

Letter 93 (A.D. 408)

Please help support the mission of New Advent and get the full contents of this website as an instant download.

Includes the Catholic Encyclopedia, Church Fathers, Summa, Bible and more — all for only \$19.99...

(<https://gumroad.com//na2>)

*To Vincentius, My Brother Dearly Beloved, Augustine Sends
Greeting.*

Chapter 1

1. I have received a letter which I believe ([../cathen/02408b.htm](http://cathen/02408b.htm)) to be from you to me: at least I have not thought this incredible, for the person who brought it is one whom I know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](http://cathen/08673a.htm)) to be a Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](http://cathen/03449a.htm)) Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](http://cathen/03712a.htm)), and who, I think, would not dare to impose upon me. But even though the letter may perchance not be from you, I have considered it necessary to write a reply to the author, whoever he may be. You know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](http://cathen/08673a.htm)) me now to be more desirous of rest, and earnest in seeking it, than when you knew ([../cathen/08673a.htm](http://cathen/08673a.htm)) me in my earlier years at Carthage ([../cathen/03385a.htm](http://cathen/03385a.htm)), in the lifetime of your immediate predecessor Rogatus. But we are precluded from this rest by the Donatists ([../cathen/05121a.htm](http://cathen/05121a.htm)), the repression and correction of whom, by the powers which are ordained of God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](http://cathen/06608a.htm)), appears to me to be labour not in vain. For we already rejoice ([../cathen/07131b.htm](http://cathen/07131b.htm)) in the correction of many who hold and defend the Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](http://cathen/03449a.htm)) unity with such sincerity, and are so glad to have been delivered from their former error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](http://cathen/05525a.htm)), that we admire them with great thankfulness and pleasure. Yet these same persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](http://cathen/11726a.htm)), under some indescribable bondage of custom, would in no way have thought of being changed to a better condition, had they not, under the shock of this alarm, directed their minds earnestly to the study of the truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](http://cathen/15073a.htm)); fearing lest, if without profit, and in vain, they suffered hard things at the hands of men ([../cathen/09580c.htm](http://cathen/09580c.htm)), for the sake not of righteousness, but of their own obstinacy and presumption, they should afterwards receive nothing else at the hand of God than the punishment due to wicked ([../cathen/05649a.htm](http://cathen/05649a.htm)) men who despised the admonition which He so gently gave and His paternal correction; and being by such reflection made teachable, they found not in mischievous or frivolous human ([../cathen/09580c.htm](http://cathen/09580c.htm)) fables, but in the promises of the divine books, that universal Church which they saw extending according to the promise throughout all nations: just as, on the testimony of prophecy ([../cathen/12473a.htm](http://cathen/12473a.htm)) in the same Scriptures,

they believed ([../cathen/02408b.htm](#)) without hesitation that Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)) is exalted above the heavens, though He is not seen by them in His glory ([../cathen/06585a.htm](#)). Was it my duty to be displeased at the salvation ([../cathen/13407a.htm](#)) of these men, and to call back my colleagues from a fatherly diligence of this kind, the result of which has been, that we see many blaming their former blindness? For they see that they were blind who believed ([../cathen/02408b.htm](#)) Christ to have been exalted above the heavens although they saw Him not, and yet denied that His glory ([../cathen/06585a.htm](#)) is spread over all the earth although they saw it; whereas the prophet ([../cathen/12477a.htm](#)) has with so great plainness included both in one sentence, "Be exalted, O God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)), above the heavens, and Your glory ([../cathen/06585a.htm](#)) above all the earth."

2. Wherefore, if we were so to overlook and forbear with those cruel enemies who seriously disturb our peace and quietness by manifold and grievous forms of violence ([../cathen/15446a.htm](#)) and treachery, as that nothing at all should be contrived and done by us with a view to alarm and correct them, truly ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) we would be rendering evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) for evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)). For if any one saw his enemy running headlong to destroy himself when he had become delirious through a dangerous fever, would he not in that case be much more truly ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) rendering evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) for evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) if he permitted him to run on thus, than if he took measures to have him seized and bound? And yet he would at that moment appear to the other to be most vexatious, and most like an enemy, when, in truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)), he had proved ([../cathen/12454c.htm](#)) himself most useful and most compassionate; although, doubtless, when health was recovered, would he express to him his gratitude with a warmth proportioned to the measure in which he had felt his refusal to indulge him in his time of phrenzy. Oh, if I could but show you how many we have even from the Circumcelliones, who are now approved Catholics ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)), and condemn their former life, and the wretched delusion under which they believed ([../cathen/02408b.htm](#)) that they were doing in behalf of the Church of God ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) whatever they did under the promptings of a restless temerity, who nevertheless would not have been brought to this soundness of judgment had they not been, as persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) beside themselves, bound with the cords of those laws ([../cathen/09053a.htm](#)) which are distasteful to you! As to another form of most serious distemper, — that, namely, of those who had not, indeed, a boldness leading to acts of violence ([../cathen/15446a.htm](#)), but were pressed down by a kind of inveterate sluggishness of mind ([../cathen/10321a.htm](#)), and would say to us: "What you affirm is true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)), nothing can be said against it; but it is hard for us to leave off what we have received, by tradition from our fathers,"— why should not such persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) be shaken up in a beneficial way by a law bringing upon them inconvenience in worldly things, in order that they might rise from their lethargic sleep, and awake to the salvation ([../cathen/13407a.htm](#)) which is to be found in the unity of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#))? How many of them, now rejoicing with us, speak bitterly of the weight with which their ruinous course formerly oppressed them, and confess that it was our duty to inflict annoyance upon them, in order to prevent them from perishing under the disease of lethargic habit, as under a fatal sleep!

3. You will say that to some these remedies are of no service. Is the art of healing, therefore, to be abandoned, because the malady of some is incurable? You look only to the case of those who are so obdurate that they refuse even such correction. Of such it is written, "In vain have I smitten your children: they received no correction:" Jeremiah 2:30 ([../bible/jer002.htm#verse30](#)) and yet I suppose that those of whom the prophet ([../cathen/12477a.htm](#)) speaks were smitten in love ([../cathen/09397a.htm](#)), not from hatred ([../cathen/07149b.htm](#)). But you ought to consider also the very large number over whose salvation ([../cathen/13407a.htm](#)) we rejoice ([../cathen/07131b.htm](#)). For if they

were only made afraid, and not instructed, this might appear to be a kind of inexcusable tyranny. Again, if they were instructed only, and not made afraid, they would be with more difficulty persuaded to embrace the way of salvation ([../cathen/13407a.htm](#)), having become hardened through the inveteracy of custom: whereas many whom we know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) well, when arguments had been brought before them, and the truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) made apparent by testimonies from the word of God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)), answered us that they desired to pass into the communion of the Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), but were in fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) of the violence ([../cathen/15446a.htm](#)) of worthless men, whose enmity they would incur; which violence ([../cathen/15446a.htm](#)) they ought indeed by all means to despise when it was to be borne for righteousness' sake, and for the sake of eternal ([../cathen/05551b.htm](#)) life. Nevertheless the weakness of such men ought not to be regarded as hopeless, but to be supported until they gain more strength. Nor may we forget what the Lord Himself said to Peter when he was yet weak: "You can not follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterwards." John 13:36 ([../bible/joh013.htm#verse36](#)) When, however, wholesome instruction is added to means of inspiring salutary fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)), so that not only the light of truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) may dispel the darkness of error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)), but the force of fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) may at the same time break the bonds of evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) custom, we are made glad, as I have said, by the salvation ([../cathen/13407a.htm](#)) of many, who with us bless God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)), and render thanks to Him, because by the fulfilment of His covenant, in which He promised that the kings of the earth should serve Christ, He has thus cured the diseased and restored health to the weak.

Chapter 2

4. Not every one who is indulgent is a friend; nor is every one an enemy who smites. Better are the wounds of a friend than the proffered kisses of an enemy. Proverbs 27:6 ([../bible/pro027.htm#verse6](#)) It is better with severity to love ([../cathen/09397a.htm](#)), than with gentleness to deceive. More good is done by taking away food from one who is hungry, if, through freedom from care as to his food, he is forgetful of righteousness, than by providing bread for one who is hungry, in order that, being thereby bribed ([../cathen/02778c.htm](#)), he may consent to unrighteousness. He who binds the man who is in a phrenzy, and he who stirs up the man who is in a lethargy, are alike vexatious to both, and are in both cases alike prompted by love ([../cathen/09397a.htm](#)) for the patient. Who can love ([../cathen/09397a.htm](#)) us more than God does? And yet He not only give us sweet instruction, but also quickens us by salutary fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)), and this unceasingly. Often adding to the soothing remedies by which He comforts men the sharp medicine of tribulation, He afflicts with famine even the pious ([../cathen/12748a.htm](#)) and devout patriarchs, disquiets a rebellious people by more severe chastisements, and refuses, though thrice besought, to take away the thorn in the flesh of the apostle, that He may make His strength perfect in weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 ([../bible/2co012.htm#verse7](#)) Let us by all means love ([../cathen/09397a.htm](#)) even our enemies, for this is right, and God commands us so to do, in order that we may be the children of our Father who is in heaven, "who makes His sun to rise on the evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) and on the good ([../cathen/06636b.htm](#)), and sends rain on the just and on the unjust ([../cathen/08010c.htm](#))." Matthew 5:45 ([../bible/mat005.htm#verse45](#)) But as we praise these His gifts, lets us in like manner ponder His correction of those whom He loves.

5. You are of opinion that no one should be compelled to follow righteousness; and yet you read that the householder said to his servants, "Whomsoever you shall find, compel them to come in." Luke 14:23 ([../bible/luk014.htm#verse23](#)) You also read how he who was at first Saul, and afterwards Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)), was compelled, by the great violence ([../cathen/15446a.htm](#)) with which Christ coerced him, to know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) and to embrace the truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)); for you cannot but think that the light which your eyes enjoy is more precious to men than money or any other possession. This light, lost suddenly by him when he was cast to the ground by the heavenly voice, he did not recover until he became a member of the Holy Church. You are also of opinion that no coercion is to be used with any man in order to his deliverance from the fatal consequences of error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)); and yet you see that, in examples which cannot be disputed, this is done by God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)), who loves us with more real regard for our profit than any other can; and you hear Christ saying, "No man can come to me except the Father draw him," John 6:44 ([../bible/joh006.htm#verse44](#)) which is done in the hearts of all those who, through fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) of the wrath ([../cathen/01489a.htm](#)) of God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)), betake themselves to Him. You know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) also that sometimes the thief scatters food before the flock that he may lead them astray, and sometimes the shepherd brings wandering sheep back to the flock with his rod.

6. Did not Sarah, when she had the power, choose rather to afflict the insolent bondwoman? And truly ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) she did not cruelly hate ([../cathen/07149b.htm](#)) her whom she had formerly by an act of her own kindness made a mother; but she put a wholesome restraint upon her pride ([../cathen/12405a.htm](#)). Genesis 16:5 ([../bible/gen016.htm#verse5](#)) Moreover, as you well know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)), these two women ([../cathen/15687b.htm](#)), Sarah and Hagar, and their two sons Isaac and Ishmael, are figures representing spiritual and carnal persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)). And although we read that the bondwoman and her son suffered great hardships from Sarah, nevertheless the Apostle Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)) says that Isaac suffered persecution ([../cathen/11703a.htm](#)) from Ishmael: "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted ([../cathen/11703a.htm](#)) him that was born after the Spirit ([../cathen/07409a.htm](#)), even so it is now;" Galatians 4:29 ([../bible/gal004.htm#verse29](#)) whence those who have understanding may perceive that it is rather the Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) which suffers persecution ([../cathen/11703a.htm](#)) through the pride ([../cathen/12405a.htm](#)) and impiety of those carnal men whom it endeavours to correct by afflictions and terrors of a temporal kind. Whatever therefore the true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) and rightful Mother does, even when something severe and bitter is felt by her children at her hands, she is not rendering evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) for evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)), but is applying the benefit of discipline to counteract the evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) of sin ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)), not with the hatred ([../cathen/07149b.htm](#)) which seeks to harm, but with the love ([../cathen/09397a.htm](#)) which seeks to heal. When good and bad do the same actions and suffer the same afflictions, they are to be distinguished not by what they do or suffer, but by the causes of each: e.g. Pharaoh ([../cathen/11788c.htm](#)) oppressed the people of God by hard bondage; Moses ([../cathen/10596a.htm](#)) afflicted the same people by severe correction when they were guilty of impiety: their actions were alike; but they were not alike in the motive of regard to the people's welfare — the one being inflated by the lust ([../cathen/09438a.htm](#)) of power, the other inflamed by love ([../cathen/09397a.htm](#)). Jezebel ([../cathen/08404a.htm](#)) slew prophets ([../cathen/12477a.htm](#)), Elijah slew false prophets ([../cathen/07698b.htm](#)); 1 Kings 18:4, 40 ([../bible/1ki018.htm#verse4](#)) I suppose that the desert ([../cathen/04749a.htm](#)) of the actors and of the sufferers respectively in the two cases was wholly diverse.

7. Look also to the New Testament (../cathen/14530a.htm) times, in which the essential gentleness of love (../cathen/09397a.htm) was to be not only kept in the heart, but also manifested openly: in these the sword of Peter is called back into its sheath by Christ, and we are taught that it ought not to be taken from its sheath even in Christ's defense. Matthew 26:52 (../bible/mat026.htm#verse52) We read, however, not only that the Jews (../cathen/08399a.htm) beat the Apostle Paul (../cathen/11567b.htm), but also that the Greeks beat Sosthenes, a Jew, on account of the Apostle Paul (../cathen/11567b.htm). Does not the similarity of the events apparently join both; and, at the same time, does not the dissimilarity of the causes make a real difference? Again, God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. Romans 8:32 (../bible/rom008.htm#verse32) Of the Son also it is said, "who loved me, and gave Himself for me;" Galatians 2:20 (../bible/gal002.htm#verse20) and it is also said of Judas that Satan (../cathen/04764a.htm) entered into him that he might betray Christ. John 13:2 (../bible/joh013.htm#verse2) Seeing, therefore, that the Father delivered up His Son, and Christ delivered up His own body, and Judas delivered up his Master, wherefore is God holy (../cathen/07386a.htm) and man guilty in this delivering up of Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm), unless that in the one action which both did, the reason for which they did it was not the same? Three crosses stood in one place: on one was the thief who was to be saved; on the second, the thief who was to be condemned; on the third, between them, was Christ, who was about to save the one thief and condemn the other. What could be more similar than these crosses? What more unlike than the persons (../cathen/11726a.htm) who were suspended on them? Paul (../cathen/11567b.htm) was given up to be imprisoned and bound, Acts 21:23-24 (../bible/act021.htm#verse23) but Satan (../cathen/04764a.htm) is unquestionably worse than any jailer: yet to him Paul (../cathen/11567b.htm) himself gave up one man for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (../cathen/08374c.htm). 1 Corinthians 5:5 (../bible/1co005.htm#verse5) And what say we to this? Behold, both deliver a man to bondage; but he that is cruel consigns his prisoner to one less severe, while he that is compassionate consigns his to one who is more cruel. Let us learn, my brother, in actions which are similar to distinguish the intentions of the agents; and let us not, shutting our eyes, deal in groundless reproaches, and accuse those who seek men's welfare as if they did them wrong. In like manner, when the same apostle says that he had delivered certain persons (../cathen/11726a.htm) unto Satan (../cathen/04764a.htm), that they might learn not to blaspheme (../cathen/02595a.htm), 1 Timothy 1:20 (../bible/1ti001.htm#verse20) did he render to these men evil (../cathen/05649a.htm) for evil (../cathen/05649a.htm), or did he not rather esteem it a good work to correct evil (../cathen/05649a.htm) men by means of the evil (../cathen/05649a.htm) one?

8. If to suffer persecution (../cathen/11703a.htm) were in all cases a praiseworthy thing, it would have sufficed for the Lord to say, "Blessed are they which are persecuted (../cathen/11703a.htm)," without adding "for righteousness' sake." Matthew 5:10 (../bible/mat005.htm#verse10) Moreover, if to inflict persecution (../cathen/11703a.htm) were in all cases blameworthy, it would not have been written in the sacred books, "Whoever privily slanders (../cathen/14035b.htm) his neighbour, him will I persecute (../cathen/11703a.htm) [cut off, E.V.]" In some cases, therefore, both he that suffers persecution (../cathen/11703a.htm) is in the wrong, and he that inflicts it is in the right. But the truth (../cathen/15073a.htm) is, that always both the bad have persecuted the good (../cathen/06636b.htm), and the good have persecuted (../cathen/11703a.htm) the bad: the former doing harm by their unrighteousness, the latter seeking to do good by the administration of discipline; the former with cruelty, the latter with moderation; the former impelled by lust (../cathen/09438a.htm), the latter under the constraint of love (../cathen/09397a.htm). For he whose aim is to kill is not careful how he wounds, but he whose aim is to cure is cautious with his lancet; for the one seeks to destroy what is sound, the other that which is decaying. The wicked (../cathen/05649a.htm) put prophets (../cathen/12477a.htm) to

death; prophets (../cathen/12477a.htm) also put the wicked (../cathen/05649a.htm) to death. The Jews (../cathen/08399a.htm) scourged Christ; Christ also scourged the Jews (../cathen/08399a.htm). The apostles (../cathen/01626c.htm) were given up by men to the civil powers; the apostles (../cathen/01626c.htm) themselves gave men up to the power of Satan (../cathen/04764a.htm). In all these cases, what is important to attend to but this: who were on the side of truth (../cathen/15073a.htm), and who on the side of iniquity; who acted from a desire to injure, and who from a desire to correct what was amiss?

Chapter 3

9. You say that no example is found in the writings of evangelists (../cathen/05645a.htm) and apostles (../cathen/01626c.htm), of any petition presented on behalf of the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) to the kings of the earth against her enemies. Who denies this? None such is found. But at that time the prophecy (../cathen/12473a.htm), "Be wise now, therefore, O you kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth: serve the Lord with fear (../cathen/06021a.htm)," was not yet fulfilled. Up to that time the words which we find at the beginning of the same Psalm were receiving their fulfilment, "Why do the heathen (../cathen/11388a.htm) rage, and the people imagine (../cathen/07672a.htm) a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed." Truly, if past events recorded in the prophetic books were figures of the future, there was given under King Nebuchadnezzar (../cathen/10666c.htm) a figure both of the time which the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) had under the apostles (../cathen/01626c.htm), and of that which she has now. In the age of the apostles (../cathen/01626c.htm) and martyrs (../cathen/09736b.htm), that was fulfilled which was prefigured when the aforesaid king compelled pious (../cathen/12748a.htm) and just men to bow down to his image, and cast into the flames all who refused. Now, however, is fulfilled that which was prefigured soon after in the same king, when, being converted to the worship of the true (../cathen/15073a.htm) God (../cathen/06608a.htm), he made a decree throughout his empire, that whosoever should speak against the God (../cathen/06608a.htm) of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, should suffer the penalty which their crime deserved. The earlier time of that king represented the former age of emperors who did not believe (../cathen/02408b.htm) in Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm), at whose hands the Christians (../cathen/03712a.htm) suffered because of the wicked (../cathen/05649a.htm); but the later time of that king represented the age of the successors to the imperial throne, now believing in Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm), at whose hands the wicked (../cathen/05649a.htm) suffer because of the Christians (../cathen/03712a.htm).

10. It is manifest, however, that moderate severity, or rather clemency, is carefully observed towards those who, under the Christian (../cathen/03712a.htm) name, have been led astray by perverse men, in the measures used to prevent them who are Christ's sheep from wandering, and to bring them back to the flock, when by punishments, such as exile and fines, they are admonished to consider what they suffer, and wherefore, and are taught to prefer the Scriptures (../bible/index.html) which they read to human (../cathen/09580c.htm) legends and calumnies (../cathen/03190c.htm). For which of us, yea, which of you, does not speak well of the laws (../cathen/09053a.htm) issued by the emperors against heathen (../cathen/11388a.htm) sacrifices (../cathen/13309a.htm)? In these, assuredly, a penalty much more severe has been appointed, for the punishment of that impiety is death. But in repressing and restraining you, the thing aimed at has been rather that you should be admonished to depart from evil (../cathen/05649a.htm), than that you should be punished for a crime. For perhaps what the apostle said of the Jews (../cathen/08399a.htm) may be said of

you: "bear them record that they have a zeal (../cathen/15753a.htm) of God (../cathen/06608a.htm), but not according to knowledge (../cathen/08673a.htm): for, being ignorant (../cathen/07648a.htm) of the righteousness of God (../cathen/06608a.htm), and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God (../cathen/06608a.htm)." Romans 10:2-3 (../bible/rom010.htm#verse2) For what else than your own righteousness are you desiring to establish, when you say that none are justified but those who may have had the opportunity of being baptized (../cathen/02258b.htm) by you? In regard to this statement made by the apostle concerning the Jews (../cathen/08399a.htm), you differ from those to whom it originally applied in this, that you have the Christian (../cathen/03712a.htm) sacraments (../cathen/13295a.htm), of which they are still destitute. But in regard to the words, "being ignorant (../cathen/07648a.htm) of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness," and "they have a zeal (../cathen/15753a.htm) of God (../cathen/06608a.htm), but not according to knowledge (../cathen/08673a.htm)," you are exactly like them, excepting only those among you who know (../cathen/08673a.htm) what is the truth (../cathen/15073a.htm), and who in the wilfulness of their perversity continue to fight against truth (../cathen/15073a.htm) which is perfectly well known to them. The impiety of these men is perhaps even a greater sin (../cathen/14004b.htm) than idolatry (../cathen/07636a.htm). Since, however, they cannot be easily convicted of this (for it is a sin (../cathen/14004b.htm) which lies concealed in the mind (../cathen/10321a.htm)), you are all alike restrained with a comparatively gentle severity, as being not so far alienated from us. And this I may say, both concerning all heretics (../cathen/07256b.htm) without distinction, who, while retaining the Christian (../cathen/03712a.htm) sacraments (../cathen/13295a.htm), are dissenters from the truth (../cathen/15073a.htm) and unity of Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm), and concerning all Donatists (../cathen/05121a.htm) without exception.

11. But as for you, who are not only, in common with these last, styled Donatists (../cathen/05121a.htm), from Donatus, but also specially named Rogatists, from Rogatus, you indeed seem to be more gentle in disposition, because you do not rage up and down with bands of these savage Circumcelliones: but no wild beast is said to be gentle if, because of its not having teeth and claws, it wounds no one. You say that you have no wish to be cruel: I think that power, not will is wanting to you. For you are in number so few, that even if you desire it, you dare not move against the multitudes which are opposed to you. Let us suppose, however, that you do not wish to do that which you have not strength to do; let us suppose that the gospel rule, "If any man will sue you at the law and take away your coat, let him have your cloak also," Matthew 5:40 (../bible/mat005.htm#verse40) is so understood and obeyed (../cathen/11181c.htm) by you that resistance to those who persecute (../cathen/11703a.htm) you is unlawful, whether they have right or wrong on their side. Rogatus, the founder of your sect (../cathen/13674a.htm), either did not hold this view, or was guilty of inconsistency; for he fought with the keenest determination in a lawsuit about certain things which, according to your statement, belonged to you. If to him it had been said, Which of the apostles (../cathen/01626c.htm) ever defended his property in a matter concerning faith (../cathen/05752c.htm) by appeal to the civil courts? As you have put the question in your letter, "Which of the apostles (../cathen/01626c.htm) ever invaded the property of other men in a matter concerning faith (../cathen/05752c.htm)?" he could not find any example of this in the Divine writings; but he might perhaps have found some true (../cathen/15073a.htm) defense if he had not separated himself from the true (../cathen/15073a.htm) Church, and then audaciously claimed to hold in the name of the true (../cathen/15073a.htm) Church the disputed possession.

Chapter 4

12. As to the obtaining or putting in force of edicts of the powers of this world against schismatics and heretics ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#)), those from whom you separated yourselves were very active in this matter, both against you, so far as we have heard, and against the followers of Maximianus, as we prove by the indisputable evidence of their own Records; but you had not yet separated yourselves from them at the time when in their petition they said to the Emperor Julian that "nothing but righteousness found a place with him,"— a man whom all the while they knew ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) to be an apostate ([../cathen/01624b.htm](#)), and whom they saw to be so given over to idolatry ([../cathen/07636a.htm](#)), that they must either admit idolatry ([../cathen/07636a.htm](#)) to be righteousness, or be unable to deny that they had wickedly lied when they said that nothing but righteousness had a place with him with whom they saw that idolatry ([../cathen/07636a.htm](#)) had so large a place. Grant, however, that that was a mistake in the use of words, what say you as to the deed itself? If not even that which is just is to be sought by appeal to an emperor, why was that which was by you supposed to be just sought from Julian?

13. Do you reply that it is lawful to petition the Emperor in order to recover what is one's own, but not lawful to accuse another in order that he may be coerced by the Emperor? I may remark, in passing, that in even petitioning for the recovery of what is one's own, the ground covered by apostolic example is abandoned, because no apostle is found to have ever done this. But apart from this, when your predecessors brought before the Emperor Constantine, by means of the proconsul Anulinus, their accusations against Cæcilianus, who was then bishop ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)) of Carthage ([../cathen/03385a.htm](#)), with whom as a guilty person they refused to have communion, they were not endeavouring to recover something of their own which they had lost, but were by calumnies ([../cathen/03190c.htm](#)) assailing one who was, as we think, and as the issue of the judicial proceedings showed, an innocent man; and what more heinous crime could have been perpetrated by them than this? If, however, as you erroneously suppose, they did in his case deliver up to the judgment of the civil powers a man who was indeed guilty, why do you object to our doing that which your own party first presumed to do, and for doing which we would not find fault with them, if they had done it not with an envious ([../cathen/08326b.htm](#)) desire to do harm, but with the intention of reproof and correcting what was wrong. But we have no hesitation in finding fault with you, who think that we are criminal in bringing any complaint before a Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) emperor against the enemies of our communion, seeing that a document given by your predecessors to Anulinus the proconsul, to be forwarded by him to the Emperor Constantine, bore this superscription: "Libellus Ecclesiae Catholicæ ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#))æ, criminum Cæciliani, traditus a parte Majorini." We find fault, moreover, with them more particularly, because when they had of their own accord gone to the Emperor with accusations against Cæcilianus, which they ought by all means to have in the first place proved ([../cathen/12454c.htm](#)) before those who were his colleagues beyond the sea, and when the Emperor, acting in a much more orderly way than they had done, referred to bishops ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)) the decision of this case pertaining to bishops ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)) which had been brought before him, they, even when defeated by a decision against them, would not come to peace with their brethren. Instead of this, they next accused at the bar of the temporal sovereign, not Cæcilianus only, but also the bishops ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)) who had been appointed judges; and finally, from a second episcopal tribunal they appealed to the Emperor again. Nor did they consider it their duty to yield either to truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) or to peace when he himself inquired into the case and gave his decision.

14. Now what else could Constantine have decreed against Cæcilianus and his friends, if they had been defeated when your predecessors accused them, than the things decreed against the very men who, having of their own accord brought the accusations, and having failed to prove what they alleged, refused even when defeated to acquiesce in the

truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#))? The Emperor, as you know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)), in that case decreed for the first time that the property of those who were convicted of schism ([../cathen/13529a.htm](#)) and obstinately resisted the unity of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) should be confiscated. If, however, the issue had been that your predecessors who brought the accusations had gained their case, and the Emperor had made some such decree against the communion to which Cæcilianus belonged, you would have wished the emperors to be called the friends of the Church's interests, and the guardians of her peace and unity. But when such things are decreed by emperors against the parties who, having of their own accord brought forward accusations, were unable to substantiate them, and who, when a welcome back to the bosom of peace was offered to them on condition of their amendment, refused the terms, an outcry is raised that this is an unworthy wrong, and it is maintained that no one ought to be coerced to unity, and that evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) should not be requited for evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) to any one. What else is this than what one of yourselves wrote: "What we wish is holy ([../cathen/07386a.htm](#))"? And in view of these things, it was not a great or difficult thing for you to reflect and discover how the decree and sentence of Constantine, which was published against you on the occasion of your predecessors so frequently bringing before the Emperor charges which they could not make good, should be in force against you; and how all succeeding emperors, especially those who are Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)), necessarily act according to it as often as the exigencies of your obstinacy make it necessary for them to take any measures in regard to you.

15. It was an easy thing for you to have reflected on these things, and perhaps some time to have said to yourselves: Seeing that Cæcilianus either was innocent, or at least could not be proved ([../cathen/12454c.htm](#)) guilty, what sin ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)) has the Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) Church spread so far and wide through the world committed in this matter? On what ground could it be unlawful for the Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) world to remain ignorant ([../cathen/07648a.htm](#)) of that which even those who made it matter of accusation against others could not prove? Why should those whom Christ has sown in His field, that is, in this world, and has commanded to grow alongside of the tares until the harvest, Matthew 13:24-30 ([../bible/mat013.htm#verse24](#)) — those many thousands of believers ([../cathen/05769a.htm](#)) in all nations, whose multitude the Lord compared to the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea, to whom He promised of old, and has now given, the blessing in the seed of Abraham ([../cathen/01051a.htm](#)) — why, I ask, should the name of Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) be denied to all these, because, forsooth, in regard to this case, in the discussion of which they took no part, they preferred to believe ([../cathen/02408b.htm](#)) the judges, who under grave responsibility gave their decision, rather than the plaintiffs, against whom the decision was given? Surely no man's crime can stain with guilt another who does not know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) of its commission. How could the faithful ([../cathen/05769a.htm](#)), scattered throughout the world, be cognisant of the crime of surrendering the sacred books as committed by men ([../cathen/09580c.htm](#)), whose guilt their accusers, even if they knew ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) it, were at least unable to prove? Unquestionably this one fact of ignorance ([../cathen/07648a.htm](#)) on their part most easily demonstrates that they had no share in the guilt of this crime. Why then should the innocent be charged with crimes which they never committed, because of their being ignorant ([../cathen/07648a.htm](#)) of crimes which, justly ([../cathen/08571c.htm](#)) or unjustly ([../cathen/08010c.htm](#)), are laid to the charge of others? What room is left for innocence, if it is criminal for one to be ignorant ([../cathen/07648a.htm](#)) of the crimes of others? Moreover, if the mere fact of their ignorance ([../cathen/07648a.htm](#)) proves, as has been said, the innocence of the people in so many nations, how great is the crime of separation from the communion of these innocent people! For the deeds ([../cathen/01115a.htm](#)) of guilty parties which either cannot be proved ([../cathen/12454c.htm](#)) to those who are innocent, or cannot be believed ([../cathen/02408b.htm](#)) by them, bring

no stain upon any one, since, even when known ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)), they are borne with in order to preserve fellowship with those who are innocent. For the good are not to be deserted for the sake of the wicked ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)), but the wicked ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) are to be borne with for the sake of the good; as the prophets ([../cathen/12477a.htm](#)) bore with those against whom they delivered such testimonies, and did not cease to take part in the sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)) of the Jewish people; as also our Lord bore with guilty Judas, even until he met the end which he deserved, and permitted him to take part in the sacred supper along with the innocent disciples ([../cathen/05029a.htm](#)); as the apostles ([../cathen/01626c.htm](#)) bore with those who preached Christ through envy ([../cathen/08326b.htm](#)) — a sin ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)) peculiarly satanic; as Cyprian bore with colleagues guilty of avarice ([../cathen/02148b.htm](#)), which, after the example of the apostle, Colossians 3:5 ([../bible/col003.htm#verse5](#)) he calls idolatry ([../cathen/07636a.htm](#)). In fine, whatever was done at that time among these bishops ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)), although perhaps it was known ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) by some of them, is, unless there be respect of persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) in judgment, unknown to all: why, then, is not peace loved by all? These thoughts might easily occur to you; perhaps you already entertain them. But it would be better for you to be devoted to earthly possessions, through fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) of losing which you might be proved ([../cathen/12454c.htm](#)) to consent to known ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)), than to be devoted to that worthless vainglory which you think you will by such consent forfeit in the estimation of men.

Chapter 5

16. You now see therefore, I suppose, that the thing to be considered when any one is coerced, is not the mere fact of the coercion, but the nature ([../cathen/10715a.htm](#)) of that to which he is coerced, whether it be good or bad: not that any one can be good in spite of his own will, but that, through fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) of suffering what he does not desire, he either renounces his hostile prejudices, or is compelled to examine truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) of which he had been contentedly ignorant ([../cathen/07648a.htm](#)); and under the influence of this fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) repudiates the error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)) which he was wont to defend, or seeks the truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) of which he formerly knew ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) nothing, and now willingly holds what he formerly rejected. Perhaps it would be utterly useless to assert this in words, if it were not demonstrated by so many examples. We see not a few men here and there, but many cities, once Donatist ([../cathen/05121a.htm](#)), now Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)), vehemently detesting the diabolical schism ([../cathen/13529a.htm](#)), and ardently loving the unity of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)); and these became Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) under the influence of that fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) which is to you so offensive by the laws ([../cathen/09053a.htm](#)) of emperors, from Constantine, before whom your party of their own accord impeached Cæcilianus, down to the emperors of our own time, who most justly ([../cathen/08571c.htm](#)) decree that the decision of the judge whom your own party chose, and whom they preferred to a tribunal of bishops ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)), should be maintained in force against you.

17. I have therefore yielded to the evidence afforded by these instances which my colleagues have laid before me. For originally my opinion was, that no one should be coerced into the unity of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)), that we must act only by words, fight only by arguments, and prevail by force of reason, lest we should have those whom we knew ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) as avowed heretics ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#)) feigning themselves to be Catholics ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)). But this opinion of mine was overcome not by the words of those who controverted it, but by

the conclusive instances to which they could point. For, in the first place, there was set over against my opinion my own town, which, although it was once wholly on the side of Donatus, was brought over to the Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) unity by fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) of the imperial edicts, but which we now see filled with such detestation of your ruinous perversity, that it would scarcely be believed ([../cathen/02408b.htm](#)) that it had ever been involved in your error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)). There were so many others which were mentioned to me by name, that, from facts themselves, I was made to own that to this matter the word of Scripture might be understood as applying: "Give opportunity to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser." Proverbs 9:9 ([../bible/pro009.htm#verse9](#)) For how many were already, as we assuredly know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)), willing to be Catholics ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)), being moved by the indisputable plainness of truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)), but daily putting off their avowal of this through fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) of offending their own party! How many were bound, not by truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#))—for you never pretended to that as yours — but by the heavy chains of inveterate custom, so that in them was fulfilled the divine saying: "A servant (who is hardened) will not be corrected by words; for though he understand, he will not answer"! Proverbs 29:19 ([../bible/pro029.htm#verse19](#)) How many supposed the sect ([../cathen/13674a.htm](#)) of Donatus to be the true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) Church, merely because ease had made them too listless, or conceited, or sluggish, to take pains to examine Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#))! How many would have entered earlier had not the calumnies ([../cathen/03190c.htm](#)) of slanderers, who declared that we offered something else than we do upon the altar of God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)), shut them out! How many, believing that it mattered not to which party a Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) might belong, remained in the schism ([../cathen/13529a.htm](#)) of Donatus only because they had been born in it, and no one was compelling them to forsake it and pass over into the Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#))!

18. To all these classes of persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) the dread of those laws ([../cathen/09053a.htm](#)) in the promulgation of which kings serve the Lord in fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) has been so useful, that now some say we were willing for this some time ago; but thanks be to God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)), who has given us occasion for doing it at once, and has cut off the hesitancy of procrastination! Others say: We already knew ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) this to be true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)), but we were held prisoners by the force of old custom: thanks be to the Lord, who has broken these bonds asunder, and has brought us into the bond of peace! Others say: We knew ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) not that the truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) was here, and we had no wish to learn it; but fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) made us become earnest to examine it when we became alarmed, lest, without any gain in things eternal ([../cathen/05551b.htm](#)), we should be smitten with loss in temporal things: thanks be to the Lord, who has by the stimulus of fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) startled us from our negligence, that now being disquieted we might inquire into those things which, when at ease, we did not care to know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#))! Others say: We were prevented from entering the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) by false reports, which we could not know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) to be false unless we entered it; and we would not enter unless we were compelled: thanks be to the Lord, who by His scourge took away our timid hesitation, and taught us to find out for ourselves how vain and absurd were the lies which rumour had spread abroad against His Church: by this we are persuaded that there is no truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) in the accusations made by the authors of this heresy ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#)), since the more serious charges which their followers have invented are without foundation. Others say: We thought, indeed, that it mattered not in what communion we held the faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)) of Christ; but thanks to the Lord, who has gathered us in from a state of schism ([../cathen/13529a.htm](#)), and has taught us that it is fitting that the one God ([../cathen/10499a.htm](#)) be worshipped in unity.

19. Could I therefore maintain opposition to my colleagues, and by resisting them stand in the way of such conquests of the Lord, and prevent the sheep of Christ which were wandering on your mountains and hills — that is, on the swellings of your pride (../cathen/12405a.htm)— from being gathered into the fold of peace, in which there is one flock and one Shepherd? John 10:16 (../bible/joh010.htm#verse16) Was it my duty to obstruct these measures, in order, forsooth, that you might not lose what you call your own, and might without fear (../cathen/06021a.htm) rob Christ of what is His: that you might frame your testaments according to Roman law, and might by calumnious (../cathen/03190c.htm) accusations break the Testament made with the sanction of Divine law to the fathers, in which it was written, "In your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed": Genesis 26:4 (../bible/gen026.htm#verse4) that you might have freedom in your transactions in the way of buying and selling, and might be emboldened to divide and claim as your own that which Christ bought by giving Himself as its price: that any gift made over by one of you to another might remain unchallenged, and that the gift which the God (../cathen/06608a.htm) of gods has bestowed upon His children, called from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, might become invalid: that you might not be sent into exile from the land of your natural birth, and that you might labour to banish Christ from the kingdom bought with His blood, which extends from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth? Nay verily; let the kings of the earth serve Christ by making laws (../cathen/09053a.htm) for Him and for His cause (../cathen/03459a.htm). Your predecessors exposed Cæcilianus and his companions to be punished by the kings of the earth for crimes with which they were falsely (../cathen/05781a.htm) charged: let the lions now be turned to break in pieces the bones of the calumniators (../cathen/03190c.htm), and let no intercession for them be made by Daniel when he has been proved (../cathen/12454c.htm) innocent, and set free from the den in which they meet their doom; Daniel 6:23-24 (../bible/dan006.htm#verse23) for he that prepares a pit for his neighbour shall himself most justly (../cathen/08571c.htm) fall into it. Proverbs 26:27 (../bible/pro026.htm#verse27)

Chapter 6

20. Save yourself therefore, my brother, while you have this present life, from the wrath (../cathen/01489a.htm) which is to come on the obstinate and the proud (../cathen/12405a.htm). The formidable power of the authorities of this world, when it assails the truth (../cathen/15073a.htm), gives glorious (../cathen/06585a.htm) opportunity of probation to the strong, but puts dangerous temptation (../cathen/14504a.htm) before the weak who are righteous; but when it assists the proclamation of the truth (../cathen/15073a.htm), it is the means of profitable admonition to the wise, and of unprofitable vexation to the foolish among those who have gone astray. "For there is no power but of God: whosoever therefore resists the power, resists the ordinance of God (../cathen/06608a.htm); for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil (../cathen/05649a.htm). Will you then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good (../cathen/06636b.htm), and you shall have praise of the same." Romans 13:1-3 (../bible/rom013.htm#verse1) For if the power be on the side of the truth (../cathen/15073a.htm), and correct any one who was in error (../cathen/05525a.htm), he that is put right by the correction has praise from the power. If, on the other hand, the power be unfriendly to the truth (../cathen/15073a.htm), and cruelly persecute (../cathen/11703a.htm) any one, he who is crowned victor in this contest receives praise from the power which he resists. But you do not that which is good (../cathen/06636b.htm), so as to avoid being afraid of the power; unless perchance this is good (../cathen/06636b.htm), to sit and speak against not one brother, but against all your brethren that are found among all nations, to whom the prophets

(../cathen/12477a.htm), and Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm), and the apostles (../cathen/01626c.htm) bear witness (../cathen/15677a.htm) in the words of Scripture, "In your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;" and again, "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, a pure offering shall be offered unto My name; for My name shall be great among the heathen (../cathen/11388a.htm), says the Lord." Malachi 1:11 (../bible/mal001.htm#verse11) Mark this: "says the Lord;" not says Donatus, or Rogatus, or Vincentius, or Ambrose, or Augustine, but "says the Lord;" and again, "All tribes of the earth shall be blessed (../cathen/02599b.htm) in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God (../cathen/06608a.htm), the God (../cathen/06608a.htm) of Israel (../cathen/08193a.htm), who only does wondrous things; and blessed be His glorious (../cathen/06585a.htm) name for ever, and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory (../cathen/06585a.htm): so let it be, so let it be." And you sit at Cartennæ, and with a remnant of half a score of Rogatists you say, "Let it not be! Let it not be!"

21. You hear Christ speaking thus in the Gospel (../cathen/06655b.htm): "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses (../cathen/10582c.htm), and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms (../cathen/12533a.htm), concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures (../bible/index.html), and said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins (../cathen/14004b.htm) should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 24:44-47 (../bible/luk024.htm#verse44) You read also in the Acts of the Apostles how this gospel began at Jerusalem, where the Holy Spirit (../cathen/07409a.htm) first filled those hundred and twenty persons (../cathen/11726a.htm), and went forth thence into Judæa and Samaria (../cathen/13416a.htm), and to all nations, as He had said to them when He was about to ascend into heaven, "You shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria (../cathen/13416a.htm), and unto the uttermost parts of the earth;" for "their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." And you contradict the Divine testimonies so firmly established and so clearly revealed, and attempt to bring about such an absolute confiscation of Christ's (../cathen/08374c.htm) heritage, that although repentance is preached, as He said, in His name to all nations, whosoever may be in any part of the earth moved by that preaching, there is for him no possibility of remission of sins (../cathen/14004b.htm), unless he seek and discover Vincentius of Cartennæ, or some one of his nine or ten associates, in their obscurity in the imperial colony of Mauritania. What will the arrogance of insignificant mortals not dare to do? To what extremities will the presumption of flesh and blood not hurry men? Is this your well-doing, on account of which you are not afraid of the power? You place this grievous stumbling-block in the way of your own mother's son, for whom Christ died, 1 Corinthians 8:11 (../bible/1co008.htm#verse11) and who is yet in feeble infancy, not ready to use strong meat, but requiring to be nursed on a mother's milk; 1 Corinthians 3:2 (../bible/1co003.htm#verse2) and you quote against me the works of Hilary, in order that you may deny the fact of the Church's increase among all nations; even unto the end of the world, according to the promise which God (../cathen/06608a.htm), in order to subdue your unbelief, confirmed with an oath (../cathen/11176a.htm)! And although you would by all means be most miserable if you stood against this when it was promised, you even now contradict it when the promise is fulfilled.

Chapter 7

22. You, however, through your profound erudition, have discovered something which you think worthy to be alleged as a great objection against the Divine testimonies. For you say, "If we consider the parts comprehended in the whole world, it is a comparatively small portion in which the Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)) is known ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)):" either refusing to see, or pretending not to know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)), to how many barbarous nations the gospel has already penetrated, within a space of time so short, that not even Christ's enemies can doubt ([../cathen/05141a.htm](#)) that in a little while that shall be accomplished which our Lord foretold, when, answering the question of His disciples ([../cathen/05029a.htm](#)) concerning the end of the world, He said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness ([../cathen/15677a.htm](#)) unto all nations, and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14 ([../bible/mat024.htm#verse14](#)) Meanwhile do all you can to proclaim and to maintain, that even though the gospel be published in Persia ([../cathen/11712a.htm](#)) and India, as indeed it has been for a long time, no one who hears it can be in any degree cleansed from his sins ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)), unless he come to Cartennæ, or to the neighbourhood of Cartennæ! If you have not expressly said this, it is evidently through fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) lest men should laugh at you; and yet when you do say this, do you refuse that men should weep for you?

23. You think that you make a very acute remark when you affirm the name Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) to mean universal, not in respect to the communion as embracing the whole world, but in respect to the observance of all Divine precepts and of all the sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)), as if we (even accepting the position that the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) is called Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) because it honestly holds the whole truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)), of which fragments here and there are found in some heresies ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#))) rested upon the testimony of this word's signification, and not upon the promises of God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)), and so many indisputable testimonies of the truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) itself, our demonstration of the existence ([../cathen/05543b.htm](#)) of the Church of God ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) in all nations. In fact, however, this is the whole which you attempt to make us believe ([../cathen/02408b.htm](#)), that the Rogatists alone remain worthy of the name Catholics ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)), on the ground of their observing all the Divine precepts and all the sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)); and that you are the only persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) in whom the Son of man ([../cathen/14144a.htm](#)) when He comes shall find faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)). Luke 17:8 ([../bible/luk017.htm#verse8](#)) You must excuse me for saying we do not believe ([../cathen/02408b.htm](#)) a word of this. For although, in order to make it possible for that faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)) to be found in you which the Lord said that He would not find on the earth, you may perhaps presume even to say that you are to be regarded as in heaven, not on earth, we at least have profited by the apostle's warning, wherein he has taught us that even an angel ([../cathen/01476d.htm](#)) from heaven must be regarded as accursed if he were to preach to us any other gospel than that which we have received. Galatians 1:8 ([../bible/gal001.htm#verse8](#)) But how can we be sure that we have indisputable testimony to Christ in the Divine Word, if we do not accept as indisputable the testimony of the same Word to the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#))? For as, however ingenious the complex subtleties which one may contrive against the simple truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)), and however great the mist of artful fallacies with which he may obscure it, any one who shall proclaim that Christ has not suffered, and has not risen from the dead on the third day, must be accursed — because we have learned in the truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) of the gospel, "that it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day;" Luke 24:46 ([../bible/luk014.htm#verse46](#)) — on the very same grounds must that man be accursed who shall proclaim that the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) is outside of the communion which embraces all nations: for in the next words of the same passage we learn also that repentance and remission of sins

(../cathen/14004b.htm) should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem; Luke 24:47 (../bible/luk024.htm#verse47) and we are bound to hold firmly this rule, "If any preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:9 (../bible/gal001.htm#verse9)

Chapter 8

24. If, moreover, we do not listen to the claims of the entire sect (../cathen/13674a.htm) of Donatists (../cathen/05121a.htm) when they pretend to be the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) of Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm), seeing that they do not allege in proof (../cathen/12454c.htm) of this anything from the Divine Books, how much less, I ask, are we called upon to listen to the Rogatists, who will not attempt to interpret; in the interest of their party the words of Scripture: "Where You feed, where You rest in the south"! For if by this the southern part of Africa is to be understood — the district, namely, which is occupied by Donatists (../cathen/05121a.htm), because it is under a more burning portion of the heavens, — the Maximianists must excel all the rest of your party, as the flame of their schism (../cathen/13529a.htm) broke forth in Byzantium and in Tripoli. Let the Arzuges, if they please, dispute this point with them, and contest that to them more properly this text applies; but how shall the imperial province of Mauritania, lying rather to the west than to the south, since it refuses to be called Africa, — how shall it, I say, find in the word "the south" a ground for boasting, I do not say against the world, but against even that sect (../cathen/13674a.htm) of Donatus from which the sect (../cathen/13674a.htm) of Rogatus, a very small fragment of that other and larger fragment, has been broken off? For what else is it than superlative impudence for one to interpret in his own favour any allegorical statements, unless he has also plain testimonies, by the light of which the obscure meaning of the former may be made manifest.

25. With how much greater force, moreover, may we say to you what we are accustomed to say to all the Donatists (../cathen/05121a.htm): If any can have good grounds (which indeed none can have) for separating themselves from the communion of the whole world, and calling their communion the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) of Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm), because of their having withdrawn warrantably from the communion of all nations — how do you know (../cathen/08673a.htm) that in the Christian (../cathen/03712a.htm) society, which is spread so far and wide, there may not have been some in a very remote place, from which the fame of their righteousness could not reach you, who had already, before the date of your separation, separated themselves for some just cause (../cathen/03459a.htm) from the communion of the whole world? How could the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) in that case be found in your sect (../cathen/13674a.htm), rather than in those who were separated before you? Thus it comes to pass, that so long as you are ignorant (../cathen/07648a.htm) of this, you cannot make with certainty any claim: which is necessarily the portion of all who, in defending the cause (../cathen/03459a.htm) of their party, appeal to their own testimony instead of the testimony of God (../cathen/06608a.htm). For you cannot say, If this had happened, it could not have escaped our knowledge (../cathen/08673a.htm); for, not going beyond Africa itself, you cannot tell, when the question is put to you, how many subdivisions of the party of Donatus have occurred: in connection with which we must especially bear in mind that in your view the smaller the number of those who separate themselves, the greater is the justice (../cathen/08571c.htm) of their cause (../cathen/03459a.htm), and this paucity of numbers makes them undoubtedly more likely to remain unnoticed. Hence, also, you are by no means sure that there may not be some righteous persons (../cathen/11726a.htm), few in number, and therefore unknown, dwelling in some place far remote from the south of

Africa, who, long before the party of Donatus had withdrawn their righteousness from fellowship with the unrighteousness of all other men, had, in their remote northern region, separated themselves in the same way for some most satisfactory reason, and now are, by a claim superior to yours, the Church of God ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), as the spiritual Zion which preceded all your sects ([../cathen/13674a.htm](#)) in the matter of warrantable secession, and who interpret in their favour the words of the Psalm, "Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the Great King," with much more reason than the party of Donatus interpret in their favour the words, "Where You feed, where You rest in the south." Song of Songs 1:7 ([../bible/son001.htm#verse7](#))

26. You profess, nevertheless, to be afraid lest, when you are compelled by imperial edicts to consent to unity, the name of God be for a longer time blasphemed ([../cathen/02595a.htm](#)) by the Jews ([../cathen/08399a.htm](#)) and the heathen ([../cathen/11388a.htm](#)): as if the Jews ([../cathen/08399a.htm](#)) were not aware how their own nation Israel ([../cathen/08193a.htm](#)), in the beginning of its history, wished to exterminate by war ([../cathen/15546c.htm](#)) the two tribes and a half which had received possessions beyond Jordan, when they thought that these had separated themselves from the unity of their nation. Joshua 22:9-12 ([../bible/jos022.htm#verse9](#)) As to the Pagans, they may indeed with greater reason reproach us for the laws ([../cathen/09053a.htm](#)) which Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) emperors have enacted against idolaters; and yet many of these have thereby been, and are now daily, turned from idols ([../cathen/07636a.htm](#)) to the living and true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) God. In fact, however, both Jews ([../cathen/08399a.htm](#)) and Pagans, if they thought the Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) to be as insignificant in number as you are — who maintain, forsooth, that you alone are Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) — would not condescend to say anything against us, but would never cease to treat us with ridicule and contempt. Are you not afraid lest the Jews ([../cathen/08399a.htm](#)) should say to you, "If your handful of men be the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)), what becomes of the statement of your Apostle Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)), that your Church is described in the words, 'Rejoice, you barren that bear not; breakforth and cry, you that travail not: for the desolate has many more children than she which has an husband;' Galatians 4:27 ([../bible/gal004.htm#verse27](#)) in which he plainly declares the multitude of Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) to surpass that of the Jewish Church?" Will you say to them, "We are the more righteous because our number is not large;" and do you expect them not to reply, "Whoever you claim to be, you are not those of whom it is said, 'She that was desolate has *many* children,' if you are reduced to so small a number"?

27. Perhaps you will quote against this the example of that righteous man, who along with his family ([../cathen/05782a.htm](#)) was alone found worthy of deliverance when the flood came. Do you see then how far you still are from being righteous? Most assuredly we do not affirm you to be righteous on the ground of this instance until your associates be reduced to seven, yourself being the eighth person: provided always, however, that no other has, as I was saying, anticipated the party of Donatus in snatching up that righteousness, by having, in some far distant spot, withdrawn himself along with seven more, under pressure of some good reason, from communion with the whole world, and so saved himself from the flood by which it is overwhelmed. Seeing, therefore, that you do not know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) whether this may not have been done, and been as entirely unheard of by you as the name of Donatus is unheard of by many nations of Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) in remote countries, you are unable to say with certainty where the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) is to be found. For it must be in that place in which what you have now done may happen to have been at an earlier date done by others, if there could possibly be any just reason for your separating yourselves from the communion of the whole world.

Chapter 9

28. We, however, are certain that no one could ever have been warranted in separating himself from the communion of all nations, because every one of us looks for the marks of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) not in his own righteousness, but in the Divine Scriptures ([../bible/index.html](#)), and beholds it actually in existence ([../cathen/05543b.htm](#)), according to the promises. For it is of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) that it is said, "As the lily among thorns, so is my love ([../cathen/09397a.htm](#)) among the daughters;" Song of Songs 2:2 ([../bible/son002.htm#verse2](#)) which could be called on the one hand "thorns" only by reason of the wickedness ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) of their manners, and on the other hand "daughters" by reason of their participation in the same sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)). Again, it is the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) which says, "From the end of the earth have I cried unto You when my heart was overwhelmed;" and in another Psalm, "Horror has kept me back from the wicked ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) that forsake Your law;" and, "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved." It is the same which says to her Spouse: "Tell me where You feed, where You rest at noon: for why should I be as one veiled beside the flocks of Your companions?" Song of Songs 1:7 ([../bible/son001.htm#verse7](#)) This is the same as is said in another place: "Make known ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) to me Your right hand, and those who are in heart taught in wisdom;" in whom, as they shine with light and glow with love ([../cathen/09397a.htm](#)), You rest as in noontide; lest perchance, like one veiled, that is, hidden and unknown, I should run, not to Your flock, but to the flocks of Your companions, *i.e.* of heretics ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#)), whom the bride here calls companions, just as He called the thorns Song of Songs 2:2 ([../bible/son002.htm#verse2](#)) "daughters," because of common participation in the sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)): of which persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) it is elsewhere said: "You were a man ([../cathen/09580c.htm](#)), mine equal, my guide, my acquaintance, who took sweet food together with me; we walked unto the house of God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)) in company. Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell ([../cathen/07207a.htm](#))," like Dathan and Abiram, the authors of an impious schism ([../cathen/13529a.htm](#)).

29. It is to the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) also that the answer is given immediately after in the passage quoted above: "If you know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) not yourself, O you fairest among women ([../cathen/15687b.htm](#)), go your way forth by the footsteps of the flocks, and feed your kids beside the shepherds' tents." Song of Songs 1:8 ([../bible/son001.htm#verse8](#)) Oh, matchless sweetness of the Bridegroom, who thus replied to her question: "If you know not yourself," He says; as if He said, "Surely the city which is set upon a mountain cannot be hid; Matthew 5:14 ([../bible/mat005.htm#verse14](#)) and therefore, 'You are not as one veiled, that you should run to the flocks of my companions.' For I am the mountain established upon the top of the mountains, unto which all nations shall come. Isaiah 2:2 ([../bible/isa002.htm#verse2](#)) 'If you know not yourself,' by the knowledge ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) which you may gain, not in the words of false witnesses, but in the testimonies of My book; 'if you know not yourself,' from such testimony as this concerning you: 'Lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes: for you shall break forth on the right hand and on the left; and your seed shall inherit the Gentiles ([../cathen/06422a.htm](#)), and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not, for you shall not be ashamed; neither be confounded, for you shall not be put to shame: for you shall forget the shame of your youth, and shall not remember the reproach of your widowhood any more: for your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is His name, and your Redeemer the Holy One of Israel ([../cathen/08193a.htm](#)); the God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)) of the whole earth shall He be called.' 'If you know not yourself,' O you fairest among women ([../cathen/15687b.htm](#)), from this which has been said of you, 'The King has greatly

desired your beauty,' and 'instead of your fathers shall be your children, whom you may make princes upon the earth:' if, therefore, 'you know (../cathen/08673a.htm) not yourself,' go your way forth: I do not cast you forth, but 'go your way forth,' that of you it may be said, 'They went out from us, but they were not of us.' 1 John 2:19 (../bible/1jo002.htm#verse19) 'Go your way forth' by the footsteps of the flocks, not in My footsteps, but in the footsteps of the flocks; and not of the one flock, but of flocks divided and going astray. 'And feed your kids,' not as Peter, to whom it is said, 'Feed My sheep;' John 21:17 (../bible/joh021.htm#verse17) but, 'Feed your kids beside the shepherds' tents,' not beside the tent of the Shepherd, where there is 'one fold and one Shepherd.'" John 10:16 (../bible/joh010.htm#verse16) But the church knows (../cathen/08673a.htm) herself, and thereby escapes from that lot which has befallen those who did not know (../cathen/08673a.htm) themselves to be in her.

30. The same [Church] is spoken of, when, in regard to the fewness of her numbers as compared with the multitude of the wicked (../cathen/05649a.htm), it is said: "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leads unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:14 (../bible/mat007.htm#verse14) And again, it is of the same Church that it is said with respect to the multitude of her members: "I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore." Genesis 22:14 (../bible/gen022.htm#verse14) For the same Church of holy (../cathen/07386a.htm) and good believers (../cathen/05769a.htm) is both small if compared with the number of the wicked (../cathen/05649a.htm), which is greater, and large if considered by itself; "for the desolate has more sons than she which has an husband," and "many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham (../cathen/01051a.htm), and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God (../cathen/08646a.htm)." Matthew 8:11 (../bible/mat008.htm#verse11) God (../cathen/06608a.htm), moreover, presents unto Himself a "numerous people, zealous (../cathen/15753a.htm) of good works." And in the Apocalypse, many thousands "which no man can number," from every tribe and tongue, are seen clothed in white robes, and with palms of victory. Revelation 7:9 (../bible/rev007.htm#verse9) It is the same Church which is occasionally obscured, and, as it were, beclouded by the multitude of offenses, when sinners bend the bow that they may shoot under the darkened moon at the upright in heart. But even at such a time the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) shines in those who are most firm in their attachment to her. And if, in the Divine promise above quoted, any distinct application of its two clauses should be made, it is perhaps not without reason that the seed of Abraham (../cathen/01051a.htm) was compared both to the "stars of heaven," and to "the sand which is by the sea-shore:" that by "the stars" may be understood those who, in number fewer, are more fixed and more brilliant; and that by "the sand on the sea-shore" may be understood that great multitude of weak and carnal persons (../cathen/11726a.htm) within the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm), who at one time are seen at rest and free while the weather is calm, but are at another time covered and troubled under the waves of tribulation and temptation (../cathen/14504a.htm).

31. Now, such a troublous time was the time at which Hilary wrote in the passage which you have thought fit artfully to adduce against so many Divine testimonies, as if by it you could prove that the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) has perished from the earth. You may just as well say that the numerous churches of Galatia had no existence (../cathen/05543b.htm) at the time when the apostle wrote to them: "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you," that, "having begun in the Spirit (../cathen/07409a.htm), you are now made perfect in the flesh?" For thus you would misrepresent that learned man, who (like the apostle) was sternly rebuking the slow of heart and the timid, for whom he was travailing in birth a second time, until Christ should be formed in them. Galatians 4:19 (../bible/gal004.htm#verse19) For who does not know (../cathen/08673a.htm) that many persons (../cathen/11726a.htm)

of weak judgment were at that time deluded by ambiguous phrases, so that they thought that the Arians ([../cathen/01707c.htm](#)) believed ([../cathen/02408b.htm](#)) the same doctrines as they themselves held; and that others, through fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)), had yielded and feigned consent, not walking uprightly according to the truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) of the gospel, to whom you would have denied that forgiveness which, when they had been turned from their error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)), was extended to them? But in refusing such pardon, you prove yourselves wholly ignorant ([../cathen/07648a.htm](#)) of the word of God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)). For read what Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)) has recorded concerning Peter, Galatians 2:11-21 ([../bible/gal002.htm#verse11](#)) and what Cyprian has expressed as his view on the ground of that statement, and do not blame the compassion of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), which does not scatter the members of Christ when they are gathered together, but labours to gather His scattered members into one. It is true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) that those who then stood most resolute, and were able to understand the treacherous phrases used by the heretics ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#)), were few in number when compared with the rest; but some of them it is to be remembered were then bravely enduring sentence of banishment, and others were hiding themselves for safety in all parts of the world. And thus the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), which is increasing throughout all nations, has been preserved as the Lord's wheat, and shall be preserved unto the end, yea, until all nations, even the barbarous tribes, are within its embrace. For it is the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) which the Son of man ([../cathen/14144a.htm](#)) has sown as good seed, and of which He has foretold that it should grow among the tares until the harvest. For the field is the world, and the harvest is the end of time. Matthew 13:24-39 ([../bible/mat013.htm#verse24](#))

32. Hilary, therefore, either was rebuking not the wheat, but the tares, in those ten provinces of Asia, or was addressing himself to the wheat, because it was endangered through some unfaithfulness, and spoke as one who thought that the rebuke would be useful in proportion to the vehemence with which it was given. For the canonical Scriptures contain examples of the same manner of rebuke in which what is intended for some is spoken as if it applied to all. Thus the apostle, when he says to the Corinthians, "How say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?" 1 Corinthians 15:12 ([../bible/1co015.htm#verse12](#)) proves clearly that all of them were not such; but he bears witness ([../cathen/15677a.htm](#)) that those who were such were not outside of their communion, but among them. And shortly after, lest those who were of a different opinion should be led astray by them, he gave this warning: "Be not deceived: evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)) not; for some have not the knowledge ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) of God: I speak this to your shame." 1 Corinthians 15:33-34 ([../bible/1co015.htm#verse33](#)) But when he says, "Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men?" 1 Corinthians 3:3 ([../bible/1co003.htm#verse3](#)) he speaks as if it applied to all, and you see how grave a charge he makes. Wherefore, if it were not that we read in the same epistle, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace ([../cathen/06689a.htm](#)) of God which is given you by Jesus Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)); that in everything you are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)); even as the testimony of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)) was confirmed in you: so that you come behind in no gift," 1 Corinthians 1:4-7 ([../bible/1co001.htm#verse4](#)) we would think that all the Corinthians had been carnal and natural, not perceiving the things of the spirit of God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)), 1 Corinthians 2:14 ([../bible/1co002.htm#verse14](#)) fond of strife, and full of envy ([../cathen/08326b.htm](#)), and "walking as men." In like manner it is said, on the one hand, "the whole world lies in wickedness ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#))," 1 John 5:19 ([../bible/1jo005.htm#verse19](#)) because of the tares which are throughout the whole world; and, on the other hand,

Christ "is the propitiation for our sins (../cathen/14004b.htm), and not for ours only, but also for the sins (../cathen/14004b.htm) of the whole world," 1 John 2:2 (../bible/1jo002.htm#verse2) because of the wheat which is throughout the whole world.

33. The love (../cathen/09397a.htm) of many, however, waxes cold because of offenses, which abound increasingly the more that, within the communion of the sacraments (../cathen/13295a.htm) of Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm), there are gathered to the glory (../cathen/06585a.htm) of His name even those who are wicked (../cathen/05649a.htm), and who persist in the obstinacy of error (../cathen/05525a.htm); whose separation, however, as chaff from the wheat, is to be effected only in the final purging of the Lord's threshing-floor. Matthew 3:12 (../bible/mat003.htm#verse12) These do not destroy those who are the Lord's wheat — few, indeed, when compared with the others, but in themselves a great multitude; they do not destroy the elect of God (../cathen/06608a.htm), who are to be gathered at the end of the world from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other. Matthew 24:31 (../bible/mat024.htm#verse31) For it is from the elect that the cry comes, "Help, Lord! For the godly man ceases, for the faithful fail from among the children of men;" and it is of them that the Lord says, "He that shall endure to the end (when iniquity shall abound), the same shall be saved." Matthew 24:12-13 (../bible/mat024.htm#verse12) Moreover, that the psalm quoted is the language not of one man, but of many, is shown by the following context: "You shall keep us, O Lord; You shall preserve us from this generation forever." On account of this abounding iniquity which the Lord foretold, it is said in another place: "When the Son of man (../cathen/14144a.htm) comes, shall He find faith (../cathen/05752c.htm) on the earth?" This doubt (../cathen/05141a.htm) expressed by Him who knows (../cathen/08673a.htm) all things prefigured the doubts which in Him we entertain, when the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm), being often disappointed in many from whom much was expected, but who have proved (../cathen/12454c.htm) very different from what they were supposed to be, is so alarmed in regard to her own members, that she is slow to believe (../cathen/02408b.htm) good of any one. Nevertheless it would be wrong to cherish doubt (../cathen/05141a.htm) that those whose faith (../cathen/05752c.htm) He shall find on the earth are growing along with the tares throughout the whole field.

34. Therefore it is the same Church also which within the Lord's net is swimming along with the bad fishes, but is in heart and in life separated from them, and departs from them, that she may be presented to her Lord a "glorious (../cathen/06585a.htm) Church, not having spot or wrinkle." Ephesians 5:27 (../bible/eph005.htm#verse27) But the actual visible separation she looks for only on the sea-shore, *i.e.* at the end of the world — meanwhile correcting as many as she can, and bearing with those whom she cannot correct; but she does not abandon the unity of the good because of the wickedness (../cathen/05649a.htm) of those whom she finds incorrigible.

Chapter 10

35. Wherefore, my brother, refrain from gathering together against divine testimonies so many, so perspicuous, and so unchallenged, the calumnies (../cathen/03190c.htm) which may be found in the writings of bishops (../cathen/02581b.htm) either of our communion, as Hilary, or of the undivided Church itself in the age preceding the schism (../cathen/13529a.htm) of Donatus, as Cyprian or Agrippinus (../cathen/01232a.htm); because, in the first place, this class of writings must be, so far as authority is concerned, distinguished from the canon of Scripture. For they are not read by us as if a testimony brought forward from them was such that it would be unlawful to hold any different

opinion, for it may be that the opinions which they held were different from those to which truth (../cathen/15073a.htm) demands our assent. For we are among those who do not reject what has been taught us even by an apostle: "If in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you; nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule," Philippians 3:15-16 (../bible/phi003.htm#verse15) — in that way, namely, which Christ is; of which way the Psalmist thus speaks: "God (../cathen/06608a.htm) be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause (../cathen/03459a.htm) His face to shine upon us: that Your way may be known (../cathen/08673a.htm) upon earth, Your saving health among all nations."

36. In the next place, if you are charmed by the authority of that bishop (../cathen/02581b.htm) and illustrious martyr (../cathen/09736b.htm) St. Cyprian, which we indeed regard, as I have said, as quite distinct from the authority of canonical Scripture, why are you not charmed by such things in him as these: that he maintained with loyalty, and defended in debate, the unity of the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) in the world and in all nations; that he censured, as full of self-sufficiency and pride (../cathen/12405a.htm), those who wished to separate themselves as righteous from the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm), holding them up to ridicule for assuming to themselves that which the Lord did not concede even to apostles (../cathen/01626c.htm) — namely, the gathering of the tares before the harvest — and for attempting to separate the chaff from the wheat, as if to them had been assigned the charge of removing the chaff and cleansing the threshing-floor; that he proved (../cathen/12454c.htm) that no man can be stained with guilt by the sins (../cathen/14004b.htm) of others, thus sweeping away the only ground alleged by the authors of schism (../cathen/13529a.htm) for their separation; that in the very matter in regard to which he was of a different opinion from his colleagues, he did not decree that those who thought otherwise than he did should be condemned or excommunicated (../cathen/05678a.htm); that even in his letter to Jubaianus (which was read for the first time in the Council, the authority of which you are wont to plead in defense of the practice of rebaptizing), although he admits that in time past persons (../cathen/11726a.htm) who had been baptized (../cathen/02258b.htm) in other communions had been received into the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) without being a second time baptized (../cathen/02258b.htm), on which ground they were regarded by him as having had no baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm), nevertheless he considers the use and benefit of peace within the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) to be so great, that for its sake he holds that these persons (../cathen/11726a.htm) (though in his judgment unbaptized) should not be excluded from office in the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm)?

37. And by this you will very readily perceive (for I know (../cathen/08673a.htm) the acuteness of your mind (../cathen/10321a.htm)) that your cause (../cathen/03459a.htm) is completely subverted and annihilated. For if, as you suppose, the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) which had been spread abroad throughout the world perished through her admitting sinners to partake in her sacraments (../cathen/13295a.htm) (and this is the ground alleged for your separation), it had wholly perished long before — at the time, namely, when, as Cyprian says, men were admitted into it without baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) — and thus Cyprian himself had no Church within which to be born; and if so, how much more must this have been the case with one who, like Donatus, the author of your schism (../cathen/13529a.htm), and the father of your sect (../cathen/13674a.htm), belonged to a later age! But if at that time, although persons (../cathen/11726a.htm) were being admitted into the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) without baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm), the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) nevertheless remained in being, so as to give birth to Cyprian and afterwards to Donatus, it is manifest that the righteous are not defiled by the sins (../cathen/14004b.htm) of other men when they participate with them in the sacraments (../cathen/13295a.htm). And thus you have no excuse by

which you can wash away the guilt of the schism ([../cathen/13529a.htm](#)) whereby you have gone forth from the unity of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)); and in you is fulfilled that saying of Holy Writ: "There is a generation that esteem themselves right, and have not cleansed themselves from the guilt of their going forth."

38. The man who, out of regard to the sameness of the sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)), does not presume to insist on the second administration of baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) even to heretics ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#)), is not, by thus avoiding Cyprian's error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)), placed on a level with Cyprian in merit, any more than the man who does not insist upon the Gentiles ([../cathen/06422a.htm](#)) conforming to Jewish ceremonies is thereby placed on a level in merit with the Apostle Peter. In Peter's case, however, the record not only of his halting, but also of his correction, is contained in the canonical Scriptures; whereas the statement that Cyprian entertained opinions at variance with those approved by the constitution and practice of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) is found, not in canonical Scripture, but in his own writings, and in those of a Council; and although it is not found in the same records that he corrected that opinion, it is nevertheless by no means an unreasonable supposition that he did correct it, and that this fact may perhaps have been suppressed by those who were too much pleased with the error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)) into which he fell, and were unwilling to lose the patronage of so great a name. At the same time, there are not wanting some who maintain that Cyprian never held the view ascribed to him, but that this was an unwarrantable forgery ([../cathen/06135b.htm](#)) passed off by liars under his name. For it was impossible for the integrity and authenticity of the writings of any one bishop ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)), however illustrious, to be secured and preserved as the canonical Scriptures are through translation into so many languages, and through the regular and continuous manner in which the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) has used them in public worship. Even in the face of this, some have been found forging many things under the names of the apostles ([../cathen/01626c.htm](#)). It is true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)), indeed, that they made such attempts in vain, because the text of canonical Scripture was so well attested, and so generally used and known ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)); but this effort of an unholy ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) boldness, which has not forborne to assail writings which are defended by the strength of such notoriety, has proved ([../cathen/12454c.htm](#)) what it is capable of essaying against writings which are not established upon canonical authority.

39. We, however, do not deny that Cyprian held the views ascribed to him: first, because his style has a certain peculiarity of expression by which it may be recognised; and secondly, because in this case our cause ([../cathen/03459a.htm](#)) rather than yours is proved ([../cathen/12454c.htm](#)) victorious, and the pretext alleged for your schism ([../cathen/13529a.htm](#))— namely, that you might not be defiled by the sins ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)) of other men — is in the most simple manner exploded; since it is manifest from the letters of Cyprian that participation in the sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)) was allowed to sinful ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)) men, when those who, in your judgment (and as you will have it, in his judgment also), were unbaptized were as such admitted to the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), and that nevertheless the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) did not perish, but remained in the dignity belonging to her nature as the Lord's wheat scattered throughout the world. And, therefore, if in your consternation you thus betake yourselves to Cyprian's authority as to a harbour of refuge, you see the rock against which your error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)) dashes itself in this course; if, on the other hand, you do not venture to flee there, you are wrecked without any struggle for escape.

40. Moreover, Cyprian either did not hold at all the opinions which you ascribe to him, or did subsequently correct his mistake by the rule of truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)), or covered this blemish, as we may call it, upon his otherwise spotless mind by the abundance of his love ([../cathen/09397a.htm](#)), in his most amply defending the unity of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) growing throughout the whole world, and in his most steadfastly holding the bond of peace; for it is written, "Charity [love ([../cathen/09397a.htm](#))] covers a multitude of sins ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#))."
 1 Peter 4:8 ([../bible/1pe004.htm#verse8](#)) To this was also added, that in him, as a most fruitful branch, the Father removed by the pruning-knife of suffering whatever may have remained in him requiring correction: "For every branch in me," says the Lord, "that bears fruit He purges, that it may bring forth more fruit." John 15:2 ([../bible/joh015.htm#verse2](#)) And whence this care of him, if not because, continuing as a branch in the far-spreading vine, he did not forsake the root of unity? "For though he gave his body to be burned, if he had not charity, it would profit him nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:3 ([../bible/1co013.htm#verse3](#))

41. Attend now a little while to the letters of Cyprian, that you may see how he proves the man to be inexcusable who desires ostensibly on the ground of his own righteousness to withdraw himself from the unity of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) (which God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)) promised and has fulfilled in all nations), and that you may more clearly apprehend the truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) of the text quoted by me shortly before: "There is a generation that esteem themselves righteous, and have not cleansed themselves from the guilt of their going forth." In a letter which he wrote to Antonianus he discusses a matter very closely akin to that which we are now debating; but it is better for us to give his very words: "Some of our predecessors," he says, "in the episcopal office in this province were of opinion that the peace of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) should not be given to fornicators, and finally closed the door of repentance against those who had been guilty of adultery ([../cathen/01163a.htm](#)). They did not, however, withdraw themselves from fellowship with their colleagues in the episcopate ([../cathen/05001a.htm](#)); nor did they rend asunder the unity of the Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), by such harshness and obstinate perseverance in their censure as to separate themselves from the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) because others granted while they themselves refused to adulterers the peace of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)). The bond of concord remaining unbroken, and the sacrament of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) continuing undivided, each bishop ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)) arranges and orders his own conduct as one who shall give account of his procedure to his Lord." What say you to that, brother Vincentius? Surely you must see that this great man, this peace-loving bishop ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)) and dauntless martyr ([../cathen/09736b.htm](#)), made nothing more earnestly his care than to prevent the sundering of the bond of unity. You see him travailing in birth for the souls ([../cathen/14153a.htm](#)) of men ([../cathen/09580c.htm](#)), not only that they might, when conceived, be born in Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)), but also that, when born, they might not perish through their being shaken out of their mother's bosom.

42. Now give attention, I pray ([../cathen/12345b.htm](#)) you, further to this thing which he has mentioned in protesting against impious schismatics. If those who granted peace to adulterers, who repented of their sin ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)), shared the guilt of adulterers, were those who did not so act defiled by fellowship with them as colleagues in office? If, again, it was a right thing, as truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) asserts and the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) maintains, that peace should be given to adulterers who repented of their sin ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)), those who utterly closed against adulterers the door of reconciliation through repentance were unquestionably guilty of impiety in refusing healing to the members of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)), in taking away the keys of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) from those who knocked for admission, and in opposing with heartless

cruelty God's most compassionate forbearance, which permitted them to live in order that, repenting, they might be healed by the sacrifice ([../cathen/13309a.htm](#)) of a contrite spirit and broken heart. Nevertheless this their heartless error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)) and impiety did not defile the others, compassionate and peace-loving men, when these shared with them in the Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)), and tolerated them within the net of unity, until the time when, brought to the shore, they should be separated from each other; or if this error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)) and impiety of others did defile them, then the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) was already at that time destroyed, and there was no Church to give Cyprian birth. But if, as is beyond question, the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) continued in existence ([../cathen/05543b.htm](#)), it is also beyond question that no man in the unity of Christ can be stained by the guilt of the sins ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)) of other men if he be not consenting to the deeds ([../cathen/01115a.htm](#)) of the wicked ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)), and thus defiled by actual participation in their crimes, but only, for the sake of the fellowship of the good ([../cathen/06636b.htm](#)), tolerating the wicked ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)), as the chaff which lies until the final purging of the Lord's threshing-floor. These things being so, where is the pretext for your schism ([../cathen/13529a.htm](#))? Are ye not an "evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) generation, esteeming yourselves righteous, yet not washed from the guilt of your going forth" [from the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#))]?

43. If, now, I were disposed to quote anything against you from the writings of Tychonius, a man of your communion, who has written rather in defense of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) and against you than the reverse, in vain disowning the communion of African Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) as traditors (by which one thing Parmenianus silences him), what else can you say in reply than what Tychonius himself said of you as I have shortly before reminded you: "That which is according to our will ([../cathen/15624a.htm](#)) is holy ([../cathen/07386a.htm](#))"? For this Tychonius — a man ([../cathen/09580c.htm](#)), as I have said, of your communion — writes that a Council was held at Carthage ([../cathen/03385a.htm](#)) by two hundred and seventy of your bishops ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)); in which Council, after seventy-five days of deliberation, all past decisions on the matter being set aside, a carefully revised resolution was published, to the effect that to those who were guilty of a heinous crime as traditors, the privilege of communion should be granted as to blameless persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)), if they refused to be baptized ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)). He says further, that Deuterius of Macriana, a bishop ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)) of your party, added to the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) a whole crowd of traditors, without making any distinction between them and others, making the unity of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) open to these traditors, in accordance with the decree of the Council held by these two hundred and seventy of your bishops ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)), and that after that transaction Donatus continued unbroken his communion with the said Deuterius, and not only with him, but also with all the Mauritanian bishops ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)) for forty years, who, according to the statement of Tychonius, admitted the traditors to communion without insisting on their being rebaptized, up to the time of the persecution ([../cathen/11703a.htm](#)) made by Macarius.

44. You will say, "What has that Tychonius to do with me?" It is true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) that Tychonius is the man whom Parmenianus checked by his reply, and effectually warned not to write such things; but he did not refute the statements themselves, but, as I have said above, silenced him by this one thing, that while saying such things concerning the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) which is diffused throughout the world, and while admitting that the faults of other men within its unity cannot defile one who is innocent, he nevertheless withdrew himself from the contagion of communion with African Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) because of their being traditors, and was an adherent of the

party of Donatus. Parmenianus, indeed, might have said that Tychonius had in all these things spoken falsely ([../cathen/05781a.htm](#)); but, as Tychonius himself observes, many were still living at that time by whom these things might be proved ([../cathen/12454c.htm](#)) to be most unquestionably true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) and generally known ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)).

45. Of these things, however, I say no more: maintain, if you choose, that Tychonius spoke falsely ([../cathen/05781a.htm](#)); I bring you back to Cyprian, the authority which you yourself have quoted. If, according to his writings, every one in the unity of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) is defiled by the sins ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)) of other members, then the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) had utterly perished before Cyprian's time, and all possibility of Cyprian's own existence ([../cathen/05543b.htm](#)) (as a member of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#))) is taken away. If, however, the very thought of this is impiety, and it be beyond question that the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) continued in being, it follows that no one is defiled by the guilt of the sins ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)) of other men within the Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) unity; and in vain do you, "an evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) generation," maintain that you are righteous, when you are "not washed from the guilt of your going forth."

Chapter 11

46. You will say, "Why then do you seek us? Why do you receive those whom you call heretics ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#))?" Mark how simple and short is my reply. We seek you because you are lost, that we may rejoice ([../cathen/07131b.htm](#)) over you when found, as over you while lost we grieved. Again we call you heretics ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#)); but the name applies to you only up to the time of your being turned to the peace of the Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), and extricated from the errors ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)) by which you have been ensnared. For when you pass over to us, you entirely abandon the position you formerly occupied, so that, as heretics ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#)) no longer, you pass over to us. You will say, "Then baptize ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) me." I would, if you were not already baptized ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)), or if you had received the baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) of Donatus, or of Rogatus only, and not of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)). It is not the Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)), but the crime of schism ([../cathen/13529a.htm](#)), which makes you a heretic ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#)). The evil ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) which has proceeded from yourself is not a reason for our denying the good that is permanent in you, but which you possess to your own harm if you have it not in that Church from which proceeds its power to do good. For from the Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) are all the sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)) of the Lord, which you hold and administer in the same way as they were held and administered even before you went forth from her. The fact, however, that you are no longer in that Church from which proceeded the sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)) which you have, does not make it the less true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) that you still have them. We therefore do not change in you that wherein you are at one with ourselves, for in many things you are at one with us; and of such it is said, "For in many things they were with me:" but we correct those things in which you are not with us, and we wish you to receive those things which you have not where you now are. You are at one with us in baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)), in creed, and in the other sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)) of the Lord. But in the spirit of unity and bond of peace, in a word, in the Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) itself, you are not with us. If you receive these things, the others which you already have will then not begin to be yours, but begin to be of use to you. We do not therefore, as you think,

receive your men of your party as still belonging to you, but in the act of receiving them we incorporate with ourselves those who forsake you that they may be received by us; and in order that they may belong to us, their first step is to renounce their connection with you. Nor do we compel into union with us those who industriously serve an error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)) which we abhor; but our reason for wishing those men to be united to us is, that they may no longer be worthy of our abhorrence.

47. But you will say, "The Apostle Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)) baptized ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) after John." Acts 19:5 ([../bible/act019.htm#verse5](#)) Did he then baptize ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) after a heretic ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#))? If you do presume to call that friend of the Bridegroom a heretic ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#)), and to say that he was not in the unity of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), I beg that you will put this in writing. But if you believe ([../cathen/02408b.htm](#)) that it would be the height of folly to think or to say so, it remains for your own wisdom to resolve the question why the Apostle Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)) baptized ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) after John. For if he baptized ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) after one who was his equal, you ought all to baptize ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) after one another. If after one who was greater than himself, you ought to baptize ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) after Rogatus; if after one who was less than himself, Rogatus ought to have baptized ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) after you those whom you, as a presbyter ([../cathen/12406a.htm](#)), had baptized ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)). If, however, the baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) which is now administered is in all cases of equal value to those who receive it, however unequal in merit the persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) may be by whom it is administered, because it is the baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)), not of those who administer the right, I think you must already perceive that Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)) administered the baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) of Christ to certain persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) because they had received the baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) of John only, and not of Christ; for it is expressly called the baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) of John, as the Divine Scripture bears witness ([../cathen/15677a.htm](#)) in many passages, and as the Lord Himself calls it, saying: "The baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) of John, whence was it? From heaven, or of men?" Matthew 21:25 ([../bible/mat021.htm#verse25](#)) But the baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) which Peter administered was the baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)), not of Peter, but of Christ; that which Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)) administered was the baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)), not of Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)), but of Christ; that which was administered by those who, in the apostle's time, preached Christ not sincerely, but of contention, was not their own, but the baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) of Christ; and that which was administered by those who, in Cyprian's time, either by artful dishonesty obtained their possessions, or by usury ([../cathen/15235c.htm](#)), at exorbitant interest, increased them, was not their own baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)), but the baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)). And because it was of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)), therefore, although there was very great disparity in the persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) by whom it was administered, it was equally useful to those by whom it was received. For if the excellency of baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) in each case is according to the excellency of the person by whom one is baptized ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)), it was wrong in the apostle to give thanks that he had baptized ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) none of the Corinthians, but Crispus, and Gaius, and the house of Stephanas; 1 Corinthians 1:14 ([../bible/1co001.htm#verse14](#)) for the baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) of the converts in Corinth ([../cathen/04363b.htm](#)), if administered by himself, would have been so much more excellent as Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)) himself was more excellent than other men. Lastly, when he says, "I have planted, and Apollos watered," 1 Corinthians 3:6 ([../bible/1co003.htm#verse6](#)) he seems to intimate that he had preached the gospel, and that Apollos had baptized ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)). Is Apollos better than John? Why then did he, who baptized ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) after John, not baptize ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) after

Apollos? Surely because, in the one case, the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm), by whomsoever administered, was the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of Christ; and in the other case, by whomsoever administered, it was, although preparing the way for Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm), only the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of John.

48. It seems to you an odious thing to say that baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) was given to some after John had baptized (../cathen/02258b.htm) them, and yet that baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) is not to be given to men after heretics (../cathen/07256b.htm) have baptized (../cathen/02258b.htm) them; but it may be said with equal justice (../cathen/08571c.htm) to be an odious thing that baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) was given to some after John had baptized (../cathen/02258b.htm) them, and yet that baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) is not to be given to men after intemperate persons (../cathen/11726a.htm) have baptized (../cathen/02258b.htm) them. I name this sin (../cathen/14004b.htm) of intemperance rather than others, because those in whom it reigns are not able to hide it: and yet what man, even though he be blind, does not know (../cathen/08673a.htm) how many addicted to this vice (../cathen/15403c.htm) are to be found everywhere? And yet among the works of the flesh, of which it is said that they who do them shall not inherit the kingdom of God (../cathen/08646a.htm), the apostle places this in an enumeration in which heresies (../cathen/07256b.htm) also are specified: "Now the works of the flesh," he says, "are manifest, which are these: adultery (../cathen/01163a.htm), fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry (../cathen/07636a.htm), witchcraft (../cathen/15674b.htm), hatred (../cathen/07149b.htm), variance, emulations, wrath (../cathen/01489a.htm), strife, seditions, heresies (../cathen/07256b.htm), envyings, murders, drunkenness (../cathen/01274a.htm), revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (../cathen/08646a.htm)." Galatians 5:19-21 (../bible/gal005.htm#verse19) Baptism, therefore, although it was administered after John, is not administered after a heretic (../cathen/07256b.htm), on the very same principle according to which, though administered after John; it is not administered after an intemperate man: for both heresies (../cathen/07256b.htm) and drunkenness (../cathen/01274a.htm) are among the works which exclude those who do them from inheriting the kingdom of God (../cathen/08646a.htm). Does it not seem to you as if it were a thing intolerably unseemly, that although baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) was repeated after it had been administered by him who, not even moderately drinking wine, but wholly refraining from its use, prepared the way for the kingdom of God (../cathen/08646a.htm), and yet that it should not be repeated after being administered by an intemperate man, who shall not inherit the kingdom of God? What can be said in answer to this, but that the one was the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of John, after which the apostle administered the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of Christ; and that the other, administered by an intemperate man, was the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of Christ? Between John Baptist and an intemperate man there is a great difference, as of opposites; between the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of Christ and the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of John there is no contrariety, but a great difference. Between the apostle and an intemperate man there is a great difference; but there is none between the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of Christ administered by an apostle (../cathen/01626c.htm), and the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of Christ administered by an intemperate man. In like manner, between John and a heretic (../cathen/07256b.htm) there is a great difference, as of opposites; and between the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of John and the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of Christ which a heretic (../cathen/07256b.htm) administers there is no contrariety, but there is a great difference. But between the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of Christ which an apostle administers, and the baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) of Christ which a heretic (../cathen/07256b.htm) administers, there is no difference. For the form of the sacrament is acknowledged to be the same even when there is a great difference in point of worth between the men by whom it is administered.

49. But pardon me, for I have made a mistake in wishing to convince you by arguing from the case of an intemperate man administering baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)); for I had forgotten that I am dealing with a Rogatist, not with one bearing the wider name of Donatist ([../cathen/05121a.htm](#)). For among your colleagues who are so few, and in the whole number of your clergy ([../cathen/04049b.htm](#)), perhaps you cannot find one addicted to this vice ([../cathen/15403c.htm](#)). For you are persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) who hold that the name Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) is given to the faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)) not because communion of those who hold it embraces the whole world, but because they observe the whole of the Divine precepts and the whole of the sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)); you are the persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) in whom alone the Son of man ([../cathen/14144a.htm](#)) when He comes shall find faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)), when on the earth He shall find no faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)), forasmuch as you are not earth and on the earth, but heavenly and dwelling in heaven! Do you not fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)), or do you not observe that "God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)) resists the proud ([../cathen/12405a.htm](#)), but gives grace ([../cathen/06689a.htm](#)) to the humble ([../cathen/07543b.htm](#))"? James 4:6 ([../bible/jam004.htm#verse6](#)) Does not that very passage in the Gospel ([../cathen/06655b.htm](#)) startle you, in which the Lord says, "When the Son of man ([../cathen/14144a.htm](#)) comes, shall He find faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)) in the earth?" Luke 18:8 ([../bible/luk018.htm#verse8](#)) Immediately thereafter, as if foreseeing that some would proudly arrogate to themselves the possession of this faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)), He spoke to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, the parable ([../cathen/11460a.htm](#)) of the two men who went up to the temple to pray ([../cathen/12345b.htm](#)), the one a Pharisee ([../cathen/11789b.htm](#)), and the other a publican ([../cathen/12553d.htm](#)). The words which follow I leave for yourself to consider and to answer. Nevertheless examine more minutely your small sect ([../cathen/13674a.htm](#)), to see whether not so much as one who administers baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)) is an intemperate man. For so widespread is the havoc wrought among souls ([../cathen/14153a.htm](#)) by this plague, that I am greatly surprised if it has not reached even your infinitesimal flock, although it is your boast that already, before the coming of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)), the one good Shepherd, you have separated between the sheep and the goats.

Chapter 12

50. Listen to the testimony which through me is addressed to you by those who are the Lord's wheat, suffering meanwhile until the final winnowing, Matthew 3:12 ([../bible/mat003.htm#verse12](#)) among the chaff in the Lord's threshing-floor, *i.e.* throughout the whole world, because "God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)) has called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof," and throughout the same wide field the "children praise Him." We disapprove of every one who, taking advantage of this imperial edict, persecutes you, not with loving concern for your correction, but with the malice ([../cathen/07149b.htm](#)) of an enemy. Moreover, although, since every earthly possession can be rightly retained only on the ground either of divine right, according to which all things belong to the righteous, or of human ([../cathen/09580c.htm](#)) right, which is in the jurisdiction of the kings of the earth, you are mistaken in calling those things yours which you do not possess as righteous persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)), and which you have forfeited by the laws ([../cathen/09053a.htm](#)) of earthly sovereigns, and plead in vain, "We have laboured to gather them," seeing that you may read what is written, "The wealth ([../cathen/15571a.htm](#)) of the sinner is laid up for the just;" Proverbs 13:22 ([../bible/pro013.htm#verse22](#)) nevertheless we disapprove of any one who, availing himself of this law

which the kings of the earth, doing homage to Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)), have published in order to correct your impiety, covetously ([../cathen/04462a.htm](#)) seeks to possess himself of your property. Also we disapprove of any one who, on the ground not of justice ([../cathen/08571c.htm](#)), but of avarice ([../cathen/02148b.htm](#)), seizes and retains the provision pertaining to the poor ([../cathen/12327a.htm](#)), or the chapels in which you meet for worship, which you once occupied in the name of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), and which are by all means the rightful property only of that Church which is the true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) Church of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)). We disapprove of any one who receives a person that has been expelled by you for some disgraceful action or crime, on the same terms on which those are received who have lived among you chargeable with no other crime beyond the error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)) through which you are separated from us. But these are things which you cannot easily prove; and although you can prove them, we bear with some whom we are unable to correct or even to punish; and we do not quit the Lord's threshing-floor because of the chaff which is there, nor break the Lord's net because of bad fishes enclosed therein, nor desert the Lord's flock because of goats which are to be in the end separated from it, nor go forth from the Lord's house because in it there are vessels destined to dishonour.

Chapter 13

51. But, my brother, if you forbear seeking the empty honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) which comes from men, and despise the reproach of fools, who will be ready to say, "Why do you now destroy what you once laboured to build up?" it seems to me to be beyond doubt ([../cathen/05141a.htm](#)) that you will now pass over to the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) which I perceive that you acknowledge to be the true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) Church: the proofs ([../cathen/12454c.htm](#)) of which sentiment on your part I find at hand. For in the beginning of your letter which I am now answering you have these words: "I knew ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) you, my excellent friend, as a man devoted to peace and uprightness, when you were still far removed from the Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)), and were in these earlier days occupied with literary pursuits; but since your conversion at a more recent time to the Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)), you give your time and labour, as I am informed by the statements of many persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)), to theological controversies." These words are undoubtedly your own, if you were the person who sent me that letter. Seeing, therefore, that you confess that I have been converted to the Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)), although I have not been converted to the sect ([../cathen/13674a.htm](#)) of the Donatists ([../cathen/05121a.htm](#)) or of the Rogatists, you unquestionably uphold the truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) that beyond the pale of Rogatists and Donatists ([../cathen/05121a.htm](#)) the Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)) exists. This faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)) therefore is, as we say, spread abroad throughout all nations, which are according to God's testimony blessed ([../cathen/02599b.htm](#)) in the seed of Abraham ([../cathen/01051a.htm](#)). Genesis 22:18 ([../bible/gen022.htm#verse18](#)) Why therefore do you still hesitate to adopt what you perceive to be true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)), unless it be that you are humbled because at some former time you did not perceive what you now see, or maintained some different view, and so, while ashamed to correct an error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)), are not ashamed (where shame would be much more reasonable) of remaining wilfully in error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#))?

52. Such conduct the Scripture ([../bible/index.html](#)) has not passed over in silence; for we read, "There is a shame which brings sin ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)), and there is a shame which is graceful and glorious ([../cathen/06585a.htm](#))." Sirach 4:21 ([../bible/sir004.htm#verse21](#)) Shame brings sin ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)), when through its influence any one forbears from changing a wicked ([../cathen/05649a.htm](#)) opinion, lest he be supposed to be fickle, or be held as by his own judgment convicted of having been long in error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)): such persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) descend into the pit alive, that is, conscious of their perdition; whose future doom the death of Dathan and Abiram and Korah, swallowed up by the opening earth, long ago prefigured. Numbers 16:31-33 ([../bible/num016.htm#verse31](#)) But shame is graceful and glorious ([../cathen/06585a.htm](#)) when one blushes for his own sin ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)), and by repentance is changed to something better, which you are reluctant to do because overpowered by that false and fatal shame, fearing lest by men who know ([../cathen/08673a.htm](#)) not whereof they affirm, that sentence of the apostle may be quoted against you: "If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." Galatians 2:18 ([../bible/gal002.htm#verse18](#)) If, however, this sentence admitted of application to those who, after being corrected, preach the truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) which in their perversity they opposed, it might have been said at first against Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)) himself, in regard to whom the churches of Christ glorified ([../cathen/06585a.htm](#)) God when they heard that he now "preached the faith ([../cathen/05752c.htm](#)) which once he destroyed." Galatians 1:23-24 ([../bible/gal001.htm#verse23](#))

53. Do not, however, imagine ([../cathen/07672a.htm](#)) that one can pass from error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)) to truth ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)), or from any sin ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)), be it great or small, to the correction of his sin ([../cathen/14004b.htm](#)), without giving some proof ([../cathen/12454c.htm](#)) of his repentance. It is, however, an error ([../cathen/05525a.htm](#)) of intolerable impertinence for men to blame the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), which is proved ([../cathen/12454c.htm](#)) by so many Divine testimonies to be the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)), for dealing in one way with those who forsake her, receiving them back on condition of correcting this fault by some acknowledgment of their repentance, and in another way with those who never were within her pale, and are receiving welcome to her peace for the first time; her method being to humble ([../cathen/07543b.htm](#)) the former more fully, and to receive the latter upon easier terms, cherishing affection for both, and ministering with a mother's love ([../cathen/09397a.htm](#)) to the health of both.

You have here perhaps a longer letter than you desired. It would have been much shorter if in my reply I had been thinking of you alone; but as it is, even though it should be of no use to yourself, I do not think that it can fail to be of use to those who shall take pains to read it in the fear ([../cathen/06021a.htm](#)) of God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)), and without respect of persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)). Amen ([../cathen/01407b.htm](#)).

About this page

Source. Translated by J.G. Cunningham. From *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 1*. Edited by Philip Schaff. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102093.htm>>.

Contact information. The editor of New Advent is Kevin Knight. My email address is [feedback732 at newadvent.org](mailto:feedback732@newadvent.org). (To help fight spam, this address might change occasionally.) Regrettably, I can't reply to every letter, but I greatly appreciate your feedback — especially notifications about typographical errors and inappropriate ads.