew words untranslated in the texts, like *amen*, *alleluia*, *racha*,²⁷⁵ *osanna*.²⁷⁶ In some cases, although they could be translated, the original form is preserved for the sake of its solemn authority (so *amen*, *alleluia*); in others, like the other two that I mentioned, they are said to be incapable of being translated into another language. 35. There are certain words in particular languages which just cannot be translated into the idioms of another language. This is especially true of interjections, which signify emotion, rather than an element of clearly conceived meaning: two such words, it is said, are *racha*, a word expressing anger, and *osanna*, a word expressing joy. 36. But it is not because of these few words, which it is easy enough to note down and ask other people about, but because of the aforementioned diversity of translators that a knowledge of languages is necessary. Translators of scripture from Hebrew into Greek can be easily counted, but not so translators into Latin, for in the early days of the faith any person who got hold of a Greek manuscript and fancied that he had some ability in the two languages went ahead and translated it.³⁷ This fact actually proves more of a help to interpretation than a hindrance, provided that readers are not too casual. Obscure passages are often clarified by the inspection of several manuscripts, like the passage in Isaiah²⁷⁷ rendered by one translator as ‘and do not despise the household of your own seed’, but by another as ‘and do not despise your own flesh’. Each one confirms the other. 38. One is explained by the other, because ‘flesh’ can be taken literally—so that one may consider this a warning not to despise one's own body—and ‘household of your seed’ can be metaphorically understood as ‘Christians’, those spiritually born with us from the same seed of the word. But when the ideas of the translators are compared a more plausible idea suggests itself: that the command is literally about not despising your kinsfolk, since when you relate ‘the

²⁷⁵ Matt. 5: 22.

²⁷⁶ Matt. 21: 9, 15; Mark 11: 9–10; John 12: 13.

²⁷⁷ Isa. 58: 7. The first reading is that of the Septuagint, the second a more literal translation used in the Vulgate. In Augustine's text *cum* has been added with Schaüblin.

esse praeceptum, quoniam domesticos seminis cum ad carnem rettuleris, consanguinei potissimum occurrunt. Unde esse arbitror illud apostoli quod ait, *si quo modo ad aemulationem adducere potuero carnem meam, ut salvos faciam aliquos ex illis*,²⁷⁸ id est ut aemulando eos qui crediderant et ipsi crederent. 39. Carnem enim suam dixit Iudaeos propter consanguinitatem. Item illud eiusdem Esaiae:²⁷⁹ *nisi credideritis, non intellegitis*, alius interpretatus est: *nisi credideritis, non permanebitis*. Quis horum vera secutus sit, nisi exemplaria linguae praecedentis legantur, incertum est. Sed tamen ex utroque magnum aliquid insinuat scienter legentibus. Difficile est enim ita diversos a se interpretes fieri ut non se aliqua vicinitate contingant. 40. Ergo quoniam intellectus in specie sempiterna est, fides vero in rerum temporalium quibusdam cunabulis quasi lacte alit parvulos, nunc autem *per fidem ambulamus, non per speciem*,²⁸⁰ nisi autem per fidem ambulaverimus, ad speciem pervenire non possumus quae non transit sed permanet, per intellectum purgatum nobis cohaerentibus veritati, propterea ille ait, *nisi credideritis, non permanebitis*, ille autem, *nisi credideritis, non intellegitis*. 41. Et ex ambiguo linguae praecedentis plerumque interpret fallitur, cui non bene nota sententia est, et eam significationem transfert quae a sensu scriptoris penitus aliena est, sicut quidam codices habent,²⁸¹ *acuti pedes eorum ad effundendum sanguinem*; *ὀξύ* enim et acutum apud Graecos et velocem significat. Ille ergo vidit sententiam qui transtulit, *veloces pedes eorum ad effundendum sanguinem*; ille autem alius ancipiti signo in aliam partem raptus erravit. 42. Et alia quidem non obscura sed falsa sunt. Quorum alia condicio est; non enim intellegendos sed emendandos tales codices potius praecipendum est. Hinc est etiam illud: quoniam *moschos* graece vitulus dicitur, *moscheumata* quidam non intellexerunt esse *plantationes* et *vitulamina* interpretati sunt.²⁸² Qui error tam multos codices praeoccupavit ut vix inveniatur aliter scriptum.²⁸³ Et tamen sententia manifestissima est, quia clarescit consequentibus verbis; namque *adulterinae plantationes non dabunt radices*

²⁷⁸ Rom. 11: 14.

²⁷⁹ Isa. 7: 9. The readings are those of the Septuagint and Symmachus respectively. Augustine has the second in *De Trin.* 7.6 and 15.2.

²⁸⁰ 2 Cor. 5: 7.

²⁸¹ Ps. 13: 3, quoted in Rom. 3: 15; cf. Isa. 59: 7.

²⁸² Wisd. 4: 3.

²⁸³ In fact no extant witness agrees with Augustine.

household of your own seed' to the flesh your kinsfolk are what particularly comes to mind. This, I think, is the explanation of Paul's statement, 'If in any way I can arouse my flesh to jealousy, so that I may save some of them'²⁸⁴ (in other words, so that they too may believe by jealously emulating those who had earlier believed). 39. By his flesh he meant the Jews, by virtue of his kinship with them. Another example, again from Isaiah:²⁸⁵ one version has 'if you do not believe, you will not understand', another has 'if you do not believe, you will not stand fast'. It is not clear which of these represents the truth unless the versions in the original language are consulted. Yet both convey something important to those who read intelligently. It is difficult to find translators who diverge so much that they do not touch at some point. 40. So because understanding concerns the vision of eternal things, whereas faith nourishes us with milk, so to speak, while we are babies in the cradle of this temporal life, and because here and now 'we walk by faith, not sight',²⁸⁶ and because if we do not walk by faith we cannot reach that vision which is not transient but eternal, and because we hold fast to the truth through a purified understanding—that is why one version says 'if you do not believe you will not stand fast' and the other 'if you do not believe you will not understand'. 41. Ambiguity in the original language often misleads a translator unfamiliar with the general sense of a passage, who may import a meaning which is quite unrelated to the writer's meaning. For example, some manuscripts have:²⁸⁷ 'their feet are sharp to shed blood' (*οξὺ* in Greek means both 'sharp' and 'quick'). The translator who wrote 'their feet are quick to shed blood' saw the meaning; but another was misled by the ambiguous sign and went astray. 42. Any other translations of this are not obscure, but plain wrong. They differ from the preceding cases, and our advice must be not to seek an interpretation of such texts, but an emendation. Another example: because *moschus* is 'calf' in Greek some translators did not interpret the word *moscheumata* as 'plants' but translated it as 'calves'.²⁸⁸ This mistake has taken over so many manuscripts that an alternative reading is hard to find;²⁸⁹ and yet the meaning is quite obvious, because all is revealed in the words that follow. 'False plants do not put out deep roots' gives better

²⁸⁴ Rom. 11: 14.

²⁸⁵ Isa. 7: 9. The readings are those of the Septuagint and Symmachus respectively. Augustine has the second in *De Trin.* 7.6 and 15.2.

²⁸⁶ 2 Cor. 5: 7.

²⁸⁷ Ps. 13: 3, quoted in Rom. 3: 15; cf. Isa. 59: 7.

²⁸⁸ Wisd. 4: 3.

²⁸⁹ In fact no extant witness agrees with Augustine.

altas convenientius dicitur quam *vitulamina*, quae pedibus in terra gradiuntur, non haerent radicibus. Hanc translationem in eo loco etiam cetera contexta custodiunt. 43. Sed quoniam et quae sit ipsa sententia quam plures interpretes pro sua quisque facultate atque iudicio conantur eloqui non apparet, nisi in ea lingua inspiciatur quam interpretantur, et plerumque a sensu auctoris devius aberrat interpres, si non sit doctissimus, aut linguarum illarum ex quibus in latinam scripturam pervenit petenda cognitio est aut habendae interpretationes eorum qui se verbis nimis obstrinxerunt, non quia sufficiunt, sed ut ex eis libertas vel error dirigatur aliorum, qui non tam verba quam sententias interpretando sequi maluerunt. 44. Nam non solum verba singula sed etiam locutiones saepe transferuntur quae omnino in latinae linguae usum, si quis consuetudinem veterum qui latine locuti sunt tenere voluerit, transire non possint. Quae aliquando intellectui nihil adimunt, sed offendunt tamen eos qui plus delectantur rebus cum etiam in earum signis sua quaedam servatur integritas. Nam soloecismus²⁹⁰ qui dicitur nihil est aliud quam cum verba non ea lege sibi coaptantur qua coaptaverunt qui priores nobis non sine auctoritate aliqua locuti sunt. Utrum enim inter homines an inter hominibus²⁹¹ dicatur ad rerum non pertinet cognitorem. 45. Item barbarismus quid aliud est nisi verbum non eis litteris vel sono enuntiatum, quo ab eis qui ante nos latine locuti sunt enuntiari solet? Utrum autem ignoscere²⁹² producta an correpta tertia syllaba dicatur, non multum curat qui peccatis suis deus ut ignoscat petit, quolibet modo illud verbum sonare potuerit. Quid est ergo integritas locutionis nisi alienae consuetudinis conservatio, loquentium veterum auctoritate firmatae? 46. Sed tamen eo magis inde offenduntur homines quo infirmiores sunt, et eo sunt infirmiores quo doctiores videri volunt, non rerum scientia qua aedificamur, sed signorum, qua non inflari omnino difficile est, cum et ipsa rerum scientia saepe cervicem erigat nisi dominico reprimatur iugo. Quid

²⁹⁰ For classical definitions of 'solecism' and 'barbarism' see *Rhet. Her.* 4. 12. 17, and Quint. 1. 5.

²⁹¹ The meaning is the same ('among men'); only the first is good Latin. The same example of grammatical error is given by some manuscripts in *Conf.* 1. 18. 29.

²⁹² 'To forgive': Augustine means 'vowel', not 'syllable'.

meaning here than ‘calves’, which are not rooted to the earth, but walk over it with their feet! This particular translation is guaranteed by the surrounding context.⁴³ Because the exact meaning which the various translators are trying to express, each according to his own ability and judgement, is not clear without an examination of the language being translated, and because a translator, unless very expert, often strays away from the author's meaning, we should aim either to acquire a knowledge of the languages from which the Latin scripture derives or to use the versions of those who keep excessively close to the literal meaning. Not that such translations are adequate, but they may be used to control the freedom or error of others who in their translations have chosen to follow the ideas rather than the words.

44. Translators often meet not only individual words, but also whole phrases which simply cannot be expressed in the idioms of the Latin language, at least not if one wants to maintain the usage of ancient speakers of Latin. Sometimes these translations lose nothing in intelligibility but trouble those people who take more delight in things when correct usage is observed in expressing the corresponding signs. What is called a solecism²⁹³ is simply what results when words are not combined according to the rules by which our predecessors, who spoke with some authority, combined them. Whether you say *inter homines* or *inter hominibus*²⁹⁴ does not matter to a student intent upon things.

45. Likewise, what is a barbarism but a word articulated with letters or sounds that are not the same as those with which it was normally articulated by those who spoke Latin before us? Whether one says *ignoscere*²⁹⁵ with a long or short third syllable is of little concern to someone beseeching God to forgive his sins, however he may have managed to utter the word. What, then, is correctness of speech but the maintenance of the practice of others, as established by the authority of ancient speakers?⁴⁶ But the weaker men are, the more they are troubled by such matters. Their weakness stems from a desire to appear learned, not with a knowledge of things, by which we are edified, but with a knowledge of signs, by which it is difficult not to be puffed up in some way; even a knowledge of things often makes people boastful, unless their necks are held down

²⁹³ For classical definitions of ‘solecism’ and ‘barbarism’ see *Rhet. Her.* 4. 12. 17, and Quint. 1. 5.

²⁹⁴ The meaning is the same (‘among men’); only the first is good Latin. The same example of grammatical error is given by some manuscripts in *Conf.* 1. 18. 29.

²⁹⁵ ‘To forgive’: Augustine means ‘vowel’, not ‘syllable’.

enim obest intellectori quod ita scriptum est: *Quae est terra in qua isti insidunt super eam, si bona est an nequam; et quae sunt civitates in quibus ipsi inhabitant in ipsis?*²⁹⁶ 47. Quam locutionem magis alienae linguae esse arbitror quam sensum aliquem altiore. Illud etiam, quod iam auferre non possumus de ore cantantium populorum: *super ipsum autem floriet sanctificatio mea*,²⁹⁷ nihil profecto sententiae detrahit. Auditor tamen peritior mallet hoc corrigi, ut non *floriet* sed *florebit* diceretur, nec quidquam impedit correctionem nisi consuetudo cantantium. Ista ergo facile etiam contemni possunt, si quis ea cavere noluerit quae sano intellectui nihil detrahunt. 48. At vero illud quod ait apostolus, *quod stultum est dei, sapientius est hominibus, et quod infirmum est dei, fortius est hominibus*,²⁹⁸ si quis in eo graecam locutionem servare voluisset,²⁹⁹ ut diceret ‘quod stultum est dei sapientius est hominum, et quod infirmum est dei fortius est hominum’, iret quidem vigilantis lectoris intentio in sententiae veritatem, sed tamen aliquis tardior aut non intellexeret aut etiam perverse intellexeret. Non enim tantum vitiosa locutio est in latina lingua talis, verum et in ambiguitatem cadit, ut quasi hominum stultum vel hominum infirmum sapientius vel fortius videatur esse quam dei. Quamquam et illud ‘sapientius est hominibus’ non caret ambiguo, etiamsi soloecismo caret. 49. Utrum enim his hominibus ab eo quod est ‘huic homini’ an his hominibus ab eo quod est ‘hoc homine’ dictum sit,³⁰⁰ non apparet nisi illuminatione sententiae. Melius itaque ita dicitur ‘sapientius est quam homines’ et ‘fortius est quam homines’. 50. De ambiguis autem signis post loquemur; nunc de incognitis agimus, quorum duae formae sunt, quantum ad verba pertinet. Namque aut ignotum verbum facit haerere lectorem aut ignota locutio. Quae si ex alienis linguis veniunt, aut quaerenda sunt ab earum linguarum hominibus aut eadem linguae, si et otium et ingenium est, ediscendae aut plurium interpretum consulenda collatio est. Si autem ipsius linguae nostrae aliqua verba locutionesque ignoramus, legendi consuetudine audiendique innotescunt. 51. Nulla sane sunt magis mandanda memoriae quam illa verborum locutionumque

²⁹⁶ Num. 13: 19, in the Septuagint version, which follows Hebrew idiom closely.

²⁹⁷ Ps. 131: 18 (132: 18).

²⁹⁸ 1 Cor. 1: 25.

²⁹⁹ Using the genitive case to express comparison, which it does not do in classical Latin.

³⁰⁰ The former is in the dative case, the latter in the ablative.

by the Lord's yoke. Surely there is no obstacle to the understanding in this version: 'what is the land in which they dwell upon it, whether it is good or wicked; and what are the towns in which they themselves live in them?'³⁰¹ 47. I judge this to be the idiom of a foreign language rather than a particularly profound idea. And the version which we are now unable to remove from the mouths of our singing congregations—'over him my sanctification will flourish'³⁰²—certainly loses none of the meaning. A more educated listener would prefer it to be corrected (by saying *florebit*, not *floriet*), and the only obstacle to this correction is the habit of those who sing it. So such matters can readily be ignored if one has no desire to avoid expressions which do not in any way detract from a sound understanding. 48. But now take the apostolic saying, 'The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men'.³⁰³ Suppose that someone wished to keep the Greek expression,³⁰⁴ with *hominum* in place of *hominibus*: the mind of the alert reader would still get to the truth of the statement, but the less quick-witted reader would either fail to understand it or understand it wrongly. Such an expression is not just faulty Latin; it is potentially ambiguous, if it gives the impression that man's foolishness is wiser, and man's weakness stronger, than God's. But the alternative *sapientius est hominibus*, though free of solecism, is not free of ambiguity: 49. it is not clear, except in the light of the context, whether it is the plural of *huic homini* or *hoc homine*.³⁰⁵ A better version would be *sapientius est quam homines* or *fortius est quam homines*. 50. I shall speak later about ambiguous signs; now I am dealing with unfamiliar ones, of which there are two kinds, as far as words are concerned. A reader may be perplexed by either an unfamiliar word or an unfamiliar expression. If they come from other languages the information must be sought from speakers of those languages, or else the languages must be learnt (if time and ability allow), or else a collection of several translations must be consulted. If we are unfamiliar with some words and expressions in our own language, they become known to us by the process of reading and listening. 51. Nothing should be committed to memory more urgently than unfamiliar kinds of words and expressions; so that when we meet a knowledgeable person whom we can ask, or a similar expression which makes

³⁰¹ Num. 13: 19, in the Septuagint version, which follows Hebrew idiom closely.

³⁰² Ps. 131: 18 (132: 18).

³⁰³ 1 Cor. 1: 25.

³⁰⁴ Using the genitive case to express comparison, which it does not do in classical Latin.

³⁰⁵ The former is in the dative case, the latter in the ablative.

genera quae ignoramus, ut cum vel peritior occurrerit de quo quaeri possint, vel talis lectio quae vel praecedentibus vel consequentibus vel utrisque ostendat quam vim habeat quidve significet quod ignoramus, facile adiuvante memoria possimus advertere et discere. Quamquam tanta est vis consuetudinis etiam ad discendum ut qui in scripturis sanctis quodammodo nutriti educatique sunt magis alias locutiones mirentur easque minus latinas putent quam illas quas in scripturis didicerunt neque in latinae language auctoribus reperiuntur. 52. Plurimum hic quoque adiuvat interpretum numerositas collatis codicibus inspecta atque discussa. Tantum absit falsitas; nam codicibus emendandis primitus debet invigilare sollertia eorum qui scripturas divinas nosse desiderant, ut emendatis non emendati cedant, ex uno dumtaxat interpretationis genere venientes. 53. In ipsis autem interpretationibus Itala ceteris praeferatur,³⁰⁶ nam est verborum tenacior cum perspicuitate sententiae. Et latinis quibuslibet emendandis graeci adhibeantur, in quibus septuaginta interpretum, quod ad vetus testamentum attinet, excellit auctoritas. Qui iam per omnes peritiores ecclesias tanta praesentia sancti spiritus interpretati esse dicuntur ut os unum tot hominum fuerit.³⁰⁷ 54. Qui si, ut fertur multique non indigni fide praedicant, singuli cellis etiam singulis separati cum interpretati essent, nihil in alicuius eorum codice inventum est quod non isdem verbis eodemque verborum ordine inveniretur in ceteris, quis huic auctoritati conferre aliquid, nedum praeferre audeat? Si autem contulerunt ut una omnium communi tractatu iudicioque vox fieret, ne sic quidem quemquam unum hominem qualibet peritia ad emendandum tot seniorum doctorumque consensum aspirare oportet aut decet. 55. Quam ob rem, etiamsi aliquid aliter in hebraeis exemplaribus invenitur quam isti posuerunt, cedendum esse arbitror divinae dispensationi, quae per eos facta est ut libri quos gens Iudaea ceteris populis vel religione vel invidia

³⁰⁶ An Italian version of the pre-Vulgate text; further identification with extant witnesses has proved impossible. See J. Schildenberger, 'Die Itala des heiligen Augustinus', in *Colligere Fragmenta, Festschrift Alban Dold* (Beuron, 1952), 84–102, who refuted attempts to see a reference to the Vulgate or emend the text. See also S. Atkinson, 'A Commentary on S. Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, II. 1–40', unpub. B.Phil. thesis (St. Andrews, 1979), 119–23.

³⁰⁷ On this and other details see S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford, 1968), 29–58.

clear from the passages which precede and follow it, or both, what is the force or significance of the unfamiliar word, we can easily make a note of it, or find out about it, with the help of our memory. (Yet such is the force of habit, even in learning, that those who are nourished and educated in the holy scriptures are more surprised by expressions from elsewhere, and regard them as worse Latin than the ones which they have learnt in scripture but are not found in Latin literature.) 52. In this area too it is very helpful to collect manuscripts and examine and discuss a number of translations. But inaccuracy must be excluded, for the attention of those who wish to know the divine scripture must first focus on the task of correcting the manuscripts, so that uncorrected ones give place to corrected ones, assuming that they belong to the same class of translation.⁵³ Among actual translations the Itala should be preferred to all others,³⁰⁸ as it keeps more closely to the words without sacrificing clarity of expression. To correct any Latin manuscripts Greek ones should be used: among these, as far as the Old Testament is concerned, the authority of the Septuagint is supreme. Its seventy writers are now claimed in all the more informed churches to have performed their task of translation with such strong guidance from the Holy Spirit that this great number of men spoke with but a single voice.³⁰⁹ 54. If, as is generally held, and indeed asserted by many who are not unworthy of belief, each one of these wrote his translation alone in an individual cell and nothing was found in anyone's version which was not found, in the same words and the same order of words, in the others, who would dare to adapt such an authoritative work, let alone adopt anything in preference to it? But if in fact they joined forces so as to achieve unanimity by open discussion and joint decision, even so it would not be right or proper for any one person, however expert, to think of correcting a version agreed by so many experienced scholars. 55. Therefore, even if we find in the Hebrew versions something that differs from what they wrote, I believe that we should defer to the divine dispensation which was made through them so that the books which the Jewish race refused to reveal to other peoples (whether out of religious scruple or

³⁰⁸ An Italian version of the pre-Vulgate text; further identification with extant witnesses has proved impossible. See J. Schildenberger, 'Die Itala des heiligen Augustinus', in *Colligere Fragmenta, Festschrift Alban Dold* (Beuron, 1952), 84–102, who refuted attempts to see a reference to the Vulgate or emend the text. See also S. Atkinson, 'A Commentary on S. Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, II. 1–40', unpub. B.Phil. thesis (St. Andrews, 1979), 119–23.

³⁰⁹ On this and other details see S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford, 1968), 29–58.

prodere nolebat credituris per dominum gentibus ministra regis Ptolomei³¹⁰ potestate tanto ante proderentur. Itaque fieri potest ut sic illi interpretati sint quemadmodum congruere gentibus ille, qui eos agebat et qui unum os omnibus fecerat, spiritus sanctus iudicavit. 56. Sed tamen, ut superius dixi,³¹¹ horum quoque interpretum qui verbis tenacius inhaeserunt collatio non est inutilis ad explanandam saepe sententiam. Latini ergo, ut dicere coeperam, codices veteris testamenti, si necesse fuerit, graecorum auctoritate emendandi sunt, et eorum potissimum qui cum septuaginta essent ore uno interpretati esse perhibentur. Libros autem novi testamenti, si quid in latinis varietatibus titubat, graecis cedere oportere non dubium est, et maxime qui apud ecclesias doctiores et diligentiores reperiuntur. 57. In translatis vero signis si qua forte ignota cogunt haerere lectorem, partim linguarum notitia, partim rerum investiganda sunt. Aliquid enim ad similitudinem valet et procul dubio secretum quiddam insinuat Siloa piscina,³¹² ubi faciem lavare iussus est cui oculos dominus luto de sputo facto inunxerat. Quod tamen nomen language incognitae nisi evangelista interpretatus esset, tam magnus intellectus lateret. 58. Sic etiam multa quae ab auctoribus eorundem librorum interpretata non sunt nomina hebraea, non est dubitandum habere non parvam vim atque adiutorium ad solvenda aenigmata scripturarum, si quis ea possit interpretari. Quod nonnulli eiusdem linguae periti viri non sane parvum beneficium posteris contulerunt, qui separata de scripturis eadem omnia verba interpretati sunt,³¹³ et quid sit Adam, quid Eva, quid Abraham, quid Moyses, sive etiam locorum nomina, quid sit Hierusalem vel Sion vel Hiericho vel Sina vel Libanus vel Iordanis et quaecumque alia in illa lingua nobis sunt incognita nomina. Quibus apertis et interpretatis multae in scripturis figuratae locutiones manifestantur. 59. Rerum autem ignorantia facit obscuras figuratas locutiones, cum ignoramus vel animantium vel lapidum vel herbarum naturas aliarumve rerum quae plerumque in scripturis

³¹⁰ Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–246 BC), as stated in Augustine's longer account in *Civ. Dei* 18. 42.

³¹¹ 2. 43.

³¹² John 9: 7.

³¹³ Notably Jerome, in his *Liber Interpretationis Hebraicorum Nominum* and *Liber Locorum*, a gazetteer based on a work of Eusebius. See J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome* (London, 1975), 153–5.

envy) might be revealed, through the mediating power of King Ptolemy,³¹⁴ well in advance to the peoples that were destined to believe through our Lord. It may indeed be the case that they translated in a way that the Holy Spirit, who was leading them and creating unanimity, judged appropriate to the Gentiles. 56. But, as I said above,³¹⁵ the comparison of translations which have kept more closely to the words is often not without its value in explaining a passage. So, as I said to begin with, Latin manuscripts of the Old Testament should be corrected if necessary by authoritative Greek ones, and especially by the version of the scholars who though seventy in number are said to have been unanimous. The Latin manuscripts of the New Testament, if there is any uncertainty in the various Latin versions, should without doubt give place to Greek ones, especially those found in the more learned and diligent churches.⁵⁷ As for metaphorical signs, any unfamiliar ones which make the reader puzzled must be examined partly through a knowledge of languages, and partly through a knowledge of things. There is a figurative significance and certainly some hidden meaning conveyed by the episode of the pool of Siloam,³¹⁶ where the man who had his eyes anointed by the Lord with mud made from spittle was ordered to wash his face. If the evangelist had not explained this name from an unfamiliar language, this important meaning would have remained hidden. 58. So too many of the Hebrew names not explained by the authors of these books undoubtedly have considerable significance and much help to give in solving the mysteries of the scriptures, if they can be explained at all. Various experts in this language have rendered no small service to posterity by explaining all these individual words from the scriptures³¹⁷ and giving the meaning of the names Adam, Eve, Abraham, and Moses, and of place-names such as Jerusalem, Zion, Jericho, Sinai, Lebanon, Jordan, and any other names in that language that are unfamiliar to us. Once these are clarified and explained many figurative expressions in scripture become quite clear.⁵⁹ Ignorance of things makes figurative expressions unclear when we are ignorant of the qualities of animals or stones or plants or other things mentioned in scripture for the sake of

³¹⁴ Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–246 BC), as stated in Augustine's longer account in *Civ. Dei* 18. 42.

³¹⁵ 2. 43.

³¹⁶ John 9: 7.

³¹⁷ Notably Jerome, in his *Liber Interpretationis Hebraicorum Nominum* and *Liber Locorum*, a gazetteer based on a work of Eusebius. See J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome* (London, 1975), 153–5.

similitudinis alicuius gratia ponuntur. Nam et de serpente quod notum est, totum corpus eum pro capite obicere ferientibus, quantum illustrat sensum illum quod dominus iubet astutos nos esse sicut serpentes,³¹⁸ ut scilicet pro capite nostro, quod est Christus,³¹⁹ corpus potius persequentibus offeramus, ne fides christiana tamquam necetur in nobis si parcentes corpori negemus deum.³²⁰ 60. Vel illud, quod per cavernae angustias coartatus deposita vetere tunica vires novas accipere dicitur,³²¹ quantum concinit ad imitandam ipsam serpentis astutiam exuendumque veterem hominem, sicut apostolus dicit,³²² ut induamur novo, et exuendum per angustias, dicente domino, *intrate per angustam portam*.³²³ Ut ergo notitia naturae serpentis illustrat multas similitudines quas de hoc animante scriptura dare consuevit, sic ignorantia nonnullorum animalium, quae non minus per similitudines commemorat, impedit plurimum intellectorem. sic lapidum, sic herbarum, vel quaeque tenentur radicibus. 61. Nam et carbunculi notitia, quod lucet in tenebris, multa illuminat etiam obscura librorum, ubicumque propter similitudinem ponitur; et ignorantia berylli vel adamantis claudit plerumque intelligentiae fores. Nec aliam ob causam facile est intellegere pacem perpetuam significari oleae ramusculo quem rediens ad arcam columba pertulit,³²⁴ nisi quia novimus et olei lenem contactum non facile alieno umore corrumpi et arborem ipsam frondere perenniter. Multi autem propter ignorantiam hysopi,³²⁵ dum nesciunt quam vim habeat vel ad purgandum pulmonem vel, ut dicitur, ad saxa radicibus penetranda, cum sit herba brevis atque humilis, omnino invenire non possunt quare sit dictum, *asperges me hysopo, et mundabor*.³²⁶ 62. Numerorum etiam imperitia multa facit non intellegi translate ac mystice posita in scripturis. Ingenium quippe, ut ita dixerim, ingenuum non potest nisi movere quid sibi velit quod et Moyses et Helias et ipse dominus quadraginta diebus ieiunaverunt.³²⁷ Cuius actionis figuratus quidam nodus nisi huius numeri cognitione et consideratione non solvitur. Habet enim denarium quater tamquam cognitionem omnium rerum

³¹⁸ Matt. 10: 16.

³¹⁹ Eph. 4: 15.

³²⁰ This interpretation is the usual one in the contemporary Latin Fathers.

³²¹ For example, by Servius on Verg. *Aen.* 2. 473.

³²² Eph. 4: 22–4.

³²³ Matt. 7: 13.

³²⁴ Gen. 8: 11.

³²⁵ Cf. 2. 150.

³²⁶ Ps. 50: 9 (51: 7).

³²⁷ Exod. 24: 18, 3 Kgs. (1 Kgs.) 19: 8, Matt. 4: 2.

some analogy. The well-known fact about the snake, that it offers its whole body to assailants in place of its head, marvellously illustrates the meaning of the Lord's injunction to be as wise as serpents,³²⁸ which means that in place of our head, which is Christ,³²⁹ we should offer our body to persecutors, so that the Christian faith is not as it were killed within us when we spare our body and deny God.³³⁰ 60. And the fact that a snake confined in its narrow lair puts off its old garment and is said to take on new strength³³¹ chimes in excellently with the idea of imitating the serpent's astuteness and putting off the old man (to use the words of the apostle)³³² in order to put on the new, and also with that of doing so in a confined place, for the Lord said 'enter by the narrow gate'.³³³ Just as a knowledge of the habits of the snake clarifies the many analogies involving this animal regularly given in scripture, so too an ignorance of the numerous animals mentioned no less frequently in an analogy is a great hindrance to understanding. The same is true of stones, herbs, and anything that has roots. 61. Even a knowledge of the carbuncle, a stone which shines in the dark, explains many obscure passages in scripture where it is used in an analogy; and ignorance of the beryl and adamant often closes the door to understanding. It is easy to understand that perpetual peace is signified by the olive branch brought by the dove when it returned to the ark,³³⁴ simply because we know that the smooth surface of oil is not easily broken by another liquid and also that the tree itself is in leaf all year round. And because of their ignorance about hyssop³³⁵ many people, unaware of its power to cleanse the lungs or even (so it is said) to split rocks with its roots, in spite of its low and humble habit, are quite unable to discover why it is said, 'You will purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean'.³³⁶ 62. An unfamiliarity with numbers makes unintelligible many things that are said figuratively and mystically in scripture. An intelligent intellect (if I may put it thus) cannot fail to be intrigued by the meaning of the fact that Moses and Elijah and the Lord himself fasted for forty days.³³⁷ The knotty problem of the figurative significance of this event cannot be solved except by understanding and considering the number, which comprises four times ten, and signifies the knowledge of

³²⁸ Matt. 10: 16.

³²⁹ Eph. 4: 15.

³³⁰ This interpretation is the usual one in the contemporary Latin Fathers.

³³¹ For example, by Servius on Verg. *Aen.* 2. 473.

³³² Eph. 4: 22–4.

³³³ Matt. 7: 13.

³³⁴ Gen. 8: 11.

³³⁵ Cf. 2. 150.

³³⁶ Ps. 50: 9 (51: 7).

³³⁷ Exod. 24: 18, 3 Kgs. (1 Kgs.) 19: 8, Matt. 4: 2.

intextam temporibus. 63. Quaternario namque numero et diurna et annua curricula peraguntur: diurna matutinis, meridianis, vespertinis nocturnisque horarum spatiis; annua vernis, aestivis, autumnalibus hiemalibusque mensibus. A temporum autem delectatione, dum in temporibus vivimus, propter aeternitatem in qua vivere volumus abstinendum et ieiunandum est, quamvis temporum cursibus ipsa nobis insinuetur doctrina contemnendorum temporum et appetendorum aeternorum. 64. Porro autem denarius numerus creatoris atque creaturae significat scientiam; nam trinitas creatoris est, septenarius autem numerus creaturam indicat propter vitam et corpus. Nam in illa tria sunt, unde etiam toto corde, tota anima, tota mente diligendus est deus;³³⁸ in corpore autem manifestissima quattuor apparent quibus constat elementa.³³⁹ In hoc ergo denario dum temporaliter nobis insinuat, id est quater ducitur, caste et continenter a temporum delectatione vivere, hoc est quadraginta diebus ieiunare. 65. Hoc lex, cuius persona est in Moyse, hoc prophetia, cuius personam gerit Helias, hoc ipse dominus monet, qui tamquam testimonium habens ex lege et prophetis medius inter illos in monte tribus discipulis videntibus atque stupentibus claruit.³⁴⁰ Deinde ita quaeritur quomodo quinquagenarius de quadragenario numero exsistat, qui non mediocriter in nostra religione sacratus est propter Pentecosten,³⁴¹ et quomodo ter ductus propter tria tempora, ante legem, sub lege, sub gratia, vel propter nomen patris et filii et spiritus sancti, adiuncta eminentius ipsa trinitate, ad purgatissimae ecclesiae mysterium referatur perveniatque ad centum quinquaginta tres pisces, quos retia post resurrectionem domini in dexteram partem missa ceperunt.³⁴² Ita multis aliis atque aliis numerorum formis quaedam similitudinum in sanctis libris secreta ponuntur, quae propter numerorum imperitiam legentibus clausa sunt. 66. Non pauca etiam claudit atque obtegit nonnullarum rerum musicarum ignorantia. Nam et de psalterii et citharae differentia quidam non inconcinne aliquas rerum figuras aperuit.³⁴³

³³⁸ Matt. 22: 37.

³³⁹ Air, fire, earth, and water.

³⁴⁰ Matt. 17: 1–8; Mark 9: 2–6.

³⁴¹ Pentecost means literally 'fiftieth' (day).

³⁴² John 21: 6–11.

³⁴³ The author of this insight, often exploited in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, is not known.

all things woven into the temporal order. 63. The courses of the day and the year are based on the number four: the day is divided into the hours of morning, afternoon, evening, and night, the year into the months of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. While we live in the temporal order, we must fast and abstain from the enjoyment of what is temporal, for the sake of the eternity in which we desire to live, but it is actually the passage of time by which the lesson of despising the temporal and seeking the eternal is brought home to us. 64. Then the number ten signifies the knowledge of the creator and creation: the Trinity is the number of the creator, while the number seven symbolizes the creation because it represents life and the body. The former has three elements (hence the precept that God must be loved with the whole heart, the whole soul, and the whole mind),³⁴⁴ and as for the body, the four elements of which it consists are perfectly obvious.³⁴⁵ To live soberly according to this significance of the number ten—conveyed to us temporally (hence the multiplication by four)—and abstain from the pleasures of this world, this is the significance of the forty-day fast. 65. This is enjoined by the law, as represented by Moses, by prophecy, as represented by Elijah, and by the Lord himself, who, to symbolize that he enjoyed the testimony of the law and the prophets, shone out in the midst of them on the mountain as the three amazed disciples looked on.³⁴⁶ In the same way a solution may be found to explain how the number fifty, which enjoys particular authority in our religion because of Pentecost,³⁴⁷ comes from the number forty, and how, when it is multiplied by three—either because of the three eras (before the law, under the law, under grace) or because of the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and with the conspicuous addition of the Trinity, refers to the mystery of the fully purified church, matching the 153 fishes that were caught in the nets cast on the right-hand side of the boat after the Lord's resurrection.³⁴⁸ In this way, expressed in a variety of numbers, there are in the sacred books certain abstruse analogies which are inaccessible to readers without a knowledge of number. 66. Many passages are also made inaccessible and opaque by an ignorance of music. It has been elegantly demonstrated³⁴⁹

³⁴⁴ Matt. 22: 37.

³⁴⁵ Air, fire, earth, and water.

³⁴⁶ Matt. 17: 1–8; Mark 9: 2–6.

³⁴⁷ Pentecost means literally 'fiftieth' (day).

³⁴⁸ John 21: 6–11.

³⁴⁹ The author of this insight, often exploited in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, is not known.

Et decem chordarum psalterium non importune inter doctos quaeritur utrum habeat aliquam musicae legem quae ad tantum nervorum numerum cogat an vero, si non habet, eo ipso magis sacrate accipiendus sit ipse numerus vel propter decalogum legis, de quo item numero si quaeratur, nonnisi ad creatorem creaturamque referendus est, vel propter superius expositum ipsum denarium. 67. Et ille numerus aedificationis templi qui commemoratur in evangelio,³⁵⁰ quadraginta scilicet et sex annorum, nescio quid musicum sonat et relatus ad fabricam dominici corporis propter quam templi mentio facta est, cogit nonnullos haereticos confiteri filium dei non falso sed vero et humano corpore indutum.³⁵¹ Et numerum quippe et musicam plerisque locis in sanctis scripturis honorabiliter posita invenimus. 68. Non enim audiendi sunt errores gentilium superstitionum, qui novem Musas Iovis et Memoriae filias esse finxerunt. Refellit eos Varro, quo nescio utrum apud eos quisquam talium rerum doctior vel curiosior esse possit.³⁵² Dicit enim civitatem nescioquam, non enim nomen recolo,³⁵³ locasse apud tres artifices terna simulacra Musarum, quod in templo Apollinis donum poneret, ut quisquis artificum pulchriora formasset ab illo potissimum electa emerent; 69. ita contigisse ut opera sua quaeque illi artifices aequae pulchra explicarent et placuisse civitati omnes novem atque omnes esse emptas ut in Apollinis templo dedicarentur. Quibus postea dicit Hesiodum poetam imposuisse vocabula.³⁵⁴ Non ergo Iuppiter novem Musas genuit, sed tres fabri ternas creaverunt. 70. Tres autem non propterea illa civitas locaverat quia in somnis eas viderat aut tot se cuiusquam illorum oculis demonstraverant, sed quia facile erat animadvertere omnem sonum, quae materies cantilenarum est, triformem esse natura.³⁵⁵ Aut enim voce editur, sicuti eorum est qui faucibus sine organo canunt, aut flatu, sicut tubarum et tibiatarum, aut pulsu, sicut in citharis et tympanis et quibuslibet aliis quae percutiendo canora sunt. 71. Sed sive ita se habeat

³⁵⁰ John 2: 20.

³⁵¹ Cf. *Tract. Iob.* 10. 10–12, *De Div. Quaest.* 56, *De Trin.* 4. 5.

³⁵² Varro is praised no less highly in *Cin. Dei* 6. 2. Augustine's use of him is discussed in H. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* (Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia xx 1 and 2; Gothenburg, 1967), 2. 627–30. The present point was probably made in one (or both) of his lost works *Antiquitates* and *De Musica*.

³⁵³ Not known; Atkinson suggests Helicon in Boeotia.

³⁵⁴ Hesiod, *Theogony*, 50–5.

³⁵⁵ Cf. Ausonius, 15. 77, for a different threefold division.

that there are some figurative illustrations of things based on the difference between the psaltery and the lyre. It is a matter of dispute among experts, not unreasonably, whether the psaltery of ten strings embodies some musical principle which obliges it to have this number of strings, or whether, if this is not so, the number should for that reason be understood rather in a special religious sense, either in terms of the decalogue (and if that number is investigated, it can only be related to the creator and the creation), or in terms of the number ten itself as expounded above. 67. The number of years given in the gospel for the building of the temple³⁵⁶ (forty-six) has some musical overtones, and when related to the constitution of the Lord's body—which is why the temple was mentioned—compels numerous heretics to admit that the Son of God took on a real human body, not an insubstantial one.³⁵⁷ Indeed we find both number and music mentioned with respect in several places in the holy scriptures. 68. But we must not listen to the fictions of pagan superstition, which have represented the nine Muses as the daughters of Jupiter and Memory. They were refuted by Varro, a man whose erudition and thirst for knowledge could not, I think, be surpassed among pagans.³⁵⁸ He says that a certain town (I forget its name)³⁵⁹ placed contracts with three workmen for three sets of images of the Muses to be set up as an offering in Apollo's temple, intending to select and buy those of the sculptor who produced the most attractive ones. 69. It so happened that the workmen's products were equally attractive, and the town selected all nine and they were all bought for dedication in Apollo's temple. He adds that the poet Hesiod later gave them names.³⁶⁰ So Jupiter did not beget the nine Muses, but they were made by three sculptors, three apiece. 70. And the town had placed contracts for three not because they had seen them in a dream or because that number had appeared before the eyes of one of its citizens, but because it was a simple matter to observe that all sound, which is the essence of music, is naturally threefold.³⁶¹ A sound is either produced by the voice, as by those who make music with their mouths, without a musical instrument, or by breath, as with trumpets and flutes, or by percussion, as in the case of lyres, drums, or anything else which resonates when struck. 71. But whether Varro's story is true or not, we should not

³⁵⁶ John 2: 20.

³⁵⁷ Cf. *Tract. Iob.* 10. 10–12, *De Div. Quaest.* 56, *De Trin.* 4. 5.

³⁵⁸ Varro is praised no less highly in *Cin. Dei* 6. 2. Augustine's use of him is discussed in H. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* (Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia xx 1 and 2; Gothenburg, 1967), 2. 627–30. The present point was probably made in one (or both) of his lost works *Antiquitates* and *De Musica*.

³⁵⁹ Not known; Atkinson suggests Helicon in Boeotia.

³⁶⁰ Hesiod, *Theogony*, 50–5.

³⁶¹ Cf. Ausonius, 15. 77, for a different threefold division.

quod Varro rettulit sive non ita, nos tamen non propter superstitionem profanorum debemus musicam fugere, si quid inde utile ad intellegendas sanctas scripturas rapere potuerimus, nec ad illorum theatricas nugas converti, si aliquid de citharis et de organis quod ad spiritalia capienda valeat disputemus. 72. Neque enim et litteras discere non debuimus quia earum deum dicunt esse Mercurium,³⁶² aut quia iustitiae virtutisque templa dedicarunt et quae corde gestanda sunt in lapidibus adorare maluerunt propterea nobis iustitia virtusque fugienda est. Immo vero quisquis bonus verusque Christianus est domini sui esse intellegat ubicumque invenerit veritatem, quam conferens et agnoscens etiam in litteris sacris superstitiosa figmenta repudiet, doleatque homines atque caveat *qui cognoscentes deum non ut deum glorificaverunt aut gratias egerunt, sed evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis et obscuratum est insipiens cor eorum; dicentes enim se esse sapientes stulti facti sunt et immutaverunt gloriam incorruptibilis dei in similitudinem imaginis corruptibilis hominis et volucrum et quadrupedum et serpentium.*³⁶³ 73. Sed ut totum istum locum, nam est maxime necessarius, diligentius explicemus, duo sunt genera doctrinarum quae in gentilibus etiam moribus exercentur, unum earum rerum quas instituerunt homines, alterum earum quas animadverterunt iam peractas aut divinitus institutas. Illud quod est secundum institutiones hominum partim superstitiosum est, partim non est. 74. Superstitiosum est quidquid institutum est ab hominibus ad facienda et colenda idola pertinens vel ad colendam sicut deum creaturam partemve ullam creaturae vel ad consultationes et pacta³⁶⁴ quaedam significationum cum daemonibus placita atque foederata, qualia sunt molimina magicarum artium, quae quidem commemorare potius quam docere assolent poetae.³⁶⁵ Ex quo genere sunt, sed quasi licentiore vanitate, haruspicum et augurum libri. 75. Ad hoc genus pertinent omnes etiam ligaturae³⁶⁶ atque remedia quae medicorum quoque disciplina condemnat, sive in praecantationibus sive in quibusdam notis quos characteres vocant, sive in

³⁶² A point conceded even by Tertullian (*De Corona* 8. 2).

³⁶³ Rom. 1: 21–3.

³⁶⁴ To be explained in sections 87–95.

³⁶⁵ Vergil (*Aen.* 4. 478–98), and Lucan (*Bellum Civile* 6. 413–830), among many. It appears that Augustine wishes to defend the poets from blame here.

³⁶⁶ Literally ‘bindings’, of which amulets may be one type. There is an apposite survey of ancient superstition in Atkinson, ‘Commentary on *De Doctrina Christiana*’, 171–82.

avoid music because of the associated pagan superstitions if there is a possibility of gleaning from it something of value for understanding holy scripture. Nor, on the other hand, should we be captivated by the vanities of the theatre if we are discussing something to do with lyres or other instruments that may help us appreciate spiritual truths. 72. We were not wrong to learn the alphabet just because they say that the god Mercury was its patron,³⁶⁷ nor should we avoid justice and virtue just because they dedicated temples to justice and virtue and preferred to honour these values not in their minds, but in the form of stones. A person who is a good and a true Christian should realize that truth belongs to his Lord, wherever it is found, gathering and acknowledging it even in pagan literature, but rejecting superstitious vanities and deploring and avoiding those who ‘though they knew God did not glorify him as God or give thanks but became enfeebled in their own thoughts and plunged their senseless minds into darkness. Claiming to be wise they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the image of corruptible mortals and animals and reptiles.’³⁶⁸ 73. But to analyse this whole matter more closely—and it is something of the greatest importance—there are two kinds of learning pursued even in pagan society. One comprises things which have been instituted by humans, the other things already developed, or divinely instituted, which have been observed by them. Of those instituted by humans, some are superstitious, some not.⁷⁴ Something instituted by humans is superstitious if it concerns the making and worshipping of idols, or the worshipping of the created order or part of it as if it were God, or if it involves certain kinds of consultations or contracts³⁶⁹ about meaning arranged and ratified with demons, such as the enterprises involved in the art of magic, which poets tend to mention rather than to teach.³⁷⁰ From this category—only their vanity is even more reckless—come the books of haruspices and augurs. 75. To this category belong all the amulets³⁷¹ and remedies which the medical profession also condemns, whether these consist of incantations, or certain marks which

³⁶⁷ A point conceded even by Tertullian (*De Corona* 8. 2).

³⁶⁸ Rom. 1: 21–3.

³⁶⁹ To be explained in sections 87–95.

³⁷⁰ Vergil (*Aen.* 4. 478–98), and Lucan (*Bellum Civile* 6. 413–830), among many. It appears that Augustine wishes to defend the poets from blame here.

³⁷¹ Literally ‘bindings’, of which amulets may be one type. There is an apposite survey of ancient superstition in Atkinson, ‘Commentary on *De Doctrina Christiana*’, 171–82.

quibusque rebus suspendendis atque illigandis vel etiam saltandis quodam modo,³⁷² non ad temperationem corporum sed ad quasdam significationes aut occultas aut etiam manifestas, quae mitiore nomine physica vocant, ut quasi non superstitione implicare sed natura prodesse videantur, sicuti sunt inaures in summo aurium singularum aut de strutionum ossibus ansulae in digitis, aut cum tibi dicitur singultienti ut dextra manu sinistrum pollicem teneas. 76. His adiunguntur milia inanissimarum observationum, si membrum aliquod salierit, si iunctim ambulantis amicus lapis aut canis aut puer medius intervenerit. Atque illud quod lapidem calcant tamquam diremptorem amicitiae minus molestum est quam cum innocentem puerum colapho percutiunt, si pariter ambulantis intercurrit. Sed bellum est quod aliquando pueri vindicantur a canibus. Nam plerumque tam superstitiosi sunt quidam ut etiam canem qui medius intervenerit ferire audeant, non impune; namque a vano remedio cito ille interdum percussorem suum ad verum medicum mittit. 77. Hinc sunt etiam illa: limen calcare cum ante domum suam transit, redire ad lectum si quis dum se calciat sternutaverit, redire domum si procedens offenderit, cum vestis a soricibus roditur plus tremere suspicionem futuri mali quam praesens damnum dolere. Unde illud eleganter dictum est Catonis, qui cum esset consultus a quodam qui sibi a soricibus erosas caligas diceret respondit non esse illud monstrum, sed vere monstrum habendum fuisse si sorices a caligis roderentur.³⁷³ 78. Neque illi ab hoc genere perniciosae superstitionis segregandi sunt qui genethliaci propter natalium dierum considerationes, nunc autem vulgo mathematici vocantur.³⁷⁴ Nam et ipsi, quamvis veram stellarum positionem cum quisque nascitur consectentur et aliquando etiam pervestigant, tamen quod inde conantur vel actiones nostras vel actionum eventa praedicere nimis errant et vendunt imperitis hominibus miserabilem servitutem. 79. Nam quisque liber ad huius modi mathematicum

³⁷² Atkinson's (179–80) suggestion *salutandis* ('greeting') is perhaps too ordinary an activity for this context.

³⁷³ This quip is otherwise unattested, but *ben trovato* (cf. Cic. *De Divinatione* 2.51). For another such mouse-joke, *ibid.* 2. 59.

³⁷⁴ Cf. *De Din. Quaest.* 45. 1, where Augustine notes that the term was once confined to astronomers. On Augustine's 'struggle with astrology' in general, see F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop* (London, 1961), 60–7.

their exponents call ‘characters’, or the business of hanging certain things up and tying things to other things, or even somehow making things dance.³⁷⁵ The purpose of these practices is not to heal the body, but to establish certain secret or even overt meanings. They call these ‘physical’ matters, using this bland name to give the impression that they do not involve a person in superstition but are by nature beneficial. So, for example, ear-rings on the tip of one ear, or rings of ostrich bone on the fingers, or the advice given you when hiccuping to hold your left thumb with your right hand. 76. Besides all this there are thousands of utterly futile practices—do this if a part of your body suddenly twitches, do that if a stone or a dog or a slave comes between you and a friend as you walk together. The habit of treading on a stone as if it were a threat to one's friendship is less offensive than cuffing an innocent boy who happens to run between people walking together. But it is nice to record that such boys are sometimes avenged by dogs: some people are so superstitious that they go as far as striking a dog who comes between them, but they do so to their cost, because as a result of this inane remedy the dog sometimes sends its assailant straight to a real doctor. 77. Other examples are these: treading on the threshold when you pass in front of your own house; going back to bed if you sneeze while putting on your shoes; returning inside your house if you trip up while leaving it; or, when your clothing is eaten by mice, worrying more about the premonition of future disaster than about the present damage. Cato had a witty saying about this: when approached by someone who said that mice had been nibbling his slippers he replied that this was not an omen, but would certainly have been if the slippers had been nibbling the mice.³⁷⁶ 78. We must not omit from this category of deadly superstition the people called *genethliaci* because of their study of natal days, or now in common parlance *mathematici* (astrologers).³⁷⁷ Although they investigate the true position of the stars at a person's birth and sometimes actually succeed in working it out, the fact that they use it to try to predict our activities and the consequences of these activities is a grave error and amounts to selling uneducated people into a wretched form of slavery. 79. When free people go to see such an astrologer,

³⁷⁵ Atkinson's (179–80) suggestion *salutandis* (‘greeting’) is perhaps too ordinary an activity for this context.

³⁷⁶ This quip is otherwise unattested, but *ben trovato* (cf. Cic. *De Divinatione* 2.51). For another such mouse-joke, *ibid.* 2. 59.

³⁷⁷ Cf. *De Din. Quaest.* 45. 1, where Augustine notes that the term was once confined to astronomers. On Augustine's ‘struggle with astrology’ in general, see F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop* (London, 1961), 60–7.

cum ingressus fuerit dat pecuniam ut servus inde exeat aut Martis aut Veneris vel potius omnium siderum, quibus illi qui primi erraverunt erroremque posteris propinaverunt vel bestiarum propter similitudinem vel hominum ad ipsos homines honorandos imposuerunt vocabula. Non enim mirandum est cum etiam propioribus recentioribusque temporibus sidus quod appellamus Luciferum honori et nomini Caesaris Romani dicare conati sunt.³⁷⁸ 80. Et fortasse factum esset atque isset in vetustatem, nisi avia eius Venus praeoccupasset hoc nominis praedium neque iure ullo ad heredes traiceret quod numquam viva possederat aut possidendum petiverat. Nam ubi vacabat locus neque alicuius priorum mortuorum honore tenebatur factum est quod in rebus talibus fieri solet. Pro Quintili enim et Sextili mensibus Iulium atque Augustum vocamus de honoribus hominum Iulii Caesaris et Augusti Caesaris nuncupatos, ut facile qui voluerit intellegat etiam illa sidera prius sine his nominibus caelo vagata esse, mortuis autem illis quorum honorare memoriam vel coacti sunt homines regia potestate vel placuit humana vanitate, nomina eorum imponentes sideribus eos ipsos sibi mortuos in caelum levare videbantur. 81. Sed quodlibet vocentur ab hominibus, sunt tamen sidera quae deus instituit et ordinavit ut voluit, et est certus motus illorum quo tempora distinguuntur atque variantur. Quem motum notare, cum quisque nascitur, quo modo se habeat, facile est per eorum inventas conscriptasque regulas. Quos sancta scriptura condemnat, dicens, *si enim tantum potuerunt scire ut possent aestimare saeculum, quomodo eius dominum non facilius invenerunt?*³⁷⁹ 82. Sed ex ea notatione velle nascentium mores actus eventa praedicere magnus error et magna dementia est. Et apud eos quidem qui talia dediscenda didicerunt sine ulla dubitatione refellitur haec superstitio.³⁸⁰ Constellationes enim quas vocant notatio est siderum, quomodo se habebant cum ille nasceretur de quo isti miseri a miserioribus consuluntur. Fieri autem

³⁷⁸ Probably Julius Caesar, in view of the alleged descent from Venus, but corroboratory evidence for this proposal is lacking. Augustine's pseudo-legal explanation is pure burlesque.

³⁷⁹ Wisd. 13: 9.

³⁸⁰ The following argument was commonly used, and occasionally refuted, by pagan writers as well as Christian ones (Atkinson, 'Commentary on *De Doctrina Christiana*', 188–92). Augustine uses it in several places, including *Conf.* 7. 6. 8–10 and *Civ. Dei* 5. 1–6.

they pay money for the privilege of coming away as slaves of Mars or Venus, or rather all the stars to which those who first made this error and then offered it to posterity gave either the names of animals, because they resembled animals, or the names of people, in order to honour particular people. It is no surprise that even in relatively recent times the Romans tried to consecrate the star we call Lucifer in the name of, and in honour of, Caesar.³⁸¹ 80. And indeed this might have been done, and become sanctified by tradition, had not Venus his ancestress, though she had never possessed it or even sought to possess it in her lifetime, already taken the name, like a piece of property, and did not transfer it in any legal way to her heirs. For when a title was vacant, and not held in the name of any previous deceased, the usual practice was followed. We call the months July and August after the human beings Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar, and not by their old names of Quinctilis and Sextilis. So it is easy for anyone who so wishes to understand that those planets too previously moved in the sky without their present names, but that when people died whose memory the populace was compelled by royal power, or disposed by human vanity, to honour they gave the names of the deceased to the heavenly bodies and fancied that they were raising to heaven people who as far as they themselves were concerned were dead. 81. But whatever men may call them, the heavenly bodies, which God made and arranged as he wished, certainly exist, and have fixed orbits from which the seasons derive their differences and variations. It is easy to record the details of these orbits when a person is born, according to the rules which they have invented and codified. Holy scripture condemns them when it says, 'For if they were able to know so much that they could judge the world, how is it that they did not discover its Lord more easily?'³⁸² 82. But the idea of using this data to predict the character and future actions and experiences of the new-born is a great mistake, and indeed great folly. To those who have learnt that such things are better unlearned this superstition is without the slightest doubt invalid.³⁸³ (In what follows constellations is their name for the diagrams of the positions occupied by the stars at the birth of the person about whom these wretched people are consulted by people even more wretched.) Now it can happen

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potest ut aliqui gemini tam sequaciter fundantur ex utero ut intervallum temporis inter eos nullum possit apprehendi et constellationum numeris adnotari. 83. Unde necesse est nonnullos geminos easdem habere constellationes, cum paria rerum vel quas agunt vel quas patiuntur eventa non habeant,³⁸⁴ sed plerumque ita disparia ut alius felicissimus, alius infelicissimus vivat, sicut Esau et Iacob geminos accipimus natos ita ut Iacob, qui posterior nascebatur, manu plantam praecedentis fratris tenens inveniretur.³⁸⁵ 84. Horum certe dies atque hora nascentium notari aliter non posset nisi ut amborum constellatio esset una; quantum autem intersit inter amborum mores facta labores atque successus, scriptura testis est, iam ore omnium gentium pervagata. 85. Neque enim ad rem pertinet quod dicunt ipsum momentum minimum atque angustissimum temporis, quod geminorum partum disternat, multum valere in rerum natura atque caelestium corporum rapidissima velocitate. Etsi enim concedam ut plurimum valeat, tamen in constellationibus a mathematico inveniri non potest, quibus inspectis se fata dicere profitetur. 86. Quod ergo in constellationibus non invenit, quas necesse est unas inspiciat, sive de Iacob sive de eius fratre consulatur, quid ei prodest si distat in caelo quod temere securus infamat, et non distat in tabula quam frustra sollicitus intuetur? Quare istae quoque opiniones quibusdam rerum signis humana praesumptione institutis ad eadem illa quasi quaedam cum daemonibus pacta et conventa referendae sunt. 87. Hinc enim fiet ut occulto quodam iudicio divino cupidi malarum rerum homines tradantur illudendi et decipiendi pro meritis voluntatum suarum, illudentibus eos atque decipientibus praevaricatoribus angelis, quibus ista mundi pars infima secundum pulcherrimum ordinem rerum divinae providentiae lege subiecta est. Quibus illusionibus et deceptionibus evenit, ut istis superstitiosis et perniciosis divinationum generibus multa praeterita et futura dicantur nec aliter accidant quam dicuntur, multaque observantibus secundum observationes suas eveniant, quibus implicati curiosiores fiant et sese magis

³⁸⁴ Cf. *Conf.* 7. 6. 8–10 and *De Div. Quaest.* 45.

³⁸⁵ Gen. 25: 25.

that some twins follow one another so closely out of the womb that no interval of time can be perceived between them and recorded in terms of constellations. 83. It follows that some twins have the same constellations, and yet their actions and experiences turn out to be not the same but often quite different.³⁸⁶ One may live to be blissfully happy, the other to be desperately unhappy, like Esau and Jacob who, we are told, were born as twins with Jacob, the second to be born, holding in his hand the foot of his brother born before him.³⁸⁷ 84. The day and hour of these births, certainly, could only have been recorded in terms of a single constellation common to both. But the vast difference between the two in terms of character and achievement, suffering and success, is attested by scripture and is now common knowledge among all peoples. 85. It is not pertinent to say, as they do, that the small interval, the tiny fraction of time that separates the birth of twins is of great significance in view of the nature of the universe and the great speed of the heavenly bodies. Even if I conceded that it was of the utmost significance, it would still not be discoverable by the astrologer in the constellations from which he claims to make predictions. 86. Since he cannot trace it in his constellations, which when examined are bound to be identical, whether he is consulted about Jacob or about his brother, what use is it to him if there is a difference in the heavens, which he thoughtlessly and casually belittles, but no difference in his diagram, which he earnestly and pointlessly beholds? So these ideas too, because they involve signs instituted by human presumption, must be classed among those contracts and agreements made with devils.⁸⁷ In this way it happens that, by some inscrutable divine plan, those who have a desire for evil things are handed over to be deluded and deceived according to what their own wills deserve. They are deluded and deceived by corrupt angels, to whom in God's most excellent scheme of things this lowest part of the world has been subjected by the decree of divine providence. As a result of these delusions and deceptions it has come about that these superstitious and deadly kinds of divination actually do tell of past and future things, which happen exactly as predicted; many things happen to observers in accordance with their observations, so that as they are caught

³⁸⁶ Cf. *Conf.* 7. 6. 8–10 and *De Div. Quaest.* 45.

³⁸⁷ Gen. 25: 25.

magisque inserant multiplicibus laqueis perniciosissimi erroris. 88. Hoc genus fornicationis animae salubriter divina scriptura non tacuit neque ab ea sic deterruit animam, ut propterea talia negaret esse sectanda quia falsa dicuntur a professoribus eorum, sed etiam *si dixerint vobis, inquit, et ita venerit, ne credatis eis*.³⁸⁸ Non enim quia imago Samuelis mortui Saul regi vera praeuntiavit propterea talia sacrilegia,³⁸⁹ quibus imago illa praesentata est, minus execranda sunt, aut quia in Actibus³⁹⁰ apostolorum ventriloqua femina verum testimonium perhibuit apostolis domini, ideo Paulus apostolus pepercit illi spiritui ac non potius feminam illius daemonii correptione atque exclusione mundavit. 89. Omnes igitur artifices³⁹¹ huius modi vel nugatoriae vel noxae superstitionis, 〈et〉 ex quadam pestifera societate hominum et daemonum quasi pacta infidelis et dolosae amicitiae constituta, penitus sunt repudianda et fugienda Christiano: *non quod idolum sit aliquid*, ait apostolus, *sed quia quae immolant daemoniis immolant et non deo, nolo vos socios daemoniorum fieri*.³⁹² 90. Quod autem de idolis et de immolationibus quae honori eorum exhibentur dixit apostolus, hoc de omnibus imaginariis signis sentiendum est quae vel ad cultum idolorum vel ad creaturam eiusque partes tamquam deum colendas trahunt vel ad remediorum aliarumque observationum curam pertinent. Quae non sunt divinitus ad dilectionem dei et proximi tamquam publice constituta, sed per privatas appetitiones rerum temporalium corda dissipant miserorum. In omnibus ergo istis doctrinis societas daemonum formidanda atque vitanda est, qui nihil cum principe suo diabolo nisi reditum nostrum claudere atque obserare conantur. 91. Sicut autem de stellis, quas condidit et ordinavit deus, humanae et deceptoriae coniecturae ab hominibus institutae sunt, sic etiam de quibusque nascentibus vel quoquo modo divinae providentiae

³⁸⁸ Deut. 13: 2–3.

³⁸⁹ 1 Kgs. (1 Sam.) 28: 11–19, discussed in the contemporary *Diversae Quaestiones ad Simplicianum* 2, 3, and later in the sixth of *Octo Dulcitii Quaestiones*.

³⁹⁰ Acts 16: 16–18.

³⁹¹ Retaining *artifices*, read in most manuscripts of both Augustine and Eugippius, which makes good sense provided that *pacta* is not in apposition with it; as Schaüblin suggested, *et* should be added, but the lacuna may be larger.

³⁹² 1 Cor. 10: 19–20.

up in them they may become ever more inquisitive and entrap themselves more and more in the manifold snares of this most deadly error. 88. This is a kind of spiritual fornication, and in the interests of spiritual health scripture has not failed to mention it. It did not warn the soul by forbidding the practice of these things on the grounds that its teachers utter falsehoods; it has actually said, 'If they tell you and it happens in that way, do not trust them'.³⁹³ The fact that the ghost of the dead Samuel prophesied the truth to King Saul³⁹⁴ does not make the wickedness of summoning that ghost any less abhorrent. Nor did the fact that (in Acts)³⁹⁵ a soothsayer bore true testimony to the Lord's apostles lead Paul to spare that spirit rather than cleanse the woman by rebuking the demon and driving it out.⁸⁹ So all the specialists³⁹⁶ in this kind of futile and harmful superstition, and the contracts, as it were, of an untrustworthy and treacherous partnership established by this disastrous alliance of men and devils, must be totally rejected and avoided by the Christian. 'It is not', to quote the apostle, 'because an idol is something, but because whatever they sacrifice they sacrifice it to devils and not to God that I do not want you to become the associates of demons.'³⁹⁷ 90. What the apostle said about idols and the sacrifices made in their honour must guide our attitude to all these fanciful signs which draw people to the worship of idols or to the worship of the created order or any parts of it as if they were God, or which relate to this obsession with remedies and other such practices. They are not publicly promulgated by God in order to foster the love of God and one's neighbour, but they consume the hearts of wretched mortals by fostering selfish desires for temporal things. So in all these teachings we must fear and avoid this alliance with demons, whose whole aim, in concert with their leader, the devil, is to cut off and obstruct our return to God. 91. Just as there are deceptive human ideas of human origin about the stars, which God created and ordered, so there are many ideas, committed to paper by many writers, apparently derived systematically from human surmises, about everything which is born or somehow comes into being by the workings of divine

³⁹³ Deut. 13: 2–3.

³⁹⁴ 1 Kgs. (1 Sam.) 28: 11–19, discussed in the contemporary *Diversae Quaestiones ad Simplicianum* 2. 3, and later in the sixth of *Octo Dulcitii Quaestiones*.

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³⁹⁷ 1 Cor. 10: 19–20.

administratione existentibus rebus multi multa humanis suspicionibus quasi regulariter coniectata litteris mandaverunt, si forte insolite acciderint, tamquam si mula pariat aut fulmine aliquid percutiatur. 92. Quae omnia tantum valent quantum praesumptione animorum quasi communi quadam lingua cum daemonibus foederata sunt. Quae tamen plena sunt omnia pestiferae curiositatis, cruciantis sollicitudinis, mortiferae servitutis. Non enim quia valebant animadversa sunt, sed animadvertendo atque signando factum est ut valerent. Et ideo diversis diverse proveniunt secundum cogitationes et praesumptiones suas. Illi enim spiritus qui decipere volunt talia procurant cuique qualibus eum irretitum per suspensiones et consensiones eius vident. 93. Sicut enim verbi gratia una figura litterae quae decusatim notatur aliud apud Graecos, aliud apud Latinos valet, non natura sed placito et consensione significandi, et ideo qui utramque linguam novit, si homini Graeco velit aliquid significare scribendo, non in ea significatione ponit hanc litteram in qua eam ponit cum homini scribit Latino, et ‘beta’ uno eodemque sono apud Graecos litterae, apud Latinos holeris nomen est, et cum dico ‘lege’, in his duabus syllabis aliud Graecus, aliud Latinus intellegit³⁹⁸—94. sicut ergo hae omnes significationes pro sua cuiusque societatis consensione animos movent, et quia diversa consensio est, diverse movent nec ideo consenserunt in eas homines quia iam valebant ad significationem, sed ideo valent quia consenserunt in eas, sic etiam illa signa, quibus perniciose daemonum societas comparatur, pro cuiusque observationibus valent. 95. Quod manifestissime ostendit ritus augurum, qui et antequam observent et posteaquam observata signa tenuerint id agunt ne videant volatus aut audiant voces avium, quia nulla ista signa sunt nisi consensus observantis accedat. 96. Quibus amputatis atque eradicatis ab animo christiano deinceps videndae sunt institutiones hominum non superstitiosae, id est non cum daemonibus sed cum ipsis hominibus institutae. Namque omnia quae ideo valent inter homines quia

³⁹⁸ ‘Speak’ and ‘read’ respectively. Latin *beta* is ‘beet’.

providence—I mean things which happen abnormally, like a mule giving birth or something being struck by lightning. 92. The influence of all these things varies in proportion to the extent of the agreement with demons achieved by presumptuous minds through such kinds of common language. But they are all brimful of dangerous curiosity, agonising worry, and deadly bondage. They were not observed as a result of their influence, but they gained their influence as a result of being observed and recorded. This is how they came to have different effects on different people, according to their particular thoughts and fancies. Spirits who wish to deceive someone devise appropriate signs for each individual to match those in which they see him caught up through his speculations and the conventions he accepts. 93. So (by way of example) the single letter which is written like a cross means one thing to Greeks and another to Latin-speakers, and has meaning not by nature but by agreement and convention; therefore a person who knows both languages does not, if he wants to say something in writing to a Greek, write that letter with the same meaning as it has when he writes to a Latin speaker. And the word *beta*, consisting of the same sounds in both languages, is the name of a letter in Greek, but a vegetable in Latin. When I say *lege* a Greek understands one thing by these two syllables, but a Latin-speaker something else.³⁹⁹ 94. All these meanings, then, derive their effect on the mind from each individual's agreement with a particular convention. As this agreement varies, so does their effect. People did not agree to use them because they were already meaningful; rather they became meaningful because people agreed to use them. Likewise the signs by which this deadly agreement with demons is achieved have an effect that is in proportion to each individual's attention to them. 95. This is clearly demonstrated by the practice of augurs, who, both before and after making their observations, deliberately avoid seeing birds in flight or hearing their cries, because these signs are null and void unless accompanied by the observer's agreement. 96. Having eliminated and uprooted these things from the Christian mind we must in turn consider those human institutions which are not superstitious, that is, ones established not with demons but with men. All things which are meaningful to

³⁹⁹ 'Speak' and 'read' respectively. Latin *beta* is 'beet'.

placuit inter eos ut valeant instituta hominum sunt. Quorum partim superflua luxuriosaque instituta sunt, partim commoda et necessaria. 97. Illa enim signa quae saltando faciunt histriones, si natura, non instituto et consensione hominum valerent, non primis temporibus saltante pantomimo praeco praenuntiaret populo Carthaginiis quid saltator vellet intellegi. Quod adhuc multi meminerunt senes, quorum relatu haec solemus audire. Quod ideo credendum est, quia nunc quoque si quis theatrum talium nugarum imperitus intraverit, nisi ei dicatur ab altero quid illi motus significant, frustra totus intentus est. 98. Appetunt tamen omnes quandam similitudinem in significando, ut ipsa signa quantum possunt rebus quae significantur similia sint. Sed quia multis modis simile aliquid alicui potest esse, non constant talia signa inter homines nisi consensus accedat. 99. In picturis vero et statuis ceterisque huiusmodi simulatis operibus, maxime peritorum artificum, nemo errat cum similia viderit, ut agnoscat quibus sint rebus similia. Et hoc totum genus inter superflua hominum instituta numerandum est, nisi cum interest quid eorum qua de causa et ubi et quando et cuius auctoritate fiat. Milia denique fictarum fabularum et falsitatum, quarum mendaciis homines delectantur, humana instituta sunt. Et nulla magis hominum propria, quae a se ipsis habent, existimanda sunt quam quaeque falsa atque mendacia.⁴⁰⁰ 100. Commoda vero et necessaria hominum cum hominibus instituta sunt, quaecumque in habitu et cultu corporis ad sexus vel honores discernendos differentia placuit, et innumerabilia genera significationum sine quibus humana societas aut non omnino aut minus commode geritur, quaeque in ponderibus atque mensuris et nummorum impressionibus vel aestimationibus suae cuique civitati et populo sunt propria, et cetera huiusmodi, quae nisi hominum instituta essent non per diversos populos varia essent nec in ipsis singulis populis pro arbitrio suorum principum mutarentur. 101. Sed haec tota pars humanorum institutorum, quae ad usum vitae necessarium proficiunt, nequaquam est fugienda Christiano, immo etiam quantum satis est intuenda memoriaque retinenda.

⁴⁰⁰ See preface, 17 n.

humans just because humans have decided that they should be so, are human institutions. Some of them are superfluous and self-indulgent, others are useful and necessary. 97. If the signs made by actors while dancing were naturally meaningful, rather than meaningful as a result of human institution and agreement, an announcer would not have indicated to the Carthaginians, as each actor danced, what the dance meant, as he did in earlier days. Many old men still remember this, and we often hear them talking about it. It is quite credible, for even now if a person unfamiliar with these frivolities goes to the theatre his rapt attention to them is pointless unless someone tells him what the movements mean. 98. Yet everyone aims at some degree of similarity when they use signs, making signs as similar as possible to the things which are signified. But because one thing can be similar to another in many ways, these signs are not generally understood unless accompanied by agreement. 99. In the case of pictures and statues and other such representations, especially those made by experienced artists, nobody who sees the representation fails to recognize the things which they resemble. This whole category should be classed among superfluous human institutions, except when it makes a difference why or where or when or by whose authority one of them is made. Finally, the thousands of fictional stories and romances, which through their falsehoods give people great pleasure, are human institutions. Indeed, nothing should be thought more peculiar to mankind than lies and falsehoods,⁴⁰¹ which derive exclusively from mankind itself. 100. But there are useful and necessary institutions, established with men by men; such things as the conventional differences in dress and in adornment of the body, designed to distinguish sex or rank, and countless kinds of coded meanings without which society would function less smoothly, or not at all, and everything in the realm of weights and measures, coinage, and currency, which are peculiar to individual states and peoples, and so on. If these were not human institutions they would not differ between different peoples, nor would they be subject to change at the whim of the authorities in each country. 101. This whole area of human institutions which contribute to the necessities of life should in no way be avoided by the Christian; indeed, within reason, they should be studied and committed to memory.

⁴⁰¹ See preface, 17 n.

102. Adumbrata enim quaedam et naturalibus utcumque similia hominum instituta sunt.⁴⁰² Quorum ea quae ad societatem, ut dictum est, daemonum pertinent, penitus repudianda sunt et detestanda; ea vero, quae homines cum hominibus habent, assumenda, in quantum non sunt luxuriosa atque superflua, et maxime litterarum figurae, sine quibus legere non possumus, linguarumque varietas quantum satis est, de qua superius disputavimus.⁴⁰³ 103. Ex eo genere sunt etiam notae, quas qui didicerunt proprie iam notarii appellantur. Utilia sunt ista nec discuntur illicite nec superstitione implicant nec luxu enervant, si tantum occupent, ut maioribus rebus, ad quas adipiscendas servire debent, non sint impedimento.

104. Iam vero illa quae non instituendo, sed aut transacta temporibus aut divinitus instituta investigando homines prodiderunt, ubicumque discantur, non sunt hominum instituta existimanda. Quorum alia sunt ad sensus corporis, alia vero ad rationem animi pertinentia. Sed illa quae sensu corporis attinguntur vel narrata credimus vel demonstrata sentimus vel experta conicimus.

105. Quidquid igitur de ordine temporum transactorum indicat ea quae appellatur historia, plurimum nos adiuvat ad libros sanctos intellegendos, etiam si praeter ecclesiam puerili eruditione discatur. Nam et per olympiadas et per consulum nomina multa saepe quaeruntur a nobis.⁴⁰⁴ Et ignorantia consulatus quo natus est dominus et quo passus est⁴⁰⁵ nonnullos coegit errare, ut putarent quadraginta sex annorum aetate passum esse dominum, quia per tot annos aedificatum templum esse dictum est a Iudaeis, quod imaginem dominici corporis habebat.⁴⁰⁶ 106. Et annorum quidem fere triginta baptizatum esse retinemus auctoritate evangelica,⁴⁰⁷ sed postea quot annos in hac vita egerit, quamquam textu ipso actionum eius animadverti possit, tamen ne alicunde caligo dubitationis oriatur, de historia gentium collata cum evangelio liquidius certiusque colligitur. Tunc enim videbitur non frustra esse dictum quod quadraginta sex annis templum aedificatum sit,

⁴⁰² These 'natural' institutions—the adjective is not used elsewhere in this context—are those observed by man and divinely instituted, of which discussion begins in 2.104.

⁴⁰³ 2.50.

⁴⁰⁴ Greek reckoning was based on the period of four years between successive Olympic Games, while the Romans used the names of the two consuls in each year.

⁴⁰⁵ In fact the chronicle of Eusebius/Jerome used the regnal years of emperors.

⁴⁰⁶ John 2: 19–20. Cf. 2. 67.

⁴⁰⁷ Luke 3: 23.

102. There are some human institutions which are modelled on natural ones⁴⁰⁸ or at any rate similar to them. Those which involve an alliance with demons are, as I have said, to be completely rejected and abhorred, but those which men practise along with their fellow-men are to be adopted, in so far as they are not self-indulgent and superfluous. This applies especially to the letters of the alphabet, without which reading would be impossible, and (up to a point) to the multiplicity of languages, which I discussed above.⁴⁰⁹ 103. In this category, too, are the symbols of shorthand, learnt by those who are now properly known as stenographers. These are useful, and it is not wrong to learn them; they do not involve us in superstition or undermine us with self-indulgence, provided that limited time is spent on them and that they do not become an obstacle to the more important things which they should help us to obtain.⁴¹⁰ 104. Now those elements of human tradition which men did not establish but discovered by investigation, whether they were enacted in time or instituted by God, should not be considered human institutions, no matter where they are learnt. Some of these concern the physical senses, others concern the mind. The former we either take on trust when they are told to us, or understand when they are demonstrated, or infer when they are experienced.⁴¹¹ 105. Whatever the subject called history reveals about the train of past events is of the greatest assistance in interpreting the holy books, even if learnt outside the church as part of primary education. Many problems are often investigated by us using Olympiads and the names of consuls.⁴¹² Ignorance of the consulships in which the Lord was born and died⁴¹³ has led many to the erroneous idea that the Lord suffered at the age of 46, because it was said by the Jews that their temple (which represented the Lord's body)⁴¹⁴ was built in forty-six years. 106. We have it on the authority of the gospel⁴¹⁵ that he was baptized at the age of about 30; the number of years that he lived after that could be inferred from the pattern of his activities, but is in fact more clearly and reliably established, beyond any shadow of doubt, by a comparison of secular history with the gospel. It will then be seen that there was some point in the statement that the temple was built in forty-six years: since the

⁴⁰⁸ These 'natural' institutions—the adjective is not used elsewhere in this context—are those observed by man and divinely instituted, of which discussion begins in 2.104.

⁴⁰⁹ 2.50.

⁴¹⁰ Greek reckoning was based on the period of four years between successive Olympic Games, while the Romans used the names of the two consuls in each year.

⁴¹¹ In fact the chronicle of Eusebius/Jerome used the regnal years of emperors.

⁴¹² John 2: 19–20. Cf. 2. 67.

⁴¹³ Luke 3: 23.

ut cum referri iste numerus ad aetatem domini non potuerit ad secretiorem instructionem humani corporis referatur, quo indui propter nos non dedignatus est unicus dei filius, per quem facta sunt omnia.⁴¹⁴ 107. De utilitate autem historiae, ut omittam Graecos, quantam noster Ambrosius quaestionem solvit, calumniantibus Platonis lectoribus et dilectoribus, qui dicere ausi sunt omnes domini nostri Iesu Christi sententias, quas mirari et praedicare coguntur, de Platonis libris eum didicisse, quoniam longe ante humanum adventum domini Platonem fuisse negari non potest. 108. Nonne memoratus episcopus, considerata historia gentium, cum reperisset Platonem Hieremiae temporibus profectum fuisse in Aegyptum, ubi propheta ille tunc erat,⁴¹⁵ probabilius esse ostendit quod Plato potius nostris litteris per Hieremiam fuerit imbutus, ut illa posset docere vel scribere quae iure laudantur? Ante litteras enim gentis Hebraeorum, in qua unius dei cultus eminuit, ex qua secundum carnem venit dominus noster,⁴¹⁶ ne ipse quidem Pythagoras fuit,⁴¹⁷ a cuius posteris Platonem theologiam didicisse isti asserunt. Ita consideratis temporibus fit multo credibilis istos potius de litteris nostris habuisse quaecumque bona et vera dixerunt quam de Platonis dominum Iesum Christum, quod dementissimum est credere. 109. Narratione autem historica cum praeterita etiam hominum instituta narrantur, non inter humana instituta ipsa historia numeranda est, quia iam quae transierunt nec infecta fieri possunt in ordine temporum habenda sunt, quorum est conditor et administrator deus. Aliud est enim facta narrare, aliud docere facienda. Historia facta narrat fideliter atque utiliter, libri autem haruspicum et quaeque similes litterae facienda vel observanda intendunt docere, monitoris audacia, non indicis fide. 110. Est etiam narratio demonstrationi similis, qua non praeterita sed praesentia indicantur ignaris. In quo genere sunt quaecumque de locorum situ naturisque animalium lignorum herbarum lapidum aliorumve corporum scripta sunt. De quo

⁴¹⁴ John 1: 3.

⁴¹⁵ Augustine later realized his mistake in claiming that Ambrose had made Plato and Jeremiah contemporaries (*Retract.* 2. 30. 2; cf. *Civ Dei* 8. 11). According to E. Molland, 'Three Passages in Augustine', *Serta Eitremiana* (Symbolae Osloenses Supplement XI; Oslo, 1942), 112–7, he misquoted or misremembered Ambrose's lost work *De Sacramentis sive de Philosophia*.

⁴¹⁶ Rom. 9: 5.

⁴¹⁷ Of the late sixth century BC .

number cannot be explained in terms of the Lord's age, it must be explained as an abstruse lesson about the human body, which the only son of God, by whom everything was made,⁴¹⁸ did not disdain to put on for our sake. 107. On the usefulness of history—leaving aside Greek scholars—I cite the major problem which was solved by my good friend Ambrose. A scandalous accusation was levelled by readers and admirers of Plato, who had the nerve to say that our Lord Jesus Christ had learnt all his ideas—which they cannot but marvel at and proclaim—from the works of Plato, since, undeniably, he lived long before our Lord's coming in the flesh. 108. After examining secular history the aforementioned bishop discovered that Plato went to Egypt (where the prophet then was) at the time of Jeremiah,⁴¹⁹ and demonstrated that it was surely more likely that Plato had been introduced to our literature by Jeremiah, and that it was this that enabled him to learn and write the things for which he is justly praised. In fact the literature of the Hebrew race, in which monotheism first made its appearance, and from which our Lord came according to the flesh,⁴²⁰ was not preceded even by Pythagoras,⁴²¹ from whose followers they claim that Plato learnt his theology. So as a result of studying the chronology it is much easier to believe that the pagans took everything that is good and true in their writings from our literature than that the Lord Jesus Christ took his from Plato—a quite crazy idea. 109. Historical narrative also describes human institutions of the past, but it should not for that reason itself be counted among human institutions. For what has already gone into the past and cannot be undone must be considered part of the history of time, whose creator and controller is God. There is a difference between describing what has been done and describing what must be done. History relates past events in a faithful and useful way, whereas the books of haruspices and similar literature set out to teach things to be performed or observed, and offer impertinent advice, not reliable information. 110. There is also a kind of narration akin to demonstration, by which things in the present, and not the past, are communicated to people unfamiliar with them. In this category are various studies of topography and zoology, and of trees, plants,

⁴¹⁸ John 1: 3.

⁴¹⁹ Augustine later realized his mistake in claiming that Ambrose had made Plato and Jeremiah contemporaries (*Retract.* 2. 30. 2; cf. *Civ Dei* 8. 11). According to E. Molland, 'Three Passages in Augustine', *Serta Eitremiana* (Symbolae Osloenses Supplement XI; Oslo, 1942), 112–7, he misquoted or misremembered Ambrose's lost work *De Sacramentis sive de Philosophia*.

⁴²⁰ Rom. 9: 5.

⁴²¹ Of the late sixth century BC .

genere superius egimus eamque cognitionem valere ad aenigmata scripturarum solvenda docuimus,⁴²² non ut pro quibusdam signis adhibeantur tamquam ad remedia vel machinamenta superstitionis alicuius; nam et illud genus iam distinctum ab hoc licito et libero separavimus. Aliud est enim dicere, ‘tritam istam herbam si biberis, venter non dolebit’, et aliud est dicere, ‘istam herbam collo si suspenderis, venter non dolebit’. Ibi enim probatur temperatio salubris, hic significatio superstitiosa damnatur. 111. Quamquam ubi praecantationes et invocationes et characteres⁴²³ non sunt plerumque dubium est utrum res quae alligatur aut quoquo modo adiungitur sanando corpori vi naturae valeat, quod libere adhibendum est, an significativa quadam obligatione proveniat, quod tanto prudentius oportet cavere Christianum quanto efficacius prodesse videbitur. Sed ubi latet qua causa quid valeat, quo animo quisque utatur interest, dumtaxat in sanandis vel temperandis corporibus sive in medicina sive in agricultura. 112. Siderum autem cognoscendorum non narratio, sed demonstratio est, quorum perpauca scriptura commemorat. Sicut autem plurimis notus est lunae cursus, qui etiam ad passionem domini anniversarie celebrandam sollemniter adhibetur, sic paucissimis ceterorum quoque siderum vel ortus vel occasus vel alia quaelibet momenta sine ullo sunt errore notissima. 113. Quae per se ipsa cognitio, quamquam superstitione non alliget, non multum tamen ac prope nihil adiuvat tractationem divinarum scripturarum et infructuosa intentione plus impedit; et quia familiaris est perniciosissimo errori fatua fata cantantium, commodius honestiusque contemnitur. Habet autem praeter demonstrationem praesentium etiam praeteritorum narrationi simile aliquid, quod a praesenti positione motuque siderum et in praeterita eorum vestigia regulariter licet recurrere. Habet etiam futurorum regulares coniecturas, non suspiciosas et ominosas, sed ratas et certas, non ut ex eis aliquid trahere in nostra facta et eventa temptemus,

⁴²² 2. 59.

⁴²³ Cf. 2. 75.

stones, and other such things. I have dealt with this category earlier⁴²⁴ and explained that such knowledge is valuable in solving puzzles in scripture, but is not to be used in place of certain signs to provide the remedies or devices of some superstition. I distinguished this category too from the one that is lawful and open to Christians. For it is one thing to say, ‘if you drink this plant in powdered form your stomach will stop hurting’, and another to say, ‘if you hang this plant round your neck your stomach will stop hurting’. In the one case the health-giving mixture is commendable, in the other the superstitious meaning is damnable. 111. But in the absence of incantations or invocations or ‘characters’⁴²⁵ it is often doubtful whether the thing tied on or attached in some way for healing the body works by nature—in which case it may be used freely—or succeeds by virtue of some meaningful association; in this case, the more effectively it appears to heal, the more a Christian should be on guard. Where the explanation of its power is not apparent, it is the attitude of the user that matters, as far as physical healing or treatment, whether in medicine or in agriculture, is concerned. 112. In astronomy—scripture mentions just a few things here—we have a case not of narration but demonstration. The orbit of the moon, which is regularly used to fix the annual celebration of our Lord's passion, is familiar to very many people, but very few have infallible knowledge about the rising or setting or any other movements of the other heavenly bodies. 113. In itself, this knowledge, although not implicating one in superstition, does not give much help—almost none, in fact—in interpreting the divine scripture and is really more of a hindrance, since it demands the fruitless expenditure of effort. Because it is akin to the deadly error of those who prophesy fatuously about fate, it is more convenient and honourable to despise it. But as well as the demonstration of things in the present it has something in common with narration of the past, because one may systematically argue from the present position and movement of the stars to their courses in the past. It also makes possible systematic predictions about the future, which are not speculative and conjectural but firm and certain; but we should not try to extract something of relevance to our own actions and experiences, like

⁴²⁴ 2. 59.

⁴²⁵ Cf. 2. 75.

qualia genethliacorum deliramenta sunt, sed quantum ad ipsa pertinet sidera. 114. Nam sicut is qui computat lunam, cum hodie inspexerit quota sit, et ante quotlibet annos quota fuerit et post quotlibet annos quota futura sit potest dicere, sic de unoquoque siderum qui ea perite computant respondere consuerunt. De qua tota cognitione, quantum ad usum eius attinet, quid mihi videretur aperui. 115. Artium etiam ceterarum quibus aliquid fabricatur, vel quod remaneat post operationem artificis ab illo effectum, sicut domus et scamnum et vas aliquod atque alia huiuscemodi, vel quae ministerium quoddam exhibent operanti deo, sicut medicina et agricultura et gubernatio, vel quarum omnis effectus est actio, sicut saltationum et cursionum et luctaminum, harum ergo cunctarum artium de praeteritis experimenta faciunt etiam futura conici. Nam nullus earum artifex membra movet in operando, nisi praeteritorum memoriam cum futurorum expectatione contexat. 116. Harum autem cognitio tenuiter in ipsa humana vita cursimque usurpanda est, non ad operandum, nisi forte officium aliquod cogat, de quo nunc non agimus, sed ad iudicandum, ne omnino nesciamus quid scriptura velit insinuare cum de his artibus aliquas figuratas locutiones inserit. 117. Restant ea quae non ad corporis sensus, sed ad rationem animi pertinent, ubi disciplina regnat disputationis et numeri. Sed disputationis disciplina ad omnia genera quaestionum quae in litteris sanctis sunt penetranda et dissolvenda plurimum valet. Tantum ibi cavenda est libido rixandi et puerilis quaedam ostentatio decipiendi adversarium. Sunt enim multa quae appellantur sophismata, falsae conclusiones rationum et plerumque ita veras imitantes, ut non solum tardos sed ingeniosos etiam minus diligenter attentos decipiant. 118. Proposuit enim quidam, dicens ei cum quo loquebatur, ‘quod ego sum, tu non es’. At ille consensit. Verum enim erat ex parte, vel eo ipso quod iste insidiosus, ille simplex erat. Tum iste addidit, ‘ego autem homo sum’. Hoc quoque cum ab illo accepisset, conclusit dicens, ‘tu igitur non es homo’. Quod genus captiosarum conclusionum scriptura, quantum existimo, detestatur illo loco ubi dictum est, *qui sophistice loquitur*

the maniacs who cast horoscopes, but confine our interest to the stars themselves. 114. Just as someone who studies the moon can say, after examining how large it is today, how large it was so many years ago, or how large it will be in so many years' time, so in the same way skilled astronomers have learnt to pronounce about each of the stars. I have now explained my position on this whole subject, as far as its practical uses are concerned.¹¹⁵ In the case of the other arts, by which something is manufactured, whether it be an artefact that remains after a craftsman has worked on it (like a house or a stool or a vessel of some kind, and so on), or whether they provide some service for God to work with (like medicine, agriculture, or navigation), or whether the whole end product consists in action (as in dancing, running, and wrestling)—in all these arts knowledge gained from past experiences causes future ones to be inferred. None of these craftsmen moves a muscle at his work except to link his experience of the past with his plans for the future. 116. In human life knowledge of these things is to be used sparingly and in passing, and not in order to make things—unless a particular task demands it, which is not my concern now—but to assist our judgement, so that we are not entirely unaware of what scripture wishes to convey when it includes figurative expressions based on these arts.¹¹⁷ That leaves subjects which concern not the physical senses but mental reasoning. Dominant here are the subjects of logic and number, but logic is of paramount importance in understanding and resolving all kinds of problems in the sacred texts. But one must beware of indulging a passion for wrangling and making a puerile show of skill in trapping an opponent. There are many 'sophisms', as they are called, or invalid deductions, framed as a rule in the guise of valid ones, designed to trap not just dull people but also clever ones who are less than consistently alert. 118. The following proposition was put by X to Y: 'You are not what I am.' Y agreed; that was, after all, true up to a point, or else Y was being simple-minded because of X's deviousness. X added, 'I am a man', and when Y granted this too, he concluded 'Therefore you are not a man'. This kind of captious argument is, in my opinion, deplored by scripture in the passage where it says 'The person

*odibilis est.*⁴²⁶ Quamquam etiam sermo non captiosus sed tamen abundantius quam gravitatem decet verborum ornamenta consecretans sophisticus dicitur. 119. Sunt etiam verae conexiones ratiocinationis falsas habentes sententias, quae consequuntur errorem illius cum quo agitur. Quae tamen ad hoc inferuntur a bono et docto homine, ut in his erubescens ille cuius errorem consequuntur eundem relinquat errorem, quia si in eodem manere voluerit necesse est etiam illa quae damnat tenere cogatur. Non enim vera inferebat apostolus cum diceret, *neque Christus resurrexit*, et illa alia, *inanis est praedicatio nostra inanis est et fides vestra*,⁴²⁷ et deinceps alia; quae omnino falsa sunt, quia et Christus resurrexit et non erat inanis praedicatio eorum qui hoc adnuntiabant nec fides eorum qui hoc crediderant. Sed ista falsa verissime conectebantur illi sententiae qua dicebatur non esse resurrectionem mortuorum. 120. Istis autem falsis repudiatis, quoniam vera erant si mortui non resurgunt, consequens erit resurrectio mortuorum. Cum ergo sint verae conexiones non solum verarum sed etiam falsarum sententiarum, facile est veritatem conexionum etiam in scholis illis discere quae praeter ecclesiam sunt. Sententiarum autem veritas in sanctis libris ecclesiasticis vestiganda est. 121. Ipsa tamen veritas conexionum non instituta sed animadversa est ab hominibus et notata, ut eam possint vel discere vel docere. Nam est in rerum ratione perpetua et divinitus instituta. Sicut enim qui narrat ordinem temporum non eum ipse componit, et locorum situs aut naturas animalium vel stirpium vel lapidum qui ostendit non res ostendit ab hominibus institutas, et ille qui demonstrat sidera eorumque motus non a se vel ab homine aliquo rem institutam demonstrat, sic etiam qui dicit, ‘cum falsum est quod consequitur necesse est ut falsum sit, quod praecedit’, verissime dicit neque ipse facit ut ita sit, sed tantum ita esse demonstrat. 122. Ex hac regula illud est quod de apostolo commemoravimus; praecedit enim non esse resurrectionem mortuorum, quod dicebant illi quorum errorem destruere volebat apostolus. Porro illam

⁴²⁶ Ecclus. 37: 23.

⁴²⁷ 1 Cor. 15: 13–14. This is analysed in terms of Stoic logic, which is used throughout the following passage: see Jackson, ‘Theory of Signs’, 39–40.

who speaks sophistically is odious'.⁴²⁸ (But the word 'sophistical' is also applied to a style which is not captious, but goes in for verbal ornament on a scale that does not suit a serious writer.)¹¹⁹ There are also such things as valid logical syllogisms based on false statements, which attack a mistake made by an opponent. But these are advanced by honest and clever people to embarrass the person whom they are seeking to attack and make him abandon his misconception, by showing that if he chooses to stick to it he is logically compelled to uphold what he condemns. The apostle Paul was not advancing true statements when he said, 'neither did Christ rise', and 'our preaching is in vain',⁴²⁹ and 'your faith is in vain', and then other things, which are completely false; because Christ did rise, and the preaching of those who reported this was not in vain, nor was the faith of those who had believed it. But these falsehoods were deduced quite validly from the proposition that there is no resurrection of the dead. 120. Because these propositions were true if it is the case that the dead do not rise, the resurrection of the dead will follow when these falsehoods are refuted. There are, then, valid syllogisms based not only on true propositions but also on false ones; it is easy to learn which of them are valid even in schools outside the church. But the truth of propositions must be sought in the church's holy books.¹²¹ The validity of syllogisms is not something instituted by humans, but observed and recorded by them, so that the subject may be taught or learnt. It is built into the permanent and divinely instituted system of things. The historian does not himself produce the sequence of events which he narrates, and the writer on topography or zoology or roots or stones does not present things instituted by humans, and the astronomer who points out the heavenly bodies and their movements does not point out something instituted by himself or any other person; likewise the logician who says 'since the consequent is false, the antecedent must be false' may be saying something perfectly true, but does not himself make it true, for he only points out the truth of it. 122. The above quoted text of Paul is an instance of this rule; for the antecedent was that there was no resurrection of the dead, as claimed by those whose error the apostle wanted to demolish. From that antecedent, by which

⁴²⁸ Ecclus. 37: 23.

⁴²⁹ 1 Cor. 15: 13–14. This is analysed in terms of Stoic logic, which is used throughout the following passage: see Jackson, 'Theory of Signs', 39–40.

sententiam praecedentem, qua dicebant non esse resurrectionem mortuorum, necessario sequitur, *neque Christus resurrexit*. Hoc autem quod sequitur falsum est, Christus enim resurrexit; falsum est ergo et quod praecedit. Praecedit autem non esse resurrectionem mortuorum; est igitur resurrectio mortuorum. 123. Quod totum breviter ita dicitur, ‘si non est resurrectio mortuorum, neque Christus resurrexit; Christus autem resurrexit, est igitur resurrectio mortuorum’. Hoc ergo, ut consequenti ablato auferatur etiam necessario quod praecedit, non instituerunt homines sed ostenderunt. Et haec regula pertinet ad veritatem connexionum, non ad veritatem sententiarum. 124. Sed in hoc loco, de resurrectione cum ageretur, et regula connexionis vera est et ipsa in conclusione sententia. In falsis autem sententiis connexionis veritas est isto modo. Faciamus aliquem concessisse, ‘si animal est cochlea, vocem habet’. Hoc concessio, cum probatum fuerit vocem cochleam non habere, quoniam consequenti ablato illud quod praecedit aufertur, concluditur non esse animal cochleam. Quae sententia falsa est, sed ex concessio falso vera conclusionis conexio. 125. Veritas itaque sententiae per se ipsam valet, veritas autem connexionis ex eius cum quo agitur opinione vel concessione consistit. Ideo autem, ut supra diximus, infertur vera conexione quod falsum est, ut eum cuius errorem corrigere volumus paeniteat sensisse praecedentia quorum consequentia videt esse respuenda. Iam hinc intellegere facile est, sicut in falsis sententiis veras, sic in veris sententiis falsas conclusiones esse posse. Fac enim aliquem proposuisse, ‘si iustus est ille, bonus est’, et esse concessum; deinde assumpsisse, ‘non est autem iustus’; quo item concessio, intulisse conclusionem, ‘non est igitur bonus’. 126. Quae tametsi vera sint omnia, non est tamen vera regula conclusionis. Non enim, sicut ablato consequenti aufertur necessario quod praecedit, ita etiam ablato praecedenti aufertur necessario quod consequitur. Quia verum est cum dicimus, ‘si orator est, homo est’, ex qua propositione si assumamus, ‘non est autem orator’, non erit consequens cum intuleris, ‘non est igitur homo’.

they maintained that there was no resurrection of the dead, the statement 'nor did Christ rise' logically follows. But that conclusion is false, since Christ did rise; so the antecedent too is false. The antecedent was that there is no resurrection of the dead; therefore there is a resurrection of the dead. 123. All of which may be put briefly like this: if there is no resurrection of the dead, Christ did not rise either; but Christ did rise, so there is a resurrection of the dead. This fact, then—that by refuting the consequent you necessarily refute the antecedent too—was not instituted but pointed out by man. This rule relates to the validity of deductions, and not to the truth of propositions.

124. But in this last statement about the resurrection, the logical deduction was valid, and the actual proposition expressed in the conclusion was true. There may, however, be a valid deduction using false propositions, as in the following example. Suppose someone granted that 'if a snail is an animal, it has a voice'. With this granted, it is then shown that a snail does not have a voice, and the deduction made—because when a conclusion is refuted the antecedent is also refuted—that a snail is not an animal. This proposition is false, but validly derived from the false premiss that was granted. 125. So whereas the truth of a proposition holds good through itself alone, the truth-value of a syllogistic conclusion is established from what the disputant believes or concedes. This explains why, as I said before, a false proposition is introduced in a valid process of reasoning to make the person whose error we wish to correct ashamed to have held opinions with consequences that he can see must be rejected. It is now easy to understand that there can be invalid deductions from true statements, just as there are valid ones from false statements. Suppose that someone put the proposition, 'if X is just, he is good', and that this was granted; that he then said, 'but X is not just', and then, with that granted, added the conclusion 'so X is not good'. 126. Even if all these statements were true, the deduction is not valid. For although it is necessarily the case that an antecedent is refuted by the refutation of the consequent, it is not the case that a consequent is refuted by the refutation of an antecedent. It is correct to say 'If he is an orator, he is a man', but if you then add the minor premiss, 'he is not an orator', it will not follow that 'he is not therefore a man'.

127. Quapropter aliud est nosse regulas conexionum, aliud sententiarum veritatem. In illis discitur quid sit consequens, quid non consequens, quid repugnans. Consequens est, 'si orator est, homo est'; inconsequens, 'si homo est orator est'; repugnans, 'si homo est, quadrupes est'. Hic ergo de ipsa conexione iudicatur. In veritate autem sententiarum ipsae per se sententiae, non earum conexio consideranda est. Sed veris certisque sententiis cum incertae vera conexione iunguntur, etiam ipsae certae fiant necesse est. 128. Quidam autem sic se iactant, cum veritatem conexionum didicerint, quasi sententiarum ipsa sit veritas. Et rursus quidam plerumque retinentes veram sententiam male se contemnunt quia leges conclusionis ignorant, cum melior sit qui novit esse resurrectionem mortuorum quam ille qui novit consequens esse ut, si resurrectio mortuorum non est, neque Christus resurrexerit.

129. Item scientia definiendi, dividendi atque partiendi, quamquam etiam rebus falsis plerumque adhibeatur, ipsa tamen falsa non est neque ab hominibus instituta, sed in rerum ratione comperta. Non enim, quia et fabulis suis eam poetae et opinionibus erroris sui vel falsi philosophi vel etiam heretici, hoc est falsi Christiani, adhibere consuerunt, propterea falsum est neque in definiendo neque in dividendo aut partiendo aliquid complectendum esse quod ad rem ipsam non pertinet, aut aliquid quod pertinet praetereundum. Hoc verum est, etiam si ea quae definiuntur aut distribuuntur vera non sint. 130. Nam et ipsum falsum definitur cum dicimus falsum esse significationem rei non ita se habentis ut significatur, sive alio aliquo modo; quae definitio vera est, quamvis falsum verum esse non possit. Possumus etiam dividere, dicentes duo esse genera falsi, unum eorum quae omnino esse non possunt, alterum eorum quae non sunt, quamvis esse possint. 131. Nam qui dicit septem et tria undecim esse, id dicit quod omnino esse non potest; qui autem dicit Kalendis, verbi gratia, Ianuariis pluisse, tametsi factum non sit, id tamen dicit quod

127. So knowing the rules of valid deduction is not the same thing as knowing the truth of propositions. In logic one learns about valid and invalid inference, and contradiction. A valid inference is 'if he is an orator he is a man'; an invalid one is 'if he is a man, he is an orator'; a contradictory one is 'if he is a man, he is a quadruped'. In these cases a judgement is made about the actual deduction. On the other hand, where the truth of propositions is concerned, it is the actual propositions in themselves, not their logical relationships, that need to be examined. But when uncertain propositions are combined with true and certain ones in a valid process of reasoning, it necessarily follows that they too become certain. 128. Some people give themselves airs when they have learnt the rules of valid deduction, as if the truth of propositions resided in that. And conversely some people, although they often hold a true opinion, wrongly despise themselves for being ignorant of the laws of inference, although it is better to know that there is a resurrection of the dead than to know that if there is no resurrection of the dead it necessarily follows that Christ did not rise either. 129. The study of definition, division, and classification, though often applied to false things, is not in itself false; and it was not instituted by man, but discovered as part of the way things are. For just because it is often applied by poets to their fables and by false philosophers or heretics (in other words, false Christians) to the tenets of their misguided systems, that does not make it wrong to say that in defining or dividing or classifying something you must not include something irrelevant or leave out something that is relevant. This is true, even if the things being defined or classified are not true. 130. Falsehood itself can be defined—we might say that falsehood is the description of something which is not actually in the state in which it is asserted to be, or put it in some other way—and the definition may be correct, although what is false cannot be true. We may also subdivide it, saying that there are two kinds of falsehood, one consisting of things which cannot possibly be true, another of things which are not true, but could be. 131. If you say that seven and three make eleven, you are saying something that cannot possibly be true, but if you say, for example, that it rained on New Year's Day, although in fact it

feri potuerit. Definitio ergo et divisio falsorum potest esse verissima, quamvis falsa ipsa utique vera non sint. 132. Sunt etiam quaedam praecepta uberius disputationis quae iam eloquentia nominatur,⁴³⁰ quae nihilominus vera sunt, quamvis eis possint etiam falsa persuaderi; sed quia et vera possunt, non est facultas ipsa culpabilis, sed ea male utentium perversitas. Nam neque hoc ab hominibus institutum est, ut caritatis expressio conciliet auditorem⁴³¹ aut ut facile quod intendit insinuet brevis et aperta narratio et varietas eius sine fastidio teneat intentos, et ceterae huius modi observationes, quae sive in falsis sive in veris causis verae sunt tamen, in quantum vel sciri vel credi aliquid faciunt aut ad expetendum fugiendumve animos movent, et inventae potius quod ita se habeant quam ut ita se haberent institutae. 133. Sed haec pars cum discitur magis ut proferamus ea quae intellecta sunt quam ut intellegamus adhibenda est. Illa vero conclusionum et definitionum et distributionum plurimum intellectorem adiuvat; tantum absit error, quo videntur sibi homines ipsam beatae vitae veritatem didicisse cum ista didicerint. 134. Quamquam plerumque accadat ut facilius homines res eas assequantur propter quas assequendas ista discuntur quam talium praeceptorum nodosissimas et spinosissimas disciplinas;⁴³² tamquam si quispiam dare volens praecepta ambulandi moneat non esse levandum posteriorem pedem nisi cum posueris priorem, deinde minutatim quemadmodum articulorum et poplitum cardines oporteat movere describat. Vera enim dicit, nec aliter ambulari potest; sed facilius homines haec faciendo ambulant quam animadvertunt cum faciunt aut intellegunt cum audiunt. 135. Qui autem ambulare non possunt multo minus ea curant quae nec experiendo possunt attendere. Ita plerumque citius ingeniosus videt non esse ratam conclusionem quam praecepta eius capit; tardus autem non

⁴³⁰ Cf. 4. 6 for a similarly discursive definition, and Book 4 in general for a fuller treatment of the subject.

⁴³¹ In technical terms, the *captatio benevolentiae* ('attempt to gain goodwill'), an important function of the *prooemium*. Cf. 4. 4, where all these points are referred to.

⁴³² The colourful and sonorous Latin recalls the style and complaint of *Conf.*

did not, you are saying something which could have been true. So the definition and subdivision of falsehoods may be perfectly correct, although the falsehoods themselves are certainly not true.¹³² There are also certain rules of the more flamboyant discipline now called eloquence,⁴³³ which are valid in spite of the fact that they can be used to commend falsehood. Since they can also be used to commend the truth, it is not the subject itself that is reprehensible, but the perversity of those who abuse it. It is not the result of human institution that the expression of love wins over one's listeners,⁴³⁴ or that a brief and lucid narrative communicates facts efficiently, or that variety holds the attention without creating boredom; these and other such observations are true whether applied to true matters or false, to the extent that they cause something to be known or believed, or influence minds to seek or to avoid something. It was discovered that these things were true, not decided that they should be true. 133. But when this subject is learnt, it has to be used in communicating what has already been understood rather than in the actual process of understanding. The rules about syllogisms and definitions and classifications, on the other hand, greatly help people to understand, provided that they avoid the error of thinking that when they have mastered them they have learnt the actual truth about the happy life. 134. But it is usually the case that people develop the skills which the learning of these details is meant to develop more easily than they pick up the tortuous and rebarbative lessons of their teachers.⁴³⁵ It is as if someone who wanted to give rules about walking were to tell you that your back foot should not be raised until you have put down your front foot, and then describe in minute detail how you should move the joints of your limbs and knees. He would be right; walking in any other way is impossible. But people find it easier to walk by actually doing these things than by paying attention to them as they do them or by assimilating rules when they hear them. 135. Those who are unable to walk pay much less heed to instructions which they cannot follow in practice. Similarly, a clever person is as a rule quicker to see that a conclusion is invalid than to understand the relevant rules; the dull person fails to see it, but has even less chance of understanding the

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⁴³⁴ In technical terms, the *captatio benevolentiae* ('attempt to gain goodwill'), an important function of the *prooemium*. Cf. 4. 4, where all these points are referred to.

⁴³⁵ The colourful and sonorous Latin recalls the style and complaint of *Conf.*

eam videt, sed multo minus quod de illa praecipitur. Magisque in his omnibus ipsa spectacula veritatis saepe delectant quam ex eis in disputando aut iudicando adiuvamur, nisi forte quod exercitiora reddunt ingenia, si etiam maligniora aut inflatiora non reddant, hoc est ut aut decipere verisimili sermone atque interrogationibus ament aut aliquid magnum, quo se bonis atque innocentibus anteponant, se assecutos putent qui ista didicerint. 136. Iam vero numeri disciplina cuilibet tardissimo clarum est quod non sit ab hominibus instituta sed potius indagata et inventa. Non enim sicut primam syllabam ‘Italiae’, quam brevem pronuntiaverunt veteres, voluit Vergilius ⟨longam⟩ et longa facta est,⁴³⁶ ita quisquam potest efficere cum voluerit ut ter terna aut non sint novem aut non possint efficere quadratam figuram aut non ad ternarium numerum tripla sint, ad senarium sescupla, ad nullum dupla (quia intelligibiles numeri⁴³⁷ semissem non habent). 137. Sive ergo in se ipsis considerentur sive ad figurarum aut ad sonorum aliarumve motionum leges numeri adhibeantur, incommutabiles regulas habent neque ullo modo ab hominibus institutas sed ingeniosorum sagacitate compertas. 138. Quae tamen omnia quisquis ita dilexerit ut iactare se inter imperitos velit et non potius quaerere unde sint vera quae tantummodo vera esse persenserit, et unde quaedam non solum vera sed etiam incommutabilia, quae incommutabilia esse comprehenderit, ac sic ab specie corporum usque ad humanam mentem perveniens—cum et ipsam mutabilem invenerit, quod nunc docta, nunc indocta sit,⁴³⁸ constituta tamen inter incommutabilem supra se veritatem et mutabilia infra se cetera—ad unius dei laudem atque dilectionem cuncta convertere a quo cuncta esse cognoscit, doctus videri potest, esse autem sapiens nullo modo. 139. Quam ob rem videtur mihi studiosis et ingeniosis adolescentibus et timentibus deum beatamque vitam quaerentibus salubriter praecipere ut nullas doctrinas quae praeter ecclesiam Christi exercentur tamquam ad beatam vitam

⁴³⁶ In *Aen.* 1. 2 and elsewhere. Schaüblin added *longam* to improve the sense.

⁴³⁷ According to Augustine in *Ep.* 3. 2 *intelligibiles numeri* admit of infinite increase but not infinite division, *sensibiles numeri* the reverse. Cf. H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris, 1938), 254 n. 3.

⁴³⁸ Cf. 1. 19 n.

rules. In all these matters it is often true that the pleasure derived from the open display of truth is greater than the assistance gained from discussing or examining it, though indeed these things can sharpen the intellect, which is a good thing provided that they do not also make people more mischievous or conceited or, in other words, more inclined to deceive others by plausible talk and questioning or to think that by learning these things they have done something marvellous which entitles them to consider themselves superior to sincere and unsophisticated people.¹³⁶ As for the study of number, it is surely clear even to the dumbest person that it was not instituted by men, but rather investigated and discovered. Vergil wanted the first vowel of *Italia*—traditionally pronounced short—to be long, and made it long;⁴³⁹ but nobody can bring it about by willing it that three threes are not nine, or that they fail to make a squared number, or that the number nine is not thrice three, or one and a half times six, or twice . . . no number (for odd numbers⁴⁴⁰ are not divisible by two).¹³⁷ So whether numbers are considered purely as numbers or used in accordance with the laws that govern figures or sounds or other kinds of motion, they have fixed rules, which were not in any way instituted by human beings but discovered by the intelligence of human brains.¹³⁸ Some people take such delight in all this that they like to boast among the unlearned instead of asking why the things which they simply perceive to be true actually are true, or why things that are not only true but also unchangeable (as they have understood them to be) actually are unchangeable; nor do they, as they come from the visible and physical to the human mind and find this too to be changeable—because it is now clever, now not,⁴⁴¹ being placed between the unchangeable truth above them and the changeable things below them—relate all these things to the praise and love of God, realizing that it is from him that all things have their existence. Such people may seem learned, but are in no way wise.¹³⁹ So it seems to me that the following advice is beneficial for young people who are keen and intelligent, who fear God and seek a life of true happiness. Do not venture without due care into any branches of learning which are pursued outside the church of Christ, as if they were a means to attaining the

⁴³⁹ In *Aen.* 1. 2 and elsewhere. Schaüblin added *longam* to improve the sense.

⁴⁴⁰ According to Augustine in *Ep.* 3. 2 *intelligibiles numeri* admit of infinite increase but not infinite division, *sensibiles numeri* the reverse. Cf. H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris, 1938), 254 n. 3.

⁴⁴¹ Cf. 1. 19 n.

capessendam secure sequi audeant sed eas sobrie diligenterque diiudicent, et si quas invenerint ab hominibus institutas, varias propter diversam voluntatem instituentium et ignotas propter suspiciones errantium, maxime si habent etiam cum daemonibus initam societatem per quarundam significationum quasi quaedam pacta atque conventa, repudiant penitus et detestentur, alienent etiam studium a superfluis et luxuriosis hominum institutis; illa vero instituta hominum quae ad societatem conviventium valent pro ipsa vitae huius necessitate non neglegant. 140. In ceteris autem doctrinis quae apud gentes inveniuntur, praeter historiam rerum vel praeteriti temporis vel praesentis ad sensus corporis pertinentium, quibus etiam utilium artium corporalium experimenta et coniecturae adnumerantur, et praeter rationem disputationis et numeri⁴⁴² nihil utile esse arbitror. In quibus omnibus tenendum est *ne quid nimis*,⁴⁴³ et maxime in his quae ad corporis sensus pertinentia volvuntur temporibus et continentur locis. 141. Sicut autem quidam de verbis omnibus et nominibus hebraeis et syris et aegyptiis, vel si qua alia lingua in scripturis sanctis inveniri potest, quae in eis sine interpretatione sunt posita, fecerunt ut ea separatim interpretarentur,⁴⁴⁴ et quod Eusebius fecit de temporum historia⁴⁴⁵ propter divinorum librorum quaestiones quae usum eius flagitant—quod ergo hi fecerunt de his rebus, ut non sit necesse Christiano in multis propter pauca laborare, sic video posse fieri, si quem eorum qui possunt benignam sane operam fraternae utilitati delectet impendere, ut quoscumque terrarum locos quaeve animalia vel herbas atque arbores sive lapides vel metalla incognita speciesque quaslibet scriptura commemorat ea generatim digerens sola exposita litteris mandet. 142. Potest etiam de numeris fieri ut eorum tantummodo numerorum exposita ratio conscribatur quos divina scriptura meminit. Quorum aliquid aut omnia iam forte facta sunt, sicut multa quae a bonis doctisque Christianis elaborata et conscripta non arbitrabamur

⁴⁴² The disciplines of definition and rhetoric (129–135) are ignored.

⁴⁴³ This ancient commonplace found its definitive Latin form in Ter. *Andria* 61.

⁴⁴⁴ Such onomastica of Hebrew and Aramaic names, and in particular those of Jerome, have been thoroughly studied by F. Wutz in ‘Onomastica Sacra’, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, 41 (1914).

⁴⁴⁵ See A. A. Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition* (Lewisburg, 1979), 29–83 and T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 111–25.

happy life, but discriminate sensibly and carefully between them. Those that are found to be of human institution—these come in many forms, because of the many different aims of those who instituted them, but offer little certainty, because of the speculative ideas of fallible people which underlie them—should be entirely repudiated and treated with disgust, especially if they involve an alliance with demonic powers established through a sort of contract or agreement to use particular esoteric meanings. Keep away too from the unnecessary and self-indulgent institutions of mankind, but in view of the demands of this present life do not neglect the human institutions vital to the cohesion of society. 140. As for the other branches of learning found in pagan society, apart from the study of things past or present which concern the bodily senses (including the productions and experimentations of the practical arts) and the sciences of logic and number,⁴⁴⁶ I consider nothing useful here. In all these subjects the watch-word must be ‘nothing in excess’,⁴⁴⁷ and nowhere more so than in those which concern the bodily senses and are subject to time or restricted in space. 141. Some scholars have made separate studies of all the words and names in Hebrew, Syriac, Egyptian, or any other language found in the holy scriptures, that are used without any interpretation;⁴⁴⁸ Eusebius made a separate study of chronology,⁴⁴⁹ because of the problems in the divine books which require its application. They did this in these specialized areas to save the Christian student a lot of bother over a few details. In the same way I can see the possibility that if someone suitably qualified were interested in devoting a generous amount of time to the good of his brethren he could compile a monograph classifying and setting out all the places, animals, plants, and trees, or the stones and metals, and all the other unfamiliar kinds of object mentioned in scripture. 142. It might also be possible to put together an explanatory account of numbers, confined to numbers mentioned in the divine scripture. Perhaps indeed some or all of this has already been done; I have come across much information on which I did not realize that good and learned Christians

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invenimus; sed sive propter turbas negligentium sive propter invidorum occultationes latent.⁴⁵⁰ 143. Quod utrum de ratione disputandi fieri possit ignoro. Et videtur mihi non posse, quia per totum textum scripturarum colligata est nervorum vice, et ideo magis ad ambigua solvenda et explicanda, de quibus post loquemur,⁴⁵¹ legentes adiuvat quam ad incognita signa cognoscenda, de quibus nunc agimus. 144. Philosophi autem qui vocantur si qua forte vera et fidei nostrae accommodata dixerunt, maxime Platonici,⁴⁵² non solum formidanda non sunt sed ab eis etiam tamquam ab iniustis possessoribus in usum nostrum vindicanda. Sicut enim Aegyptii non tantum idola habebant et onera gravia quae populus Israel detestaretur et fugeret sed etiam vasa atque ornamenta de auro et de argento et vestem, quae ille populus exiens de Aegypto sibi potius tamquam ad usum meliorem clanculo vindicavit, non auctoritate propria sed praecepto dei, ipsis Aegyptiis nescienter commodantibus ea quibus non bene utebantur,⁴⁵³ —145. sic doctrinae omnes gentilium non solum simulata et superstitiosa figmenta gravesque sarcinas supervacanei laboris habent,⁴⁵⁴ quae unusquisque nostrum duce Christo de societate gentilium exiens debet abominari atque devitare, sed etiam liberales disciplinas usui veritatis aptiores et quaedam morum praecepta utilissima continent, deque ipso uno deo colendo nonnulla vera inveniuntur apud eos. Quod eorum tamquam aurum et argentum, quod non ipsi instituerunt sed de quibusdam quasi metallis divinae providentiae, quae ubique infusa est, eruerunt, et quo perverse atque iniuriose ad obsequia daemonum abutuntur, cum ab eorum misera societate sese animo separat debet ab eis auferre Christianus ad usum iustum⁴⁵⁵ praedicandi evangelii. Vestem

⁴⁵⁰ This comment could be the result of personal disappointment; had Augustine once perhaps approached Jerome for such a work?

⁴⁵¹ In Book 3.

⁴⁵² Augustine refers to those now known as neo-Platonists, and Plotinus in particular. Cf. 1. 16 n.

⁴⁵³ Exod. 3: 21–2 and 12: 35–6. This interpretation is also found in Origen (*PG* 11. 87–91), and in part resembles the figurative interpretation found in the Latin version of Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 4. 46–7, which may well date from this time. For such interpretations of Egypt, cf. Tert. *Scorpiae* 2, Hilary *In Ps.* 134. 19. The morality of the Hebrews' action is discussed by Augustine in *De Din. Quaest.* 53, *Enarr. Ps.* 104. 28 and *Contra Faustum* 71.

⁴⁵⁴ Aspects of pagan studies much more evident in *Conf.* than in the preceding chapters.

⁴⁵⁵ On the concept of *usus iustus* and its application by Christians, see C. Gnllka, 'Usus iustus', *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, 24 (1980), 34–76.

had done research or written books. These things tend to remain unknown, whether because the bulk of scholars neglect them, or because jealous ones conceal them.⁴⁵⁶ 143. Whether the same can be done for logic, I do not know. I rather think not, because logic permeates the whole body of scripture, rather like a network of muscles, and so is of more help to the reader in resolving and revealing ambiguities—of which I will speak later⁴⁵⁷—than in understanding unfamiliar signs, which is my present concern.¹⁴⁴ Any statements by those who are called philosophers, especially the Platonists,⁴⁵⁸ which happen to be true and consistent with our faith should not cause alarm, but be claimed for our own use, as it were from owners who have no right to them. Like the treasures of the ancient Egyptians, who possessed not only idols and heavy burdens which the people of Israel hated and shunned but also vessels and ornaments of silver and gold, and clothes, which on leaving Egypt the people of Israel, in order to make better use of them, surreptitiously claimed for themselves (they did this not on their own authority but at God's command, and the Egyptians in their ignorance actually gave them the things of which they had made poor use)⁴⁵⁹—145. similarly all the branches of pagan learning contain not only false and superstitious fantasies and burden-some studies⁴⁶⁰ that involve unnecessary effort, which each one of us must loathe and avoid as under Christ's guidance we abandon the company of pagans, but also studies for liberated minds which are more appropriate to the service of the truth, and some very useful moral instruction, as well as the various truths about monotheism to be found in their writers. These treasures—like the silver and gold, which they did not create but dug, as it were, from the mines of providence, which is everywhere—which were used wickedly and harmfully in the service of demons must be removed by Christians, as they separate themselves in spirit from the wretched company of pagans, and applied to their true function,⁴⁶¹ that of preaching the gospel. As for their clothing—which corresponds to human

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quoque illorum, id est hominum quidem instituta, sed tamen accommodata humanae societati qua in hac vita carere non possumus, accipere atque habere licuerit in usum convertenda christianum. 146. Nam quid aliud fecerunt multi boni fideles nostri? Nonne aspicimus quanto auro et argento et veste suffarcinatus exierit de Aegypto Cyprianus et doctor suavissimus et martyr beatissimus? quanto Lactantius? quanto Victorinus, Optatus, Hilarius,⁴⁶² ut de vivis taceam?⁴⁶³ quanto innumerabiles Graeci? Quod prior ipse fidelissimus dei famulus Moyses fecerat,⁴⁶⁴ de quo scriptum est quod eruditus fuerit *omni sapientia Aegyptiorum*. 147. Quibus omnibus viris superstitiosa gentium consuetudo, et maxime illis temporibus cum Christi recutiens iugum Christianos persequeretur, disciplinas quas utiles habebat numquam commodaret si eas in usum colendi unius dei, quo vanus idolorum cultus excinderetur, conversum iri suspicarentur. Sed dederunt aurum et argentum et vestem suam exeunti de Aegypto populo dei, nescientes quemadmodum illa quae dabant in Christi obsequium redderentur. Illud enim in Exodo factum sine dubio figuratum est ut hoc praesignaret. Quod sine praeiudicio alterius aut paris aut melioris intellegentiae dixerim. 148. Sed hoc modo instructus divinarum scripturarum studiosus cum ad eas perscrutandas accedere coeperit, illud apostolicum cogitare non cesset: *scientia inflat, caritas aedificat*.⁴⁶⁵ Ita enim sentit, quamvis de Aegypto dives exeat, tamen nisi Pascha egerit salvum se esse non posse. *Pascha autem nostrum immolatus est Christus*,⁴⁶⁶ nihilque magis immolatio Christi nos docet quam illud quod ipse clamat, tamquam ad eos quos in Aegypto sub Pharaone videt laborare: *venite ad me qui laboratis et onerati estis et ego vos reficiam. Tollite iugum meum super vos et discite a me, quoniam mitis sum et humilis corde, et invenietis requiem animis vestris. Iugum enim meum lene est et sarcina mea levis est*.⁴⁶⁷ Quibus, nisi mitibus et humilibus corde, quos non inflat scientia, sed

⁴⁶² On Lactantius see J. Quasten, *Patrology*, 2 (1953), 392–410 and R. M. Ogilvie, *The Library of Lactantius* (Oxford, 1978), and on the others [J. Quasten] A. di Berardino (ed.), *Patrology*, 4 (Eng. trans.: Westminster, Md., 1986), iv 36–61, 69–80, 122–7. The suggestion of J. Doignon (*Latomus*, 22 (1963), 795–805) that this list is a reply to a list of Christian writers made by Jerome in *Ep.* 58 to Paulinus of Nola is unlikely because of the different purposes of the two writers and the different choice of names.

⁴⁶³ These surely include Ambrose: see Introduction, p. xii.

⁴⁶⁴ Acts 7: 22.

⁴⁶⁵ 1 Cor. 8: 1.

⁴⁶⁶ 1 Cor. 5: 7.

⁴⁶⁷ Matt. 11: 28–30.

institutions, but those appropriate to human society, which in this life we cannot do without—this may be accepted and kept for conversion to Christian purposes. 146. This is exactly what many good and faithful Christians have done. We can see, can we not, the amount of gold, silver, and clothing with which Cyprian, that most attractive writer and most blessed martyr, was laden when he left Egypt; is not the same true of Lactantius, and Victorinus, of Optatus, and Hilary,⁴⁶⁸ to say nothing of people still alive,⁴⁶⁹ and countless Greek scholars? This is what had been done earlier by Moses himself,⁴⁷⁰ that most faithful servant of God, of whom it is written that he was trained in ‘all the wisdom of the Egyptians’. 147. Pagan society, riddled with superstition, would never have given to all these men the arts which it considered useful—least of all at a time when it was trying to shake off the yoke of Christ and persecuting Christians—if it had suspected that they would be adapted to the purpose of worshipping the one God, by whom the worship of idols would be eradicated. But they did give their gold and silver and clothing to God's people as it left Egypt, little knowing that the things they were giving away would be put back into the service of Christ. The event narrated in Exodus was certainly a figure, and this is what it foreshadowed. (I say this without prejudice to any other interpretation of equal or greater importance.) 148. As students of the divine scriptures, equipped in this way, begin to approach the task of studying them in detail, they must ponder incessantly this phrase of the apostle Paul: ‘knowledge puffs up, but love builds up’.⁴⁷¹ In this way, even if they leave Egypt well provided for, they realize that without first observing the passover they cannot be saved. Now ‘Christ our Passover has been sacrificed’;⁴⁷² the sacrifice of Christ teaches us nothing more clearly than what he himself calls out, as if to those whom he sees suffering in Egypt under Pharaoh: ‘Come unto me, you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. My yoke is a soft one, and my burden light’.⁴⁷³ Who are these but the gentle and lowly in heart, people not puffed

⁴⁶⁸ On Lactantius see J. Quasten, *Patrology*, 2 (1953), 392–410 and R. M. Ogilvie, *The Library of Lactantius* (Oxford, 1978), and on the others [J. Quasten] A. di Berardino (ed.), *Patrology*, 4 (Eng. trans.: Westminster, Md., 1986), iv 36–61, 69–80, 122–7. The suggestion of J. Doignon (*Latomus*, 22 (1963), 795–805) that this list is a reply to a list of Christian writers made by Jerome in *Ep.* 58 to Paulinus of Nola is unlikely because of the different purposes of the two writers and the different choice of names.

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caritas aedificat? 149. Meminerint ergo eorum qui pascha illo tempore per umbrarum imaginaria celebrabant, cum signari postes sanguine agni iuberentur, hysopo fuisse signatos.⁴⁷⁴ Herba haec humilis et mitis est, et nihil fortius et penetrabilius eius radicibus, *ut in caritate radicati et fundati* possimus *comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis quae sit latitudo et longitudo et altitudo et profundum*,⁴⁷⁵ id est crucem domini. Cuius latitudo dicitur in transverso ligno quo extenduntur manus, longitudo a terra usque ad ipsam latitudinem, quo a manibus et infra totum corpus affigitur, altitudo a latitudine sursum usque ad summum, quo adhaeret caput, profundum vero, quod terrae infixum absconditur. 150. Quo signo crucis omnis actio christiana describitur: bene operari in Christo et ei perseveranter inhaerere, sperare caelestia, sacramenta non profanare. Per hanc actionem purgati valebimus *cognoscere etiam supereminentem scientiae caritatem Christi*,⁴⁷⁶ qua aequalis est patri, per quem facta sunt omnia,⁴⁷⁷ ut impleamur in omnem plenitudinem dei. Est etiam in hysopo vis purgatoria; ne inflante scientia de divitiis ab Aegypto ablatis superbe aliquid pulmo tumidus anhelet,⁴⁷⁸ *asperges me*, inquit, *hysopo et mundabor, lavabis me et super nivem dealbabor. Auditui meo dabis exsultationem et laetitiam*.⁴⁷⁹ Deinde consequenter adnectit, ut ostendat purgationem a superbia significari hysopo, *exultabunt ossa humiliata*. 151. Quantum autem minor est auri argenti vestisque copia, quam de Aegypto secum ille populus abstulit, in comparatione divitiarum quas postea Hierosolymae consecutus est, quae maxime in Salomone rege ostenduntur,⁴⁸⁰ tanta fit cuncta scientia quae quidem est utilis collecta de libris gentium, si divinarum scripturarum scientiae comparetur. Nam quidquid homo extra didicerit si noxium est ibi damnatur, si utile est ibi invenitur. Et cum ibi quisque invenerit omnia quae utiliter

⁴⁷⁴ Exod. 12: 22.

⁴⁷⁵ Eph. 3: 18, linked with the cross by Irenaeus (*Demonstr.* 34). See J. Danielou, *A History of Early Christian Doctrine*, 1, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (London, 1964), 279–92.

⁴⁷⁶ Eph. 3: 19.

⁴⁷⁷ John 1: 3.

⁴⁷⁸ A verbal reminiscence of Persius 1. 14: *grande aliquid quod pulmo animae praelargus anhelet* ('something great for lungs prodigal of wind to pump out'), but with *pulmo* qualified by *tumidus* (cf. Verg. *Aen.* 10. 387). On Persius in Augustine see Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 2. 472–4, 692.

⁴⁷⁹ Ps. 50: 9–10 (51: 7–8).

⁴⁸⁰ 3 Kgs. (1 Kgs.) 10: 14–27.

up by knowledge but built up by love? 149. Remember those who celebrated the Passover in days gone by, in its unreal and shadowy form; when the command was given to mark their gateposts with the blood of a lamb, they were also sprinkled with hyssop.⁴⁸¹ This is a lowly and gentle plant, but nothing is stronger or more penetrating than its roots, so that 'rooted and grounded in love' we may be able 'to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth'.⁴⁸² This refers to the Lord's cross. The breadth is the cross-beam, on which the hands were stretched out; the length is the part from the ground to the cross-beam, to which is fixed the whole body from the hands downward; the height is the part from the cross-beam up to the top, to which the head is attached; the depth is the hidden part, firmly set in the ground. 150. In the symbol of the cross every Christian act is inscribed: to do good in Christ and to hold fast resolutely to him, to hope for heaven, to avoid profaning the sacraments. If we are purified by such behaviour we will be able 'to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge'⁴⁸³—the love in which he, by whom everything was made,⁴⁸⁴ is equal to the Father—and so be filled with all the fullness of God. Hyssop also has a cleansing power, so that nobody should boast, with his head inflated⁴⁸⁵ by a knowledge of the wealth he has taken from Egypt. 'You will sprinkle me with hyssop', scripture says, 'and I shall be made clean; you will wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. You will give exultation and joy to my ears.'⁴⁸⁶ Then to follow that up it adds, to demonstrate that hyssop signifies cleansing from pride: 'the bones once abased will rejoice.'⁴⁸⁷ 151. The insignificance of the amount of gold, silver, and clothing which that people took away with it from Egypt, in comparison with the wealth that it later attained in Jerusalem, as shown particularly in the reign of Solomon,⁴⁸⁷ is the measure of the insignificance of all knowledge, I mean useful knowledge, that is collected from pagan books, when compared with the knowledge contained in the divine scriptures. For what a person learns independently of scripture is condemned there if it is harmful, but found there if it is useful. And when one has found there all the useful knowledge that can be learnt anywhere else, one will also find there, in much greater

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⁴⁸⁶ Ps. 50: 9–10 (51: 7–8).

⁴⁸⁷ 3 Kgs. (1 Kgs.) 10: 14–27.

alibi didicit, multo abundantius ibi inveniet ea quae nusquam omnino alibi, sed in illarum tantummodo scripturarum mirabili altitudine et mirabili humilitate discuntur. 152. Hac igitur instructione praeditum cum signa incognita lectorem non impedierint, mitem et humilem corde, subiugatum leniter Christo et oneratum sarcina levi, fundatum et radicum et aedificatum in caritate, quem scientia inflare non possit, accedat ad ambigua signa in scripturis considerata et discutienda, de quibus iam tertio volumine dicere aggrediar quod dominus donare dignabitur.

abundance, things which are learnt nowhere else at all, but solely in the remarkable sublimity and the remarkable humility of the scriptures. 152. Readers furnished with such an education will not be held back by unfamiliar signs. Gentle and lowly in heart, peacefully subject to Christ, laden with a light burden, founded and rooted and built up in love, and incapable of being puffed up by knowledge, they should now proceed to consider and analyse the ambiguous signs in the scriptures, on which I will now endeavour to present, in my third book, such learning as the Lord deigns to deliver to me.

Liber Tertius

Liber Tertius

1. Homo timens deum voluntatem eius in scripturis sanctis diligenter inquit. Et ne amet certamina, pietate mansuetus, praemunitus etiam scientia linguarum, ne in verbis locutionibusque ignotis haereat, praemunitus etiam cognitione quarundam rerum necessariarum, ne vim naturamve earum quae propter similitudinem adhibentur ignoret, adiuvante etiam codicum veritate, quam sollers emendations⁴⁸⁸ diligentia procuravit, veniat ita instructus ad ambigua scripturarum discutienda atque solvenda. 2. Ut autem signis ambiguis non decipiatur, quantum per nos instrui potest—fieri autem potest ut istas vias, quas ostendere volumus, tamquam pueriles vel magnitudine ingenii vel maioris illuminationis claritate derideat—sed tamen, ut coeperam dicere, quantum per nos instrui valet, qui eo loco animi est ut per nos instrui valeat, sciat ambiguitatem scripturae aut in verbis propriis esse aut in translatis, quae genera in secundo libro demonstravimus.⁴⁸⁹

3. Sed cum verba propria faciunt ambiguum scripturam, primo videndum est ne male distinxerimus aut pronuntiaverimus. Cum ergo adhibita intentio incertum esse perviderit quomodo distinguendum aut quomodo pronuntiandum sit,⁴⁹⁰ consulat regulam fidei,⁴⁹¹ quam de scripturarum planioribus locis et ecclesiae auctoritate percepit, de qua satis egimus cum de rebus in libro primo loqueremur. 4. Quod si ambae vel etiam omnes, si plures fuerint partes ambiguitatis, secundum fidem sonuerint, textus ipse sermonis a praecedentibus et consequentibus partibus, quae ambiguitatem illam in medio posuerunt,

⁴⁸⁸ On ancient *emendatio*, see J. E. G. Zetzel, *Latin Textual Criticism in Antiquity* (Salem, 1981), 206–10.

⁴⁸⁹ 2. 32–3.

⁴⁹⁰ Ancient readers often had to punctuate for themselves. See S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* (London, 1977), 220–2.

⁴⁹¹ By this Augustine means the fundamentals of Christian doctrine outlined in various parts of Book 1. On the early history of the term, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London, 1972), 76–88.

Book Three

1. The student who fears God earnestly seeks his will in the holy scriptures. Holiness makes him gentle, so that he does not revel in controversy; a knowledge of languages protects him from uncertainty over unfamiliar words or phrases, and a knowledge of certain essential things protects him from ignorance of the significance and detail of what is used by way of imagery. Thus equipped, and with the assistance of reliable texts derived from the manuscripts with careful attention to the need for emendation,⁴⁹² he should now approach the task of analysing and resolving the ambiguities of the scriptures. 2. To prevent himself from being misled by ambiguous signs, in so far as I can instruct him (it may indeed be the case that either because of great intellectual gifts or a clarity of mind that is the result of greater illumination than I have he scorns as elementary the methods which I wish to demonstrate)—but, as I began to say, in so far as I can instruct him, the student who is in the proper state of mind to accept my instruction should know that ambiguity in scripture resides either in literal or in metaphorical usages (as the terms were described in Book 2).⁴⁹³

3. When it is literal usages that make scripture ambiguous, we must first of all make sure that we have not punctuated or articulated the passage incorrectly. Once close consideration has revealed that it is uncertain how a passage should be punctuated and articulated,⁴⁹⁴ we must consult the rule of faith,⁴⁹⁵ as it is perceived through the plainer passages of the scriptures and the authority of the church. (I dealt adequately with this matter when speaking of things in Book 1).

4. But if both interpretations, or indeed all of them (supposing that there are several sides to the ambiguity) sound compatible with the faith, then it remains to consult the context—the preceding and following passages, which surround the ambiguity—in order to help us determine which of the several meanings that suggest

⁴⁹² On ancient *emendatio*, see J. E. G. Zetzel, *Latin Textual Criticism in Antiquity* (Salem, 1981), 206–10.

⁴⁹³ 2. 32–3.

⁴⁹⁴ Ancient readers often had to punctuate for themselves. See S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* (London, 1977), 220–2.

⁴⁹⁵ By this Augustine means the fundamentals of Christian doctrine outlined in various parts of Book 1. On the early history of the term, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London, 1972), 76–88.

restat consulendus, ut videamus cuinam sententiae de pluribus quae se ostendunt ferat suffragium eamque sibi contexi patiatur.

5. Iam nunc exempla considera. Illa haeretica distinctio,⁴⁹⁶ *in principio erat verbum, et verbum erat apud deum, et deus erat*, ut alius sit sensus: *verbum hoc erat in principio apud deum*, non vult deum verbum confiteri. Sed hoc regula fidei refellendum est qua nobis de trinitatis aequalitate praescribitur, ut dicamus, *et deus erat verbum*, deinde subiungamus, *hoc erat in principio apud deum*.

6. Illa vero distinctionis ambiguitas neutra parte resistit fidei et ideo textu ipso sermonis diiudicanda est, ubi ait apostolus, *et quid eligam ignoro. Compellor autem ex duobus, concupiscentiam habens dissolvi et esse cum Christo, multo enim magis optimum manere in carne necessarium propter vos*.⁴⁹⁷ Incertum est enim utrum *ex duobus concupiscentiam habens*, an *compellor autem ex duobus*, ut illud adiungatur *concupiscentiam habens dissolvi et esse cum Christo*. 7. Sed quoniam ita sequitur *multo enim magis optimum*, apparet eum eius optimi dicere se habere concupiscentiam, ut cum ex duobus compellatur, alterius tamen habeat concupiscentiam, alterius necessitatem—concupiscentiam scilicet esse cum Christo, necessitatem manere in carne. Quae ambiguitas uno consequenti verbo diiudicatur, quod positum est *enim*. Quam particulam qui abstulerunt interpretes illa potius sententia ducti sunt, ut non solum compelli ex duobus sed etiam duorum habere concupiscentiam videretur.⁴⁹⁸ 8. Sic ergo distinguendum est: *et quid eligam ignoro. Compellor autem ex duobus*, quam distinctionem sequitur *concupiscentiam habens dissolvi et esse cum Christo*. Et tamquam quaereretur quare huius rei potius habeat concupiscentiam, *multo enim magis optimum* inquit. Cur ergo e duobus compellitur? Quia est manendi necessitas, quam ita subiecit: *manere in carne necessarium propter*

vos. 9. Ubi autem neque praescripto fidei neque ipsius sermonis textu ambiguitas explicari potest, nihil obest secundum quamlibet earum quae ostenduntur sententiam distinguere. Veluti est illa ad Corinthios: *has ergo promissiones habentes*,

⁴⁹⁶ John 1: 1–2; the Arians are meant.

⁴⁹⁷ Phil. 1: 22–4. An English translation cannot illustrate the ambiguity, because its word-order, unlike the Latin word-order, determines the meaning. The point was important in debates with the Manichees: see *Conf.* 8. 10. 23–4.

⁴⁹⁸ The conclusion is not inescapable; the omission of *enim* in the Vulgate did not close the question. In fact Augustine's first argument is the stronger one.

themselves is supported by it, and which one lends itself to acceptable combinations with it.

5. Consider now the following examples. The well-known heretical punctuation⁴⁹⁹ ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and there was God’, giving a different sense in what follows (‘this Word was in the beginning with God’) refuses to acknowledge that the Word was God. This is to be refuted by the rule of faith, which lays down for us the equality of the members of the Trinity, and so we should say ‘and the Word was God’, and then go on, ‘this was in the beginning with God’. 6. The following ambiguous passage is not, on either interpretation, at odds with the faith, and therefore has to be resolved by its actual context. The apostle says, ‘And I know not which to choose; I am torn in two directions having a desire to be dissolved and be with Christ, for that is much the best; to remain in the flesh is necessary on your account.’⁵⁰⁰ It is not in fact clear whether we should read ‘having a desire in two directions’ or ‘I am torn in two directions’, followed by ‘having a desire to be dissolved and be with Christ’. 7. But since the phrase ‘for that is much the best’ follows, it is clear that he says he has a desire for that which is best, so that although torn in two directions he feels a desire to do the one but an obligation to do the other (that is, a desire to be with Christ, but an obligation to remain in the flesh). The ambiguity is resolved by the presence of the single word ‘for’. Critics who remove this word have been led to the conclusion that he was apparently not only torn in two directions but also had a desire for two things.⁵⁰¹ 8. So the punctuation must be: ‘and I know not which to choose; I am torn in two directions’ [pause] ‘having a desire to be dissolved and be with Christ.’ And then, as if he were being asked why he has a desire for this, he says, ‘for it is much the best’. Why, then, is he torn in two directions? Because there is an obligation to remain, which he expresses thus: ‘to remain in the flesh is necessary on your account.’ 9. Where an ambiguity can be resolved neither by an article of faith nor by the actual context there is no objection to any punctuation which follows one of the meanings that suggest themselves. Such is the passage in Corinthians: ‘so having these

⁴⁹⁹ John 1: 1–2; the Arians are meant.

⁵⁰⁰ Phil. 1: 22–4. An English translation cannot illustrate the ambiguity, because its word-order, unlike the Latin word-order, determines the meaning. The point was important in debates with the Manichees: see *Conf.* 8. 10. 23–4.

⁵⁰¹ The conclusion is not inescapable; the omission of *enim* in the Vulgate did not close the question. In fact Augustine’s first argument is the stronger one.

*carissimi, mundemus nos ab omni coinquinatione carnis et spiritus perficientes sanctificationem in timore dei. Capite nos, nemini nocuimus.*⁵⁰² Dubium est quippe utrum *mundemus nos ab omni coinquinatione carnis et spiritus*, secundum illam sententiam *ut sit sancta et corpore et spiritu*,⁵⁰³ an *mundemus nos ob omni coinquinatione carnis*, ut alius sit sensus: *et spiritus perficientes sanctificationem in timore dei. Capite nos.* Tales igitur distinctionum ambiguitates in potestate legentis sunt.

10. Quaecumque autem de ambiguis distinctionibus diximus, eadem observanda sunt et in ambiguis pronuntiationibus. Nam et ipsae, nisi lectoris nimia vitentur incuria, aut regulis fidei corriguntur aut praecedentis vel consequentis contextione sermonis; aut si neutrum horum adhibetur ad correctionem, nihilominus dubiae remanebunt,⁵⁰⁴ ut quolibet modo lector pronuntiaverit, non sit in culpa. 11. Nisi enim fides revocet, qua credimus deum non accusaturum adversus electos suos et Christum non condemnaturum electos suos, potest illud sic pronuntiari, *quis accusabit adversus electos dei?*⁵⁰⁵ ut hanc interrogationem quasi responsio consequatur *deus qui iustificat*, et item interrogetur, *quis qui condemnat?* et respondeatur *Christus Iesus qui mortuus est*. Quod credere quia dementissimum est, ita pronuntiabitur ut praecedat percontatio, sequatur interrogatio. 12. Inter percontationem autem et interrogationem hoc veteres interesse dixerunt, quod ad percontationem multa responderi possunt, ad interrogationem vero aut ‘non’ aut ‘etiam’.⁵⁰⁶ Pronuntiabitur ergo ita ut post percontationem qua dicimus, sono interrogantis enuntietur *deus qui iustificat?* ut tacite respondeatur ‘non’; et item percontemur, *quis qui condemnat?* rursusque interrogemus, *Christus Iesus qui mortuus est, magis autem qui resurrexit, qui est in dextera dei, qui et interpellat pro nobis?* ut ubique tacite respondeatur ‘non’. 13. At vero illo in loco ubi ait, *quid ergo dicemus? Quia gentes quae non sectabantur iustitiam, apprehenderunt iustitiam,*⁵⁰⁷ nisi post percontationem qua

⁵⁰² 2 Cor. 7: 1–2. Again the English translation inevitably removes the ambiguity under discussion. It follows the usual and preferable interpretation of the passage.

⁵⁰³ 1 Cor. 7: 34.

⁵⁰⁴ Schaüblin considers the words *si neutrum horum adhibetur ad correctionem* to be an interpolation which weakens the sense; they do indeed, but not impossibly.

⁵⁰⁵ Rom. 8: 33–4.

⁵⁰⁶ For this distinction see *Quint.* 9. 2. 6 and Donatus on Ter. *Andria* 800.

⁵⁰⁷ Rom. 9: 30.

promises, my dearest brethren, let us purify ourselves from all pollution of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Welcome me; I have wronged no-one.⁵⁰⁸ It is uncertain whether we should read 'let us purify ourselves from all pollution of the flesh and the spirit', on the analogy of the phrase 'so that she may be holy in body and spirit',⁵⁰⁹ or 'let us purify ourselves from all pollution of the flesh', with a different sense emerging in what follows: 'and perfecting holiness of the spirit in the fear of God. Welcome me . . .' Such problems of punctuation are for the reader to resolve.

10. The points that I have just made about problems of punctuation also apply to the problems of reading aloud. These too, unless they are simply mistakes due to a reader's gross carelessness, are resolved by considering either the rules of faith or the surrounding context. If neither of these methods is used to resolve them they will none the less remain in dispute,⁵¹⁰ but in such a way that the reader will not be wrong however the passages are articulated. 11. If our faith did not prevent it—for we believe that God will not make accusations against his elect and that Christ will not condemn the elect—the following passage might be read in such a way that the question, 'Who will make an accusation against God's elect?'⁵¹¹ is followed by a sort of answer in the words 'God who justifies them', and then, similarly, by the question, 'Who is it that condemns them?', and the answer, 'Christ Jesus who died'. But since it would be crazy to believe this, it will be articulated as a *percontatio* followed by an *interrogatio*. 12. (The difference between these, according to ancient authorities, is that many answers may be given to the former, but only 'yes' and 'no' to the latter.)⁵¹² So it will be articulated in such a way that what follows the *percontatio* ('Who will make an accusation against God's elect?') is intoned interrogatively ('God who justifies them?'), expecting the tacit answer 'no'; and this is followed similarly by a *percontatio* ('Who is it that condemns?'), and another *interrogatio* ('Christ Jesus who died, but who rose again, who is at God's right hand, and who pleads for us?'), all of them expecting the tacit answer 'no'. 13. But in the passage where he says 'What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness',⁵¹³ the text that follows will not make sense unless the question

⁵⁰⁸ 2 Cor. 7: 1–2. Again the English translation inevitably removes the ambiguity under discussion. It follows the usual and preferable interpretation of the passage.

⁵⁰⁹ 1 Cor. 7: 34.

⁵¹⁰ Schaüblin considers the words *si neutrum horum adhibetur ad correctionem* to be an interpolation which weakens the sense; they do indeed, but not impossibly.

⁵¹¹ Rom. 8: 33–4.

⁵¹² For this distinction see *Quint.* 9. 2. 6 and Donatus on Ter. *Andria* 800.

⁵¹³ Rom. 9: 30.

dictum est: *Quid ergo dicemus?* responsio subiciatur: *Quia gentes quae non sectabantur iustitiam apprehenderunt iustitiam*, textus consequens non cohaerebit. Qualibet autem voce pronuntietur illud quod Nathanahel dixit, *a Nazareth potest aliquid boni esse*,⁵¹⁴ sive affirmantis, ut illud solum ad interrogationem pertineat quod ait, *a Nazareth?* sive totum cum dubitatione interrogantis, non video quomodo discernatur; uterque autem sensus fidem non impedit.

14. Est etiam ambiguitas in sono dubio syllabarum, et haec utique ad pronuntiationem pertinens. Nam quod scriptum est *non est absconditum a te os meum, quod fecisti in abscondito*,⁵¹⁵ non elucet legenti utrum correpta littera ‘os’ pronuntiet an producta. Si enim corripiat, ab eo quod sunt ossa, si autem producat, ab eo quod sunt ora intellegitur numerus singularis. 15. Sed talia linguae praecedentis inspectione diiudicantur: nam in graeco non ‘stoma’ sed ‘oston’ positum est. Unde plerumque loquendi consuetudo vulgaris utilior est significandis rebus quam integritas litterata. Mallem quippe cum barbarismo dici,⁵¹⁶ ‘non est absconditum a te ossum meum’, quam ut ideo esset minus apertum quia magis latinum est. Sed aliquando dubius syllabae sonus etiam vicino verbo ad eandem sententiam pertinente diiudicatur, sicuti est illud apostoli *quae praedico vobis sicut praedixi, quoniam qui talia agunt regnum dei non possidebunt*.⁵¹⁷ 16. Si tantummodo dixisset, *quae praedico vobis* neque subiunxisset, *sicut praedixi*, nonnisi ad codicem praecedentis linguae recurrendum esset, ut cognosceremus utrum in eo quod dixit *praedico* producenda an corripienda esset syllaba media.⁵¹⁸ Nunc autem manifestum est producendam esse. Non enim ait, ‘sicut praedicavi’, sed *sicut*

praedixi. 17. Non solum autem istae sed etiam illae ambiguitates quae non ad distinctionem vel ad pronuntiationem pertinent similiter considerandae sunt, qualis illa est ad Thessalonicenses: *Propterea consolati sumus fratres in vobis*.⁵¹⁹ Dubium

⁵¹⁴ John 1: 46.

⁵¹⁵ Ps. 138: 15 (139: 15). Literally, ‘my face/bone, which you made in a hidden place, is not hidden from you’. *ossa* means ‘bones’, *ora* ‘faces’ or ‘mouths’.

⁵¹⁶ Cf. 2. 45 for *barbarismus*, and 4. 64–6 for the overriding importance of clarity. Augustine makes similar comments in *Enarr. Ps.* 36, *Serm.* 3. 6, 138. 15 (139. 15), and *Tract. Iob.* 2. 14. He does not champion barbarisms for their own sake, and uses them sparingly himself; see R. P.H. Green, ‘Augustine’s *De Doctrina Christiana* : Some Clarifications’, *Respublica Litterarum*, 15 (1992), 101–2.

⁵¹⁷ Gal. 5: 21. ‘I warn you, as I have warned already, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.’

⁵¹⁸ The former would mean ‘foretell’. Again, Augustine means ‘vowel’ rather than syllable.

⁵¹⁹ 1 Thess. 3: 7.

‘What shall we say then?’ is followed by the reply ‘That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness.’ But I fail to see how to determine with what tone Nathaniel’s words *a Nazareth potest aliquid boni esse*⁵²⁰ should be articulated—whether they should be read as a statement with only the words ‘from Nazareth’ forming a question, or read entirely with the hesitant tone of a question. Neither interpretation is contrary to the faith.

14. Ambiguity is also present where the length of syllables is uncertain; and this too of course is relevant to reading aloud. In the sentence *non est absconditum a te os meum, quod fecisti in abscondito*⁵²¹ it is not obvious as one reads whether one should pronounce *os* with a short or long vowel. If it is made short, the singular of the word *ossa* is understood; if long, the singular of *ora*. 15. Such matters are settled by an inspection of the original: in Greek the word denotes not ‘mouth’, but ‘bone’. So the colloquial manner of speaking is often more effective than the propriety of literary language when it comes to signifying things. Indeed, I would prefer the sentence *non est absconditum a te ossum meum*, which includes a barbarism,⁵²² to one which because it is better Latin is less clear. Sometimes such doubts about the length of a syllable may be resolved by a nearby word which is relevant to the meaning, as in the sentence of the apostle Paul, *quae praedico vobis sicut praedixi, quoniam qui talia agunt regnum dei non possidebunt*.⁵²³ 16. If he had said simply *quae praedico vobis*, without adding *sicut praedixi*, it would be necessary to refer to a manuscript in the original language to find out whether to pronounce the middle syllable of the word *praedico* long or short.⁵²⁴ But in this case it is clear that it should be long; he said not *sicut praedicavi* but *sicut praedixi*. 17. As well as these ambiguities we must consider in a similar way those which do not concern punctuation or reading aloud, like the one in Thessalonians *Propterea consolati sumus fratres in vobis*.⁵²⁵ It is not clear whether *fratres* is in the vocative case or the

⁵²⁰ John 1: 46.

⁵²¹ Ps. 138: 15 (139: 15). Literally, ‘my face/bone, which you made in a hidden place, is not hidden from you’. *ossa* means ‘bones’, *ora* ‘faces’ or ‘mouths’.

⁵²² Cf. 2. 45 for *barbarismus*, and 4. 64–6 for the overriding importance of clarity. Augustine makes similar comments in *Enarr. Ps.* 36, *Serm.* 3. 6, 138. 15 (139. 15), and *Tract. Iob.* 2. 14. He does not champion barbarisms for their own sake, and uses them sparingly himself; see R. P.H. Green, ‘Augustine’s *De Doctrina Christiana* : Some Clarifications’, *Respublica Litterarum*, 15 (1992), 101–2.

⁵²³ Gal. 5: 21. ‘I warn you, as I have warned already, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.’

⁵²⁴ The former would mean ‘foretell’. Again, Augustine means ‘vowel’ rather than syllable.

⁵²⁵ 1 Thess. 3: 7.

enim utrum ‘o fratres’ an ‘hos fratres’: neutrum autem horum est contra fidem. Sed graeca lingua hos casus pares non habet et ideo illa inspecta renuntiatur vocativus, id est ‘o fratres’. 18. Quod si voluisset interpretes dicere ‘propterea consolationem habuimus, fratres, in vobis’, minus servitum esset verbis, sed minus de sententia dubitaretur aut certe adderetur ‘nostri’; nemo enim fere ambigeret vocativum casum esse cum audiret ‘propterea consolati sumus, fratres nostri, in vobis.’ Sed iam hoc periculosius permittitur. Ita factum est in illa ad Corinthios, cum ait apostolus: *cotidie morior, per vestram gloriam, fratres, quam habeo in Christo Iesu.*⁵²⁶ 19. Ait enim quidam interpretes, ‘cotidie morior, per vestram iuro gloriam’, quia in graeco vox iurantis manifesta est sine ambiguo sono. Rarissime igitur et difficillime inveniri potest ambiguitas in propriis verbis, quantum ad libros divinarum scripturarum spectat, quam non aut circumstantia ipsa sermonis, qua cognoscitur scriptorum intentio, aut interpretum collatio aut praecedentis linguae solvat inspectio.

20. Sed verborum translatorum ambiguitates, de quibus deinceps loquendum est, non mediocrem curam industriamque desiderant. Nam in principio cavendum est ne figuratam locutionem ad litteram accipias. Et ad hoc enim pertinet quod ait apostolus, *littera occidit, spiritus autem vivificat.*⁵²⁷ Cum enim figurate dictum sic accipitur tamquam proprie dictum sit, carnaliter sapitur. Neque ulla mors animae congruentius appellatur quam cum id etiam quod in ea bestiis antecellit, hoc est intelligentia, carni subicitur sequendo litteram. 21. Qui enim sequitur litteram, translata verba sicut propria tenet, neque illud quod proprio verbo significatur refert ad aliam significationem. Sed si ‘sabbatum’ audierit, verbi gratia, non intellegit nisi unum diem de septem qui continuo volumine repetuntur; et cum audierit ‘sacrificium’, non excedit cogitatione illud quod fieri de victimis pecorum terrenisque fructibus solet. Ea demum est miserabilis animae servitus, signa pro rebus accipere et supra creaturam corpoream oculum mentis ad hauriendum aeternum lumen levare non posse.

⁵²⁶ 1 Cor. 15: 31. The problem is that *per* has various meanings, unlike the Greek π .

⁵²⁷ 2 Cor. 3: 6.

accusative; neither reading would be contrary to the faith. But in Greek the corresponding case-forms are not identical, and so after inspecting the Greek we declare in favour of the vocative (equivalent to *o fratres*). 18. If a translator had chosen to say *Propterea consolationem habuimus, fratres, in vobis*, he would have been verbally less close, but there would be no doubting his meaning. Or indeed *nostri* might be added, for hardly anyone would doubt that the vocative was being used in the phrase *Propterea consolati sumus, fratres nostri, in vobis*. But it is rather dangerous to allow such changes. This has been done in Corinthians, where the apostle says *cotidie morior, per vestram gloriam, fratres, quam habeo in Christo Iesu*.⁵²⁸ 19. one translator actually wrote *cotidie morior, per vestram iuro gloriam*, because in Greek there is a clear and unambiguous word signifying an oath. In the field of literal expressions, then, as far as the books of holy scripture are concerned, it is very unusual, and very difficult, to find cases of ambiguity which cannot be resolved either by the particular details of the context—which are a pointer to the writer's intention—or by a comparison of Latin translations or an inspection of the original language.

20. But the ambiguities of metaphorical words, about which I must now speak, require no ordinary care and attention. To begin with, one must take care not to interpret a figurative expression literally. What the apostle says is relevant here: 'the letter kills but the spirit gives life.'⁵²⁹ For when something meant figuratively is interpreted as if it were meant literally, it is understood in a carnal way. No 'death of the soul' is more aptly given that name than the situation in which the intelligence, which is what raises the soul above the level of animals, is subjected to the flesh by following the letter. 21. A person who follows the letter understands metaphorical words as literal, and does not relate what the literal word signifies to any other meaning. On hearing the word 'sabbath', for example, he interprets it simply as one of the seven days which repeat themselves in a continuous cycle; and on hearing the word 'sacrifice' his thoughts do not pass beyond the rituals performed with sacrificial beasts or fruits of the earth. It is, then, a miserable kind of spiritual slavery to interpret signs as things, and to be incapable of raising the mind's eye above the physical creation so as to absorb the eternal light.

⁵²⁸ 1 Cor. 15: 31. The problem is that *per* has various meanings, unlike the Greek π .

⁵²⁹ 2 Cor. 3: 6.

22. Quae tamen servitus in Iudaeo populo longe a ceterarum gentium more distabat, quandoquidem rebus temporalibus ita subiugati erant ut unus eis in omnibus commendaretur deus. Et quamquam signa rerum spiritualium pro ipsis rebus observarent, nescientes quo referrentur, id tamen insitum habebant, quod tali servitute uni omnium, quem non videbant, placerent deo.⁵³⁰ Quam custodiam tamquam sub paedagogo parvulorum fuisse scribit apostolus. 23. Et ideo qui talibus signis pertinaciter inhaeserunt, contemnentem ista dominum, cum iam tempus revelationis eorum venisset, ferre non potuerunt; atque inde calumnias, quod sabbato curaret,⁵³¹ moliti sunt principes eorum populusque signis illis tamquam rebus astrictus non credebat deum esse vel a deo venisse, qui ea sicut a Iudaeis observabantur nollet attendere. Sed qui crediderunt, ex quibus facta est prima ecclesia Hierosolymitana, satis ostenderunt quanta utilitas fuerit eo modo sub paedagogo custodiri, ut signa quae temporaliter imposita erant servientibus ad unius dei cultum qui fecit caelum et terram opinionem observantium religarent. 24. Namque illi quia proximi spiritualibus fuerunt—in ipsis enim temporalibus et carnalibus votis atque signis, quamvis quomodo spiritualiter essent intellegenda nescirent, unum tamen didicerant venerari aeternum deum—tam capaces exstiterunt spiritus sancti ut omnia sua venderent eorumque pretium indigentibus distribuendum ante apostolorum pedes ponerent seque totos dedicarent deo⁵³² tamquam templum novum, cuius terrenae imagini, hoc est templo veteri, serviebant.

25. Non enim hoc ullas ecclesias gentium fecisse scriptum est, quia non tam prope inventi erant qui simulacra manufacta

deos habebant. 26. Et si quando aliqui eorum illa tamquam signa interpretari conabantur, ad creaturam colendam venerandamque referebant. Quid enim mihi prodest simulacrum, verbi gratia, Neptuni non ipsum habendum deum, sed eo significari universum mare vel etiam omnes aquas ceteras quae

⁵³⁰ Gal. 3: 24.

⁵³¹ Matt. 12: 1–14; Luke 6: 1–11.

⁵³² Acts 4: 32–5.

22. But the form this slavery took in the Jewish people was very different from the experience of other nations, since notwithstanding their enslavement to temporal things the idea of monotheism was presented to them in all sorts of ways. And although they observed the signs of spiritual things in place of the things themselves—not knowing what they related to—they nevertheless had an ingrained belief that such slavery made them acceptable to the single God of all, the God whom they were unable to see. This relationship, as the apostle Paul wrote,⁵³³ was like the protection of children by a pedagogue. 23. That is why the people who resolutely held fast to these signs were unable, when the time had come for them to be explained, to tolerate the Lord who disregarded them; and that is why their leaders engineered false accusations against him because he healed on the sabbath,⁵³⁴ and why the people, devoted to signs as if they were things, did not believe that he was God or that he had come from God, since he refused to follow these practices in the way that they were observed by the Jews. But those who did believe—those who became the first church of Jerusalem—clearly showed what an advantage it was to have had the protection of a pedagogue in this way; for the result was that the signs temporarily imposed on them in their slavery drew the thoughts of those who observed them to the worship of the one God who created heaven and earth. 24. Because they were very close to being spiritual—for although they did not know how to interpret them spiritually, the vows and signs concerned with the world and the flesh had at least taught them to worship the one eternal God—they were so receptive to the Holy Spirit that they sold all their possessions and placed the proceeds at the apostles' feet for distribution to the poor, dedicating themselves wholly to God.⁵³⁵ And so they formed a new temple, a temple whose earthly counterpart they had served previously. 25. It is not recorded that any Gentile churches did this; for those who thought of manufactured statues as gods were not found to be so spiritually aware. 26. If any of them ever did try to interpret these statues as signs, they related them to the worship and veneration of the created order. For what good is it to me that (for example) an image of Neptune is not thought of as a god in itself, but considered to represent the whole sea or all the fontibus prouunt? Sicut a quodam poeta illorum describitur, si bene recolo, ita dicente:

⁵³³ Gal. 3: 24.

⁵³⁴ Matt. 12: 1–14; Luke 6: 1–11.

⁵³⁵ Acts 4: 32–5.

Tu, Neptune pater, cui tempora cana crepanti
 cincta salo resonant, magnus cui perpete mento
 profluit oceanus et flumina crinibus errant.⁵³⁶

27. Haec siliqua intra dulce tectorium sonantes lapillos quatit; non est autem hominum sed porcorum cibus. Novit quid dicam qui evangelium novit.⁵³⁷ Quid ergo mihi prodest quod Neptuni simulacrum ad illam significationem refertur, nisi forte ut neutrum colam? Tam enim mihi statua quaelibet quam mare universum non est deus. Fateor tamen altius demersos esse qui opera hominum deos putant quam qui opera dei. Sed nobis unus diligendus et colendus deus praecipitur, qui fecit haec omnia quorum illi simulacra venerantur vel tamquam deos vel tamquam signa et imagines deorum. 28. Si ergo signum utiliter institutum pro ipsa re sequi cui significandae institutum est carnalis est servitus, quanto magis inutilium rerum signa instituta pro rebus accipere? Quae si rettuleris ad ea ipsa quae his significantur, eisque colendis animum obligaveris, nihilominus servili carnalique onere atque velamine non carebis. 29. Quam ob rem christiana libertas eos quos invenit sub signis utilibus tamquam prope inventos, interpretatis signis quibus subditi erant, elevatos ad eas res quarum illa signa sunt liberavit. Ex his factae sunt ecclesiae sanctorum Israhelitarum. Quos autem invenit sub signis inutilibus, non solum servilem operationem sub talibus signis sed etiam ipsa signa frustravit removitque omnia, ut a corruptione multitudinis simulatorum deorum, quam saepe ac proprie scriptura fornicationem vocat, ad unius dei cultum gentes converterentur, nec sub ipsis iam signis utilibus serviturae, sed exercitaturae potius animum in eorum intelligentia spiritali. 30. Sub signo enim servit qui other kinds of watercourse that flow from springs? He is so described by one of their poets, if I remember rightly, in these words:

⁵³⁶ The author and context of this passage are unknown. Perhaps, as Riese suggested, it comes from the poem *Ponticon* (or *Pontica*), of which a fragment is extant: see E. Courtney (ed.), *The Fragmentary Latin Poets* (Oxford, 1993), 456.

⁵³⁷ Luke 15: 16. Cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 21. 13. 4.

Thou, father Neptune, whose hoary temples resound to the splash of the encircling sea, from whose mighty chin flows the great ocean, in whose hair rivers meander . . .⁵³⁸

27. Inside its attractive shell this husk is a jangle of fine-sounding stones; but it is the food of pigs, not men. (Anyone who knows the gospel knows my meaning.⁵³⁹) What good is it to me, then, that a representation of Neptune is given this significance, except perhaps to make me avoid both kinds of worship? As far as I am concerned, any statue is as far from being God as the whole sea is. But I admit that those who regard the works of men as gods are more bogged down in error than those who so regard the works of God. But we are instructed to love and worship the one God who created all these things of which they venerate images, whether they do so by treating them as gods or as signs or representations of gods. 28. If, then, it is a carnal form of slavery to follow a sign divinely instituted for a useful purpose rather than the thing that it was instituted to represent, is it not far worse to accept as things the humanly instituted signs of useless things? If you relate such signs to the actual things signified by them, and commit your soul to worshipping them, you will still not be free from the oppression and the delusion of this servile and carnal condition. 29. So Christian freedom has liberated those whom it found enslaved to useful signs—they were, so to speak, not that far away—and by interpreting the signs to which they were subjected has raised them to the level of the things of which these were signs. These people formed the churches of the holy Israelites. But as for those whom it found under the influence of useless signs, it has undermined not only their servile attention to such signs, but also the signs themselves; and it has eliminated them all, so that the Gentiles might turn away from the pollution of a horde of fictitious gods—something which scripture frequently, and literally, calls fornication—to the worship of the one God, and no longer live in slavery, even to useful signs, but rather exercise their minds by the discipline of understanding them spiritually. 30. A person enslaved by a

⁵³⁸ The author and context of this passage are unknown. Perhaps, as Riese suggested, it comes from the poem *Ponticon* (or *Pontica*), of which a fragment is extant: see E. Courtney (ed.), *The Fragmentary Latin Poets* (Oxford, 1993), 456.

⁵³⁹ Luke 15: 16. Cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 21. 13. 4.

operatur aut veneratur aliquam rem significantem, nesciens quid significet. Qui vero aut operatur aut veneratur utile signum divinitus institutum cuius vim significationemque intellegit non hoc veneratur quod videtur et transit sed illud potius quo talia cuncta referenda sunt. Talis autem homo spiritalis et liber est, etiam tempore servitutis, quo carnalibus animis nondum oportet signa illa revelari quorum iugo edomandi sunt. 31. Tales autem spiritales erant patriarchae ac prophetae omnesque in populo Israel per quos nobis spiritus sanctus ipsa scripturarum et auxilia et solacia ministravit. Hoc vero tempore posteaquam resurrectione domini nostri manifestissimum indicium nostrae libertatis illuxit, nec eorum quidem signorum quae iam intellegimus operatione gravi onerati sumus, sed quaedam pauca pro multis eademque factu facillima et intellectu augustissima et observatione castissima ipse dominus et apostolica tradidit disciplina, sicuti est baptismi sacramentum et celebratio corporis et sanguinis domini. 32. Quae unus quisque cum percipit, quo referantur imbutus agnoscit, ut ea non carnali servitute sed spiritali potius libertate veneretur. Ut autem litteram sequi et signa pro rebus quae his significantur accipere servilis infirmitatis est, ita inutiliter signa interpretari male vagantis erroris est. Qui autem non intellegit quid significet signum et tamen signum esse intellegit nec ipse premitur servitute. Melius est autem vel premi incognitis sed utilibus signis quam inutiliter ea interpretando a iugo servitutis eductam cervicem laqueis erroris inserere. 33. Huic autem observationi, qua cavemus figuratam locutionem, id est translatam, quasi propriam sequi, adiungenda etiam illa est, ne propriam quasi figuratam velimus accipere. Demonstrandum est igitur prius modus inveniendae locutionis, propriae an figurata sit. Et iste omnino modus est, ut quid-quid in sermone divino neque ad morum honestatem neque ad fidei veritatem proprie referri potest figuratum esse cognoscas. 34. Morum honestas ad diligendum deum et proximum, fidei veritas ad cognoscendum deum et proximum

sign is one who worships some thing which is meaningful but remains unaware of its meaning. But the person who attends to or worships a useful sign, one divinely instituted, and does realize its force and significance, does not worship a thing which is only apparent and transitory but rather the thing to which all such things are to be related. Such a person is spiritual and free—and this was true even in the era of slavery when the time was not yet ripe for carnal minds to receive the clarification of the signs by which they had to be disciplined, like oxen beneath a yoke. 31. Among such spiritual people were the patriarchs and prophets and all those in the people of Israel through whom the Holy Spirit provided us with the support and comfort of the scriptures. But at the present time, when a brilliant demonstration of our freedom has been revealed in the resurrection of our Lord, we are not oppressed by the tiresome necessity of attending to signs, even the signs which we now understand. Instead of many signs there are now but a few signs, simple when performed, inspiring when understood, and holy when practised, given to us by the teaching of our Lord himself and the apostles, such as the sacrament of baptism and the celebration of the Lord's body and blood. 32. When an individual understands these, he recognizes with an inner knowledge what they relate to, and consequently venerates them not because of carnal slavery but because of his spiritual freedom. And just as it is a mark of servile weakness to follow the letter and accept the signs rather than the things signified by them, so it is a mark of badly misguided error to interpret signs in a useless way. The person who does not understand what a sign means, but at least understands that it is a sign, is not himself subject to slavery. It is better to be dominated by unknown but useful signs than to interpret them in a useless way and so thrust one's neck, rescued from the yoke of slavery, into the toils of error.³³ As well as this rule, which warns us not to pursue a figurative (that is, metaphorical) expression as if it were literal, we must add a further one: not to accept a literal one as if it were figurative. We must first explain the way to discover whether an expression is literal or figurative. Generally speaking, it is this: anything in the divine discourse that cannot be related either to good morals or to the true faith should be taken as figurative. 34. Good morals have to do with our love of God and our neighbour, the true faith with our

pertinet. Spes autem sua cuique est in conscientia propria, quemadmodum se sentit ad dilectionem dei et proximi cognitionemque proficere. De quibus omnibus primo libro dictum est. 35. Sed quoniam proclive est humanum genus non ex momentis ipsius libidinis sed potius suae consuetudinis aestimare peccata, fit plerumque ut quisque hominum ea tantum culpanda arbitretur quae suae regionis et temporis homines vituperare atque damnare consuerunt, et ea tantum probanda atque laudanda quae consuetudo eorum cum quibus vivit admittit. Eoque contingit ut si quid scriptura vel praeceperit quod abhorret a consuetudine audientium vel quod non abhorret culpaverit, si animum eorum iam verbi vinxit auctoritas, figuratam locutionem putent. 36. Non autem praecipit scriptura nisi caritatem, nec culpat nisi cupiditatem, et eo modo informat mores hominum. Item si animum praeoccupavit alicuius erroris opinio, quidquid aliter asseruerit scriptura figuratum homines arbitrantur. Non autem asserit nisi catholicam fidem rebus praeteritis et futuris et praesentibus. Praeteritorum narratio est, futurorum praenuntiatio, praesentium demonstratio; sed omnia haec ad eandem caritatem nutriendam atque roborandam et cupiditatem vincendam atque extinguendam valent. 37. Caritatem voco motum animi ad fruendum deo propter ipsum et se atque proximo propter deum;⁵⁴⁰ cupiditatem autem motum animi ad fruendum se et proximo et quolibet corpore non propter deum. Quod autem agit indomita cupiditas ad corrumpendum animum et corpus suum, flagitium vocatur; quod autem agit ut alteri noceat, facinus dicitur. 38. Et haec sunt duo genera omnium peccatorum, sed flagitia priora sunt. Quae cum exinaniverint animum et ad quandam egestatem perduxerint, in facinora prosilitur, quibus removeantur impedimenta flagitiorum aut adiumenta quaerantur. Item quod agit caritas quo sibi prosit, utilitas est; quod autem agit ut prosit proximo, beneficentia nominatur. Et hic praecedit utilitas, quia nemo potest ex eo quod non habet prodesse alteri. Quanto autem magis regnum cupiditatis destruitur, tanto caritatis augetur.

⁵⁴⁰ For the notion of enjoying one's neighbour for God's sake, see 1. 79, and O'Donovan, '*Usus* and *Fruitio*', 389 and 391.

understanding of God and our neighbour. The hope that each person has within his own conscience is directly related to the progress that he feels himself to be making towards the love and understanding of God and his neighbour. All this has been dealt with in Book 1.

35. But since the human race is prone to judge sins not by the strength of the actual lust, but rather by the standard of its own practices, people generally regard as culpable only such actions as men of their own time and place tend to blame and condemn, and regard as commendable and praiseworthy only such actions as are acceptable within the conventions of their own society. And so it happens that if scripture enjoins something at variance with the practices of its readers, or censures something that is not at variance with them, they consider the relevant expression to be figurative (always assuming that their minds are governed by the authority of the Word). 36. But scripture enjoins nothing but love, and censures nothing but lust, and moulds men's minds accordingly. Similarly, if their minds are taken over by a particular prejudice, people consider as figurative anything that scripture asserts to the contrary. But it asserts nothing except the catholic faith, in time past, present, and future. It narrates the past, foretells the future, and demonstrates the present, but all these things serve to nourish and strengthen this love, and to overcome and annihilate lust. 37. By love I mean the impulse of one's mind to enjoy God on his own account and to enjoy oneself and one's neighbour on account of God;⁵⁴¹ and by lust I mean the impulse of one's mind to enjoy oneself and one's neighbour and any corporeal thing not on account of God. What unbridled lust does to corrupt the mind and body is called wickedness; what it does to harm another person is called wrongdoing. 38. All sins can be divided into these two kinds, but wickedness comes first. Once it has depleted the mind and as it were bankrupted it, it rushes on to commit wrongdoing in order to remove the obstacles to wickedness or to find assistance for it. Similarly, what love does to benefit itself is self-interest, and what it does to benefit a neighbour is known as kindness. And here self-interest comes first, because nobody can do good to another out of resources which he does not possess. The more the realm of lust is destroyed, the more the realm of love is increased.

⁵⁴¹ For the notion of enjoying one's neighbour for God's sake, see 1. 79, and O'Donovan, '*Usus* and *Fructus*', 389 and 391.

39. Quidquid ergo asperum et quasi saevum factu dictuque in sanctis scripturis legitur ex persona dei vel sanctorum eius, ad cupiditatis regnum destruendum valet. Quod si perspicue sonat, non est ad aliud referendum quasi figurate dictum sit. Sicuti est apostoli, *Thesaurizas tibi iram in die irae et revelationis iusti iudicii dei, qui reddet unicuique secundum opera sua: his quidem qui secundum sustinentiam boni operis gloriam et honorem et incorruptionem quaerentibus, vitam aeternam; his autem qui ex contentione sunt et diffidunt veritati, credunt autem iniquitati, ira et indignatio. Tribulatio et angustia in omnem animam hominis operantis malum, Iudaei primum et Graeci.*⁵⁴² 40. Sed hoc ad eos cum quibus evertitur ipsa cupiditas, qui eam vincere noluerunt. Cum autem in homine cui dominabantur regna cupiditatis subvertuntur, illa est aperta locutio: *qui autem Iesu Christi sunt, carnem suam crucifixerunt cum passionibus et concupiscentiis.*⁵⁴³ Nisi quia et hic quaedam verba translata tractantur, sicuti est ‘ira dei’ et ‘crucifixerunt’; 41. sed non tam multa sunt vel ita posita ut obtegant sensum et allegoriam vel aenigma faciant, quam proprie figuratam locutionem voco. Quod autem Hieremiae dicitur: *ecce constitui te hodie super gentes et regna ut evellas et destruas et disperdas et dissipes,*⁵⁴⁴ non dubium quin figurata locutio tota sit, ad eum finem referenda quem diximus.

42. Quae autem quasi flagitiosa imperitis videntur, sive tantum dicta sive etiam facta sunt vel ex dei persona vel ex hominum quorum nobis sanctitas commendatur, tota figurata sunt. Quorum ad caritatis pastum enucleanda secreta sunt. Quisquis autem rebus praetereuntibus restrictius utitur quam sese habent mores eorum cum quibus vivit aut temperans⁵⁴⁵ aut superstitiosus est. Quisquis vero sic eis utitur ut metas consuetudinis bonorum inter quos versatur excedat aut aliquid significat aut flagitiosus est. 43. In omnibus enim talibus non usus rerum, sed libido utentis in culpa est. Neque ullo modo quisquam sobrius crediderit domini pedes ita unguento

⁵⁴² Rom. 2: 5–9.

⁵⁴³ Gal. 5: 24.

⁵⁴⁴ Jer. 1: 10.

⁵⁴⁵ Some manuscripts have *intemperans*, but it would be strange for Augustine to call such ascetics ‘intemperate’.

39. Any harsh and even cruel word or deed attributed to God or his saints that is found in the holy scriptures applies to the destruction of the realm of lust. If the message is clear, it should not be treated as figurative and related to something else. For example, Paul's saying: 'You are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, the day of the revelation of the just judgement of God, who will repay all people according to their works; eternal life to those who by persistence in well-doing seek glory and honour and immortality, but anger and fury to those who fractiously refuse to obey the truth and put their trust in iniquity. There will be tribulation and distress to every soul of man that does evil, first to the Jew and then to the Greek.'⁵⁴⁶ 40. But this was written to those whose destruction must accompany that of the lust itself, those who refused to overcome it. In cases where the realm of lust is overcome by a person once dominated by it, this perfectly clear saying applies: 'Those who belong to Jesus Christ have crucified their flesh along with its passions and desires.'⁵⁴⁷ Even here, admittedly, some words are used metaphorically, such as 'wrath of God' and 'crucified', 41. but they are not so many, or so unclear in expression, as to hide the sense and create allegory or obscurity, which is what I mean by figurative expression in the strict sense. On the other hand, Jeremiah's phrase 'Behold today I have established you over nations and kingdoms, to uproot and destroy, to lay waste and scatter'⁵⁴⁸ is, without doubt, entirely figurative, and so must be related to the aim that I mentioned above.⁴² Matters which seem like wickedness to the unenlightened, whether just spoken or actually performed, whether attributed to God or to people whose holiness is commended to us, are entirely figurative. Such mysteries are to be elucidated in terms of the need to nourish love. A person who makes more limited use of transient things than the moral conventions of his own society allow is either self-controlled⁵⁴⁹ or superstitious; a person whose use of them exceeds the limits set by the practice of good people in his society is either guilty of wickedness or an indication of some special significance. 43. In all such matters what is reprehensible is not the use made of things but the user's desire. No person in his right mind should ever think that the Lord's feet were anointed by a woman with precious

⁵⁴⁶ Rom. 2: 5–9.

⁵⁴⁷ Gal. 5: 24.

⁵⁴⁸ Jer. 1: 10.

⁵⁴⁹ Some manuscripts have *intemperans*, but it would be strange for Augustine to call such ascetics 'intemperate'.

pretioso a muliere perfusus ut luxuriosorum⁵⁵⁰ et nequam hominum solent, quorum talia convivia detestamur. Odor enim bonus fama bona est, quam quisquis bonae vitae operibus habuerit, dum vestigia Christi sequitur, quasi pedes eius pretiosissimo odore perfundit. 44. Ita quod in aliis personis plerumque flagitium est in divina vel prophetica persona magnae cuiusdam rei signum est. Alia est quippe in perditis moribus, alia in Oseae prophetae vaticinatione coniunctio meretricis.⁵⁵¹ Nec si flagitiose in conviviis temulentorum et lascivorum nudantur corpora propterea in balneis nudum esse flagitium est. 45. Quid igitur locis et temporibus et personis conveniat diligenter attendendum est, ne temere flagitia reprehendamus. Fieri enim potest ut sine aliquo vitio cuppediae vel voracitatis pretiosissimo cibo sapiens utatur, insipiens autem foedissima gulae flamma in vilissimum ardescat. Et sanius quisque maluerit more domini pisce vesci quam lenticula more Esau nepotis Abraham⁵⁵² aut hordeo more iumentorum. 46. Non enim propterea continentiores nobis sunt pleraeque bestiae quia vilioribus aluntur escis. Nam in omnibus huiuscemodi rebus non ex earum rerum natura quibus utimur sed ex causa utendi et modo appetendi vel probandum est vel improbandum quod facimus. 47. Regno terreno veteres iusti caeleste regnum imaginabantur et praenuntiabant. Sufficiendae prolis causa erat uxorum plurium simul uni viro habendarum inculpabilis consuetudo. Et ideo unam feminam maritos habere plurimos honestum non erat; non enim mulier eo est fecundior, sed meretricia potius turpitudine vel quaestum vel liberos vulgo quaerere. 48. In huiuscemodi moribus quidquid illorum temporum sancti non libidinose faciebant, quamvis ea facerent quae hoc tempore nisi per libidinem fieri non possunt, non culpat scriptura. Et quidquid ibi tale narratur non solum historice ac proprie sed etiam figurate ac prophetice acceptum interpretandum est usque in finem illum caritatis sive dei sive proximi sive utriusque. 49. Sicut enim talaes et manicatas

⁵⁵⁰ Matt. 26: 7–12; John 12: 1–7.

⁵⁵¹ Hos. 1: 2–3.

⁵⁵² Luke 24: 42; Gen. 25: 34.

ointment⁵⁵³ in the same way as the feet of self-indulgent and evil men are anointed at the sort of banquets which we abhor. A good perfume signifies a good reputation: anyone who enjoys this through the deeds of an upright life anoints Christ's feet in a figurative sense with a most precious perfume by following in his footsteps. 44. Again, what is generally speaking wicked in other people is the sign of something great in one who is divine or a prophet. Consorting with a prostitute is one thing in a depraved society, but something quite different in the prophecy of Hosea.⁵⁵⁴ And the fact that some people strip in their drunken, uninhibited parties does not make it immoral to be naked in the bath.⁴⁵ We must pay careful attention to the conduct appropriate to different places, times, and persons, in case we make rash imputations of wickedness. It is possible for a wise man to take some kind of costly food without any taint of greed or gluttony, and for an unwise one to yearn for junk food with a most disgusting outburst of greed. Or someone might have a healthy preference for eating fish, like our Lord, rather than lentils, like Abraham's grandson Esau,⁵⁵⁵ or barley, like cattle. 46. The fact that most animals are more restrained than we are is not the result of their cheaper diet. In all matters of this kind actions are made acceptable or unacceptable not by the particular things we make use of, but by our motives for using them and our methods of seeking them. 47. Righteous men of long ago visualized the kingdom of heaven as an earthly kingdom, and predicted it accordingly. In the interests of creating offspring there was a perfectly blameless practice for one man to have several wives. For the same reason it was not honourable for one woman to have several husbands; that does not make a woman more fertile, and it is indeed a form of immoral prostitution to seek either profit or children through promiscuity. 48. Given such social conventions, things that the saints of those ages could do without any lust—although they were doing something which cannot be done without lust nowadays—are not censured by scripture. Anything of this kind related there is to be understood not only historically and literally but also figuratively and prophetically, and interpreted according to the aim of love, whether it be love of God or love of one's neighbour, or both. 49. In ancient Rome it was

⁵⁵³ Matt. 26: 7–12; John 12: 1–7.

⁵⁵⁴ Hos. 1: 2–3.

⁵⁵⁵ Luke 24: 42; Gen. 25: 34.

tunicas habere apud Romanos veteres flagitium erat,⁵⁵⁶ nunc autem honesto loco natis, cum tunicati sunt, non eas habere flagitium est, sic animadvertendum est in cetero quoque usu rerum abesse oportere libidinem, quae non solum ipsa eorum inter quos vivit consuetudine nequiter abutitur, sed etiam saepe fines eius egressa foeditatem suam, quae intra claustra morum sollemnium latitabat, flagitiosissima eruptione manifestat. 50. Quidquid autem congruit consuetudini eorum cum quibus vita ista degenda vel necessitate imponitur vel officio suscipitur, a bonis et magnis hominibus ad utilitatem et beneficentiam referendum est, vel proprie sicut et nos debemus vel etiam figurate sicut prophetis licet. 51. In quae facta legenda cum incurrunt indocti alterius consuetudinis, nisi auctoritate reprimantur flagitia putant; nec possunt animadvertere totam conversationem suam vel in coniugiis vel in conviviis vel in vestitu ceteroque humano victu atque cultu aliis gentibus et aliis temporibus flagitiosum videri. 52. Qua varietate innumerabilium consuetudinum commoti quidam dormitantes, ut ita dicam, qui neque alto somno stultitiae sopiebantur nec in sapientiae lucem poterant evigilare, putaverunt nullam esse iustitiam per se ipsam, sed unicuique genti consuetudinem suam iustam videri; quae cum sit diversa omnibus gentibus, debeat autem incommutabilis manere iustitia, fieri manifestum nullam usquam esse iustitiam. Non intellexerunt, ne multa commemorem, *quod tibi fieri non vis, alio ne feceris*,⁵⁵⁷ nullo modo posse ulla eorum gentili diversitate variari. 53. Quae sententia cum refertur ad dilectionem dei, omnia flagitia moriuntur; cum ad proximi, omnia facinora. Nemo enim vult corrumpi habitaculum suum; non ergo debet corrumpere habitaculum dei, se ipsum scilicet.⁵⁵⁸ Et nemo vult sibi a quoquam noceri; nec ipse igitur cuiquam nocuerit. 54. Sic eversa tyrannide cupiditatis caritas regnat iustissimis legibus

⁵⁵⁶ Cf. Cic. *In Catilinam* 2. 22 (a favourite speech according to Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 2. 482).

⁵⁵⁷ Tobit 4: 16.

⁵⁵⁸ The words *se ipsum scilicet* (referring to 1 Cor. 3: 16–17) are perhaps a gloss; the logic and expression of the passage are better without them.

considered wicked to wear ankle-length tunics or ones with sleeves,⁵⁵⁹ whereas now it is thought immoral for the upper classes not to have them when wearing tunics; so we must observe that in the use of all other such things there must be an absence of lust, which not only wickedly exploits the actual practice of its society but also, by going beyond those limits in an outburst of total wickedness, often makes a disgraceful exhibition of its own ugliness, which had previously been concealed behind the barriers of traditional morality.⁵⁰ Whatever accords with the social practices of those with whom we have to live this present life—whether this manner of life is imposed by necessity or undertaken in the course of duty—should be related by good and serious men to the aims of self-interest and kindness, either literally, as we ourselves should do, or also figuratively, as is allowed to the prophets. 51. When those who are unfamiliar with different social practices come up against such actions in their reading, they think them wicked unless restrained by some explicit authority. They are incapable of realizing that their own sort of behaviour patterns, whether in matters of marriage, or diet, or dress, or any other aspect of human life and culture, would seem wicked to other races or other ages. 52. Some people have been struck by the enormous diversity of social practices and in a state of drowsiness, as I would put it—for they were neither sunk in the deep sleep of stupidity nor capable of staying awake to greet the light of wisdom—have concluded that justice has no absolute existence but that each race views its own practices as just. So since the practices of all races are diverse, whereas justice ought to remain unchangeable, there clearly is no such thing as justice anywhere. To say no more, they have not realized that the injunction ‘do not do to another what you would not wish to be done to yourself’⁵⁶⁰ can in no way be modified by racial differences. 53. When this injunction is related to the love of God, all wickedness dies; and when it is related to the love of one's neighbour, all wrongdoing dies. For nobody wants his own dwelling to be wrecked, and so he should not wish to wreck God's dwelling (which is himself).⁵⁶¹ Nobody wants to be harmed by anybody; so he should not do harm to anybody. 54. So when the tyranny of lust has been overthrown love rules with laws that are utterly just: to love God on his account, and

⁵⁵⁹ Cf. Cic. *In Catilinam* 2. 22 (a favourite speech according to Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 2. 482).

⁵⁶⁰ Tobit 4: 16.

⁵⁶¹ The words *se ipsum scilicet* (referring to 1 Cor. 3: 16–17) are perhaps a gloss; the logic and expression of the passage are better without them.

dilectionis dei propter deum, sui et proximi propter deum. Servabitur ergo in locutionibus figuratis regula huiusmodi, ut tam diu versetur diligenti consideratione quod legitur donec ad regnum caritatis interpretatio perducatur. Si autem hoc iam proprie sonat, nulla putetur figurata locutio. 55. Si praeceptiva locutio est aut flagitium aut facinus vetans aut utilitatem aut beneficentiam iubens, non est figurata. Si autem flagitium aut facinus videtur iubere aut utilitatem et beneficentiam vetare, figurata est. *Nisi manducaveritis*, inquit, *carnem filii hominis et sanguinem biberitis, non habebitis vitam in vobis*.⁵⁶² Facinus vel flagitium videtur iubere: figura ergo est, praecipiens passioni dominicae esse communicandum et suaviter atque utiliter recondendum in memoria quod pro nobis caro eius crucifixa et vulnerata sit. 56. Ait scriptura, *si esurierit inimicus tuus, ciba illum; si sitit, potum da illi*.⁵⁶³ Hic nullo dubitante beneficentiam praecipit. Sed quod sequitur, *hoc enim faciens carbones ignis congeres super caput eius*, malevolentiae facinus putes iuberi: ne igitur dubitaveris figurate dictum. Et cum possit dupliciter interpretari, uno modo ad nocendum, altero ad praestandum, ad beneficentiam te potius caritas revocet, ut intellegas carbones ignis esse urentes paenitentiae gemitus, quibus superbia sanatur eius qui dolet se inimicum fuisse hominis a quo eius miseriae subvenitur. 57. Item cum ait dominus, *qui amat animam suam perdet eam*,⁵⁶⁴ non utilitatem vetare putandus est, qua debet quisque conservare animam suam, sed figurate dictum ‘perdat animam’, id est perimat atque amittat usum eius quem nunc habet, perversum scilicet atque praeposterum, quo inclinatur temporalibus ut aeterna non quaerat. Scriptum est, *da misericordi et ne suscipias peccatorem*.⁵⁶⁵ Posterior pars huius sententiae videtur vetare beneficentiam; ait enim, *ne suscipias peccatorem*; intellegas ergo peccatorem figurate positum pro peccato, ut peccatum eius non suscipias. 58. Saepe autem accidit ut quisquis in meliore gradu spiritalis vitae vel est vel esse se putat figurate dicta esse

⁵⁶² John 6: 54.

⁵⁶³ Rom. 12: 20.

⁵⁶⁴ John 12: 25. Augustine clearly takes this as a command, not a statement of fact; for a survey of his ‘complementary’ and ‘antithetical’ interpretations of this verse, see Oliver O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (New Haven, Conn., 1980), 190–1.

⁵⁶⁵ Ecclus. 12: 4.

to love oneself and one's neighbour on God's account. Therefore in dealing with figurative expressions we will observe a rule of this kind: the passage being read should be studied with careful consideration until its interpretation can be connected with the realm of love. If this point is made literally, then no kind of figurative expression need be considered.⁵⁵ If the expression is a prescriptive one, and either forbids wickedness or wrongdoing, or enjoins self-interest or kindness, it is not figurative. But if it appears to enjoin wickedness or wrongdoing or to forbid self-interest or kindness, it is figurative. Scripture says, 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you'.⁵⁶⁶ This appears to enjoin wickedness or wrongdoing, and so it is figurative, a command to participate in the Lord's passion and to store in our memory the pleasurable and useful knowledge that his flesh was crucified and wounded for our sake. 56. Scripture says, 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink'.⁵⁶⁷ Here no one can doubt that it enjoins kindness. But one would think that the following words 'for by doing this you will pile coals of fire on his head' advocate malicious wrongdoing; so one can be sure that it was meant figuratively. Given that it can be interpreted in two ways, in the sense of causing harm and in the sense of offering something, the principle of love should lead you to the interpretation involving kindness, so that you understand by 'coals of fire' the agonized groans of penitence which cure the pride of a person who regrets having been the enemy of someone who helped him in distress. 57. Similarly, when the Lord says, 'He who loves his own soul shall lose it',⁵⁶⁸ this should not be taken as forbidding self-interest (everyone must seek to preserve his own soul) but as meaning 'lose one's soul' in a figurative sense—that is, to destroy and lose one's current perverse and disordered way of using it, by which one is inclined to what is temporal and prevented from seeking what is eternal. It is written: 'give to the merciful and do not support a sinner'.⁵⁶⁹ The second part of this statement seems to forbid kindness ('do not support a sinner'); so understand 'sinner' figuratively as 'sin', the meaning being 'do not support his sin'. 58. It often happens that someone who is, or thinks he is, at a higher stage of the spiritual life regards as figurative instructions

⁵⁶⁶ John 6: 54.

⁵⁶⁷ Rom. 12: 20.

⁵⁶⁸ John 12: 25. Augustine clearly takes this as a command, not a statement of fact; for a survey of his 'complementary' and 'antithetical' interpretations of this verse, see Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (New Haven, Conn., 1980), 190–1.

⁵⁶⁹ Ecclus. 12: 4.

arbitretur quae inferioribus gradibus praecipiantur; ut verbi gratia si caelibem amplexus est vitam et se castravit propter regnum caelorum,⁵⁷⁰ quidquid de uxore diligenda et regenda sancti libri praecipiant, non proprie sed translate accipi oportere contendat; et quisquis statuit servare innuptam virginem suam tamquam figuratam locutionem conetur interpretari qua dictum est, *trade filiam, et grande opus perfeceris*.⁵⁷¹ 59. Erit igitur etiam hoc in observationibus intellegendarum scripturarum, ut sciamus alia omnibus communiter praecipere, alia singulis quibusque generibus personarum, ut non solum ad universum statum valetudinis, sed etiam ad suam cuiusque membri propriam infirmitatem medicina perveniat. In suo quippe genere curandum est quod ad melius genus non potest erigi. 60. Item cavendum est ne forte quod in scripturis veteribus pro illorum temporum condicione etiamsi non figurate sed proprie intellegatur, non est flagitium neque facinus, ad ista etiam tempora quis putet in usum vitae posse transferri. Quod nisi dominante cupiditate et ipsarum quoque scripturarum quibus evertenda est satellitium quaerente non faciet. Nec intellegit miser ad hanc utilitatem illa esse sic posita ut spei bonae homines salubriter videant et consuetudinem quam aspernantur posse habere usum bonum et eam quam amplexantur esse posse damnabilem, si et ibi caritas utentium et hic cupiditas attendatur. 61. Nam si multis uxoribus caste uti quisquam pro tempore potuit, potest alius una libidinose. Magis enim probo multarum fecunditate utentem propter aliud quam unius carne fruentem propter ipsam. Ibi enim quaeritur utilitas temporum opportunitatibus congrua, hic satiatur cupiditas temporalibus voluptatibus implicata. Inferiorisque gradus ad deum sunt, quibus secundum veniam concedit apostolus carnalem cum singulis coniugibus consuetudinem propter intemperantiam eorum,⁵⁷² quam illi qui plures singuli cum haberent, sicut sapiens in cibo et potu nonnisi salutem corporis, sic in concubitu

⁵⁷⁰ Matt. 19: 12.

⁵⁷¹ Ecclus. 7: 27.

⁵⁷² 1 Cor. 7: 2.

which are given to those at a lower stage. So, for example, a man who has embraced a life of celibacy and castrated himself for the sake of the kingdom of heaven⁵⁷³ might maintain that any instructions given in the sacred books about loving or governing one's wife should be taken not literally but figuratively; or someone who has resolved to keep his own daughter unmarried might try to interpret as figurative the saying 'Marry off your daughter, and you will have done a great deed.'⁵⁷⁴ 59. This too, then, will be one of our rules for interpreting scripture: we must understand that some instructions are given to all people alike, but others to particular classes of people, so that the medicine may confront not only the general pathology of the disease but also the particular weakness of each part of the body. What cannot be raised to a higher level must be healed at its own level.⁶⁰ Likewise we must take care not to regard something in the Old Testament that is not wickedness or wrongdoing by the standards of its own time—even when understood literally and not figuratively—as capable of being transferred to the present time and applied to our own lives. A person will not do this unless lust is in total control and actively seeking the complicity of the very scriptures by which it must be overthrown. Such a wretch does not realize that these things are written down for a useful purpose, to enable men of good conscience to see, for their own spiritual health, that a practice which they reject can have a good application, and that a practice which they embrace can be damnable, if the love shown by its followers (in the first case) or their greed (in the second) is taken into account.⁶¹ For if one man according to the custom of his time could be chaste with many wives, another today can be lustful with a single wife. I approve the man who exploits the fertility of many women for a purpose other than sex more highly than one who enjoys one woman's flesh for its own sake. In one case there is the motive of self-interest, in accordance with the conditions prevailing at the time; in the other, the satisfaction of a lust caught up in the pleasures of the world. In God's eyes the men to whom the apostle allowed sexual intercourse with their individual wives, because of their lack of self-control,⁵⁷⁵ are at a lower stage than those who each had several wives but looked

⁵⁷³ Matt. 19: 12.

⁵⁷⁴ Ecclus. 7: 27.

⁵⁷⁵ 1 Cor. 7: 2.

nonnisi procreationem filiorum intuebantur. 62. Itaque si eos in hac vita invenisset domini adventus, cum iam non *mittendi sed colligendi lapides* tempus esset,⁵⁷⁶ statim se ipsos castrarent propter regnum caelorum. Non enim est in carendo difficultas nisi cum est in habendo cupiditas. Noverant quippe illi homines etiam in ipsis coniugibus luxuriam esse abutendi intemperantiam. Quod Tobiae testatur oratio, quando est copulatus uxori. Ait enim, *benedictus es, domine patrum nostrorum, et benedictum nomen tuum in omnia saecula saeculorum. Benedicant te caeli et omnis creatura. Tu fecisti Adam et dedisti illi adiutorium Evam. Et nunc, domine, tu scis quoniam non luxuriae causa accipio sororem meam sed ipsa veritate ut miserearis nostri, domine.*⁵⁷⁷ 63. Sed qui effrenata libidine vel per multa stupra diffuentes evagantur vel in ipsa una coniuge non solum excedunt ad liberorum procreationem pertinentem modum, sed etiam inhumanioris⁵⁷⁸ intemperantiae sordes inverecunda omnino licentia servilis cuiusdam libertatis accumulunt, non credunt fieri potuisse ut temperanter multis feminis antiqui uterentur viri, nihil servantes in usu illo nisi congruum tempori propagandae prolis officium. Et quod ipsi laqueis libidinis obstricti vel in una non faciunt, nullo modo in multis fieri posse arbitrantur. 64. Sed isti possunt dicere nec honorari quidem atque laudari oportere viros bonos et sanctos, quia ipsi cum honorantur atque laudantur intumescunt superbia, tanto avidiores inanissimae gloriae quanto eos frequentius atque latius lingua blandior ventilaverit. Qua ita leves fiunt ut eos rumoris aura, sive quae prospera sive quae adversa existimatur, in quaslibet invehat voragines flagitiorum aut in facinorum etiam saxa collidat. Videant ergo quam sibi arduum sit atque difficile nec laudis esca illi nec contumeliarum aculeis penetrari, et non ex se alios metiantur. 65. Credant potius apostolos nostros nec cum suspicerentur ab hominibus inflatos fuisse nec cum despicerentur elisos. Neutra quippe temptatio defuit illis viris; nam et credentium celebrabantur praeconio et persequentium

⁵⁷⁶ Cf. Eccles. 3: 5.

⁵⁷⁷ Tobit 8: 7–10.

⁵⁷⁸ I have followed the reading *inhumanioris* rather than *humaniores* ; both have manuscript support.

only to the procreation of children in the sexual act (just as in eating and drinking a wise man looks only to physical health). 62. And so if the Lord's advent had found them still in this life, when it was time not 'to throw away stones but collect them'⁵⁷⁹ they would have immediately castrated themselves for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. For there is no difficulty in foregoing sex, except where there is lust in practising it. Those men of old knew that the enjoyment of sex with their wives was a form of unrestrained abuse. This is shown by Tobit's prayer when he married his wife: 'You are blessed, Lord of our fathers, and your name is blessed for ages to come. Let the heavens and all creation bless you. You made Adam and gave him the assistance of Eve. And now, Lord, you know that it is not for enjoyment that I am taking my sister, but in all honesty, so that you may have mercy on us, O Lord.'⁵⁸⁰ 63. But promiscuous people who with unbridled lust go through one affair after another, or people who, just with a single wife, not only exceed the limit appropriate to the procreation of children but also in their inhuman⁵⁸¹ incontinence pile filth upon filth with an utterly shameless exercise of their slavish kind of freedom, do not consider it possible that the men of old treated their many wives with self-control and in so doing simply fulfilled the duty, required by their times, of creating offspring. What they themselves, entangled as they are in the toils of lust, do not even achieve with one wife, they think totally impossible with several.⁶⁴ But they may as well say that good and holy men should not even be honoured or praised, just because they themselves, when honoured and praised, swell with pride, and because the more frequent, and the more widespread, the publicity of flattering tongues becomes, the more greedy they are for empty praise. This makes them vain, and so the wind of rumour, whether it is seen as favourable or unfavourable, draws them into various whirlpools of wickedness or drives them against the rocks of wrongdoing. So they should realize what a difficult and demanding thing it is not to be enticed by the bait of praise or pierced by the barbs of insult, and not measure others by themselves. 65. They would do better to reckon that our apostles were neither puffed up when admired by men nor cast down when despised. They escaped neither of these temptations, being fêted by the accolades of believers and slandered by the

⁵⁷⁹ Cf. Eccles. 3: 5.

⁵⁸⁰ Tobit 8: 7–10.

⁵⁸¹ I have followed the reading *inhumanioris* rather than *humaniores* ; both have manuscript support.

maledictis infamabantur. 66. Sicut ergo isti pro tempore utebantur his omnibus et non corrumpebantur, sic illi veteres, usum feminarum ad sui temporis convenientiam referentes, non patiebantur eam dominationem libidinis cui serviunt qui ista non credunt. 67. Et ideo isti nullo modo sese cohiberent ab inexpiabili odio filiorum a quibus vel uxores vel concubinas suas attemptatas aut attrectatas esse cognoscerent, si eis forte tale aliquid accidisset. 68. Rex autem David, cum hoc ab impio atque immani filio passus esset, non solum ferocientem toleravit sed etiam planxit extinctum.⁵⁸² Non enim carnali zelo irretitus tenebatur, quem nullo modo iniuriae suae sed peccata filii commovebant. Nam ideo si vinceretur eum occidi prohibuerat, ut edomito servaretur paenitendi locus.⁵⁸³ Et quia non potuit, non orbitatem doluit in eius interitu sed noverat in quas poenas tam impie adultera et parricidalis anima raperetur. Namque alio prius filio qui innocens erat, pro quo aegrotante affligebatur, moriente laetatus est.⁵⁸⁴ 69. Ex hoc maxime apparet qua moderatione ac temperantia illi viri feminis utebantur, quod cum in unam illicite irruisset rex idem, aestu quodam aetatis et temporalium rerum prosperitatibus abreptus, cuius etiam maritum occidendum praeceperat,⁵⁸⁵ accusatus est per prophetam.⁵⁸⁶ Qui cum ad eum venisset convincendum de peccato, proposuit ei similitudinem de paupere qui habebat ovem unam, cuius vicinus multas cum haberet ad adventum hospitis sui unam potius vicini sui pauperis oviculam exhibuit epulandam. 70. In quem commotus David occidi eum iussit et quadruplicari ovem pauperi, ut se nesciens condemnaret qui peccaverat sciens. Quod cum ei manifestatum esset et divinitus denunciata vindicta, diluit paenitendo peccatum. Sed tamen in hac similitudine stuprum tantummodo designatum est de ove vicini pauperis. De marito autem mulieris interempto, hoc est de ipso paupere qui unam ovem habebat occiso, non est per similitudinem interrogatus David,

⁵⁸² 2 Kgs. (2 Sam.) 18. 33.

⁵⁸³ 2 Kgs. (2 Sam.) 18. 5.

⁵⁸⁴ 2 Kgs. (2 Sam.) 12. 15–23.

⁵⁸⁵ 2 Kgs. (2 Sam.) 11.

⁵⁸⁶ 2 Kgs. (2 Sam.) 12: 1–14.

abuse of persecutors. 66. So just as the apostles experienced all this in accordance with the custom of their times without being corrupted, so those men of old, relating their treatment of women to the conventions of their times, did not tolerate the domination of lust, the lust which enslaves men who find all this incredible.⁶⁷ And so if they discovered that their wives or concubines had been accosted or violated by their sons, these men would be quite unable to restrain themselves from implacably hating them, supposing that anything of this kind had happened to them. 68. But King David, when he suffered this at the hands of his wicked and brutal son, not only put up with his cruelty but even lamented his death.⁵⁸⁷ He was not trapped in the net of carnal jealousy, since it was not his own injuries but the sins of his son that worried him. He had in fact deliberately given orders that if his son were overcome he should not be killed, so as to leave him some scope for repentance when overthrown.⁵⁸⁸ After failing to save him he grieved over his son's death not because of his bereavement, but because he knew the penalties to which a soul guilty of such wicked adultery and murder was heading. For on the death of his earlier son (who was innocent), whose illness had been distressing him,⁵⁸⁹ he was pleased. 69. The following episode makes it very clear what moderation and self-control those men showed towards women. The same king, his head turned by youthful passion and worldly success, unlawfully violated a woman after ordering her husband to be killed,⁵⁹⁰ and was accused by the prophet.⁵⁹¹ When he came to David to convict him of his sin, Nathan put to him the analogy of a poor man with one sheep, and a neighbour of the poor man, who, although he himself had several, nevertheless served his poor neighbour's one and only sheep to greet the arrival of a guest. 70. This appalled King David, who ordered the neighbour to be killed and the poor man to be compensated for his sheep four times over—and so condemned himself unawares for the sin he was aware of having committed. When apprised of this and warned of divine punishment he atoned for his sin by repentance. But in this analogy it is only the sexual sin that is signalled by the sheep of the poor neighbour. David was not asked in this analogy about the murder of the woman's husband—the killing

⁵⁸⁷ 2 Kgs. (2 Sam.) 18. 33.

⁵⁸⁸ 2 Kgs. (2 Sam.) 18. 5.

⁵⁸⁹ 2 Kgs. (2 Sam.) 12. 15–23.

⁵⁹⁰ 2 Kgs. (2 Sam.) 11.

⁵⁹¹ 2 Kgs. (2 Sam.) 12: 1–14.

ut in solum adulterium diceret sententiam damnationis suae. 71. Ex quo intellegitur quanta temperantia multas mulieres habuerit, quando de una in qua excessit modum a se ipso puniri coactus est. Sed in isto viro immoderatae huius libidinis non permansio sed transitus fuit; propterea etiam ab arguente propheta ille illicitus appetitus hospes vocatus est. Non enim dixit eum regi suo sed hospiti suo vicini pauperis ovem ad epulandum exhibuisse. 72. At vero in eius filio Salomone non quasi hospes transitum habuit sed regnum ista libido possedit. De quo scriptura non tacuit, culpans eum fuisse amatorem mulierum.⁵⁹² Cuius tamen initia desiderio sapientiae flagrauerunt; quam cum amore spiritali adeptus esset amisit amore carnali. 73. Ergo, quamquam omnia vel paene omnia quae in veteris testamenti libris gesta continentur non solum proprie sed etiam figurate accipienda sint, tamen etiam illa quae proprie lector acceperit, si laudati sunt illi qui ea fecerunt sed ea tamen abhorrent a consuetudine bonorum qui post adventum domini divina praecepta custodiunt, figuram ad intellegentiam referat,⁵⁹³ factum vero ipsum ad mores non transferat. Multa enim sunt quae illo tempore officiose facta sunt quae modo nisi libidinose fieri non possunt. 74. Si qua vero peccata magnorum virorum legerit, tametsi aliquam in eis figuram rerum futurarum animadvertere atque indagare potuerit, rei tamen gestae proprietatem ad hunc usum assumat, ut se nequaquam recte factis suis iactare audeat et prae sua iustitia ceteros tamquam peccatores contemnat, cum videat tantorum virorum et cavendas tempestates et flenda naufragia. 75. Ad hoc enim etiam peccata illorum hominum scripta sunt ut apostolica illa sententia ubique tremenda sit, cum ait, *qua-propter qui videtur stare videat ne cadat*.⁵⁹⁴ Nulla enim fere pagina est sanctorum librorum in qua non sonet quod *deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam*.⁵⁹⁵ 76. Maxime itaque investigandum est utrum propria sit an

⁵⁹² 3 Kgs. (1 Kgs.) 11: 1–4.

⁵⁹³ A difficult passage: after stating (as in 2.48) that many passages may be taken both literally and figuratively he focuses on things taken literally but then seems to contradict himself in the words *figuram ad intellegentiam referat*. Schäublin deleted *figuram*, but this weakens the antithesis.

⁵⁹⁴ 1 Cor. 10: 12.

⁵⁹⁵ Jas. 4: 6.

of the poor man himself, that is, with his single sheep—and so it was on his adultery alone that he issued his self-condemnatory verdict. 71. One can infer from this the self-control with which he treated his many women, since in the case of the one woman with whom he had overstepped the limit he was compelled to punish himself. But in David's case there was no permanence to this extravagant lust, it was a passing phase; that is why his illicit appetite was called a 'guest' by the prophet who convicted him. He did not say that the man had offered his poor neighbour's sheep in a feast for his king, but for his guest. 72. But in David's son Solomon this lust was no guest paying a passing visit, but took over the whole kingdom. Scripture did not remain silent about this, but condemned him as a womanizer.⁵⁹⁶ In his early life he had a passionate desire for wisdom; but then, after gaining it through spiritual love, he lost it through carnal love.⁷³ So all, or nearly all, of the deeds contained in the books of the Old Testament are to be interpreted not only literally but also figuratively; but (in the case of those which the reader interprets literally) if agents are praised but their actions do not agree with the practices of the good men who since the Lord's coming in the flesh have been the guardians of the divine precepts, one should take up the figurative meaning into the understanding⁵⁹⁷ but not take over the deed itself into one's own behaviour. Many things were done in those times out of duty which cannot be done now except out of lust. 74. But when reading about the sins of great men, even if it is possible to observe or trace a prefiguration of future events in them, one should nevertheless take on board the literal meaning of the act, in this way. Bearing in mind the dangerous storms and miserable shipwrecks suffered by great men one should refrain from boasting of one's own deeds, which would be quite wrong, or despising others as sinners by the standards of one's own justice. 75. Even the sins of these men have been recorded in order to put people everywhere in awe of the apostle's saying 'So whoever thinks he stands must take care not to fall.'⁵⁹⁸ There is hardly a page in the Bible which does not proclaim the message: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'⁵⁹⁹ 76. The greatest care must therefore be taken to determine

⁵⁹⁶ 3 Kgs. (1 Kgs.) 11: 1–4.

⁵⁹⁷ A difficult passage: after stating (as in 2.48) that many passages may be taken both literally and figuratively he focuses on things taken literally but then seems to contradict himself in the words *figuram ad intellegentiam referat*. Schäublin deleted *figuram*, but this weakens the antithesis.

⁵⁹⁸ 1 Cor. 10: 12.

⁵⁹⁹ Jas. 4: 6.

figurata locutio quam intellegere conamur. Nam comperto quod figurata sit, adhibitis regulis rerum quas in primo libro digessimus, facile est eam versare omnibus modis donec perveniamus ad sententiam veritatis, praesertim cum usus accesserit pietatis exercitatione roboratus. Invenimus autem utrum propria sit an figurata locutio, illa intuentes quae supra dicta sunt. 77. Quod cum apparuerit, verba quibus continetur aut a similibus rebus ducta invenientur aut ab aliqua vicinitate attingentibus. 78. Sed quoniam multis modis res similes rebus apparent non putemus esse praescriptum ut quod in aliquo loco res aliqua per similitudinem significaverit hoc eam semper significare credamus. Nam et in vituperatione posuit fermentum dominus cum diceret, *cavete a fermento Phariseorum*,⁶⁰⁰ et in laude cum diceret, *simile est regnum caelorum mulieri quae abscondit fermentum in tribus mensuris farinae donec totum fermentaretur*.⁶⁰¹ 79. Huius igitur varietatis observatio duas habet formas. Sic enim aliud atque aliud res quaeque significant ut aut contraria aut tantummodo diversa significant. Contraria scilicet, cum alias in bono alias in malo res eadem per similitudinem ponitur, sicut hoc est quod de fermento supra diximus. Tale est etiam quod leo significat Christum, ubi dicitur, *vicit leo de tribu Iuda*,⁶⁰² significat et diabolus, ubi scriptum est, *adversarius vester diabolus tamquam leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem devoret*.⁶⁰³ 80. Ita serpens in bono est: *〈Estote〉 astuti ut serpentes*,⁶⁰⁴ in malo autem: *serpens Evam seduxit in astutia sua*.⁶⁰⁵ In bono panis: *ego sum panis vivus qui de caelo descendi*,⁶⁰⁶ in malo panis: *panes occultos libenter edite*.⁶⁰⁷ Sic et alia plurima. Et haec quidem quae commemoravi minime dubiam significationem gerunt, quia exempli gratia commemorari non nisi manifesta debuerunt. Sunt autem quae incertum sit in quam partem accipi debeant, sicut *calix in manu domini vini meri plenus est mixto*.⁶⁰⁸ 81. Incertum est enim utrum iram dei significet non usque ad novissimam poenam, id est usque ad faecem, an potius gratiam scripturarum a Iudaeis ad gentes transeuntem, quia *inclinavit ex hoc in hoc*, remanentibus apud Iudaeos observationibus quas

⁶⁰⁰ Matt. 16: 6, 11.

⁶⁰¹ Luke 13: 21. It was here that Augustine broke off: see Introduction, pp. xii–xiii.

⁶⁰² Rev. 5: 5.

⁶⁰³ 1 Pet. 5: 8.

⁶⁰⁴ Matt. 10: 16. I have added *estote*, which could easily be lost before the similar sounding *astuti*.

⁶⁰⁵ 2 Cor. 11: 3.

⁶⁰⁶ John 6: 51.

⁶⁰⁷ Prov. 9: 17.

⁶⁰⁸ Ps. 74: 9 (75. 8).

whether the expression that we are trying to understand is literal or figurative. When we have worked out that it is figurative, it is easy to study it from various angles, using the rules set out in Book 1, until we reach the true meaning, especially if we have the advantage of experience fortified by the exercise of holiness. We find out if an expression is literal or figurative by considering the criteria mentioned above.⁷⁷ Once this becomes clear, the words in which it is expressed will be found to be taken either from things that are similar or things that are in some way connected.⁷⁸ But since there are many ways in which things may resemble other things, we should not imagine that there is a hard and fast rule that a word will always have the meaning that it has in a particular place. The Lord used the word 'leaven' in a pejorative sense when he said 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees',⁶⁰⁹ but in a commendatory sense when he said 'The kingdom of heaven is like a woman who hid leaven in three measures of wheat until it was all leavened.'⁶¹⁰79. Examination of these differences reveals two forms. The various meanings of a particular thing may be either contrary or just different. By contrary I mean cases in which a particular thing is used sometimes in a good sense and sometimes in a bad one, like the leaven just discussed. Another example is 'lion', which signifies Christ in the passage 'The lion from the tribe of Juda has conquered',⁶¹¹ but 'devil' in the passage 'Your enemy the devil walks round like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.'⁶¹² 80. And 'serpent' is used in a good sense in the passage 'be wise as serpents',⁶¹³ but in a bad sense in 'the serpent seduced Eve by its cunning'.⁶¹⁴ 'Bread' in a good sense: 'I am the living bread come from heaven',⁶¹⁵ in a bad sense: 'gladly eat hidden bread'.⁶¹⁶ And so on. The examples cited are quite uncontroversial in meaning, since only perfectly plain passages should be cited as examples. But there are some which are uncertain, such as 'There is a cup of wine in the hand of the Lord, full of mixed wine.'⁶¹⁷ 81. It is not clear whether this signifies the wrath of God, not carried as far as the ultimate penalty (that is, down to the dregs), or the gracious gift of the scriptures which passes from Jews to Gentiles (because 'it inclined from the one to the other'), but in such a way that the practices redolent of the flesh remain with the Jews ('because

⁶⁰⁹ Matt. 16: 6, 11.

⁶¹⁰ Luke 13: 21. It was here that Augustine broke off: see Introduction, pp. xii–xiii.

⁶¹¹ Rev. 5: 5.

⁶¹² 1 Pet. 5: 8.

⁶¹³ Matt. 10: 16. I have added *estote*, which could easily be lost before the similar sounding *astuti*.

⁶¹⁴ 2 Cor. 11: 3.

⁶¹⁵ John 6: 51.

⁶¹⁶ Prov. 9: 17.

⁶¹⁷ Ps. 74: 9 (75. 8).

carnaliter sapiunt, quia *faex eius non est exinanita*. Cum vero res eadem non in contraria sed tantum in diversa significatione ponitur, illud est in exemplo, quod aqua et populum significat, sicut in Apocalypsi legimus,⁶¹⁸ et spiritum sanctum, unde est illud *flumina aquae vivae fluent de ventre eius*,⁶¹⁹ et si quid aliud atque aliud pro locis in quibus ponitur aqua significare intellegitur. 82. Sic et aliae res non singula,⁶²⁰ sed unaquaeque earum non solum duo aliqua diversa sed etiam nonnumquam multa significat pro loco sententiae, sicut posita reperitur. 83. Ubi autem apertius ponuntur, ibi discendum est quomodo in locis intellegantur obscuris. Neque enim melius potest intellegi quod dictum est deo, *apprehende arma et scutum et exsurge in adiutorium mihi*,⁶²¹ quam ex loco illo ubi legitur, *domine ut scuto bonae voluntatis tuae coronasti nos*.⁶²² Nec tamen ita ut iam ubicumque scutum pro aliquo munimento positum legerimus non accipiamus nisi bonam voluntatem dei. Dictum est enim et *scutum fidei, in quo possitis*, inquit, *omnes sagittas maligni ignitas extinguere*.⁶²³ Nec rursus ideo debemus in armis huiuscemodi spiritalibus scuto tantummodo fidem tribuere, cum alio loco etiam lorica dicta sit fidei: *induti*, inquit, *loricam fidei et caritatis*.⁶²⁴ 84. Quando autem ex eisdem scripturae verbis non unum aliquid sed duo vel plura sentiuntur, etiam si latet quid senserit ille qui scripsit, nihil periculi est si quodlibet eorum congruere veritati ex aliis locis sanctarum scripturarum doceri potest, id tamen eo conante qui divina scrutatur eloquia, ut ad voluntatem perveniatur auctoris per quem scripturam illam sanctus operatus est spiritus, sive hoc assequatur sive aliam sententiam de illis verbis quae fidei rectae non refragatur exsculpat, testimonium habens a quocumque alio loco divinorum eloquiorum. 85. Ille quippe auctor in eisdem verbis quae intellegere volumus et ipsam sententiam forsitan vidit et certe dei spiritus, qui per eum haec operatus est, etiam ipsam occurruram lectori vel auditori sine dubitatione praevidit, immo ut occurreret, quia et ipsa est veritate subnixa, providit. Nam quid in divinis eloquiis largius et uberius potuit divinitus provideri

⁶¹⁸ Rev. 17: 15.

⁶¹⁹ John 7: 38.

⁶²⁰ The transmitted text has *singulae*, but it seems pointless to say that examples of things that have a multiplicity of meanings are not singular.

⁶²¹ Ps. 34: 2 (35: 2).

⁶²² Ps. 5: 13 (5: 12).

⁶²³ Eph. 6: 16.

⁶²⁴ 1 Thess. 5: 8.

its dregs are not emptied'). A thing may be used not with a contrary significance, but just with a different one; an example is 'water', which signifies both people, as in Revelation,⁶²⁵ and the Holy Spirit, as in 'rivers of running water will flow from his belly',⁶²⁶ as well as various other things, depending on the context.⁸² There are other things too which signify not just single ideas⁶²⁷ but, taken individually, two or often more ideas, depending on the contexts in which they are found. ⁸³ From passages where such things are expressed clearly one should find out how they are to be understood in obscure contexts. There is no better way of understanding what was said to the Lord in the words, 'Take your arms and shield and rise to help me'⁶²⁸ than by using the passage 'Lord, you have crowned us as with the shield of your good will.'⁶²⁹ Not that we should understand only the meaning 'God's good will' in every passage where we read of the shield being used as a defence; there is also 'the shield of faith, with which you may extinguish all the arrows of the evil one'.⁶³⁰ Nor again should we necessarily assign the meaning 'faith' just to the shield alone among such spiritual armour; in another passage the breastplate of faith is also mentioned: 'Put on the breastplate of faith and love.'⁶³¹⁸⁴ Sometimes not just one meaning but two or more meanings are perceived in the same words of scripture. Even if the writer's meaning is obscure, there is no danger here, provided that it can be shown from other passages of the holy scriptures that each of these interpretations is consistent with the truth. The person examining the divine utterances must of course do his best to arrive at the intention of the writer through whom the Holy Spirit produced that part of scripture; he may reach that meaning or carve out from the words another meaning which does not run counter to the faith, using the evidence of any other passage of the divine utterances. ⁸⁵ Perhaps the author too saw that very meaning in the words which we are trying to understand. Certainly the spirit of God who worked through the author foresaw without any doubt that it would present itself to a reader or listener, or rather planned that it should present itself, because it too is based on the truth. Could God have built into the divine eloquence a more generous or bountiful gift than the possibility of understanding the same

⁶²⁵ Rev. 17: 15.

⁶²⁶ John 7: 38.

⁶²⁷ The transmitted text has *singulae*, but it seems pointless to say that examples of things that have a multiplicity of meanings are not singular.

⁶²⁸ Ps. 34: 2 (35: 2).

⁶²⁹ Ps. 5: 13 (5: 12).

⁶³⁰ Eph. 6: 16.

⁶³¹ 1 Thess. 5: 8.

quam ut eadem verba pluribus intellegantur modis quos alia non minus divina contestantia faciant approbari?⁶³² 86. Ubi autem talis sensus eruitur, cuius incertum certis sanctarum scripturarum testimoniis non possit aperiri, restat ut ratione reddita manifestus appareat, etiam si ille cuius verba intellegere quaerimus eum forte non sensit. Sed haec consuetudo periculosa est; per scripturas enim divinas multo tutius ambulatur. Quas verbis translatis opacatas cum scrutari volumus, aut hoc inde exeat quod non habeat controversiam, aut, si habet, ex eadem scriptura ubicumque eius inventis atque adhibitis testibus terminetur. 87. Sciant autem litterati modis omnibus locutionis quos grammatici graeco nomine tropos vocant auctores nostros usos fuisse, et multiplicius atque copiosius quam possunt existimare vel credere qui nesciunt eos et in aliis ista didicerunt.⁶³³ Quos tamen tropos qui noverunt agnoscunt in litteris sanctis eorumque scientia ad eas intellegendas aliquantum adiuvantur. Sed hic eos ignaris tradere non decet, ne artem grammaticam docere videamur. Extra sane ut discantur admoneo, quamvis iam superius id admonuerim, id est in secundo libro, ubi de linguarum necessaria cognitione disserui.⁶³⁴ 88. Nam litterae, a quibus ipsa grammatica nomen accepit—grammata enim Graeci litteras vocant—signa utique sunt sonorum ad articulatam vocem qua loquimur pertinentium. Istorum autem troporum non solum exempla, sicut omnium, sed quorundam etiam nomina in divinis libris leguntur, sicut allegoria, aenigma, parabola.⁶³⁵ Quamvis paene omnes hi tropi qui liberali dicuntur arte cognosci etiam in eorum reperiantur loquellis qui nullos grammaticos audierunt et eo quo vulgus utitur sermone contenti sunt. 89. Quis enim non dicit, ‘sic floreas’?, qui tropus metaphora vocatur. Quis non dicit ‘piscinam’, etiam quae non habet pisces nec facta est propter pisces et tamen a piscibus nomen accepit?⁶³⁶ Qui tropus catachresis dicitur.⁶³⁷ 90. Longum est isto modo ceteros persequi. Nam usque ad

⁶³² This matter is more fully dealt with in the second half of *Conf.* 12.

⁶³³ Cf. 2. 50.

⁶³⁴ Cf. 2. 43.

⁶³⁵ Cf. Gal. 4: 24; 1 Cor. 13: 12; ‘parable’ is much commoner.

⁶³⁶ A stock example among ancient grammarians.

⁶³⁷ *Catachresis* (Latin also *abusio*) denotes the use of a word in a context where strictly speaking it does not apply (e.g. ‘substantial’ for ‘big’, or ‘menu’ or ‘mouse’ in computer language).

words in several ways, all of them deriving confirmation from other no less divinely inspired passages?⁶³⁸ 86. When one unearths an equivocal meaning which cannot be verified by unequivocal support from the holy scriptures it remains for the meaning to be brought into the open by a process of reasoning, even if the writer whose words we are seeking to understand perhaps did not perceive it. But this practice is dangerous; it is much safer to operate within the divine scriptures. When we wish to examine passages obscured by metaphorical expressions, the result should be something which is beyond dispute or which, if not beyond dispute, can be settled by finding and deploying corroboratory evidence from within scripture itself.⁸⁷ The literary-minded should be aware that our Christian authors used all the figures of speech which teachers of grammar call by their Greek name of tropes, and that they did so more diversely and profusely than can be judged or imagined by those who are unfamiliar with scripture or who gained their knowledge of figures from other literature.⁶³⁹ Those who know about these tropes recognize them in sacred literature, and this knowledge to some extent helps them in understanding it. This would not be the proper place to present them to people not familiar with them; I do not wish to look as if I am giving a course on grammar. I recommend that they be learnt independently; as indeed I have recommended already, in Book 2, when discussing the importance of learning languages.⁶⁴⁰ 88. (Letters, from which grammar actually takes its name—the Greek word for them is *grammata*—are of course the signs of the sounds involved in the articulation of the words which we use when speaking.) In the divine books we find not only examples of these tropes, as of everything else, but also the names of some of them, like ‘allegory’, ‘enigma’, and ‘parable’.⁶⁴¹ Almost all these tropes, which are said to be acquired through one of the ‘liberal’ arts, are also found in the utterances of those who have had no formal teaching in grammar and are content with the style of ordinary people. 89. Don't we all say ‘so may you flourish’? This is a metaphor. Don't we all refer to a swimming pool by the word *piscina*, which takes its name from fish even though it does not contain fish and was not made for fish?⁶⁴² This trope is called catachresis.⁶⁴³ 90. It would take a long time to work through the others in

⁶³⁸ This matter is more fully dealt with in the second half of *Conf.* 12.

⁶³⁹ Cf. 2. 50.

⁶⁴⁰ Cf. 2. 43.

⁶⁴¹ Cf. Gal. 4: 24; 1 Cor. 13: 12; ‘parable’ is much commoner.

⁶⁴² A stock example among ancient grammarians.

⁶⁴³ *Catachresis* (Latin also *abusio*) denotes the use of a word in a context where strictly speaking it does not apply (e.g. ‘substantial’ for ‘big’, or ‘menu’ or ‘mouse’ in computer language).

illos pervenit vulgi locutio qui propterea mirabiliores sunt quia contra quam dicitur significant, sicuti est quae appellatur ironia vel antiphrasis. Sed ironia pronuntiatione indicat quid velit intellegi, ut cum dicimus homini mala facienti, ‘res bonas facis’; antiphrasis vero ut contraria significet non voce pronuntiantis efficitur, sed aut verba habet sua, quorum origo e contrario est, sicut appellatur lucus quod minime luceat;⁶⁴⁴ aut consuevit aliquid ita dici, quamvis dicatur etiam non e contrario, velut cum quaerimus accipere quod ibi non est et respondetur nobis, ‘abundat’;⁶⁴⁵ aut adiunctis verbis facimus ut a contrario intellegatur quod loquimur, velut si dicamus, ‘cave illum, quia bonus homo est’.⁶⁴⁶ 91. Et quis talia non dicit indoctus⁶⁴⁷ nec omnino sciens qui sint vel quid vocentur hi tropi? Quorum cognitio propterea scripturarum ambiguitatibus dissolvendis est necessaria quia cum sensus, ad proprietatem verborum si accipiat, absurdus est, quaerendum est utique ne forte illo vel illo tropo dictum sit quod non intellegimus. Et sic pleraque inventa sunt quae latebant. 92. Ticonius⁶⁴⁸ quidam qui contra Donatistas invictissime scripsit, cum fuerit Donatista, et illic invenitur absurdissimi cordis ubi eos non omni ex parte relinquere voluit, fecit librum quem *Regularum* vocavit, quia in eo quasdam septem regulas exsecutus est quibus quasi clavibus divinarum scripturarum aperirentur occulta.⁶⁴⁹ 93. Quarum primam ponit *De domino et eius corpore*, secundam *De domini corpore bipertito*; tertiam *De promissis et lege*; quartam *De specie et genere*; quintam *De temporibus*; sextam *De recapitulatione*; septimam *De diabolo et eius corpore*. Quae quidem considerata, sicut ab illo aperiuntur, non parvum adjuvant ad penetranda quae tecta sunt divinorum eloquiorum. Nec tamen omnia quae ita scripta sunt ut non facile intellegantur possunt his regulis inveniri, sed aliis modis

⁶⁴⁴ Another old chestnut.

⁶⁴⁵ Compare perhaps the modern ‘no problem’ or ‘I’m delighted’ (in some contexts).

⁶⁴⁶ It is not clear whether Augustine means that the meaning of ‘beware’ is coloured by ‘good’ and so means ‘look out for’, or the reverse (so that ‘good’ means ‘bad’), which would be more truly a contrary interpretation.

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. Quint. 8. 6. 4.

⁶⁴⁸ On Tyconius see H. Chadwick, ‘Tyconius and Augustine’ in *Heresy and Orthodoxy in the Early Church* (Variorum, 1991), 49–55, and in general, P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l’Afrique chrétienne* (Paris, 1920), v. 165–219, esp. 178–195.

⁶⁴⁹ See F. C. Burkitt, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius* (Cambridge, 1894), and the translation of W. S. Babcock, *Tyconius, The Book of Rules* (Atlanta, 1989).

the same way. Popular speech has even come to use some which are remarkable because what they mean is the opposite of what is said, like the figures of irony and antiphrasis. In irony we indicate what is meant by means of our intonation, as when we say to a man who is doing something badly, 'you're doing a good job there'. In antiphrasis, on the other hand, we signify the opposite meaning, not by our intonation, but either by the use of particular words whose origin derives from a contrary—for example, *lucus* ('grove'), which is so called because it has little light,⁶⁵⁰ or by using certain customary expressions (though these can also be used without a contrary meaning). For example, when looking for something that is not available in a particular place, we may be told 'there's plenty';⁶⁵¹ or we may by adding words give what we say a contrary interpretation, as in 'beware of him, he's a good man'.⁶⁵² 91. Are things of this kind not said by all the uneducated⁶⁵³ and by people who are totally ignorant of the tropes and all their names? A knowledge of them is necessary for the resolution of ambiguities in scripture because when a meaning based on the literal interpretation of the words is absurd we must investigate whether the passage that we cannot understand is perhaps being expressed by means of one or other of the tropes. This is how most hidden meanings have been discovered.⁹² A certain Tyconius,⁶⁵⁴ who although a Donatist himself wrote against the Donatists with irresistible power—and thereby stands convicted of having a split personality since he was unwilling to make a clean break with them—wrote a book which he called 'The Book of Rules', because in it he developed seven rules which could be used like keys to open up the secrets of the divine scriptures.⁶⁵⁵ 93. The first rule is 'On the Lord and his body'; the second 'On the Lord's twofold body'; the third 'On the promises and the law'; the fourth 'On species and genus'; the fifth 'On measurements of time', the sixth 'On recapitulation'; the seventh 'On the devil and his body'. Consideration of these rules, as expounded by him, is quite helpful in penetrating the obscure parts of the divine writings. Of course not everything that is written in a way that makes it difficult to understand can be clarified by these rules; there are

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⁶⁵¹ Compare perhaps the modern 'no problem' or 'I'm delighted' (in some contexts).

⁶⁵² It is not clear whether Augustine means that the meaning of 'beware' is coloured by 'good' and so means 'look out for', or the reverse (so that 'good' means 'bad'), which would be more truly a contrary interpretation.

⁶⁵³ Cf. Quint. 8. 6. 4.

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⁶⁵⁵ See F. C. Burkitt, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius* (Cambridge, 1894), and the translation of W. S. Babcock, *Tyconius, The Book of Rules* (Atlanta, 1989).

pluribus, quos hoc numero septenario usque adeo non est iste complexus ut idem ipse multa exponat obscura in quibus harum regularum adhibet nullam, quoniam nec opus est. 94. Neque enim aliquid illic tale versatur aut quaeritur, sicut in Apocalypsi⁶⁵⁶ Iohannis quaerit quemadmodum intellegendi sint angeli ecclesiarum septem quibus scribere iubetur. Et ratiocinatur multipliciter et ad hoc pervenit, ut ipsos angelos intellegamus ecclesias. In qua copiosissima disputatione nihil istarum est regularum, et utique res illic obscurissima quaeritur. Quod exempli gratia satis dictum sit, nam colligere omnia nimis longum et nimis operosum est quae ita obscura sunt in Scripturis canonicis ut nihil istorum septem ibi requirendum sit. 95. Iste autem cum has velut regulas commendaret, tantum eis tribuit, quasi omnia quae in lege, id est in divinis libris, obscure posita invenerimus his bene cognitis atque adhibitis intellegere valeamus. Ita quippe exorsus est eundem librum ut diceret, *Necessarium duxi ante omnia quae mihi videntur libellum regularem scribere et secretorum legis veluti claves et luminaria fabri-care. Sunt enim quaedam regulae mysticae quae universae legis recessus obtinent et veritatis thesauros aliquibus invisibiles faciunt. Quarum si ratio regularum sine invidia, ut communicamus, accepta fuerit, clausa quaeque patefient et obscura dilucidabuntur, ut quis prophetiae immensam silvam perambulans his regulis quodam modo lucis tramitibus deductus ab errore defendatur.*⁶⁵⁷ 96. Hic si dixisset, ‘Sunt enim quaedam regulae mysticae quae nonnullos legis recessus obtinent’, aut certe, ‘quae magnos legis recessus obtinent’, non autem quod ait *universae legis recessus*, neque dixisset *clausa quaeque patefient*, sed ‘clausa multa patefient’, verum dixisset, nec tamen elaborato atque utili operi suo plus quam res ipsa postulat dando in spem falsam lectorem eius cognitoremque misisset. 97. Quod ideo dicendum putavi ut liber ipse et legatur ab studiosis, quia plurimum adiuvat ad scripturas intellegendas, et non de illo speretur tantum quantum non habet. Caute sane legendus est, non solum propter quaedam in

⁶⁵⁶ Rev. 1: 20. On Tyconius' commentary on Revelation, see M. Dulaey, 'La sixième règle de Tyconius et son résumé dans le *De Doctrina Christiana*', *REA* 35 (1989), 83–103.

⁶⁵⁷ This is Tyconius' preface.

numerous other methods not included in his seven, and indeed Tyconius himself explains many problems without applying any of these rules, because they are not needed. 94. Sometimes there is no relevant matter or problem in the passage under investigation; as, for example, when in Revelation⁶⁵⁸ he discusses how to interpret the angels of the seven churches to which John was ordered to write. There he argues in many different ways and reaches the conclusion that we should interpret the angels as the churches. In that very full discussion there is no sign of these rules, and yet the problem is certainly a very abstruse one. But enough of examples: it would take too much time and effort to assemble all the abstruse passages in scripture where recourse to these seven rules is unnecessary.⁹⁵ When Tyconius was presenting these so-called rules he claimed for them the power to make intelligible almost all the abstruse passages that we find in the law (that is, the divine books), if they are properly learnt and applied. He began his book by saying ‘I have thought it particularly necessary—and more pressing than anything else—to write a book of rules and as it were to fashion some keys, or spotlights, to reveal the secrets of the law. There are certain mystical rules which govern the secret passages of the entire law and make the treasures of the truth invisible to some people. If the principle of these rules is accepted in the ungrudging spirit with which I offer them, all closed doors will swing open and all obscurity be as light as day, so that the reader who roams through the vast forest of prophecy will be guided by these rules as by so many illuminated pathways, and be preserved from error.’⁶⁵⁹ 96. Had he said here, ‘There are certain mystical rules which govern some secret passages of the law’, or even ‘which govern some important secret passages of the law’, and not ‘the secret passages of the whole law’, and had he not said, ‘all closed doors will swing open’ but ‘many closed doors will swing open’, he would have been telling the truth without raising false hopes in his readers and disciples by attributing to his careful and useful work more than the facts warranted. 97. I thought that this needed saying so that students would actually read the book itself—it is very helpful for understanding the scriptures—but not expect from it more than it had to offer. It must certainly be read with caution, not only because of certain

⁶⁵⁸ Rev. 1: 20. On Tyconius' commentary on Revelation, see M. Dulaey, 'La sixième règle de Tyconius et son résumé dans le *De Doctrina Christiana*', *REA* 35 (1989), 83–103.

⁶⁵⁹ This is Tyconius' preface.

quibus ut homo erravit sed maxime propter illa quae sicut Donatista haereticus loquitur. Quid autem doceant vel admoneant istae septem regulae, breviter ostendam.⁶⁶⁰ 98. Prima *De domino et eius corpore* est. In qua scientes aliquando capitis et corporis, id est Christi et ecclesiae, unam personam nobis intimari—neque enim frustra dictum est fidelibus, *ergo Abrahae semen estis*,⁶⁶¹ cum sit unum semen Abrahae quod est Christus—non haesitemus quando a capite ad corpus vel a corpore transitur ad caput, et tamen non receditur ab una eademque persona. 99. Una enim persona loquitur dicens, *sicut sponso imposuit mihi mitram et sicut sponsam ornavit me ornamento*.⁶⁶² Et tamen quid horum duorum capiti, quid corpori—id est quid Christo, quid ecclesiae—conveniat utique intellegendum est. 100. Secunda est *De domini corpore bipertito*, quod quidem non ita debuit appellare. Non enim re vera domini corpus est quod cum illo non erit in aeternum. Sed dicendum fuit, ‘De domini corpore vero atque permixto’ aut ‘vero atque simulato’ vel quid aliud, quia non solum in aeternum verum etiam nunc hypocritae non cum illo esse dicendi sunt, quamvis in eius esse videantur ecclesia. Unde poterat ista regula et sic appellari ut diceretur ‘De permixta ecclesia’. 101. Quae regula intellectorem vigilantem requirit, quando scriptura cum ad alios iam loquatur tamquam ad eos ipsos ad quos loquebatur videtur loqui, vel de ipsis cum de aliis iam loquatur, tamquam unum sit utrorumque corpus, propter temporariam commixtionem et communionem sacramentorum. Ad hoc pertinet in Cantico Canticorum: *Fusca sum et speciosa ut tabernacula Cedar, ut pelles Salomonis*.⁶⁶³ Non enim ait, ‘Fusca fui ut tabernacula Cedar et speciosa sum ut pelles Salomonis’, sed utrumque se esse dixit propter temporalem unitatem intra una retia piscium bonorum et malorum.⁶⁶⁴ Tabernacula enim Cedar ad Ismaelem pertinent, qui non erit heres cum filio liberae.⁶⁶⁵ 102. Itaque cum de bona parte dicat deus, *ducam caecos in viam quam non*

⁶⁶⁰ As a rule Augustine takes one or two of Tyconius' shorter examples.

⁶⁶¹ Gal. 3: 29.

⁶⁶² Isa. 61: 10.

⁶⁶³ S. of S. 1: 4.

⁶⁶⁴ Cf. Matt. 13: 47–8.

⁶⁶⁵ Cf. Gen. 21: 10, and Gal. 4: 30.

things which, being human, he gets wrong, but especially because of the things which he says as a Donatist heretic. I will now briefly explain the teaching and advice that these seven rules have to offer.⁶⁶⁶98. The first one is 'On the Lord and his body'. Sometimes we know that a single being, consisting of a head and a body, that is, Christ and his church, is being presented to us; for it was said to the faithful, not without reason, 'so you are the seed of Abraham',⁶⁶⁷ although there is but a single seed of Abraham, namely Christ. In such cases we should not be puzzled when scripture moves from head to body or vice versa, while still dealing with one and the same person. 99. For it is a single person that says, 'He has placed a garland on me as on a husband and has arrayed me with ornament like a wife',⁶⁶⁸ but it is of course necessary to appreciate which of these two statements applies to the head (Christ), and which to the body (the church). 100. The second rule is 'On the Lord's twofold body', but he should not have given it this title, since something that will not be with God for ever is not in fact the Lord's body. He should rather have said 'On the Lord's true and mixed body', or 'true and apparent body', or perhaps something else, because false Christians should not be said to be with God even at the present time, let alone for eternity, although they appear to be within his church. So that rule could also have been entitled 'On the mixed church'. 101. This rule demands close concentration from the student, since scripture, though actually speaking to another set of people, may seem to be speaking to the actual persons it was addressing before, or may seem to be speaking about the same persons when in fact it is speaking about others, as if both kinds formed a single body by virtue of their temporary unity and their participation in the sacraments. A sentence in the Song of Songs is relevant here: 'I am dark and pretty like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.'⁶⁶⁹ She does not say, 'I was dark like the tents of Kedar and I am pretty like the curtains of Solomon', but instead says that she is both, because of the temporal unity of good and bad fish inside the single net.⁶⁷⁰ The tents of Kedar refer to Ishmael, who will not be the heir with the free woman's son.⁶⁷¹ 102. And so although God says about the good part, 'I shall

⁶⁶⁶ As a rule Augustine takes one or two of Tyconius' shorter examples.

⁶⁶⁷ Gal. 3: 29.

⁶⁶⁸ Isa. 61: 10.

⁶⁶⁹ S. of S. 1: 4.

⁶⁷⁰ Cf. Matt. 13: 47–8.

⁶⁷¹ Cf. Gen. 21: 10, and Gal. 4: 30.

noverunt, et semitas quas non noverunt calcabunt, et faciam illis tenebras in lucem et prava in directum. Haec verba faciam et non derelinquam eos, mox de alia parte, quae mala permixta est, dicit, *ipsi autem conversi sunt retro*, quamvis alii iam significantur his verbis.⁶⁷² Sed quoniam nunc in uno sunt, tamquam de ipsis loquitur de quibus loquebatur; non tamen semper in uno erunt. Ipse est quippe ille servus commemoratus in evangelio, cuius dominus cum venerit dividet eum et partem eius cum hypocritis ponet.⁶⁷³ 103. Tertia regula est *De promissis et lege*, quae alio modo dici potest ‘De spiritu et littera’, sicut eam nos appellavimus cum de hac re scriberemus;⁶⁷⁴ potest etiam sic dici: ‘De gratia et mandato’. Haec autem magis mihi videtur magna quaestio quam regula quae solvendis quaestionibus adhibenda est. Haec est quam non intellegentes Pelagiani vel condiderunt suam haeresem vel auxerunt. Laboravit in ea disserenda Ticonius bene, sed non plene. 104. Disputans enim de fide et operibus, opera nobis dixit a deo dari merito fidei, ipsam vero fidem sic esse a nobis ut nobis non sit a deo. Nec attendit apostolum dicentem, *pax fratribus et caritas cum fide a deo patre et domino Iesu Christo*.⁶⁷⁵ Sed non erat expertus hanc haeresem quae nostro tempore exorta multum nos ut gratiam dei quae per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum est adversus eam defenderemus exercuit et secundum id quod ait apostolus, *oportet haereses esse ut probati manifesti fiant in vobis*⁶⁷⁶ multo vigilantiores diligentioresque reddidit, ut adverteremus in scripturis sanctis quod istum Ticonium minus attentum minusque sine hoste sollicitum fugit, etiam ipsam scilicet fidem donum esse illius qui eius mensuram unicuique partitur.⁶⁷⁷ 105. Ex qua scientia quibusdam dictum est, *vobis donatum est pro Christo non solum ut credatis in eum verum etiam ut patiamini pro eo*.⁶⁷⁸ Unde quis dubitet utrumque esse dei donum, qui fideliter atque

⁶⁷² Isa. 42: 16–17.

⁶⁷³ Matt. 24: 50–1.

⁶⁷⁴ Augustine's work of this title was written in 412.

⁶⁷⁵ Eph. 6: 23.

⁶⁷⁶ 1 Cor. 11: 19.

⁶⁷⁷ Rom. 12: 3.

⁶⁷⁸ Phil. 1: 29.

lead the blind along a way unknown to them, and they will tread paths unknown to them; and I shall make darkness into light for them and crooked ways into straight ones. I shall perform what I say and will not desert them', he says shortly afterwards of the other part, the bad part mixed in with them, 'but they themselves have turned back', although other people are meant by these words.⁶⁷⁹ Because they are now together, he seems to be speaking of those about whom he was speaking before; but they will not always be together. In fact they are like the slave mentioned in the gospel, whose master will when he arrives set him apart and place his lot with the false Christians.⁶⁸⁰ 103. The third rule is 'On the promises and the law', though an alternative title might be 'On the spirit and the letter', as I myself called it when writing on this subject.⁶⁸¹ It could also be called 'On grace and commandment'. But this seems to me an important problem in itself, rather than a rule to be applied to solving problems. This is the issue that the Pelagians failed to understand when creating, or developing, their heresy. In his discussion of this Tyconius worked on it effectively, but not exhaustively. 104. For when discussing faith and works he said that works were given to us by God according to the merit of our faith, but that faith itself came from within us without coming to us from God. He did not heed the apostle's words: 'peace to the brethren and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'.⁶⁸² Tyconius had no experience of the heresy which sprang up in our time and was a great trial to me as I championed the grace of God which comes through the Lord Jesus Christ; a heresy which, in accordance with the apostle's words 'it is right that there be heresies, so that the genuine among you may be recognized'⁶⁸³ made me more alert and careful, with the result that I noticed in the holy scripture something that had escaped Tyconius, who was less attentive and less on his guard because he had no opponent: namely that even faith itself is a gift of God, who distributes to each individual his or her measure.⁶⁸⁴ 105. In accordance with this truth it was said to certain people 'a privilege has been given to you for the sake of Christ: that you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for him'.⁶⁸⁵ Who can doubt that both things are the gift of God, on hearing—with faith and understanding

⁶⁷⁹ Isa. 42: 16–17.

⁶⁸⁰ Matt. 24: 50–1.

⁶⁸¹ Augustine's work of this title was written in 412.

⁶⁸² Eph. 6: 23.

⁶⁸³ 1 Cor. 11: 19.

⁶⁸⁴ Rom. 12: 3.

⁶⁸⁵ Phil. 1: 29.

intellegenter audit utrumque donatum? Plura sunt et alia testimonia quibus id ostenditur, sed hoc nunc non agimus. Alibi autem atque alibi saepissime ista egimus. 106. Quarta Ticonii regula est *De specie et genere*. Sic enim eam vocat, volens intellegi speciem partem, genus autem totum cuius ea pars est quam nuncupat speciem. Sicut unaquaeque civitas pars est utique universitatis gentium, hanc ille vocat speciem, genus autem omnes gentes. Neque hic ea discernendi subtilitas adhibenda est quae a dialecticis traditur, qui inter partem et speciem quid intersit acutissime disputant. 107. Eadem ratio est, si non de unaquaque civitate sed de unaquaque provincia vel gente vel regno tale aliquid in divinis reperiatur eloquiis. Non solum enim verbi gratia de Hierusalem vel de aliqua gentium civitate, sive Tyro sive Babylonia sive alia qualibet dicitur aliquid in scripturis sanctis quod modum eius excedat et conveniat potius omnibus gentibus, verum etiam de Iudaea, de Aegypto, de Assyria et quacumque alia gente in qua sunt plurimae civitates, non tamen totus orbis sed pars eius est, dicitur quod transeat eius modum et congruat potius universo, cuius haec pars est vel, sicut iste appellat, generi cuius haec species est. 108. Unde et in notitiam vulgi verba ista venerunt, ut etiam idiotae intellegant quid specialiter, quid generaliter in quocumque praecepto imperiali sit constitutum. Fit hoc etiam de hominibus; sicut ea quae de Salomone dicuntur excedunt eius modum et potius ad Christum vel ecclesiam, cuius ille pars est, relata clarescunt. 109. Nec species semper exceditur; saepe enim talia dicuntur quae vel ei quoque vel ei fortasse tantummodo apertissime congruant. Sed cum ab specie transitur ad genus quasi adhuc de specie loquente scriptura, ibi vigilare debet lectoris intentio, ne quaerat in specie quod in genere potest melius et certius invenire. 110. Facile est quippe illud quod ait propheta Hiezechiel: *domus Israel habitavit in terra et polluerunt illam in via sua et in idolis suis et peccatis suis; secundum immunditiam menstruatae facta est via eorum ante faciem meam. Et effudi iram meam super*

—that both have been given? There are many other testimonies that demonstrate this, but that is not my present purpose. I have, however, dealt with them very often in various other places.¹⁰⁶ The fourth of Tyconius' rules is 'on species and genus'. That is his title; by 'species' he means a part, by 'genus' the whole to which the part which he calls the species belongs. So since each individual state is part of the whole of the world's population, he calls this the species, and the whole population the genus. We need not here apply the subtle distinctions taught by the logicians, who argue very finely about the difference between part and species. ¹⁰⁷ The same principle applies to anything of this nature found in the divine writings which concerns not a single state, but a single province or nation or kingdom. For example: not only are statements made in the holy scriptures about Jerusalem or about gentile states such as Tyre, Babylon, or whatever, which transcend the limits of the particular state and are more suitable to all races, but statements are also made about Judaea, Egypt, Assyria, and other nations in which there are several states but which do not comprise the whole world but only a part of it, which transcend the limits of the particular nation and are more suitable to the whole world of which that is a part or, in his terms, to the genus of which it is a species. ¹⁰⁸ In this sense these words have entered the popular domain: even laymen can understand what is of general or specific import in an imperial edict. The rule applies to persons, too: witness the things said about Solomon, which transcend the limits of their subject and in fact really become clear only when related to Christ or the church, of which Solomon is a part. ¹⁰⁹ The species is not always transcended: often statements are made which are quite clearly appropriate either to the species as well as the genus or perhaps exclusively to the species. But when scripture moves from species to genus while apparently still speaking of the species, the reader's attention must be particularly close, so as not to seek in the species a meaning which can be found more easily and convincingly in the genus. ¹¹⁰ It is easy to understand what the prophet Ezekiel says: 'The house of Israel lived in the land and they profaned it by their ways and their idols and their sins; their conduct before my face was like the uncleanness of a menstruating woman. And I poured out my anger upon them and

*eos et dispersi illos inter nationes et ventilavi eos in regiones; secundum vias eorum et secundum peccata eorum indicavi eos.*⁶⁸⁶ Facile est, inquam, hoc intellegere de illa domo Israel, de qua dicit apostolus, *videte Israel secundum carnem*,⁶⁸⁷ quia haec omnia carnalis populus Israel et fecit et passus est. 111. Alia etiam quae sequuntur eidem intelleguntur populo convenire. Sed cum coeperit dicere, *et sanctificabo nomen meum sanctum illud magnum, quod pollutum est inter nationes, quod polluistis in medio earum; et scient gentes quoniam ego sum dominus*,⁶⁸⁸ iam intentus debet esse qui legit, quemadmodum species excedatur et adiungatur genus. Sequitur enim et dicit, *dum sanctificabor in vobis ante oculos eorum, et accipiam vos de gentibus et congregabo vos ex omnibus terris et inducam vos in terram vestram; et aspergam vos aqua munda et mundabimini ab omnibus simulacris vestris et mundabo vos; et dabo vobis cor novum et spiritum novum dabo in vos et auferam cor lapideum de carne vestra et dabo vobis cor carneum; et spiritum meum dabo in vos et faciam ut in iustitiis meis ambuletis et iudicia mea custodiat et faciatis, et habitabitis in terra quam dedi patribus vestris et eritis mihi in populum et ego ero vobis in deum, et mundabo vos ex omnibus immunditiis vestris.*⁶⁸⁹ 112. Hoc de novo testamento esse prophetatum, ad quod pertinet non solum una gens illa in reliquiis suis, de quibus alibi scriptum est, *si fuerit numerus filiorum Israel sicut harena maris, reliquiae salvae fient*,⁶⁹⁰ verum etiam ceterae gentes, quae promissae sunt patribus eorum, qui etiam nostri sunt, non ambigit quisquis intuetur et lavacrum regenerationis hic esse promissum,⁶⁹¹ quod nunc videmus omnibus gentibus redditum. Et illud quod ait apostolus, cum testamenti novi gratiam commendaret, ut in comparatione veteris emereret: *epistola nostra vos estis, scripta non atramento sed spiritu dei vivi, non in tabulis lapideis sed in tabulis cordis carnalibus*,⁶⁹² hinc esse respicit et perspicit ductum ubi iste propheta dicit, *et dabo vobis cor novum et spiritum novum dabo in vos et auferam cor lapideum de carne vestra et dabo vobis cor carneum.*⁶⁹³ 113. Cor quippe carneum,

⁶⁸⁶ Ezek. 36: 17–19.

⁶⁸⁷ 1 Cor. 10: 18.

⁶⁸⁸ Ezek. 36: 23.

⁶⁸⁹ Ezek. 36: 23–9.

⁶⁹⁰ Isa. 10: 22; cf. Rom. 9: 27.

⁶⁹¹ Titus 3: 5.

⁶⁹² 2 Cor. 3: 2–3.

⁶⁹³ Ezek. 36: 26.

dispersed them among the peoples and scattered them among all regions; I judged them according to their ways and according to their sins.⁶⁹⁴ It is easy, I say, to understand this of the house of Israel, about which Paul says, ‘see Israel according to the flesh’⁶⁹⁵ because the people of Israel did or experienced all these things in the flesh. 111. Other things in what follows can also be understood of that people. But when he goes on to say, ‘And I will sanctify my name, that great name which is profaned among the nations, which you profaned in the midst of them; and the nations will know that I am the Lord’⁶⁹⁶ the reader must now carefully observe how the species is transcended and the genus introduced. The passage continues: ‘When I am sanctified through you before their eyes, I will take you from the peoples and gather you from all lands and bring you into your own land. And I will sprinkle you with clean water, and you will be made clean from all your idolatries. I will cleanse you and give you a new heart, and I will give you a new spirit. And I will take away from your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh; and I will give my spirit to you and cause you to walk in my ordinances and keep and observe my judgements. And you will live in the land which I gave to your fathers, and you will be my people and I will be your God. And I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness.’⁶⁹⁷ 112. That this is a prophecy about the New Testament, involving not only that particular race in its remnants (about which it is written elsewhere, ‘Even if the number of the sons of Israel is as the sand of the seashore, only a remnant will be safe’)⁶⁹⁸ but also all the other races promised to their fathers, who are also our fathers, will be unambiguously clear to anyone who has the insight to see that here is a promise of the baptism of regeneration⁶⁹⁹ which we now see duly given to all peoples. He will also realize and recognize that the words used by Paul the apostle to commend the grace of the New Testament so that it stood out in comparison with the Old Testament—‘You are our letter, written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on the fleshly tablets of the heart’⁷⁰⁰—derive from this passage, where the prophet says, ‘And I will give you a new heart and a new spirit, and I will take away from your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.’⁷⁰¹ 113. He wanted the heart of flesh—

⁶⁹⁴ Ezek. 36: 17–19.

⁶⁹⁵ 1 Cor. 10: 18.

⁶⁹⁶ Ezek. 36: 23.

⁶⁹⁷ Ezek. 36: 23–9.

⁶⁹⁸ Isa. 10: 22; cf. Rom. 9: 27.

⁶⁹⁹ Titus 3: 5.

⁷⁰⁰ 2 Cor. 3: 2–3.

⁷⁰¹ Ezek. 36: 26.

unde ait apostolus, *tabulis cordis carnalibus*, a corde lapideo voluit vita sentiente discerni et per vitam sentientem significavit intellegendam. Sic fit Israel spiritalis non unius gentis sed omnium quae promissae sunt patribus in eorum semine, quod est Christus.⁷⁰² 114. Hic ergo Israel spiritalis ab illo Israele carnali, qui est unius gentis, novitate gratiae non nobilitate patriae et mente non gente distinguitur. Sed altitudo prophetica dum de illo vel ad illum loquitur, latenter transit ad hunc, et cum iam de isto vel ad istum loquatur, adhuc de illo vel ad illum videtur loqui, non intellectum scripturarum nobis quasi hostiliter invidens sed exercens medicinaliter nostrum. 115. Unde et illud quod ait: *et inducam vos in terram vestram*,⁷⁰³ et paulo post tamquam id ipsum repetens, *et habitabitis*, inquit, *in terra quam dedi patribus vestris*,⁷⁰⁴ non carnaliter sicut carnalis Israel sed spiritaliter sicut spiritalis Israel debemus accipere. Ecclesia quippe *sine macula et ruga*⁷⁰⁵ ex omnibus gentibus congregata atque in aeternum regnatura cum Christo ipsa est terra beatorum, *terra viventium*,⁷⁰⁶ ipsa intellegenda est patribus data, quando eis certa et immutabili dei voluntate promissa est, quoniam ipsa promissionis vel praedestinationis firmitate iam data est quae danda suo tempore a patribus credita est, sicut de ipsa gratia quae sanctis datur scribens ad Timotheum apostolus ait, *non secundum opera nostra, sed secundum suum propositum et gratiam, quae data est nobis in Christo Iesu ante saecula aeterna, manifestata autem nunc per adventum salvatoris nostri*.⁷⁰⁷ 116. Datam dixit gratiam quando nec erant adhuc quibus daretur, quoniam in dispositione ac praedestinatione dei iam factum erat quod suo tempore futurum fuerat, quod esse dicit manifestatum. Quamvis haec possint intellegi et de terra futuri saeculi, quando erit *caelum novum et terra nova*,⁷⁰⁸ in qua iniusti habitare non poterunt. Et ideo recte dicitur piis quod ipsa sit terra

⁷⁰² Gal. 3: 16.

⁷⁰³ Ezek. 36: 24.

⁷⁰⁴ Ezek. 36: 28.

⁷⁰⁵ Eph. 5: 27.

⁷⁰⁶ Ps. 26: 13 (27: 13).

⁷⁰⁷ 2 Tim. 1: 9–10.

⁷⁰⁸ Rev. 21: 1.

whence the apostle's expression 'in the fleshy tablets of the heart'—to be distinguished from the heart of stone because of its sentient life; and by sentient life he meant intelligent life. So 'spiritual Israel' becomes not a matter of a single race, but of all the races promised to the fathers in their seed, which is Christ.⁷⁰⁹ 114. This spiritual Israel is distinguished from the fleshy Israel, consisting of a single people, by the novelty of grace, not by nobility of race, and by mentality, not nationality. But such is the prophet's profundity that while speaking about the former and indeed to the former he moves imperceptibly to the latter; and while speaking about the latter or addressing himself to the latter he still seems to be speaking about the former and addressing himself to the former, not with the hostile purpose of begrudging us an understanding of the scriptures but with the healthy one of stretching our understanding. 115. So when he says 'I will bring you into your own land',⁷¹⁰ and a little later repeats it, 'And you will live in the land which I gave to your fathers',⁷¹¹ we should understand this not carnally, of the fleshy Israel, but spiritually, of the spiritual Israel. It is the church 'without blemish or wrinkle',⁷¹² assembled from all peoples and destined to reign with Christ, which is itself the land of the blessed, the 'land of the living'.⁷¹³ And it is the church itself that should be understood as having been given to the fathers at the time when it was promised by God's sure and immutable will, since what our fathers believed would be given in its own time was already given with the security of promise or predestination. Similarly, when writing to Timothy of the grace given to the saints, Paul says 'Not according to our works, but according to his purpose and his grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the eternal ages but has now been made plain by our saviour's coming'.⁷¹⁴ 116. He said that grace was given at a time when there were not even people to whom it could be given, because in God's disposition and foreknowledge what was going to happen in its own time had already happened; this he describes by the words 'made plain'. However, this could also be understood to mean the land of a future generation, since there will be 'a new heaven and a new earth',⁷¹⁵ in which the unjust will not be able to live. Therefore it is said to the saints

⁷⁰⁹ Gal. 3: 16.

⁷¹⁰ Ezek. 36: 24.

⁷¹¹ Ezek. 36: 28.

⁷¹² Eph. 5: 27.

⁷¹³ Ps. 26: 13 (27: 13).

⁷¹⁴ 2 Tim. 1: 9–10.

⁷¹⁵ Rev. 21: 1.

eorum quae ulla ex parte non erit impiorum, quia et ipsa similiter data est, quando danda firmata est. 117. Quintam Ticonius regulam ponit quam *De temporibus* appellat, qua regula plerumque inveniri vel conici possit latens in scripturis sanctis quantitas temporum. Duobus autem modis vigere dicit hanc regulam, aut tropo sinecdоче aut legitimis numeris. Tropus sinecdоче aut a parte totum aut a tota partem facit intellegi, sicut unus evangelista post dies octo factum dicit quod alius post dies sex, quando in monte discipulis tantum tribus praesentibus facies domini fulsit ut sol et vestimenta eius ut nix.⁷¹⁶ 118. Utrumque enim verum esse non posset quod de numero dierum dictum est, nisi ille qui dixit *post dies octo* intellegatur partem novissimam diei ex quo id Christus praedixit futurum, et partem primam diei quo id ostendit impletum pro totis diebus duobus atque integris posuisse, eum vero qui dixit *post dies sex*, integros omnes et totos, sed solos medios computasse. Hoc modo locutionis, quo significatur a parte totum, etiam illa de resurrectione Christi solvitur quaestio. 119. Pars enim novissima diei quo passus est, nisi pro toto die accipiat, id est adiuncta etiam nocte praeterita, et nox in cuius parte ultima resurrexit nisi totus dies accipiat, adiuncto scilicet die illucescente dominico, non possunt esse tres dies et tres noctes quibus se in corde terrae praedixit futurum.⁷¹⁷ 120. Legitimos autem numeros dicit quos eminentius divina scriptura commendat, sicut septenarium vel denarium vel duodenarium et quicumque alii sunt quos legendo studiosi libenter agnoscunt. Plerumque enim numeri huius modi pro universo tempore ponuntur, sicut *septies in die laudabo te*⁷¹⁸ nihil est aliud quam *semper laus eius in ore meo*.⁷¹⁹ 121. Tantundem valent et cum multiplicantur, sive per denarium, sicut septuaginta et septingenti—unde possunt et septuaginta anni Hieremiae⁷²⁰ pro universo tempore spiritaliter accipi, quo est apud alienos ecclesia—sive per se ipsos, sicut decem per decem centum sunt et duodecim per

⁷¹⁶ Matt. 17: 1–2 (six); Mark 9: 1–2 (six); Luke 9: 28 (eight). The same explanation is given by Augustine in *De Consensu Evangelistarum* 2. 56. 113, 3. 24. 66.

⁷¹⁷ Matt. 12: 40.

⁷¹⁸ Ps. 118: 164 (119: 164).

⁷¹⁹ Ps. 33: 2 (34: 1).

⁷²⁰ Jer. 25: 11, 29: 10.

quite correctly that the land itself, which will not in any way belong to the wicked, is theirs; because, in the same way, the land was actually given at the time when the gift was ratified.¹¹⁷ The fifth rule laid down by Tyconius is the one that he calls ‘On measurements of time’, by which one can often discover or figure out indications of time in the holy scriptures that are not explicit. He says that this rule works in two ways, either through the trope of synecdoche or through ordinary numbers. The trope synecdoche permits either the whole to be understood from the part, or the part from the whole. By way of example, one evangelist says that an event happened eight days later and another puts it six days later—this being the occasion when on the mountain with only three disciples present the Lord's face shone like the sun and his clothes like snow.⁷²¹ 118. These statements about the number of days could not both be correct unless the writer who said ‘eight days later’ is understood as having treated the last part of the day on which Christ predicted that the event would happen and the first part of the day on which he demonstrated its fulfilment as two whole days, and the writer who said ‘after six days’ as having counted six whole days, but only the intervening ones. This figure of speech, by which the whole is signified by a part, also provides a solution to the problem about Christ's resurrection. 119. For unless the last part of the day on which he suffered is taken as one whole day (by adding the previous night) and the night at the end of which he rose again as another whole day (by adding the Sunday that was just dawning), you cannot get the three days and nights which he predicted that he would spend in the heart of the earth.⁷²² 120. By ordinary numbers he means those which scripture makes conspicuous use of, like the numbers seven or ten or twelve, and the others which scholars happily acknowledge as they read. As a rule such numbers are made to stand for a complete period of time; so ‘I will praise you seven times a day’⁷²³ means exactly the same as ‘his praise shall always be on my lips’.⁷²⁴ 121. They have the same meaning when multiplied, whether by ten, giving seventy or seven hundred—hence the seventy years of Jeremiah⁷²⁵ may be understood spiritually as the whole of the time during which the church is among foreigners—or by themselves; so ten times ten is a hundred, and twelve times

⁷²¹ Matt. 17: 1–2 (six); Mark 9: 1–2 (six); Luke 9: 28 (eight). The same explanation is given by Augustine in *De Consensu Evangelistarum* 2. 56. 113, 3. 24. 66.

⁷²² Matt. 12: 40.

⁷²³ Ps. 118: 164 (119: 164).

⁷²⁴ Ps. 33: 2 (34: 1).

⁷²⁵ Jer. 25: 11, 29: 10.

duodecim centum quadraginta quattuor, quo numero significatur universitas sanctorum in Apocalypsi.⁷²⁶ Unde apparet non solas temporum quaestiones istis numeris esse solvendas, sed latius patere significationes eorum et in multa proserpere. Neque enim numerus iste in Apocalypsi ad tempora pertinet sed ad homines. 122. Sextam regulam Ticonius *Recapitulationem* vocat, in obscuritate scripturarum satis vigilanter inventam.⁷²⁷ Sic enim dicuntur quaedam quasi sequantur in ordine temporis vel rerum continuatione narrentur, cum ad priora quae praetermissa fuerant latenter narratio revocetur. Quod nisi ex hac regula intellegatur erratur. 123. Sicut in Genesi *et plantavit*, inquit, *dominus deus paradisum in Eden ad orientem et posuit ibi hominem quem formavit, et produxit deus adhuc de terra omne lignum speciosum et bonum in escam*,⁷²⁸ ita videtur dictum tamquam id factum sit posteaquam factum posuit hominem in paradiso cum breviter utroque commemorato—id est quod plantavit deus paradisum et posuit ibi hominem quem formavit recapitulando redeat et dicat quod praetermiserat, quomodo scilicet paradisus fuerit plantatus, quia *produxit deus adhuc de terra omne lignum speciosum et bonum in escam*. 124. Denique secutus adiunxit, *et lignum vitae in medio paradiso et lignum sciendi boni et mali*. Deinde flumen quo paradisus irrigaretur, divisum in quattuor principia fluviorum quattuor explicatur;⁷²⁹ quod totum pertinet ad institutionem paradisi. Quod ubi terminavit, repetivit illud quod iam dixerat, et re vera hoc sequebatur, atque ait, *et sumpsit dominus deus hominem quem finxit et posuit eum in paradiso*,⁷³⁰ et cetera. 125. Post ista enim facta ibi est positus homo, sicut nunc ordo ipse demonstrat, non post hominem ibi positum facta sunt ista, sicut prius dictum putari potest nisi recapitulatio illic vigilanter intellegatur, qua reditum est ad ea quae fuerant praetermissa. 126. Itemque in eo libro, cum commemorarentur generationes filiorum Noe, dictum est, *hi filii Cham in tribubus suis secundum linguas suas in regionibus suis et in gentibus suis*.

⁷²⁶ Rev. 7: 4.

⁷²⁷ In 'La sixième règle de Tyconius', M. Dulaey compares Augustine's interpretation of the sixth rule with the extant text and argues that Augustine is also indebted to his commentary on Revelation (cf. n. 85 above).

⁷²⁸ Gen. 2: 8–9.

⁷²⁹ Gen. 2: 9.

⁷³⁰ Gen. 2: 15.

twelve is one hundred and forty four, a number which in Revelation signifies the whole body of saints.⁷³¹ So it is clear not only that these numbers are the key to chronological problems, but also that their significance is wider and their influence far-reaching. For in Revelation the number I mentioned relates not to time, but people.¹²² Tyconius gives the name ‘recapitulation’ to his sixth rule, a rule discovered by close attention to the obscurities of scripture.⁷³² Some passages are presented as if their contents follow in chronological order or in a continuous sequence, when in fact the narrative covertly switches back to earlier matters which had been passed over. Failure to recognize the operation of this rule leads to misunderstandings. ¹²³ It is said in Genesis: ‘The Lord God planted a garden in Eden to the East and placed there the man that he had made, and God also produced from the earth every tree that is beautiful to look at and good to eat.’⁷³³ This gives the impression that the last action was done after he had made man and placed him in the garden, when in fact, having briefly mentioned both things—that God planted the garden and placed there the man that he had made—the writer recapitulates and goes back to say what he had passed over, namely how the garden was planted, that ‘God also produced from the earth every tree that is beautiful to look at and good to eat’. ¹²⁴ Finally, following this up, he added ‘and the tree of life in the middle of paradise and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’. Then comes the river for the irrigation of the garden, divided into the four sources of the four rivers:⁷³⁴ all this concerns the making of the garden. After finishing that description, the writer repeated what he had already said—and this really followed on at this point—in the words, ‘and the Lord took the man that he had made and placed him in the garden’,⁷³⁵ and so on. ¹²⁵ For it was after these actions that the man was placed there, as is now showed by the new order, and not the reverse, as its prior position in the narrative might lead one to think unless one was alert enough to recognize a recapitulation there, and a return to what had been passed over.¹²⁶ Similarly in the same book, where the generations of the sons of Noah are recorded, it was said: ‘these are the sons of Ham by their tribes, according to their tongues, by their

⁷³¹ Rev. 7: 4.

⁷³² In ‘La sixième règle de Tyconius’, M. Dulaey compares Augustine's interpretation of the sixth rule with the extant text and argues that Augustine is also indebted to his commentary on Revelation (cf. n. 85 above).

⁷³³ Gen. 2: 8–9.

⁷³⁴ Gen. 2: 9.

⁷³⁵ Gen. 2: 15.

Enumeratis quoque filiis Sem dicitur, *hi filii Sem in tribubus suis secundum linguas suas in regionibus suis et in gentibus suis*. Et adnectitur de omnibus, *hae tribus filiorum Noe, secundum generationes eorum secundum gentes eorum. Ab his dispersae sunt insulae gentium super terram post diluvium. Et erat omnis terra labium unum et vox una omnibus*.⁷³⁶ 127. Hoc itaque quod adiunctum est: *et erat omnis terra labium unum et vox una omnibus*, id est una lingua omnium, ita dictum videtur tamquam eo iam tempore, quo dispersi fuerant super terram etiam secundum insulas gentium, una fuerit omnibus lingua communis. Quod procul dubio repugnat superioribus verbis, ubi dictum est *in tribubus suis secundum linguas suas*. Neque enim dicerentur habuisse iam linguas suas singulae tribus, quae gentes singulas fecerant, quando erat omnibus una communis. 128. Ac per hoc recapitulando adiunctum est *et erat omnis terra labium unum et vox una omnibus*, latenter narratione redeunte, ut diceretur quomodo factum sit ut ex una omnium lingua fuerint divisi per multas. Et continuo de illa turris aedificatione narratur, ubi haec eis iudicio divino ingesta est poena superbiae, post quod factum dispersi sunt per terram secundum linguas suas.⁷³⁷ 129. Fit ista recapitulatio etiam obscurius, sicut in evangelio dicit dominus, *die quo exiit Loth a Sodomis pluit ignem de caelo et perdidit omnes: secundum haec erunt dies filii hominis quo revelabitur. Illa hora qui erit in tecto et vasa eius in domo, non descendat tollere illa; et qui in agro, similiter non revertatur retro. Meminerit uxoris Loth*.⁷³⁸ Numquid cum dominus fuerit revelatus, tunc sunt ista servanda, ne quisque retro respiciat, id est vitam praeteritam cui renuntiavit inquirat, et non potius isto tempore ut, cum dominus fuerit revelatus, retributionem pro eis quae quisque servavit vel contempsit inveniet? 130. Et tamen quia dictum est, *In illa hora*, tunc putantur ista servanda cum dominus fuerit revelatus, nisi ad intellegendam recapitulationem sensus legentis invigilet, adiuvante alia scriptura quae ipsorum apostolorum adhuc tempore clamavit:

⁷³⁶ Gen. 10: 20; 10: 31; 10: 32; 11: 1.

⁷³⁷ Gen. 11: 4–9.

⁷³⁸ Luke 17: 29–32.

regions, and by their races.' After the enumeration of the sons of Sem, it is said: 'these are the sons of Sem by their tribes, according to their tongues, by their regions, and by their races.' And then, referring to them all, the writer adds 'These are the tribes of the sons of Noah, according to their generations and their races. From these tribes the various pockets of Gentiles were scattered over the earth after the flood. And every land had a single language, and all had one voice.'⁷³⁹ 127. This last addition 'And every land had a single language, and all had one voice' (that is, one common language) gives the impression that there was a single common language at the time when they had been dispersed over the land in pockets of Gentiles. This is clearly inconsistent with the previous words 'by their tribes and according to their languages'. Single tribes which had formed single races cannot be said to have had their own languages at a time when there was a single language common to all. 128. Therefore the words 'and every land had a single language, and all had one voice' are added by recapitulation, with the narrative covertly turning back on itself, in order to explain how it happened that after having a single common language they were divided among many. Immediately after this comes the story of the building of the tower; this was when the penalty for their arrogance was imposed on them by divine judgement. It was after this that they were scattered throughout the world according to their various languages.⁷⁴⁰129. This recapitulation may take an even more obscure form, as in the gospel where the Lord says, 'on the day that Lot left Sodom it rained fire from heaven and destroyed everyone: such will be the days of the Son of Man, when he is revealed. At that hour, if someone is on his roof and his goods in the house, he should not return to take them; and someone in the field likewise should not turn back. Remember Lot's wife.'⁷⁴¹ Surely it is not at the time when the Lord is revealed that this advice is to be followed (not to look back, or, in other words, not to inquire into the past life which one has renounced), but rather at the present time, so that when the Lord is revealed one may find compensation for the things that one has maintained or abandoned. 130. But because of the words 'at that hour' it looks as if this advice is to be followed at the time when the Lord is revealed, unless the reader's senses are alert to the recapitulation. Help comes from another part of scripture,

⁷³⁹ Gen. 10: 20; 10: 31; 10: 32; 11: 1.

⁷⁴⁰ Gen. 11: 4–9.

⁷⁴¹ Luke 17: 29–32.

*fili, novissima hora est.*⁷⁴² Tempus ergo ipsum quo evangelium praedicatur, quousque dominus reveletur, hora est in qua oportet ista servari, quia et ipsa revelatio domini ad eandem horam pertinet, quae die iudicii terminabitur. 131. Septima Ticonii regula est eademque postrema *De diabolo et eius corpore*. Est enim et ipse caput impiorum, qui sunt eius quodam modo corpus, ituri cum illo in supplicium ignis aeterni,⁷⁴³ sicut Christus caput est ecclesiae,⁷⁴⁴ quod est corpus eius, futurum cum illo in regno et gloria sempiterna. Sicut ergo in prima regula, quam vocat *De domino et eius corpore*, vigilandum est ut intellegatur, cum de una eademque persona scriptura loquitur, quid conveniat capiti, quid corpori, ita et in ista novissima aliquando in diabolum dicitur quod non in ipso sed potius in eius corpore possit agnosci, quod habet non solum in eis qui manifestissime foris sunt⁷⁴⁵ sed in eis etiam qui, cum ad ipsum pertineant, tamen ad tempus miscentur ecclesiae donec unusquisque de hac vita exeat vel a frumento palea ventilabro ultimo separetur.⁷⁴⁶ 132. Quod enim scriptum est apud Esaiam, *Quomodo cecidit de caelo Lucifer mane oriens*⁷⁴⁷ et cetera, quae sub figura regis Babyloniae de eadem persona vel ad eandem personam dicta sunt, in ipsa contextione sermonis de diabolo utique intelleguntur. Et tamen quod ibi dictum est, *contritus est in terra qui mittit ad omnes gentes*, non totum ipsi capiti congruit. Nam etsi mittit ad omnes gentes diabolus angelos suos, tamen in terra corpus eius, non ipse, conteritur—nisi quia ipse est in corpore suo, quod contritum fit pulvis, quem proiciat ventus a facie terrae.⁷⁴⁸ 133. Hae autem omnes regulae, excepta una quae vocatur *De promissis et lege*, aliud ex alio faciunt intellegi, quod est proprium tropicae locutionis, quae latius patet quam ut possit, ut mihi videtur, ab aliquo universa comprehendi. Nam ubicumque velut aliud dicitur ut aliud intellegatur, etsi nomen ipsius tropi in loquendi arte non invenitur, tropica locutio est. Quae cum fit ubi fieri solet, sine labore sequitur intellectus;

⁷⁴² 1 John 2: 18.

⁷⁴³ Matt. 25: 41.

⁷⁴⁴ Eph. 1: 22–3.

⁷⁴⁵ 1 Cor. 5: 12.

⁷⁴⁶ Matt. 3: 12; Luke 3: 17.

⁷⁴⁷ Isa. 14: 12.

⁷⁴⁸ Ps. 1: 4.

which proclaimed in the time of the apostles themselves ‘Sons, it is the last hour.’⁷⁴⁹ So it is the time in which the gospel is being preached, the time leading up to the revelation of the Lord, that is the hour at which that advice ought to be followed, because the actual revelation of the Lord relates to the time which will end with the day of judgement.¹³¹ The seventh and last rule of Tyconius is ‘On the devil and his body’. He is actually himself the head of the wicked, and they are, in a way, his body, destined to go with him into the punishment of eternal fire,⁷⁵⁰ just as Christ is the head of the church,⁷⁵¹ and the church is his body, destined to be with him in his kingdom in eternal glory. Just as the first rule (‘On the Lord and his body’) should make us alert, when scripture is speaking of one and the same person, to distinguish what applies to the head and what applies to the body, so here with the last: sometimes something is said against the devil which cannot be understood of him but rather concerns his body—a body which comprises not only those who are quite clearly outside,⁷⁵² but also those who although they belong to him are nevertheless part of the church for the time being, until each individual departs this life and is separated out like chaff from wheat at the last judgement.⁷⁵³ 132. The words of Isaiah, ‘how Lucifer, son of the dawn, has fallen from the sky’⁷⁵⁴ and the rest, which are spoken about, or to, one and the same person under the guise of the King of Babylon, are certainly in the actual context understood of the devil. But the following words ‘he who sends to all races is pounded into the earth’ do not entirely apply to the head itself. It is true that the devil sends his angels to all races, yet it is the devil's body, not the devil himself, that is pounded into the earth, except in the sense that he is in his own body, which when pounded becomes dust for the wind to drive from the face of the earth.⁷⁵⁵ 133. All these rules, with the single exception of the one entitled ‘On promises and law’, state that one thing is to be understood by another. This is the characteristic of metaphorical diction, which is too broad a category, it seems to me, to be embraced in its entirety by a single person. Whenever one thing is said in order that something else may be understood, we have a metaphorical expression, even if the name of the actual trope is not found in the textbooks. When this takes a

⁷⁴⁹ 1 John 2: 18.

⁷⁵⁰ Matt. 25: 41.

⁷⁵¹ Eph. 1: 22–3.

⁷⁵² 1 Cor. 5: 12.

⁷⁵³ Matt. 3: 12; Luke 3: 17.

⁷⁵⁴ Isa. 14: 12.

⁷⁵⁵ Ps. 1: 4.

cum vero ubi non solet, laboratur ut intellegatur, ab aliis magis ab aliis minus, sicut magis minusve dona dei sunt in ingeniis hominum vel adiutoria tribuuntur. 134. Proinde sicut in verbis propriis, de quibus superius disputavimus, ubi res ut dicuntur intellegendae sunt, sic in translatis, quae faciunt tropicas locutiones, ubi aliud ex alio intellegendum est, de quibus huc usque quantum visum est satis egimus, non solum admonendi sunt studiosi venerabilium litterarum ut in scripturis sanctis genera locutionum sciant et quomodo apud eas dici aliquid soleat vigilanter advertant memoriterque retineant, verum etiam, quod est praecipuum et maxime necessarium, orent ut intellegant. In eis quippe litteris quarum studiosi sunt legunt quoniam *dominus dat sapientiam, et a facie eius scientia et intellectus*,⁷⁵⁶ a quo et ipsum studium, si pietate praeditum est, acceperunt. 135. Sed haec satis etiam de signis, quantum ad verba pertinet, dicta sint. Restat ut de proferendis eis quae sentimus sequenti volumine quae dominus donaverit dicamus.

⁷⁵⁶ Prov. 2: 6.

familiar form, understanding follows without effort; when it does not, effort is needed for understanding, and more in some cases than others, depending on the gifts of God bestowed on our human intellects or the assistance that he gives. 134. As in the case of the literal usages that I discussed earlier, when things are to be understood in their plain sense, so too in metaphorical ones, expressed through tropes, when one thing must be understood by another—which I have now dealt with at what seems appropriate length—students of our revered scriptures must be taught to recognize the various kinds of expression in holy scripture, to notice and memorize the ways in which it tends to say things, and especially—this is paramount, and absolutely vital—to pray for understanding. In the literature which they study they read that ‘God gives wisdom, and from his face there is knowledge and understanding’,⁷⁵⁷ and from him too they have also received their actual commitment to study, provided that it is accompanied by holiness.

135. But enough about signs, at least in their relation to words. It remains to present, in my next book, whatever the Lord prompts me to say on the subject of presenting our thoughts to others.

⁷⁵⁷ Prov. 2: 6.

Liber Quartus

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1. Hoc opus nostrum, quod inscribitur *De Doctrina Christiana*, in duo quaedam fueram prima distributione partitus. Nam post prooemium, quo respondi eis qui hoc fuerant reprehensuri, *duae sunt res*, inquam, *quibus nititur omnis tractatio scripturarum: modus inveniendi quae intellegenda sunt, et modus proferendi quae intellecta sunt. De inveniendo prius, de proferendo postea disseremus.*⁷⁵⁸ 2. Quia ergo de inveniendo multa iam diximus et tria de hac una parte volumina absolvimus, adiuvante domino de proferendo pauca dicemus, ut si fieri potuerit uno libro cuncta claudamus totumque hoc opus quattuor voluminibus terminetur.

3. Primo itaque expectationem legentium, qui forte me putant rhetorica daturum esse praecepta quae in scholis saecularibus et didici et docui, ista praelocutione cohibeo atque ut a me non expectentur admoneo; non quod nihil habeant utilitatis, sed quod si quid habent seorsum discendum est, si cui fortassis bono viro⁷⁵⁹ etiam haec vacat discere, non autem a me vel in hoc opere vel in aliquo alio requirendum.

4. Nam cum per artem rhetoricam et vera suadeantur et falsa,⁷⁶⁰ quis audeat dicere adversus mendacium in defensoribus suis inermem debere consistere veritatem, ut videlicet illi qui res falsas persuadere conantur noverint auditorem vel benevolum vel intentum vel docilem prooemio facere, isti autem non noverint? Illi falsa breviter aperte verisimiliter, et isti vera sic narrent ut audire taedeat, intellegere non pateat, credere postremo non libeat?⁷⁶¹ Illi fallacibus argumentis veritatem oppugnent, asserant falsitatem, isti nec vera defendere nec falsa

⁷⁵⁸ Cf. 1. 1.

⁷⁵⁹ Reminiscent of Quintilian's specification of the perfect orator (12. 1. 1, from Cato): *vir bonus dicendi peritus* ('a good man experienced in speaking').

⁷⁶⁰ Cf. 2. 132, a classification on which this important paragraph is based.

⁷⁶¹ The virtues of the various sections of a speech, alluded to here, are succinctly given in Cic. *De Orat.* 2. 80, and in more detail at *Rhet. Her.* 1. 4. 6 ff. and Cic. *De Inu.* 1. 15. 20 ff.

Book Four

1. In the initial arrangement of my material I divided this work of mine, entitled 'On Christian Teaching', into two parts. After a preface in which I answered those who were likely to criticize this undertaking, I said, 'there are two things on which all interpretation of scripture depends: the process of discovering what we need to learn, and the process of presenting what we have learnt. I shall discuss the process of discovery first, and then that of presentation.

⁷⁶² 2. Since I have already said a lot about the former—making three volumes out of this single part—I will now with the Lord's help say a little about presentation. If possible, I will confine all my remarks to a single book and bring this work to completion in four volumes.

3. At the outset I must curb the expectations of any readers who think that I am going to present the rhetorical rules which I learnt and taught in pagan schools, and warn them in this preamble not to expect that sort of thing from me. This is not because the rules have no practical use, but because such practical uses as they do have must be learnt separately—assuming that a person of good character⁷⁶³ has the time to learn them on top of everything else—and not sought from me either in this or any other work.

4. Since rhetoric is used to give conviction to both truth and falsehood,⁷⁶⁴ who could dare maintain that truth, which depends on us for its defence, should stand unarmed in the fight against falsehood? This would mean that those who are trying to give conviction to their falsehoods would know how to use an introduction to make their listeners favourable, interested, and receptive, while we would not; that they would expound falsehoods in descriptions that are succinct, lucid, and convincing,⁷⁶⁵ while we would expound the truth in such a way as to bore our listeners, cloud their understanding, and stifle their desire to believe; that they would assail the truth and advocate falsehood

⁷⁶² Cf. 1. 1.

⁷⁶³ Reminiscent of Quintilian's specification of the perfect orator (12. 1. 1, from Cato): *vir bonus dicendi peritus* ('a good man experienced in speaking').

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valeant refutare? Illi animos audientium in errorem moventes impellentesque dicendo terreant contristent exhilarant exhortentur ardenter, isti pro veritate lenti frigidique dormitent? Quis ita desipiat ut hoc sapiat? 5. Cum ergo sit in medio posita facultas eloquii, quae ad persuadenda seu prava seu recta valet plurimum, cur non bonorum studio comparatur ut militet veritati, si eam mali ad obtinendas perversas vanasque causas in usus iniquitatis et erroris usurpant?

6. Sed quaecumque sunt de hac re observationes atque praecepta quibus, cum accedit in verbis plurimis ornamentisque verborum linguae sollertissima consuetudo, fit illa quae facundia vel eloquentia nominatur,⁷⁶⁶ extra istas litteras nostras, seposito ad hoc congruo temporis spatio, apta et convenienti aetate discenda sunt eis qui hoc celeriter possunt. 7. Nam et ipsos Romanae principes eloquentiae non piguit dicere quod hanc artem nisi quis cito possit numquam omnino possit perdiscere.⁷⁶⁷ Quod utrum verum sit, quid opus est quaerere? Non enim, etiamsi possint haec a tardioribus tandem aliquando perdisci, nos ea tanti pendimus ut eis discendis iam maturas vel etiam graves hominum aetates velimus impendi. 8. Satis est ut adolescentulorum ista sit cura, nec ipsorum omnium quos utilitati ecclesiasticae cupimus erudiri sed eorum quos nondum magis urgens et huic rei sine dubio praeponenda necessitas occupavit. Quoniam si acutum et fervens adsit ingenium, facilius adhaeret eloquentia legentibus et audientibus eloquentes quam eloquentiae praecepta sectantibus. 9. Nec desunt ecclesiasticae litterae, etiam praeter canonem⁷⁶⁸ in auctoritatis arce salubriter collocatum, quas legendo homo capax, etsi id non agat sed tantummodo rebus quae ibi dicuntur intentus sit, etiam eloquio quo dicuntur, dum in his versatur, imbuitur, accedente vel maxime exercitatione sive scribendi sive dictandi, postremo etiam dicendi, quae secundum pietatis ac fidei regulam sentit.⁷⁶⁹ 10. Si autem tale desit ingenium, nec illa rhetorica praecepta capiuntur nec, si

⁷⁶⁶ Cf. 2. 132.

⁷⁶⁷ Cic. *De Orat.* 3. 89 and 146, part of an imagined conversation between leading orators of the generation before Cicero.

⁷⁶⁸ See 2. 26–9 nn.

⁷⁶⁹ Cf. 3. 5 n.

with fallacious arguments, while we would be too feeble either to defend what is true or refute what is false; that they, pushing and propelling their listeners' minds towards error, would speak so as to inspire fear, sadness, and elation, and issue passionate exhortations, while we, in the name of the truth, can only idle along sounding dull and indifferent. Who could be so senseless as to find this sensible? 5. No; oratorical ability, so effective a resource to commend either right or wrong, is available to both sides; why then is it not acquired by good and zealous Christians to fight for the truth, if the wicked employ it in the service of iniquity and error, to achieve their perverse and futile purposes?

6. As for the relevant observations and rules, which, together with a skilful manner of speaking that uses an abundance of words and verbal ornament, constitute what we mean by eloquence,⁷⁷⁰ these should be learnt independently of this work by those who can do so quickly, by setting aside an appropriate period of time at a suitable and convenient stage of their lives. 7. Even the luminaries of Roman eloquence were happy to say that if these things could not be learnt quickly they could never be properly learnt at all.⁷⁷¹ No need to ask whether this is true: for even if this subject could eventually be mastered by the less intelligent, I do not rate it so highly that I would wish people's mature or advanced years to be devoted to learning it. 8. It is enough if this task is left to young people, and not all those whom we desire to be educated for the good of the church, but those who are not yet bound by a more pressing responsibility or one with an unquestionably higher priority. Given a sharp and eager mind, eloquence is picked up more readily by those who read and listen to the words of the eloquent than by those who follow the rules of eloquence. 9. There is no shortage of Christian literature, even outside the canon⁷⁷² which has been raised to its position of authority for our benefit; and by reading this an able person, even one not seeking to become eloquent but just concentrating on the matters being discussed, can become steeped in their eloquence, especially if this is combined with the practice of writing or dictating, and eventually speaking, what is felt to be in conformity with the rule of holiness and faith.⁷⁷³ 10. In the absence of such ability the rules of eloquence cannot be learnt, and even if they are laboriously

⁷⁷⁰ Cf. 2. 132.

⁷⁷¹ Cic. *De Orat.* 3. 89 and 146, part of an imagined conversation between leading orators of the generation before Cicero.

⁷⁷² See 2. 26–9 nn.

⁷⁷³ Cf. 3. 5 n.

magno labore inculcata quantulacumque ex parte capiantur, aliquid prosunt. Quandoquidem etiam ipsi qui ea didicerunt et copiose ornateque dicunt, non omnes ut secundum ipsa dicant possunt ea cogitare cum dicunt, si non de his disputant. Immo vero vix ullos eorum esse existimo qui utrumque possint, et dicere bene et ad hoc faciendum praecepta illa dicendi cogitare cum dicunt. 11. Cavendum est enim ne fugiant ex animo quae dicenda sunt dum attenditur ut arte dicantur. Et tamen in sermonibus atque dictionibus eloquentium impleta reperiuntur praecepta eloquentiae, de quibus illi ut eloquerentur vel cum eloquerentur non cogitaverunt, sive illa didicissent sive ne attigissent quidem. Implent quippe illa quia eloquentes

sunt, non adhibent ut sint eloquentes.⁷⁷⁴ 12. Quapropter, cum ex infantibus loquentes non fiant nisi locutiones discendo loquentium, cur eloquentes fieri non possunt nulla eloquendi arte tradita sed elocutiones eloquentium legendo et audiendo et, quantum assequi conceditur, imitando? Quid quod ita fieri ipsis quoque experimur exemplis? Nam sine praeceptis rhetoricis novimus plurimos eloquentiores plurimis qui illa didicerunt, sine lectis vero et auditis eloquentium disputationibus vel dictionibus neminem. 13. Nam neque ipsa arte grammatica,⁷⁷⁵ qua discitur locutionis integritas, indigerent pueri, si eis inter homines qui integre loquerentur crescere daretur et vivere. Nescientes quippe ulla nomina vitiorum, quidquid vitiosum cuiusquam ore loquentis audirent sana sua consuetudine reprehenderent et caverent, sicut rusticos urbani reprehendunt, etiam qui litteras nesciunt.

14. Debet igitur divinarum scripturarum tractator et doctor, defensor rectae fidei ac debellator erroris, et bona docere et mala dedocere atque in hoc opere sermonis conciliare aversos, remissos erigere, nescientibus quod agitur quid exspectare debeant intimare.⁷⁷⁶ Ubi autem benivolos intentos dociles aut

⁷⁷⁴ A similar point is made less concisely in Cic. *De Orat.* 1. 87 and 91.

⁷⁷⁵ Grammar, though omitted in Book 2, was a vital part of the traditional curriculum: see S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* (London, 1977), 198–211.

⁷⁷⁶ This and the following paragraph take up the manifesto of 4. 4, including its implied fourfold division of the speaker's task.

drummed in and assimilated to some extent they are of no benefit. For even those who have learnt the rules and speak fluently and stylishly are not all able to consider them as they speak in order to make sure that they are following them (unless of course they are discussing the actual rules). Indeed I think there are hardly any who are able to do both—that is, to speak well and to consider as they speak the rules of eloquence which promote good speaking. 11. There is a danger of forgetting what one has to say while working out a clever way to say it. Yet we discover the rules of eloquence to be observed in the sermons and addresses of eloquent men, even though the speakers—whether conversant with them or entirely untouched by them—did not consider them either when preparing to speak or when actually speaking. They observe the rules because they are eloquent; they do not use them to become eloquent.⁷⁷⁷ 12. Infants acquire speech purely by assimilating the words and phrases of those who speak to them; so why should the eloquent not be able to acquire their eloquence not through the traditional teaching but by reading and listening to the speeches of the eloquent and by imitating them within the limits of their ability? Isn't this precisely what we see in practice? We know that there are very many speakers with no knowledge of rhetorical rules who are more eloquent than the many who have learnt them; but no-one who has not read or listened to the disputations or addresses of good speakers is eloquent at all. 13. Nor indeed would the art of grammar,⁷⁷⁸ by which one is taught to speak properly, be needed by children if it were possible for them to grow up and live their lives among people who spoke properly. Even though totally ignorant of the names of solecisms, they would, by virtue of their correct habits, note and avoid anything ungrammatical that they heard from any speaker, just as town-dwellers, even illiterate ones, find fault with country folk. 14. So the interpreter and teacher of the divine scriptures, the defender of the true faith and vanquisher of error, must communicate what is good and eradicate what is bad, and in the same process of speaking must win over the antagonistic, rouse the apathetic, and make clear to those who are not conversant with the matter under discussion what they should expect.⁷⁷⁹ When he finds them favourable, interested, and

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⁷⁷⁹ This and the following paragraph take up the manifesto of 4. 4, including its implied fourfold division of the speaker's task.

invenerit aut ipse fecerit, cetera peragenda sunt sicut postulat causa. Si docendi sunt qui audiunt, narratione faciendum est, si tamen indigeat ut res de qua agitur innotescat. 15. Ut autem quae dubia sunt certa fiant, documentis adhibitis ratiocinandum est. Si vero qui audiunt movendi sunt potius quam docendi, ut in eo quod iam sciunt agendo non torpeant et rebus assensum quas veras esse fatentur accommodent, maioribus dicendi viribus opus est. Ibi obsecrationes et increpationes, concitationes et coercitationes⁷⁸⁰ et quaecumque alia valent ad commovendos animos sunt necessaria.

16. Et haec quidem cuncta quae dixi omnes fere homines in

his quae loquendo agunt facere non quiescunt. 17. Sed cum alii faciant obtunse deformiter frigide, alii acute ornatè vehementer, illum ad hoc opus unde agimus iam oportet accedere qui potest disputare vel dicere sapienter, etiamsi non potest eloquenter, ut prosit audientibus, etiamsi minus quam prodesset si et eloquenter posset dicere. Qui vero affluit insipienti eloquentia, tanto magis cavendus est quanto magis ab eo in his quae audire inutile est delectatur auditor et eum quoniam diserte dicere audit etiam vere dicere existimat. 18. Haec autem sententia nec illos fugit qui artem rhetoricam docendam putarunt; fassi sunt enim sapientiam sine eloquentia parum prodesse civitatibus, eloquentiam vero sine sapientia nimium obesse plerumque, prodesse numquam.⁷⁸¹ Si hoc ergo illi, qui praecepta eloquentiae tradiderunt, in eisdem libris in quibus id egerunt veritate instigante coacti sunt confiteri, veram, hoc est supernam, quae a patre luminum⁷⁸² descendit sapientiam nescientes, quanto magis nos non aliud sentire debemus, qui huius sapientiae filii et ministri sumus?

19. Sapienter autem dicit homo tanto magis vel minus quanto in scripturis sanctis magis minusve profecit, non dico in eis multum legendis memoriaeque mandandis sed bene intellegendis et diligenter earum sensibus indagandis. Sunt

⁷⁸⁰ Close in style and content to Cic. *De Orat.* 3. 118 *cohortationes, obiurgationes, consolationes, miserationes* ('exhortation, reproach, consolation, compassion') and also to 1 Tim. 2: 1; so Augustine surely used the word *coercitationes* here, not the commoner *coercitiones* found in some manuscripts.

⁷⁸¹ Cic. *De Im.* 1. 1. For the plural here see Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 2. 698–701.

⁷⁸² Cf. Jas. 1: 17, *pater luminum*, which Augustine evidently associates with the rhetorical term *lumina dicendi* ('adornments of speech'), for which cf. n. 29.

receptive, or has made them so by his own efforts, then there are other goals to be achieved, as the particular case demands. If listeners need information, there must be a presentation of the facts (if indeed this is really what is needed) to make the matter under discussion more familiar. 15. To clarify disputed issues there must be rational argument and deployment of evidence. But if listeners have to be moved rather than instructed, in order to make them act decisively on the knowledge that they have and lend their assent to matters which they admit to be true, then greater powers of oratory are required. In such cases what one needs is entreaties, rebukes, rousing speeches, solemn admonitions,⁷⁸³ and all the other things which have the power to excite human emotions.

16. All these things that I have mentioned are continually being carried out by just about everybody in transactions performed through speech. 17. But since some performances are unintelligent, awkward, and boring, whereas others are clever, elegant, and exciting, the person required for the task under consideration is someone who can argue or speak wisely, if not eloquently. This will benefit his audience, albeit less so than if he could speak eloquently too. But the speaker who is awash with the kind of eloquence that is not wise is particularly dangerous because audiences actually enjoy listening to such a person on matters of no value to them, and reckon that somebody who is heard to speak eloquently must also be speaking the truth. 18. This point did not escape even those who believed in teaching the art of rhetoric; they declared that wisdom without eloquence was of little value to society but that eloquence without wisdom was generally speaking a great nuisance, and never beneficial.⁷⁸⁴ If the writers of textbooks on rhetoric were forced by the pressure of the truth to admit this even in their books on the subject, notwithstanding the fact that they had no knowledge of the true wisdom—the heavenly wisdom that comes down from the father of light⁷⁸⁵—how much more vital is it for us, the sons and servants of this wisdom, to hold the same opinion?

19. The wisdom of what a person says is in direct proportion to his progress in learning the holy scriptures—and I am not speaking of intensive reading or memorization, but real understanding and careful investigation of their meaning. Some

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enim qui eas legunt et neglegunt: legunt ut teneant, neglegunt ne intellegant. 20. Quibus longe sine dubio praeferendi sunt qui verba earum minus tenent et cor earum sui cordis oculis vident. Sed utrisque ille melior qui et cum volet eas dicit et sicut

oportet intellegit. 21. Huic ergo, qui sapienter debet dicere etiam quod non potest eloquenter, verba scripturarum tenere maxime necessarium est. Quanto enim se pauperiorem cernit in suis tanto eum oportet in istis esse ditiozem, ut quod dixerit suis verbis probet ex illis, et qui propriis verbis minor erat magnorum testimonio quodam modo crescat. Probando enim delectat qui minus potest delectare dicendo. 22. Porro qui non solum sapienter verum etiam eloquenter vult dicere, quoniam profecto plus proderit si utrumque potuerit, ad legendos vel audiendos et exercitatione imitandos eloquentes eum mitto libentius quam magistris artis rhetoricae vacare praecipio, si tamen hi qui leguntur et audiuntur non solum eloquenter sed etiam sapienter dixisse vel dicere veraci praedicatione laudantur. 23. Qui enim eloquenter dicunt, suaviter, qui sapienter, salubriter audiuntur. Propter quod non ait scriptura ‘multitudo eloquentium. . .’, sed *multitudo sapientium sanitas est orbis terrarum*.⁷⁸⁶ Sicut autem saepe sumenda sunt et amara salubria, ita semper vitanda est pernicioza dulcedo; sed salubri suavitate vel suavi salubritate quid melius? Quanto enim magis illic appetitur suavitas tanto facilius salubritas prodest. 24. Sunt ergo ecclesiastici viri qui divina eloquia non solum sapienter sed eloquenter etiam tractaverunt,⁷⁸⁷ quibus legendis magis non sufficit tempus quam deesse ipsi studentibus et vacantibus possunt.

25. Hic aliquis forsitan quaerit utrum auctores nostri, quorum scripta divinitus inspirata canonem nobis saluberrima auctoritate fecerunt, sapientes tantummodo an eloquentes etiam nuncupandi sint. Quae quidem quaestio apud me ipsum et apud eos qui mecum quod dico sentiunt, facillime

⁷⁸⁶ Wisd. 6: 26.

⁷⁸⁷ Cf. 2. 146.

people read them but neglect them; by their reading they profit in knowledge, by their neglect they forfeit understanding. 20. Those who remember the words less closely but penetrate to the heart of scripture with the eyes of their own heart are much to be preferred, but better than either is the person who not only quotes scripture when he chooses but also understands it as he should. 21. For a person who has to speak wisely on matters which he cannot treat eloquently close adherence to the words of scripture is particularly necessary. The poorer he sees himself to be in his own resources, the richer he must be in those of scripture, using them to confirm what he says in his own words; so that although once deficient in words of his own he can grow in stature, as it were, by the testimony of something really important. A preacher who cannot give pleasure with his words may give pleasure with his texts. 22. As for the person who wants to speak eloquently as well as wisely—it will certainly be more beneficial if he can do both—I would be happier to refer him to eloquent speakers so that he can read their works, listen to their words, and practise imitating them, than to recommend that his time be spent on teachers of rhetoric, provided that those whom he will read and listen to are reliably said to be, or to have been, wise speakers as well as eloquent ones. 23. Eloquent speakers give pleasure, wise ones salvation. That is why scripture says not that ‘a multitude of the eloquent. . .’ but ‘a multitude of the wise is the salvation of the world’.⁷⁸⁸ We often have to take bitter medicines, and we must always avoid sweet things that are dangerous: but what better than sweet things that give health, or medicines that are sweet? The more we are attracted by sweetness, the easier it is for medicine to do its healing work. 24. So there are men of the church who have interpreted God's eloquent utterances not only with wisdom but with eloquence as well;⁷⁸⁹ and it is more likely even for students with leisure to read that their time will run out than that these authors will be exhausted.

25. At this point someone may be asking whether the Christian authors whose divinely inspired writings have created for us the canon of scripture with its most beneficial authority should be pronounced just wise, or eloquent as well. In my experience, and the experience of people who feel as I do on this matter, the question is a very easy one to answer. For when I

⁷⁸⁸ Wisd. 6: 26.

⁷⁸⁹ Cf. 2. 146.

solvitur. Nam ubi eos intellego, non solum nihil eis sapientius verum etiam nihil eloquentius mihi videri potest. Et audeo dicere omnes qui recte intellegunt quod illi loquuntur simul intellegere non eos aliter loqui debuisse. 26. Sicuti est enim quaedam eloquentia quae magis aetatem iuvenilem decet, est quae senilem, nec iam dicenda est eloquentia si personae non congruit eloquentis, ita est quaedam quae viros summa auctoritate dignissimos planeque divinos decet. Haec illi locuti sunt, nec ipsos decet alia nec alios ipsa. Ipsis enim congruit; alios autem quanto videtur humilior tanto altius non ventositate sed soliditate transcendit. 27. Ubi vero non eos intellego, minus quidem mihi apparet eorum eloquentia, sed eam non dubito esse talem qualis est ubi intellego. Ipsa quoque obscuritas divinorum salubriumque dictorum tali eloquentiae miscenda fuerat, in qua proficere noster intellectus non solum inventionem verum etiam exercitatione deberet.⁷⁹⁰

28. Possem quidem, si vacaret, omnes virtutes et ornamenta eloquentiae⁷⁹¹ de quibus inflantur isti qui linguam suam nonstrorum auctorum linguae non magnitudine sed tumore praeponunt, ostendere in istorum litteris sacris quos nobis erudiendis et ab hoc saeculo pravo in beatum saeculum transferendis providentia divina providit. 29. Sed non ipsa me plus quam dici potest in illa eloquentia delectant quae sunt his viris cum oratoribus gentilium poetisve communia. Illud magis admiror et stupeo, quod ista nostra eloquentia ita usi sunt per alteram quandam eloquentiam suam, ut nec deesset eis nec emineret in eis, quia eam nec improbari ab illis nec ostentari oportebat; quorum alterum fieret si vitaretur, alterum putari posset si facile agnosceretur. 30. Et in quibus forte locis agnoscitur a doctis, tales res dicuntur ut verba quibus dicuntur non a dicente adhibita sed ipsis rebus velut sponte subiuncta videantur, quasi sapientiam de domo sua,

⁷⁹⁰ Cf. 2. 9 n.

⁷⁹¹ On tropes in scripture cf. 3. 87.

understand these authors, not only can I conceive of nothing wiser; I can conceive of nothing more eloquent. Indeed, I venture to say that all who correctly understand what these writers are saying realize at the same time that it would not have been right for them to express it in any other way. 26. For just as there is one kind of eloquence appropriate to the young, and another kind appropriate to the old—and we should not call it eloquence if it does not match the status of the speaker—so there is a kind of eloquence appropriate to writers who enjoy the highest authority and a full measure of divine inspiration. They spoke in their own particular style, and it would be inappropriate for them to have used any other style, or for others to have used theirs. It is appropriate to them, and the humbler it seems, the more thoroughly it transcends that of others, not in grandiloquence but in substance. 27. When I fail to understand them, their eloquence is less clear, but I have no doubt that it is of the same standard as that which appears clearly when I do understand them. The fusion of obscurity with such eloquence in the salutary words of God was necessary in order that our minds could develop not just by making discoveries but also by undergoing exertion.⁷⁹² 28. If I had the time, I could exemplify, in the sacred literature of the writers that divine providence has supplied to educate us and lead us from this wicked world into the world of true happiness, all the qualities and figures of eloquence⁷⁹³ which turn the heads of those who, on the basis not of grandeur but grandiloquence, prefer their own style to that of Christian writers. 29. But in that eloquence it is not the things which Christian writers have in common with pagan orators or poets that give me an in-expressible delight; what astonishes and overwhelms me is that they used our eloquence side by side with a rather different eloquence of their own in such a way that it is neither totally lacking nor unduly prominent in their writings. This is because it would have been wrong for it to be either discredited or paraded in the scriptures. (The first of these things would have happened if it had been completely avoided, the second, arguably, if it were easily recognized.) 30. In passages where scholars do perhaps recognize it, the subject-matter is such that the words used seem to be ones not selected by the speaker but ones naturally associated with the actual topic. You could

⁷⁹² Cf. 2. 9 n.

⁷⁹³ On tropes in scripture cf. 3. 87.

id est pectore sapientis, procedere intellegas et tamquam inseparabilem famulam etiam non vocatam sequi eloquentiam.

31. Quis enim non videat quid voluerit dicere et quam sapienter dixerit apostolus: *gloriamur in tribulationibus, scientes quia tribulatio patientiam operatur, patientia autem probationem, probatio vero spem, spes autem non confundit, quia caritas dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis*.⁷⁹⁴ Hic si quis, ut ita dixerim, imperite peritus artis eloquentiae praecepta apostolum secutum fuisse contendat, nonne a Christianis doctis indoctisque ridebitur? 32. Et tamen agnoscitur hic figura quae climax graece, latine vero a quibusdam est appellata gradatio,⁷⁹⁵ quoniam scalam dicere noluerunt, cum verba vel sensa conectuntur alterum ex altero; sicut hic ex tribulatione patientiam, ex patientia probationem, ex probatione spem conexam videmus. Agnoscitur et aliud decus, quoniam post aliqua pronuntiationis voce singula finita, quae nostri membra et caesa, Graeci autem cola et commata vocant, sequitur ambitus sive circuitus, quem periodon illi appellant, cuius membra suspenduntur voce dicentis donec ultimo finiatur.⁷⁹⁶ 33. Nam eorum quae praecedunt circuitum, membrum illud est primum *quoniam tribulatio patientiam operatur*, secundum *patientia autem probationem*, tertium *probatio vero spem*. Deinde subiungitur ipse circuitus, qui tribus peragitur membris, quorum primum est *spes autem non confundit*, secundum *quoniam caritas dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris*, tertium *per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis*. At haec atque huiusmodi in elocutionis arte traduntur. Sicut ergo apostolum praecepta eloquentiae secutum fuisse non dicimus, ita quod eius sapientiam secuta sit eloquentia non negamus.

34. Scribens ad Corinthios in secunda epistola redarguit quosdam qui erant ex Iudaeis pseudapostoli eique detrahebant.⁷⁹⁷ Et quoniam se ipsum praedicare compellitur, hanc sibi velut insipientiam tribuens quam sapienter dicit quamque eloquenter! Sed comes sapientiae, dux eloquentiae, illam sequens,

⁷⁹⁴ Rom. 5: 3–5.

⁷⁹⁵ Cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4. 25. 34; Quint. 9. 3. 54–7.

⁷⁹⁶ For commata, cola, and periods, see Quint. 9. 4. 22 and 122–130, and Augustine's contemporary Martianus Capella (5. 527–8). It is not clear how Augustine distinguishes *membra* and *caesa* : it is not by rhythm, length, or syntactical function.

⁷⁹⁷ 2 Cor. 11: 16–30.

visualize it as wisdom proceeding from its own home (by this I mean a wise person's heart) and eloquence, like an ever-present slave, following on behind without having to be summoned.

31. In the following passage who can fail to see what the apostle meant, and how wisely he expressed it? 'We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance character, and character hope, and that hope does not disappoint us; because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.'⁷⁹⁸ Supposing that some unscholarly scholar of rhetoric (if I may put it like this) were to maintain that Paul had here followed rhetorical rules, surely he would be laughed out of court by educated and uneducated Christians alike? 32. Yet we recognize here the figure generally designated by the Greek word 'climax'—though some people, not wishing to speak of a 'ladder', prefer the Latin word *gradatio*⁷⁹⁹—whereby words or ideas are linked one with another. So here we see 'suffering' linked with 'endurance', 'endurance' linked with 'character', 'character' linked with 'hope'. Another ornament too may be recognized, whereby after certain sections, each articulated in a single phrase—these are known to Latin teachers as 'limbs' and 'pieces', but to Greeks as 'cola' and 'commata'—there follows an 'ambit' or 'circuit' (they call it a 'period'), in which the parts are left hanging by the speaker's voice until the period is completed by the last clause.⁸⁰⁰ 33. The first of the cola that precede the period is 'that suffering produces endurance', the second is 'and endurance character', and the third 'and character hope'. Then comes the period itself, formed of three cola of which the first is 'and hope does not disappoint us', the second 'because God's love has been poured into our hearts', and the third 'through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us'. But these and other such things are part and parcel of traditional rhetoric. We do not say that Paul followed rhetorical rules; but we do not deny that his wisdom was attended by eloquence.

34. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul refutes some false apostles from the ranks of the Jews who were denigrating him.⁸⁰¹ Obligated to blow his own trumpet, and at the same time presenting this as foolishness, he spoke with an amazing combination of wisdom and eloquence, but as the servant of

⁷⁹⁸ Rom. 5: 3–5.

⁷⁹⁹ Cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4. 25. 34; Quint. 9. 3. 54–7.

⁸⁰⁰ For commata, cola, and periods, see Quint. 9. 4. 22 and 122–130, and Augustine's contemporary Martianus Capella (5. 527–8). It is not clear how Augustine distinguishes *membra* and *caesa*: it is not by rhythm, length, or syntactical function.

⁸⁰¹ 2 Cor. 11: 16–30.

istam praecedens et sequentem non respuens, 35. *iterum dico*, inquit, *ne quis me existimet insipientem esse; alioquin velut insipientem suscipite me, ut et ego modicum quid glorier. Quod loquor non loquor secundum deum, sed quasi in stultitia, in hac substantia gloriae. Quoniam quidem multi gloriantur secundum carnem, et ego gloriabor. Libenter enim sustinetis insipientes, cum sitis sapientes. Toleratis enim si quis vos in servitutem redigit, si quis devorat, si quis accipit, si quis extollitur, si quis in faciem vos caedit. Secundum ignobilitatem dico, quasi nos infirmati sumus. In quo autem quis audet (in insipientia dico), audeo et ego. Hebraei sunt? et ego. Israelitae sunt? et ego. Semen Abrahae sunt? et ego. Ministri Christi sunt? (insipiens dico), super ego. In laboribus plurimum, in carceribus abundantius, in plagis supra modum, in mortibus saepius. A Iudaeis quinquies quadraginta una minus accepi. Ter virgis caesus sum, semel lapidatus sum, ter naufragium feci; nocte et die in profundo maris fui; in itineribus saepe, periculis fluminum, periculis latronum, periculis ex genere, periculis ex gentibus, periculis in civitate, periculis in deserto, periculis in mari, periculis in falsis fratribus; in labore et aerumna, in vigiliis saepius, in fame et siti, in ieiuniis saepius, in frigore et nuditate; praeter illa quae extrinsecus sunt, incursus in me cotidianus, sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum. Quis infirmatur, et ego non infirmor? Quis scandalizatur, et ego non uror? Si gloriari oportet, in his quae infirmitatis meae sunt gloriabor. Quanta sapientia ista sint dicta vigilantes vident, quanto vero etiam eloquentiae concurrerint flumine, et qui stertit advertit.*

36. Porro autem qui novit agnoscit quod ea caesa, quae commata Graeci vocant, et membra et circuitus, de quibus paulo ante disserui, cum decentissima varietate interponerentur totam istam speciem dictionis et quasi eius vultum, quo etiam indocti delectantur moventurque, fecerunt. 37. Nam unde coepimus hunc locum inserere circuitus sunt. Primus minimus, hoc est bimembris; minus enim quam duo membra circuitus habere non possunt,⁸⁰² plura vero possunt. Ergo ille

⁸⁰² Cf. Quint. 9. 4. 125.

wisdom and the master of eloquence, being led by the one but leading the other and not disdaining it as it followed behind. 35. 'I repeat', he says, 'let nobody take me for a fool; or if you do, then accept me as a fool, so that I too may have my little boast. What I am saying I am saying not with the Lord's authority, but as a fool, in this boastful confidence. Since many people boast of worldly things, I will boast too. For although wise yourselves, you gladly tolerate fools. You put up with it if someone makes slaves of you, if someone preys on you, if someone takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or if someone slaps you in the face. I speak in terms of embarrassment, as though I was made to look weak. But whatever anyone dares to boast of (I am speaking as a fool), I dare to boast of it too. Are they Hebrews? I am too. Are they Israelites? I am too. Are they the seed of Abraham? I am too. Are they servants of Christ? Speaking as a fool, I say I am even more so. I have been many more times in adversity, more frequently in prison, the victim of beatings without limit, and more often close to death. Five times from the Jews I have received the thirty-nine lashes. Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I have suffered shipwreck; for a night and a day I have been adrift on the open sea; often on the road, in danger from rivers, in danger from robbers, in danger from my own people, in danger from Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the desert, in danger at sea, in danger from false brethren; suffering toil and hardship, and often deprived of sleep; suffering hunger and thirst, and often without food; and suffering from cold and exposure. And apart from those external things, there is the daily pressure on me, my anxiety for all my churches. Who is weakened, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not bruised? If boasting there must be, then I will boast of the things that show my weakness.' The wisdom of these words is obvious to those who are alert; the flood of eloquence which they combine to produce is apparent even to the inert.

36. A knowledgeable person recognizes that it is the above-mentioned commata, cola, and periods, that, deployed as they are with tasteful variety, have produced all the beauty of this style, which, like a pleasant face, pleases and moves even the uneducated. 37. Right from the beginning of the passage quoted there are periods. The first is the smallest sort, one of two cola (periods cannot have fewer than two,⁸⁰³ but may have

⁸⁰³ Cf. Quint. 9. 4. 125.

primus est: *iterum dico, ne quis me existimet insipientem esse*. Sequitur alius trimembris: *alioquin velut insipientem suscipite me, ut et ego modicum quid glorier*. 38. Tertius qui sequitur membra habet quattuor: *Quod loquor non loquor secundum deum, sed quasi in stultitia, in hac substantia gloriae*. Quartus duo habet: *Quoniam quidem multi gloriantur secundum carnem, et ego gloriabor*. Et quintus duo: *Libenter enim sustinetis insipientes, cum sitis sapientes*. Etiam sextus bimebris est: *Toleratis enim si quis vos in servitutem redigit*. Sequuntur tria caesa: *si quis devorat, si quis accipit, si quis extollitur*. 39. Deinde tria membra: *si quis in faciem vos caedit*. Secundum ignobilitatem dico, quasi nos infirmati sumus. Additur trimembris circuitus: *In quo autem quis audet (in insipientia dico), audeo et ego*. Hinc iam singulis quibusque caesis interrogando positae singula itidem caesa responsione redduntur, tria tribus: *Hebraei sunt? et ego. Israelitae sunt? et ego. Semen Abrahae sunt? et ego*. Quarto autem caeso simili interrogatione posito non alterius caesi, sed membri oppositione respondet: *Ministri Christi sunt? (insipiens dico) super ego*. 40. Iam caesa quattuor sequentia, remota decentissime interrogatione, funduntur: *In laboribus plurimum, in carceribus abundantius, in plagis supra modum, in mortibus saepius*. Deinde interponitur brevis circuitus, quoniam suspensa pronuntiatione distinguendum est: *A Indaeis quinquies*, ut hoc sit unum membrum, cui conecitur alterum: *quadraginta una minus accepi*. 41. Inde reditur ad caesa et ponuntur tria: *ter virgis caesus sum, semel lapidatus sum, ter naufragium feci*. Sequitur membrum: *nocte et die in profundo maris fui*. Deinde quattuordecim caesa decentissimo impetu profluunt: *in itineribus saepe, periculis fluminum, periculis latronum, periculis ex genere, periculis ex gentibus, periculis in civitate, periculis in deserto, periculis in mari, periculis in falsis fratribus; in labore et aerumna, in vigiliis saepius, in fame et siti, in ieiuniis saepius, in frigore et nuditate*. 42. Post haec interponit trimembrem circuitum: *praeter illa*

more): so the first one is 'I repeat, let nobody take me for a fool.' Another, of three cola, follows: 'or if you do, then accept me as a fool, so that I too may have my little boast.' 38. The third has four: 'What I am saying I am saying not with the Lord's authority, but as a fool, in this boastful confidence.' The fourth has two: 'Since many people boast of worldly things, I will boast too.' The fifth also has two: 'For although wise yourselves, you gladly tolerate fools.' The sixth is also of two parts: 'You put up with it if someone makes slaves of you.' Three commata follow: 'if someone preys upon you, if someone takes advantage of you, or puts on airs.' 39. Then there are three cola: 'if someone slaps you in the face. I speak in terms of embarrassment, as though I was made to look weak.' A three-fold period follows: 'But whatever anyone dares to boast of (I am speaking as a fool), I dare to boast of it too.' At this point three single commata reply individually to three questions likewise expressed in three commata: 'Are they Hebrews? I am too. Are they Israelites? I am too. Are they the seed of Abraham? I am too.' A fourth comma, again in the form of a question, receives a reply in the form not of another comma, but a colon: 'Are they servants of Christ? Speaking as a fool, I say I am even more so.' 40. Then the series of questions is tastefully withdrawn, and the four following commata pour out: 'I have been many more times in adversity, more frequently in prison, the victim of beatings without limit, and more often close to death.' Then a short period is added (it must be marked by a pause in our articulation): 'Five times from the Jews'—this is one comma, and it is joined by another—'I have received the thirty-nine lashes.' 41. Then he reverts to commata, of which there are three: 'Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I have suffered shipwreck.' A colon follows: 'for a night and a day I have been adrift on the open sea.' Next we have fourteen commata, pouring out in a magnificent rush: 'often on the road, in danger from rivers, in danger from robbers, in danger from my own people, in danger from Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the desert, in danger at sea, in danger from false brethren; suffering toil and hardship, and often deprived of sleep; suffering hunger and thirst, and often without food; and suffering from cold and exposure.' 42. After this he adds a period of three cola: 'And apart from those external things,

quae extrinsecus sunt, incursus in me cotidianus, sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum. Et huic duo membra percontatione subiungit: *Quis infirmatur, et ego non infirmor? Quis scandalizatur, et ego non uror?* Postremo totus iste quasi anhelans locus bimembri circuitu terminatur: *Si gloriari oportet, in his quae infirmitatis meae sunt gloriabor.* 43. Quod vero post hunc impetum interposita narratiuncula quodam modo requiescit et requiescere auditorem facit, quid decoris et delectationis habeat satis dici non potest. Sequitur enim dicens: *Deus et pater domini Iesu scit, qui est benedictus in saecula, quia non mentior.* Ac deinde quomodo periclitatus fuerit et quomodo evaserit brevissime narrat.

44. Longum est cetera persequi vel in aliis sanctarum scripturarum locis ista monstrare. Quid si etiam figuras locutionis quae illa arte traduntur in his saltem quae de apostoli eloquio commemoravi ostendere voluissem? Nonne facilius graves homines me nimium quam quisquam studiosorum sibi sufficientem putaret? 45. Haec omnia quando a magistris docentur pro magno habentur, magno emuntur, magna iactatione venduntur.⁸⁰⁴ Quam iactationem etiam ego redolere vereor, dum ista sic dissero. Sed male doctis hominibus respondendum fuit, qui nostros auctores contemnendos putant non quia non habent sed quia non ostentant quam nimis isti diligunt eloquentiam.

46. Sed forte quis putat tamquam eloquentem nostrum elegisse me apostolum Paulum. Videtur enim ubi ait, *etsi imperitus sermone, sed non scientia*,⁸⁰⁵ quasi concedendo obtrectatoribus sic locutus, non tamquam id verum agnosceret confitendo. Si autem dixisset, ‘imperitus quidem sermone, sed non scientia’, nullo modo aliud posset intellegi. Scientiam plane non cunctatus est profiteri, sine qua esse doctor gentium non valeret. 47. Certe si quid eius proferimus ad exemplum eloquentiae, ex illis epistolis utique proferimus quas etiam ipsi obtrectatores eius, qui sermonem praesentis contemptibilem putari volebant, graves et fortes esse confessi sunt.⁸⁰⁶ 48. Dicendum

⁸⁰⁴ Cf. 4. 144. It is also a prominent theme in *Conf.* e.g. at 4. 2. 2. and 8. 6. 13.

⁸⁰⁵ 2 Cor. 11: 6.

⁸⁰⁶ 2 Cor. 10: 10.

there is the daily pressure on me, my anxiety for all my churches.' To this he adds two cola in the form of a question: 'Who is weakened, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not bruised?' Finally the whole of this rather breathless passage is concluded with a bipartite period of two cola: 'If boasting there must be, then I will boast of the things that show my weakness.' 43. After this blitz, by introducing a short passage of narrative, he calms down, as it were, and makes the reader calm down, with a grace and a charm that words cannot adequately express. For he follows this up by saying: 'The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed for ever and ever, knows that I am not lying' And then he briefly describes how he was in danger and how he escaped.

44. It would be tedious to examine all the passage's stylistic virtues or to point them out in other passages of the holy scriptures. Suppose I had chosen to demonstrate the figures of speech, as transmitted in textbooks of rhetoric, that occur just in these passages, which I quoted to show Paul's eloquence: serious men would think that I was overdoing it long before any of those scholarly types thought that I had done enough. 45. When taught by schoolmasters all these things are regarded as something great; they are bought at a great price, and sold with great showmanship.⁸⁰⁷ I am anxious to avoid giving the impression of showmanship in my discussion, but I had to reply to the ill-educated people who think our authors contemptible not because they do not possess the eloquence that our critics are so inordinately fond of, but because they do not make a show of it.

46. But someone may be thinking that I chose the apostle Paul just because he is the paragon of Christian eloquence. When he said, 'Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge',⁸⁰⁸ he appears to have been making a concession to his detractors rather than an acknowledgement of the truth. If he had said, 'Unskilled in speech I may be, but not so in knowledge', there would be no other way to interpret it. Clearly he did not hesitate to admit his knowledge, without which he could not have been the teacher of the Gentiles. 47. In any case, anything of his that we quote as a paradigm of eloquence is taken from the letters, which even his detractors, who wanted him to be thought contemptible as a speaker, admitted to be weighty and powerful.⁸⁰⁹ 48. So I realize that I must say something also

⁸⁰⁷ Cf. 4. 144. It is also a prominent theme in *Conf.* e.g. at 4. 2. 2. and 8. 6. 13.

⁸⁰⁸ 2 Cor. 11: 6.

⁸⁰⁹ 2 Cor. 10: 10.

ergo mihi aliquid esse video et de eloquentia prophetarum, ubi per tropologiam multa obteguntur. Quae quanto magis translatis verbis videntur operiri tanto magis cum fuerint aperta dulcescunt. Sed hoc loco tale aliquid commemorare debeo, ubi quae dicta sunt non cogar exponere sed commendem tantum quomodo dicta sint. Et ex illius prophetae libro potissimum hoc faciam, qui se pastorem vel armentarium fuisse dicit atque inde divinitus ablatum atque missum ut dei populo prophetaret. Non autem secundum Septuaginta interpretes, qui etiam ipsi divino Spiritu interpretati ob hoc aliter videntur nonnulla dixisse, ut ad spiritalem sensum scrutandum magis admoneretur lectoris intentio, unde etiam obscuriora nonnulla, quia magis tropica, sunt eorum, sed sicut ex hebraeo in latinum eloquium presbytero Hieronymo utriusque linguae perito interpretante translata sunt.⁸¹⁰

49. Cum igitur argueret impios, superbos, luxuriosos et fraternae ideo neglegentissimos caritatis, rusticus vel ex rustico iste propheta exclamavit, dicens,⁸¹¹ *vae qui opulenti estis in Sion, et confiditis in monte Samariae, optimates capita populorum, ingredienti pompatice domum Israel! Transite in Chalanne et videte et ite inde in Emath magnam et descendite in Geth Palaestinarum et ad optima quaeque regna horum, si latior terminus eorum termino vestro est. Qui separati estis in diem malum et appropinquatis solio iniquitatis, qui dormitis in lectis eburneis et lascivitis in stratis vestris, qui comeditis agnum de grege et vitulos de medio armenti, qui canitis ad vocem psalterii. Sicut David putaverunt se habere vasa cantici, bibentes in phialis vinum, et optimo unguento delibuti, et nihil patiebantur super contritione Ioseph.* 50. Numquidnam isti, qui prophetas nostros tamquam ineruditos et elocutionis ignaros velut docti disertique contemnunt, si aliquid eis tale vel in tales dicendum fuisset, aliter se voluissent dicere, qui tamen eorum insanire

noluissent? 51. Quid enim est quod isto eloquio aures sobriae plus desiderent? Primo ipsa invectio quasi sopitis

⁸¹⁰ The Vulgate: see M. Moreau, 'Sur un commentaire d'Amos', in A.-M. La Bonnardière, *Saint Augustin et la Bible*, 313–322, and A.-M. La Bonnardière, 'Augustin a-t-il utilisé la Vulgate de Jérôme?', *ibid.* 303–12. On the Septuagint, cf. 2. 54 n.

⁸¹¹ Amos 6: 1–6.

about the eloquence of the prophets, in which much is obscure because of their figurative language. Indeed, the more opaque they seem, because of their use of metaphor, the greater the reader's pleasure when the meaning becomes clear. But I must make a similar analysis here, in passages where I am not obliged to explain the meaning but will restrict myself to presenting features of the style. I shall do this with particular reference to the book of the prophet who described himself as a shepherd or a herdsman, but was removed from that job by a divine summons and sent to prophesy to God's people. My text is not that of the Septuagint, whose seventy translators though working with the help of the Holy Spirit seem to have rendered some passages in different ways so that the reader's attention might be alerted to the search for spiritual meaning (which is why some of their sayings—the more figurative ones—are rather obscure), but that of the translation from Hebrew into Latin made by the priest Jerome, an expert in both languages.⁸¹²

49. When condemning the wicked, the proud, and the self-indulgent, and those who as a result were quite unmindful of brotherly love, this rustic (or erstwhile rustic) prophet exclaimed in these words:⁸¹³ 'Woe to those of you who are comfortably off in Sion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, leaders, and heads of the peoples, who enter the house of Israel with pomp and circumstance! Go across to Calneh and see, and travel from there to Hamath the great and descend into Gath of the Philistines and to all their best kingdoms, to see if their territories are broader than your territories. You who are set apart for the day of evil and approach the throne of iniquity, who sleep on couches of ivory and run riot in your beds, who devour the lamb from the flock and calves from the middle of the herd, who sing to the sound of the psaltery. Like David, they thought that they had the vessels of song, drinking wine in bowls, and anointed with the best perfume, and they suffered no pain over the dismay of Joseph.' 50. Would those who despise our prophets as unlearned and unacquainted with eloquence (as if they themselves were learned and eloquent!) have wished to speak any differently if they had had something similar to say to such an audience—those of them, at any rate, who did not want to behave like freaks? 51. What is there that discriminating ears could possibly want over and above such eloquence? First, there is the invective, crashing with an

⁸¹² The Vulgate: see M. Moreau, 'Sur un commentaire d'Amos', in A.-M. La Bonnardière, *Saint Augustin et la Bible*, 313–322, and A.-M. La Bonnardière, 'Augustin a-t-il utilisé la Vulgate de Jérôme?', *ibid.* 303–12. On the Septuagint, cf. 2. 54 n.

⁸¹³ Amos 6: 1–6.

sensibus ut evigilarent quo fremitu illisa est: *vae qui opulenti estis in Sion, et confiditis in monte Samariae, optimates capita populorum, ingredienti pompaticae domum Israel!* Deinde, ut beneficiis dei, qui eis ampla spatia regni dedit, ostendat ingratos, quoniam confidebant in monte Samariae, ubi utique idola colebantur, *Transite, inquit, in Chalanne et videte et ite inde in Emath magnam et descendite in Geth Palaestinorum et ad optima quaeque regna horum, si latior terminus eorum termino vestro est.* 52. Simul etiam cum ista dicuntur locorum nominibus tamquam luminibus ornatur eloquium,⁸¹⁴ quae sunt Sion, Samaria, Chalanne, Emath magna et Geth Palaestinorum. Deinde verba quae his adiunguntur locis decentissime variantur: *opulenti estis, confiditis,*

transite, ite, descendite. 53. Consequenter denuntiatur futura sub iniquo rege appropinquare captivitas, cum adiungitur: *Qui separati estis in diem malum et appropinquatis solio iniquitatis.* Tunc subiciuntur merita luxuriae: *qui dormitis in lectis eburneis et lascivitis in stratis vestris, qui comeditis agnum de grege et vitulos de medio armenti.* Ista sex membra tres bimembres circuitus ediderunt.⁸¹⁵ 54. Non enim ait, ‘Qui separati estis in diem malum, qui appropinquatis solio iniquitatis, qui dormitis in lectis eburneis, qui lascivitis in stratis vestris, qui comeditis agnum de grege, qui vitulos de medio armenti’. Quod si ita diceretur esset quidem et hoc pulchrum, ut ab uno pronomine repetito omnia sex membra decurrerent et pronuntiantis voce singula finirentur; sed pulchrius factum est ut eidem pronomini essent bina subnexa, quae tres sententias explicarunt, unam ad captivitatis praenuntiationem: *Qui separati estis in diem malum et appropinquatis solio iniquitatis*; alteram ad libidinem: *qui dormitis in lectis eburneis et lascivitis in stratis vestris*; ad voracitatem vero tertiam pertinentem: *qui comeditis agnum de grege et vitulos de medio armenti*, ut in potestate sit pronuntiantis utrum singula finiat et membra sint sex, an primum et tertium et quintum voce suspendat et secundum primo, quartum tertio, sextum quinto

⁸¹⁴ Cf. Cic. Orat. 163 *locorum splendidis nominibus illuminatus est versus* (‘the line is lit up with glorious place-names’).

⁸¹⁵ Although they are not complete sentences. Cf. n. 21.

explosive roar upon sleepy senses to awaken them: 'Woe to those of you who are comfortably off in Sion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, leaders, and heads of the peoples, who enter the house of Israel with pomp and circumstance.' Then in order to show that because of their confidence in the mountain of Samaria (where idols were worshipped) they were ungrateful for the benefits of God, who gave them the broad expanses of their kingdom, he says: 'Go across to Calneh and see, and travel from there to Hamath the great and descend into Gath of the Philistines and to all their best kingdoms, to see if their territories are broader than your territories.' 52. As these points are made, the discourse is enhanced, highlighted as it were,⁸¹⁶ by the names of places—Sion, Samaria, Calneh, Hamath the great, and Gath of the Philistines—and there is elegant variation in the words attached to these place-names: 'you are comfortably off', 'you trust', 'go across', 'travel', 'descend'. 53. Their future enslavement under a wicked king is aptly declared to be approaching in the following words: 'You who are set apart for the day of evil and approach the throne of iniquity.' Then the acts of self-indulgence follow: 'who sleep on couches of ivory and run riot in your beds, who devour the lamb from the flock and the calves from the middle of the herd.' These six cola produce three bipartite periods.⁸¹⁷ 54. He does not say: 'You who are set apart for the day of evil, who approach the throne of iniquity, who sleep on couches of ivory, who run riot in your beds, who devour the lamb from the flock, who devour the calves from the middle of the herd'; if he had, this too would be attractively expressed, with all six cola each flowing from the one repeated pronoun and each one marked off by a pause in the speaker's voice. But it was expressed more attractively by attaching to a single pronoun a pair of clauses, each of which expounded three ideas, one on the prediction of captivity ('who are set apart for the day of evil and approach the throne of iniquity'), one on their lust ('who sleep on couches inlaid with ivory, and run riot in your beds'), and the third on their greed ('who devour the lamb from the flock and calves from the middle of the herd'). So it is for the reader to choose whether to separate each element in pronunciation and make six cola, or, by not lowering the voice after the first, third, and fifth elements, to combine the first with the second, the third

⁸¹⁶ Cf. Cic. *Orat.* 163 *locorum splendidis nominibus illuminatus est versus* ('the line is lit up with glorious place-names').

⁸¹⁷ Although they are not complete sentences. Cf. n. 21.

conectendo tres bimembres circuitus decentissime faciat: unum quo calamitas imminens, alterum quo lectus impurus, tertium quo prodiga mensa monstratur. 55. Deinde luxuriosam remordet aurium voluptatem. Ubi cum dixisset, *qui canitis ad vocem psalterii*, quoniam potest exerceri sapienter a sapientibus musica, mirabili decore dicendi, invectionis impetu relaxato, et non ad illos sed de illis iam loquens, ut nos musicam sapientis a musica luxuriantis distinguere commoneret, non ait, ‘qui canitis ad vocem psalterii et sicut David putatis vos habere vasa cantici’, 56. sed cum illud ad illos dixisset quod luxuriosi audire deberent, *qui canitis ad vocem psalterii*, imperitiam quoque eorum aliis quodam modo indicavit adiungens, *Sicut David putaverunt se habere vasa cantici, bibentes in phialis vinum et optimo unguento delibuti*. Tria haec melius pronuntiantur si suspensis duobus prioribus membris circuitus tertio finiantur.

57. Iam vero quod his omnibus adicitur: *et nihil patiebantur super contritione Ioseph*, sive continuatim dicatur ut unum sit membrum, sive decentius suspendatur *et nihil patiebantur*, et post hanc distinctionem inferatur: *super contritione Ioseph*, atque sit bimembris circuitus, miro decore non dictum est, ‘nihil patiebantur super contritione fratris’, sed positus est pro fratre ‘Ioseph’, ut quicumque frater proprio significaretur eius nomine, cuius ex fratribus fama praeclara est, vel in malis quae pendit vel in bonis quae rependit. 58. Iste certe tropus, ubi Ioseph quemcumque fratrem facit intellegi, nescio utrum illa quam didicimus et docuimus arte tradatur.⁸¹⁸ Quam sit tamen pulcher et quemadmodum afficiat legentes atque intellegentes, non opus est cuiquam dici si ipse non sentit.

59. Et plura quidem quae pertineant ad praecepta eloquentiae in hoc ipso loco, quem pro exemplo posuimus, possunt reperiri. Sed bonum auditorem non tam si diligenter discutiatur instruit, quam si ardentem pronuntietur accendit.

⁸¹⁸ If it had been, it would surely be in the long list in Book 4 of *Rhet. Her.*, but it is not mentioned there.

with the fourth, and the fifth with the sixth, and so, very tastefully, create three bipartite periods, of which one shows the impending disaster, one their sexual immorality, and one their extravagant gourmandise. 55. Then he castigates the self-indulgent pleasures of the ear. After saying 'who sing to the sound of the psaltery', he reins in the force of his invective with remarkable taste. He speaks not to them but about them and, in order to warn us to distinguish the wise man's music from the libertine's (for music can be performed wisely by the wise) does not say 'who sing to the sound of the psaltery and like David think that you have the vessels of song'; 56. but rather, after saying something which these libertines needed to be told ('you who sing to the sound of the psaltery') he also somehow contrived to reveal their ignorance to others by adding 'like David, they thought that they had the vessels of song, drinking wine in bowls, and anointed with the best perfume'. (These three cola are articulated better if the first two cola are not followed by a lowering of the voice and the period is rounded off by the third one.) 57. Now for the phrase which is added to all this: 'and they suffered no pain over the dismay of Joseph'. Whether it is spoken continuously, as one colon, or, more tastefully, by lowering the voice after 'and they suffered no pain', and by adding the words 'over the dismay of Joseph' after a pause, creating a bipartite period, it is a sign of remarkable taste that he does not say, 'they suffered no pain over the dismay of their brother', but puts 'Joseph' instead of 'brother', so that any brother is signified by the proper name of the particular brother whose fame, whether because of the injuries he suffered or the kindnesses with which he repaid them, overshadowed that of his brothers. 58. I am not sure if the figure by which 'Joseph' is made to stand for 'any brother' is specified in the discipline which I learnt and taught;⁸¹⁹ but there is no need to point out how attractive it is and how much it impresses those who read and understand it to anyone if he does not realize it for himself.

59. Even more things relevant to the rules of eloquence could be discovered in this same passage which I quoted as an example. But the effect of eloquence on a person of good character is not so much to instruct when painstakingly discussed as to inspire when passionately delivered. For such

⁸¹⁹ If it had been, it would surely be in the long list in Book 4 of *Rhet. Her.*, but it is not mentioned there.

Neque enim haec humana industria composita sed divina mente sunt fusa et sapienter et eloquenter, non intenta in eloquentiam sapientia, sed a sapientia non recedente eloquentia. 60. Si enim, sicut quidam disertissimi atque acutissimi viri videre ac dicere potuerunt, ea quae oratoria velut arte discuntur non observarentur et notarentur et in hanc doctrinam redigerentur nisi prius in oratorum invenirentur ingeniis,⁸²⁰ quid mirum si et in istis inveniuntur quos ille misit qui fecit ingenia? Quapropter et eloquentes quidem, non solum sapientes canonicos nostros auctores doctoresque fateamur tali eloquentia qualis personis eius modi congruebat.

61. Sed nos etsi de litteris eorum quae sine difficultate intelleguntur nonnulla sumimus elocutionis exempla, nequaquam putare debemus imitandos nobis eos esse in his, quae ad exercendas et eliminandas quodam modo mentes legentium et ad rumpenda fastidia atque acuenda studia discere volentium, celandos quoque, sive ut ad pietatem convertantur sive ut a mysteriis secludantur, animos impiorum utili ac salubri obscuritate dixerunt. 62. Sic quippe illi locuti sunt, ut posteriores qui eos recte intellegerent et exponerent alteram gratiam, disparem quidem, verumtamen subsequentem in dei ecclesia reperirent. Non ergo expositores eorum ita loqui debent tamquam se ipsi exponendos simili auctoritate proponant, sed in omnibus sermonibus suis primitus ac maxime ut intellegantur elaborent, ea quantum possunt perspicuitate dicendi, ut aut multum tardus sit qui non intellegit, aut in rerum quas explicare atque ostendere volumus difficultate ac subtilitate, non in nostra locutione sit causa qua minus

tardiusve quod dicimus possit intellegi. 63. Sunt enim quaedam quae vi sua non intelleguntur aut vix intelleguntur, quantolibet et quantumlibet quamvis planissime dicentis versentur eloquio. Quae in populi audientiam vel raro, si aliquid urget, vel numquam omnino mittenda sunt. In libris autem, qui ita scribuntur ut ipsi sibi quodam modo lectorem teneant cum

⁸²⁰ Cf. Cic. *De Orat.* 1. 146.

things were not produced by human labour, but poured from the divine mind with both wisdom and eloquence; and it was not a case of wisdom being devoted to eloquence but of eloquence keeping pace with wisdom. 60. As certain eloquent and discerning authorities were able to see and say, the things that are learnt in the so-called art of public speaking would not have been observed, noted, and systematized into a discipline if they had not first been found in the minds of orators;⁸²¹ so why be surprised if they are also found in the words of men sent by God, the creator of all minds? We should therefore acknowledge that our canonical authors and teachers are eloquent, and not just wise, with a kind of eloquence appropriate to the kind of persons they were.

61. Although I am taking numerous examples of style from those of their writings which are understood without difficulty, we should certainly not think that they are suitable for imitation in those passages where they have spoken with a helpful and healthy obscurity in order to exercise and somehow refine their readers' minds or to overcome the reluctance and whet the enthusiasm of those seeking to learn, or even in order to cloud the minds of the wicked, whether this is done to turn them to holiness or to exclude them from the holy mysteries. 62. They spoke in this way so that later writers who understood and expounded them correctly might find within God's church a further source of grace, one not equal to theirs but subsidiary to it. Their expositors should not speak in such a way that they set themselves up as similar authorities, themselves in need of exposition, but should endeavour first and foremost in all their sermons to make themselves understood and to ensure, by means of the greatest possible clarity, that only the very slow fail to understand, and that the reason why anything that we say is not easily or quickly understood lies in the difficulty and complexity of the matters that we wish to explain and clarify, and not in our mode of expression. 63. There are some things which are not understood, or barely understood, in themselves, no matter how carefully they are expressed or how many times they are repeated by even the plainest of speakers. These things should seldom be put to a popular audience, and then only if there is a pressing need, or arguably never at all. But in the case of books, which because they are in writing somehow grip the reader when they are

⁸²¹ Cf. Cic. *De Orat.* 1. 146.

intelleguntur, cum autem non intelleguntur molesti non sint volentibus⁸²² legere, et in aliquorum collocationibus non est hoc officium deserendum, ut vera quamvis ad intellegendum difficillima, quae ipsi iam percepimus, cum quantocumque labore disputationis ad aliorum intellegentiam perducamus, si tenet auditorem vel collocutorem discendi cupiditas nec mentis capacitas deficit, quae quoquo modo intimata possit accipere, non curante illo qui docet quanta eloquentia doceat sed quanta evidentia.

64. Cuius evidentiae diligens appetitus aliquando negligit verba cultiora nec curat quid bene sonet sed quid bene indicet atque intimet quod ostendere intendit. Unde ait quidam, cum de tali genere locutionis ageret, esse in ea quandam diligentem neglegentiam.⁸²³ Haec tamen sic detrahit ornatum ut sordes non contrahat. 65. Quamvis in bonis doctoribus tanta docendi cura sit, vel esse debeat, ut verbum quod nisi obscurum sit vel ambiguum latinum esse non potest, vulgi autem more sic dicitur ut ambiguitas obscuritasque vitetur, non sic dicatur ut a doctis sed potius ut ab indoctis dici solet. Si enim non piguit dicere interpretes nostros, *non congregabo conventicula eorum de sanguinibus*,⁸²⁴ quoniam senserunt ad rem pertinere ut eo loco pluraliter enuntiaretur hoc nomen, quod in latina lingua singulariter tantummodo dicitur, cur pietatis doctorem pigeat imperitis loquentem ‘ossum’ potius quam ‘os’ dicere, ne ista syllaba non ab eo quod sunt *ossa* sed ab eo quod sunt *ora* intellegatur, ubi Aerae aures de correptione vocalium vel productione non iudicant? 66. Quid enim prodest locutionis integritas quam non sequitur intellectus audientis, cum loquendi omnino nulla sit causa si quod loquimur non intellegunt propter quos ut intellegant loquimur? Qui ergo docet vitabit verba omnia quae non docent, et si pro eis alia quae integra intellegantur potest dicere id magis eligit. Si autem non potest, sive quia non sunt sive quia in praesentia non occurrunt, utetur etiam verbis minus integris, dum tamen res ipsa doceatur atque discatur integre.

⁸²² Reading *volentibus* with a minority of manuscripts rather than *nolentibus*; the point is not that readers can put books down but that unlike listeners they do not withhold their attention when they fail to understand something.

⁸²³ Cf. Cic. *Orat.* 78 *quaedam etiam neglegentia est diligens* ('there is also a contrived kind of casualness').

⁸²⁴ Ps. 15: 34: (16: 4). Cf. 3. 15 n.

understood, and do not annoy people when they are not understood, if they really want⁸²⁵ to read them, and also in the case of debates with certain sorts of people, we should not shirk the duty of making plain to the minds of others the truths which we have ourselves perceived, however hard they may be to comprehend, with as much effort and argument as may be necessary; always assuming that our listener or disputant has the will to learn and does not lack the mental capacity to absorb such things, in whatever way they are presented by a teacher concerned not for the eloquence of his teaching but its clarity.

64. The careful pursuit of this clarity sometimes leads one to neglect elegant vocabulary and consider not what sounds good but what is good for putting over and making clear what one has to say. One writer, when dealing with this kind of discourse, spoke of a ‘contrived casualness’.⁸²⁶ Such a style disposes of ornament without exposing itself to squalor. 65. But good teachers take, or should take, the greatest care to ensure that a word which cannot be good Latin unless it is obscure or ambiguous, but which is used in colloquial speech in a way that avoids obscurity and ambiguity, is not used as it is used by educated people but rather as the uneducated tend to use it. Our translators were happy to say ‘I shall not convene assemblies from their bloods’,⁸²⁷ since they realized that it was important in this particular context to use the plural form of this noun, although it is used only in the singular in Latin; so why should a teacher of holiness, when speaking to the unlearned, be averse to saying *ossum* rather than *os*, so as to prevent the monosyllable being interpreted not as the singular of *ossa* but as the singular of *ora* (since the African ear is not a good judge of short or long vowels)? 66. What is the use of correct speech if it does not meet with the listener's understanding? There is no point in speaking at all if our words are not understood by the people to whose understanding our words are directed. The teacher, then, will avoid all words that do not communicate; if, in their place, he can use other words which are intelligible in their correct forms, he will choose to do that, but if he cannot—either because they do not exist or because they do not occur to him at the time—he will use words that are less correct, provided that the subject-matter itself is communicated and learnt correctly.

⁸²⁵ Reading *volentibus* with a minority of manuscripts rather than *nolentibus*; the point is not that readers can put books down but that unlike listeners they do not withhold their attention when they fail to understand something.

⁸²⁶ Cf. Cic. *Orat.* 78 *quaedam etiam neglegentia est diligens* (‘there is also a contrived kind of casualness’).

⁸²⁷ Ps. 15: 34: (16: 4). Cf. 3. 15 n.

67. Et hoc quidem non solum in collocutionibus, sive fiant cum aliquo uno sive cum pluribus, verum etiam et multo magis in populis quando sermo promitur, ut intellegamur instandum est, quia in collocutionibus est cuique interrogandi potestas. Ubi autem omnes tacent ut audiatur unus et in eum intenta ora convertunt, ibi ut requirat quisque quod non intellexerit nec moris est nec decoris, ac per hoc debet maxime tacenti subvenire cura dicentis. 68. Solet enim motu suo significare utrum intellexerit cognoscendi avida multitudo. Quod donec significet, versandum est quod agitur multimoda varietate dicendi; quod in potestate non habent qui praeparata et ad verbum memoriter retenta pronuntiant. Mox autem ut intellectum esse constiterit, aut sermo finiendus aut in alia transeundum est. 69. Sicut enim gratus est qui cognoscenda enubilat, sic onerosus qui cognita inculcat, eis dumtaxat quorum tota expectatio in dissolvenda eorum quae panduntur difficultate pendebat. Nam delectandi gratia etiam nota dicuntur, ubi non ipsa sed modus quo dicuntur attenditur. Quod si et ipse iam notus est atque auditoribus placet, paene nihil interest utrum is qui dicit dictor an lector sit. 70. Solent enim et ea quae commode scripta sunt non solum ab eis quibus primitus innotescunt iucunde legi verum ab his etiam quibus iam nota sunt neque adhuc illa de memoria delevit oblivio non sine iucunditate relegi vel ab utrisque libenter audiri. Quae autem quisque iam oblitus est, cum commonetur, docetur.⁸²⁸ Sed de modo delectandi nunc non ago; de modo quo docendi sunt qui discere desiderant loquor. 71. Is est autem optimus, quo fit ut qui audit verum audiat et quod audit intellegat. Ad quem finem cum ventum fuerit nihil tunc amplius de ipsa re tamquam diutius docenda laborandum est, sed forte de commendanda ut in corde figatur. Quod si faciendum videbitur, ita modeste faciendum est ne perveniatur ad taedium.

72. Prorsus haec est in docendo eloquentia, qua fit dicendo

⁸²⁸ Rather than delighted; Augustine anticipates the distinction he is about to make.

67. This aim of being intelligible should be strenuously pursued not only in debates, whether with one person or several, but also, and this is even more important, in public gatherings when a sermon is delivered. In debates everyone has an opportunity to ask questions, but when all hush their voices to listen to one speaker, and turn their attentive faces towards him, it is not usual or acceptable for someone to ask questions about something he has not understood. So the speaker's sensitivity must come to the aid of the silent listener. 68. A crowd that is eager to learn tends to show by its movements whether it has understood. Until it does show this, the topic must be rolled around in a variety of different ways—this is not possible for those who deliver prepared or memorized speeches—but when it is clear that it has been understood, the sermon should be brought to an end or a transition made to another topic. 69. A speaker who clarifies something that needs to be learnt is a blessing, but a speaker who labours things already learnt is a bore, at least for those who were keyed up by the prospect of resolving difficulties in the matters being explained. But in order to delight one's audience even well-known topics may be treated; here the attraction lies not in the topics themselves, but in the style. If this is itself familiar and welcome to an audience, it hardly matters whether the speaker speaks or reads his speech. 70. Things which are well written tend not only to be read with pleasure on first acquaintance, but also to be reread with considerable pleasure by those who are already acquainted and have not yet lost their memory of them; and both classes tend to enjoy listening to them. (When a person is reminded of something he has forgotten, he is being taught.)⁸²⁹ But I am not now concerned with methods of giving pleasure; I am speaking about methods of teaching people who are eager to learn. 71. The best method is one by which the listener hears the truth and understands what he hears. Once this goal has been reached there is no need to busy oneself in teaching that particular topic any longer, but it may be necessary to make it attractive, and so implant it in the mind. If it does seem necessary, it should be done with restraint, to prevent boredom. 72. In a word, the function of eloquence in teaching is not

⁸²⁹ Rather than delighted; Augustine anticipates the distinction he is about to make.

non ut libeat quod horrebat aut ut fiat quod pigebat sed ut appareat quod latebat. Quod tamen si fiat insuaviter, ad paucos quidem studiosissimos suos pervenit fructus, qui ea quae discenda sunt, quamvis abiecte inculteque dicantur, scire desiderant. Quod cum adepti fuerint, ipsa delectabiliter veritate pascuntur, bonorumque ingeniorum insignis est indoles in verbis verum amare, non verba. 73. Quid enim prodest clavis aurea, si aperire quod volumus non potest, aut quid obest lignea, si hoc potest, quando nihil quaerimus nisi patere quod clausum est? Sed quoniam inter se habent non-nullam similitudinem vescentes atque discentes, propter fastidia plurimorum etiam ipsa sine quibus vivi non potest alimenta condienda sunt. 74. Dixit enim quidam eloquens, et verum dixit, ita dicere debere eloquentem ut doceat, ut delectet, ut flectat.⁸³⁰ Deinde addidit, *docere necessitatis est, delectare suavitatis, flectere victoriae*. Horum trium quod primo loco positum est, hoc est docendi necessitas, in rebus est constituta quas dicimus, reliqua duo in modo quo dicimus. Qui ergo dicit cum docere vult, quamdiu non intellegitur nondum se existimet dixisse quod vult ei quem vult docere, quia etsi dixit quod ipse intellegit, nondum illi dixisse putandus est a quo intellectus non est; si vero intellectus est, quocumque modo dixerit, dixit. 75. Quod si etiam delectare vult eum cui dicit aut flectere, non quocumque modo dixerit faciet, sed interest quomodo dicat ut faciat. Sicut est autem ut teneatur ad audiendum delectandus auditor, ita flectendus ut moveatur ad agendum. Et sicut delectatur si suaviter loquaris, ita flectitur si amet quod polliceris, timeat quod minaris, oderit quod arguis, quod commendas amplectatur, quod dolendum exaggeras doleat, cum quid laetandum praedicas gaudeat, misereatur eorum quos miserandos ante oculos dicendo constituis, fugiat eos quos cavendos terrendo

⁸³⁰ Cic. *Orat.* 69, with *probare* ('to demonstrate') for *docere*; the verbs are virtually synonymous, as emerges in 4. 127.

to make people like what was once offensive, or to make them do what they were loth to do, but to make clear what was hidden from them. If this is done in a disagreeable way, the benefits reach only a few enthusiasts, who are eager to know the things they need to learn no matter how dull and unattractive the teaching may be. Once they have attained it, they feed on the truth itself with great delight; it is the nature of good minds to love truth in the form of words, not the words themselves. 73. What use is a golden key, if it cannot unlock what we want to be unlocked, and what is wrong with a wooden one, if it can, since our sole aim is to open closed doors? Learning has a lot in common with eating: to cater for the dislikes of the majority even the nutrients essential to life must be made appetizing.⁷⁴ It has been said by a man of eloquence, and quite rightly, that the eloquent should speak in such a way as to instruct, delight, and move their listeners.⁸³¹ He then added: 'instructing is a matter of necessity, delighting a matter of charm, and moving them a matter of conquest.' The first of these three, the need to instruct, relates to the subject-matter of our discourse, the other two to the style we use. A speaker wishing to instruct should not think that he has communicated what he wishes to communicate to the person he wishes to instruct until he is understood. Even if he has said what he himself understands, he should not yet think that he has communicated with the person who fails to understand him; but if he has been understood, then, no matter how he has spoken, he has communicated. 75. But if he also wishes to delight the person he is speaking to, or to move him, he will not achieve this by speaking anyhow; it makes a difference what style he uses for this purpose. A hearer must be delighted, so that he can be gripped and made to listen, and moved so that he can be impelled to action. Your hearer is delighted if you speak agreeably, and moved if he values what you promise, fears what you threaten, hates what you condemn, embraces what you commend, and rues the thing which you insist that he must regret; and if he rejoices at what you set forth in your preaching as something joyful, pities those whom by your words you present to his mind's eye as miserable, and shuns those whom with terrifying language you urge him to avoid.

⁸³¹ Cic. *Orat.* 69, with *probare* ('to demonstrate') for *docere*; the verbs are virtually synonymous, as emerges in 4. 127.

proponis, et quidquid aliud grandi eloquentia fieri potest ad commovendos animos auditorum, non quid agendum sit ut sciant, sed ut agant quod agendum esse iam sciunt. 76. Si autem adhuc nesciunt prius utique docendi sunt quam movendi. Et fortasse rebus ipsis cognitis ita movebuntur ut eos non opus sit maioribus eloquentiae viribus iam moveri. Quod tamen cum opus est, faciendum est; tunc autem opus est, quando cum scierint quid agendum sit non agunt. Ac per hoc docere necessitatis est. Possunt enim homines et agere et non agere quod sciunt. Quis autem dixerit eos agere debere quod nesciunt? Et ideo flectere necessitatis non est, quia non semper opus est, si tantum docenti vel etiam delectanti consentit auditor. Ideo autem victoriae est, quia fieri potest ut et doceatur et delectetur et non assentiatur. 77. Quid autem illa duo proderunt si desit hoc tertium? Sed neque delectare necessitatis est, quandoquidem cum dicendo vera monstrantur—quod ad officium docendi pertinet—non eloquio agitur neque hoc attenditur ut vel ipsa vel ipsum delectet eloquium, sed per se ipsa, quoniam vera sunt, manifestata delectant. Unde plerumque delectant etiam falsa patefacta atque convicta. Neque enim delectant quia falsa sunt, sed quia falsa esse verum est delectat et dictio qua hoc verum esse monstratum est. 78. Propter eos autem quibus fastidientibus non placet veritas si alio quocumque modo, sed si eo modo dicatur ut placeat et sermo dicentis, datus est in eloquentia non parvus etiam delectationi locus. Quae tamen addita non sufficit duris, quos nec intellexisse nec docentis elocutione delectatos esse profuerit. Quid enim haec duo conferunt homini qui et confitetur verum et collaudat eloquium nec inclinat assensum, propter quem solum, cum aliquid suadetur, rebus quae dicuntur invigilat dicentis intentio? 79. Si enim talia docentur

There are other things too in this grand style of eloquence which can be done to move the minds of listeners, the purpose being not to make known to them what they must do, but to make them do what they already know must be done. 76. If they are still ignorant, they must of course be instructed rather than moved. And perhaps when they know the relevant facts they will be moved to such a degree that greater powers of eloquence are not needed to move them. But this must be done when necessary; and it is necessary when although they know they must do something they fail to do it. This is why instruction is a matter of necessity. People may either do or not do what they know must be done; but who could say that they must do something which they do not know they must do? The reason why moving people is not a matter of necessity is that it is not always needed, as when a listener assents to a speaker who is merely instructing or perhaps also delighting him. The reason why it is a matter of conquest is that it is possible for a person to be instructed and delighted but not give assent. 77. What use would the first two be without the third? Nor is giving delight a matter of necessity, since when truths are being demonstrated by a speaker—this relates to the task of instruction—it is not the aim of the eloquence or the intention of the speaker that the truths or the eloquence should in themselves produce delight; but the truths themselves, as they are revealed, do produce delight by virtue of being true. Similarly the exposure and refutation of falsehoods generally give delight. They do not give delight because they are false; but because it is true that they are false delight is given by the words in which this truth is demonstrated. 78. Because of the disdainful kind of person who is not satisfied by the truth presented anyhow, but accepts it only if expressed in such a way that the discourse also gives pleasure, delight has been given an important role in eloquence. But even the extra contribution of this is not enough for the hard-hearted, who stand to gain neither from mere understanding nor from their delight in the teacher's style. How do those two things benefit a person who admits the truth and praises the style but does not give his assent—which is the whole point of the speaker's tireless concentration on the subject-matter of his address when advocating a particular course of action? 79. If

quae credere vel nosse sufficiat, nihil est aliud eis consentire nisi confiteri vera esse. Cum vero id docetur quod agendum est, et ideo docetur ut agatur, frustra persuadetur verum esse quod dicitur, frustra placet modus ipse quo dicitur, si non ita discitur ut agatur. Oportet igitur eloquentem ecclesiasticum, quando suadet aliquid quod agendum est, non solum docere ut instruat et delectare ut teneat verum etiam flectere ut vincat. 80. Ille quippe iam remanet ad consensionem flectendus eloquentiae granditate, in quo id non egit usque ad eius confessionem demonstrata veritas, adiuncta etiam suavitate dictionis. 81. Cui suavitati tantum operae impensum est ab hominibus ut non solum non facienda verum etiam fugienda ac detestanda tot et tanta mala atque turpia, quae malis et turpibus disertissime persuasa sunt, non ut eis consentiatur sed sola delectationis gratia lectitentur. Avertat autem deus ab ecclesia sua quod de synagoga Iudaeorum Hieremias propheta commemorat dicens, *pavor et horrenda facta sunt super terram, prophetae prophetabant iniqua, et sacerdotes plausum dederunt manibus suis, et plebs mea dilexit sic. Et quid facietis in futurum?*⁸³² 82. O eloquentia tanto terribilior quanto purior, et quanto solidior tanto vehementior. O vere *securis concidens petras!*⁸³³ Huic enim rei simile esse verbum suum, quod per sanctos prophetas fecit, per hunc ipsum prophetam deus ipse dixit. Absit itaque, absit a nobis ut sacerdotes plaudant iniqua dicentibus et plebs dei diligat sic. 83. Absit a nobis, inquam, tanta dementia; nam quid faciemus in futurum? Et certe minus intellegantur, minus placeant, minus moveant quae dicuntur, vera tamen dicantur, et iusta, non iniqua libenter audiantur. Quod utique non fieret nisi suaviter dicerentur. 84. In populo autem gravi, de quo dictum est deo, *in populo gravi laudabo te,*⁸³⁴ nec illa suavitas delectabilis est qua non quidem iniqua dicuntur sed exigua et

⁸³² Jer. 5: 30–1.

⁸³³ Jer. 23: 29.

⁸³⁴ Ps. 34: 18 (35: 18).

one is giving instruction on the sort of topic in which belief or knowledge is sufficient, consent is nothing more than the acknowledgement that they are true. But when one is giving instruction about something that must be acted on, and one's aim is to produce this action, it is futile to persuade people of the truth of what is being said, and futile to give delight by the style one uses, if the learning process does not result in action. So when advocating something to be acted on the Christian orator should not only teach his listeners so as to impart instruction, and delight them so as to hold their attention, but also move them so as to conquer their minds. 80. The kind of listener that still has to be moved to give his consent by a grand style of eloquence is one in which this end has not been achieved by the demonstration of the truth—even if this leads to the open acknowledgement of it—in combination with a charming style. 81. So much attention has been paid to the charms of style that not only things which should not be done but even things which should be avoided and abhorred—evil and wicked things, eloquently advocated by evil and wicked men—are avidly read about by people without any intention of giving their consent but simply in search of delight. May God keep from his church the attitude described by Jeremiah when he says of the Jewish synagogue: ‘Fearful and terrible things have happened in the land. The prophets were prophesying iniquity and the priests have given applause with their hands and my people have loved it so. And what will you do in the time to come?’⁸³⁵ 82. What eloquence—all the more terrifying for its directness, and all the more compelling for its stead-fastness! It is indeed the ‘axe which shatters rocks’,⁸³⁶ to which God himself, in the words of this very prophet, compared the word which he proclaimed through his holy prophets. Be it far, far from us, that priests should applaud speakers of iniquity, and God's people love it so. 83. May such madness be far from us, I say; for what shall we do in the time to come? And indeed let what is spoken be less well understood, less delightful, and less moving, as long as the truth be spoken and justice, not iniquity, be what gives listeners pleasure. That could certainly not be the case if it is not presented attractively. 84. But a serious congregation, about which the Psalmist said to his God, ‘I shall praise you in a serious congregation’⁸³⁷ will

⁸³⁵ Jer. 5: 30–1.

⁸³⁶ Jer. 23: 29.

⁸³⁷ Ps. 34: 18 (35: 18).

fragilia bona spumae verborum ambitu ornantur, quali nec magna atque stabilia decenter et graviter ornarentur. Est tale aliquid in epistola beatissimi Cypriani,⁸³⁸ quod ideo puto vel accidisse vel consulto factum esse ut sciretur a posteris quam linguam doctrinae Christianae sanitas ab ista redundantia revocaverit et ad eloquentiam graviolem modestioremque restrinxerit, qualis in eius consequentibus litteris secure amatur, religiose appetitur, sed difficillime impletur. 85. Ait ergo quodam loco, *Petamus hanc sedem: dant secessum vicina secreta, ubi dum erratici palmitum lapsus pendulis nexibus per arundines baiulas repunt, viteam porticum frondea tecta fecerunt*. Non dicuntur ista nisi mirabiliter affluentissima fecunditate facundiae, sed profusione nimia gravitati displicent. 86. Qui vero haec amant profecto eos qui non ita dicunt sed castigatius eloquuntur non posse ita eloqui existimant, non iudicio ista vitare. Quapropter iste vir sanctus et posse se ostendit sic dicere, quia dixit alicubi, et nolle, quoniam postmodum nusquam. 87. Aget itaque noster iste eloquens, cum iusta et sancta et bona dicit—neque enim alia debet dicere—aget ergo quantum potest cum ista dicit, ut intellegenter, ut libenter, ut oboedienter audiatur. Et haec se posse, si potuerit et in quantum potuerit, pietate magis orationum quam oratorum facultate non dubitet, ut orando pro se ac pro illis quos est allocuturus sit orator antequam dictor.⁸³⁹ Ipsa hora iam ut dicat accedens, priusquam exserat proferentem linguam, ad deum levet animam sitientem, ut ructet quod biberit, vel quod impleverit fundat. 88. Cum enim de unaquaque re, quae secundum fidem dilectionemque tractandae sunt, multa sint quae dicantur et multi modi quibus dicantur ab eis qui haec sciunt, quis novit quid ad praesens tempus vel nobis dicere vel per nos

⁸³⁸ Cyprian, *Ep.* 1 (*Ad Donatum*).

⁸³⁹ A contrived pun: the Latin word *orator* (normally ‘orator’) is used for ‘man of prayer’.

not even take delight in the attractive style that is devoted not to presenting iniquity but to enhancing trivial and ephemeral goods with the sort of ostentatious verbal froth which could not even enhance important and lasting things in a tasteful and serious way. There is something of the sort in a letter of the blessed Cyprian,⁸⁴⁰ and I think it was allowed to happen, or done on purpose, so that posterity might know that his style was rescued from this exuberance by the soundness of his Christian teaching and confined to a more serious and modest kind of eloquence, like that of his later letters, which is freely enjoyed and diligently imitated but matched only with the greatest difficulty. 85. He says in one passage: 'Let us seek this bower; the nearby solitudes offer seclusion, where, with the wandering shoots of the vine branches creeping with their pendulous clusters across their supporting trellises, the leafy roofs have created a vine-clad colonnade.' This is spoken with a marvellously extravagant profusion of verbal riches, but offends serious minds by its excessive elaboration. 86. Admirers of this style believe that people who do not speak like this, but express themselves more severely, are incapable of such writing, not that they deliberately avoid it. So this holy man has shown not only that he could speak in this way, because he did so in one passage, but also that he preferred not to, because after this he did so nowhere else.⁸⁴¹ 87. The aim of our orator, then, when speaking of things that are just and holy and good—and he should not speak of anything else—the aim, as I say, that he pursues to the best of his ability when he speaks of these things, is to be listened to with understanding, with pleasure, and with obedience. He should be in no doubt that any ability he has and however much he has derives more from his devotion to prayer than his dedication to oratory; and so, by praying for himself and for those he is about to address, he must become a man of prayer before becoming a man of words.⁸⁴¹ As the hour of his address approaches, before he opens his thrusting lips he should lift his thirsting soul to God so that he may utter what he has drunk in and pour out what has filled him. 88. On any one of the subjects which must be treated in terms of faith and love there are many points to make, and many ways for those who know about these things to make them; who can know what it is

⁸⁴⁰ Cyprian, *Ep.* 1 (*Ad Donatum*).

⁸⁴¹ A contrived pun: the Latin word *orator* (normally 'orator') is used for 'man of prayer'.

expediat audiri nisi qui corda omnium videt? Et quis facit ut quod oportet et quemadmodum oportet dicatur a nobis, nisi *in cuius manu sunt et nos et sermones nostri*?⁸⁴² 89. Ac per hoc discat quidem omnia quae docenda sunt, qui et nosse vult et docere, facultatemque dicendi, ut decet virum ecclesiasticum, comparet. Ad horam vero dictionis illud potius bonae menti cogitet convenire quod dominus ait: *nolite cogitare quomodo aut quid loquamini: dabitur enim vobis in illa hora quid loquamini. Non enim vos estis qui loquimini, sed spiritus patris vestri qui loquitur in vobis*.⁸⁴³ Si ergo loquitur in eis spiritus sanctus, qui persequentibus traduntur pro Christo, cur non et in eis qui tradunt discentibus Christum? 90. Quisquis autem dicit non esse hominibus praecipendum quid vel quemadmodum doceant, si doctores sanctus efficit spiritus, potest dicere nec orandum nobis esse quia dominus ait, *scit pater vester quid vobis necessarium sit priusquam petatis ab eo*,⁸⁴⁴ aut apostolum Paulum Timotheo et Tito non debuisse praecipere quid vel quemadmodum praeciperent aliis. Quas tres apostolicas epistolas ante oculos habere debet cui est in ecclesia persona doctoris imposita. 91. Nonne in prima ad Timotheum legitur, *adnuntia haec et doce*?⁸⁴⁵ (Quae autem sint supra dictum est.) Nonne ibi est, *seniorem ne increpaveris, sed obsecra ut patrem*?⁸⁴⁶ Nonne in secunda ei dicitur, *formam habe verborum sanorum quae a me audisti*?⁸⁴⁷ Nonne ibi ei dicitur, *satis age, te ipsum probabilem operarium exhibens deo non erubescens, verbum veritatis recte tractans*?⁸⁴⁸ Ibi est et illud: *praedica verbum, instans opportune, importune; argue, hortare, increpa in omni longanimitate et doctrina*.⁸⁴⁹ 92. Itemque ad Titum nonne dicit episcopum iuxta doctrinam fidelis verbi perseverantem esse debere, *ut potens sit in doctrina sana et contradicentes redarguere*?⁸⁵⁰ Ibi etiam dicit, *tu vero loquere quae decet sanam doctrinam, senes sobrios esse*,⁸⁵¹ et quae sequuntur. Ibi et illud: *haec loquere et exhortare et increpa cum omni imperio. Nemo te contemnat*.

⁸⁴² Wisd. 7: 16.

⁸⁴³ Matt. 10: 19–20.

⁸⁴⁴ Matt. 6: 8.

⁸⁴⁵ 1 Tim. 4: 11.

⁸⁴⁶ 1 Tim. 5: 1.

⁸⁴⁷ 2 Tim. 1: 13.

⁸⁴⁸ 2 Tim. 2: 15.

⁸⁴⁹ 2 Tim. 4: 2.

⁸⁵⁰ Titus 1: 9.

⁸⁵¹ Titus 2: 1–2.

expedient for us to say or our audience to hear at a particular moment but the one who sees the hearts of all? And who can ensure that we say what is right and say it in the right way but the one 'in whose hands we, and our sermons, exist?'⁸⁵² 89. So let the person who wishes both to know and to teach learn everything that he needs to teach, and acquire the skill in speaking appropriate to a Christian orator; but nearer the time of his actual address let him consider that there is more suitable advice for a holy mind in what the Lord says: 'Do not worry about what to say or how to say it; for you will be given words to speak when the time comes. For it is not you who speak, but the spirit of your father who speaks within you.'⁸⁵³ If the Holy Spirit speaks in those who are delivered to their persecutors for Christ's sake, why should he not also speak in those who deliver Christ to their pupils?⁹⁰ Anyone who says that there is no need to give people instruction about what, or how, to teach, if it is the Holy Spirit that makes men teachers, may as well say that there is no need for us to pray, since the Lord says, 'Your father knows what you need before you ask him';⁸⁵⁴ or that the apostle Paul should not have instructed Timothy and Titus on what or how to teach others. (A person who has been given the position of teacher in the church should keep these three apostolic letters before his eyes.) 91. In 1 Timothy we read, 'Pass on these things and teach them.'⁸⁵⁵ (What they are has been mentioned earlier.) We also find there: 'do not chide an elder, but appeal to him as you would to your father.'⁸⁵⁶ In the second letter he is told, 'stick to the form of sound words that you heard from me'.⁸⁵⁷ He is also told, 'Do your best to show yourself to God as a reliable workman with no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.'⁸⁵⁸ There is also the advice 'preach the word, insist on it at times convenient and inconvenient; criticize, encourage, and reprimand with all possible persistence and teaching'.⁸⁵⁹ 92. And again, he tells Titus that a bishop must be resolute in teaching the infallible word 'so that he may be strong in sound teaching and able to refute those who speak against it',⁸⁶⁰ and also: 'but you must say what befits sound teaching, that old men must be sober',⁸⁶¹ and so on. And this too: 'Speak these things, and give encouragement and reprimand with all authority. Let nobody despise you. Remind

⁸⁵² Wisd. 7: 16.

⁸⁵³ Matt. 10: 19–20.

⁸⁵⁴ Matt. 6: 8.

⁸⁵⁵ 1 Tim. 4: 11.

⁸⁵⁶ 1 Tim. 5: 1.

⁸⁵⁷ 2 Tim. 1: 13.

⁸⁵⁸ 2 Tim. 2: 15.

⁸⁵⁹ 2 Tim. 4: 2.

⁸⁶⁰ Titus 1: 9.

⁸⁶¹ Titus 2: 1–2.

*Admone illos principibus et potestatibus subditos esse*⁸⁶² et cetera. 93. Quid ergo putamus? Numquid contra se ipsum sentit apostolus qui, cum dicat doctores operatione fieri spiritus sancti, ipse illis praecipit quid et quemadmodum doceant? An intellegendum est et hominum officia ipso sancto spiritu largiente in docendis etiam ipsis doctoribus non debere cessare, et tamen *neque qui plantat est aliquid neque qui rigat, sed deus qui incrementum dat*?⁸⁶³ 94. Unde ipsis quoque ministris sanctis hominibus vel etiam sanctis angelis operantibus nemo recte discit quae pertinent ad vivendum cum deo nisi fiat a deo docilis deo, cui dicitur in Psalmo: *doce me ut faciam voluntatem tuam, quoniam tu es deus meus*.⁸⁶⁴ Unde et ipsi Timotheo idem dicit apostolus, loquens utique ad discipulum doctor, *tu autem persevera in his quae didicisti et tradita sunt tibi, sciens a quo didiceris*.⁸⁶⁵ 95. Sicut enim corporis medicamenta quae hominibus ab hominibus adhibentur nonnisi eis prosunt quibus deus operatur salutem, qui et sine illis mederi potest cum sine ipso illa non possint, et tamen adhibentur—et si hoc officiose fiat inter opera misericordiae vel beneficentiae deputatur—ita et adiumenta doctrinae tunc prosunt animae adhibita per hominem cum deus operatur ut prosint, qui potuit evangelium dare homini etiam non ab hominibus neque per hominem.⁸⁶⁶ 96. Qui ergo nititur dicendo persuadere quod bonum est, nihil illorum trium spernens—ut scilicet doceat, ut delectet, ut flectat—oret atque agat ut, quemadmodum supra diximus, intellegenter libenter oboedienter audiatur. Quod cum apte et convenienter facit, non immerito eloquens dici potest etsi non eum sequatur auditoris assensus. Ad haec enim tria—id est ut doceat, ut delectet, ut flectat—etiam illa tria videtur pertinere voluisse idem ipse Romani auctor eloquii, cum itidem dixit, *is erit igitur eloquens, qui poterit parva summis, modica temperate,*

⁸⁶² Titus 2: 15–3: 1.

⁸⁶³ 1 Cor. 3: 7.

⁸⁶⁴ Ps. 142: 10 (143: 10).

⁸⁶⁵ 2 Tim. 3: 14.

⁸⁶⁶ Cf. Gal. 1: 11–12.

them to be submissive to rulers and authorities',⁸⁶⁷ and so on. 93. So what is our verdict? Surely the apostle is not in two minds, when he says that teachers are made by the working of the Holy Spirit but also gives instruction about what and how they should teach? Or are we rather to understand two things at once—that through the abundant gifts of the Holy Spirit the human task of teaching even the teachers themselves must not cease, and that 'neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but it is God who produces the growth'?⁸⁶⁸ 94. That is why even with the ministry of holy men, or indeed the co-operation of the holy angels, nobody properly learns the things that appertain to a life with God, unless, through God, he becomes responsive to God, to whom it is said in the Psalm: 'Teach me to do your will, since you are my God'.⁸⁶⁹ That is why the apostle says to Timothy himself, speaking as teacher to disciple, 'You must be resolute in the things you have learnt and which have been passed on to you, knowing from whom you have learnt them'.⁸⁷⁰ 95. Just as physical medicines, applied by humans to other humans, only benefit those in whom the restoration of health is effected by God, who can heal even without them (but they cannot work without him, though they are applied all the same), and if this is done conscientiously, it is reckoned as a work of mercy or kindness; so too the benefits of teaching, applied to the soul through human agency, are only beneficial when the benefit is effected by God, who could have given the gospel to man even without human writers or intermediaries.⁸⁷¹ 96. So the speaker who is endeavouring to give conviction to something that is good should despise none of these three aims—of instructing, delighting, and moving his hearers—and should make it his prayerful aim to be listened to with understanding, with pleasure, and with obedience, as I have stated above. If he does this properly and appropriately he can fairly be called eloquent, even if he does not meet with his audience's assent. It appears that the selfsame authority on Roman eloquence wanted to relate these three aims—of instructing, delighting, and moving an audience—to the following three styles, when, in a similar way, he said: 'So the eloquent speaker will be one who can treat small matters in a restrained style, intermediate matters in a mixed style, and important matters

⁸⁶⁷ Titus 2: 15–3: 1.

⁸⁶⁸ 1 Cor. 3: 7.

⁸⁶⁹ Ps. 142: 10 (143: 10).

⁸⁷⁰ 2 Tim. 3: 14.

⁸⁷¹ Cf. Gal. 1: 11–12.

magna granditer dicere,⁸⁷² tamquam si adderet illa etiam tria et sic explicaret unam eandemque sententiam dicens, 'Is erit igitur eloquens, qui ut doceat poterit parva summis, ut delectet modica temperate, ut flectat magna granditer dicere.' 97. Haec autem tria ille, sicut ab eo dicta sunt, in causis forensibus posset ostendere, non autem <in nostris>,⁸⁷³ hoc est in ecclesiasticis quaestionibus, in quibus huius quem volumus informare sermo versatur. In illis enim ea parva dicuntur, ubi de rebus pecuniariis iudicandum est, ea magna, ubi de salute ac de capite hominum; ea vero ubi nihil horum iudicandum est nihilque agitur ut agat sive decernat sed tantummodo ut delectetur auditor, inter utrumque quasi media et ab hoc modica, hoc est moderata, dixerunt. (Modicis enim modus nomen imposuit, nam modica pro parvis abusive,⁸⁷⁴ non proprie dicimus.) 98. In istis autem nostris, quandoquidem omnia, maxime quae de loco superiore populis dicimus, ad hominum salutem nec temporariam sed aeternam referre debemus, ubi etiam cavendus est aeternus interitus, omnia sunt magna quae dicimus, usque adeo ut nec de ipsis pecuniariis rebus vel acquirendis vel amittendis parva videri debeant quae doctor ecclesiasticus dicit, sive sit illa magna sive parva pecunia. 99. Neque enim parva est iustitia, quam profecto et in parva pecunia custodire debemus, dicente domino, *qui in minimo fidelis est et in magno fidelis est*.⁸⁷⁵ Quod ergo minimum est, minimum est; sed in minimo fidelem esse, magnum est. Nam sicut ratio rotunditatis, id est ut a puncto medio omnes lineae pares in extrema ducantur, eadem est in magno disco quae in nummulo exiguo, ita ubi parva iuste geruntur non minuitur iustitiae magnitudo. 100. De iudiciis denique saecularibus (quibus utique nisi pecuniariis?) cum loqueretur apostolus,⁸⁷⁶ *audet quisquam vestrum, inquit, adversus alterum negotium habens iudicari ab iniquis et non apud sanctos? An nescitis quia sancti mundum iudicabunt? Et si in vobis iudicatur mundus, indigni estis qui de minimis iudicetis?*

⁸⁷² Cic. *Orat.* 101, with *graviter* ('impressively') where Augustine has *granditer*. The three styles are introduced in Cic. *Orat.* 69, where Cicero's descriptions are respectively *subtile, modicum, vebemens*.

⁸⁷³ Schaüblin's supplement *in nostris* is an economical remedy for some unlikely Latin.

⁸⁷⁴ Or with 'catachresis': cf. 63, 89 n.

⁸⁷⁵ Luke 16: 10.

⁸⁷⁶ 1 Cor. 6: 1–9

in a grand style.’⁸⁷⁷ It is as if he were adding this triad to the first one and so forming a single coherent statement like this: ‘The eloquent speaker will be one who can treat small matters in a restrained style in order to instruct, intermediate matters in a mixed style in order to delight, and important matters in a grand style in order to move an audience.’⁹⁷ He could have exemplified these three styles, as used by him, in forensic cases, but not in our matters, that is⁸⁷⁸ the ecclesiastical matters which will engage the speaker of whom I am offering a sketch. In forensic cases small matters in their terms are ones in which judgement must be made on financial questions, and great matters are ones in which human life is at stake; whereas matters in which none of these things is at issue, and the aim is not action or decision, but solely the delight of the listener, have been called intermediate (as falling between the two) and so moderate, or limited: the word ‘moderate’ derives from the word *modus* (‘limit’). (When we use this word in the sense of ‘small’ we are using it loosely,⁸⁷⁹ not literally.)⁹⁸ But in our situation, since we must relate everything, especially what we say to congregations from our position of authority, to the well-being of human beings not in this temporary life but in eternity, where there is the added danger of eternal perdition, all matters that we speak of are important, so much so that not even what a Christian teacher says about acquiring or losing sums of money should be thought of as a small matter, whether the amount is big or little.⁹⁹ For justice, which we must certainly observe even in small financial transactions, is not a small matter: as the Lord says, ‘The person who is trustworthy in small matters is trustworthy in important ones too.’⁸⁸⁰ A small matter is small; but to be trustworthy in a small matter is something important. Just as the property of roundness—by virtue of which all lines drawn from the centre of a circle to its circumference are equal—is the same in a large dish as in the tiniest coin, so the importance of justice is not diminished when small matters are performed with justice.¹⁰⁰ When speaking about secular lawsuits (meaning of course financial ones) the apostle Paul said,⁸⁸¹ ‘Does any of you who has a dispute with another dare to be judged by the wicked, and not before the holy? Do you not know that the holy will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy

⁸⁷⁷ Cic. *Orat.* 101, with *graviter* (‘impressively’) where Augustine has *granditer*. The three styles are introduced in Cic. *Orat.* 69, where Cicero’s descriptions are respectively *subtile, modicum, vebemens*.

⁸⁷⁸ Schäublin’s supplement *in nostris* is an economical remedy for some unlikely Latin.

⁸⁷⁹ Or with ‘catachresis’: cf. 63, 89 n.

⁸⁸⁰ Luke 16: 10.

⁸⁸¹ 1 Cor. 6: 1–9

Nescitis quoniam angelos indicabimus, nedum saecularia? Saecularia igitur iudicia si habueritis, eos qui contemptibiles sunt in ecclesia, hos collocate. Ad reverentiam vobis dico. Sic non est inter vos quisquam sapiens qui possit inter fratrem suum indicare? Sed frater cum fratre indicatur et hoc apud infideles. Iam quidem omnino delictum est quia iudicia habetis vobiscum. Quare non magis iniquitatem patimini? Quare non potius fraudamini? Sed vos iniquitatem facitis et fraudatis et hoc fratres. An nescitis quia iniusti regnum dei non hereditabunt?

101. Quid est quod sic indignatur apostolus, sic corripit, sic exprobrat, sic increpat, sic minatur? Quid est quod sui animi affectum tam crebra et aspera vocis mutatione testatur? Quid est postremo quod de rebus minimis tam granditer dicit? Tantumne de illo negotia saecularia meruerunt? Absit. Sed hoc facit propter iustitiam caritatem pietatem, quae nulla sobria mente dubitante etiam in rebus quamlibet parvulis magna sunt.

102. Sane si moneremus homines quemadmodum ipsa negotia saecularia vel pro se vel pro suis apud ecclesiasticos iudices agere deberent, recte admoneremus ut agerent tamquam parva summis. Cum vero de illius viri disseramus eloquio quem volumus earum rerum esse doctorem quibus liberamur ab aeternis malis atque ad aeterna pervenimus bona, ubicumque agantur haec—sive apud populum sive privatim sive ad unum sive ad plures sive ad amicos sive ad inimicos sive in perpetua dictione sive in colloctione sive in tractatibus sive in libris sive in epistolis vel longissimis vel brevissimis—magna sunt.

103. Nisi forte quoniam calix aquae frigidae res minima atque vilissima est, ideo minimum aliquid atque vilissimum dominus ait quod eum qui dederit discipulo eius non perdet mercedem suam;⁸⁸² aut vero quando iste doctor in ecclesia facit inde sermonem, parvum aliquid debet existimare se dicere et ideo non temperate, non granditer, sed summis sibi esse dicendum. Nonne quando accidit ut de hac re loqueremur ad populum et deus adfuit ut congrue diceremus, tamquam de illa aqua frigida quaedam flamma

⁸⁸² Cf. Matt. 10: 42.

to pass judgement on small matters? Do you not know that, far from secular business, we shall judge angels? So if you have secular disputes, take as your judges those who are despised in the church! I say this to awaken your self-respect. Is there among you no wise man who could judge between the brethren? But brother passes judgement on brother, and that before unbelievers. Now it is really culpable of you to have lawsuits against each other. Why not rather accept injustice? Why not rather be defrauded? But you are perpetrating injustice and fraud: and this against your own brethren. Do you not know that the unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God?' 101. What was it that made him so indignant that he rebukes, reproaches, reprimands, and threatens like this? What was it that made him show his inner feelings with such frequent and violent changes in his voice? And why is it that he speaks so grandly about small matters? Did human business deserve so much of his attention? Far from it. He did all this in the interests of justice, love, and holiness, which as no sensible mind can doubt are important even in the smallest issues. 102. Now if we were advising men how to conduct secular cases before church courts, for themselves or for their families, we would certainly be right to advise them to deal with small matters in a restrained style. But since we are discussing the discourse of the man whom we wish to be a teacher of those things by which we are freed from eternal ills and attain eternal well-being, wherever they may be raised—whether in public or in private, whether with one person or several, whether with friends or opponents, whether in continuous speech or in debate, whether in treatises or in books, whether in letters of great length or extreme brevity—they are important. 103. Unless of course we think that because a cup of cold water is a trivial and valueless thing the Lord is saying something trivial and valueless when he declares that the person who gives a cup to one of his disciples will not lose his reward?⁸⁸³ Or that when a teacher in church bases a sermon on this he should consider himself to be speaking of something small, and so speak not in the intermediate or the grand style, but the restrained style? Is it not true that on one occasion when I happened to be speaking on this before a congregation and God by his presence enabled me to speak suitable words, there somehow arose from

⁸⁸³ Cf. Matt. 10: 42.

surrexit, quae etiam frigida hominum pectora ad misericordiae opera facienda spe caelestis mercedis accenderet? 104. Et tamen cum doctor iste debeat rerum dictor esse magnarum, non semper eas debet granditer dicere, sed summis cum aliquid docetur, temperate cum aliquid vituperatur sive laudatur. Cum vero aliquid agendum est et ad eos loquimur qui hoc agere debent nec tamen volunt, tunc ea quae magna sunt dicenda sunt granditer et ad flectendos animos congruenter. Et aliquando de una eademque re magna et summis dicitur si docetur et temperate si praedicatur et granditer si aversus inde animus ut convertatur impellitur. 105. Quid enim deo ipso maius est? Numquid ideo non discitur? Aut <quid> qui docet unitatem trinitatis debet nisi summissa disputatione agere, ut res ad dinoscendum difficilis quantum datur possit intellegi? Numquid hic ornamenta et non documenta quaeruntur? Numquid ut aliquid agat est flectendus auditor et non potius ut discat instruendus? 106. Porro cum laudatur deus sive de se ipso sive de operibus suis, quanta facies pulchrae ac splendidae dictionis oboritur ei qui potest quantum potest laudare, quem nemo convenienter laudat, nemo quomodocumque non laudat! At si non colatur aut cum illo vel etiam prae illo colantur idola sive daemonia sive quaecumque creatura, quantum hoc malum sit atque ut ab hoc malo avertantur homines, debet utique granditer dici. 107. Summissae dictionis exemplum est apud apostolum Paulum, ut planius aliquid commemorem, ubi ait,⁸⁸⁴*dicite mihi, sub lege volentes esse, legem non audistis? Scriptum est enim quod Abraham duos filios habuit, unum de ancilla et unum de libera, sed ille quidem qui de ancilla, secundum carnem natus est, qui autem de libera, per repromissionem. Quae sunt in allegoria: haec enim sunt duo testamenta, unum quidem a monte Sina in servitutem generans, quod est Agar. Sina enim mons est in Arabia, quae coniuncta est huic quae nunc*

⁸⁸⁴ Gal. 4: 21–6.

that cold water a flame to fire the cold hearts of men to perform works of mercy in the hope of heavenly reward?¹⁰⁴ But although our teacher must be a speaker on important matters, he should not always speak of them in the grand style but rather use the restrained style when teaching, and the intermediate style when censuring or praising something. But when action must be taken and we are addressing those who ought to take it but are unwilling, then we must speak of what is important in the grand style, the style suitable for moving minds to action. Sometimes one speaks about one and the same important matter in all three styles: in the restrained style, if it is being taught; in the moderate style, if it is being praised; and in the grand style, if antagonistic minds are being driven to change their attitude. 105. What is greater than God himself? But does that mean he is not the subject of teaching? Surely a speaker teaching the unity of the Trinity should keep exclusively to the restrained style in order to make this difficult and complicated matter as comprehensible as he can? Surely it is not the case that ornament rather than argument is required, or that the reader needs to be moved in the interests of action rather than instructed in the interests of edification? 106. And when God is being praised, either in himself or in his works, what a display of attractive and brilliant oratory appears in the mouth of the preacher who can praise God as far as is possible—for nobody praises God adequately yet nobody fails to praise him in some way! And if God is not worshipped, or if idols or demons or any other created things are worshipped alongside him or in his place, the enormity of this evil, and the necessity for men to turn away from such an evil, must certainly be expressed in the grand style.¹⁰⁷ There is an example of the restrained style in the apostle Paul—to mention one of the clearer examples—where he says:⁸⁸⁵ ‘Tell me, you who wish to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? It is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman; the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, but the son of the free woman through God's promise. This is an allegory. These are in fact the two covenants: one, from Mount Sinai, by which people are born into slavery—this is Hagar. Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, which corresponds to the present Jerusalem; she is in slavery

⁸⁸⁵ Gal. 4: 21–6.

est Hierusalem, et servit cum filiis suis, quae autem sursum est Hierusalem, libera est, quae est mater nostra, et cetera. 108. Itemque ubi ratiocinatur et dicit, *fratres, secundum hominem dico, tamen hominis confirmatum testamentum nemo irritum facit aut superordinat. Abrahae dictae sunt promissiones et semini eius. Non dicit, ‘et seminibus’, tamquam in multis, sed tamquam in uno, et semini tuo, quod est Christus. Hoc autem dico: testamentum confirmatum a deo post quadringentos triginta annos facta lex non infirmat ad evacuandas promissiones. Si enim ex lege hereditas, iam non ex promissione; Abrahae autem per promissionem donavit deus.*⁸⁸⁶ 109. Et quia occurrere poterat audientis cogitationi, ‘Utquid ergo lex data est, si ex illa non est hereditas?’ ipse sibi hoc obiecit atque ait velut interrogans, *quid ergo lex?*⁸⁸⁷ Deinde respondit, *transgressionis gratia proposita est donec veniret semen cui promissum est, dispositum per angelos in manu mediatoris. Mediator autem unius non est, deus vero unus est.* Et hic occurrebat quod sibi ipse proposuit: *lex ergo adversus promissa dei?* Et respondit, *absit*, reddiditque rationem dicens, *si enim data esset lex quae posset vivificare, omnino ex lege esset iustitia. Sed conclusit scriptura omnia sub peccato, ut promissio ex fide Iesu Christi daretur credentibus* et cetera vel si quid eius modi est. 110. Pertinet ergo ad docendi curam non solum aperire clausa et nodos solvere quaestionum sed etiam dum hoc agitur aliis quaestionibus quae fortassis inciderint, ne id quod dicimus improbetur per illas aut refellatur, occurrere, si tamen et ipsa earum solutio pariter occurrerit, ne moveamus quod auferre non possumus. Fit autem ut, cum incidentes quaestioni aliae quaestiones et aliae rursus incidentibus incidentes pertractantur atque solvuntur, in eam longitudinem ratiocinationis extendatur intentio ut nisi memoria plurimum valeat atque vigeat ad caput unde agebatur disputator redire non possit. Valde autem bonum est ut quidquid contradici potest, si occurrerit, refutetur, ne ibi occurrat ubi non erit qui respondeat, aut praesenti quidem sed tacenti occurrat et minus sanatus abscedat.

⁸⁸⁶ Gal. 3: 15–18.

⁸⁸⁷ Gal. 3: 19–22.

along with her sons. But the heavenly Jerusalem is the free woman, and she is our mother', and so on. 108. Similarly, where he is reasoning, and says: 'Brethren, here is a human example. A human covenant, once ratified, cannot be made void or added to by anyone. The promises were made to Abraham and his offspring. He does not say "offsprings", meaning several, but "and to your offspring, which is Christ", meaning one. My point is this: the covenant ratified by God is not undermined, or the promises nullified, by a law made 430 years later. For if the inheritance comes by law, it does not come by promise; but God bestowed it on Abraham by promise.'⁸⁸⁸ 109. And because he was able to meet the objection, 'Why then was the law given, if inheritance does not come through it?', he raised this objection himself, saying in the form of a question, 'What then is the point of the law?';⁸⁸⁹ and then replied: 'It was promulgated because of wrongdoing, until the arrival of the offspring to which the promise was made; and this was arranged through angels by the agency of an intermediary. An intermediary does not exist for one party alone, and God is one.' Here too something occurred to him, and he presented it himself: 'Is the law then at odds with God's promises?' 'Far from it', is his reply, followed by the explanation, 'Had we been given a law capable of giving life, then righteousness would certainly come through law. But scripture has subjected everything to the rule of sin in order that the promise might be given to believers through faith in Jesus Christ.' And there is more in this vein. 110. So it is part of the teacher's task not just to reveal what is hidden and solve knotty problems but also, while doing this, to anticipate other questions which may arise, in case they undermine or refute what we are saying; provided, that is, that the solution also presents itself to us, so that we do not undermine our sure foundation. It tends to happen that one question leads to others, and these in turn lead to yet more, and that as these are investigated and answered the thread of our argument becomes so extended that unless endowed with a very good memory the debater is unable to return to his starting point. But it is a very good idea to refute something that can be refuted, if an argument presents itself, in case it presents itself either in a situation where there is nobody able to answer it or in the mind of someone who is present at the meeting but keeps quiet, and consequently goes away unenlightened.

⁸⁸⁸ Gal. 3: 15–18.

⁸⁸⁹ Gal. 3: 19–22.

111. In illis autem apostolicis verbis dictio temperata est: *seniorem ne increpaveris, sed obsecra ut patrem, iuniores ut fratres, anus ut matres, adulescentulas ut sorores.*⁸⁹⁰ Et in illis: *obsecro autem vos, fratres, per miserationem dei, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam vivam, sanctam, deo placentem.*⁸⁹¹ Et totus fere ipsius exhortationis locus temperatum habet elocutionis genus. Ubi illa pulchriora sunt in quibus propria propriis tamquam debita reddita decenter excurrunt, sicuti est:⁸⁹² 112. *habentes dona diversa secundum gratiam quae data est nobis, sive prophetiam, secundum regulam fidei; sive ministerium, in ministrando; sive qui docet, in doctrina, sive qui exhortatur, in exhortatione; qui tribuit, in simplicitate; qui praeest, in sollicitudine; qui miseretur, in hilaritate. Dilectio sine simulatione, odio habentes malum, adhaerentes bono, caritate fraternitatis invicem diligentes, honore mutuo praevenientes, studio non pigri, spiritu ferventes, domino servientes, spe gaudentes, in tribulatione patientes, orationi instantes, necessariis sanctorum communicantes, hospitalitatem sectantes. Benedicite persequentes vos, benedicite et nolite maledicere. Gaudere cum gaudentibus, flere cum flentibus, id ipsum invicem sentientes.* 113. Et quam pulchre ista omnia sic effusa bimembri circuitu terminantur: *non alta sapientes, sed humilibus consentientes!* Et aliquanto post, *in hoc ipso, inquit, perseverantes, reddite omnibus debita: cui tributum, tributum; cui vectigal, vectigal; cui timorem, timorem; cui honorem, honorem.*⁸⁹³ Quae membratim fusa clauduntur etiam ipsa circuitu, quem duo membra contexunt: *nemini quidquam debeatis nisi ut invicem diligatis.* Et post paululum, *nox praecessit, inquit, dies autem appropinquavit. Abiciamus itaque opera tenebrarum et induamus nos arma lucis. Sicut in die honeste ambulemus, non in comissionibus et ebrietatibus, non in cubilibus et impudiciis, non in contentione et aemulatione; sed induite dominum Iesum Christum, et carnis providentiam ne feceritis in concupiscentiis.*⁸⁹⁴ 114. Quod si quisquam ita diceret, ‘et carnis providentiam ne in concupiscentiis feceritis’, sine dubio aures

⁸⁹⁰ 1 Tim. 5: 1–2.

⁸⁹¹ Rom. 12: 1.

⁸⁹² Rom. 12: 6–16.

⁸⁹³ Rom. 13: 6–8. Cf. *Conf.* 8. 12. 29.

⁸⁹⁴ Rom. 13: 12–14.

111. The mixed style is found in the following words of Paul: ‘Do not rebuke an older man, but appeal to him as you would to a father. Treat younger men as brothers, old ladies as mothers, and young girls as sisters.’⁸⁹⁵ And in these too: ‘I appeal to you, brethren, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice which is living, holy, and acceptable to God.’⁸⁹⁶ Indeed just about the whole of this exhortation exemplifies the mixed style of speaking. The most attractive parts are those in which there is a graceful flow of phrases each duly balanced by other phrases, as here:⁸⁹⁷ 112. ‘We have various gifts, to be used according to the particular grace bestowed on us: prophecy, to be used according to the rule of faith; or service, to be used in our ministry; or, if one teaches, in teaching; or if one exhorts, in exhortation; or, if one is a giver, in wholehearted generosity; or if one is a leader, with a sense of responsibility; or if one shows mercy, with a spirit of cheerfulness. Let your love be without pretence; hate evil, and stick to what is good, loving one another with brotherly love, outdoing one another in mutual respect, unremitting in enthusiasm, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in suffering, constant in prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practising hospitality. Bless those that persecute you, bless rather than curse. Rejoice with those that rejoice, weep with those that weep, having the same feelings as each other.’ 113. Attractive too is the way in which this whole outpouring of words is concluded with a period of two cola: ‘not having haughty ideas, but associating with the humble.’ And a little later he says: ‘Persevering in this very thing, give to all what is their due: tribute, if it is tribute; tax, if it is tax; respect, if it is respect; honour, if it is honour.’⁸⁹⁸ These words, arranged in cola, are themselves concluded by a period, consisting of two cola: ‘owe nothing to anyone except the duty of mutual love.’ And a little later he says: ‘The night is far gone, and the day is at hand. So let us throw off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us behave honourably, as in the day, not in revels and drunkenness, not in debauchery and vice, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not give thought to the flesh by indulging passionate desires.’⁸⁹⁹ 114. If this had been put in the following way, ‘Do not, by indulging passionate desires, give thought for the flesh’,

⁸⁹⁵ 1 Tim. 5: 1–2.

⁸⁹⁶ Rom. 12: 1.

⁸⁹⁷ Rom. 12: 6–16.

⁸⁹⁸ Rom. 13: 6–8. Cf. *Conf.* 8. 12. 29.

⁸⁹⁹ Rom. 13: 12–14.

clausula numerosiore mulceret;⁹⁰⁰ sed gravior interpret etiam ordinem maluit tenere verborum. Quomodo autem hoc in Graeco eloquio sonet, quo est locutus apostolus, viderint eius eloquii usque ad ista doctiores; mihi tamen quod nobis eodem verborum ordine interpretatum est nec ibi videtur currere numero. 115. Sane hunc elocutionis ornatum qui numerosis fit clausulis deesse fatendum est auctoribus nostris. Quod utrum per interpretes factum sit an (quod magis arbitror) consulto illi haec plausibilia devitaverint, affirmare non audeo, quoniam me fateor ignorare. Illud tamen scio, quod si quisquam huius numerositatis peritus illorum clausulas eorundem numerorum lege componat, quod facillime fit mutatis quibusdam verbis, quae tantundem significatione valent, vel mutato eorum quae invenerit ordine, nihil illorum quae velut magna in scholis grammaticorum aut rhetorum didicit illis divinis viris defuisse cognoscet et multa reperiet locutionis genera tanti decoris, quae quidem et in nostra sed maxime in sua lingua decora sunt, quorum nullum in eis quibus isti inflantur litteris invenitur. 116. Sed cavendum est ne divinis gravibusque sententiis, dum additur numerus, pondus detrahatur. Nam illa musica disciplina, ubi numerus iste plenissime discitur, usque adeo non defuit prophetis nostris ut vir doctus Hieronymus quorundam etiam metra commemoret,⁹⁰¹ in hebraea dumtaxat lingua. Cuius ut veritatem servaret in verbis, haec inde non transtulit. 117. Ego autem ut de sensu meo loquar, qui mihi quam aliis et quam aliorum est utique notior, sicut in meo eloquio quantum modeste fieri arbitror non praetermitto istos numeros clausularum, ita in auctoribus nostris hoc mihi plus placet quod ibi eos rarissime invenio. 118. Grande autem dicendi genus hoc maxime distat ab isto genere temperato, quod non tam verborum ornatibus comptum est quam violentum animi affectibus. Nam capit etiam illa ornamenta paene omnia, sed ea si non habuerit non requirit. Fertur quippe impetu suo et elocutionis pulchritudinem, si occurrerit, vi rerum rapit, non cura decoris assumit. Satis enim

⁹⁰⁰ The grounds for this judgement are not clear; in terms of syllable quantity both versions provide common and acceptable rhythms. Augustine may be influenced by accentual rhythm (the so-called *cursus*), though one cannot be certain how exactly he would have articulated these particular words. For a study of rhythm in Latin prose writing of this period see S. M. Oberhelman, *CQNS* 38 (1988), 228–42.

⁹⁰¹ Jerome, *Prologus in Iob*.

the more rhythmical sentence-ending would doubtless have been more pleasing to the ear;⁹⁰² but the serious-minded translator preferred to retain the exact word-order. Suitably advanced scholars of Greek rhetoric may investigate how it sounds in Greek, the language that the apostle used; but to me the version that we have in Latin, keeping to the original word-order, does not seem very rhythmical either. 115. It must certainly be admitted that the stylistic embellishment that derives from rhythmical clausulae is missing in the Latin scriptures. Whether this is the fault of the translators or whether (as I suspect is more likely) they deliberately avoided such specious things, I do not venture to say: I admit I do not know. But this I do know, that if an expert in prose rhythm were to produce clausulae according to the rules that govern such rhythm—this could be done very easily by substituting certain words which have the same meaning, or by changing the order of the words found in the text—he would discover that these divinely inspired writers lack none of those supposedly important features which he learnt in the schools of grammar and rhetoric; he would also find many types of elegant expression—elegant in our language, certainly, but particularly so in the original—none of which is found in the literature which fills them with such pride. 116. But there is a danger of reducing the weight of the impressive divine writings while enhancing the rhythm. Our prophets were not ignorant of music, the subject which gives the fullest instruction in rhythm, and indeed the learned Jerome mentions the metres used by some of them,⁹⁰³ in the Hebrew, but for the sake of verbal accuracy he did not reproduce them in his translation. 117. If I may state my own attitude—which is of course better known to me than it is to other people, and better known to me than the attitudes of other people—I do not neglect clausular rhythms in my own speaking, but apply them in what I consider to be moderation; and in our writers they have extra appeal because I find them so rarely. 118. What especially differentiates the grand style from the mixed style is that it is not so much embellished with verbal ornament as inflamed by heartfelt emotion. It has room for almost all those ornaments, but if they are not there they are not missed. It is borne along by its own momentum, and

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⁹⁰³ Jerome, *Prologus in Iob*.

est ei propter quod agitur ut verba congruentia non oris eligantur industria sed pectoris sequantur ardorem. 119. Nam si aurato gemmatoque ferro vir fortis armetur, intentissimus pugnae agit quidem illis armis quod agit, non quia pretiosa sed quia arma sunt; idem ipse est tamen et valet plurimum, etiam cum *rimanti telum ira facit*.⁹⁰⁴ Agit apostolus ut pro evangelico ministerio patienter mala huius temporis cum solatio donorum dei omnia tolerentur. Magna res est et granditer agitur nec desunt ornamenta dicendi. 120. *Ecce, inquit,*⁹⁰⁵*nunc tempus acceptabile, ecce nunc dies salutis. Nullam in quoquam dantes offensionem, ut non reprehendatur ministerium, sed in omnibus commendantes nosmetipsos ut dei ministros, in multa patientia, in tribulationibus, in necessitatibus, in angustiis, in plagis, in carceribus, in seditionibus, in laboribus, in vigiliis, in ieiuniis, in castitate, in scientia, in longanimitate, in benignitate, in spiritu sancto, in caritate non ficta, in verbo veritatis, in virtute dei, per arma iustitiae dextra et sinistra, per gloriam et ignobilitatem, per infamiam et bonam famam, ut seductores et veraces, ut qui ignoramur et cognoscimur, quasi morientes et ecce vivimus, ut coerciti et non mortificati, ut tristes, semper autem gaudentes, sicut egeni, multos autem ditantes, tamquam nihil habentes et omnia possidentes.* Vide adhuc ardentem: *os nostrum patet ad vos, o Corinthii, cor nostrum dilatatum est,* et cetera, quae persequi longum est. 121. Itemque ad Romanos agit,⁹⁰⁶ ut persecutiones huius mundi caritate vincantur, spe certa in adiutorio dei. Agit autem et granditer et ornate: *Scimus, inquit, quoniam diligentibus deum omnia cooperantur in bonum, his qui secundum propositum vocati sunt. Quoniam quos ante praescivit, et praedestinavit conformes imaginis filii sui, ut sit ipse primogenitus in multis fratribus. Quos autem praedestinavit, illos et vocavit; et quos vocavit, ipsos et iustificavit; quos autem*

⁹⁰⁴ Verg. *Aen.* 7. 507–8. Perhaps a text set for paraphrase at school: cf. Claudian, *Carmina Minora* 6, ed. Hall.

⁹⁰⁵ 2 Cor. 6: 2–11.

⁹⁰⁶ Rom. 8: 28–39.

derives its beauty of expression, if indeed this emerges, from the power of its subject-matter, and not the pursuit of elegance. It is sufficiently equipped for its purpose if appropriate words follow not from a search for elaborate vocabulary but from the promptings of a passionate heart. 119. If a brave man happens to be armed with a golden and jewelled sword, it is not because his weapon is precious that he does what he does with it in the heat of battle but because it is a weapon; and he remains the same mighty warrior even when 'anger makes a weapon of whatever his groping search supplies'.⁹⁰⁷ In the following passage the apostle pleads that in the service of the gospel the evils of the present time should all be endured with the support of God's gifts. An important subject, it is treated in the grand style, and not without ornament. 120. 'Behold', he says,⁹⁰⁸ 'now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation. We give no offence in anything, lest our ministry incur blame, but commend ourselves in everything as the servants of God, in great endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in crises, in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in labours, in sleepless nights, in hunger, in purity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love which is not feigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God, through the weapons of justice on the left hand and on the right, through glory and dishonour, through bad repute and good repute, as impostors and yet truthful, as men who are unknown and yet known, as dying, and (behold) yet alive, as punished yet not put to death, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as needy but enriching many, as if owning nothing yet possessing everything.' And notice the impassioned sequel: 'Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians, our heart is wide', and the rest, which it would take a long time to give in full.¹²¹ Similarly, when writing to the Romans⁹⁰⁹ he pleads that the persecutions of this world be overcome through love, with an assured hope in the assistance of God. He pleads in a style both grand and ornate: 'We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those that he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, so that he might be the firstborn of many brothers. Those that he predestined, he also called; and those that he called, he also

⁹⁰⁷ Verg. *Aen.* 7. 507–8. Perhaps a text set for paraphrase at school: cf. Claudian, *Carmina Minora* 6, ed. Hall.

⁹⁰⁸ 2 Cor. 6: 2–11.

⁹⁰⁹ Rom. 8: 28–39.

iustificavit, ipsos et glorificavit. Quid ergo dicemus ad haec? Si deus pro nobis, quis contra nos? Qui filio proprio non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit eum, quomodo non et cum illo omnia nobis donavit? Quis accusabit adversus electos dei? Deus qui iustificat? Quis qui condemnat? Christus Iesus qui mortuus est, magis autem qui resurrexit, qui et est in dextera dei, qui et interpellat pro nobis? Quis nos separabit a caritate Christi? tribulatio? an angustia? an persecutio? an fames? an nuditas? an periculum? an gladius? Sicut scriptum est, 'quia propter te mortificamur tota die, aestimati sumus ut oves occisionis'.⁹¹⁰ Sed in his omnibus supervincimus per eum qui dilexit nos. Certus sum enim quia neque mors neque vita neque angelus neque principatus neque praesentia neque futura neque virtus neque altitudo neque profundum neque creatura alia poterit nos separare a caritate dei, quae est in Christo Iesu domino nostro. 122. Ad Galatas autem quamvis tota illa epistola summisso dicendi genere scripta sit nisi in extremis partibus, ubi est eloquium temperatum, tamen interponit quendam locum eo motu animi, ut sine ullis quidem talibus ornamentis qualia sunt in his quae modo posuimus non posset tamen nisi granditer dici. 123. Dies, inquit,⁹¹¹ observatis et menses et annos et tempora. Timeo vos, ne forte sine causa laboraverim in vos. Estote sicut ego, quoniam et ego sicut vos. Fratres, precor vos, nihil me laesistis. Scitis quia per infirmitatem carnis iam pridem evangelizavi vobis, et temptationem vestram in carne mea non sprevisistis neque respuistis, sed sicut angelum dei excepistis me, sicut Christum Iesum. Quae ergo fuit beatitudo vestra? Testimonium vobis perhibeo, quoniam si fieri posset oculos vestros eruissetis et dedissetis mihi. Ergo inimicus factus sum vobis verum praedicans? Aemulantur vos non bene, sed excludere vos volunt, ut eos aemulemini. Bonum est autem aemulari in bono semper, et non solum cum praesens sum apud vos. Filioli mei, quos iterum parturio donec Christus formetur in vobis. Vellem autem nunc adesse apud vos et mutare vocem meam, quia confundor in vobis. 124. Numquid hic aut contraria contrariis verba sunt reddita

⁹¹⁰ Ps. 43: 22 (44: 22).

⁹¹¹ Gal. 4: 10–20.

justified; and those that he justified, he also glorified. So what shall we say to all this? If God is for us, who is against us? Since he did not spare his own son, but delivered him for the good of us all, how can he fail to give us all things together with him? Who will make an accusation against God's elect? God, who justifies? Who is there who condemns us? Christ Jesus, who died, and what is more rose again, and is indeed at the right hand of God, actually interceding for us? Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction? Distress? Hunger? Nakedness? Danger? Violence? As it is written, "For your sake we are being done to death all day long, we have been reckoned as sheep for the slaughter."⁹¹² But in all these things we are more than conquerors through the one that loved us. For I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angel nor emperor, neither present nor future, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.¹²² In Galatians, although the whole letter is written in the restrained style except for the last part, where the mixed style is used, he inserts a passage of such powerful emotion that although lacking any of the ornaments that we found in the passages quoted above it can only be assigned to the grand style. ¹²³ He says:⁹¹³ 'You observe days and months and years and seasons. I fear that perhaps I have laboured for you in vain. Be as I am, just as I became like you. Brethren—I implore you—you have done me no injury. You know that it was through physical weakness that I preached the gospel to you long ago, and you know that you did not despise or shrink from the trials that you had over my physical condition but welcomed me like an angel of God, like Christ Jesus. How great was your happiness! I bear witness to you, that had it been possible you would have torn out your own eyes and given them to me. So have I become your enemy by preaching the truth to you? They are envious of you, but not with an honest envy; they want to exclude you, so that you will envy them. It is a good thing to feel envy, but always in an honest matter, and not only when I am present with you. My dear sons, with whom I am once again in labour, until Christ is formed in you—I wish I could now be present among you and change my tone. I am amazed at you.' ¹²⁴ Clearly there are

⁹¹² Ps. 43: 22 (44: 22).

⁹¹³ Gal. 4: 10–20.

aut aliqua gradatione⁹¹⁴ sibi subnexa sunt aut caesa et membra circuitusve sonuerunt? Et tamen non ideo tepuit grandis affectus, quo eloquium fervere sentimus. 125. Sed apostolica ista sic clara sunt ut et profunda sint, atque ita conscripta memoriaeque mandata ut non solum lectore vel auditore verum etiam expositore opus habeant, si quis in eis non superficie contentus altitudinem quaerat. Quapropter videamus ista genera dicendi in eis qui istorum lectione ad rerum divinarum atque salubrium scientiam profecerunt eamque ecclesiae ministrarunt. Beatus Cyprianus summisso dicendi genere utitur in eo libro ubi de sacramento calicis disputat. 126. Solvitur quippe ibi quaestio, in qua quaeritur utrum calix dominicus aquam solam an eam vino mixtam debeat habere. Sed exempli gratia aliquid inde ponendum est. Post principium ergo eius epistolae iam solve incipiens propositam quaestionem, *admonitos autem nos scias*, inquit,⁹¹⁵*ut in calice offerendo dominica traditio servetur neque aliud fiat a nobis quam quod pro nobis dominus prior fecit, ut calix qui in commemoratione eius offertur mixtus vino offeratur. Nam cum dicat Christus, 'ego sum vitis vera',*⁹¹⁶*sanguis Christi non aqua est utique sed vinum. Nec potest videri sanguis eius, quo redempti et vivificati sumus, esse in calice quando vinum desit calici quo Christi sanguis ostenditur, qui scripturarum omnium sacramento ac testimonio praedicetur. Invenimus enim in Genesi*⁹¹⁷*circa sacramentum Noe hoc idem praecurrisse et figuram dominicae passionis illic exstitisse, quod vinum bibit, quod inebriatus est, quod in domo sua nudatus est, quod fuit recubans nudis et patentibus femoribus, quod nuditas illa patris a medio filio denotata est, a maiore vero et minore contexta, et cetera quae necesse non est exsequi, cum satis sit hoc solum complecti, quod Noe typum futurae veritatis ostendens non aquam sed vinum biberit et sic imaginem dominicae passionis expresserit. Item in sacerdote Melchisedech sacrificii dominici sacramentum praefiguratum videmus, secundum quod scriptura divina testatur et dicit, 'et Melchisedech rex Salem protulit panem et vinum.*

⁹¹⁴ Cf. 4. 32 n.

⁹¹⁵ Cyp. Ep. 63. 2–4.

⁹¹⁶ John 15: 1.

⁹¹⁷ Gen. 9: 21–3.

here no pairs of words or phrases in stylistic opposition, no words joined one to another to form a climax,⁹¹⁸ and no euphonious cola, or commata, or periods; but that does not imply a cooling of the great emotion which makes his discourse boil over with passion.¹²⁵ But these sayings of Paul, although clear, are also profound, and although written down and widely known require not only a reader or listener but also an expositor, if somebody is not content with the surface meaning but seeks to probe their depths. So let us look at these styles in writers who by their reading of scripture attained a knowledge of the divine truths of salvation and made it available to the church. The blessed Cyprian uses the restrained style in the treatise in which he discusses the sacrament of the cup. 126. Here he is answering the question whether the Lord's cup should hold water alone, or water mixed with wine. A part of this should be quoted as an example. After the beginning of the letter, as he begins to answer the question he has raised, he says,⁹¹⁹ 'You should know that we were instructed to follow the Lord's teaching in the offering of the cup and not to do anything except what the Lord, on our behalf, did first; it follows that the cup offered in remembrance of him should be offered with an admixture of wine. Since Christ says, "I am the true vine",⁹²⁰ the blood of Christ is surely not water but wine. Nor is it possible for his blood, by which we have been redeemed and made alive, to appear to be in the cup when there is no wine in the cup by which Christ's blood is presented so that it may be proclaimed according to the holy teaching and witness of all the scriptures. In Genesis⁹²¹ we find an anticipation of it and a figure of the Lord's passion in the holy teaching about Noah; he drank wine, became drunk, was made naked in his own house, and lay down with his bare legs wide open until his father's nakedness was noticed by the middle son and covered up by the eldest and the youngest, and so on. There is no need to continue, because it is sufficient to grasp the fact that Noah, presenting a type of the truth to come, drank not water but wine and thus produced a representation of the Lord's passion. And again we see the sacrament of our Lord's sacrifice prefigured in the priest Melchisadech, as attested by holy scripture in the words, "And Melchisadech king of Salem brought out

⁹¹⁸ Cf. 4. 32 n.

⁹¹⁹ *Cyp. Ep.* 63. 2–4.

⁹²⁰ John 15: 1.

⁹²¹ Gen. 9: 21–3.

*Fuit autem sacerdos dei summi et benedixit Abraham.*⁹²² *Quod autem Melchisedech typum Christi portaret, declarat in Psalmis spiritus sanctus ex persona patris ad filium dicens, ‘ante Luciferum generavi te. Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.’*⁹²³ Haec et alia quae sequuntur huius epistolae summissae dictionis modum servant, quod facile est explorare legentibus. 127. Sanctus quoque Ambrosius cum agat rem magnam de spiritu sancto, ut eum patri et filio demonstret aequalem, summisso tamen dicendi genere utitur, quoniam res suscepta non ornamenta verborum aut ad flectendos animos commotionis affectum sed rerum documenta desiderat. Ergo inter cetera in principio huius operis ait,⁹²⁴ *Quo motus oraculo Gedeon, cum audisset quod deficientibus licet populorum milibus in uno viro dominus plebem suam ab hostibus liberaret, obtulit haedum caprarum, cuius carnem secundum praeceptum angeli et azyma supra petram posuit et ea iure perfudit. Quae simul ut virgae cacumine quam gerebat angelus dei contigit, de petra ignis erupit atque ita sacrificium quod offerebatur assumptum est.*⁹²⁵ *Quo indicio declaratum videtur quod petra illa typum habuerit corporis Christi, quia scriptum est, ‘bibebant de consequenti petra, petra autem erat Christus’.*⁹²⁶ *Quod utique non ad divinitatem eius sed ad carnem relatum est, quae sitientium corda populorum perenni rivo sui sanguinis inundavit. Iam tunc igitur in mysterio declaratum est quia dominus Iesus in carne sua totius mundi peccata crucifixus aboleret, nec solum delicta factorum sed etiam cupiditates animorum. Caro enim haedi ad culpam facti refertur, ius ad illecebras cupiditatum, sicut scriptum est, quia ‘concupivit populos cupiditatem pessimam et dixerunt, “Quis nos cibabit carnem?”*⁹²⁷ *Quod igitur extendit angelus virgam et tetigit petram de qua ignis exiit ostendit quod caro domini spiritu repleta divino peccata omnia humanae condicionis exureret. Unde et dominus ait, ‘ignem veni mittere in terram’,*⁹²⁸ *et cetera, in quibus rei docendae ac probandae maxime incumbit.*

⁹²² Gen. 14: 18–20.

⁹²³ Ps. 109: 3–4 (110: 3–4).

⁹²⁴ Ambr. *De Spiritu* prol. 2–3.

⁹²⁵ Judg. 6: 11–21.

⁹²⁶ 1 Cor. 10: 4.

⁹²⁷ Num. 11: 4.

⁹²⁸ Luke 12: 49.

bread and wine. He was the priest of God most high, and blessed Abraham.”⁹²⁹ That Melchisadech was holding a prefiguration of Christ is made plain by the Holy Spirit in one of the Psalms, where he says, in the mouth of the father speaking to his son, “I created you before Lucifer. You are a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisadech.”⁹³⁰ This passage, like what follows in this letter, keeps to the confines of the restrained style, as readers may easily discover.

127. Saint Ambrose too, although treating the important subject of the Holy Spirit, uses the restrained style to demonstrate his equality to the Father and the Son, because his chosen topic does not require verbal ornament or emotional fervour to move the mind, but factual evidence. So he says at the beginning of this work,⁹³¹ among other things, ‘Gideon was persuaded by this divine pronouncement; on hearing that in the absence of thousands of fighting men the Lord would rescue his people from their enemy through one man, he offered a kid from his herds, and in accordance with the angel’s instructions placed its flesh together with unleavened cakes on a rock and marinaded them in broth. When the angel of the Lord touched this offering with the tip of the rod that he was carrying, fire blazed out from the rock, consuming the sacrifice that was being offered.’⁹³² This evidence seems to make it clear that the rock presents a type of Christ’s body, because it is written, “They drank from the rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.”⁹³³ This surely relates not to his divinity, but to his flesh, which has refreshed the hearts of his thirsting people with the unfailing stream of his blood. So in this mystery it was declared even then that the crucified Lord Jesus would in his own flesh remove the sins of the whole world, and not only the sins of action, but the lusts of the heart as well. The flesh of the kid refers to the sins of action, and the broth to the seductiveness of desire, as shown by the scripture that says, “The people conceived a wicked desire, and said, ‘who will give us flesh to eat?’”⁹³⁴ The fact that the angel put out his rod and touched the rock from which the fire came shows that the Lord’s flesh, filled with the Holy Spirit, would burn away all the sins of our human condition. This is why the Lord said, “I have come to put fire on the earth.”⁹³⁵ And so Ambrose goes on, intent on teaching and confirming this truth.

⁹²⁹ Gen. 14: 18–20.

⁹³⁰ Ps. 109: 3–4 (110: 3–4).

⁹³¹ Ambr. *De Spiritu* prol. 2–3.

⁹³² Judg. 6: 11–21.

⁹³³ 1 Cor. 10: 4.

⁹³⁴ Num. 11: 4.

⁹³⁵ Luke 12: 49.

128. De genere temperato est apud Cyprianum virginitatis illa laudatio:⁹³⁶ *Nunc nobis ad virgines sermo est, quarum quo sublimior gloria est, maior et cura. Flos est ille ecclesiastici germinis, decus atque ornamentum gratiae spiritalis, laeta indoles laudis et honoris, opus integrum atque incorruptum, dei imago respondens ad sanctimoniam domini, illustrior portio gregis Christi. Gaudet per ipsas atque in illis largiter floret ecclesiae matris gloriosa fecunditas; quantoque plus copiosa virginitas numero suo addit, gaudium matris augescit.* Et alio loco in fine epistulae: *‘Quomodo portavimus’,* inquit, *‘imaginem eius qui de limo est, sic portemus et imaginem eius qui de caelo est’.*⁹³⁷ *Hanc imaginem virginitas portat, portat integritas, sanctitas portat et veritas; portant disciplinae dei memores, iustitiam cum religione retinentes, stabiles in fide, humiles in timore, ad omnem tolerantiam fortes, ad sustinendas iniurias mites, ad faciendam misericordiam faciles, fraterna pace unanimes atque concordēs. Quae vos singula, o bonae virgines, observare diligere implere debetis, quae deo et Christo vacantes ad dominum cui vos dicastis maiore et meliore parte praeceditis. Provectae annis, iunioribus facite magisterium; minores natu, praebete comparibus incitamentum; hortamentis vos mutuis excitate, aemulis de virtute documentis ad gloriam provocate; durate fortiter, spiritaliter pergite, pervenite feliciter; tantum mementote tunc nostri, cum incipiet in vobis virginitas honorari.*

129. Ambrosius etiam genere dicendi temperato et ornato professis virginibus proponit tamquam sub exempli forma, quod moribus imitentur,⁹³⁸ et dicit, *virgo erat non solum corpore sed etiam mente, quae nullo doli ambitu sincerum adulteraret affectum; corde humilis, verbis gravis, animi prudens, loquendi parcius, legendi studiosior; non in incerto divitiarum,⁹³⁹ sed in prece pauperis spem*

⁹³⁶ Cyp. *De Habitu Virginum* 3 and 23.

⁹³⁷ 1 Cor. 15: 49.

⁹³⁸ Ambr. *De Virginitate* 2. 2. 7–8.

⁹³⁹ 1 Tim. 6: 17.

128. An example of the mixed style is Cyprian's encomium of virginity.⁹⁴⁰ 'Now my address is directed to virgins, whose sense of responsibility must match their exalted reputation. This is the flower of the church's garden, the showpiece and ornament of spiritual grace, the joyous crown of praise and honour; a creation perfect and uncorrupted, an image of God which reflects the Lord's holiness, a distinguished portion of Christ's flock. In them the glorious fecundity of their mother the church rejoices, and through them she blossoms abundantly; and the more daughters that prolific virginity adds to its numbers, the more the mother's joy increases.' And in another passage, at the end of the letter, he says: 'Just as we have borne the image of the earthy man, so let us bear the image of the heavenly man.'⁹⁴¹ This image is borne by virginity; it is borne by incorruptibility; it is borne by holiness and truthfulness; it is borne by those who remember God's training, and by those who maintain justice together with religion, by those who are firm in their religious faith, humble in their godly fear, strong enough for all kinds of endurance, gentle enough to put up with injustice, always ready for acts of mercy, and united and harmonious in brotherly peace. Noble virgins, each of you must practise, respect, and achieve these various things; for you, being free for God and Christ, go before us in a position of greater and higher status towards the master to whom you have dedicated yourselves. Those of you who are advanced in age should give teaching to the younger ones; those who are younger should provide a challenge to your comrades. Stimulate each other with mutual exhortation, challenge each other to glory with competitive demonstrations of virtue; hold fast with courage, proceed with the spirit, and reach your goal with joy; only be mindful of us, when virginity begins to receive acclaim through you.'¹²⁹ Ambrose also uses the mixed and ornate style of speaking when, in the form of a description, he offers dedicated virgins a standard of behaviour.⁹⁴² He says, 'She was a virgin not only physically but also mentally, and not the sort to taint her honest character with any attempt to deceive; she was lowly in heart, serious in speech, prudent in mind; an infrequent speaker, but a diligent reader; she based her hopes not on uncertain riches⁹⁴³ but on her pauper's prayers; she was devoted

⁹⁴⁰ Cyp. *De Habitu Virginum* 3 and 23.

⁹⁴¹ 1 Cor. 15: 49.

⁹⁴² Ambr. *De Virginitate* 2. 2. 7–8.

⁹⁴³ 1 Tim. 6: 17.

*reponens; intenta operi, verecunda sermone; arbitrum mentis non hominem sed deum quaerere; nulli laedere os,*⁹⁴⁴*bene velle omnibus; assurgere maioribus natu, aequalibus non invidere; fugere iactantiam, rationem sequi, amare virtutem. Quando ista vel vultu laesit parentes? Quando dissensit a propinquis? Quando fastidivit humilem? Quando risit debilem? Quando vitavit inopem? Eos solos sollicita coetus virorum invisere quos misericordia non erubesceret ne quem praeteriret verecundia. Nihil torvum in oculis, nihil in verbis procax, nihil in actu inverecondum; non gestus fractior, non incessus solutior, non vox petulantior, ut ipsa corporis species simulacrum fuerit mentis et figura probitatis. Bona quippe domus in ipso vestibulo debet agnosci ac primo praetendat ingressu nihil intus latere tenebrarum, tamquam lucernae lux intus posita foris luceat. Quid ego exsequar ciborum parsimoniam, officiorum redundantiam: alterum ultra naturam superfuisse, alterum paene ipsi naturae defuisse? Illic nulla intermissa tempora, hic congeminati ieiunio dies, et si quando reficiendi successisset voluntas, cibus plerumque obviis qui mortem arceret, non delicias ministraret, et cetera. 130. Haec autem propterea in exemplo huius temperati generis posui, quia non hic agit ut virginitatem voveant quae nondum voverunt sed quales esse debeant quae iam votae sunt. Nam ut aggrediatur animus tantum ac tale propositum, grandi utique dicendi genere debet excitari et accendi. Sed martyr Cyprianus de habitu virginum, non de suscipiendo virginitatis proposito scripsit, iste vero episcopus etiam ad hoc eas magno accendit eloquio. 131. Verum ex eo quod ambo egerunt dictionis grandis exempla memorabo. Ambo quippe invecti sunt in eas quae formam pigmentis colorant vel potius decolorant. Quorum prior ille cum hoc ageret, ait inter cetera,*⁹⁴⁵*si quis pingendi artifex vultum alicuius et speciem et corporis qualitatem aemulo colore signasset*

⁹⁴⁴ Cf. Ter. *Adelphi* 864, *nulli laedere os* ('never lashing out at anyone').

⁹⁴⁵ Cypr. *De Habitu Virginum* 15–16.

to her work, modest in her conversation; she looked to God, not man, as the judge of her heart; she offended nobody to their face⁹⁴⁶ and wished everybody well; she stood up out of respect for older people, and felt no envy towards those of her own age; she avoided ostentation, followed reason, and loved virtue. When did she offend her parents, even by her expression? When did she disagree with her relatives? When did she despise the humble? When did she mock the disabled? When did she avoid a beggar? She was careful to visit only those groups of men in which her compassionate soul would not be embarrassed that her modesty might oblige her to pass anyone by. There was no aggression in her eyes, no insolence in her words, no immodesty in her actions; her gestures were not affected; her gait was not unbecoming; her conversation was not assertive. Her whole outward appearance was a mirror of her mind and a picture of honesty. A good home should be recognized as such even in its vestibule, and should proclaim right at the entrance, as it were by light radiating from a lamp inside, that no darkness lurks within. Why should I describe her frugality in eating, and her extravagance in well-doing, the one exceeding, the other barely meeting, the requirements of nature? For the one, no opportunities were let slip, for the other two or more whole days at a time were spent in fasting, and when she did experience a desire for refreshment it was generally for food to stave off death, not to provide enjoyment? And so on. 130. I have presented these two passages as examples of the mixed style, because the aim is not to make virgins of women who have not yet professed virginity, but to show women who have professed virginity how they should behave. In order to embark upon such a great undertaking, the mind must be excited and inspired by the grand style of speaking. But Cyprian the martyr was writing about the lifestyle of virgins, not about making a profession of virginity, whereas Ambrose the bishop was also using his great eloquence to inspire them to virginity.¹³¹ I shall take my examples of the grand style from an area that they both treated. Both denounced women who colour, or rather discolour, their bodies with cosmetics. The first of them says in this regard, among other things:⁹⁴⁷ ‘Suppose an artist had depicted somebody's face, general appearance, and

⁹⁴⁶ Cf. Ter. *Adelphi* 864, *nulli laedere os* (‘never lashing out at anyone’).

⁹⁴⁷ Cypr. *De Habitu Virginum* 15–16.

et signato iam consummatoque simulacro manus alius inferret, ut iam formata, iam picta quasi peritior reformaret, gravis prioris artificis iniuria et iusta indignatio videretur. Tu te existimas impune laturam tam improbae temeritatis audaciam, dei artificis offensam? Ut enim impudica circa homines et incesta fucis lenocinantibus non sis, corruptis violatisque quae dei sunt peior adultera detineris. Quod ornari te putas, quod putas comi, impugnatio est ista divini operis, praevaricatio est veritatis. Monentis apostoli vox est, 'Expurgate vetus fermentum ut sitis nova conspersio, sicut estis azymi. Nam Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus. Itaque festa celebremus, non in fermento veteri neque in fermento malitiae et nequitiae, sed in azymis sinceritatis et veritatis.'⁹⁴⁸ Num sinceritas perseverat et veritas, quando quae sincera sunt polluuntur et colorum adulterinis medicaminum fucis in mendacium vera mutantur? Dominus tuus dicit, 'non potes facere capillum unum album aut nigrum',⁹⁴⁹ et tu ad vincendam domini tui vocem vis te esse potiore. Audaci conatu et sacrilego contemptu crines tuos inficis; malo praesagio futurorum capillos iam tibi flammeos auspicaris. Longum est inserere omnia quae sequuntur. 132. Ille vero posterior ut in tales diceret,⁹⁵⁰ Hinc illa, inquit, nascuntur incentiva vitiorum, ut quaesitis coloribus ora depingant, dum viris displicere formidant, et de adulterio vultus meditentur adulterium castitatis. Quanta hic amentia effigiem mutare naturae, picturam quaerere, et dum verentur maritali iudicio, prodere suum? Prior enim de se pronuntiat quae cupit mutare quod nata est. Ita dum alii studet placere, prius ipsa sibi displicet. Quem iudicem, mulier, veriolem requirimus deformitatis tuae quam te ipsam, quae videri times? Si pulchra es, quid absconderis? Si deformis, cur te formosam esse mentiris, nec tuae

⁹⁴⁸ 1 Cor. 5: 7–8.

⁹⁴⁹ Matt. 5: 36.

⁹⁵⁰ Ambr. *De Virginitate* 1. 6. 28.

physical characteristics in lifelike colours, and that when the painting was completely finished another artist put his hand to it, thinking himself a better painter and intending to redo what was already a finished painting; this would appear a great injustice to the first artist, and a just cause for indignation. So do you think you will get away with the insolence of your wicked effrontery and your implied insult to God the Creator? Even if you are not regarded among men as indecent and revolting with your garish make-up, your corruption and violation of what is God's handiwork marks you down as worse than an adulteress. What you think of as adornment, what you think of as fashion, is an attack on God's creation, an offence against truth. This is the apostle Paul's warning: "Purge out the old leaven, so that you may be a fresh mixture, unleavened just as you are. For Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. So let us celebrate the feast, not with the old leaven or with the leaven of corruption and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of simplicity and truth".⁹⁵¹ Can simplicity and truth survive when simple things are polluted and true colours changed into false ones by artificially coloured cosmetic dyes? Your Lord says: "You cannot make a single hair black or white",⁹⁵² yet you would like to be more powerful and overthrow the words of your Lord! Staining your hair is a piece of reckless audacity and blasphemous contempt; experimenting with orange tints in your hair is an omen of hell-fire.⁹ It would take a long time to add all that follows.¹³² What the second of these writers says against such women is this: ⁹⁵³ 'This is the origin of these incitements to vice: the fact that they decorate their faces with artificial colours for fear of not pleasing their husbands, and that by corrupting their faces they bring about the corruption of their chastity. What great madness it is to change their natural appearance and look for an artificial one, and to betray their own judgement of themselves for fear of their husbands' judgement? The woman who wishes to change her nature makes a prior judgement on herself. And so in her eagerness to please another man, she begins by not pleasing herself. Do we need a better judge of your ugliness than your own self, woman, something which you are afraid to show in public? If you are beautiful, why hide it? If you are ugly, why pretend you are beautiful,

⁹⁵¹ 1 Cor. 5: 7–8.

⁹⁵² Matt. 5: 36.

⁹⁵³ Ambr. *De Virginitate* 1. 6. 28.

conscientiae nec alieni gratiam erroris habitura? Ille enim alteram diligit, tu alteri vis placere, et irasceris si amet aliam qui adulterare in te docetur. Male magistra es iniuriae tuae. Lenocinari refugit etiam quae passa est lenonem, ac licet vilis mulier non alteri tamen sed sibi peccat. Tolerabiliora propemodum in adulterio crimina sunt; ibi enim pudicitia, hic natura adulteratur. 133. Satis, ut existimo, apparet feminas ne suam fucis adulterent formam et ad pudorem et ad timorem hac facundia vehementer impelli. Proinde neque summissum neque temperatum sed grande omnino genus hoc elocutionis agnoscimus. Et in his autem quos duos ex omnibus proponere volui, et in aliis ecclesiasticis viris et bona et bene, id est sicut res postulat acute ornate ardentique dicentibus, per multa eorum scripta vel dicta possunt haec tria genera reperiri et assidua lectione vel auditione admixta etiam exercitatione studentibus inolescere. 134. Nec quisquam praeter disciplinam esse existimet ista miscere; immo quantum congrue fieri potest, omnibus generibus dictio varianda est. Nam quando proluxa est in uno genere, minus detinet auditorem, cum vero fit in aliud ab alio transitus, etiam si longius eat, decentius procedit oratio; quamvis habeant et singula genera varietates suas in sermone eloquentium, quibus non sinuntur in eorum qui audiunt frigescere vel tepescere sensibus. Verumtamen facilius summissum solum quam solum grande diutius tolerari potest. 135. Commotio quippe animi quanto magis excitanda est ut nobis assentiatur auditor, tanto minus in ea diu teneri potest, cum fuerit quantum satis est excitata. Et ideo cavendum est, ne dum volumus altius erigere quod erectum est etiam inde decidat quo fuerat excitatione perductum. Interpositis vero quae sunt dicenda summissius, bene reditur ad ea quae opus est granditer dici, ut dictionis impetus sicut maris aestus alternet.

thus forfeiting both the benefit of your own conscience and the benefit of another person's delusion? For he loves a different woman, and you seek to please a different man; yet you would be angry if he loved another woman, even though it is by you that he is taught to be a kind of adulterer. Sadly, you are the initiator of this injustice to yourself. Even a woman exploited by a pimp shuns these allurements, and worthless as she is at least sins only against herself, and not any one else. Sins committed in adultery are almost more tolerable; they pollute one's chastity, but not one's nature.' 133. It is clear enough, I think, that women are being strongly urged by this rhetoric not to contaminate their bodies with cosmetics, and moved to shame and fear. Accordingly we recognize in this neither the restrained nor the mixed style, but, beyond all doubt, the grand style. Both in these two writers, whom I have selected from the whole range, and in the other Christian writers who say good things and say them well—by which I mean clearly, ornately, and passionately, as the situation demands—these three styles may be found throughout their many writings or sermons; and they may be cultivated by keen students through constant reading or listening, combined with regular practice.¹³⁴ Nobody should think that it is against the rules of the art to combine these styles. On the contrary, our discourse should be varied by using all three, as far as is possible without impropriety. When a speech carries on in a single style, it is less absorbing for the listener, but when there is transition from one style to another it has a smoother flow, even if it is rather long. It is true, however, that in the mouths of eloquent speakers the individual styles have their own kinds of variety, which prevent them from falling flat or becoming tedious to their audience. Be that as it may, the restrained style on its own is easier to tolerate over a long period than the grand style on its own. 135. The more important it is to arouse emotion to win our listener's assent, the less easy it is to sustain it for a long time once it has been sufficiently aroused. So we must take care that in seeking to intensify what is already intense our style of speaking does not fall from the level that we reached with our emotive words. It is a good idea to introduce things that have to be said in the restrained style and then return to the things that require the grand style, so that the intensity of our speech ebbs and flows

Ex quo fit ut grande dicendi genus, si diutius est dicendum, non debeat esse solum sed aliorum generum interpositione varietur. Ei tamen generi dictio tota tribuitur, cuius copia praevaluerit. 136. Interest enim quod genus cui generi interponatur vel adhibeatur certis et necessariis locis. Nam et in grandi genere semper aut paene semper temperata decet esse principia, et in potestate est eloquentis ut dicantur nonnulla summis, etiam quae possent granditer dici, ut ea quae dicuntur granditer ex illorum fiant comparatione grandiora et eorum tamquam umbris luminosiora reddantur. In quocumque autem genere aliqua quaestionum vincula solvenda sunt, acumine opus est, quod sibi summissum genus proprie vindicat. 137. Ac per hoc eo genere utendum est et in aliis duobus generibus, quando eis ista incidunt: sicut laudandum aliquid vel vituperandum, ubi nec damnatio cuiusquam nec liberatio nec ad actionem quamlibet assensio requiritur, in quocumque alio genere occurrerit, genus adhibendum et interponendum est temperatum. In grandi ergo genere inveniunt locos suos duo cetera et in summis similiter. 138. Temperatum autem genus non quidem semper sed tamen aliquando summis indiget, si, ut dixi, quaestio cuius nodus est solvendus incurrat vel quando nonnulla quae ornari possent ideo non ornantur sed summis sermone dicuntur ut quibusdam quasi toris ornamentorum praebeant eminentiorem locum.⁹⁵⁴ Grande autem genus temperata dictio non requirit; ad delectandos quippe animos, non ad movendos ipsa suscipitur. 139. Non sane si dicenti crebrius et vehementius acclametur ideo granditer putandus est dicere; hoc enim et acumina summissi generis et ornamenta faciunt temperati. Grande autem genus plerumque pondere suo voces premit sed lacrimas exprimit. Denique cum apud Caesaream Mauretaniae⁹⁵⁵ populo dissuaderem pugnam civilem vel potius plus quam civilem,⁹⁵⁶ quam Catervam vocabant—neque enim cives tantummodo verum etiam propinqui, fratres, postremo parentes

⁹⁵⁴ Cf. Cic. *Orat.* 21.

⁹⁵⁵ In 418. See G. Bonner, 'Augustine's visit to Caesarea in 418', in C. W. Dugmore and C. Duggan (eds.), *Studies in Church History* 1 (London, 1964), 104–113.

⁹⁵⁶ Based on the phrase *bella . . . plusquam civilia* ('wars even worse than civil wars') in the first line of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.

like the tides of the sea. It follows that, if we must speak for a long time, the grand style should not be used alone but be varied by the introduction of the other styles. (The discourse as a whole is assigned to the style which is preponderant in terms of quantity.) 136. It is important to know which of these styles may be combined, and which ones are applicable to particular contexts. Within the grand style an introduction should always—or almost always—be in the mixed style, and it is open to the eloquent speaker to say some things in the restrained style, even if the grand style is a possibility, so that what is said in the grand style gains prominence in comparison with them and is made to appear brighter because the rest is as it were in shadow. When, in whatever style, there are complex problems to unravel, incisiveness is required, and this is the proper concern of the restrained style. 137. Accordingly we must also use that style within the other two styles when such things crop up. Similarly, when there is something to be praised or censured but where a person's condemnation or acquittal, or an audience's assent and action, are not at issue, whatever the style in which this need arises, the mixed style must be used and introduced. So in the grand style the two other styles find their place; and in the restrained style, likewise, the other two find theirs. 138. The mixed style sometimes, but not always, requires the restrained style; when, for example, as I have just said, a question arises in which there are difficulties to be unravelled, or when topics which could have been embellished are deliberately not embellished but put in the restrained style in order to give greater prominence to particular clusters of ornament.⁹⁵⁷ But a discourse in the middle style has no need of the grand style: it is employed to delight people's minds, not move them to action. 139. A speaker should not be thought to be speaking in the grand style just because he is frequently and warmly applauded; this effect is also produced by the incisiveness of the restrained style and the embellishment of the mixed style. As a rule the grand style silences people's voices with its weight, but elicits tears. I was once appealing to the people in Caesarea of Mauretania⁹⁵⁸ to abandon their civil strife, or rather than conflict worse than civil strife⁹⁵⁹ which they called *caterva*, in which not merely citizens, but even close relatives, brothers, and even

⁹⁵⁷ Cf. Cic. *Orat.* 21.

⁹⁵⁸ In 418. See G. Bonner, 'Augustine's visit to Caesarea in 418', in C. W. Dugmore and C. Duggan (eds.), *Studies in Church History* 1 (London, 1964), 104–113.

⁹⁵⁹ Based on the phrase *bella . . . plusquam civilia* ('wars even worse than civil wars') in the first line of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.

ac filii lapidibus inter se in duas partes divisi per aliquot dies continuos certo tempore anni sollemniter dimicabant, et quisque ut quemque poterat occidebat—egi quidem granditer, quantum valui, ut tam crudele atque inveteratum malum de cordibus et moribus eorum avellerem pelleremque dicendo. Non tamen egisse aliquid me putavi cum eos audirem acclamantes, sed cum flentes viderem. 140. Acclamationibus quippe se doceri et delectari, flecti autem lacrimis indicabant. Quas ubi aspexi, immanem illam consuetudinem a patribus et avis longeque a maioribus traditam, quae pectora eorum hostiliter obsidebat vel potius possidebat, victam antequam re ipsa id ostenderent credidi moxque sermone finito ad agendas deo gratias corda atque ora converti. Et ecce iam ferme octo vel amplius anni sunt, propitio Christo, ex quo illic nihil tale temptatum est. Sunt et alia multa experimenta quibus didicimus homines quid in eis fecerit sapientis granditas dictionis non clamore potius quam gemitu, aliquando etiam lacrimis, postremo vitae mutatione monstrasse. 141. Summisso etiam dicendi genere sunt plerique mutati, sed ut quod nesciebant scirent, aut quod eis videbatur incredibile crederent, non autem ut agerent quod agendum iam noverant et agere nolebant. Ad huiusmodi namque duritiam flectendam debet granditer dici. Nam et laudes ac vituperationes, quando eloquenter dicuntur, cum sint in genere temperato, sic afficiunt quosdam ut non solum in laudibus et vituperationibus⁹⁶⁰ eloquentia delectentur verum et ipsi laudabiliter appetant fugiantque vituperabiliter vivere. Sed numquid omnes qui delectantur imitantur, sicut in grandi genere omnes qui flectuntur agunt et in summisso genere omnes qui docentur sciunt aut credunt verum esse quod nesciunt? 142. Unde colligitur illa duo genera quod efficere intendunt hoc eis esse maxime necessarium qui sapienter et eloquenter volunt dicere. Illud vero quod agitur genere temperato, id est

⁹⁶⁰ The words in *laudibus et vituperationibus* may well be a gloss (Schaublin).

parents and sons used to split into opposing gangs regularly at a particular time of the year and fight with stones continuously for several days, slaughtering whoever they could. I spoke, to the best of my ability, in the grand style, in order to eradicate and eliminate such a cruel and chronic evil from their hearts and their habits by my words. I did not think I had achieved anything when I heard them applaud, but only when I saw them in tears. 140. Their applause showed that they were receiving instruction and experiencing delight; their tears that they were moved. It was when I saw this—and before they showed it in their actions—that I believed that this brutal practice, inherited from their fathers and grandfathers and remoter ancestors, which so fatally obsessed, or rather possessed, their hearts, had been overcome. Quickly finishing my speech, I occupied their hearts and mouths in giving thanks to God. And indeed through Christ's mercy it is now some eight years, or more, since such violence has been attempted. There are many other experiences by which I have learnt that people show the effects of a wise speech delivered in the grand style not by shouting so much as groaning, and sometimes even by weeping, and, eventually, by changing their lives. 141. Many people are transformed by the restrained style of speaking too, but in the sense of knowing what they did not know before or believing what had once seemed incredible to them, and not in the sense of doing something which they had known to be necessary but refused to do. To move that kind of hard-heartedness one must speak in the grand style. In the mixed style speeches of praise or blame, when given eloquently, move some people not only to a delight in the eloquent expression of praise or blame⁹⁶¹ but also to a decision to live a praiseworthy life and avoid a blameworthy one; but it can hardly be said that all people who delight in such things remodel their lives, in the same way that all those who are moved by a speech in the grand style act on it, or in the same way that all who are instructed in the restrained style come to understand something or, if they do not understand it, at least believe it to be true. 142. From this it may be inferred that the aims of these two styles are a particularly important consideration for those who wish to speak eloquently and wisely. The aim of the mixed

⁹⁶¹ The words in *laudibus et vituperationibus* may well be a gloss (Schaublin).

ut eloquentia ipsa delectet, non est propter se ipsum usurpandum, sed ut rebus quae utiliter honesteque dicuntur, si nec docente indigent eloquio nec movente, quia et scientes et faventes auditores habent, aliquanto promptius ex delectatione ipsa elocutionis accedat vel tenacius adhaerescat assensus. 143. Nam cum eloquentiae sit universale officium in quocumque istorum trium genere dicere apte ad persuasionem, finis autem id quod intenderis persuadere dicendo, in quocumque istorum trium genere dicit quidem eloquens apte ad persuasionem, sed nisi persuadeat ad finem non pervenit eloquentiae. Persuadet autem in summisso genere vera esse quae dicit, persuadet in grandi ut agantur quae agenda esse iam sciuntur nec aguntur, persuadet in genere temperato pulchre ornateque se dicere. Quo fine nobis quid opus est? 144. Appetant eum qui lingua gloriantur et se in panegyricis talibusque dictionibus iactent, ubi nec docendus nec ad aliquid agendum movendus sed tantummodo est delectandus auditor. Nos vero istum finem referamus ad alterum finem, ut scilicet quod efficere volumus cum granditer dicimus hoc etiam isto velimus, id est ut bona morum diligantur vel devitentur mala, si ab hac actione non sic alieni sunt homines ut ad eam grandi genere dictionis videantur urgendi, aut si iam id agunt ut agant studiosius atque in eo firmiter perseverent. Ita fit ut etiam temperati generis ornatu non iactanter sed prudenter utamur, non eius fine contenti quo tantummodo delectatur auditor sed hoc potius agentes ut etiam ipso ad bonum quod persuadere volumus adiuvetur. 145. Illa itaque tria quae supra posuimus—eum qui sapienter dicit, si etiam eloquenter vult dicere, id agere debere ut intellegenter, ut libenter, ut oboedienter audiatur—non sic accipienda sunt tamquam singula illis tribus dicendi generibus ita tribuantur ut ad summissum intellegenter, ad temperatum libenter, ad grande pertineat oboedienter audiri, sed sic potius

style—to give delight through the eloquence itself—should not be espoused for its own sake but so that assent for things which are spoken of for the general good and with honourable intent (assuming that the listeners know the topic and are sympathetic, and so do not require a style that instructs or moves), may as a result of this delight be gained more readily and implant itself more firmly. 143. The general function of eloquence, in any of these three styles, is to speak in a manner fitted to persuade, and the aim is to persuade people, by speaking, of what you are trying to put over; so in any of these three styles the eloquent speaker speaks in a manner fitted to persuade, and if he fails to persuade he has not achieved the aim of his eloquence. In the restrained style he persuades people that what he says is true; in the grand style he persuades them to do what they knew to be necessary but were not doing; in the mixed style he persuades people that he is speaking attractively or elaborately. But what is the point of that? 144. Let that be the aim of those who revel in verbiage, and let them show off in panegyrics and speeches of that sort, where the audience does not need to be instructed or moved to action, but merely delighted. We should relate this aim to another aim, that of achieving in this mixed style what we want to achieve in the grand style (that is, to make people value good behaviour and avoid the bad); but not if our listeners are so far from doing this that it seems necessary to urge them to it in the grand style, or if they are already doing it but need to be persuaded to do it with greater commitment and resolution. It follows that we should use the embellishment of the middle style thoughtfully, and not ostentatiously, not content with its aim of simply delighting an audience but rather intent to ensure that it helps them towards the good action which is the object of our persuasion.¹⁴⁵ The three aims which I stipulated earlier—when saying that the wise speaker who also wants to speak eloquently must make it his aim to be listened to with understanding, with pleasure, and with obedience—should not be understood in the sense that a single aim is assigned to each style (so that to be listened to with understanding would be the business of the restrained style, to be listened to with pleasure that of the mixed style, and to be listened to with obedience that of the grand style), but rather in the sense that a speaker should

ut haec tria semper intendat et quantum potest agat etiam cum in illorum singulo quoque versatur. Nolumus enim fastidiri etiam quod summis dicimus, ac per hoc volumus non solum intellegenter verum etiam libenter audiri. 146. Quid autem agimus divinis testimoniis docendo quod dicimus nisi ut oboedienter audiamur, id est ut credatur eis, opitulante illo cui dictum est, *testimonia tua credita facta sunt valde*?⁹⁶² Quid etiam quaerit nisi credi, qui aliquid licet summis eloquio discentibus narrat? Et quis eum velit audire nisi auditorem nonnulla etiam suavitate detineat? Nam si non intellegatur quis nesciat nec libenter eum posse nec oboedienter audiri? 147. Plerumque autem dictio ipsa summissa, dum solvit difficillimas quaestiones et inopinata manifestatione demonstrat, dum sententias acutissimas de nescioquibus quasi cavernis unde non sperabatur eruit et ostendit,⁹⁶³ dum adversarii convincit errorem et docet falsum esse quod ab illo dici videbatur invictum, maxime quando adest eius quoddam decus non appetitum sed quodam modo naturale, et nonnulla non iactantacula sed quasi necessaria atque, ut ita dicam, ipsis rebus exorta numerositas clausularum, tantas acclamationes excitat ut vix intellegatur esse summissa. 148. Non enim quia neque incedit ornata neque armata, sed tamquam nuda congredditur, ideo non adversarium nervis lacertisque collidit et obsistentem subruit ac destruit membris fortissimis falsitatem. Unde autem crebro et multum acclamatur ita dicentibus, nisi quia veritas sic demonstrata sic defensa sic invicta delectat? Et in hoc igitur genere summis iste noster doctor et dictor id agere debet ut non solum intellegenter verum etiam libenter et oboedienter audiatur. 149. Illa quoque eloquentia generis temperati apud eloquentem ecclesiasticum nec inornata relinquitur nec indecenter ornatur, nec solum hoc appetit ut delectet, quod solum apud alios profitetur, verum etiam in his quae laudat

⁹⁶² Ps. 92: 5 (93:5).

⁹⁶³ Cf. Cic. *Orat.* 79, *acutae crebraeque sententiae ponentur et nescio unde ex abdito erutae* ('intelligent and frequent points will be made, unearthed from some unsuspected sources').

always have these three aims and pursue them to the best of his ability even when operating within one particular style. After all, we do not want what we say in a restrained style to be despised, and so we want to be listened to not only with understanding but also with pleasure. 146. And when we teach what we have to say with the help of the divine testimonies, what is our aim if not to be listened to with obedience, or in other words, to induce belief in them, with the help of the one to whom it was said, ‘your testimonies have been made very believable’?⁹⁶⁴ What is the purpose of the speaker who expounds something to his audience, even in the restrained style, if not to be believed? And who would wish to listen to him unless captivated by a certain amount of charm? Who does not realize that a person who is not understood cannot be listened to either with pleasure or with obedience? 147. It often happens that a discourse in the restrained style, as it solves very difficult problems and explains things by means of startling proofs, or uncovers and reveals some very penetrating ideas from an unexpected source (rather like treasure from a cave),⁹⁶⁵ or refutes the error of our adversary and teaches that something apparently irrefutable said by him is false—especially when this is accompanied by a charm which is not contrived but somehow natural, and by an extensive use of clausular rhythms which is not pretentious but seemingly inevitable, and arises as it were from the actual subject-matter—elicits such cheers of approval that it is not easily recognized as the restrained style. 148. Just because it marches to battle without embellishment or armour, and apparently defenceless, this does not prevent it from crushing the enemy with the strength of its sinewy hands and disabling its opponent and demolishing falsehood with its mighty limbs. How can one explain the frequent and lengthy applause given to such speakers except by the delight produced by the demonstration, the defence, and the indestructibility of the truth? So in this restrained style too our teacher and speaker must aim to be listened to not only with understanding but also with pleasure and with obedience. 149. Again, in the mouth of the Christian speaker the eloquence of the mixed style is not left without embellishment or embellished inappropriately. The aim is not only to give delight (though others make this their sole aim) but to be listened to with

⁹⁶⁴ Ps. 92: 5 (93:5).

⁹⁶⁵ Cf. Cic. *Orat.* 79, *acutae crebraeque sententiae ponentur et nescio unde ex abdito erutae* (‘intelligent and frequent points will be made, unearthed from some unsuspected sources’).

sive vituperat, istis appetendis vel firmiter tenendis, illis autem devitandis vel respuendis, vult utique oboedienter audiri. Si autem non auditur intellegenter, nec libenter potest. Proinde illa tria, ut intellegant qui audiunt, ut delectentur, ut oboediant, etiam in hoc genere agendum est, ubi tenet delectatio principatum. 150. Iam vero ubi movere et flectere [grandi genere]⁹⁶⁶ opus est auditorem—quod tunc est opus, quando et veraciter dici et suaviter confitetur et tamen non vult facere quod dicitur—dicendum est procul dubio granditer. Sed quis movetur si nescit quod dicitur? Aut quis tenetur ut audiat si non delectatur? Unde et in isto genere, ubi ad oboedientiam cor durum dictionis granditate flectendum est, nisi et intellegenter et libenter qui dicit audiatur non potest oboedienter audiri. 151. Habet autem ut oboedienter audiamur quantacumque granditate dictionis maius pondus vita dicentis. Nam qui sapienter et eloquenter dicit, vivit autem nequiter, erudit quidem multos discendi studiosos, quamvis *animae suae* sit *inutilis*,⁹⁶⁷ sicut scriptum est. Unde ait apostolus, *sive occasione sive veritate Christus adnuntiatur*.⁹⁶⁸ Christus autem veritas est, et tamen etiam non veritate adnuntiari veritas potest, id est ut pravo et fallaci corde quae recta et vera sunt praedicentur. Sic quippe adnuntiatur Iesus Christus ab eis qui sua quaerunt, non quae Iesu Christi.⁹⁶⁹ 152. Sed quoniam boni fideles non quemlibet hominum sed ipsum dominum oboedienter audiunt, qui ait, *quae dicunt, facite; quae autem faciunt, facere nolite; dicunt enim et non faciunt*,⁹⁷⁰ ideo audiuntur utiliter etiam qui utiliter non agunt. Sua enim quaerere student, sed sua docere non audent, de loco scilicet superiore sedis ecclesiasticae quam sana doctrina constituit. Propter quod ipse dominus priusquam de talibus quod commemoravi diceret praemisit, *cathedram Moysi sedent*.⁹⁷¹ Illa ergo cathedra, non eorum sed Moysi, cogebat eos bona dicere, etiam non bona facientes. Agebant ergo sua in vita sua; docere autem sua cathedra illos non permittebat aliena. 153. Multis itaque prosunt dicendo quae

⁹⁶⁶ The words *grandi genere* here are clearly inappropriate.

⁹⁶⁷ Cf. Eccles. 37: 2.

⁹⁶⁸ Phil. 1: 18.

⁹⁶⁹ Phil. 2: 21.

⁹⁷⁰ Cf. Matt. 23: 3.

⁹⁷¹ Matt. 23: 2.

obedience on the matters which it subjects to praise or blame, so that the former may be sought or more resolutely followed, and the latter avoided or repudiated. But if it is not listened to with understanding it cannot be listened to with pleasure. So these three aims—that the audience understand, delight, and obey—must be sought in this style too, where delight is paramount. 150. When one needs⁹⁷² to move and sway one's listeners—this is necessary at the point when they acknowledge that a speech is both true and delightful but are unwilling to do what it recommends—one must certainly speak in the grand style. But who can be moved if he does not understand what is said? Or who can be engrossed and made to listen, if he is not delighted? So in this style too, when hard hearts must be moved by grandeur of style, a speaker cannot be listened to with obedience unless he is also listened to with understanding and pleasure as well.¹⁵¹ More important than any amount of grandeur of style to those of us who seek to be listened to with obedience is the life of the speaker. A wise and eloquent speaker who lives a wicked life certainly educates many who are eager to learn, although he is 'useless to his own soul',⁹⁷³ as scripture puts it. That is why Paul says, 'Let Christ be proclaimed, whether in pretence or in truth.'⁹⁷⁴ Christ is the truth, and yet the truth can be proclaimed even by untruth, in the sense that things which are right and true may be proclaimed by a wicked and deceitful heart. It is in this way that Jesus Christ is proclaimed by those who seek their own and not the things of Jesus Christ.⁹⁷⁵ 152. But because good faithful men listen with obedience not to a particular speaker, but to their Lord, who says, 'Do what they say, but do not do what they do; for they do not practice what they preach',⁹⁷⁶ even those that behave unprofitably are heard with profit. For they may seek their own thing, but they dare not teach their own words from the elevated position of the episcopal chair, which sound teaching has established. This is why the Lord himself, before speaking the abovementioned words on this matter, warned 'They sit in Moses' seat.'⁹⁷⁷ It was that seat, not theirs but Moses', that compelled them to say good things, even though they did not do good things. So in their own lives they did their own thing, but in another's seat they were not allowed to teach their own things. 153. So they

⁹⁷² The words *grandi genere* here are clearly inappropriate.

⁹⁷³ Cf. Eccus. 37: 2.

⁹⁷⁴ Phil. 1: 18.

⁹⁷⁵ Phil. 2: 21.

⁹⁷⁶ Cf. Matt. 23: 3.

⁹⁷⁷ Matt. 23: 2.

non faciunt, sed longe pluribus prodessent faciendo quae dicunt. Abundant enim qui malae vitae suae defensionem ex ipsis suis praepositis et doctoribus quaerant, respondentes corde suo aut etiamsi ad hoc erumpunt ore suo atque dicentes, ‘quod mihi praecipis cur ipse non facis?’ Ita fit ut eum non oboedienter audiant qui se ipse non audit, et dei verbum quod eis praedicatur simul cum ipso praedicatore contemnant. 154. Denique apostolus scribens ad Timotheum, cum dixisset, *nemo adulescentiam tuam contemnat*, subiecit unde non contemneretur, atque ait, *sed forma esto fidelium in sermone, in conversatione, in dilectione, in fide, in castitate*.⁹⁷⁸ 155. Talis doctor ut oboedienter audiatur, non impudenter non solum summis ac temperate verum etiam granditer dicit, quia non contemptibiliter vivit. Sic namque elegit bonam vitam ut etiam bonam non neglegat famam sed provideat bona coram deo et hominibus quantum potest,⁹⁷⁹ illum timendo, his consulendo. In ipso etiam sermone malit rebus placere quam verbis, nec existimet dici melius nisi quod dicitur verius, nec doctor verbis serviat sed verba doctori. Hoc est enim quod ait apostolus: *non in sapientia verbi, ne evacuetur crux Christi*.⁹⁸⁰ 156. Ad hoc valet etiam quod ait ad Timotheum: *noli verbis contendere; ad nihil enim utile est nisi in subversione audientium*.⁹⁸¹ Neque enim hoc ideo dictum est ut adversariis oppugnantibus veritatem nihil nos pro veritate dicamus. Et ubi erit quod cum ostenderet qualis esse episcopus debeat ait inter cetera, *ut potens sit in doctrina sana et contradicentes redarguere*.⁹⁸² Verbis enim contendere est non curare quomodo error veritate vincatur sed quomodo tua dictio dictioni praeferatur alterius. 157. Porro qui non verbis contendit, sive summis sive temperate sive granditer dicat, id agit verbis ut veritas pateat, veritas placeat, veritas moveat, quoniam nec ipsa quae praecepti finis et plenitudo legis est caritas

⁹⁷⁸ 1 Tim. 4: 12.

⁹⁷⁹ 2 Cor. 8: 21.

⁹⁸⁰ 1 Cor. 1: 17.

⁹⁸¹ 2 Tim. 2: 14.

⁹⁸² Titus 1: 9.

benefit many people by preaching what they do not practise, but they would benefit far more people if they practised what they preached. There are plenty of people who look for a justification of their own evil lives from those in authority who teach them; they reply within their hearts or even, if they blurt it out, with their lips, 'Why don't you practise what you preach?' That is why people do not listen with obedience to the man who does not listen to himself, and they despise the word of God preached to them as well as despising the preacher.⁹⁸³ 154. Finally, the apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, after saying, 'Let nobody despise your youth', added the reason why he should not be despised, and said, 'Be an example to believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity.'⁹⁸⁴ 155. For such a teacher, seeking to be listened to with obedience, it is not impudent to speak not only in the restrained and the mixed styles but also in the grand style, because the life he lives is not a contemptible one. He has chosen to live a good life without neglecting a good reputation; and to the best of his ability he aims at what is honourable in the eyes of God and man,⁹⁸⁵ by fearing the one and taking thought for the other. When actually speaking he should choose to satisfy his audience with things rather than words, and not regard any matter as better expressed than another unless it is more truthfully expressed; the words must serve the teacher, not the other way round. This is what the apostle Paul meant when he said, 'not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power'.⁹⁸⁶ 156. What he said to Timothy is also important: 'do not do battle with words; this is useless, and only ruins those who listen.'⁹⁸⁷ But this was not said to deter us from saying anything in defence of the truth when our enemies attacked it. Otherwise what would be the point of saying, as he did say (among other things), to show what kind of person a bishop should be, 'so that he may be strong in sound teaching and able to refute those who oppose it'?⁹⁸⁷ To 'do battle with words' is to be concerned not about overcoming error with truth, but about making your sermon seem better than someone else's. 157. The speaker who avoids battles over words is the one who endeavours in his words, whether speaking in the restrained, the mixed, or the grand style, to make the truth clear, to make it pleasing, and to make it moving, since not even

⁹⁸³ 1 Tim. 4: 12.

⁹⁸⁴ 2 Cor. 8: 21.

⁹⁸⁵ 1 Cor. 1: 17.

⁹⁸⁶ 2 Tim. 2: 14.

⁹⁸⁷ Titus 1: 9.

ullo modo esse recta potest,⁹⁸⁸ si ea quae diliguntur non vera sed falsa sunt. Sicut autem cuius pulchrum corpus et deformis est animus magis dolendus est quam si deforme haberet et corpus, ita qui eloquenter ea quae falsa sunt dicunt magis miserandi quam si talia deformiter dicerent. 158. Quid est ergo non solum eloquenter verum etiam sapienter dicere, nisi verba in summisso genere sufficientia, in temperato splendentia, in grandi vehementia, veris tamen rebus quas audiri oporteat adhibere? Sed qui utrumque non potest dicat sapienter quod non dicit eloquenter potius quam dicat eloquenter quod dicit insipienter. 159. Si autem ne hoc quidem potest, ita conversetur ut non solum sibi praemium comparet sed et praebeat aliis exemplum et sit eius quasi copia dicendi forma vivendi. 160. Sunt sane quidam qui bene pronuntiare possunt, quid autem pronuntient excogitare non possunt. Quod si ab aliis sumant eloquenter sapienterque conscriptum memoriaeque commendent atque id ad populum proferant, si eam personam gerunt, non improbe faciunt. Etiam sic enim, quod profecto utile est, multi praedicatores veritatis fiunt nec multi magistri, si unius veri magistri *id ipsum* dicant *omnes et non sint in eis schismata*.⁹⁸⁹ Nec deterrendi sunt isti voce Hieremiae prophetae, per quem deus arguit *eos qui furantur verba eius, unusquisque a proximo suo*.⁹⁹⁰ 161. Qui enim furantur alienum auferunt, verbum autem dei non est ab eis alienum qui obtemperant ei; potiusque ille dicit aliena qui cum dicat bene vivit male. Quaecumque enim bona dicit eius excogitari videntur ingenio sed ab eius moribus aliena sunt. Eos itaque dixit deus furari verba sua, qui boni volunt videri loquendo quae dei sunt, cum mali sint faciendo quae sua sunt. Nec sane ipsi dicunt bona quae dicunt, si diligenter attendas. Quomodo enim dicunt verbis quod negant factis? Non enim frustra de talibus ait apostolus, *confitentur se nosse deum, factis autem negant*.⁹⁹¹ Modo ergo

⁹⁸⁸ Cf. 1 Tim 1: 5 and Rom. 13: 10.

⁹⁸⁹ 1 Cor. 1: 10.

⁹⁹⁰ Jer. 23: 30.

⁹⁹¹ Titus 1: 16.

the love which is the end of the commandment and the fulfilment of the law⁹⁹² can be directed aright if the things loved are not true but false. Just as a person who has a handsome body but a repulsive mind is more pathetic than if he had a repulsive body as well, so those who speak eloquently of what is false are more to be pitied than if they spoke of it repulsively. 158. Surely, then, the art of speaking both eloquently and wisely is a matter of using adequate words in the restrained style, striking words in the mixed style, and powerful words in the grand style, but using them of things that are true and need to be heard. But the speaker who cannot do both should treat wisely what he cannot treat eloquently rather than the reverse. 159. If he is not even capable of this, he should seek to live in such a way that he not only gains a reward for himself but also gives an example to others, so that his way of life becomes, in a sense, an abundant source of eloquence. 160. There are indeed some people who can give a good speech but not compose one. If they borrow from others something composed with eloquence and wisdom and commit it to memory and then bring that to their audience, they are not doing anything wrong, provided that they adhere to this role. Moreover it is in this way—and this is certainly a useful thing—that many men become preachers of the truth, but few are teachers of it, provided that they all really speak the words of the one true teacher and there are no divisions among them’.⁹⁹³ They should not be inhibited by the words of the prophet Jeremiah, through whom God condemns those who ‘steal words, each one from his neighbour’.⁹⁹⁴ 161. People who steal take something that is not their own, but it is not the case that the word of God is not theirs, if they obey him. It is rather those who speak well but live evil lives that speak something that is not their own. The good things they say seem to be the product of their own brains, but are at odds with their behaviour. Those who, as God said, steal his words are those who want to appear good by saying the things of God when in fact they are evil, doing their own thing. But if you think carefully, it is not they themselves that speak the good things they say. For how can they affirm in their words what they deny in their actions? The apostle Paul had a point when he said about such people: ‘They profess to know God, but deny him.’⁹⁹⁵ In

⁹⁹² Cf. 1 Tim 1: 5 and Rom. 13: 10.

⁹⁹³ 1 Cor. 1: 10.

⁹⁹⁴ Jer. 23: 30.

⁹⁹⁵ Titus 1: 16.

quodam ipsi dicunt et rursus alio modo non ipsi dicunt, quoniam utrumque verum est quod veritas ait. 162. De talibus enim loquens, *quae dicunt*, inquit, *facite; quae autem faciunt facere nolite*,⁹⁹⁶ hoc est, ‘quod ex ore illorum auditis facite; quod in opere videtis facere nolite’; *dicunt enim*, inquit, *et non faciunt*. Ergo quamvis non faciant tamen dicunt. Sed alio loco tales arguens, *Hypocritae*, inquit, *quomodo potestis bona loqui cum sitis mali?*⁹⁹⁷ Ac per hoc et ea quae dicunt, quando bona dicunt, non ipsi dicunt, voluntate scilicet atque opere negando quod dicunt. 163. Unde contingit ut homo disertus et malus sermonem quo veritas praedicetur dicendum ab alio non diserto sed bono ipse componat. Quod cum fit, ipse a se ipso tradit alienum, ille ab alieno accipit suum. Cum vero boni fideles bonis fidelibus hanc operam commodant utrique sua dicunt quia et deus ipsorum est cuius sunt illa quae dicunt, et ea sua faciunt quae non ipsi componere potuerunt qui secundum illa composite vivunt. 164. Sive autem apud populum vel apud quoslibet iam iamque dicturus sive quod apud populum dicendum vel ab eis qui voluerint aut potuerint legendum est dictaturus, oret ut deus sermonem bonum det in os eius. Si enim regina oravit Hester, pro suae gentis temporaria salute locutura apud regem, ut in os eius deus congruum sermonem daret,⁹⁹⁸ quanto magis orare debet ut tale munus accipiat qui pro aeterna hominum salute *in verbo et doctrina* laborat?⁹⁹⁹ 165. Illi vero, qui ea dicturi sunt quae ab aliis acceperunt, et antequam accipiant orent pro eis a quibus accipiunt ut eis detur quod per eos accipere volunt, et cum acceperint orent ut bene et ipsi proferant et illi ad quos proferunt sumant, et de prospero exitu dictionis eidem gratias agant a quo id se accepisse non dubitant, ut *qui gloriatur in illo gloriatur in cuius manu sunt et nos et sermones nostri*.¹⁰⁰⁰

⁹⁹⁶ Matt. 23: 3.

⁹⁹⁷ Matt. 12: 34.

⁹⁹⁸ Esth. 14: 13.

⁹⁹⁹ 1 Tim. 5: 17.

¹⁰⁰⁰ 1 Cor. 1: 31; Wisd. 7: 16.

one sense it is they themselves who speak, but in another sense it is not they themselves who speak: both these things are true, as the Truth says. 162. On the one hand, when speaking about such men, Christ says ‘do what they say but not what they do’¹⁰⁰¹ (that is, ‘do what you hear from their mouths but not what you see in their actions’), for ‘they do not practise what they preach’. They do at least preach, even if they do not practise. But in another passage he rebukes such people: ‘Hypocrites, how can you say good things, when you are evil?’¹⁰⁰² It follows that when they say good things it is not they themselves who say them, because in their wills and actions they deny what they say. 163. So it is possible for a person who is eloquent but evil actually to compose a sermon proclaiming the truth for another, who is not eloquent but good, to deliver. When this happens, one person transfers from himself what is not his own, and one receives from the other what is his own. But when good and faithful people lend such a work to others who are good and faithful, both parties are saying what is their own, because the God to whom their words belong is their own, and because people who live aright, according to what they have been unable to write for themselves, make such writings their own. 164. Whether they are going to speak before a congregation or any other body, or to dictate something to be spoken before a congregation or read by others who are able and willing to do so, speakers must pray that God will place a good sermon on their lips. If Queen Esther, when about to plead before the King for the temporal salvation of her people, prayed that God would place a suitable speech on her lips,¹⁰⁰³ how much more important is it for those who work for people's eternal salvation by ‘teaching God's word’¹⁰⁰⁴ to pray to receive such a gift? 165. Those who are going to deliver something they have received from others should pray, before receiving it, that those from whom they will get it may be given what they, through them, want to receive; they should also pray, after receiving it, that they themselves may present it effectively and that those to whom they present it may absorb it effectively. And they should also give thanks for a favourable outcome of their address to the one from whom they do not doubt that they received it, ‘so that anyone who boasts may boast’ in the one ‘whose hands hold us and our sermons alike’¹⁰⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁰¹ Matt. 23: 3.

¹⁰⁰² Matt. 12: 34.

¹⁰⁰³ Esth. 14: 13.

¹⁰⁰⁴ 1 Tim. 5: 17.

¹⁰⁰⁵ 1 Cor. 1: 31; Wisd. 7: 16.

166. Longior evasit liber hic quam volebam quamque putaveram, sed legenti vel audienti cui gratus est longus non est. Cui autem longus est per partes eum legat qui habere vult cognitum; quem vero cognitionis eius piget de longitudine non queratur. Ego tamen deo nostro ago gratias quod in his quattuor libris non qualis ego essem, cui multa desunt, sed qualis esse debeat qui in doctrina sana,¹⁰⁰⁶ id est Christiana, non solum sibi sed etiam aliis laborare studet, quantulacumque potui facultate disserui.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Titus 1: 9, neatly linked in the words that follow to the title of Augustine's book.

166. This book has ended up longer than I wanted or expected it to be; but it is not too long for the reader or hearer who welcomes it. Anybody who finds it too long should read it in parts if he wants to have a complete knowledge of it, and anybody who is not interested in such knowledge should not complain of its length. But in any case I thank God that in these four books I have been able to discuss, with such ability as I have, not the sort of person that I am—for I have many failings—but the sort of person that those who apply themselves to sound teaching,¹⁰⁰⁷ in other words Christian teaching, on behalf of others as well as themselves, ought to be.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Titus 1: 9, neatly linked in the words that follow to the title of Augustine's book.

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